Studia Humana
Volume 2:3 (2013), pp. 19—30

On Contradiction in Orthodox Philosophy

Ni la contradiction n'est marquee de fausseté,
ni l'incontradiction n'est marquee de vérité.
Blaise Pascal (Penseés, p. 384)

Michael Craig Rhodes

North Park University, USA

e-mail:amcrodos@yahoo.com

Abstract:
Orthodoxy sometimes appears to lack a respectable form of logical reasoning. This is because objective mystery is so central, and because contradiction is, therefore, a methodological necessity. However, the belief system also rejects explosion. Thus, on the one hand, the law of non-contradiction is violated, and, on the other hand, it is respected. In terms of thinking about Orthodox thinking, this is the fundamental issue, namely that logical reasoning in Orthodoxy is paraconsistent. That is what we examine in this essay.

This paper was first published in the volume
Schumann A. (ed), *Logic in Orthodox Christian Thinking.* Ontos Verlag, 2013, pp. 82-103.

As with other religious logical systems,[1] we find that in Orthodox Christian thought there are instances of tolerated inconsistencies. Moreover, the principle that anything follows from a contradiction, ex contradictione quodlibet (henceforth ECQ), is not embraced. To embrace ECQ is to maintain that given any proposition of the form p ~p, which, by the inference rule of simplification, means that p is a premise and ~p is a premise, then any q may be inferred by the addition rule such that p v q; and this inferential process can continue ad infinitum, thus implying the truth of any and all sentences. That is, {A, ~A} |= B (the so called inference of explosion), where B is the variable for quodlibet, is taken as a valid consequence relation. For writers in the Orthodox tradition, failure to maintain ECQ is implicit. This is largely because Orthodox tradition stretches back some 2,000 years, whereas ECQ has become widely embraced only in about the past 150 years. Nevertheless, whether or not one is aware of the apparent problematic logical implications, the Orthodox belief system includes two basic contradictions; and insofar as they are affirmed in isolation (that is, insofar as these but not all inconsistencies are tolerated), then ECQ is tacitly invalidated. Long before the development of modern logics, and the widespread endorsement of ECQ, a basic assumption is present and pervasive in Orthodox thought—namely that Christian belief is coherent even if it is not consistent. That assumption led thinkers like Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers to reject inferences in keeping with the law of non-contradiction (henceforth LNC)—but not necessarily the LNC itself—and to promote a (tacit) paraconsistent inferential methodology. This means that Orthodox Logic is therefore paraconsistent. For the Orthodox theories of God and Jesus Christ are inconsistent but not incoherent and explosive.

The two contradictions endemic to Orthodox thought are that God is both one and three and that Jesus is both (fully) God and (fully) man. From the perspective of non-paraconsistent logics,

these propositions are in fact contradictory; so they entail the truth of any and all sentences. These propositions are either contradictory and, thus, untrue, or they are contradictory, yet true. The logic of Orthodox thought, of course, affirms the latter. Our examination of this is twofold. First, we define the term contradiction, and briefly explicate the LNC. Secondly, we turn to Pavel Florensky (1882–1937), who was the first Orthodox philosopher to understand both the form of logical reasoning endemic to Orthodox thought as well as its paraconsistent implications.

It has been maintained by Ayda Ignez Arruda, and widely held since, that the earliest development of paraconsistent logics occurred in Russia in or around 1910 by Nikolai Alexandrovich Vasiliev (1880–1940).[2] A similar trend was also taking shape in the work of Jan Łukasiewicz (1878–1956) in Poland, see [22], [23]. However, as already indicated, paraconsistent logic has long been an implicit feature of Orthodox thought. Several writers even deny the LNC (though most hold, at least implicitly, to both LNC and Orthodox dogma without recognizing that such a position is itself inconsistent), yet it is not until Florensky that we have an attempt to justify allowance of inconsistency in Orthodox thought. Thus, in terms of making explicit what had long been implicit in Orthodox thought, Florensky has played a role in the development of paraconsistent logics. His ability to do so more extensively was almost undoubtedly inhibited by the Revolution. But that he has not been seen to have a role in developing paraconsistent logic is understandable for at least two reasons. First, like the vast majority of his very large bibliography, his magnum opus has been accessible to scholars (until quite recently) only in Russian. Secondly, his forays into paraconsistent logic come to us, in that text, not as a treatise on logic, but rather as part of a work that, as he puts it, is 'for Catechumens' [13], p. 6 (hereinafter PGT). It was first published in Moscow in 1914 as Столп и Утверждение Истины: Опыт Православной Теодицеи в Двенадцати Письмах. That publication date puts his ideas in the developmental stages of paraconsistent logic. It is possible, of course, that Florensky had read or been otherwise exposed to the ideas of Vasiliev. And since he studied mathematics at Moscow University with Nikolai Vasilievich Bugaev (1837–1903), Sergei Nikolaevich Trubetskoy (1862–1905) and Leo Mikhailovich Lopatin (1855–1920), it is perhaps even probable that there may have been some influence. But from the evidence available in the PGT, we are compelled by charity to conclude that there was no such influence. Of course, it may be the case that there was, but that Florensky just did not cite Vasiliev when he should have. That is indeed possible. But Florensky is quite fastidious in citing his sources. So much so that the notes in the PGT run some 160 pages in what appears to be 9 pt font (not to mention his 'Clarification and Proof' section, roughly 75 pages). Thus, it is more improbable than probable, in our view, that Florensky was influenced in any way by Vasiliev. It is more likely that he was influenced by the neo-Kantian thought of Alexander Ivanovich Vvedensky (1856–1925) and Ivan Ivanovich Lapshin (1870–1952), both of whom speak of violating the law of non-contradiction and were less neglected than Vasiliev.[3] But there is no indication in the PGT of that either. Thus, Florensky's ideas on paraconsistency are almost certainly original. That he appears to have been among the first to attempt to develop a paraconsistent logic is important as much for logic as for Orthodox thought. Before saying more about Florensky, though, we must frame the discussion a bit.

