# Christological Consistency and the Reduplicative Qua

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**Abstract**: A central problem faced by any classical form of Christology runs as follows. Christ is both divine and human, but it seems that there are pairs of predicates that meet the following conditions: the two predicates in the pair cannot both belong to one subject; everything that is divine has one of the predicates; everything that is human has the other of the predicates. So, for example, nothing can be changeable and unchangeable; everything both divine is unchangeable; everything human is changeable. If, as classical Christology asserts, Christ is both divine and human, then we seem to land in contradiction. My purpose in this paper is to argue that a certain strategy for avoiding this sort of contradiction, a strategy involving qua-phrases, is much more promising than its critics have seen. I proceed as follows. First, I indicate which particular version of the qua strategy I am interested in, and I explain the negative judgment that the literature has made on it. Second, I develop an alternative version of the strategy that does not fall prey to these criticisms. Third, I discuss the consequences of using my alternative, and I consider some objections.

#### Introduction

A central problem faced by any classical form of Christology runs as follows. Christ is both divine and human, but it seems that there are pairs of predicates that meet the following conditions: the two predicates in the pair cannot both belong to one subject; everything that is divine has one of the predicates; everything that is human has the other of the predicates. So, for example, nothing can be both changeable and unchangeable; everything divine is unchangeable; everything human is changeable. If, as classical Christology asserts, Christ is both divine and human, then we seem to land in contradiction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I am deliberately leaving it open-ended precisely what is meant by "classical Christology." There are some crucial texts that this expression encompasses, the most important of which are the Scriptures and the decrees of the (first) seven ecumenical councils. But many would say that other texts need to be included as well, and this is a matter of deep disagreement among serious people. Beyond that initial difficulty, it must be kept in mind that the texts that belong to the classical tradition were

As Cross (2009) spells out, there are at least four basic strategies that can be found in the literature for dealing with this problem. The first uses phrases such as "qua human" and "qua divine" to qualify the contradictory propositions: although one cannot say both that Christ is changeable and that Christ is unchangeable, one can perhaps say that Christ is changeable qua human and that Christ is unchangeable qua divine.

The second strategy involves appeal to relative identity. One distinguishes between a divine being and a human being and says that while these two are distinct beings, they are the same person; because the contradictory predicates belong to different beings, contradiction is avoided, and because the two beings are both identical to one person, the unity of Christ is preserved.

The third strategy involves appeals to parts and wholes. One argues that Christ has two parts, his divine nature and his human nature, and one then says that one of the contradictory predicates belongs to one part, while the other belongs to the other part, thus avoiding the problem of contradictory predicates belonging unqualifiedly to one subject. Meanwhile, Christ's unity is preserved by arguing that in an indirect or "borrowed" way, the predicates do all belong to Christ.

The fourth Cross labels "restrictive" because it involves restricting one's notion of divinity or humanity: one denies some of the initial starting points that give rise to the problem by arguing that it's not true, for example, that everything divine is unchangeable.

Setting aside for present purposes any analysis of the last three strategies, my purpose in this paper is to argue that one particular version of the first strategy, the strategy that uses qua-phrases, is much more promising than its critics have seen. I proceed as follows. First, I indicate which particular version of the qua strategy I am interested in, and I explain the negative judgment that the literature has made on it. Second, I develop an alternative version of the strategy that does not fall prey to these criticisms. Third, I discuss the consequences of using my alternative, and I consider some objections. Fourth, I consider the worry that my strategy is not consistent with classical Christology.

## Initial look at the reduplicative qua strategy

composed in particular historical contexts, with particular controversies in mind: even if it seems, on a first reading, that they are addressed to our questions, attention to historical context might reveal that in truth they are not. And to make matters still more complicated, it should be added that even when it turns out that those texts were not written with our questions in mind, they still might have something to say to our questions—the texts must be read not only with sensitivity to their original context, but also in a way that is attuned to their deeper philosophical and theological implications. Classical Christology, then, is not a set of texts so much as it is a set of texts and some views on how to interpret them, and it is always going to be a matter of argument which texts are included, and whether this or that way of interpreting them is legitimate and authoritative. This lack of clarity may be frustrating, but it is part of the problem itself and cannot be eliminated. The word "reduplicative" is sometimes used in a general way to speak of locutions in which the subject term is, so to speak, repeated or duplicated by a modifying phrase. In this sense, any sentence like "Christ is changeable qua human" or "Christ is changeable insofar as he is human" is reduplicative, regardless of how one interprets the reduplicative phrase.<sup>2</sup> There is, however, another and narrower sense of "reduplicative" that is used to express one specific way of understanding qua-sentences.<sup>3</sup> What is at issue in this paper is the reduplicative strategy in the narrow sense, or in other words, the use of qua-phrases or their equivalents in a certain specific way.

