

Simply True:
The Function of the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity
in Anselm's Account of Truth in *de Veritate*¹

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In this paper, I argue that Anselm's account of truth in De Veritate (DV) depends on the key elements of the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity (DDS). Studies on the presence of DDS in the work of Anselm are scarce, and of those available none focuses on the role of DDS in DV. With this paper I hope to contribute to this gap in Anselmian scholarship. According to DDS God is not different from his attributes. Historically, this doctrine was developed primarily by the Church Fathers within the context of theological polemics to argue (against Modalists) that (a) in the Triune unity of the Godhead there are three distinct persons who are Father, Son, and Spirit, (against Pagans), (b) that God is different from the world, and (against Gnostics) that (c) God does not have parts. I argue that each of the three central premises of DV—(1) God is truth, (2) truth is in things and (3) God is the truth of things—which are constitutive of Anselm's theory of truth, depend respectively on the core elements of DDS, (a), (b), and (c). I conclude that DDS plays a central role in Anselm's account of truth.

The Doctrine of Divine Simplicity (henceforth, DDS) plays a central role in the development of the first systematic account of truth in Western thought, that of Anselm of Canterbury as laid out in *de Veritate* (henceforth, *DV*),² written c. 1080-1085. Studies on the presence of DDS in the work of Anselm are scarce and those available focus mainly on the *Monologion* and the *Proslogion* to the complete exclusion of *DV*. With this paper I hope to partially address this lack and in so doing to complement already existing Anselmian scholarship on the topic.³

¹ This paper consists of a substantial revision of a seminar paper submitted for the course “Seminar On Truth in Anselm and Aquinas,” led by Dr. Holtz in the Winter Semester of 2016 at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome. An earlier draft of this paper was prepared for presentation at the 6th Annual Graduate Student Conference, April 2016, at the Higher Institute of Philosophy (HIW) at KU Leuven, Belgium. The preparation of the draft for publication was made possible thanks to the FWO Flanders Fellowship, granted through the Faculty of Theology, also at KU Leuven.

² All in-text English citations of Anselm's works come from “On Truth,” in *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (A.J. Banning Press, 2000), 164-190. Two other English translations were also consulted: “On Truth,” in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, trans. Brian Davies and Gill Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 151-174 and “On Truth,” in *Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans. by Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, IN.: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007), 117-144. The Latin citations come from *de Veritate* in Vol. I of *Sancti Anselmi Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, 6 Vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946-1961), 174-199, available online through the Internet Archive, URL: <https://archive.org/details/sanselmicantuari05anse>, accessed throughout February-November 2016.

³ For a succinct general introduction to the cluster of issues surrounding the problem of Divine Simplicity, see Jeffrey E. Brower, “Making Sense of Divine Simplicity,” *Faith and Philosophy*, 25.1 (January, 2008): 3-30. For an overview of the literature concerning Divine Simplicity in Anselm, see Siobhan Nash-Marshall, “Properties, Conflation and Attribution: the *Monologion* and Divine Simplicity,” *The Saint Anselm Journal*, 4.2 (Spring 2007): 1-18. Finally, for

Conceptually, the Doctrine of Divine Simplicity “denies any physical or metaphysical composition in the divine being.”⁴ Differently put, DDS is a “denial of any real ontological distinction between God's substance and his attributes.”⁵ DDS may be defined as comprising four claims. First, God is his nature. Second, the properties of God are identical. Third, the nature of God is his existence. Fourth, the properties of God are his nature. Philosophically and theologically, starting with Augustine, DDS became a foundational tenet (albeit at first an implicit one) for speaking about God, and received a systematic formulation and application in the thought of later prominent thinkers, notably in the *Summa Theologiae* by Thomas Aquinas.⁶ The Roman Catholic Church adopted DDS as an infallible *de fide* doctrine, voiced in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (canon #428)⁷ and again in Vatican Council I (canon # 1782)⁸ in the late 19th century. DDS gained renewed interest among scholars when it came under fire in the 1980's after Alvin Plantinga published an important study entitled “Does God have a Nature?”⁹ There, Plantinga challenged the claim that God has a nature which implied, as shall become clear later, that God is not his nature and therefore is not simple, but composed. In view of the difficulties DDS raises (such as accounting for change in God) Plantinga concluded that one *may* and perhaps even *must* maintain, without detriment to and for the sake of Christian monotheism, that God is not simple or at least not in the traditional “absolute” sense. Thenceforth, a number of critiques ensued. On the one hand, some (mainly Protestant) thinkers questioned the compatibility of the DDS with a genuinely Christian and Biblical understanding of God. On the other hand, some (mainly atheists) capitalized on the difficulties with upholding DDS to argue that if DDS is false, then belief in the existence of God is false also. They argued that, if God has no nature, then God does not exist.

Historically, key aspects of the DDS were developed by the Church Fathers as early as, the third century A.D., primarily within the context of theological polemics to argue (against Modalists)¹⁰ that (a) God is not different from the Godhead and that in this unity there are three distinct persons who are Father, Son, and Spirit (against the Pagans), (b) that God is different from

a critique of Divine Simplicity, see R. T. Mullins, “Simply Impossible: A Case Against Divine Simplicity,” *Journal of Reformed Theology* 7 (2013): 181-203.

⁴ Peter Weigel, “Divine Simplicity,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (IEP), URL: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/div-simp/#H7>, accessed throughout April-October 2016.

⁵ John P. Rosheger, “Augustine and Divine Simplicity,” *New Black Friars* Vol. 77, No. 901 (February 2009): 72.

⁶ Aquinas discusses Divine Simplicity early in the *Summa theologiae* and argues, by way of negation, that since God is not composed, God must be simple: “*Potest autem ostendi de Deo quomodo non sit, removendo ab eo ea quae ei non conveniunt, utpote compositionem, motum, et alia huiusmodi. Primo ergo inquiratur de simplicitate ipsius, per quam removetur ab eo compositio. Et quia simplicia in rebus corporalibus sunt imperfecta et partes, secundo inquiratur de perfectione ipsius; tertio, de infinitate eius; quarto, de immutabilitate; quinto, de unitate.*” Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Benziger Bros. Edition, 1947), I, 3, 1-8, URL: <http://dhspriory.org/thomas/summa/FP/FP003.html#FPQ3OUTP1>, accessed throughout October-November 2016.

⁷ Heinrich Dezingher, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum* (Friburg: Herder, 1911), 188.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 473.

⁹ Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Marquette University Press, 1980), 146 ff.

¹⁰ Modalists argued that God is not three persons but only one precisely because they were afraid of concluding that since God is three persons there is not one God but three.

the world (against pantheism),¹¹ and (c) that God is not composite but simple (against the Gnostics).¹² To identify the presence of DDS in *DV*, my main concern in this paper is to show that and how elements (a), (b), and (c) of DDS are operative at the core of *DV*. I proceed by discussing the role of DDS [(a), (b), and (c)] in *DV*. To further underscore my point, I then raise criticisms against *DV* to illustrate how later sources wrestled, directly or indirectly, with the implications of inscribing the DDS at the heart of *DV*.