What we need initially is an answer to the question 'What is a Contradiction?' That can only be had with a definition of the term. The English term itself derives from the Latin verb contradictio (contradicere), 'I speak against' ('to speak against'). But the initial definition of 'contradiction' comes to us from Aristotle. In the Greek the term Aristotle used was antiphasis. That term is composed of two Greek words. The term anti is a preposition. In this use, it means 'against.' The second term, phasis, comes from the verb phēmi, which means 'to say, speak or tell.' It connotes the act of expressing opinion, thought or belief, and, thus, of having an opinion, thought or belief. The term phasis itself means a 'saying, speech, sentence, affirmation or assertion.' A fair etymological definition of the term antiphasis, then, is that it means a 'saying, speech, sentence, affirmation or assertion against.' So Latin and Greek provide the same basic meaning. But both leave us with the

question against what? And we shall answer that in due course. For now, however, we need to look at Aristotle's own definition of the term.

Actually, we should probably say definitions. For, in addition to defining it a time or two in the Organon (Cat. 10.13b, 28ff.; de Int. 6.28–37; 7.17b, 38–18a, 7), Aristotle also defines antiphasis twice in the Metaphysics (cf. 1005b, 13–22 and 1011b, 13–14[4]). We turn first to the definition given in de Interpretatione. For, in addition to incorporating the term antiphasis, which does not appear in the Categories passages, the definition we get in de Interpretation uses termini technici, which become important for Orthodox thought. (This is very explicit, as we shall see below, in John of Damascus.) Those terms do appear in Categories. And although they themselves have not been equally as influential in logic or philosophy, especially Analytic thought (we do see some use in Continental philosophy though, notably, e.g., in Jean-Luc Marion's L'idole et la distance [Paris: Editions Bernard Grasset, 1977][5]), their respective concepts have been. But what terms do we have in mind? First, Aristotle speaks of a true statement, an affirmation, as kataphasis apophansis, a 'positive proposition.' Second, he speaks of a false statement, a denial, as an apophasis apophansis, a 'negative proposition.' The two terms kataphasis and apophasis, then, are what we have in mind. In most cases, Aristotle is not the direct source of those terms for Orthodox thought. For a philosopher such as Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500), this bit of Aristotelian logic comes from late ancient Neoplatonic thought, particularly Proclus' Elements of Theology, where he gets much of his Aristotelian influence; but most Eastern patristic writers rely on the Isagoge for their knowledge of Aristotle's logic. These words bear a similarity to antiphasis. Both are composed of a preposition plus phasis. The two prepositions in question are kata and apo. The first of these, in this context, takes the meaning of 'according to' or 'in agreement with.' Thus, etymologically kataphasis probably means something like 'according to/in agreement with saying, speech, sentence, affirmation or assertion.' That's a bit wooden. A better rendering is 'according to/in agreement with expression.' The second preposition, apo, implies the idea of being 'away from,' 'at a distance from' or 'far from.' The term apophasis, from an etymological perspective, denotes the idea of being 'away from/at a distance from/far from expression.' These terms distinguish between two types of propositions: kataphatic and apophatic propositions. Aristotle affirms that pasē kataphasei estin apophasis antikeimenē kai pasē apophasei kataphasi, 'every kataphasis has an opposite apophasis, and similarly every apophasis an opposite kataphasis' (de Int. 6, 33–5[6]). This is what he calls an antiphasis. As (existential and universal) examples, he gives 'Socrates is white' (p) and 'Socrates is not white' (~p), and 'every man is white' and 'not every man is white' (de Int. 7.18a, 1–2). In Categories, Aristotle argues that this distinction (as opposed to contraries, correlatives, positives and privatives) always involves truth and falsity. Thus, it is either the case, for example, that 'Socrates is ill' or that 'Socrates is not ill' (Cat. 10.13b, 28ff). Even in theory, it cannot be the case that 'Socrates is both ill and not ill.' John of Damascus (c. 650–ante 754[7]) picks up on this definition in his Philosophical Chapters[8] (ch. 63). His examples of kataphatic propositions are 'Socrates is wise' and 'Socrates walks.' For apophatic propositions, he gives 'so-and-so is not wise' and 'so-and-so does not walk' (cf. [7], p. 97; for the Greek I have used PG 94). A contradiction, or antiphasis (John also wrote in Greek), then, is understood in terms of opposition between kataphatic and apophatic propositions. Likewise, John follows Aristotle (via Ammonius in Cat.) on kataphasis and apophasis. He defines kataphasis as 'the stating of what belongs to something, as, for example, 'he is noble.'' And apophasis is 'the stating of what does not belong to something, as, for example, 'he is not noble' [7, p. 88]. Thus, for John, antiphasis is 'the apophasis opposed to the kataphasis and the kataphasis opposed to the apophasis' (cf PG 94:653).