What is that specific way? It is this: if someone says that Christ is changeable qua human, the meaning is that Christ is changeable *in virtue of being human*. In other words, and to a first approximation, the qua-phrase tells us what it is in virtue of which the predicate attaches to the subject. Put schematically, it goes as follows:

*X* is *F* qua *R* means: *X* is *F* in virtue of being *R*.

Because my goal at the moment is not to provide a complete logical account of propositions that fit this schema, but only to shed light on Christology, let me stipulate that there will be only two allowable substitutions for "R" in this schema, "divine" and "human," and that the only allowable substitutions for "F" are features of Christ exclusive of his divinity and humanity.

Now the standard and perhaps most obvious way of interpreting this schema is by taking the "in virtue of" relation to indicate something like a sufficient cause, so that we have the following:

(A) *X* is *F* qua *R* means:

X is R, and X is F, and X's being R makes it be the case that X is F.

I am calling this (A) because it is a schema for an *a*ffirmation.

A further element of the standard interpretation is construing the corresponding denials as follows:

(DN) X is not F qua R means: X is R, and X is not F, and X's being R makes it be the case that X is not F.

I am calling this (DN) because it is a *d*enial with *n*arrow-scope negation (the issue of scope will receive more attention below).

When reduplicative qualifications are understood along the lines of (A) and (DN), they are not helpful for avoiding contradictions in Christology. That is because (A) and (DN), taken together, imply that *X* is both *F* and not-*F*. For example, if Christ

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For discussion of various ways of interpreting qua-phrases with specific reference to Christology, see Senor (2002, 228-233), and Cross (2009, 455-457). For a broad discussion of qua-phrases generally in the history of philosophy and theology, see Bäck (1996).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For this narrower sense of "reduplication," see Cross (2002, 193-195).

is both divine and human, and if he is unchangeable qua divine and changeable qua human, and if those claims are interpreted according to (A) and (DN), then it follows that Christ is both changeable and unchangeable, which lands us right back in the contradiction we were trying to avoid. Nor have commentators failed to point this out.<sup>4</sup>

It seems to me, however, that the reduplicative approach has been condemned too quickly. In the next two sections of this paper, I will discuss better ways of understanding it.

### A better way of thinking about reduplicative propositions I

In this section I will briefly discuss one way in which the standard understanding of reduplication, the understanding embodied in (A) and (DN), is inadequate. The discussion will be brief, because although important in itself, it does not directly engage the consistency issues that are central to this paper.

It is clearly correct to say things like "Christ walked in Jerusalem." Now if someone objected that Christ is God and that God, who is immaterial, cannot walk, a natural reply in the reduplicative spirit would be to say, "Christ walked in Jerusalem qua human." But this does not fit well with (A), because then it would mean that Christ's being human makes it be the case that he is walking in Jerusalem. That is clearly incorrect, because otherwise Christ would always have to be walking in Jerusalem, even when, say, he was in Nazareth. So (A) needs to be replaced with something different:

(A\*) X is F qua R means:X is R, and X is F, and X's being R makes it possible for X to be F.

The point of this modification is as follows. Christ walked in Jerusalem, and there is clearly some important connection between his being human and his walking in Jerusalem, but that connection is not that his being human inevitably brings it about that he is walking in Jerusalem. The connection is simply that his being human is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See Cross (2002, 193-195) and (2009, 455); McCord Adams (2006, 130); Senor (2002, 229).