In the opening lines of *DV*, Anselm lays out the problematic of the work as follows: “Since we believe that **God is truth**, and since we say that **truth is in many other things**, I would like to know whether in whatever things it is said to be we ought to affirm that **truth is God** [bolds are mine].”¹³ The premises Anselm advances in this condensed introduction to his treatise are: (1) God is truth, and (2) truth is *in* things. Ultimately Anselm wants to argue that from (1) and (2) it follows that (3) God is the truth of things. In what follows I wish to show how Anselm depends on elements (a), (b) and (c) of DDS to develop each of these programmatic premises (1), (2) and (3) respectively. Hence, premise (1) depends on (a), premise (2) on (b) and premise (3) on (c). To discuss the role and implications of DDS in *DV* I articulate the problematic that each premise of *DV* raises in terms of a question [*cf.* (i), (ii) and (iii) *infra*], each of which draws on a specific element of DDS for an answer. Question (i) is, how is truth one? Question (ii) is, how is truth *in* things? Question (iii) is, how is God truth itself, that is, the Supreme Truth (henceforth, *SV*)?

Preliminary Clarifications

Before continuing, and for the sake of expository clarity, some brief preliminary discussion of premises (1) to (3) of *DV* and of elements (a) to (c) of DDS is required. First, I turn to *DV*. In premise (1) “God is truth,” Anselm uses the word truth as a noun which is predicated of God, not to modify the noun God but to establish an identity relation between God and truth through the existential use of *is*. The premise is therefore a tautology such that insight into its content can only be obtained by defining the terms God and truth and by discussing how elements of each relate to the other. Anselm famously defines God as “a being than which nothing greater can be conceived.” Anselm defines truth as rectitude or correctness (*rectitudo*). Anselm begins his analysis of truth by locating the truth of speech (*locutio*) in statements (*oratio*). A statement is true when it “corresponds *both* to the way things are *and* to the purpose of making statements.”¹⁴ Like the truth of statements, so too the truth of action, of will, and even of existence itself depends on how these

¹¹ In general, the term pantheism, coined by John Toland in 1705, may be defined “positively as the view that God is identical with the cosmos, the view that there exists nothing which is outside of God, or else negatively as the rejection of any view that considers God as distinct from the universe.” See, William Mander, “Pantheism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP), URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pantheism/>, accessed throughout April–October 2016.

¹² Steven J. Duby, “Divine Simplicity: a Dogmatic Account” (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 2014), URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10023/5935>, accessed throughout March–April 2016.

¹³ Anselm, “On Truth,” 164. *De Veritate* 1 (Schmitt 1.4–6), p. 176: “*DISCIPULUS. Quoniam deum veritatem esse credimus, et veritatem in multis aliis dicimus esse, vellem scire an ubicumque veritas dicitur, deum eam esse fateri debeamus.*”

¹⁴ Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 205.

correspond to their doing what they are supposed to do. It is in this sense that Anselm holds in premise (2), “truth is in many other things.” Finally, as we shall see, if things have something to which they correspond in the first place, it is because God determines what that correspondence consists of, and to the extent that he does, God is the cause of truth. As we shall see, premise (3), “truth is God,” follows from premises (1) and (2). Incidentally, while these premises may still remain somewhat obscure as I launch into the core of the discussion, by the end of the paper I hope to have shed some light on them by showing how they engage with elements (a), (b), and (c) of DDS.

Now I turn to DDS. Elements (a), (b) and (c) of DDS are best understood against the background of the positions they aimed to avoid. Element (a) of DDS is informed by Trinitarian concerns and aims at articulating what it means to say, as Christians do, that God is Triune, i.e. God is three (Father, Son and Spirit), yet one. (a) can be formulated as follows: the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Spirit is God; the Father is not the Son is not the Spirit; and yet there is only one God, or God is God. (a) became the standard “Orthodox” interpretation of the Trinity by the fourth century when it was formulated in terms of three *personae* sharing a single *natura*: there is one divine nature shared by three distinct persons. Implicitly, (a) negates two positions which can be formulated in terms of *persona/natura* language. First, it denies that there are three divine natures corresponding to each of the three persons, i.e., that there are three gods, Father, Son, and Spirit. Second, it denies that the divine nature is not shared by three persons, i.e., that each persona is reduced to a manifestation of the one divine nature, that the distinction between Father, Son, and Spirit is nominal, not real. Note that the first position stresses the threeness of God while the second position stresses the unity. (a) attempts to maintain a balance by recognizing the real threeness and unity of the Trinity.

Element (b) of DDS is a distinctively (mainstream) Christian statement about the origin of the world which was articulated in the early centuries of Christian thought. (b) aims at drawing a distinction between God as creator and the world as created. While pre-Christian accounts of the origins of the world (such as that of Aristotle and Plato and even Hesiod and Homer) recognized at times, not always, the efficient agency of a God who literally *formed* the world, they usually recognized that what was *formed* was already existing matter (*hyle*) which was in some cases deemed to be eternal. This conception posed potential challenges for Christians in light of the background of the biblical account of creation (Gen. 1:26) according to which human beings are made in the *imago et similitudo Dei*. To say that human beings are like God carried the danger, as illustrated in Augustine's anti-Manichean writings, of anthropomorphizing God. The reasoning was that, if God forms human beings in his own image, this implies that God has bodily parts, organs, eyes, hair, etc. Christians thought this unacceptable. To avoid this conclusion early thinkers such as Augustine constantly invoked *creatio ex/de nihilo* to argue that while creation comes from God (including matter), creation is distinct from God because of its origin, literally “from nothing,” *ex nihilo*, while stressing that the *imago Dei* consisted in the fact of being created *de nihilo*, from the substance of God. In this way Augustine thought he could maintain a distinction yet a relationship between God and the world.

Element (c) affirms that God is not composite but simple.¹⁵ To hold that God is composite would imply that God has parts and therefore that God changes. As early as the Presocratics, change was often identified with things transient and was therefore often juxtaposed with things eternal. Hence, since God is thought to be eternal, he is therefore unchanging and for that reason without parts. This doctrine has many ramifications. For Aquinas, for instance, the non-composition of God means that God is pure act and lacks potency and is therefore immaterial (because matter is the principle of potency). Some contemporary apologists and theologians deny that God is non-composite because this would imply, it is argued, that God is unable to have a personal relation with human beings, thereby jeopardizing the omnipotence of God. Other contemporary scholars reject the simplicity of God on the grounds that if God is non-composite and therefore unchanging and outside of time, this would mean that God does not know what time it is, thereby jeopardizing the omniscience of God and even God's sovereignty.¹⁶

By the 12th century, (a), (b), and (c) had already become part of mainstream Christian language about God as Triune, transcendent, and simple. Needless to say, Anselm would have agreed with (a), (b), and (c), and it is therefore not surprising, as I shall go on to argue, that they form part of the conceptual framework of *DV*.

In his study of *DV*, Cooper notes that Anselm's account of truth develops in three stages of argumentation.¹⁷ To detect the crucial role of DDS in *DV*, I show how each of these stages functions to answer each of questions (i), (ii), and (iii). The first stage consists in determining “what is involved in the thesis that there are many truths”¹⁸ *vis-à-vis* the claim that God is truth. In the second stage, Anselm argues for the unity of truth.¹⁹ To conclude, the third stage identifies the “one truth/rectitude with the supreme truth.”²⁰ Interestingly, and not without a reason (the reason

¹⁵ Duby notes that (with the exception of Tertullian who, maybe because of his engagement with Marcionism, at times considers God “from goodness simply” rather than “from goodness alone”) the view that God is simple is found in the early Church Fathers, who were, surprisingly for the climate of controversy, unified on this position. See, Steven J. Duby, “Divine Simplicity: a Dogmatic Account,” 13-16. Major figures of the Middle Ages such as Boethius, Lombard, Anselm, and Aquinas also reached a similar consensus concerning the doctrine of God's simplicity. Of course, major developments in the understanding of what God's simplicity consists of and what it implies ensued. For an overview of these developments during the Middle Ages see Steven J. Duby, “Divine Simplicity: a Dogmatic Account,” 16-27.