Formal definitions do not strictly follow the Aristotelian (and thus Damascenian) conception of antiphasis as the opposition of kataphasis and apophasis; but they are nevertheless Aristotelian. The terminology of kataphasis and apophasis, for example, is not maintained, and we see an emphasis on logical impossibility as the criterion for truth and falsity. For example, in his Symbolic Logic (fifth edition), Irving M. Copi gives the following sentential definition:

> One statement is said to contradict, or be a contradiction of, another statement when it is logically impossible for them both to be true… A statement form that has only false substitution instances is said to be contradictory or a contradiction, and the same terms are applied to its substitution instances. The statement form p ~p is proved a contradiction by the fact that in its truth table only **F**'s occur in the column that it heads (1979 [1954], p. 28; author's emphases).

Such a statement form may have any number of different substitution instances, each of which is equally logically impossible and (thus) contradictory. But what will be definitive has already been noted by Aristotle. Opposing predicates cannot be ascribed to the same subject at the same time and in the same respect (cf. Cat. 10.13b, 33–5). Thus, it is also the case that a statement of the form ((x)(Φx ⊃ Ψx) (∃x)(Φx ~Ψx)) or ((x)(Φx ⊃ ~Ψx) (∃x)(Φx Ψx)), for example, is a contradiction. This kind of contradiction is often portrayed in logic texts[9] as a diagram composed of four statements (two contraries, two subcontraries and two contradictions), which is known as the square of opposition. It is the proverbial AO (universal affirmation [all S are P] plus particular negation [Some S are not P]) and EI (universal negation [No S are P] plus particular affirmation [Some S are P]) diagonal pairs that are contradictory. Such contradictions are defined in terms of logical entailment, when both p and q entail the other's negation. A statement p logically entails the negation of q (i.e. ~q), and q logically entails the negation of p (~p). That is, ((p ⊃ ~q) (q ⊃ ~p)). Thus, both 'all men are mortal' (p) entails 'some men are not mortal' (q) is false (~q), and vice versa.[10]

So what is contradiction a speaking against? Several answers are possible. It is speaking against in the sense of the opposition of kataphasis and apophasis, and vice versa, or a speaking against a subject predicate relation, or a propositional truth, or a speaking against speaking, etc. Or, as our discussion has been anticipating, it is a speaking against the law of non-contradiction (LNC). A contradiction is a speech act that instantiates LNC violation. We must turn back to Aristotle for an explanation of what we mean by LNC. He presents three versions of it in Met. These appear at 4.3.1005b, 19–20, 4.3.1005b, 24 (cf. 29–30), and 4.6.1011b, 13–20. In the latter of these sections, he speaks of the LNC as 'the most indisputable of all beliefs'. And the formulation runs as follows: 'contradictory statements are not at the same time true.' But the LNC in Aristotle is primarily a principle of being. In Met. 3, for example, he holds that 'a thing cannot at the same time be and not be' (2.2, 29–30; cf. 4.1005b, 23–26 and 11.1061b.5ff). Thus, we get contemporary formulations such as 'nothing in reality can correspond to a logical contradiction.' This is more basic to Aristotle's notion of the LNC. For it is because a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time that kataphatic and apophatic propositions, which have the same subject and predicate, cannot both be true. Thus, in propositional calculus, ~(p ~p).

Not every Ancient Greek philosopher bought the notion of LNC. Heraclitus, for example, seems to have promoted just the opposite. His was a position with which Aristotle was not sympathetic. He expresses disagreement with Heraclitus' tolerance of contradiction in Topics (8.5, 159b, 31–3), Physics (1.2.185b, 19–25), Metaphysics (4.3.1005b, 23–4; 4.7.1012a, 24–5; 11.5.1062a, 32–4). Beginning with the latter text, he says (see Met. 4.3.1005b, 23–4) that 'it is impossible for anyone to believe the same thing to be and not to be, as some think Heraclitus says.' And in 4.7.1012a, 24–5 he speaks of 'the doctrine of Heraclitus,' which is, in his view, 'that all things are and are not.' And that, Aristotle says, 'eoike…hapanta alēthē poiein,' 'seems…to make everything true.' Turning now to the Phys. 1.2.185b, 19–25, he argues that 'if all things are one in the sense of having the same definition, like 'raiment' and 'dress,' then it turns out that they are maintaining the Heraclitean doctrine, for it will be the same thing 'to be good' and 'to be bad, and 'to be good' and 'to be not good,' and so the same thing will be 'good' and 'not good,' and man and horse; in fact, their view will be not that all things are one, but that they are nothing; and that 'to be of such-and-such a quality' is the same as 'to be of such-and-such a size.' Heraclitus' position is similarly referenced in Top. 8.5, 159b, 31–3. Aristotle conjectures in Met. 11.5.1062a, 32–4 that

Heraclitus might have been argued out of his delusion if someone had questioned him and 'forced him to confess that opposite statements can never be true of the same subjects.' Jonathan Barnes [5] has maintained that

> Heraclitus' central contention, the Unity thesis, is inconsistent; it flagrantly violates the Law of Contradiction; hence it is false, necessarily false, and false in a trivial and tedious fashion (p. 60).[11]