Cross (2009, 455) cites Morris (1986) as sharing this condemnation, but matters appear to be more complicated than Cross allows. On the one hand, it is not clear that Morris is specifically focusing on the causal version, rather than on qua approaches in general; to this extent, Morris's criticisms might well be thought to aim at all versions of the qua approach, rather than just at causal interpretations. On the other hand, however, it is actually not Morris's claim that qua approaches in general, or causal qua approaches in particular, always lead to contradictions. Discussing Hebert (1979), Morris says that *if* qualified assertions always imply their unqualified counterparts, then contradiction cannot be avoided (see 48, 50), but he does not assert that they always do imply them; in fact, he denies this (49, 51). This is not, however, to say that Morris thinks that the qua approach is a good Christological strategy; he does not (54-55).

what allows him to walk in Jerusalem—if he were only divine, then he would not be able to walk in Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

Two clarifications need to be added. First, someone might object that, on (A\*), it is true not only that Christ walked in Jerusalem qua human, but also that he walked in Jerusalem qua divine, on the grounds that although his being human does indeed make it possible for him to walk, his being divine is what makes it possible for him to be human, and so, by transitivity, his being divine makes it possible for him to walk. In response, let me say that in the Christological schemas discussed in this paper, the relation at issue is non-transitive. The point could be put as follows: *X* is *F* qua *R* means that *X* is *F* immediately in virtue of being *R*, rather than through the mediation of some additional nature. So Christ is not "walking qua divine" in the intended sense, even if in some other sense it might be right to say so.

A second point of clarification is as follows. One might wonder whether it is quite right to say that Christ walks qua human, because after all, if he had become leonine instead (as he is portrayed as doing in C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* stories), he also would have been able to walk. The reply to this is simply that as things actually are, it is in fact his being human that makes his walking possible. That some other nature might have made it possible, on some alternative scenario, is not relevant to what (A\*) is saying.

I have just proposed that we understand the reduplicative qua in such a way that X's being R need not be sufficient for X's being F. For it to be true that X is F qua R, X's being R need only make it possible for X to be F. And yet it is the case that sometimes, X's being R does make X be F. To use a traditional example, Socrates is able to laugh qua human, and his being human is sufficient for his being able to laugh. Or, for another example, Christ is omnipotent qua divine, and his being divine is sufficient for his being omnipotent.

But it's not just that some cases of reduplication are cases of sufficiency; it's also that the cases that are of interest for the contradiction problem are cases of sufficiency: after all, if X's being R only makes it possible for X to be F, we won't have to worry about contradiction! So in the rest of this paper, I am going to proceed as if sufficiency were the right way to think about the force of the reduplicative "in virtue of"; in other words, I am going to continue to consider (A) and (DN). A complete or anyway more general account of reduplication would overcome this narrowness, but that would lead us far from the purpose of this paper.

### A better way of thinking about reduplicative propositions II

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This is related to a point made by Cross (2009, 455-456).

I have only commented on (A); what about (DN)? This is rather more complicated, because one has to decide what the scope of the negation should be. Is the point that X's being R doesn't make it possible for X to be F, or rather that X's being R makes it possible for X to be not F? Such questions, while obviously important, lie outside the scope of this paper.

As standardly understood, reduplication involves (A) and (DN). (DN), as its name implies, gives the negation narrow scope. It is worth pausing to consider this further. Denials are ambiguous in a way that has often been noted. Consider a case that does not have to do with natures. What does it mean to say, "Fido is not able to hear in virtue of having eyes"? Does it mean that having eyes makes Fido deaf, or does it mean that having eyes does not enable him to hear? That is, does it mean that in virtue of having eyes, he cannot hear, or does it mean that it's not the case that, in virtue of having eyes, he can hear? The first option gives the negation narrow scope, and the second option gives it wide scope.

What this shows is that (DN) is not the only possibility for reduplicative denial. We also have to consider (DW), where "W" of course stands for "wide." Here are the two alternatives, side-by-side for comparison:

- (DN) X is not F qua R means: X is R, and X is not F, and X's being R makes it be the case that X is not F.
- (DW) X is not F qua R means:X is R, and it is not the case that X's being R makes it be the case that X is F.