¹⁶ See, for example, “Simplicity” in J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 524-527. Their rejection of Divine Simplicity ensues from their commitment to the view that God must in some sense be temporal, otherwise, they argue, he could not enter into relation with creatures. The problem with maintaining that God is both omniscient and eternal is illustrated well by the “Two puzzles about omniscience” articulated by Kretzmann. See, Michael Lacewing, “Two puzzles about omniscience,” (Routledge Taylor & Francis Group: 2014), URL: <http://www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Two-puzzles-about-omniscience.pdf>, accessed throughout February-November 2016. For a recent, extended case against Divine Simplicity see R.T. Mullins, “Simply Impossible: A Case Against Divine Simplicity,” *Journal of Reformed Theology*, 7 (2013): 181-203.

¹⁷ Travis J. Cooper, “One Truth or Many Truths? Two Medieval Accounts of Truth: Anselm of Canterbury and Robert Grosseteste,” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2012), 81-89, URL: <http://cuislandora.wrlc.org/islandora/object/etd%3A324>, accessed throughout March-April 2016.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

being, as I argue in this paper, that DDS is operative in *DV*²¹), each of these three stages aligns exactly with (a), (b), and (c). Hence, to understand the role of DDS in the core argument of *DV*, the method I adopt for my analysis consists in discussing how (a), (b), and (c) function to answers (i), (ii), and (iii), respectively.

Although the Anselmian account of truth is not without difficulties (many of which have been discussed in the secondary literature),²² fully addressing these difficulties is beyond the aim and scope of the present discussion. Though I am not primarily arguing for the coherence of the Anselmian account of truth, it is true that DDS does in fact contribute to the coherence of the account. That being said, my central aim is to assess the role of DDS in *DV* and not to assess its coherence. If after providing the Anselmian answers to (i), (ii), and (iii), I identify and discuss critical difficulties with the arguments and assess what these entail for the DDS as it functions in *DV*, I do so only insofar as these criticisms help underscore the immanent tension produced by simultaneously maintaining the three main tenets of DDS at the core of *DV*. Ultimately, these criticisms serve to point out the implications of the presence and central role of DDS in *DV* and, in so doing, to underscore my central thesis.

First Stage of Anselm's Argument

In stage one, I discuss question (i) in order to identify the role of (a) in premise (1). The Biblical source from whence Anselm draws premise (1) is John 14:6, where Christ says "I am the way, the truth, and the life."²³ In this inescapable allusion to John 14:6 Anselm seems to have deliberately altered the passage. He does not say "we believe that Christ is truth," but "we believe that God is truth."²⁴ In other words, Anselm is implicitly saying that the claim "God is truth" is equivalent to the claim "Christ is truth." Hence, implicit in premise (1) is the claim that at least some attributes that are predicated of Christ, such as truth, may also be predicated of God. This should lead to the conclusion that in *DV* (as is the case everywhere else in the Anselmian *corpus*) Christ is not different from God, but is one and the same with God.²⁵ As an application of element (a) of DDS, from premise (1) it follows that the truth which is Christ is one in/with God.

²¹ John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2007): 199. While it could be argued that Anselm had no access to DDS, Anselm read Augustine who already had elements of the DDS.

²² Indeed, Anselm's theory attracted critics such as Robert Grosseteste as early as the 12th century. Grosseteste contested the proposition "there is only one truth in all things." See Jan A. Aertsen, "Truth in the Middle Ages" in *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*, ed. Kurt Pritzl (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 135.

²³ "No doubt the student's question is prompted by passages of Scripture such as John 14:6, where Christ asserts 'I am the way, the truth, and the life,' and the extended reflections on such passages one can find in authorities such as Augustine." Jeffrey E. Brower, "Anselm on Ethics" in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Brian Davies and Brian Leftow, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 234. Also, see footnote 2 in Anselm, "On Truth," 164.

²⁴ Anselm, "On Truth," 164. *De Veritate* 1 (Schmitt 1.4-6), 176: "*DISCIPULUS. Quoniam **deum** veritatem esse credimus . . .*" (bold is mine).

²⁵ This implication is entailed by what Visser and Williams call Anselm's "Grand Unified Theory of Truth." See Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 204-221.

Problematic as this claim is to Anselm's "Unified Theory of Truth," the question of interest to our present discussion is: (i) how is truth one in God?

To assess whether premise (3) follows from premises (1) and (2), Anselm proceeds by searching, from the multiplicity of experience, for a single, unifying definition of truth. His point of departure is an appeal to experience: "let us inquire as to what truth is by [examining] the various things in which we say there is truth."²⁶ As we shall discuss in greater detail later, Anselm progressively locates truth in statements (*enuntiatione*),²⁷ in thought,²⁸ in the will,²⁹ in action,³⁰ in the senses,³¹ and in the being (*esse*) of things.³² From an analysis of these instances of truth, Anselm articulates the core of his account of truth: "the affirmation's truth is simply its rightness, or correctness (*rectitudo*)."³³ Hence, truth is the rightness/correctness/rectitude (*rectitudo*) of things.³⁴ The rightness or correctness of a thing consists in its doing what it ought to do. When a statement "signifies what it ought to, it signifies rightly, or correctly."³⁵ Concerning actions, Anselm writes: ". . . to do the truth is to do what is good and to do what is good is to do what is right. Therefore, nothing is clearer than that the truth of an action is its rightness [*rectitudo*]."³⁶ Hence, the devil is not in the truth because "when he willed what he ought not to have willed, he deserted truth and uprightness."³⁷ Anselm classifies the truth of the senses, which is also rectitude, under the truth of action. He writes, ". . . whatever the senses are seen to report, whether they do so as a result of their nature or of some other cause [for example, because of a tinted glass], they do what they ought. Therefore, they do what is right and true, and their truth falls within the

²⁶ Anselm, "On Truth," 165. *De Veritate* 1 (Schmitt 1.21-1.1), 177-178: "MAGISTER. Non memini me invenisse definitionem veritatis; sed si vis quaeramus per rerum diversitates in quibus veritatem dicimus esse quid sit veritas."

²⁷ *De Veritate* 1 and 2

²⁸ *De Veritate* 3

²⁹ *De Veritate* 4

³⁰ *De Veritate* 5

³¹ *De Veritate* 6

³² *De Veritate* 7

³³ Anselm, "On Truth," 166. *De Veritate* 2 (Schmitt 2.21-26), 178: "D. Vere et recta et vera est, cum significat esse quod est. M. Idem igitur est illi et rectam et veram esse, id est significare esse quod est. D. Vere idem. M. Ergo non est illi aliud veritas quam rectitudo. D. Aperte nunc video veritatem hanc esse rectitudinem."

³⁴ The conclusion that truth is rectitude itself is introduced in the opening lines of *De Veritate* 10. Anselm sets up this definition through his consideration of various cases of truth in *De Veritate* 2 to 9; cf. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 51.

³⁵ Anselm, "On Truth," 166. *De Veritate* 2 (Schmitt 2.14), 178: "M. At cum significat quod debet, recte significat."

³⁶ Anselm, "On Truth," 170. *De Veritate* 5 (Schmitt 5.25-28), 181: "Unde sequitur quia rectitudinem facere est facere veritatem. Constat namque facere veritatem esse bene facere, et bene facere esse rectitudinem facere. Quare nihil apertius quam veritatem actionis esse rectitudinem."

