

Transcendent and Immanent Eternity in Anselm's *Monologion*

Eternidade transcendente e imanente na obra *Monologion* de Anselmo

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Abstract: This article argues that the significance of Anselm's contribution to the concept of Eternity as a divine attribute is his well-articulated conception of it as "Maximum", connecting it to the logic of simplicity. The beginning of this article reviews the ongoing debates over Anselm's idea of timeless Eternity, including the work of Pike, Leftow, and Rogers. By contextualizing Anselm's work in light of his textual sources, including Augustine, Boethius, and possibly Hilary of Poitiers, it clarifies the exact ways Anselm moved the conversation of his time forward. It then analyzes the role Eternity plays in the structure of the *Monologion*, suggesting that Anselm saw that the metaphor of "containment" was enfolded within notions of "presence." In order to preserve God's transcendence and immanence, Anselm argues for a kind of presence that does not imply containment based upon ideas of divine Maximum.

Key words: Anselm, Boethius, Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Hilary of Poitiers, Eternity, timeless, time, transcendence, immanence, *Monologion*.

Resumo: Este artigo discute que a importância da contribuição de Anselmo ao conceito de Eternidade como um atributo divino é a sua concepção bem articulada como "Máximo", ligando-a à lógica da simplicidade. O início deste artigo revisa os debates em curso sobre a ideia de Anselmo de eternidade atemporal, incluindo o trabalho de Pike, Leftow e Rogers. Ao contextualizar o trabalho de Anselmo a luz de suas fontes teóricas, inclusive Agostinho, Boécio, e, possivelmente, Hilary de Poitiers, fica clara a forma exata como Anselmo levou adiante a discussão de seu tempo. Em seguida, ele analisa o papel que a Eternidade desempenha na estrutura do *Monologion*, sugerindo que Anselmo percebeu que a metáfora da "contenção" foi envolvida dentro de noções de "presença". A fim de preservar a transcendência e imanência de Deus, Anselmo defende uma espécie de presença que não implica contenção com base em ideias de Máxima divina.

Palavras-chave: Anselmo, Boécio, Agostinho, *De Trinitate*, Hilary de Poitiers, Eternidade, atemporal, tempo, transcendência, imanência, *Monologion*.

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Anselm of Canterbury is probably best known for his ontological argument for the existence of God, but in recent years, he has become increasingly associated with the idea of “timeless” Eternity. In this article, I will be taking up his conception of divine Eternity, which has implications for our understanding of divine transcendence and immanence. Anselm’s work combines Augustinian and Boethian doctrines of God to produce an original notion of divine Eternity centred upon the idea of God as “Maximum.”² I will focus upon what I think is the core of Anselm’s significance as found in the *Monologion* (1936) because I believe the root of his most innovative ideas can be found here. Later works such as the *Proslogion* (1936), *De veritate* (1936), and *De concordia* (1936) develop these ideas and will be referred to as needed.

Highlighting the details of the Augustinian and Boethian context of Anselm’s writings helps to clarify its significance and structure. I divide Anselm’s arguments for God’s Eternity into two kinds: arguments for transcendent Eternity and arguments for immanent Eternity. The former arguments have been all but ignored in most contemporary scholarship. Anselm’s arguments for transcendent Eternity have implications for the doctrine of divine immanence, which entails transcendent Eternity’s *presence* in time without its *containment* by time. In tracing Anselm’s arguments on this theme, I draw attention to his use of the metaphors of *presence* and *containment* to explain transcendent Eternity’s immanence in time. Anselm’s arguments expose underlying assumptions concerning the nature of *presence* that lead to misunderstandings of how an eternal God interacts with his temporal creation.

Many misunderstandings of Anselm’s concept of divine Eternity in the *Monologion* have arisen because of a failure to distinguish his arguments for transcendent Eternity from his arguments for immanent Eternity. The tendency to focus upon categorizing concepts of divine Eternity along the lines of “everlasting” versus “atemporal” may be partly to blame for this misunderstanding. In the last forty years, there has been some disagreement over whether Boethius or Anselm should be viewed as the paradigmatic espouser of the notion of God’s “timeless” or “atemporal” Eternity. The division of theories of God’s Eternity into “everlasting” and “atemporal” views has encouraged scholars to ask the wrong questions about the nature of God’s Eternity. It is more helpful to categorize theories of divine Eternity according to the way they navigate the idea of divine transcendence and immanence rather than whether Eternity exists temporally or atemporally.³

In addition, a particular thinker’s theory about the structure of time is less important than *whether that thinker believes that time is a created thing*. If time is a created thing, a transcendent, creator God can never be “bound” by His own creation. This “binding” of the Creator by his creation is what is meant by the problem of time “containing” Eternity. Until scholars understand that, they will not understand Anselm’s concept of divine Eternity. Since it is more important to

² Maximum is a term occasionally used by Anselm when he is talking about God and quantity. Following the example of Nicholas of Cusa in *De Docta Ignorantia*. I connect it with Anselm’s idea of God as *Summa Natura/Essentia*, that is, God as highest nature because He is beyond a scale of comparison.

³ My theological use of “transcendent” and “immanent” ought not to be confused with certain other traditions of usage that may assert a sharper dichotomy between the immanent and the transcendent – a dichotomy that may map onto a nature/supernature distinction where the divine presence to nature is not emphasized. I am also not using transcendent in the purely medieval sense of “the transcendentals,” i.e. good, truth, unity, etc. In the present context, transcendence and immanence are two ways of viewing the same God: Immanence presupposes transcendence, making it a mystery to be explored. I use Immanence rather than omnipresence in this case because it is a transcendent presence in place and time. Although the underlying metaphor of omnipresence is “presence,” it is typically defined as “being everywhere” whereas what is meant in this case is: being everywhere (place) and always (every time) without losing properties of transcendence such as unity, greatness, etc. It is particularly characteristic of Anselm’s thought that he took the parallels between the categories of place and time to their logical extensions. For an example of this sort of usage, see (Gersh, 1984).

stress time as a created thing necessary for sensible objects, I will not attempt to fully uncover Anselm's "theory of time's structure" – if he had one – except insofar as it is necessary for my arguments concerning Eternity in Anselm. Neither will I try to categorize his theories within the framework of McTaggart's A-series or B-series time or other permutations (McTaggart, 1908, 1909).⁴ As will shortly become clear, the combined work of Leftow and Rogers has shown, at minimum, that such a problem should not be addressed in merely one article, and this is not that article. Instead, I will outline certain basic notions of time, simultaneity, and containment that Anselm would have had available to him from his sources in order to show that these ideas remain key regardless of Anselm's precise theory.

Literature review

In 1970, Nelson Pike published *God and Timelessness*, in which he attempted to understand and find a justification for the traditional doctrine of God as timeless. This book appears to lay some foundation, along with Pike's argument for theological fatalism, for the increasingly influential Open Theism movement. He followed Schleiermacher in choosing the word "timeless" because he understood God's Eternity to have two widespread meanings: (i) God is timeless and (ii) God "has unending duration" (Pike, 1970, p. ix). In this work, he upholds Anselm and Schleiermacher as the two strongest defendants of God's timelessness.⁵ Asserting that neither Anselm nor Schleiermacher adequately defends the doctrine of the Christian God's Eternity, he ends the book with a question which has had broad influence: "what reason is there for thinking that the doctrine of God's timelessness should have a place in a system of Christian theology?" (Pike, 1970, p. 190). After Pike's book, an increasing number of philosophers and theologians have begun to doubt whether it is truly necessary for a perfect God to be timeless.

In 1981, Eleanore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (whom Pike acknowledges for his contributions to *God and Timelessness*) co-authored an influential article entitled "Eternity."⁶ This article attempts to make the Boethian concept of eternity coherent within an analytic philosophical context. Stump and Kretzmann argue that Boethius' model (with some modern interpolations), rather than Anselm's, is the higher ground from which to defend the doctrine of Eternity.⁷ The key to the Boethian definition is how a person understands simultaneity. Simultaneity is dependent upon an eternal or temporal perspective. Time has many "nows," but there is only one "now" in Eternity. Eternity's simultaneity is "simultaneous existence or occurrence at one and the same eternal present" (Stump and Kretzmann, 1981, p. 435). According to relativity theory, the simultaneity of temporal events is dependent

⁴ Oddly, most of the literature continues to ignore McTaggart's main question of whether Time was even real.

⁵ He does deal briefly with Plato, Augustine, Boethius, and Thomas Aquinas, but the emphasis is upon Anselm and Schleiermacher.

⁶ It should be noted from the beginning that Stump and Kretzmann, unlike Pike, initially uphold the term "Eternity." While Pike sees two definitions of Eternity (Timelessness and "limitless duration in time"), they believe the latter definition is more accurately called "Sempiternity": for them, Eternity is Timelessness. Even so, Stump and Kretzmann's article abandons the term "Eternity" in practice, if not in theory. Throughout the majority of the essay, they employ Whitehead's term, "eternality" instead, which is defined as "the condition of having eternity as one's mode of existence" (Stump and Kretzmann, 1981, p. 430). Although the term may have been subconsciously chosen, there are several potential problems with their use of terms, including the problem of whether "eternality" potentially implies a stricter dichotomy of divine substance and divine attributes than has been traditionally upheld.

⁷ They also introduce the idea of God's atemporal Eternity as having a kind of duration (Stump and Kretzmann, 1981, p. 225). Rogers has dealt extensively with this idea in Stump, Kretzmann and Leftow, upholding Anselm's idea of Eternity as present in opposition to it. See "Eternity has no Duration" (Rogers, 1997, p. 151-174).

upon the perspective of the observer. The interaction of the eternal “now” and temporal “nows” presents us with unique problems of simultaneity. Having identified the nature of these problems, Stump and Kretzmann invent a new term for when Eternity and Time intersect: ET-simultaneity. ET-simultaneity accounts for (or at least describes) the way events can happen simultaneously in Eternity but not in Time: Just because God sees my birth and my death in his eternal “now,” that does not imply that my birth and death do not really happen successively in time.

In 1984, David Burrell published a Thomistic response to their work, in which he argues that Anselm was one of the first to explicitly link Eternity with Aseity – the idea that God has no source or origin other than himself (Burrell, 1984). This article has not received the attention it deserves and in many cases contains the kernel of some of my present arguments. Burrell observes that the Stump-Kretzmann “Boethian” model of ET-simultaneity, while laudable in many respects, is really an Anselmian model in that it relies on metaphors of containment and presence. Burrell does not see his reduction of the Stump-Kretzmann model to metaphor as a criticism.⁸ Rather, it is merely a necessary consequence of the transcendent subject matter. Stump and Kretzmann have identified the semantic difficulties of using the term “simultaneous,” but that does not mean that they will be able to adequately explain the process. The very nature of transcendence prevents further precision.