Consider as an example the claim "Christ is unchangeable qua divine." Someone who meant this in the reduplicative way, and who meant it moreover according to the narrow-scope reading, would mean that Christ is divine, and that Christ is not changeable, and that the reason he is not changeable is that he is divine. Someone who meant it in the reduplicative way, but who meant it according to the wide-scope reading, would mean that Christ is divine, and that being divine does not make him changeable. The contrast can be expressed differently, as follows. On the narrow-scope reading, Christ's being divine *prevents* him from being changeable; on the wide-scope reading, his being divine *fails to provide for* his being changeable.<sup>6</sup>

As we have seen, a reduplicative approach that embraces both (A) and (DN) leads to contradiction. But what about a reduplicative approach that instead embraces (A) and (DW)? Does it lead to contradiction?

#### Consequences of taking the wide-scope route

To make progress on the question of whether taking the wide-scope route leads to contradiction, it will be helpful to consider certain special facts that come into play when we are dealing with entities that, like Christ, have more than one nature. Restricting ourselves to affirmations for the time being, let us note the following. Christ, we might say, has this or that feature (e.g., changeability) and he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> This is similar to a distinction made in Haldane (1991, 202) between being unentitled and disentitled (e.g., to use a library).

has it because of having this or that nature (e.g., humanity). But since Christ has more than one nature, it is at least possible that, for some feature he has, he has it in virtue of both of his natures; for example, we might say that he is a mind-possessor both because he is divine and because he is human. We can thus distinguish "some" statements from "every" statements. A "some" statement is a statement to the effect that Christ has a certain feature in virtue of some nature that he has, whereas an "every" statement is a statement to the effect that Christ has a certain feature in virtue of every nature that he has.

This distinction plays out in one way for multi-natured entities, and in another way for single-natured entities. In the case of a two-natured entity like Christ, there is an obvious difference between affirming that he has some nature in virtue of which he has a given feature, and affirming that it is in virtue of every one of his natures that he has that feature. Most entities, however, like the dog Fido, have only one nature; for entities of that sort, the difference between the two types of statements, while obviously robust on the logical level, makes no practical difference. Fido is warm-blooded in virtue of some of his natures, but also he is warm-blooded in virtue of all of his natures, simply because his canine nature is his only nature. Or, to put the point another way: in the case of a two-natured entity, an "every" statement cannot be inferred from the corresponding "some" statement; in the usual case, however, viz., the case of a one-natured entity, the "every" statement can be so inferred (if we add the premise that the entity in question has only one nature). When there is only one nature, both "some" and "every" point to that nature and only to that nature: in such cases, "some" and "every" come to the same thing for all practical purposes.

The same difference is found in the case of denials. In the case of a twonatured entity like Christ, there is a difference between saying, on the one hand, that one of his natures does not provide for his having some feature, and saying, on the other hand, that none of his natures provides for his having that feature. Such a distinction exists in the case of a single-natured entity as well, but again, it makes no practical difference. One of Fido's natures does not provide for his being able to fly, and also none of his natures provides for his being able to fly: to say the one is pretty much to say the other, inasmuch as his canine nature is the only one he has. In the case of a two-natured entity, an "every" statement cannot be inferred from the corresponding "some" statement; in the case of a one-natured entity, by contrast, the inference does go through, assuming we add the premise that the entity has only one nature, because in such cases, "some" and "every," for all practical purposes, come to the same thing.

Now cases concerning single-natured beings are the usual sort of case, indeed, the only sort of case that most people ever consider. As a result, ordinary ways of thinking are indifferent to a distinction that is quite important when two-natured beings are at issue. This means that there is a natural tendency to think in ways that are inappropriate for Christology.

With these observations in hand, let us address the question of contradiction. We want to avoid saying things like "Christ is changeable and unchangeable"; can we do this by using the schemas (A) and (DW)? Or is it rather the case that "Christ is changeable qua human" implies the unqualified "Christ is changeable" and that "Christ is not changeable qua divine" implies the unqualified "Christ is not changeable"? To prepare an answer to this question, I will first make a general point about qua-statements; second, I will make a point about reduplicative affirmations; third, I will make a point about reduplicative denials.