³⁷ Anselm, "On Truth," 169. *De Veritate* 2 (Schmitt 4.21-4.8), 180-181: "M. Sed et in voluntate dicit veritas ipsa veritatem esse, cum dicit diabolum non stetisse »in veritate«. Non enim erat in veritate neque deseruit veritatem nisi in voluntate. D. Ita credo. Si enim semper voluisset quod debuit, numquam pec- casset qui non nisi peccando veritatem deseruit. M. Dic ergo quid ibi intelligas veritatem. D. Non nisi rectitudinem. Nam si quamdiu voluit quod debuit, ad quod scilicet voluntatem acceperat, in rectitudine et in veritate fuit, et cum voluit quod non debuit, rectitudinem et veritatem deseruit: non aliud ibi potest intelligi veritas quam rectitudo, quoniam sive veritas sive rec- titudo non aliud in eius voluntate fuit quam velle quod debuit."

classification of truth in actions.”³⁸ Having discussed various instances of truth, Anselm goes on to unify them into a single theory of truth. He asks “whether we must understand truth to be in anything other than the things we have already examined” and argues that “whatever is is truly-insofar as it is what it is in the Supreme Truth.”³⁹ In other words, because things are what they ought to be, everything that exists exhibits the rectitude of truth. Anselm concludes: “there is truth in the being of all that exists, because all things are what they are in the Supreme Truth.”⁴⁰ At this point, Anselm returns to the issue raised in the opening lines of the work: “So if truth and rightness are in the being of things because these things are what they are in the Supreme Truth, then assuredly the truth of things is rightness [*rectitudo*].”⁴¹

The three key features of Anselm's argument emerge upon briefly considering what Anselm means by “function” when he claims that things have a function. If things ought to perform a function, it is not because Anselm is adopting an inherent teleology, but because (arguably like Augustine) for Anselm the prescribed function of things is that whereby God governs and sustains the world, i.e., functions manifest the sovereignty of God over creation. Things don't have a function because God assigns them a function. Rather, God *causes* the functions of things because God *knows* the function of things. Hence, to say that God has sovereignty over creation is to say that “what God knows, he causes.”⁴² Therefore, by conforming to their function as it exists in the mind of God as an idea, things maintain the order (*ordo*) of the world. Even disorder does not escape the grasp of divine sovereignty. Anselm thinks that even to the extent that it is a possibility for a thing to fail in performing its function, and therefore to disturb the order of the world, God governs the world. In other words (and this is also arguably Augustinian), Anselm underscores divine sovereignty over creation by subordinating even disorder in the world to a contained possibility in God (as *exemplum*, *forma*, *similitudo*, and *regula*) and in divine utterances or *locutio*: for Anselm untruth is a function of truth, just as evil is a function of good, in so far and only to the extent that God regulates the possibility of disorder.⁴³

³⁸ Anselm, “On Truth,” 173. *De Veritate* 6 (Schmitt 6.33-6.3), 184-185: “*Hoc tantum sufficiat dicere quia sensus, quidquid renuntiare videantur, sive ex sui natura hoc faciant sive ex alia aliqua causa: hoc faciunt quod debent, et ideo rectitudinem et veritatem faciunt; et continentur haec veritas sub illa veritate, quae est in actione.*”

³⁹ Anselm, “On Truth,” 174. *De Veritate* 7 (Schmitt 7.18-19), 185 “*M. Iam considera an praeter summam veritatem in aliqua re veritas sit intelligenda, exceptis iis quae supra conspecta sunt. D. Quid illud esse potest? M. An putas aliquid esse aliquando aut alicubi quod non sit in summa veritate, et quod inde non acceperit quod est in quantum est, aut quod is possit aliud esse quam quod ibi est? D. Non est putandum. M. Quidquid igitur est, vere est, in quantum est hoc quod ibi est. D. Absolute concludere potes quia omne quod est vere est, quoniam non est aliud quam quod ibi est.*”

⁴⁰ Anselm, “On Truth,” 174. *De Veritate* 7 (Schmitt 7.18-19), 185: “*M. Est igitur veritas in omnium quae sunt essentia, quia hoc sunt quod in summa veritate sunt.*”

⁴¹ Anselm, “On Truth,” 174. *De Veritate* 7 (Schmitt 7.1-3), 186: “*M. Si ergo et veritas et rectitudo idcirco sunt in rerum essentia, quia hoc sunt quod sunt in summa veritate: certum est veritatem rerum esse rectitudinem.*” Cf. *De Veritate* 1.

⁴² Katherin A. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press), 17.

⁴³ I think that if Anselm can subordinate all the possibilities of human action to divine agency, it is because he treats agency as a modal concept. On Anselm's analysis of agency as a modal concept, see Sara L. Uckelman, “Anselm's Logic of Agency,” Institute for Logic, Language and Computation, UVA, 1-16, URL: <https://www.illc.uva.nl/Research/Publications/Reports/PP-2007-31.text.pdf>, accessed throughout November-December 2016.

Having considered function, the three key features of Anselm's discussion of truth are as follows. First, truth is rightness and rightness is the fulfillment of the function which things ought to perform. Secondly, Anselm goes on to argue that everything that exists, insofar as it exists, has a prescribed function which it ought to perform (even being itself). Third, the truth of all things is unified in the *SV*. Hence, "all truth either is God or somehow reflects God."⁴⁴

This last point, which depends on the previous two, is significant because positing a single *SV* enables Anselm to explain why things can have a function in the first place and why all these functions ultimately converge in the unity of a single *SV* which is God. In short, the multiplicity of truth reveals that the truth of things is rectitude, and the rectitude of things reveals the need to postulate an underlying unity in God. In the final analysis, the unity of the multiplicity of truth in the *SV* reveals that element (a), the element of unity in DDS, is at work in reconciling premises (1) and (2) in order to conclude (3).

To evaluate the implications of inscribing element (a) in DDS enables Anselm to explain, on the one hand, the multiplicity of truth as a matter of empirical observation and, on the other hand, to account for their unity through a synthesis of multiplicity in the unity of the *SV*, we may consider a difficulty with the Anselmian multiplicity/unity synthesis. As early as the 12th century, Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), while accepting premises (1) and (2), argues in his own *De Veritate* that the conclusion Anselm should have drawn is not that truth is one, but that there are many truths.⁴⁵ Like Anselm, Grosseteste too was a close reader of Augustine, which makes the point of disagreement quite significant. Grosseteste argues that "because truth is *esse*, and because *esse* is distinct for different kinds of beings, the account of truth is diverse according as true things are diverse, so that different kinds of true things have different definitions of truth."⁴⁶ Grosseteste is mainly concerned that Anselm's insistence on the unity of truth fails to account for how linguistic expressions such as "there are many truths" can be meaningful expressions if there are not many, but only one truth. The issue at stake, for Grosseteste, is not so much, as Anselm would have it, whether a statement, more precisely an enunciation, is true or not insofar as it does or fails to do what a statement (at least an affirmation) ought to do: "signifying that what is is."⁴⁷ Grosseteste is interested in a semantics divorced from truth: he is concerned that while a statement such as "there are many truths" may signify rightly, and may therefore be true, it cannot be meaningfully understood if at the end of the day the many truths to which this statement refers are ultimately only a single truth in the *SV*. In other words, Grosseteste thinks that Anselm is committed to the (literally) nonsensical conclusion that the statements "truth is one" and "there are many truths" are

⁴⁴ Visser and Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 205.