In 1991, Brian Leftow upheld an Anselmian model of Eternity as more plausible than the Boethian model espoused by Stump-Kretzmann. He wrote his book attempting to defend the traditional idea of Eternity against the numerous contemporary challenges.⁹ Contrasting it with Augustinian and Boethian views of time, Leftow uses Anselm’s account to construct what he considers to be a more coherent argument within current metaphysical discussion. Leftow argues for three changes in Anselm’s thought from his writing of the *Monologion* to that of the *Proslogion*. First, Anselm abandons his efforts in the *Monologion* to preserve omnipresence and chooses in the *Proslogion* to “claim that God is in all ways beyond time” (Leftow, 1991, p. 210). Second, he later argues that “to say that God is temporally omnipresent makes it sound as if creation is a receptacle that contains and so transcends its creator” (Leftow, 1991, p. 210). Third, in the *Proslogion*, Anselm introduces a new argument that “eternity literally contains time” (Leftow, 1991, p. 211). He calls this “reverse-containment theory.” Leftow believes that Anselm most fully develops this notion of eternity’s containment of time in *De concordia*. He follows Delmas Lewis’ interpretation of the following Anselmian quotation: “in eternity there is only a present, which is not a temporal present like ours, but an eternal present in which all of time is contained. As the present time contains every place and the things which are in any place, so the eternal present contains at once the whole of time and whatever exists at any time” (Leftow, 1991, p. 212). Leftow concludes that “Anselm’s claim that eternity contains time, then, amounts to the claim that time is embedded in a further dimension, location in which has at least some timelike qualities [*sic*]” (Leftow, 1991, p. 213). Once Anselm writes *De concordia*, according to Leftow, he believes that Eternity is “like a super-temporal dimension” that God and creatures occupy whereas in the *Monologion*, Anselm had attempted to argue that God shared the same temporal co-ordinates as creatures (Leftow, 1991, p. 181, 214). Anselm posited this argument in order to

⁸ Others have seen ET-simultaneity as an *empty* metaphor because it does not define the key term “observe” without tautology.

⁹ “[Contrary to the] nearly unchallenged orthodoxy for the millennium between Athanasius and Duns Scotus... the claim that God is timeless is widely considered to be at best needless and outmoded [Platonic] metaphysical baggage, and at worse incompatible with such central theistic claims as that God is omniscient, that God is an agent or a person, and that God can act in the world” (Leftow, 1991, p. 2-3).

rectify Aristotelian problems of conditionality, which would make omnipresence, an essential attribute of God, dependent on the existence of a creation. Although Leftow believes this original problem is no longer an issue, he does believe the co-existence of God and creation within a super-temporal realm allows God to be with rather than in/at all times in a better way than the ET-simultaneity model espoused by Stump and Kretzmann.¹⁰ Unfortunately, such a model appears to make God in some way dependent upon something outside of himself: an eternal dimension or matrix.

Brian Leftow's primary interlocutor has been Katherin Rogers, a strong advocate for Anselmian "perfect being theology" (Rogers, 2000). While both scholars agree on the importance of Anselm and the pitfalls of Open Theology, they have disagreed over what they consider to be Anselm's model of time. In contrast with Leftow's theory of "Anselmian presentism," Katherin Rogers portrays Anselm "as a pioneer of four-dimensionalism,"¹¹ a position she has maintained in numerous publications (Rogers, 2009, p. 338, 1994, 2006, 2007).¹² While her argument with Leftow deserves to be addressed more thoroughly, my current argument does not rely on either theory of time, and thus, I must pass over it more briefly.¹³

From this review of recent secondary literature, it should be apparent that the question is not *if* Anselm had a significant impact upon ideas of God's Eternity but rather *how* to evaluate Anselm's overall significance.

¹⁰ Leftow thinks that from Anselm's perspective, time and temporal things exist in God's eternity "not just God and His creative act" (p. 360). Somehow this does not preclude events occurring in time: "events all occur in the frozen simultaneity of eternity. But that is just one way they occur. They also follow one another in time" (p. 360). It is not clear how (or if) Leftow avoids the idea of eternity as a dimension that contains God (and possibly other things such as time). While his model is difficult to imagine, this difficulty should not necessarily be a criticism, given the paradoxical nature of the subject matter. In a later article, Leftow expounds upon his theory describing what he calls "Anselmian presentism" (Leftow, 2009). Normally "presentism" entails a form of A-theory (tensed) time in which only present objects exist, but Anselm believed in an eternal and temporal present. This entails not just two "presents" but two tenses. Within the temporal present, things are not "equally real at all locations" of past, present and future: "there are only two locations at which things are real, the temporal and eternal present. Time *t* exists in eternity, but this does not entail that *t* and what it contains are real at *t*. Rather, *t* and what it contains are located in eternity and real in eternity." (p. 300). Thus, one must consider the coextension of two presents (temporal and eternal) and two existences (temporal and eternal). Which verb tense can be used is affected by these four variables: "presentness(*t*) and existence(*t*) are(*t*) coextensive. It is(*t*) not true that Anselm's God exists(*t*), but that He exists(*e*)" (p. 300). As complicated as this model is, Leftow is seeking to uphold both God's present and a time that really is fleeting (not just one that appears to be). In a way, he is developing further the Stump-Kretzmann line of reasoning, which seeks to elaborate the implications for two very different "nows."

¹¹ A similar observation has been made by Craig (1986, p. 103).

¹² Rogers' terminology is the same that Evans (1977) uses in a more historically oriented article on the sources for Anselm's views of eternity.

¹³ What she means by four-dimensionalism is a view of time in which fleetingness is a matter of perspective. This view contrasts with Leftow's, who wants to uphold the reality of the fleetingness of the present from either a temporal or eternal perspective. She eschews the traditional labels for such a view, such as "tenseless time" (B-theory) and "eternalism" (both of which have been applied to Rogers' work by Leftow) because they have certain unhelpful connotations. Rogers wants to avoid "tenseless time" because it connotes a "block" universe, which sounds static and finite (p. 323). Rogers rejects the term "eternalism," because it can lead to an understanding of Eternity that is not God's mode of being and seems to create confusing ideas about what it might mean to say an "eternal world" (p. 323). She believes this terminology could cause confusion, not because a B-theory implies an eternal world, but because the analytic philosophy habit of referring to the B-theory of time as "eternalism" might be misunderstood by a general audience to mean an eternal world. Rogers criticizes Leftow's use of the term "presentism" as confusing because Open Theists, such as William Hasker, think that presentism entails "that absolutely all that exists in the present moment, such that God, too, must exist only in the present moment. That means that it is true at the present moment that God acts directly only at the present moment" (p. 336). Open Theism is a position that neither scholar holds, and Rogers' article primarily addresses this position (p. 337-338). Her major concerns with Leftow's position (a more fleeting present) are based upon his conceptions of God's sight/knowledge. Finally, Rogers questions whether Leftow's assertion that Anselm has two presents works if one follows Anselm's consistent analogy between time and place: if there are two presents can there be two "heres" (p. 327)?

Transcendent Eternity: The Meaning and Implications of Eternity as *Summa Natura* (*Monologion* 1-17)

In seeking Anselm's conception of Eternity, most authors understandably proceed directly to *Monologion* 18-25, where Anselm addresses the ideas of beginnings, endings, places and times.¹⁴ But in the preface to the *Proslogion*, Anselm says that the *Monologion* is like a chain of many interwoven arguments (*multorum concatenatione contextum argumentorum*), meaning each argument builds upon the next. It is important to step back and see *Monologion* 18-25 within context. I would argue that Anselm considers Eternity from two perspectives: transcendence and immanence. The discussion that follows chapter 18 focuses on immanent Eternity, which assumes a notion of transcendent Eternity established in previous chapters. The roots of what it means to say that God is transcendentally eternal and Eternity are enfolded within the beginning of the *Monologion* where God is described as being "one nature, which is the highest of all, alone sufficient in its eternal blessedness [...] giving and making through its omnipotent goodness" (*unam naturam, summam omnium quae sunt, solam sibi in aeterna sua beatitudine sufficientem [...] per omnipotentem bonitatem suam dantem et facientem [...]*) (1.5-8.13). The key to unfolding this enfolding is a proper understanding of what Anselm means by God as *summa natura* or Maximum. Such unfolding will help us to better understand Anselm's concept of transcendent Eternity.

What does it mean for Anselm to say that God is Maximum or that which it is always better to be without qualification? First, God is greater than all things both *comparatively* and *absolutely*. Much of *Monologion* 2-14 establishes God's greatness with respect to his creation on the basis of his self-existent, creative, and sustaining nature. Such relative or relational terms merely express that God is greater than creation, but they do not say what God is. In *Monologion* 15, Anselm seeks non-relational terms (*praeter relativa*) to apply to God and asserts that by necessity all those terms that it is better to be than not to be must apply to the Maximum because it is "that than which nothing at all is better" (*ipsum omnino melius sit quam non ipsum*).¹⁵ Second, God's greatness is not through participation. This conclusion follows from the arguments of cap. 2-14. Things that are relatively good are relatively good through something else, that is, through participation (cap. 1, 5, and 7).¹⁶ But God is good, eternal, and whatever else he is, through Himself (cap. 5). Third, God is a simple whole, and this unity has implications for how we

¹⁴ See for example: Leftow (1991, p. 183-216); Rogers (2006); Evans (1977). To begin here, however, would be a mistake because this section already assumes Eternity. This assumption is particularly clear when one examines just how Anselm answers the questions he poses at the beginning of *Monologion* 18: *Ex quo igitur haec tam simplex natura creatrix et vigor omnium fuit vel usquequo futura est? An potius nec ex quo nec usque quo est, sed sine principio et sine fine est?* (18.7-9.32). After laying out several arguments, Anselm then gives a further argument: *si summa illa natura principium vel finem habet, non est vera aeternitas, quod esse supra inexpugnabiliter inventum est* (18.9-10.33). When was this inexpugnabiliter argument that God is true Eternity given? To understand this argument, you must go back to how Anselm connects Eternity with the Highest Nature. better to be than not to be." *Quare necesse est eam esse viventem, sapientem, potentem et omnipotentem, veram, iustam, beatam, aeternam, et quidquid similiter absolute melius est quam non ipsum* (15.29-33.28).

¹⁵ This test only applies to terms for which it is always truly better to be than not to be. It is not always better to be gold, for example, than not to be gold whereas it is always better to not be corporeal than to be corporeal. Anselm includes eternal in the list of things it is better to be than to be without qualification. "Therefore, it is necessary that it is living, wise, powerful and omnipotent, true, just, blessed, eternal, and whatever similarly it is in every respect.