First let us notice that any single reduplicative statement is a "some" statement. After all, it is precisely in order to focus on one nature that we say things like "qua human" and "qua divine." To say that Christ is changeable qua human is not to say that he is changeable in virtue of all his natures, but only that he is changeable in virtue of his nature; to say that Christ is not changeable qua divine is not to say that every one of his natures fails to provide for his being changeable, but only that his divinity does. We can, to be sure, make claims that invoke every nature that an entity has, but that requires putting together more than one qua-statement, by saying for example "Christ is able to understand qua divine, and he is able to understand qua human."

The second point has to do with affirmations: A statement (or set of statements) invoking every one of Christ's natures is sufficient for the truth of an unqualified statement like "Christ has understanding," but it is not necessary for it: a statement invoking only one nature is sufficient all on its own. Thus, for example, if Christ has one nature in virtue of which he is changeable, that's enough for his being changeable *tout court*—it is not necessary for him to be changeable in virtue of his other nature as well. (This is like saying that as long as he has ears, he can hear—it is not necessary that he be able to hear in virtue of his eyes as well.) So a single reduplicative affirmation, even though it invokes only one nature, does imply its unqualified counterpart. "Christ qua human is changeable" implies the unqualified "Christ is changeable."

The third point concerns denials. One might be tempted to assume that the logical relations here are the same as in the previous case; in other words, one might be tempted to assume that since a reduplicative affirmation invoking one nature is necessary and sufficient for its unqualified counterpart, while an affirmation (or set of affirmations) invoking every nature is sufficient but not necessary for its ungualified counterpart, then a denial invoking one nature is necessary and sufficient for its unqualified counterpart, while a denial invoking every nature is sufficient but not necessary for its unqualified counterpart. But this would be a mistake. Consider again the analogy with sense powers. An animal that has eyes is not thereby able to hear, but from this it does not follow that the animal is unable to hear *tout court*: for all we are told by such a denial (wide-scope, invoking only one sense power), the animal might have some other sense power in virtue of which it can hear. For an animal to be non-hearing *tout court*, it must be true in virtue of all its sense powers that it cannot hear. So, returning now to the case of Christology, for the truth of an unqualified denial like "Christ is unchangeable," what is needed is a set of denials such that they together invoke every nature. A simple reduplicative denial, which invokes only one nature, is not sufficient for an unqualified denial. "Christ is not changeable qua divine," interpreted with wide-scope negation, is a "some" statement, and therefore it does not imply "Christ is not changeable," because it leaves open the possibility that Christ has some other nature in virtue of which he is changeable—for example, humanity.

Here we can see the relevance of something noted earlier, viz., that "some" statements do not imply "every" statements when multi-natured beings are at issue. Starting with "X is not F qua R," our question is whether this implies "X is not F." "X is not *F* qua *R*" is a "some" statement, but to arrive at the ungualified denial "*X* is not *F*," we need an "every" statement. If we were in a situation in which a "some" statement implied the corresponding "every" statement, then "X is not F qua R," because it was a "some" statement implying the corresponding "every" statement, would ultimately imply "X is not F." But "some" statements imply "every" statements only in the case of single-natured entities; in the case of multi-natured entities, like Christ, "some" statements do not imply "every" statements. It might have been tempting to think that a single reduplicative denial was sufficient for its unreduplicated counterpart, but that was only because we were unconsciously thinking in a way applicable only to single-natured beings. "Fido cannot fly qua canine" does imply "Fido cannot fly." but "Christ cannot change qua divine" does not imply "Christ cannot change," and the difference between the two cases is precisely that Christ, unlike Fido, has two natures.

With these three points in hand, we can answer our question. From "Christ is changeable qua human," "Christ is changeable" follows. But from "Christ is unchangeable qua divine," understood as having wide-scope negation, "Christ is not changeable" does not follow. And this means that if we interpret reduplicative denials as having wide rather than narrow scope negations, contradiction is avoided.<sup>7</sup>