⁴⁵ My interpretation of Grosseteste is wholly based on that of Travis J. Cooper, "One Truth or Many Truths? Two Medieval Accounts of Truth: Anselm of Canterbury and Robert Grosseteste," in *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*, ed. Kurt Pritzl (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 122-221, and that of Timothy Noone, "Truth, Creation and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure," in *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*, 102-126.

⁴⁶ Cooper, "One Truth or Many Truths? Two Medieval Accounts of Truth," 215.

⁴⁷ Anselm, "On Truth," 167. *De Veritate* 2 (Schmitt 2.8-14), 178: "*M. Ad quid facta est affirmatio? D. Ad significandum esse quod est. M. Hoc ergo debet. D. Certum est. M. Cum ergo significat esse quod est, significat quod debet. D. Palam est. M. At cum significat quod debet, recte significat.*"

equivalent. And yet, this conclusion can be dismissed by the simple fact that Grosseteste's objection can be meaningfully understood. Grosseteste concludes that the challenge of providing an account of truth is not so much to show how multiplicity converges in the unity of a *SV*, but rather in accounting for truth as multiplicity, at least as far as semantics is concerned. Although it could be superficially argued that Grosseteste makes an unwarranted conclusion about an ontological reality based on semantic considerations, the thrust of his argument reveals "that the affirmation of the multiplicity of truth is, so to speak, the *default* position and is to be rejected only under the compulsion of other considerations."⁴⁸ The consequence of Grosseteste's position is that he understands (3), the claim that God is the truth of things, differently from Anselm. For Anselm, (3) functions to reconcile premises (1) and (2) and requires, by way of an invalid inference in Grosseteste's estimation, that the truth of God in (3) be one. For Grosseteste, however, premise (2) leads to an account of truth that, in his view, demands an equivocal use of the word truth: a truth that is multiple in creation and the Truth that is one in God. Of course, the difficulty for Grosseteste is to explain how the truth is related to the Truth. He does so by introducing Christ as the *ratio/logos*. How Grosseteste incorporates Christ as a mediator between "un-synthesized" truths and Truth, though an interesting topic in its own right, is beyond the scope of the present discussion. Suffice it to say that Grosseteste does not undermine DDS. On the contrary, elements of DDS are operative in how Grosseteste works out the implications of dormant Trinitarian elements present in Anselm's *DV*.⁴⁹

In closing this section the question arises: how does the point of contention between Grosseteste and Anselm concerning the relation between the multiplicity and unity of truth bear upon the role of DDS in *DV*? First, though there is a point of contention, this does not mean that Grosseteste is doing away with element (a) of DDS. Rather, the difficulty Grosseteste raises is only intelligible if it is granted that Grosseteste himself is also implicitly accepting or at least operating within the paradigm that motivates Anselm to use (a). Indeed, the point of contention between Grosseteste and Anselm is not so much whether (a) is or should be present in an account of truth. Rather, precisely because (a) is a demand not only of faith (for both Anselm and Grosseteste) but also of coherence (for Anselm) and of sense (for Grosseteste) does a point of contention arise. Grosseteste, too, wants to argue for the unity of truth while emphasizing semantics (a point he thinks Anselm overlooked). In so doing Grosseteste's reading of Anselm, and the dispute in the first place, can only be understood as reinforcing the presence of (a) in Anselm's account of truth. Was Grosseteste right? Did Anselm have a response to Grosseteste? These questions are beyond the scope of this paper. The point is, the implication of (a), presented as a difficulty by Grosseteste, only reinforces that (a) is operative in *DV*, that is, that truth is one and therefore that God is one. But the question arises: how is God different from creation?

⁴⁸ Cooper, "One Truth or Many Truths? Two Medieval Accounts of Truth," 220.

⁴⁹ Duby, "Divine Simplicity: a Dogmatic Account," 145.

Second Stage of Anselm's Argument

To answer this question I now turn to stage two of the Anselmian account of truth in which I shall discuss question (ii) (how is truth *in* things?) so as to identify the role of (b) (God is different from the world) in premise (2) (truth is in things). Whereas premise (1) is based on an explicit appeal to what “we believe” according to the *regula fidei*, premise (2) arises from an appeal to what “we say.” Furthermore, whereas in (1) truth is not something that God *has* but rather something that God *is*, according to (2) things themselves are not truth.⁵⁰ Thus formulated (1) and (2) enable Anselm to argue that, while the truth of things is related to the truth of God, which coincides with who God *is* as *SV*, things are nonetheless different from God. By identifying element (b) of DDS within premise (2), a crucial question must be addressed if Anselm is to maintain that God is different from the world: (ii) how is truth *in* things?

While Anselm's definition of truth enables him to argue that the truth of things is the truth of God, he must still explain how the truth of God is *in* things. Since truth is in all that exists (insofar as all that is *is* rightly), explaining how the truth of God is *in* things may be motivated by an attempt to ensure that God, as *SV*, is related to the world, as truth. To understand this motivation is to identify the presence of (b) in premise (2).

Early in *DV* 1 Anselm writes that he had wrestled with the concept of a *SV* in *Monologion* where he briefly argued that the *SV* “has no beginning and no end.” Anselm returns to the *SV* in *DV* 7 where he argues that everything is in the *SV* and that things are what they are because of the *SV*. He asks rhetorically, “Do you think that there is anything, at any time or place, which is not in the Supreme Truth, or has not received from the Supreme Truth what it is, insofar as it is, or is able to be other than what it is in the Supreme Truth?”⁵¹ The pupil answers in the negative. Though *SV* is introduced in *DV* 7, it is not until *DV* 10 that Anselm explicitly defines the *SV* as rectitude (*rectitudo*) itself: “You will not deny that the Supreme Truth [*SV*] is rightness [*rectitudo*], will you?” Thus defined, to understand how the one *SV* is related to the multiplicity of truths, and therefore to understand why the *SV* is different from things, two questions must be addressed. First, what does it mean to say that the truth of things is *in* the *SV*? Second, why is the *SV* identified with rightness itself?

Anselm often suggests that truth is *in* things and explains how the truth of things relates to the *SV* in terms of cause and effect. Late in *DV* he writes, “the truth which is in the existence of

⁵⁰ “Indeed, it will turn out that truth is so much the same thing in each of its manifestations that it is not strictly correct to speak of the truth *of* this or that thing. There is just truth, period; instead of speaking of the truth *of* action *a* and statement *s*, we should say that both action *a* and statement *s* are in accordance with truth, period” (Visser and Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” 205).

⁵¹ Anselm, “On Truth,” 174. *De Veritate* 7 (Schmitt 7.11-14), 185: “*M. An putas aliquid esse aliquando aut alicubi quod non sit in summa veritate, et quod inde non acceperit quod est inquantum est, aut quod is possit aliud esse quam quod ibi est? D. Non est putandum.*”

things is the effect of the Supreme Truth”⁵² This is because truth *in* things is not *of* things. Rather, “truth is so much the same thing in each of its manifestations that it is not strictly correct to speak of the truth *of* this or that thing. There is just truth, period.”⁵³ Hence, what is said to be the truth *in* things is nothing but a manifestation of the *SV* which is the cause of the existence of all things and in virtue of which anything can be said to be true.⁵⁴ In this context Anselm understands causality in the Aristotelian sense of efficient causality (*Phys.* 194b 29)⁵⁵ and not in the sense of material causality (*Phys.* 198b 19–21).⁵⁶ That is to say, the *SV* does not cause the truth of things by making these truths or by giving a standard against which thing may be judged to conform or not.⁵⁷ Rather, things receive their truth through a kind of participation in the *SV*. Furthermore, Anselm distinguishes between two modalities of existence. Either things exist through themselves (*per se*) or things exist through another (*per aliud*). Now to avoid a regression *ad infinitum* (as we shall see later), for Anselm all that exists *per aliud* exists in virtue of that which exists *per se*. Finally (as we shall also see later) there can only be one thing that exists *per se*. For Anselm, the one truth which is the *SV* exists *per se* while the multiplicity of truths exist *per aliud*. Hence, to answer question i (how is truth one?), the *SV* causes the truth of things in that it is through (or by participation in) the *SV* that things are said to have their truth or rectitude.