This seems to be consistent with, though somewhat more strongly worded than, Aristotle's own view of Heraclitus. G. S. Kirk has suggested that Aristotle 'seems entirely to misrepresent the opposite doctrine, or at any rate to subject it to a kind of criticism which is really irrelevant to it.' For, in Kirk's view, Heraclitus' concept of 'the same' is not synonymous with 'identical' ([20], p. 19). This may or may not be the case, although it is likely that Heraclitus had a more nuanced view of the matter. But it is not a significant issue as regards the LNC, as Laurence R. Horn has suggested it is in his 'Contradiction' in SEP [30], because whether Aristotle correctly regards Heraclitus on this in particular, he is nevertheless justified in viewing him as one who does not share an understanding of contradiction that is consistent with his own. For whether Heraclitus maintains that p = ~p, or had in mind some fine distinction that is not explicit in his fragments, he seems certainly to have maintained, as Hegel later thought, that p ~p. And, for Aristotle, that position is the real problem with Heraclitus. For if the most fundamental alternatives are motion and immobility, rather than one and many, as regards kataphasis and apophasis, and if it is the case that, as Plato maintains in Theatetus, 'if all things are in motion, every answer to any question whatsoever is equally correct' (183a[12])—with which Aristotle seems to agree when he says 'if all things are in motion, nothing will be true; everything will be false. But it has been shown (Met. 4.7.1012a, 24–5?) that this is impossible'—, then contradiction is, for Aristotle, an instance of such lack of permanence, and, as he sees it, the problem with allowing inconsistency of the form p ~p, then, is that, as he puts it in Met. 4.7.1012a, 24–5, it 'seems… to make everything true.' And that is perhaps the earliest expression of something like what comes to be known as the ECQ. It would be saying too much to affirm that this is in fact a position that Aristotle held; for it is presented in Met. 4 as something that eoike, or seems, to be the case. He may have suspected that tolerance of (some) contradiction would be explosive; but he did not clearly endorse that view.

The LNC is important for Aristotle's logic, but it does not necessitate adherence to ECQ. However, commitment to both runs deep in analytic philosophy. William Stanley Jevons' comment in his Elementary Lessons in Logic (London: Macmillan and Co., 1957 [1870]) expresses a somewhat weaker perspective than what becomes generally accepted in analytic philosophy. What he says is, in fact, quite in accord with Aristotle. As he sees it,

> It is the very nature of existence that a thing cannot be otherwise than it is; and it may be safely said that all fallacy and error arise from unwittingly reasoning in a way inconsistent with this law. All statements or inferences taken which imply a combination of contradictory qualities must be taken as impossible and false, and the breaking of this law is the mark of their being false (118; italics mine).

But it is this sort of perspective that is nevertheless the source of the modern ECQ notion. By the time of Russell and Frege, ECQ becomes a philosophical dogma for analytic thought, and, thus, the source for the kind of inconsistency intolerance of the form indicated by Barnes above. Many such examples could be cited. One figure who has undoubtedly played a leading role in promoting it is W. V. Quine. Speaking to the suggestion that we 'reject the law of non-contradiction and so accept an occasional sentence and its negation both as true,' Quine says '[m]y view of this dialogue is that neither party knows what he is talking about. They think they are talking about negation, '~', 'not;' but surely the notation ceased to be recognizable as a negation when they took to regarding some conjunctions of the form p ~p as true, and stopped regarding such sentences as implying all others. Here, evidently, is the deviant logician's predicament: when he tries to deny the doctrine he only changes the subject' (in 'Deviant Logics' chapter 6 of his Philosophy of Logic [Prentice Hall: 1970], p. 81). For Quine, and many others, intolerance of inconsistency, especially contradiction, is

a cardinal philosophical dogma. That, as we noted above, is derived in large part from Aristotle's own view of the LNC.

The two Orthodox beliefs mentioned above are instances of contradiction; thus, they violate the LNC. But there are two types of contradiction amongst writers in the Orthodox tradition. Most writers have held these beliefs in such a way that inconsistent predicates are affirmed of the same subject. Others, most importantly Pseudo-Dionysius, both affirm and deny inconsistent predicates with regard to the same subject. The first type of contradiction takes the form p ~p, where the contention is that this proposition is true. The other type is of the form ((p ~p) (~p ~~p)). Thus, Pseudo-Dionysius maintains that God is one and three and denies that God is one and three. This Pseudo-Dionysian form, though enormously (albeit at times confusingly) influential is not the conciliar, and, thus, technically Orthodox position. That is the simpler proposition that God is both one and three. In the terminology of the councils (i.e. Nicea 325 and Constantinople 381) Father, Son and Holy Spirit are homoousios, which is taken to mean that God is mia ousia kai treis hypostaseis, one essence and three persons (as later formalized at Constantinople in 553). This is the form the contradiction takes in the PGT. In 'Letter Six: Contradiction' (pp. 106–23), we find Florensky assuming the paraconsistent logic of Orthodox thought, but also trying to justify it. For if the LNC is true in the sense that isolated contradictions are never to be tolerated, then the Orthodox theory of God is false; for the logic supporting it would be faulty.