¹⁶ For more about participation, see fn. 31.

reason about Eternity because there is a certain interchangeability of attributes (cap. 17).¹⁷ From the idea of the Supreme Being's simple, non-composite nature, Anselm develops a unique logic of simplicity, which has implications for how the attributes help to explain one another.¹⁸

How does this concept of God as Maximum, and the Logic of Simplicity that arises from it, affect Anselm's concept of Eternity? First, God's Eternity is both relatively and absolutely great. Thus, his Eternity must be greater by definition than the things he has created, whether they are eternal angels, immortal men, or temporal things. While it may help initially to conceive of God's Eternity as compared to other things, ultimately it is so much greater that there is no scale of comparison because God's Eternity is a *se*. God is greater than his creation because he is self-existent and self-sustaining, which, as will be seen, are attributes closely connected to God's Eternity. Eternity must transcend Time itself because Eternity is uncreated and Time is created. Second, to say that God is eternal is to say that He is Eternity. There can be nothing outside of God called "Eternity" that God inhabits: such an idea violates God's unique priority before all things because it makes him dependent upon something else. Leftow's reverse containment theory appears to ignore this fundamental principle. Third, an eternal God is substantively eternal, i.e. Eternity itself. It is thus appropriate to capitalize "Eternity" as a name of God. He is eternal and Eternity. Since Maximum (*summa*), when applied to God, does not imply a quality or quantity, it must mean that Eternity is God's unique state of being. Eternity within this view cannot be a matrix or any other thing (including necessary beings) extraneous to God's substance. If God's nature is simple in this way, one can conclude certain things about the nature of God's Eternity from his other attributes (the "logic of simplicity").

The Two Step Augustinian (*De Trinitate*) Argument for Transcendent Eternity (*Monologion* 18)

Anselm's first argument for transcendent Eternity uses the logic of simplicity, borrowing from Augustine's composition of Eternity from immortal Life (*vita immortalis*), unchangeableness (*immutabilitas*), and incorruptibility (*incorruptibilitas*). In *De Trinitate* (1968), Augustine equates God's life (*vita*) with his being (*essentia*) and nature (*natura*) (15.5.7.15-16).¹⁹ Augustine notes that it is tempting to consider the name spirit (*spiritus*) as God's substance while names such as eternal (*aeternus*), immortal (*immortalis*), incorruptibility (*incorruptibilis*), unchangeable (*immutabilis*), living (*vivus*), wise (*sapiens*), powerful (*potens*), beautiful (*speciosus*), just (*iustus*), good (*bonus*), and happy (*beatus*) as qualities of this substance (15.5.8.45-48). While

¹⁷ Anselm describes this unity geometrically, comparing it to a simple point in *De incarnatione* 15. He also speaks of Eternity existing as a whole, rather than in parts, in *Proslogion* 18. For more discussion of Anselm's use of geometry to describe time and Eternity, see (Evans, 1977).

¹⁸ This conclusion is perhaps one of the least intuitive for modern readers. The example is given of a man who is both bodily and rational. Neither term describes the man in his entirety; by contrast, Justice describes the Supreme Substance in its entirety because that Supreme Substance is just through itself (not through participation) and is not a composite substance (cap. 16). Anselm derives this logic of simplicity from the *De Trinitate*'s of Augustine and Boethius, both of which discuss the logical implications for the unity of God's substance and his attributes. Predication of any sort must be applied in a modified fashion when speaking about God. Anselm will follow the lead of his models in making certain attributes substantive and interrelated. In particular, he follows Augustine's exemplum that shows which attributes can be combined to make God's Eternity. This example becomes a fundamental argument for Anselm.

¹⁹ This life and being is identical with his sensing and understanding.

the tendency is to think of God's spirit as his substance, all names of God refer to his substance, not just God's spirit. Thus, it is possible to reduce such a long list of names so that it is easier to remember. Augustine's first example concerns the name "eternal," which he says can signify immortal, incorruptible, and unchangeable. Is this a metaphysical reality or merely the way humans approach the reality which is Eternity? Augustine does not answer this question. He is only clear that such talk about God's attributes is in reality talk about God's substance.

This reduction of three names into one name – a Trinitarian move that serves a function in his larger argument – is the foundation for arguments concerning the nature of Eternity in Anselm. Not only do these arguments show the unitive and substantive nature of God's attributes based upon the logic of simplicity, they also resemble the Trinity in their three-fold nature. Anselm turns Augustine's argument into a two-step argument for God's Eternity, based first upon God having no beginning and second upon God having no ending. While Anselm's argument resembles Augustine's, it has many characteristics that are uniquely Anselm's own.

Anselm sees "being without beginning or end" to be an epistemologically easier concept, and therefore, uses it to build to the more difficult concept of Eternity. First, he shows that the Highest Nature must be without beginning and *per se*. He lays out three possibilities: it could begin (*principium habet*) from or through itself (*ex se vel per se*), from or through another thing (*ex alio vel per aliud*), or from or through nothing (*ex nihilo vel per nihil*) (18.9-12.32). The latter two possibilities are excluded precisely because it has already been shown that the Highest Nature must be *per se* in order to be the Highest. The first possibility is nonsensical for the following reason because there is a distinction between existing-*per se*-and-*ex se* and beginning-*per se*-and-*ex se*. The state of having the latter appears to imply two things: an initial being (the beginning) and a derivative one. In this way, Anselm argues that the Maximum merely exists *per se* and *ex se* without beginning.²⁰ If this nature were to have a beginning from itself, this nature would be two natures rather than one. Since none of the three options are possible, the highest being must not have a beginning. Anselm's proof shows that this Highest Nature is not only without beginning, but also without beginning in such a way that he is *per se*. Anselm has made Aseity the first step of the argument for Eternity.²¹

The second step of Anselm's argument asks whether God is without end. For this argument, Anselm begins with the previously established attributes of supremely immortal (*summe immortalis*) and supremely incorruptible (*summe incorruptibilis*). If it is manifestly best that a nature neither die nor decay in any way, clearly God can have no end (and presumably no change that would imply such a thing). Anselm quickly moves from these basic arguments to ones not found in Augustine's *De Trinitate*. He bases his argument on an even more fundamental concept – the highest good (*summum bonum*) (18.21.32-3.33). The Highest Nature could not end without *willing* to end and such a will could never be the highest good. Therefore, this nature must not have an end or it would be neither good nor immortal nor incorruptible.

²⁰ "It could not have a beginning through itself although it exists from itself and through itself since it exists from and through itself such that there is in no way one being, which is from and through itself, and another being, which is that through which and from which the other being exists.' Whatever moreover begins to exist from another or through another is wholly other than that being from which or through which it begins to exist. The Highest Nature, therefore, did not begin through itself or from itself (18.13-18.32). *Vel per se initium habere non potest, quam quam ex seipsa et per seipsam sit. Sic enim est ex se et per se, ut nullo modo sit alia essentia quae est per se et ex se, et alia per quam et ex qua est. Quidquid autem ex aliquo vel per aliquid incipit esse, non est omnino idem illi, ex quo vel per quod incipit esse. Summa igitur natura non incepit per se vel ex se.*

²¹ There are many fine articles that discuss the Aseity of God in Anselm with more depth than it is possible to do so here (Brower, 2007; Morreall, 1984; Burrell, 1984).

Combining these two arguments, we get a notion of Eternity that is based upon lacking beginning or end but is clearly more than lacking beginning or end. The Highest Eternity exists through itself and does not decay or die because God's goodness of will combined with his omnipotence entails that he will never have the desire to end and will always have the power to exist.

One step argument for transcendent Eternity based on the nature of Truth (*Monologion 18* and *De Veritate*)

At this point, Anselm completes his argument for a nature without beginning or end with an appeal to true Eternity (*vera aeternitas*) (18.10.33). Throughout his argument, he has used the conception of the *Summa Natura* as *per se* and *summum bonum* in order to expand to less obvious conceptions of that nature such as incorruptibility or immortality. He has taken the argument apart into two halves, examining whether it has a beginning and whether it has an ending separately. Now, he takes the idea in its entirety: lacking a beginning *and* an ending are both necessary aspects of true Eternity.

It is at this point that Anselm introduces a new one step, syllogistic argument for Eternity based upon Augustine's *Soliloquia* (1910), an inner dialogue between Augustine and Reason.²² In the *Soliloquia*, Augustine shows that God is Eternal because Truth does not begin and cannot end. If God is Truth and Truth has no beginning or end, then God must have no beginning or end. A corollary to this conclusion, based upon the logic of simplicity, is that God, as true Eternity, has no beginning or end.²³ The argument for Eternity from Truth is particularly apt (although Anselm does not say it this way) because in the case of Truth a lack of beginning or ending in no way implies extension.

While Anselmian scholarship has sometimes noticed this textual connection, it is not typically examined in scholarship on the nature of Eternity.²⁴ Other scholarship has ignored this connection with Augustine completely, particularly

²² The influence of this text upon the genre of the *Proslogion* is explored in Matthews (2007). The *Soliloquia* is critically platonic in that it explicitly refers to the statements of Plato and Plotinus about God that are true while still questioning whether they "knew" God (1.1.9).

²³ There are two other possible Augustinian sources for the connection between Eternity and Truth that would have been available to Anselm: *De libero arbitrio* (CCL 29) and *De magistro* (CCL 29). The closest parallels appear to be from the *Soliloquia*. Unfortunately it is not clear whether either *De magistro* or *Soliloquia* were in Anselm's library at Bec. See: (Gasper, 2004, p.207) In *De libero arbitrio*, we read: "In no way will you deny that there is unchangeable Truth, containing all those things which are unchangeably true." *nullo modo negaveris esse incommutabilem veritatem, haec omnia quae incommutabiliter vera sunt continentem* (*De libero arbitrio* 2.12.33.130.1-4); "Truth...remaining in itself neither increases when it seems more to us, neither does it decrease when less [is seen by us], but [is] whole and uncorrupted." *veritas...in se manens nec proficiat cum plus a nobis videtur nec deficiat cum minus sed integra et incorrupta...* (*De libero arbitrio* 2.12.34.135.39-44); later, Augustine compares Truth to hearing or seeing things as a whole with speaking them extended in time and says that "The Beauty of Truth and Wisdom...[is] that it is not completed in time nor does it depart from a location...[it is] sempiternal." *At illa veritatis et sapientiae pulchritudo...nec peragitur tempore nec migrat locis...sempiterna* (*De libero arbitrio* 2.14.38.151.42-46). Based upon Anselm's work by the same title (*De libero arbitrio*) it appears that he has read this work, which talks about God's Truth. See (Rieger, 2007, p. 574-580) From *De magistro*, there is: "We reflect upon Truth, which directs the interior of our mind...he who is reflected upon teaches [us], [this Truth is] Christ who is said to dwell in the inner man. He is the power and sempiternal Wisdom of the unchangeable God," *Intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus veritatem... ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus, id est incommutabilis dei virtus atque sempiterna sapientia...* 11.38.45-49. On the relationship between this work and the *Proslogion* see (Pouchet, 1964, p.84).