To answer question ii (how is truth in things?), Anselm implicitly employs the same distinction between *per se/per aliud* existence to argue that there can only be one thing that has *per se* existence and that such a thing must be rectitude itself. Anselm argues as follows. First, concerning the *SV* who is presumably God, he observes that “all other things are indebted to it; it

⁵² Here Anselm is referring to the double-truth of the “truth of thought” and the “truth of statement.” Anselm, “On Truth,” 179. *De Veritate* 10 (Schmitt 10.6-12), 190: “*M. Vides etiam quomodo ista rectitudo causa sit omnium aliarum veritatum et rectitudinum, et nihil sit causa illius? D. Video et animadverto in aliis quasdam esse tantum effecta, quasdam vero esse causas et effecta. Ut cum veritas quae est in rerum existentia sit effectum summae veritatis, ipsa quoque causa est veritatis quae cogitationis est, et eius quae est in propositione; et istae duae veritates nullius sunt causa veritatis.*”

⁵³ Visser and Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” 205.

⁵⁴ “ESSENCE (LATIN, *ESSENTIA*): Anselm uses the word *essentia* in a variety of ways: (1) It signifies the individual thing that exists. In this usage “an essence” is synonymous with “an existent being.” (2) Sometimes it is used to indicate what a present-day philosopher might call “ontological status.” In this sense one might say that darkness, for example, has no essence, because it is nothing more than the absence of light, whereas light has essence because it is something in its own right. To say that darkness has no essence, in this sense, is therefore equivalent to saying that it is nothing and that it is not something. (3) It sometimes signifies the nature of a thing. For example, the essence of a human being is to be rational and animal. Such other features as being tall or short, dark or fair, male or female are accidents.* (4) Sometimes (particularly in *On Truth* 7) Anselm uses it strictly as the abstract noun corresponding to *esse*, “to be,” where that verb includes the meanings “exists” and “is a certain way.” In such cases I translate *essentia* as ‘being’, and ‘being’ should be understood to include the meanings ‘existence’ and ‘being a certain way’. (5) Occasionally it simply means ‘existence’.” *Anselm: Basic Writings*, trans. and ed. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007), 418.

⁵⁵ Aristotle, “Physics” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 315-446.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 315-446.

⁵⁷ Anselm does not espouse the Aristotelian so-called correspondence theory of truth which defines truth as “*adequatio rei et intellectus*” without adding a spin of his own. Indeed, Anselm's theory is more accurately described as a double-correspondence theory of truth (emphasis on “double”). See, Visser and Williams, “*Anselm on Truth*,” 205.

does not owe anything to anyone. It has no other reason for being what it is except that it is.”⁵⁸ Hence, the *SV* has *per se* existence. Then, turning to rectitude, which by this time Anselm has already identified with the *SV*, Anselm elicits from his pupil the conclusion that rectitude as the Supreme Truth “is the cause of the truth of thought and of the truth which is in statements; but these two truths are not causes of any truth.”⁵⁹ Implicit in Anselm's identification of the *SV* with rectitude is the following argument. Things must have an explanation. However, if everything must be explained by something else, then there must be at least one thing that is not explained by anything else because an infinite regress of explanations fails to provide an explanation.⁶⁰ Hence, there must be things that are explained by something else, which are said to have *per aliud* existence, and there must be at least one thing, which is said to have *per se* existence, that is not explained by anything else. Furthermore, only one thing can have *per se* existence because by definition to have *per se* existence is to have “maximal” existence and only one thing can have “maximal existence.”⁶¹ Anselm implicitly reasons that if both the *SV* and rectitude have *per se* existence, and that if only one thing can have *per se* existence, then it follows that the *SV* and rectitude are the same thing.⁶²

In short, the distinction between two modes of existence, *per aliud* and *per se*, enables Anselm to explain how the truth of things is related to the *SV*. Furthermore, this relationship is paradigmatic of how Anselm understands the relationship between the world and God: at once immanently related yet wholly different. Indeed, on the one hand, all that exists is in a sense true because, insofar as God has made everything, all that exists *exists* rightly. Hence, the world for Anselm, as referring to all that exists, can be loosely defined as the sum-total of truths. On the other hand, Anselm identifies the *SV*, which is righteousness itself, with God. In short, God is at once immanent *in* the truth of the world and yet, as *SV*, God transcends the truth of the world ontologically (since God is “maximal”) and both spatially and temporally (since God has “neither beginning nor end”). To conclude, with element (b) of DDS Anselm provides a concise account of how God is related to the world: God and world are at once ontologically different yet related. But what are the implications of incorporating (b) in (2)?

The challenge arises: can Anselm maintain his God/world relation without reducing God to the world or without turning the world into God? Indeed, it may be argued that the relationship Anselm lays out between God and the world, based on the existence of a *per se* being who is Truth

⁵⁸ Anselm, “On Truth,” 179. *De Veritate* 10 (Schmitt 10.3-4), 190: “*Omnia enim illi debent, ipsa vero nulli quicquam debet; nec ulla ratione est quod est, nisi quia est.*”

⁵⁹ Anselm, “On Truth,” 179. *De Veritate* 10 (Schmitt 10.6-7), 190: “*M. Vides etiam quomodo ista rectitudo causa sit omnium aliarum veritatum et rectitudinum, et nihil sit causa illius?*”

⁶⁰ He makes use of two principles about explanation, both of which he claims to know *a priori*. First, for any *x*, either *x* is explained by another thing *y*, or else *x* is explained by itself, in which case *x* is *y*, or there is nothing which explains *x*. Second, whatever exists must have an explanation of its existence. See, Joshua Hoffman and Gary S. Rosenkrantz, *The Divine Attributes* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell Publisher, 2008), 89-90.

⁶¹ For this reason, here Anselm returns to the opening words of *De Veritate* 10: “the Supreme Truth has neither beginning nor end.”

⁶² On a historical note, this argument, whereby Anselm identifies the *SV* with rightness could be considered a precursor to the Principle of Sufficient Reason and to the corollary of the Principle of Identity, the Identity of Indiscernible, both of which are systematically developed and applied by Leibniz in the 17th century. This idea is but a tentative conjecture.

itself and the existence of all the things in the world that exist *per aliud*, may result in pantheism. To say that God is a being that exists *per se* is to say that God is being itself (a conclusion that follows also from DDS). Although the claim that God is being itself has a long list of adherents in monotheism who adopt it to explain how God relates to the world, these proponents generally shy away from establishing the identity relation between God and the world because this would result in outright pantheism. An interesting exception is the Arabic philosopher Ibn Arabi who explains the unity of God (*tawhid*) by asserting “that there can be no real being other than God; that God permeates through all beings and *is* essentially all things.”⁶³ Unsurprisingly, later followers of Ibn Arabi developed a monistic ontology of the Koranic term *wahdat al-wujūd* (unity of being), which is a kind of *distributive* pantheism (“the view that each thing in the cosmos is divine”⁶⁴). The question arises, does incorporating (a) in DV result in pantheism?