We have just said that it is a paraconsistent logic that produces the Orthodox theory of God. That may not be obvious. What would that kind of logic look like in this situation? The logic behind the Orthodox theory may be summarized as follows. First of all, it is a theory of simultaneous unity and distinction in God, namely the contention that God is both one and three. According to that theory, God is one essence in three persons. In earliest Christian thought, this took the form of triadic 'subordinationism.' The most notorious form of that view was Irenaeus of Lyons' 'two hands' theory. During the Arian crisis of the fourth century, Athanasius of Alexandria and the Cappadocian Fathers successfully argued for a triadic view that included the concept of co-equality. However, experience of divine behavior (especially an instance such as the baptism of Christ [theophany], e.g.), which had formed an integral part of its Trinitarian theory, indicated that there is either one God or three gods. Hence, Orthodox theory was not consistent with all of its experience. So in terms of the formulation of its theory of God not everything about experience was inferred. And viable options—monarchianism, arianism, pneumatomachianism (or 'macedonianism'), tritheism,[13] e.g.—any one of which would have been a sensible inference according to the LNC, were rejected. Therefore, the inferential methodology used was paraconsistent. Florensky formally justifies this sort of paraconsistency in rejecting the reductio. And in doing so, he formalizes the dialtheism of Orthodox thought. In writing the PGT, Florensky was influenced by Jevons (and many others). This is explicit in the text of 'On the Methodology of the Historical Critique' (PGT, pp. 384–89), where Jevons is twice (PGT, p. 384, 388) quoted and mentioned by name. Much earlier in the PGT, in 'Letter Six: Contradiction' (loc. cit.), the reader is referred to Jevons (among several other logicians—Poretsky, Peano, Schröder, Russell, Couturat, etc.) in two notes. But the LNC is not a logical dogma for him, as it is for Jevons and others. Rather tolerance of inconsistency means, very explicitly, tolerance of противоречие (protēvoryechēye) or антиномия (antēnomēya), 'contradiction' or 'antinomy.'[14] What he has in mind in particular is propositions of the form p ~p, which is what he speaks of as the antēnomēya P (cf. PGT, 112–3). He justifies embracing (at least some) contradictions on his rejection of the reductio. His analysis of the reductio shows that (what we now call) classical logic is explosive. For, according to his analysis, p ~p is derivable using the reductio form and a few basic replacement rules. He calls p · ~p 'the antinomy P.' Thus, P = (p ~p) = V, where 'P' is a proposition with two contradictory terms (or a class whose members mutually exclude one another), and V is the truth truth-operator. An antinomic proposition, he says, 'contains thesis and antithesis, so that it is inaccessible to any objection... [and] above the plane of rationality' (PGT, 113). Truth is antinomic for him. But that is not the same as saying that any contradiction is true. He is very explicit that the antinomy P is synonymous with contradiction. That term and the

meaning we can now associate with it, gives us the fullest sense of what he means by 'antinomy,' namely speaking against. And that is essentially how we would understand it here were we to interpret it in a strictly etymological manner. For in that sense, antinomy means 'against (the) law' (from anti and nomos). Lexically, we find 'conflict of laws' and 'contradiction between laws' (LSJ). In a philosophical context, it is natural to understand 'law' in terms of the 'laws of thought,' specifically the LNC.

Some writers have been hesitant to affirm this. In his Pavel Florensky: A Metaphysics of Love, for example, Robert Slesinski says that 'the requirements of conceptual clarity and terminological rigor demand that he be faulted for his poetic license and propensity for literary flourish,' specifically as regards his synonymous use of the terms antinomy and contradiction. For they 'denote different things,' Slesinki asserts, 'and should not be confused.' In his view, "antinomy" would have been the better, more properly nuanced choice, even though it connotes the idea of contradiction' (p. 147). In addition to speaking of it as a contradiction, the OED defines 'antinomy' as a 'paradox.' 'Paradox' comes from para and doxa. The preposition para here (as in the term paraconsistent) takes the meaning 'contrary to' or 'against.' The term doxa from dokeo, most likely means 'expectation.' It is commonly taken to mean 'opinion,' which is not wholly inaccurate. But a paradox is not what it is because of misalignment with opinion per se. It seems, rather, to be a matter of expectation. Something is a paradox (Zeno's Achilles' paradox, e.g. See Phys. 4.9.239b14–29) because it does not (seem) to be consistent with expectation. Indeed, one expects the quicker runner to overtake the slower one. But this meaning for 'antinomy' does not give us a more accurate definition. Since it is rather more epistemological, it may even complicate matters. And, in any case, an antinomy, as we use the term, is not merely something that goes against expectation. The OED gives a rather different meaning for 'paradox'—'a seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement or proposition that may in fact be true.' That is the way the term is commonly used, and it also has the merit of being about speaking rather than thinking. But the only significant nuances here are the qualifications 'seemingly' and 'may in fact be true.' And those are qualifications Florensky is not making. Nor are they consistent with Orthodox dogmas. The term dogma also derives from dokeo. The lexical meaning of import for dogma is that of 'a resolution' or 'decree.' And concerning truth in particular, the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas of Orthodox thought are, thus, reckoned to be true, in spite of the obvious inconsistencies. They are not maintained as paradoxes; nor (therefore) are they held to be antinomies in the sense indicated by the OED. For Florensky, the antinomy P is robust. It is a contradiction. Moreover, as he reads it, the Trinitarian and Christological dogmas are too. But why would he want to assert this? Does that claim not implicate falsity? This seems to be Slesinski's concern. For, speaking of the dogmas as contradictions seems to hyperbolize the indigenous inconsistency. For insofar as 'Christ is God,' then it follows that 'Christ is not a man.' But insofar as 'Christ is a man,' then it follows that 'Christ is not God.' And, similarly, insofar as 'God is one,' then it follows that 'God is not three.' But insofar as 'God is three,' then it follows that 'God is not one.' And, furthermore, insofar as 'All men are mortal' and 'Christ is a man,' then 'Christ is mortal.' But insofar as 'No God is mortal' and 'Christ is God', then 'Christ is not mortal.' And from this it follows both that 'All men are mortal' and 'At least one man is not mortal' and 'No God is mortal' and 'At least one God is mortal.' However, this is not hyperbole; it is clarity. Moreover, the dogmas are of the form P = (p ~p) = V. In other words, P = 'Christ is God' and 'Christ is man;' and P = 'God is one' and 'God is three.' And, P = 'All men are mortal' and 'At least one man is not mortal;' and P = 'No God is mortal' and 'At least one God is mortal.'