²⁴ See for example, Hopkins, 2003, p.138-151, 148; Hopkins, 1972, 17. The connection between Eternity and Truth is not considered in most of the literature discussing Eternity in Anselm.

within the context of Anselm's *De Veritate*.²⁵ If the nature of Eternity relies upon the nature of Truth, it is important to clarify exactly what sort of Truth is under discussion. The *Soliloquia* considers eternal Truth from two perspectives: (i) God as eternal Truth, and (ii) The eternity of true propositions in the mind of God.²⁶ The first perspective is the one most important for understanding Anselm's *Monologion* and the Eternity as a divine perfection. God is both Truth and Eternity because the fact that God is Truth, and Truth is eternal, implies that God is eternal Truth. Augustine's identification of Truth with God, and not just true propositions, is clear from his opening invocation to "God, the Truth, in whom, by whom, and through whom all truths are true" (*Deus veritas, in quo et a quo et per quem vera sunt quae vera sunt omnia*) (1.1.3), who is "one eternal and true substance" (*una aeterna vera substantia*) (1.1.4). The Eternity of Truth is established in the following way: "Truth could not perish, because if not only the world perished but also Truth itself perished, it would still be true that the World and Truth perished. But nothing is true without Truth. In no way, therefore, does Truth perish" (2.15.28; cf. 1.15.29 and 2.2.2).²⁷ Not only does this proof show that Truth cannot perish, it also shows that God cannot perish: If Truth cannot perish, and God is Truth, God cannot perish. At a minimum then, God's Eternity must be equivalent to Truth's Eternity.

Anselm will realize later that in order for this argument to be completely effective, he must elaborate his definition of Truth. He accomplishes this task in a new work, *De veritate*. This work is not frequently considered in scholarship on Anselm and Eternity, but it is foundational to his argument. Consider the following passage:

Student. Since we believe that God is truth, and we say that truth is in many other things, I would like to know whether we ought to confess that God is wherever truth is said to be. For you also, in the *Monologion*, prove through the truth of a statement that the highest truth has no beginning or end [...] Therefore I desire to learn from you the definition of truth (*De ver.* 1.4-19.176).²⁸

And also:

Thus you can now understand how I proved through the truth of a statement, in my *Monologion*, that the Supreme Truth does not have beginning or end. For when I said, 'when was it not true that something was going to exist?' I did not say that *either* that statement, which asserted that something would be in the future, was without a beginning, *or* that that particular truth should be God. Rather, I meant that it could not be understood *when* truth should be absent from it *if* that statement exists. As a result of this fact, since it could not be understood when that truth could not be (if the statement in which it could be exists), this truth is understood to be without

²⁵ See for example, Visser and Williams (2004, p. 204-221). An allusion is made to a tangential connection to Aristotle but even the authors admit that Anselm's theory would have been foreign to Aristotle because of its divine emphasis. Such a divine emphasis is not foreign to the work of Augustine on Truth.

²⁶ In context, these ideas undergird Augustine's arguments for the immortality of the soul. As in *De Trinitate*, eternal life is here connected with eternal being and eternal understanding, but this time, in the context of the immortal human soul. Eternal life implies eternal existence, but more inquiry must be made into eternal knowing (2.2.2).

²⁷ *Veritatem non posse interire... quod non solum si totus mundus intereat, sed etiam si ipsa veritas, verum erit et mundum et veritatem interisse. Nihil autem verum sine veritate: nullo modo igitur interit veritas.*

²⁸ *DISCIPULUS. Quoniam deum veritatem esse credimus, et veritatem in multis aliis dicimus esse, vellem scire an ubicumque veritas dicitur, deum eam esse fateri debeamus. Nam tu quoque in Monologio tuo per veritatem orationis probas summam veritatem non habere principium vel finem... Quapropter veritatis definitionem a te discere exspecto.*

beginning or end, which is the first cause of this truth. Therefore, the truth of this statement could not always exist if its *cause* did not always exist (*De ver.* 10.13-22.190).²⁹

From both passages it is clear that Anselm sees his work on Truth as an argument for God being without beginning or end as unfinished because he has yet to define what he means by truth. Thus, in *De veritate*, Anselm does the philosophical "heavy-lifting" required to move from true statements to Truth in the mind of God or Supreme Truth.³⁰ In the *Monologion*, Anselm alludes to the idea that true statements are only true through participation in the Supreme Truth, but in *De veritate*, he shows how this participation works at various levels.³¹ At the level of transcendent Eternity and the highest Truth, the one we are interested in, there can never be a beginning or ending of Truth even if true statements come into existence that were not there before. Anselm has tied together Augustinian arguments scattered throughout the *Soliloquia* to show two aspects of God's Transcendent Eternity (without beginning or end) in one step, without appeal to too many other divine attributes.

Through understanding what it means for Eternity to be Maximum, and through Anselm's two arguments for God's Eternity, the nature of God's Transcendent Eternity has become clearer. God's Eternity is without beginning or ending, but this aspect is not the sum of its nature because God's nature is not merely something that He *has* but something that He *is*. Divine supremacy demands that Eternity is not something in which God participates. He is Eternity; in fact in *De incarnatione Dei* (1936), Anselm states, "God is not anything other than simple Eternity itself" (*Deus non est aliud quam ipsa simplex aeternitas*)(15.12.33).³² Divine simplicity implies that Eternity is intricately connected to his other attributes in such a way that one attribute can shed light upon another attribute. It can also be understood as unifying other attributes: immortality, immutability, and incorruptibility are three particularly related attributes. Truth in its unity and without-beginning-and-endness is another attribute with which Eternity is particularly connected and by which Eternity can be made known.

Transcendent Eternity made immanent: Seeking presence (*Monologion* 19-23)

What is true of transcendent Eternity must also be true of immanent Eternity. This identity must be the case because transcendent and immanent Eternity cannot be anything but one Eternity considered from separate perspectives. Anselm's

²⁹ *Unde iam intelligere potes quomodo summam veritatem in meo Monologio probavi non habere principium vel finem per veritatem orationis. Cum enim dixi, quando non fuit verum quia futurum erat aliquid, non ita dixi, ac si absque principio ista oratio fuisset quae asseret futurum esse aliquid, aut ista veritas esset deus; sed quoniam non potest intelligi quando, si oratio ista esset, veritas illi deesset. Ut per hoc quia non intelligitur, quando ista veritas esse non potuerit, si esset oratio in qua esse posset, intelligatur illa veritas sine principio fuisse, quae prima causa est huius veritatis. Quippe veritas orationis non semper posset esse, si eius causa non semper esset.*

³⁰ A nice summary of this argument has been made by Visser and Williams in (2004, p. 204-221, 216) "To argue that the supreme Truth is eternal is not to argue that some feature of statements is eternal, but that the cause of their truth is eternal. God is the supreme Truth because He is the cause of the truth of all other true things."

³¹ Rogers comments on the nature of Anselm's use of participation, claiming that it is platonic in an Augustinian way: "In *De Veritate* Anselm does not disagree when his interlocuter says that 'nothing is true except by participating in Truth' (*Nihil est verum nisi participando veritatem* S.I p.177, 11.16). Truth is not just a quality... Qualities do not exist per se. Only one thing exists per se. Clearly the Truth in which all true things participate is God Himself" (Rogers, 1997, p. 95-96). Visser and Williams do not think that it is Platonic, making a distinction between Anselm's handling of Truth and of Good, but they do agree that Truth is one in Anselm: "What exactly is it for something to 'exist in' or to 'be a certain way in' the supreme Truth?... (1)... things received their existence and their characteristics from God; (p. 2) ...what they received from God necessarily accords with his plan for them...there is rectitude in all things because all things accord with God's plan for them. Whatever is right" (2009, p. 48).

³² In this same passage, Anselm makes it clear that there are not many eternities within or without each other.

arguments for immanent Eternity bring out the inherent tension between God's presence (which might be called immanence) and his transcendence. On the one hand, God must be transcendent in such a way that nothing is before him ontologically or chronologically.³³ On the other hand, He not only creates the world, but through Him, all things are sustained: through this creating and sustaining presence, He is immanent.³⁴ The imposition of the transcendence/immanence nomenclature may seem somewhat modern or anachronistic, but the conceptual shift within the text is real and appears to have been apparent to Anselm's early readers. There appears to be a real shift in the text from the earlier chapters to *Monologion* 19-23.³⁵

The centrality of presence is important in the chapters on immanence in the *Monologion* and becomes even more pronounced in the *Proslogion*. One might say that Anselm examines the problem of presence as an intellectual challenge in the *Monologion* and wrestles with the problem of presence as a spiritual challenge in the *Proslogion*.³⁶ The theme of divine presence can be found throughout Anselm's works. In the *Monologion*, it is a question of the presence of the highest nature,

³³ *Monologion* 19 considers whether there is anything *ante* or *post* the divine substance. Like Augustine, Anselm answers that there is *nihil* before or after God, and highlights the absurdity of the way in which we often think of *nihil* as some thing by using personification language. The first example is at the beginning of the chapter: *ecce iterum insurgit nihil* (19.26.33); and a further example can be found in the middle of a passage: *An potius repugnandum est nihilo, ne tot structurae necessariae rationis expugnentur a nihilo?* (19.11-14.34). *Nihil* is not an *aliquid* that can raise itself up! Neither does it have volition in its ability to destroy! But that is what our minds tend to think. This very Augustinian point is reminiscent of *De magistro* 2.3 where he points to the way in which assigning a word to *nihil* tends to make us think of it as something substantive. What is particularly unusual is the way Anselm connects this idea with the solution to the problem of *ante/post* found in *Confessio* 11.10-13, where Augustine makes the observation that time is itself a created thing: How could it be possible for something created to exist prior to its Creator? *Ante/post* implies a timeline but how could there be a timeline without time? By connecting this issue with the Augustinian distinction of *nihil*, Anselm makes this argument which is ultimately dependent upon the *per se/per aliud* idea of maximality into something that includes time, space, and all those things that are in time and space – thus all creation. Anselm is thus able to construct a solution by means of clarifying terms. Rather than *nihil non fuit ante summam essentiam nec erit post illam* (19.15-16.34) meaning *priusquam summa essentia esset fuit cum erat nihil* (19.20.34), it actually means *ante summam essentiam non fuit aliquid* (19.21-22). He, therefore, is defining *nihil* in the sense of *non aliquid*. Within the Latin, the absurdity of the thought becomes particularly apparent because of the juxtaposition of *essentia esset fuit*. The conception of an essence, whose very defining characteristic is being, not existing "in the past tense" is a nonsensical.