Even if Anselm argues for the unity of truth (analogous and perhaps literally comparable to Ibn Arabi's unity of being), there are two reasons for thinking that Anselm is not committed to the *distributive* pantheism the way Ibn Arabi may have been (as his commentators argued).

First, whereas Ibn Arabi's starting premise is the unity of being, from whence derives the unity of the world and ultimately the identification of the world with God, Anselm begins simultaneously from both the multiplicity of truth and the unity of God and then concludes that God is truth. For Ibn Arabi the unity of the world is a precondition for asserting the unity of God, and it is the basis for asserting that God is identical with the world. On the contrary, for Anselm, asserting the unity of truth or of the world is a consequence of maintaining that truth depends on God who is one. I think this difference of approach to a similar problem is illuminating and worth further study. Perhaps Ibn Arabi's position shows that it is incompatible to maintain that God is one, related to the world, yet different from the world while denying that the God and the world are identical.

Second, it may be argued that, unlike Ibn Arabi, Anselm can maintain a distinction between world and God by employing the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (the way earlier thinkers such as Augustine does in similar contexts against the Manicheans).⁶⁵ In sum, the argument is that the

⁶³ William Mander, “Pantheism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP), edited by Edward N. Zalta, URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/pantheism/>, accessed throughout April-October 2016.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Interestingly, during the Islamic Golden Age, the Muslim thinker Al-Ghazali (1058-1111 AD) suggested that the doctrine that God creates *ex nihilo* (من لا شيء) is present in the Koran. Al-Ghazali cites the following verses (*surahs*): 52:35, 2:117, 19:67, 21:30, 21:56, 35:1, 51:47. From this it is possible to conclude that if Ibn Arabi had knowledge of the works of Al-Ghazali (which he may have) and/or of the Koran (which he definitely did) then either he paid little attention to the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* or he simply thought it obvious that even *creatio ex nihilo* could not account for the creator/creation distinction, thereby resulting in the pantheism he espoused. Al-Ghazali developed his views on creation *ex nihilo* mostly within the context of his critique of the “philosophers,” aimed specifically at Avicenna, who maintained the doctrine of the pre-eternity of the world. Specifically the use of *ex nihilo* by Al-Ghazali, see Al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, translated by Michael E. Marmura, (Provo, UT.: Brigham Young University Press, 2000): 219, 231 and 237. For secondary literature on *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* and specifically on Al-Ghazali's argument against the pre-eternity of the world, Peter Adamson has put together an excellent reading list in entry no. 144 of his online podcast “History of philosophy without gaps,” entitled “Miracle

basis for the unity of the world in spite of its multiplicity (of truth) and its relation to God is that the world is ontologically *like* and *unlike* God in that God creates or is the cause⁶⁶ of the world *ex nihilo*. Furthermore, to acquit Anselm from the charge of pantheism, through a constructive retrieval of Augustinian sources, it could be argued that for Anselm God causes the rectitude of things materially *ex nihilo* and efficiently *de nihilo*.⁶⁷

However, this argument would have to be reconciled with passages such as *Monologion* 8, which reads: “The second man made the first man from nothing,’ or ‘The first man was made from nothing by the second man.’ That is, the first man, who formerly was regarded as nothing, is now esteemed as truly something because of the making of the second man.” Here Anselm seems to be suggesting that the *ex nihilo* capacity of human beings is analogous to that of God. Most importantly, to acquit Anselm it must be clarified how the *ex nihilo* capacity of human beings is different from that of God. If the analogy rests on the *nihil* and human beings always begin “creating” from something, the analogy is not to be taken seriously, or it is to be taken in the metaphorical sense, or it is to be taken literally. I think Anselm takes the analogy to mean human beings create *ex nihilo* metaphorically, since human beings have no access to *nihil*.

To conclude this section, I have attempted to illustrate that at the juncture where Anselm uses element (b) of DDS to distinguish between creature and creator, Ibn Arabi invokes pantheism. This raises the question: what distinguishes an Ibn Arabi from an Anselm? Anselm is avoiding the otherwise perhaps unavoidable consequence that if element (b) is to be maintained, then God is all and all is God by incorporating element (b) into the second stage of his argument. Ibn Arabi's commitment to pantheism then has helped us to underscore the important role that element (b) plays for Anselm to avoid pantheism in *DV*. But if God is one yet different from the world, and if the truth *of* God is at the same time *in* the world, would not this commit Anselm to the view that

Worker: Al-Ghazali against the Philosophers,” URL: <http://historyofphilosophy.net/al-ghazali-incoherence>, accessed throughout April-October 2016.

⁶⁶ “EFFICIENT CAUSE: In Chapter 6 of the *Monologion* Anselm distinguishes three sorts of causes. The efficient cause is the one that more or less corresponds to our ordinary usage of the word ‘cause’ (though note the broader characterization of efficient causes in Lambeth Fragments 9). The efficient cause of *x* is what- ever brings about or produces *x*. The material cause of a thing is the matter out of which it is made; the instrumental cause of a thing is any tool that was used in bringing it about. To use a standard example, the material cause of a marble statue is the marble it is made of, the instrumental cause is the sculptor’s chisel or other tools, and the efficient cause is the sculptor. In Chapter 6 of the *Monologion* Anselm is generally careful to use different prepositions for each of the three causes. A thing is said to come about ‘by the agency of’ an efficient cause, ‘from’ a material cause, and ‘by means of’ an instrumental cause” (Williams, *Anselm: Basic Writings*, 417-18).

⁶⁷ Reconstructing such an argument for Anselm is plausible given that Anselm was a close reader of Augustine for whom the alternative *ex/de nihilo* distinction played an important role in articulating how human beings bear something divine (the *imago Dei*). In this first sense, humans are made *de nihilo*. At the same time Augustine avoids the anthropomorphic overtones that the Rabbinic interpretation of *imago Dei* usually carry, by making it clear that human beings are not of the same substance of God. In this second sense Augustine uses *ex nihilo*. For more on how the *ex/de nihilo* distinction is inscribed in Augustine’s theory of human identity and theology of *imago*, see Matthew Drever, *Image, Identity and the Forming of the Augustinian Soul*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013), 48-84. For a recent overview of the challenges that prompted Augustine’s changing interpretation of *imago Dei* see, Pablo Irizar, “La cambiante interpretación literal de *imago Dei* en el pensamiento de San Agustín (387-391): ¿dónde está la *imago Dei*, en el cuerpo o en el alma?”, *La Ciudad de Dios* 228(1).

God has parts? In other words, to rephrase question (iii), how is it possible for God to be at once the truth of things and in things yet not things without having parts? I discuss this question in what follows.

Third Stage of Anselm's Argument

In stage three, I discuss question (iii) (how is God truth itself, *SV*?) to identify the role of (c) in premise (3). Crudely put, the core argument Anselm advances in *DV* is that the truth of all things converges in the unity of a single *SV* which is God. This argument enables Anselm to reconcile premises (1) and (2). That is, Anselm can reconcile the claims "God is truth" and "God is the truth *in* things," thereby reconciling the multiplicity of truth without compromising the unity of God. Indeed, the unity of God (positively put) or the absence of parts in God (negatively put) is an implication of DDS. Element (c) of DDS can be located within premise (3) of DDS if we suggest that God has no parts because the *SV*, which is God, is one. I am arguing that element (c) of DDS provides the answer to question (iii). At this stage the pressing question becomes: (iii) how is God truth itself (the *SV*)?