In terms of the language of contradiction, however, Florensky tends to favor Kantian and Hegelian terminology rather than the Aristotelian and (later) Orthodox use of kataphasis and apophasis. The antinomy P, as he puts it, is composed of the 'thesis p' and the 'antithesis ~p.' P is true if it cannot be shown that the thesis and antithesis are false. In other words, if it can be shown that thesis p and antithesis ~p are false contraries, then P is not true. If it is a bona fide contradiction, then it is true. He borrows the term 'antinomy' from Kant's use of it in book two,

chapter two of the second division of the first Critique (esp. A427/B455 ff.), crediting him for its 'very late origin.'[15] For the origin of the concept, he turns to Heraclitus. And his reading of Heraclitus is consistent with Aristotle's. He finds him to be a proponent of the opposition of kataphasis and apophasis; but, for him, this means that Heraclitus is a champion of the concept of truth as contradiction, and (as Russell does in his 'Mysticism and Logic') presents several of the fragments of Heraclitus to show this. He also mentions several other figures who, in his view, were proponents of antinomy. This begins what amounts to a general (and sometimes effusive) summary of the history of philosophy and Orthodox thought as it pertains to antinomy. After Heraclitus, he makes brief reference to the Eleatics (Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno, Melissus[16]), Plato and Nicholas of Cusa's coincidentia oppositorum; and then merely names Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Renouvier and the 'pragmatists' (with reference to a previous note [77] on Pascal's wager in which he cites numerous texts of and on pragmatic philosophy). Next he turns to Job as a scriptural example of antinomy. In that paragraph, he also relates the concept of antinomy with the concept of mystery (taina) and the act of silence (molchaniya). He adds that

> The mysteries of religion are not secrets that one must not reveal. They are… inexpressible, unutterable, indescribable experiences, which cannot be put into words except in the form of contradictions… (PGT, p.117).

And so the next important proponent of antinomy he mentions is Orthodox dogma, which he contrasts with heresy. In his view, whereas dogma is antinomic, heresy chooses sides, either the thesis p or the antithesis ~p. In this way, heresy is rational, but false. Orthodox rationality, however, acquires the truth by means of a kind of rational humility. Earlier in the chapter (cf. PGT, p. 109), he says that o podvige rassudka est' vera, 'the podvig of reason is belief/faith'. The term podvig indicates a bold feat or great deed; it is commonly used in Orthodox thought to designate ascetic and spiritual practices. In his The Path to Salvation: A Manual of Spiritual Transformation,[17] the prominent Russian spiritual writer, Theophan the Recluse, speaks of podvig as consisting of 'self-opposition and self-forcing' (p. 208). Here Florensky uses it because, in his view, antinomy is vne-rassudochnogo, 'extra-rational', (rather than irrational or non-rational). The podvig very, 'podvig of belief/faith', as he also calls it (cf. ibid.), is the method of attaining truth beyond the LNC. In the podvig of which Theophan speaks, one forces oneself to engage in exercises such as fasting and alms giving or confession and communion. Such practices are thought of as spiritual exercises. From Florensky's perspective, belief/faith is the fundamental podvig, the most elemental spiritual exercise. It is a difficult feat, and comes to something along the lines of what Paul has in mind when he speaks of tēn logikēn latreia, 'rational worship,' and of being metamorphousth tē anakainōsei tou noos (ēmōn), 'transformed by the renewing of your mind' (Rm. 12.1, 2).

From Florensky's perspective, and here he is very much in tune with the logic of Orthodox thought, contradictions are eliminated not by disjunctive reasoning but by conjunctive reasoning. Rather than either kataphasis or apophasis being true and the other one being false, Florensky promotes the idea that, concerning the tajny religii, 'mysteries of religion,' the podvig of both-and logic, of believing in spite of opposition, achieves coherence supra-rationally. This is apparently what he finds in the authors he mentions. And it is, as indicated in the brief comments about Plato, a kind of cel'nogo rassudka, which Jakim renders as 'integral rationality' (PGT, p. 116).[18] The term airesis, from which we get the English 'heresy' (and the Russian eres'), has the lexical meanings of 'conquering,' 'taking for oneself' and 'choosing;' (it can, of course, also designate a 'sect'). These meanings have one main thing in common. For conquering, taking and choosing each has to do with something, something that is part of other things. If there is something called 'integral rationality,' then, in Florensky's mind, there is also a heretical rationality, a form of reasoning that opts for one part or another, either p or ~p. But it is necessary to keep in mind, in spite of fulsome comments such as 'contradictions are in everything' (PGT, 116), that integral reasoning, since it is tolerant of inconsistency, is not explosive. It may be the case that contradiction is the hallmark of truth, but that does not mean that just any contradiction turns out to be true. Spinoza's pantheism is an example.