³⁴ "Nothing was made except through the creative, present Being, so also nothing is sustained except through the preserving presence of this same Being." (*nihil factum est nisi per creatricem praesentem essentiam, ita nihil vigeat nisi per eiusdem servatricem praesentiam*)(13.13-15.27). "It is in every place and time since it is absent from no place or time, and it is in no place or time since it has no place or time." (*In omni loco et tempore est, quia nulli abest; et in nullo est, quia nullum locum aut tempus habet* (22.7.41).

³⁵ One can see this shift in Peter Lombard's *Sententia* (c.1154-6), written about seventy years after Anselm's work. (Lombard, 1971) In book 1, distinction 37, Lombard places many of the questions that concern Anselm under the heading of "In what ways God is said to be in things" (*Quibus modis dicitur esse Deus in rebus*), distinguishing it from his earlier consideration of in what way things are said to be in God (that is, God's nature). Thus, the consideration of God's presence within time [immanence] might teach us something about the Supreme Nature, but it is to be distinguished from the attributes of God, such as Eternity, *per se* [transcendence].

³⁶ The two explicit and relevant references to presence in the *Monologion* are: Just two examples of this theme in the *Proslogion*: "Lord, if you are not here, where should I seek you, the absent one. If moreover you are everywhere, why do I not see you as present? But surely you inhabit light inaccessible. And where is light inaccessible? Or how should I draw near unto light inaccessible?" (*Domine, si hic non es, ubi te quaeram absentem? Si autem ubique es, cur non video praesentem? Sed certe habitas "lucem inaccessibilem." Et ubi est lux inaccessibilis? Aut quomodo accedam ad lucem inaccessibilem?* (1.2-4.98). "O highest and inaccessible light, oh whole and blessed Truth, how far you are from me, who am so near to you! How removed you are from my gaze, who am so present to your gaze! Wherever you are, you are wholly present, and I do not see you. In you I move and have my being, and I cannot draw near to you. You are within me and around me, yet I sense it not." (*O summa et inaccessibilis lux, o tota et beata veritas, quam longe es a me, qui tam prope tibi sum! Quam remota es a conspectu meo, qui sic praesens sum conspectui tuo! Ubique es tota praesens, et non te video. In te moveor et in te sum, et ad te non possum accedere. Intra me et circa me es, et non te sentio* (16.27.112-4.113).

but elsewhere, Anselm emphasizes the presence of certain aspects of this nature: Does divine presence mean the presence of Truth (*De veritate*), Power/Substance (*De Incarnatione* 7 and 15), or Sight/Perception/Knowledge (*Proslogion*)? Throughout his works, Anselm will emphasize that these various aspects are all present because they are all one nature; nevertheless, it does somewhat affect Anselm's argument in the *Monologion* that he is speaking about the presence of the Highest Nature in creation, and therefore, the immanence of the Highest Eternity in place and time.

Consideration of immanent Eternity sheds light upon transcendent Eternity through inherent similitudes within creation, and yet, it also preserves the mystery of the transcendent through the negation of certain spatio-temporal assumptions when applied to God. In the context of *Monologion* 19ff., these similitudes, and their transcendent alterity, can be found in the very categories of our speech and understanding. At heart, Anselm's clarity and contribution to this discussion, which was begun by Augustine and continued by Boethius, is his recognition that presence normally implies containment. Part of Anselm's ability to identify this confusion inherent in metaphors comes from his strong connection between place and time: he logically applies some of Boethius' observations concerning place to similar situations concerning time. This recognition of the limitation of the word "presence" is an important conceptual progression of the Augustinian-Boethian project. While "presence" is not a category, it underlies several categories. The latent valences of "containment" within³⁷ "presence" can cause conceptual misunderstanding of predication when they are not identified. While Burrell and Leftow have suggested something similar to this, I believe that this contribution starts in the *Monologion* and has not been generally appreciated for its importance. I would argue that Anselm takes the kernels of his argument in the *Monologion* and develops these seeds in later works. This development would contradict Leftow's assertions that Anselm abandoned omnipresence in the *Monologion* only to recover it later through a reverse-containment thesis. Anselm's conceptual continuation of Augustinian and Boethian thought has major implications for how Eternity is understood to be both transcendent and immanent within Time.

Anselm's Boethian sources for theorizing the nature of immanent Eternity

Anselm gets clear distinctions concerning Unity, Trinity, and the Ten Categories from Boethius' *De Trinitate* (1968). He develops these distinctions further, taking Boethian observations concerning "containment" and Place, and applying them to Time. This application is characteristic of Anselm's general approach to place and time, seeing that which applies to one as applying to another.

Boethius addresses the way all of the various categories must be adjusted when applied to God's substance, and he mostly follows the Aristotelian order of the ten categories. These ten categories are divided into intrinsic and extrinsic (4.78-108). The intrinsic categories are substance (*substantia*; particular and universal), quality (*qualitas*; kind) and quantity (*quantitas*; number). Boethius begins by observing that predicates change when applied to God and that God

³⁷ While normally prepositions such as "in" or "within" can be used somewhat interchangeably, I will prefer the term "within" throughout this paper because it is in line with Anselm's point about *in* meaning more appropriately *cum*. He had only two prepositional choices. We have three.

himself is above substance (*ultra substantiam*)(4.7-11).³⁸ Normally, there are two kinds of substances. A primary substance is a particular thing, like Socrates. These cannot be predicated of or said to be in anything. A secondary substance is a universal, like man. These can be predicated of something: Socrates is a man. When intrinsic categories are applied to God, they are substantive, whereas normally, with things that are not God, only the category of substance is substantive. This substantive use of all these categories comes about because God is *sua propria*. To say that God is above or more than substance (*ultra substantiam*) means that although Socrates is not simply a man, God is simply God. This unique nature of God's substance means that there is convertibility between substance and the quality as applied to God. God is just but he is also Justice because the quality of just in God is also a substance. When quantity is applied to God, it refers to his greatness(*magnus*) or best (*maximum*). This means two things. First, God's greatness or Maximum is that he is above substance. Second, God's form is utterly unified such that his qualities are his substance. Clearly, this understanding of quantity as applied to God is one of the strongest influences upon Anselm's idea of God as Maximum, and this passage is one of the best justifications for translating *summa* as Maximum.

The extrinsic categories are relation (*ad aliquid*; the way one object is to another), place (*ubi*; where), time (*quando*; when), situation (*situm esse*; being-in-a position or the relation of different parts of a being to another), action (*facere*; doing), state (*habere*; having), passivity (*pati*; being affected). These extrinsic categories are more difficult to modify:

- (i) *Situation* and *Passivity* do not apply at all to God (4.97-98).
- (ii) *Place* applies in the sense that God is everywhere, but this word needs some modification to be fully understood.
- (iii) *Time* applies in the sense that God is "always," but this term also requires explanation.
- (iv) Boethius says little about *State* and *Action*, except to say that they are extrinsic. God may be said to hold all things (*cuncta possidens*), which is a state, or to rule (*regit*), which is an action, but these all relate to things outside of God. They are not internal to Him.
- (v) Not following the traditional ordering, Boethius saves the full treatment of the category of *Relation* to the very end because this final category is the most important for discussing the Trinity, which is the primary subject of his treatise. The Trinity is a relation that is intrinsic to God.

Of all the extrinsic categories, Boethius' discussion of Place and Time must be examined here in more detail.

When discussing the category of Place, Boethius introduces the problems of containment but does not adjust prepositions (from *in* to *cum*) as Anselm does:

For it seems to be said that He is "everywhere" (*ubique*), not because he is in every place (*in omni loco*) (for he cannot be in a place at all) but because every place is present to him insofar as He contains (*capiendum*) it, although he himself is not contained (*suscipiatur*) in any place; and therefore he is said never to be in a place, since he is "everywhere" but not "in any place" (4.54-59).³⁹

³⁸ While one might argue that Boethius defines *ultra substantiam* in a unique way, he is borrowing the phrase itself from the Neoplatonic tradition.

³⁹ *Nam quod ubique est ita dici videtur non quod in omni sit loco (omnino enim in loco esse non potest) sed quod omnis ei locus adsit ad eum capiendum, cum ipse non suscipiatur in loco; atque ideo nusquam in loco esse dicitur, quoniam ubique est sed non in loco.*

Following the Boethian model, Anselm will also discuss omnipresence in terms of everywhere and in every place, elaborating more thoroughly upon his observations concerning containment and then applying them to his discussion of Time.

Concerning the category of Time, Boethius – like Augustine before him and Anselm after him – says that God's "when" (*quando*) is more appropriately called "always" (*semper*):

But what is said of God (he is "always") signifies only one thing, that in some way, he *would have been* to everything past, *is* to everything present (in whatever way this term should be used) and *will be* to everything future. What could be said of the heavens and other heavenly (immortal) bodies according to the philosophers could not be said of God. For He is "always," since "always" belongs to the present in a point of time. And there is so much difference between the present of our affairs (*nostrarum rerum praesens*), which is now, and the present of divine affairs (*divinarum*),⁴⁰ because our "now," as if running, produces time and sempiternity, but the divine "now," enduring, not moving itself, and standing still, makes Eternity. To which name [eternity], if you were to attach "always" (*semper*), you would make this "now" that is continual and unailing, and thereby, a perpetual course, i.e. "sempiternity" (4.64-77).⁴¹

Sorabji (1983, p. 116) rightly observes that three distinctions can be found in this passage: the distinction between the eternal and the temporal "now," the distinction between the eternal and the temporal "always," and the distinction between eternity and sempiternity. The first and last of these distinctions are not to be found in Anselm's *Monologion*, and thus, will not be discussed here. What is most important for Anselm is how "always," along with past, present, and future, applies to God. It may also be noticed that the Anselmian questions of omnipresence and omni-temporality do not seem to be the primary concern for Boethius. Rather, Boethius is more interested in discussing the category of Time as it distinguishes between divine and temporal substance, not the interaction of divine and temporal substances.

Defining time, simultaneity, and containment

Anselm's understanding of immanence, simultaneity, and containment depends upon his notions of place and time. Although it is not possible to give a full account of Anselm's conceptions of time, simultaneity, and containment, a sketch can be given here, based upon Anselm's likely sources.

Anselm's conception of time and place would have probably been shaped by Aristotle's *Categoriae* in the translation and commentary by Boethius (1961). From these texts, he would have learned that time and place can be classified as continuous quantities, similar to the way lines and solids are measured. Geometric metaphors are central to the Aristotelian/Boethian explanations of both place and time, and underlying most of these geometric explanations is the Euclidean

⁴⁰ The plural nature of divine *rerum* ought be examined further because it might have implications for the nature of divine action and nature, which normally ought to be considered a unity. It would be more neatly translated as "our now" and the "divine now" but that is not what is written.