Before directly engaging with (iii), a subsidiary question to question (iii) arises: why does Anselm identify the *SV* with God? I elicited Anselm's answer to this question in the previous section: only one being can have *per se* existence, and if both *SV* and God have *per se* existence, then the *SV* and God are identical. Anselm advances a similar argument in *Monologion* where he argues that the Supreme Good and God are the same. Indeed, that God exists *per se* is for Anselm "the most fundamental metaphysical truth."⁶⁸ This claim is not without nuance nor without difficulties, especially, as was discussed earlier, when trying to explain how God relates to the world. However, the point at issue here is, in general, that operative in Anselm's identification of God with the *SV* (and with the Supreme Good) is the view that God is not different from his attributes. In other words, God does not have parts. Of course, the thrust of this claim is to implicitly reject the view that God is composite so that there cannot be a real difference in the attributes of God. Hence Anselm can also argue that God is not only rightness, but justice as well, "Indeed, although it is not the case that the Supreme and Simple Nature (*summa namque simplici natura*) is just or right because it ought [to be or to do] anything, nevertheless rightness and justice are assuredly identical in it."⁶⁹ From the vantage point of upholding that the nature of God is simple (*simplici natura*), it becomes evident why God is truth itself in *DV* and why to answer question (iii) Anselm relies heavily on element (c) of DDS. However, element (c) is useful to show that God is the *SV* if it is the case that the existence of God is, like the rest of his attributes, identical with who God is, for nothing can be predicated of God, and therefore God cannot be said to be simple, unless it is established that God is his existence. In other words, element (c) of DDS can function for Anselm in *DV* if and only if God is his existence. But is this the case?

⁶⁸ Peter King, "Anselm," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (forthcoming), URL: <http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/articles/Anselm.EP.pdf>, accessed throughout March-April 2016, 4.

⁶⁹ Anselm, "On Truth," 181. *De Veritate* 12 (Schmitt 12.3-5), 195: "*In summa namque et simplici natura, quamvis non ideo sit iusta et recta quia debeat aliquid, dubium tamen non est idem esse rectitudinem et iustitiam.*"

Indeed, the strongest source of criticism against arguing that God is the *SV* would be to argue that God does not necessarily have *per se* existence. Such a criticism would be a re-formulation of the famous argument advanced by Immanuel Kant. In what he labelled “ontological” thinking, Kant argued, roughly, that to say that God has *per se* existence does not add anything to the concept of God. In other words, a specific mode of existence is not essential to (an *a priori* predicate of) the concept of God. Specifically, Kant argues that every available proof for the existence of God has proved unsatisfactory because “being is evidently not a real predicate, that is, a conception of something which is added to the conception of some other thing.”⁷⁰ Kant adds, “if I take the subject (God) with all its predicates (omnipotence being one), and say: God is, or, There is a God, I add no new predicate to the conception of God. . . .”⁷¹ Rather, the concepts “God” and “existence” are two concepts joined contingently so that the first does not imply the second.

In the 20th century, Bertrand Russell advanced a similar criticism from the vantage point of semantics. As a solution to the Problem of Nonexistent Objects, an implication of Russell's theory of descriptions, it could be argued that, like the term “existence,” the term “God” is not itself a name (of a thing) but rather a property. Hence, when we say that God exists we are really saying “the concept God applies to something, or something possesses the property of being God.” Whether that something exists or not is a different question. Hence, for Russell, it is not existence, as Kant would argue, but God that is a kind of property.

Together, Kant and Russell sever the *essence/existence* identity in God, thereby also severing the grounds upon which Anselm may claim an identity relation between the *SV* and God. For Kant, Anselm has no basis for claiming that either *SV* or God have *per se* existence. Russell takes the critique a step further: since God has no *per se* existence, even if the *SV* exists, Anselm has no basis for predicating God of the *SV*. Though the concerns motivating these critics are different from those of Anselm, together, these criticisms challenge the claim that God is simple and lead to the conclusion that, at worst, if God and existence can be conceptually separated, so too they must be ontologically separated and, at best, we will never know whether anything fulfills the criteria of DDS.

The thrust of Anselm's argument is not hopeless, however. Arguing from a modal analysis of the concept of God, Alvin Plantinga holds, in short, that if God exists in any possible world, then God exists in every possible world. In other words, logically, the concept of God implies the existence of God. Plantinga is not advocating a leap from a logical to an ontological necessity. At

⁷⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn (London: Bell & Daldy, 1872), 368. For a readily available, revised English translation, see Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Jonathan Bennett (2010-2015), URL: http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/kant1781part2_4.pdf, accessed throughout February-December 2016, 272-275.

⁷¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 368.

most, his argument shows that the belief in the existence of God is rational, precisely because it is logical. Hence, although Plantinga does not think that God is metaphysically simple, his argument supports the rationality of maintaining the DDS.⁷²

In this last section, my discussion of the nature and modality of the existence of God in Modern and Analytic philosophy did not attempt to defend Anselm from his critics. After all, as Peter King has argued, if we misunderstand how Anselm uses verbs in modal reasoning (as applied to the so-called “ontological” argument), it is often because we fail to appreciate its basis in metaphysics.⁷³ Indeed, in my reading of Anselm, that God is his existence is not so much a consequence as a function of upholding element (c) of DDS; that is, because God is simple, he is identical with his existence, as he is with all of his attributes. This last remark makes the point of my discussion clear: in the very juncture where the critics of Anselm would contest the claim that God is the *SV* because God is not his existence, element (c) of DDS is at play. Hence, the critics have only served to bring to the surface the presence of element (c) in Anselm's answer to question (iii).

Conclusion

In this paper I have assessed the role of three central elements of DDS in Anselm's account of truth in *DV*. These three elements are (a) God is one with the Godhead, (b) God is related to yet different from the world, and (c) God is not compound but simple. I argued that each of the three central premises of *DV*—(1) God is truth, (2) truth is *in* things and (3) God is the truth of things—which are constitutive of Anselm's theory of truth, depend respectively on the core elements of DSS, (a), (b), and (c). I conclude that DDS plays a central role in Anselm's account of truth.⁷⁴

⁷²Alvin Plantinga, *Does God Have a Nature?*, 146 ff.

⁷³For example, when analyzing what “nothing” predicates and how it fails to signify (rightly), critics often say Anselm is not contributing to what Aristotle has already said on the topic of semiotics. On the issue, Peter King comments: “Anselm’s reply to this charge is compelling, I think, although it is easy to miss, since it is not so much argued for explicitly as it is built into his very approach to the philosophy of language and its underlying metaphysics.” See, Peter King, “Anselm's Philosophy of Language,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, 98.

⁷⁴There are a couple of relevant features of this conclusion. First, my discussion of DDS in *DV* reveals that the treatise also has a Trinitarian concern which is worth discussing because it may challenge the common (now largely debunked) assumption that Western Trinitarian thought, following Augustine, moves from the Godhead to its Trinitarian nature, that is, from unity to multiplicity. It could be argued that Anselm's move from the multiplicity of truth to the *SV* is also a model for understanding the Trinity in another way, from the Trinity of persons to the unity of the Godhead. Second, since Anselm's moral theory depends on his theory of truths, it may be expected that DDS also plays a central role in his moral theory. Third, *DV* is “the first systematic account of truth in the history of philosophy.” In fact, Anselm may have been aware of this when he wrote “I do not recall having arrived at a definition of truth. . . .” It would be interesting to inquire into how (for it seems it was) and why DDS was later rooted out from theories of truth.