Or is it? No contradiction follows from "Christ is changeable qua human" and "Christ is unchangeable qua divine." But what about the contradiction generated by the original starting points, namely, "everything divine is unchangeable" and "everything human is changeable" and "Christ is divine and human"? If all three of those starting-points are left standing, then we still have a contradiction. But not all of them are left standing: it follows from what I have argued in this paper that "everything divine is unchangeable" is false: after all, Christ is divine, and Christ is changeable, so there is at least one thing that is divine but changeable. That said, it is important also to say that Christ is unchangeable qua divine, and in fact to say that *everything* divine is unchangeable qua divine. Otherwise we would no longer have a connection between divinity and unchangeability.<sup>8</sup>

My analysis has rested on the idea that there is a crucial and relevant difference between affirmations and denials. It could be objected, however, that this is an illusion and that the difference is only grammatical, a mere difference of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Although, as noted before, there is no space here to investigate alternative accounts of qua language in Christology, it's interesting to note that for Haldane (1991, 203-204), neither the positive nor the negative unqualified statements are implied by their qualified counterparts. In other words, on the standard, narrow-scope analysis, both the inferences go through; on Haldane's analysis, neither goes through; on my proposal, one goes through but not the other.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> I explore this topic in an unpublished paper.

formulation, in which case the analysis would be faulty.<sup>9</sup> Let us flesh out the objection with a non-Christological example:

- (i) The house is occupied.
- (ii) The house is not occupied.

(i) is, apparently, a positive statement, an affirmation, while (ii) is, apparently, a negative statement, a denial. But according to the objection, this distinction is merely grammatical. Consider another pair:

- (i\*) The house is not vacant.
- (ii\*) The house is vacant.

Doesn't (i\*) make the same claim as (i), while being a denial? And doesn't (ii\*) make the same claim as (ii), while being an affirmation? If so, then it seems that there is no distinction between affirmations and denials apart from a superficial grammatical one.

In reply to this objection, it should be noted that although of course there is a grammatical difference between (i) and (i\*), and between (ii) and (ii\*), these differences mask underlying similarities. Note that (i) is true just in case at least one of the rooms in the house has someone in it, whereas (ii) is true just in case none of the rooms has someone in it. The truth-conditions for (i) are, so to speak, less demanding than the truth-conditions for (ii); for (i) to be true, only one room needs someone in it; for (ii) to be true, all the rooms need to be empty. (The city code enforcer who wants to make sure the house is not abandoned has an easier job than the firefighter who wants to make sure that no one is in danger.) But exactly the same points can be made about (i\*) and (ii\*): the truth-conditions of (ii\*) are the same as the truth-conditions of (i), and the truth-conditions of (ii\*) are the same as those of (ii).

Therefore, although it is true that one can, so to speak, reverse the polarity of many sentences, changing grammatically positive sentences to grammatically negative sentences, and changing grammatically negative sentences to grammatically positive sentences, nonetheless there is still a difference between affirmations and denials, a difference that holds firm behind this changeability of outward form. Claims (i) and (i\*) are both unqualified affirmations, and a statement invoking only some room is sufficient for either of them. Claims (ii) and (ii\*), by contrast, are both unqualified denials, and a statement invoking only some room is not sufficient for either of them—only a statement invoking every room is sufficient. The difference between affirmations and denials is real, then, and so too is the difference between what is required for unqualified affirmations and what is required for unqualified denials. Therefore, the objection does not work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that in his discussion of the reduplicative approach, Cross at least appears to proceed as if the difference between affirmations and denials is merely grammatical; see (2002, 195), especially note 56.

The result we have arrived at is this. If there is an apparent contradiction in Christology, then it will be helpful in many cases<sup>10</sup> to formulate reduplicative quastatements using the schemas (A) and (DW). Both reduplicative statements can be endorsed, and together with them, it will be right to endorse the unqualified counterpart of the (A)-style statement. To avoid contradiction, however, one will want not to endorse the unqualified counterpart of the (DW)-style statement, and furthermore this unqualified counterpart does not follow from the (DW)-style statement. So, for example, if we are faced with the worry that classical Christology requires us to say that Christ is both changeable and unchangeable, we should endorse the following: "Christ is changeable qua human," "Christ is unchangeable qua divine," and "Christ is changeable." But we should not endorse "Christ is unchangeable," nor—and this, of course, is the crucial point—are we forced to do so by our endorsement of "Christ is not changeable qua divine."<sup>11</sup>