⁴¹ *Quod vero de deo dicitur "semper est," unum quidem significant, quasi omni praeterito fuerit, omni quoquo modo sit praesenti est, omni futuro erit. Quod de caelo et de ceteris immortalibus corporibus secundum philosophos dici potest, at de deo non ita. Semper enim est, quoniam "semper" praesentis est in eo temporis tantumque inter nostrarum rerum praesens, quod est nunc, interest ac divinarum quod nostrum "nunc" quasi currens tempus facit et sempiternitatem, divinum vero "nunc" permanens neque movens sese atque consistens aeternitatem facit; cui nomini si adicias "semper," facies eius quod est nunc iugem indefessumque ac per hoc perpetuum cursum quod est sempiternitas.*

definition of a point (*punctus*) as that “of which there are no parts” (*cuius pars nulla est*), which would have been available to Anselm either through Boethian quotation or Isidore (*Etym.* 3.12.7).⁴² Just as a point of place is best understood as a common boundary that has no real measurement, so a present point of time can be understood through the relative order of its “parts,” which themselves have no abiding existence. Boethius explains that these parts can be understood as the past, present, and future: “For when the parts of time are the past and future, the present time is the common boundary of these, for of one there is an end and of the other a beginning. Place also consists of continuous parts” (*Nam cum sint partes temporis praeteritum et futurum, horum praesens tempus communis est terminus, huius namque finis est, illius initium. Locus quoque continuorum*) (PL 205D). Larger “chunks” of time or place are referred to as space or *spatio*.

Anselm would have also been able to get a definition of *simul* from these same Aristotelian/Boethian texts. In them, Aristotle observes and Boethius comments that there are three kinds of simultaneity: *simul simpliciter* which is according to the same time (*secundum idem tempus*), *simul naturaliter* according to causation, and *simul naturaliter* according to genus and difference. God would fit all definitions of *simul* more perfectly than any other thing. Normally, with *simul naturaliter* according to genus and species, there is no convertibility: Socrates is a man, but not all men are Socrates; however, God is God, and as was shown when discussing the logic of simplicity, there is a convertibility of his substance/attributes because they are uniquely simple. In the case of *simul naturaliter* according to causation, there is always a natural hierarchy: the father causes the son even though there can be no father without a son or son without a father. By contrast, God is from himself, and thus exists *simul* causally without hierarchy. Finally, *simul simpliciter* usually entails two things/actions at one time. Immanently speaking, and this is the context in which Anselm normally speaks of God’s simultaneity (which is why it is mentioned here and not before), God’s nature as *simul simpliciter* entails only God’s existence as a whole at all times. The plurality is in the creation (although it might be considered from the standpoint of the present unity), and the unity in the Creator. Transcendently speaking, one might also say that God is simultaneous with his “time,” Eternity, which is itself one. This simultaneity would resemble the Stump-Kretzmann “E-simultaneity” although to speak in such a way may be misleading. God is whole at the Eternal present while also being Eternity. Thus, Anselm’s conclusion that God is *simul tota* means four things: (i) God is from himself and without hierarchy within himself, (ii) God is his Nature, (iii) God is present as a whole at all times (immanent meaning), and (iv) God is a whole at his eternal present, which for him is the same as being his Eternity (transcendent meaning).

With these various definitions in mind, the geometrical language of Aristotle and Boethius, which is based upon relation and measurement, does not necessarily imply containment although one can speak of Aristotelian container theories of time. It might be that underlying Anselm’s idea of a time and space as a “container” is the Augustinian idea that time and space are created and had a beginning.⁴³ The creatability of time and place appears to imply that they are not merely relations although it is very unlikely that he would have thought of them as substances (or a four-dimensional substance-like thing).⁴⁴

⁴² There was a revival of Euclid in the Twelfth Century that began with the Norman conquest of Messina in 1060, but it is unlikely and unnecessary that Anselm would have needed to be aware of this importation of new texts. See (Busard, 1987).

⁴³ If this was not known to Anselm through the *Confessions*, it might have been known through his *Tract. in Joh.* 38.4.17-20.340.

⁴⁴ The difficulty of describing time and place as quasi-substantive or as relation probably has roots in the inherently difficult nature of the Timaeon notion of receptacle.

There is one final aspect of Time as Anselm would have understood it that may be somewhat foreign to modern understandings of it, that is, the locus of wholeness. In his reply to Gaunilo, Anselm states that although time exists always, it does not exist always as a whole because it can only exist always partitively (cap. 1). Such a unification of times into a Time seems rather vague to non-existent. We might infer from Anselm's *De Grammatico* 21 that times at their very least have categorical unity. In that text, Anselm tentatively (realizing that there was debate on the matter) concludes that the predication of the quality "having-whiteness" is identical with "white." Time, as another category, might be said to have categorical unity in a similar fashion. Exactly how this might look is difficult to say and gets at questions of realism and nominalism (does time exist only in temporal things or outside of them as well?) that it would be difficult to address here, assuming (which is difficult) that there is enough writing of Anselm on this matter. This categorical unity, whatever it is, should be distinguished from the unity of Platonic participation discussed earlier within the context of Truth because Truth is God in a way that a predicate and the thing that possesses that predicate is not. While at that point in the argument the focus was upon the everlastingness of Supreme Truth, the argument can be made in reverse: those things that truly exist in time have a unity and wholeness in Truth itself. The truth that time exists in some way gives a unity to it through participation in Truth. This point can be made without recourse to the divine ideas, although such things would have been familiar to Anselm.

With all of these aspects of time in mind, what then did Anselm mean by containment? First, the ability to contain would have nothing to do with how "large" space and time were. An infinite place and time would still be too "small" if they were created by God. Even if such an infinite place and time were not substantive and were still more akin to co-ordinates on a grid or matrix, this "grid," which is nothing in itself, is still in some sense created by God. Seen from this perspective, the laws or rules governing the grid do not apply to the one creating these laws or rules. He is therefore not contained or bound by them. Second, within the context of geometry, time and place allow measurement when conceived of as points laid side by side, extended as lines or shapes. God's Eternity conceived as a point is immeasurable because no matter how many points are laid on top of one another, they are still one point and therefore immeasurable (*De incarn.*, 15). At a minimum when Anselm says in other places that Eternity is outside of time (*De process.*, 2.200.3), this means that transcendently He cannot be measured by continuous quantity, and immanently He cannot be subject to the laws of place and time. Finally, there are implications for what was said about the nature of predication and participation. Time as a categorical unity can in no way "contain" God because the category was created by God. At a minimum, time or things in time can be said to be contained by God in the way that they exist "enfolded" in his Truth (as well as in his ideas) and that they have existence that participates in that Truth. It appears that in the sections in the *Monologion* about to be analysed, Anselm is at the very least denying a divine obligation for God to obey the normal rules of his created order. He can be simultaneously whole at all times and places. Times and places are not ways of measuring him or his Eternity. It is also possible that Anselm was thinking of containment in a somewhat physical sense: the world's time and place as being within an invisible, infinite geometric box which is too small for him. This latter possibility can be conceived as a matter of linguistic metaphor (latent within words like "in") or as a physical reality.

One final caveat *lector*: It is also important to remember that neither Leibniz's nor Newton's view exactly corresponds to Anselm's view. Certain modern theories of time, such as Leibniz's idea of time as relation, might find the language of

"containment" somewhat unintelligible because the question might arise: "contained by what?". Aristotelian container theories, which Anselm may have known indirectly at least, see place and time as a kind of relation. Although Leibniz also saw time as a relation, he very firmly believed that it was not a substance. The difficulty, which will not be solved here, lies in the rather sticky metaphysical questions of whether there are multiple kinds of being (and further historical questions of how *ousia* came to be translated as substance which now has connotations of individual being). Is relation a kind of being?

Minimally speaking, "containment" can be considered a mere metaphor: there is no literal substance that is a container. Rather, it is an idea that helps convey limitation to a particular time or place. It is possible, however, to conceive of time and place as having a degree of being because it was created. Aristotle believed that time was a real thing that can be measured (as well as something perceived by the mind). Leibniz, on the other hand, considered time to be an ideal, not in the sense of a metaphysical reality but instead an illegitimate perception. For Leibniz, God is not bound by time or place because He can see that concepts such as time and place are illusory. Plato, Augustine, and in all likelihood, Anselm believed time to be a created thing and thus a metaphysical reality – not illusions. Anselm would not have struggled so hard to see how God could be both transcendent and immanent in time if time ultimately were illusory. Does this mean that containment implied a container for Anselm, making his theory closer to Newton's substantive time? It is very hard to say, especially if Anselm was familiar with the Latin Timaeian tradition of the receptacle. This would also depend upon the Newtonian and Anselmian definitions of substance, which must be a topic for another time.

How Eternity can be immanent with time: Avoiding containment through "Always" (*Monologion* 20-23)

How exactly does Anselm reason out the nature of God's presence within time and place, concluding with Boethius and Augustine that God's *where* is "everywhere" (where), and more importantly for this investigation, that his *when* is "always"? What steps does he take and what sources does he use? Anselm analyzes the problem under four headings: whether this Supreme Being is in every place and time (cap. 20), whether it is in no place or time (cap. 21), how it exists in every and in no place and time (cap. 22), and how it is better to understand it to be "always" than in every time (cap. 23). At the outset, there appeared to be only two possibilities: either God is in every place and time, or he is not. Anselm then showed that both must be true because to deny these propositions would imply either that God is not whole at the same time or that space and time are not stretched out into parts. The Anselmian turn comes at the end, when he recognizes that presence normally implies containment, but in the case of the divine, it does not. First, he will point out that instead of *in*, one should say *cum*, applying a Boethian distinction concerning both place and time. Better still, one ought instead to say "always," as Augustine does in *De civitate Dei* (1955) and Boethius does in *De Trinitate*. Anselm will end by applying his conclusions through a consideration of the Boethian definition of Eternity as found in the *Consolatio*.

Anselm may have derived the ideas of God's knowledge viewing temporal things in his simultaneous present and of God's immanent presence in time as "always" primarily from Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. In this work, Augustine writes that God's intention (*intentio*) does not "pass from thought to thought" (*de*

cogitatione in cogitationem transit): "in his incorporeal vision, all things which he knows are present simultaneously" (*in cuius incorporeo contuitu simul adsunt cuncta quae novit*) (11.21.27-29). The mystery of such knowledge is compared to God's movement of temporal things without "temporal motion of his own" (*nullis suis temporalibus motibus*) (11.21.31). Past, present, and future things are comprehended by God's vision in his completely stable and sempiternal present (*omnia stabili ac sempiterna praesentia*).⁴⁵ Augustine does not elaborate the structure of time in this passage although he might do so in the *Confessions*.⁴⁶ *What is more important to him is the preservation of the Eternity of God's life and action. This two-fold aspect of God's Eternity becomes clearer in the next important passage from the City of God*, which distinguishes between the interaction of God and the angels with the world.