Thus, there are no grounds for showing that Florensky is as unavoidably committed to the truth of the contradiction 'Pavel is his own daddy,' for example, as to something like 'God is both one and three.' Integral reasoning does not imply the truth of just any contradiction. For some contradictions are intuitively intolerable. They are, we might say, prima facie false. Claiming that a man is his own daddy immediately smacks of incomprehensibility and error. And other contradictions are equally erroneous, though perhaps not as obvious. Consider, for example, 'The universe is both geocentric and heliocentric' and 'One of the five solids is a one-dimensional figure known as the round-square or dodecahedron.' Whereas 'Pavel is his own daddy' is intuitively intolerable, these latter two seem to require some pre-existent knowledge. But they are just as false. Provided we have a fair understanding of astronomy and geometry, we can quickly determine that. These two types of contradictions are absurd and falsifiable. A third category consists of counter-intuitive claims—such as the Liar (or Epimenides) Paradox, the Chalcedonian definition or the Hilbert Hotel Paradox (where it is true that the hotel is both full and has vacancies)—that seem to be true. If such claims are accepted as being inconsistent but true, then they are contradictory in a manner quite distinct from the above two types of contradictions. That difference consists in the uncovering of mystery. Intolerable contradictions (absurd and falsifiable claims) are not able to do that. It is this sort of tolerable contradiction—integral instances of LNC violation—that interests Florensky. By way of concluding the chapter we have been discussing, he lists eleven of them. Each concerns Orthodox belief and practice. The top two are the ones we have already mentioned, namely the Orthodox doctrines of God and Jesus Christ. The others we do not need to rehearse here. We must only underscore that the list is composed of contradictions that are relevant to Orthodox belief and practice. The first two are the core of Orthodox thought. There is a unique feature to these contradictions, which is especially explicit in these first two examples. That feature concerns an analytical criterion of integral contradiction, which we may call the principle of simultaneous union and distinction. For that gives a more refined sense of what sort of mystery is the subject of accepted instances of inconsistency in Orthodox thought.

A true contradiction is a mystery. This is the difference between false and true contradictions. The distinct characteristic of mystery is the difficulty one experiences in trying to understand and explain it either as true or false. A false contradiction, however, can be either known or shown to be so quite easily and conclusively. No mitigating factors remain. The claim 'Pavel is his own daddy' is not difficult to understand or explain; we understand (and could explain) that it is erroneous. The truth-value of something like 'God is both one and three' is similarly determinable in that it is not demonstrably false. Why? To answer this, we must introduce a distinction. For in Orthodox thought metaphysics is not just a matter of being per se, as is the proposition about Pavel; it is rather about two classes of being. On the one hand, there is created being; and, on the other, there is uncreated being. In general, in Orthodox thought the LNC applies to created being, but not to uncreated being. However, there are indications in the thought of the Eastern Fathers that it is not applicable in created being. One obvious example, similar in form to 'married bachelor,' is the Orthodox belief in Mary as Virgin Mother; the most evident and universally acknowledged instance where it is not wholly applicable, though, is in the incarnation. Back to the main point, though, the claim 'God is both one and three' is not absurd or demonstrably false because the subject, according to Orthodox thought, is uncreated.

So, what is the inference mechanism that allows affirmation of inconsistency in isolation? Florensky gestures toward mystery. Not just any mystery though. The mystery Florensky sees as distinguishing a true contradiction from its false cousins induces silence; it gets one to the point of being speechless. Not just speechless. Lack of speech is understood in terms of prayer and worship, and in terms of ineffability. Moreover, that sort of mystery must be akin to hope. But again, Florensky has a particular kind of hope in mind. The only hope that matters is his concern. If inconsistency is to be tolerated in isolation, then it must provide hope in the face of death. The source of that hope must be love that is victorious over the enemy of being: death. Thus, measuring

mystery in Orthodox thought requires not just critical evaluation of the logic of propositions; but also, and most essentially, it requires love.

References

1. Arruda, A. I., 1977, 'On the Imaginary Logic of N. A. Vasil'év' [in:] Arruda, A. I., da Costa, Newton C. A., and Chuaqui, R. (eds.), Non-Classical Logic, Model Theory and Computability: Proceedings the Third Latin-American Symposium on Mathematical Logic, Campinas, Brazil, July 11–17, 1976, Amsterdam: North Holland, pp. 3–24.
2. Arruda, A. I., 1984, 'N. A. Vasil'év: A Forerunner of Paraconsistent Logic' Philosophia Naturalis XXI, pp. 472–91.
3. Arruda, A. I., 1989, 'Aspects of the Historical Development of Paraconsistent Logic' [in:] Graham Priest, R. Routley and J. Norman (eds.), Paraconsistent Logic: Essays on the Inconsistent, München: Philosophia Verlag, pp. 99–130.
4. Barnes, Jonathan, 1969, 'The Law of Contradiction' Philosophical Quarterly, 19:302–309.
5. Barnes, Jonathan, 1979, The Presocratic Philosophers. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 60–1.
6. Bergmann, Merrie, Moor, James, and Nelson, Jack, 1990 [1980], The Logic Book. New York: McGraw Hill, Inc.
7. Chase Jr., Frederic H., trans., 1999 [1958], The Fathers of the Church (Vol. 37): Saint John of Damascus Writings. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America.
8. Cook, H. P., and Trednnick, Hugh, eds. and trans., 2002 [1938], Aristotle: Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics. Harvard University Press.
9. Döpp, Siegmar, and Geerlings, Wilhel, eds., 2000 [1998], Dictionary of Early Christian Literature [Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur]. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, pp. 338–9.
10. Edie, James M., Scanlan, James P., and Zeldin, Mary-Barbara, eds., with collaboration of George L. Kline, 1984 [1965], Russian Philosophy vol. 3, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.
11. Florensky, Pavel, 1909, 'Kosmologicheskie antinomii Immanuila Kanta' Bogoslovnii vestnik 4, pp. 597–625.
12. Florensky, Pavel, 1986, 'Antinomija Jazyka' [Antinomy of Language] translated by N. K. Bonetskaia, Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae 32, pp. 117–63.
13. Florensky, Pavel, 1997, The Pillar and Ground of Truth: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy in Twelve Letters, Boris Jakim, trans., with an introduction by Richard F. Gustafson. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
14. Florensky, Pavel, 1998, The Path to Salvation: A Manual of Spiritual Transformation, translated by Fr. Seraphim Rose and the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood. Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood.
15. Fowler, Harold North, 1961 [1921], Plato: Theatetus and Sophist, vol. 7. Harvard University Press.
16. Geach, Peter, 1980 [1972], Logic Matters. Berkeley: University of California Press.
17. Govier, Trudy, 1992 [1991], A Practical Study of Arguments. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
18. Khomyakov, Alexei, Samarin, Yu. F., eds., 1900, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Alekseya Stepanivich Khomyakova, 8 vols. Moscow.
19. Kireevsky, Ivan, 1856, 'O neobhodimosti i vozmozhnosti novyh nachal dlja filosofii' [On the Necessity and Possibility of New Principles for Philosophy] Russkaya Beseda [Russian Colloquy].
20. Kirk, G. S., 2010 [1954], Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments, A Critical Study with an Introduction, Text and Translation. Cambridge University Press.