Another objection can be constructed on the basis of remarks made in Haldane (1991), cited above. Haldane's line of reasoning can be summarized as follows (for convenience's sake, I will use the examples already under consideration in this paper, rather than his own). First, note two things. Haldane gives reasons for thinking that instances of the schemas "x qua R1 is F" and "x qua R2 is not F" can both be true, and then he sets out to find interpretations of them that are in accord with that. Also, Haldane understands qua propositions as universally quantified (e.g., everything qua canine can bark). With those points made clear, let us note first that Haldane rejects the idea that that pair of schemas should be analysed as follows:

- JH1 (x) (x is human $\rightarrow$ x is changeable)
- JH2 (x) (x is divine  $\rightarrow [x is changeable])$

("JH" simply means "John Haldane"; the labels are mine, obviously, and not his.) On these interpretations, a contradiction cannot be avoided: if Christ is both human and divine, then he is going to be changeable and unchangeable; JH1 and JH2 imply their unqualified counterparts. This point is similar to reasons seen above for rejecting the combination of (A) and (DN)—but only partly similar, as we shall see presently.

Then Haldane considers the possibility that instead of interpreting the negative claim as JH2, we could interpret it as follows:

JH3  $\sim$ (x) (x is divine  $\rightarrow$ x is changeable)

This gives the negation wide scope rather than narrow. And while JH1 and JH2 implied contradictory statements, JH1 and JH3 do not: JH1 does imply that everything human is changeable, but JH3 does not imply that everything divine is unchangeable. This is similar, but again only partly similar, to the analysis given above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> I just said "in many cases"; what I have in mind will be explained in the conclusion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> And so we should not only not affirm the relevant (DN)-style statement, we should deny it.

Haldane objects that this wide-scope strategy, while avoiding one problem, falls into another. His objection amounts to this: we can think of a situation in which the truth-values of JH1 and JH3 do not match those of the qua-statements they are supposed to interpret, and this shows that JH1 and JH3 are not adequate as analyses of those qua-statements. Suppose we are at a world at which everything divine is human and vice versa—in other words, suppose we are at a world at which every divine person is incarnate as human and there are no merely human beings, because every human being is an incarnate divine person. At such a world, JH3 is equivalent to

#### JH4 $\exists x (x \text{ is divine } \& x \text{ is not changeable}).$

But then we can see why, for Haldane, a proposal to interpret the qua-statements as JH1 and JH3 fails. According to arguments he had given earlier, "X is not changeable qua divine" is true at the world under discussion. But clearly JH4 is false at that world, which means that JH3 is false too, as JH3 and JH4 are logically equivalent; but then JH3 cannot be the right interpretation of "x is not changeable qua divine," inasmuch as a correct interpretation must at least be truth-value preserving.

Haldane has thus given us reason to think that when qua propositions are interpreted in a certain way, scope ambiguities cannot be exploited to avoid contradiction. Now there is an obvious difference between my proposal, on the one hand, and the interpretation of qua propositions that Haldane is concerned with, on the other. The interpretation he is concerned with construes qua propositions in straightforward conditional terms: if x is human, then x is changeable. Understanding qua propositions in reduplicative terms is different: x's being human makes it be the case that x is changeable. This makes for a clear difference between (A) and JH1, and again between (DW) and JH3 or even JH2. Conditional statements are not the same as statements about what is true in virtue of what, so Haldane's criticism of the proposal to interpret the negation as having wide scope simply does not address my proposal (nor, of course, does Haldane claim that it does).

From this, however, it does not follow that Haldane's analysis is completely irrelevant to my proposal. It is at least possible that a suitable transformation of Haldane's analysis *would* undercut my proposal. Let us again assume a world at which everyone who is human is divine and vice versa. As we know already, "Christ qua human is changeable" is, on my proposal, to be interpreted as

Christ is human & Christ is changeable & Christ's being human makes it be the case that Christ is changeable,

and this, with suitable universalization, looks like the following:

Christ is human & Christ is changeable & (x) (x is human  $\rightarrow$ [x's being human makes it be the case that x is changeable]). My proposal treats the negative proposition "Christ is not changeable qua divine" as

Christ is divine & it is not the case that Christ's being divine makes it be the case that Christ is changeable.