Augustine also addresses the nature of God's "always" (*semper*) in *De civitate Dei* 12.16 to explain why angels are not co-eternal with God. As will be seen, the term "always" will play a very important role in Anselm's argument for the nature of God's omnipresence. Augustine explains that Angels exist "always" in that they exist "in all time" (*omni tempore*) and "before all time" (*ante tempora*) (12.16.33-34). "They were made together with time," which has itself existed in all time (*omni tempore fuit tempus*) (12.16.56), and "without them, time would by no means have been possible" (*sine quibus tempora nullo modo esse potuerunt*) (12.16.83).⁴⁷ Unlike the angels, however, God has always existed "in an immutable Eternity" (*aeternitate inmutabili*). In the same passage, Augustine also gives a definition of time, which may have been influential for Anselm: Time is that which is indicated "by some changing motion, one part of which occurs earlier and another later because they cannot exist simultaneously in [time]" (*In aliquo mutabili motu, cuius aliud prius, aliud posterius praeterit, eo quod simul esse non possunt*) (12.16.41-43). Thus, while the immortality of the angels (*inmortalitas angelorum*) is outside of time, their motion (*eorum motus*) not only produces time but also passes through it (12.16.85-90). This distinction between angelic immortality and angelic motion is the basis for Augustine's conclusion that the angels cannot be coeternal (*coaeterni*) with God. Thus, God's Eternity or "always" is held to be unique to Him. It is clearly transcendent and does not act in the same way within time that the angelic hosts do. It is less clear how God's immanence is to be understood in Augustine. God has knowledge/vision of all time in his transcendent Eternity, and he uses the angels to work his will in his temporal creation through action. It is less clear in what way God's being is present to his creation. By contrast, Anselm will emphasize that all of these aspects (being, knowledge, sight, action) of God are present in some way in the world.

Monologion 20-24 should be read as an exploration of how a transcendent God can be present to his creation. This presence includes both place and time. The first question that Anselm considers is whether the divine substance is in every place and time. It is self-evidently Maximum for God to exist *ubique* and *semper* because

⁴⁵ While it is tempting to translate this sempiternal as merely equivalent to "eternal," there may be grounds for assuming these terms are not exactly synonyms. Consider for example Augustine's compression of names in *De Trinitate* 15: eternal as a combination of immortal, incorruptible, and unchangeable. This may be a similar compression: [stable (incorruptible/unchangeable) and sempiternal (immortal) present] = eternity.

⁴⁶ While one could find similar passages about God's knowledge in the *Confessions*, it is not clear whether Anselm had access to this work. In fact, the confusion in the secondary literature concerning Anselm's theory of time may be a result of Anselm's lack of access to this text. In *Confessions* 11.18, Augustine admits that he is unsure whether God sees the future as the present (implying that they exist already in some way although not to us – a four-dimensional time) or whether God merely sees the signs or causes of future things (a Molinistic view of God's foreknowledge). This discussion is absent from the *City of God* and also from Anselm's own work.

⁴⁷ The meaning of this passage is made clearer when Augustine later elaborates that the movement of the angels produces time (12.16.87-88).

the other two options of existing nowhere and never or some places and some times are patently less (20.11.35). Given Anselm's earlier arguments, it is impossible for the One who exists supremely and most truly to not exist. It is also impossible for the One without which "absolutely nothing exists" to be limited in place or time. The reason for the impossibility is twofold: (i) The Maximum cannot be limited, and (ii) No essence can exist without the sustaining of the Maximum. From this line of reasoning it can be seen that the principle of Maximum that permeates the *Monologion* motivates Anselm to uphold God's immanence. God must exist in all times and places because to be anything less would be to deny that God is Maximum.

And yet, with his beginning remarks, "I sense the murmuring of contradiction (*sentio [...] contradictionis summurmurare*) (20.10.35), it is clear that Anselm recognizes that saying God exists *in omni loco vel tempore* does not represent the whole truth of God's Being. For all of this hesitance, he shows that *prima facie* there are only three logical options concerning God's relationship with place and time: He is at all (*omni*), some (*aliquo*), or no (*nullo*) places and times (20.11-13.35). Another kind of reasoning, however, beckons him to consider how God cannot exist in all times and places.

Anselm breaks the concept *in omni loco vel tempore* into possible meanings and evaluates their truth or falsehood. Even here the language of Eternity does not immediately enter the conversation although the accompanying language of Eternity, in the sense of *whole* and *part*, does. The first question is whether God exists as a whole or part in place and time. Because God is not in parts (something established when considering his transcendent Eternity) He cannot exist as a part in place and time. How would this whole exist in place and time? Would it be a whole divided throughout the parts of place and time? Or does it exist as a whole in the sum of all things and in their individual parts? Anselm breaks this question further into how the latter could be true with respect primarily to place or time individually. He encounters difficulty when he cannot have something be whole in two places at one time. When reversing the question, it also becomes clear that something cannot remain whole by being in one place at different times.

His final difficulty with time comes in chapter twenty-one when he addresses whether God is in no place or time and whether he can be whole throughout past, present, and future. Division into any parts whatsoever denies the very definition of the divine substance and Eternity as being "simultaneously whole" (*simul tota*). Anselm decides to split his consideration of time and place into two different lines. It is at his discussion of time that Eternity is introduced. That which is stretched out into parts, by definition, is temporal. That which is simultaneously whole is by definition eternal; this unity was something established when considering God as Transcendent Maximum in early chapters. How can Eternity exist in time? Much less, how can it exist in time as a whole?

Anselm's method of reasoning follows a dialectical line until it reaches a place where only one thing can be the case and yet it appears to be nonsense to try to assert this same thing to be the case. In chapter twenty-two, he begins to look for another way that would allow both to be true:

Perhaps in some way the Highest Nature exists in place and time in a way which does not prevent it from existing in a manner that is simultaneously whole in individual places or times, such that nevertheless they are not many parts of wholes but only one whole. Neither is his lifetime, which is nothing if not true eternity, not distributed into past, present, and future (22.4-8.39).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ *Fortasse quodam modo est summa natura in loco vel tempore, quo non prohibetur sic esse simul tota in singulis locis vel temporibus, ut tamen non sint plures totae sed una sola tota, nec eius aetas, quae non est nisi vera aeternitas, non sit distributa in praeteritum, praesens et futurum.*

He begins to realize that only things that cannot transcend the space of place or the duration of time can be limited by the same: "For only those things which exist in place or time in such way that they do not go beyond the extent of place or the span of time are bound by the law of place and the law of time" (22.8-10.39).⁴⁹ That which is neither subject to the laws of place and time, nor contained therein, cannot be overcome by the same: "No law of place or of time in any way restricts a nature which place and time do not at all confine by any containment" (*Nulla igitur lex loci aut temporis naturam ullam aliquomodo cogit, quam nullus locus ac tempus aliqua continentia claudit*)(22.23-25.39). Through reason, Anselm derives a conception of Eternity that is neither atemporal (because Anselm considers Eternity to be with time) nor temporally bound (because he considers Eternity to be outside of time).

His next step is to return to the language used and explain how it accurately describes the situation as long as the words take on special meaning for the case at hand. He distinguishes temporal creatures, who are present and bound in time, from the Supreme Essence, who is present with time, but not bound by its laws: "it is present, even because it is not contained (*praesens est, non etiam quia continetur*)" (22.32-33.40). Thus, a more accurate description is to say that the Supreme Being is "with place or time rather than in place or time" (*cum loco vel tempore quam in loco vel tempore*) (22.2.41). It is "absent" from no space or time and yet it has no place in either. In fact, the Supreme Nature contains all things by means of its omnipresence (cap. 23).⁵⁰ By the implications of the logic of simplicity, this containing aspect of the Supreme Nature implies that Eternity contains all things at all times.⁵¹ Anselm appears satisfied to leave the problem here once he has (i) identified the possible contradiction; (ii) shown the limitations of our language in describing the Supreme Being; and (iii) resolved the problem so as to show no necessary contradiction.

Anselm's use of the Boethian definition (*Monologion* 24)

Under the heading of "how the Supreme Being can better be understood to exist always than to exist at every time" (*quomodo melius intelligi posit esse semper quam in omni tempore*), Anselm ends his discussion of transcendent and immanent Eternity with a reference to the Boethian "definition" as found in the *Consolatio* (2000): "What else is true eternity, appropriate for the Supreme Being alone, other than illimitable life, existing simultaneously and absolutely perfectly?" (*quid aliud est vera aeternitas quae illi soli convenit, quam interminabilis vita simul et perfecte tota*

⁴⁹ *Non enim videntur hac lege loci ac temporis cogi nisi ea quae sic sunt in loco vel tempore, ut loci spatium aut temporis diuturnitatem non excedant.*

⁵⁰ *Verum cum constet eandem summam naturam non magis esse in omnibus locis quam in omnibus quae sunt, non velut quae contineatur, sed quae penetrando cuncta contineat.*

⁵¹ In later works, Anselm says explicitly that God is pure Eternity (*De Incarnatione* 15), and that Eternity contains and yet is beyond all time (*Pros.* 19-20). It also contains by extension, one aeon or more than one aeon, depending upon perspective (if we can conceive of aeons as units or whole-nesses of time)(*Pros.* 21). *De concordia* 1.5 has the most extensive discussion of this containment of the whole of time by the eternal present. As was mentioned earlier, there are two primary interpretations of what model of time appears to be implied by this passage: Anselmian presentism or four-dimensionalism. While I will not attempt here to adjudicate between the two choices, it might be helpful to assert the reality of perspectivalism. There are two perspectives within Anselm's system: God and creatures. God's perspective is the closest to the "objective" perspective sought by modern philosophy, but perhaps it is not equivalent to this objective perspective. This lack of equivalence is not a lack in the Godhead: rather, it is an affirmation that God has created creatures that have real being and thus perspective apart from himself. His condescension in incarnation affirms the reality, validity and value of this perspective. In this way, the perspective of a being that flows through time is a real perspective because that being has been given agency, even while the Eternal divine perspective is also real.

existens?)(24.23-25). In this one small chapter elaborating God's "always," no more than fifteen lines, Anselm ties together insights from both *De Trinitate's* (1968) and *De Civitate Dei* (1955) with his earlier insights on the transcendent nature of Eternity.