21. Lossky, Nicholas Onufriyevich, 1951, History of Russian Philosophy. New York: International University Press, Inc., pp. 163–70.
22. Łukasiewicz, Jan, 1910, O zasadzie sprzeczności u Arystotelesa: Studium Krytyczne [The Principle of Contradiction in Aristotle: A Critical Study], Cracow.
23. Łukasiewicz, Jan, 1971 [1910], 'On the Principle of Contradiction in Aristotle', trans. Vernon Wedin in Review of Metaphysics, XXIV, pp. 485–509 (Łukasiewicz, Jan, 1910, 'Über den Satz des Widerspruchs bei Aristoteles' in Bulletin Internal de l'Académie des Sciences de Cracovie. Classe de histoire de philosophie, pp. 15–38).
24. McKeon, Richard, ed., 1997 [1924], Aristotle's Metaphysics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary, vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
25. McKeon, Richard, ed., 2001 [1941], The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York: Modern Library.
26. Sheen, Louis J., ed., 1973, Readings in Russian Philosophical Thought: Logic and Aesthetics. Mouton.
27. Solovyov, Vladimir, 2008, trans. Valeria Z. Nollan, The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge. Eerdmans.
28. Vasiliev, N., 1993, 'Imaginary (non-Aristotelian) Logic' Axiomathes 4.3, pp. 353–55.
29. Williamson, Colwyn, 1972, 'Squares of Opposition: Comparisons between Syllogistic and Prepositional Logic' in NDJFL 13(4), pp. 497–500.
30. Zalta, Edward N., ed., The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition). The URL for Horn's article = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/contradiction/>.
31. Zenkovsky, Vasili V., 1953, trans. George L. Kline A History of Russian Philosophy, vol. 2. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 678–87 and 687–95.

Notes

1. *Such as the Hindu Upanishadic and Vedantic philosophies and the Mādhyamika philosophy in Buddhism.*
2. See Vasiliev 'Na chastichno suzhdenijah, na treugol'nike protivopolozhnostej, na zakone iskljuchennoj chetverti' (1910) and 'Imaginary (non-Aristotelian) Logic' in [28] (= English summary of 'Mnimaja (non-Aristotelevskaja) Logika'[1912]); [1], [2], [3].
3. On Vvedensky and Lapshin see [21], pp. 163–70; [31], pp. 678–87 and 687–95. Both are also mentioned in [10]. See also [26] for translated sections of Vvedensky's *Logika kak chast' teorii Poznaniia* (*Logic as Part of the Theory of Knowledge*) and Lapshin's *Zakony Myshleniia i Formy Poznaniia* (*The Laws of Thought and Forms of Cognition*).
4. Following [25]. For the Greek of *Metaphysics* I use his [24].
5. Translated by Thomas A. Carlson and published in 2001 by Fordham University Press.
6. This is E. M. Edghill's translation in [25], p. 43. Line numbers here (and for *Cat.*) follow the Greek text in LCL 325 (=[8]).
7. John's dates are difficult to determine exactly, and they often differ considerably. The dates I give here follow Robert Volk's 'John of Damascus' in [9] (1998=*Lexikon der antiken christlichen Literatur*), pp. 338–9.
8. Also known as *Dialectica*.
9. For example: [17], p. 7; and [6], pp. 267–272; Copi (1979 [1954]), pp. 66–8. The original source is *An. Pr.* 1.2, 1–25 and *de Int.* 17b, 17–26.
10. See [29]; and Peter Geach 'Contradictories and Contraries' in chapter two ('Traditional Logic') of [16], p. 70ff.
11. See also his [4].
12. LCL 164 (= [15]).
13. There were proponents of each of these inferences. Respectively: Noetus, Praxeus, Sabellius, Photinus, Marcellus of Ancyra (=modalists), Theodotus, Paul of Samosata (=adoptionists, psilanthropists, dynamic monarchists); Arius, Eustathius of Sabastia (whom Basil speaks of as the leader of the pneumatomacians [*ep.* 263.3]); and tritheism appears a bit later in John (Grammaticus) of Philoponus (and, much later in the west, probably Roscellinus and Gilbert de la Porrēe, who, incidentally, was influenced by Boethius).
14. According to the new (post-revolution) orthography.

15. On what he calls *perezhivanii antinomichnosti*, he refers the reader to his [11]. See also his [12].
16. And perhaps others (cf. *Sophist* 242c–d).
17. Translated by Fr. Seraphim Rose and the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood (Platina: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1998).
18. Precursors to this concept include [18], v. 1, p. 327 (*cel'nosti razuma*); [19]; and [27].