Expressed Haldane-style, with universal quantifiers, this becomes

Christ is divine &  $\sim(x)$  (x is divine  $\rightarrow[x's$  being divine makes it be the case that x is changeable]),

which, at the world under consideration, is equivalent to

Christ is divine &  $\exists x \text{ (x is divine \& ~[x's being divine makes it be the case that x is changeable]).}$ 

But that creates no difficulties, even at a world in which everything that's divine is, in fact, changeable. On the analysis that Haldane had rejected, the denial with wide scope was equivalent to the false JH4 (i.e., the false claim that there exists something human that is not omnipotent). By contrast, however, when the denial with wide scope is interpreted reduplicatively rather than conditionally, it is equivalent not to the false JH4 but rather to the true claim that there exists something divine that is not changeable-because-divine; of course something can fail to be changeable-because-divine while still being changeable. So my proposal is immune to this imagined Haldane-style criticism of the attempt to avoid contradiction by appeal to scope ambiguities.<sup>12</sup>

#### But is it really classical Christology?

I have presented a picture according to which we should affirm, for instance, that Christ is unchangeable qua divine, but also according to which we should deny that he is unchangeable *tout court*. Is this proposal consistent with classical Christology? Let me grant right away that there are formulations in the tradition that seem to go against it. For example, in his third letter to Nestorius, included in the proceedings of the Council of Ephesus, Cyril of Alexandria says that the Word of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> My commentary here on Haldane is similar to the points made by Cross (2002,195n57), although where Cross appears to fault Haldane for giving an inadequate analysis of the reduplicative qua, it seems to me that Haldane isn't actually discussing the reduplicative qua at all, but simply some other interpretation of qua language—the "conditional qua," one might call it.

God is "unalterable and absolutely unchangeable."<sup>13</sup> When Cyril makes this remark, he is trying to make clear that he does not mean that the incarnation involves any modification to divinity. Nonetheless, the quoted words do not themselves explicitly include any qualification akin to "qua divine."

Does that mean that this statement—a statement that is, by adoption so to speak, a conciliar statement—requires us to hold not (only) that Christ is unchangeable qua divine, but (also) that he is unchangeable tout court? If the statement had been made, for example, as part of a dispute over whether it was enough to say "Christ is unchangeable qua divine" or whether instead the unqualified "Christ is unchangeable" was required as well, then it would pretty clearly rule out the theory I am proposing. But that Cyrillian formula, and others like it that one could find, were not produced with that sort of controversy in mind. Given the contexts in which such statements were put forward, there is no reason to think that they are intended to express claims that are "unqualified" in the sense at issue in this paper. Such statements are better understood to be elliptical, with the relevant qua-phrase intended but left unsaid,<sup>14</sup> or else to be—with respect to the point at issue in this paper—ambiguous. In the absence of some powerful argument that the deeper meanings of those texts do point to the view that Christ is unqualifiedly unchangeable, then. I conclude that classical Christology does not rule out my proposal.

## Conclusion

I have argued that reduplicative statements, when interpreted correctly, do not lead to contradiction in Christology. This means that they can be used to avoid contradiction for a certain range of cases. However, I have not argued that this sort of reduplicative strategy should be used for every worry that one might have about consistency in Christology. For example, it is worth noting that the issues my strategy addresses arise when one has accepted, at least arguendo, the idea that Christ is both divine and human, but someone might think that it is inconsistent with the divine nature for a divine person to become human. That sort of question would have to be handled in a different way.

We should not assume that there is one fix-all solution to apparent contradictions in Christology.

Someone who agreed that the reduplication strategy can be used as outlined here to solve certain Christological problems might still wonder whether this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Third Letter to Nestorius, trans. Anthony Meredith, as found in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumencial Councils*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990), p. 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> For the idea that qualifications can be left unstated in authoritative texts, see for example Augustine, *De Trinitate* I, chaps. 11-13. See also John of Damascus, *On the Orthodox Faith* III, c. 4, and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 16, art. 4 (citing Augustine).

strategy is the best one to use for those problems. That much larger question will have to be taken up on another occasion.<sup>15</sup>

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