Like *De Trinitate*, the *Consolatio* is rich with conceptions of Eternity and Time, but its most profound contribution upon later authors, including Anselm, must be the "definition" of Eternity: "Eternity, then, is the simultaneously whole and perfect possession of limitless life" (5.6.9-11).⁵² This definition ought to be considered within its full context:

And so, it is the common judgment of all who live by reason that God is eternal. Therefore, let us consider what Eternity is because this reveals to us both the divine nature (*naturam*) and knowledge (*scientiam*). Eternity, then, is the whole and perfect possession of limitless life simultaneously, which becomes clearer by comparison with temporal things. For whatever lives in time, being in the present, proceeds from the past to the future. And there is nothing fixed in time that can embrace equally the whole span of its life. But indeed it [a temporal thing] does not grasp tomorrow, and now it has lost yesterday. Also in this present life, you do not live more than in this moving and fleeting moment (5.6.5-18).⁵³

Two relevant influences upon Anselm ought to be noted from this passage. First, the premise of Anselm's *Monologion* builds upon the idea that it is the common judgment of all living that God is eternal – and more, that God is the Maximum. Its exercise in reason attempts to show exactly how this could be the case. Second, the Eternity of God refers to his nature, unity of life, and knowledge.

Because Eternity is God's Life, contrary to some current philosophical conceptions, Eternity cannot be a matrix or dimension that God inhabits. It is God's substance, as all the attributes may said to be within a theology of divine simplicity. The centrality of Life within Boethius' definition also precludes characterizations of atemporal Eternity as static being. Insofar as it is "static" or "atemporal," it is so because it lacks the drawbacks that are associated with Time. Life in time is a *being* that seems to verge on nothing – a point that barely seems like anything when the past is lost and the future is not yet. Insofar as life in time appears whole, it must be gathered from an extension of time (which barely seems to exist). Eternal Life has none of these drawbacks.⁵⁴

⁵² Of course, there can be no definition, in the word's medieval sense, of Eternity because definitions ascribe boundaries to things by placing them into categories and God cannot be categorized in comparison to anything but himself, and yet, Boethius' description is one of the best and most memorable.

⁵³ *Deum igitur aeternum esse cunctorum ratione degentium commune iudicium est. Quid sit igitur aeternitas consideremus; haec enim nobis naturam pariter divinam scientiamque pategacit. Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio, quod ex collatione temporalium clarius liquet. Nam quidquid vivit in tempore id praesens a praeteritis in futura procedit nihilque est in tempore constitutum quod totum vitae suae spatium pariter posit amplexi. Sed crastinum quidem nondum adprehendit, hesternum vero iam perdidit; in hodierna quoque vita non amplius vivitis quam in illo mobili transitorioque momento.*

⁵⁴ Finally, just after giving this definition, Boethius refutes the idea of the world's co-eternity with God, from both an Aristotelian and Platonic perspective. Since the issue with co-eternity (rather than Eternity) is equality, we can learn a lot about the unique nature of God's Eternity through this Boethian comparison. Boethius does not consider Aristotle's extension of infinite time to be eternal because the past and future barely exist (5.6.18-22). God's Eternity, in comparison, "stands as a whole, always present to itself and holds the infinity of moving time as a present" (5.6.29-31). Neither does Boethius think that Plato's world without beginning or end is co-eternal with God because the property of boundless life is a property of the divine mind and not of the world (5.6.35-38). In addition, God is older than the world (*antiquior*) not by a certain amount of time but by his simplicity of nature (5.6.38-40). In this sense, even if God were to always be creating and sustaining a world, the nature of that world's extended being is enough to make that world's time not equal to God's eternity. God is older, not just by being "before" or older in respect of origin (whether or not there was a "when" before God created the world) but he is even before in respect to the nature of his being. Boethius' series of comparisons are not on a scale: more time or beginning earlier. The divine nature is not just better on a scale of comparison with other beings. It is better or "older" by its own nature, which no created thing cannot equal. This simplicity of nature is exactly where we must now look for our understanding of Eternity in Anselm.

In the first sentence of chapter twenty-four, Anselm ties together the insights from the earlier chapters: "This Highest Substance exists (cap. 1) without beginning and without end (cap. 2) neither does it have a past or a future, nor a time, which is the fleeting present as we experience it, since its lifetime (*aetas*), or eternity, which is nothing other than itself, is unchanging and without parts" (*Monologion* 24.12-14.42).⁵⁵ The first qualification was established by the Augustinian proofs for Transcendent Eternity. The second one was established in the chapters discussing Immanent Eternity: it ties together Boethian (*De Trinitate*) insights about God being in all past, present, and future but having a unique "now" with the arguments from the earlier chapters on God being in and not in all times.

The foundation for this unique interaction with time and times is the utter wholeness of the Supreme Substance, such that its lifetime (*aetas*) is unchanging and undivided. This wholeness provides the foundation for Anselm's argument that "always" more appropriately applies to God than to time.⁵⁶ As was mentioned previously, divine immanence is closely related to causation and temporal similitude. "Always" (like "lifetime") is normally used to describe the relative wholeness of time, but God is utterly a unity in a way that time never can be.⁵⁷ Thus, "always" applies more appropriately to the Highest Nature than to time, even though it is normally used within the context of time. Anselm's use of the term "always" resembles Boethius usage in the *De Trinitate* to mean that God is in all past, present and future but neither contained by it nor running through it. It also resembles Augustine's usage in *De Civitate Dei* 12 to compare the "always" of God and the "always" of the angels. Angels exist in all times and before all times, but God is uncreated and immutable. Therefore, his simultaneity is perfect.

From this summary and its introduction of "life," Anselm shifts to incorporate another element of Augustine's *De Trinitate* 15: recognizing the equivalence of life and being in God. Anselm continues applying this logic of simplicity to further assert that God is Eternity, which is his Life. This series of equivalences has the effect of Anselm adding an *existens* to Boethius' definition: *interminabilis vita simul et perfecte tota existens*. While it is subtle, and clearly rooted in an Augustinian idea not at odds with the Boethian definition, it inserts a slight change of emphasis by placing the natures in relation. Humans often think of their life as that which changes, even if it has a certain wholeness in its totality, and their being as that which has relative stability. When one considers the divine nature, the unchanging dynamism of life is forever linked with an absolute stability. This wholly unextended Life-Being has no beginning, comes from itself, and does not end.

⁵⁵ *Eandem...summam substantiam...sine principio et fine esse, nec habere praeteritum aut futurum, nec temporale, hoc est labile praesens quo nos utimur; quoniam aetas sive aeternitas eius, quae nihil aliud est quam ipsa, immutabilis et sine partibus est.*

⁵⁶ "Therefore, if 'always,' which seems to signify the whole of time, this word is said much more truly about the Supreme Substance. It is understood to signify eternity, which is never dissimilar to itself, more than it is understood to apply to the variations of time, which are not always similar to themselves in anything. Thus, if it is said always to exist, since it is the same thing for it to be or to live, nothing is understood better than to be or live eternally. That is, to possess the whole illimitable life perfectly, simultaneously. 'Nonne ergo 'semper', quod videtur designare totum tempus, multo verius si de illa dicitur, intelligitur significare aeternitatem, quae sibi ipsi numquam est dissimilis, quam temporum varietatem, quae sibi semper in aliquo est non similis? Quare si dicitur semper esse: quoniam idem est illi esse et vivere, nihil melius intelligitur quam aeternae esse vel vivere, id est interminabilem vitam perfecte simul totam obtinere (24.14-18.42).

⁵⁷ In Anselm's reply to Gaunilo, he persisted in saying this: "For if it is also said that time is always and the world is everywhere, it is not meant, nevertheless, that time is always as a unity or that the world is everywhere as a whole. And just as the individual parts of time are not when the other parts are, so they can be thought never to exist." *Nam et si dicatur tempus semper esse et mundus ubique, non tamen illud totum semper aut iste totus est ubique. Et sicut singulae partes temporis non sunt quando aliae sunt, ita possunt numquam esse cogitari (1.25-28.131).* Anselm makes a connection between the temporal existence of something "always" and its cause that is "always" (*De Veritate* 10).

Anselm has begun to tie his strands of Eternity together in this modified Boethian definition, and returns where he started: The true Eternity, that is present in the Supreme Substance, is at its base *a se* and limitless.⁵⁸ Whereas earlier true was used as a modifier of Eternity in order to derive its limitlessness, now it is used to describe a unique nature, a nature that distinguishes it from what it has created.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether he made any profound innovations with respect to Time or Tense, Anselm made a significant contribution to the conception of Eternity by connecting it to a well-articulated notion of God as Maximum. For this contribution, it matters less whether Anselm believed in an A or B (or any other) theory of time than that Anselm believed Time to be fundamentally a created thing that God could in no way be dependent upon.

Anselm's idea of God as Maximum led him to develop a logic of simplicity, based upon the *De Trinitate*'s of Augustine and Boethius. Through a better understanding of the transcendent Eternity, he established the criteria for how this Eternity could be immanent. It had to be present with/in its creation, which was made in its own image, but it had to be present "always" and "everywhere" in a way that did not contradict its transcendence. The logic of simplicity brought to light ambiguities in the metaphor of presence that did not accord with ideas of God as Maximum. Taking a cue from Boethius' treatment of God's inability to be contained by place, and applying this insight about the nature of the presence metaphor to time, Anselm articulated the nature of the transcendent-immanent presence of Eternity with/in time. He correctly located a problem of immanence within the metaphors of presence and containment. The Highest Nature, which is pure Eternity, is present with, contains, and transcends time. With his unfolding of the transcendent and immanent nature of Eternity, Anselm then shows that they are enfolded within the Boethian definition of Eternity, which he has modified slightly to include the Augustinian insight that God's life is his being.

Much contemporary scholarship has sought the significance and categorization of Anselm's Eternity. But how ought Anselm's Eternity to be categorized? I would argue that attempts to categorize conceptions of Eternity as either "timeless" or "temporal" ask the wrong question. It must be *both* for two reasons. First, Anselm's Eternity is timeless/atemporal in the sense that it transcends time and its life-being does not suffer the consequences that temporal things do when they are extended throughout time. God's life-being does not begin or end. It never verges on nothingness. It is timeless in every way that satisfies maximal greatness, which is to say, a way that implies transcendent Eternity's immanent interaction with Time. God can never be dependent upon his creation, and therefore, He cannot be temporal. Second, it is impossible for God to be absent from his creation, and yet, Time cannot be something that God participates in. Eternity must therefore be present with Time and times, in a unique way that allows it to remain wholly indivisible and independent from it. The difficulties of comprehending such an Eternity are not because the idea is incoherent but because our categories and metaphors are insufficient for the task. Eternity is uniquely one, comparable and relatively comprehensible only because it has made things according to its likeness.

⁵⁸ "For it is clearly perceived that this true eternity is alone in this substance, which alone is not made, but was found to be the maker of all things: since true eternity is understood to be the period that lack beginning and end." *Nam vel hoc solo veram æternitatem soli illi inesse substantiæ, quæ sola non facta sed factrix esse inventa est, aperte percipitur: quoniam vera æternitas principii finisque meta carere intelligitur* (24.25-28.42).

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