This paper is inspired by the challenges faced in reconciling the transcendence and immanence of the "classical" conception of God in a coherent manner. Critics frequently contend that the doctrines of the Trinity and divine simplicity are irreconcilable, with defenders typically resorting to intricate arguments or elaborate systematics to demonstrate compatibility. However, a more interesting approach entails presenting transcendence and immanence in a manner that naturally aligns with Christian thought, rather than defensively constructing logical frameworks to forcibly unite them. Though ambitious, I believe this endeavor is attainable and this paper represents my attempt to achieve it.

A keen eye may notice I have been fast and loose-so far-between immanence and transcendence on one hand, and divine simplicity and trinity on the other. That’s exactly right, this paper gets at the heart of how it can look like I’m being fast and loose with these terms, but there is specific ways these terms can be framed where they work really well together in a variety of ways because-when framed precisely-they are an expression of a succinct interval, and as we shall see.

**God is Immanentia Omnis:**

Translating the Implications of Individuation, Personhood, and Existence theologically

**Abstract:** This paper offers a novel perspective on the relationship between Actus Purus (transcendence) and Immanentia Omnis (immanence) in characterizing the Trinity. Specifically, it presents a new approach to expressing the Triune God's immanence by providing three arguments that lead to a formulation of immanence that is consistent with the traditional notion of God's transcendence. The argument contends that a comprehensive understanding of individuation and an emphasis on personhood can offer insights that can be translated into Christian theological discourse, particularly with regard to expressing the type of immanence required for the task. This analysis potentially sheds light on the nature of the Trinity, culminating in the innovative formulation of the Trinity as the interval T = [Actus Purus, Immanentia Omnis].

**Part 1:** A Plurivocal case for Individuation

**IA. Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to offer a fresh approach to articulating the transcendence and immanence of the Trinity through the ideas of Actus Purus (transcendence) and Immanentia Omnis (immanence). By delving into the metaphysical and logical arguments surrounding individuation, personhood, and existence, we hope to uncover new perspectives that equip us with the conceptual framework needed to understand and convey God's immanence and transcendence in a unique manner. Ultimately, this will pave the way for an innovative representation of the Trinity, formulated as T = [Actus Purus, Immanentia Omnis]. This paper moves on from classical thinkers and talks in a mode about individuation that assumes a received actuality in a plurivocal sense, focusing on the elements that individuate entities at the base level of their participation in that reception. Aristotle, Plotinus, and Aquinas have already taken us as far back as we can go conceptually. We move on from there and do not need to go that far back.

**IB. Argument 1**: Individuation of Entities with Substance: A Comprehensive Approach to Understanding Distinct Identities

In the argument below I attempt to put forth the claim that a good theory of individuation is a multifaceted theory of individuation, that integrates both metaphysical ideas and cultural, social, and historical influences. This argument tries to illustrate that such a theory of individuation should take into account form and designated matter, as well as causality framed as metaphysical dependence, and the realization of an entity's essence through the manifestation of existence. Furthermore, the implication is a good theory of individuation should underscore the significance of personhood, along with its ethical, legal, and theological aspects, where applicable (but not necessarily) in differentiating and comprehending entities that possess substance.

**Premise 1:** Individuation is a process that differentiates entities possessing substance based on their unique identities, characterized by a distinct set of properties that separate them from others. This process applies to both individual entities with substance and collective entities with substance.

**Premise 2:** A well-rounded individuation theory must take into account metaphysical notions contributing to the distinction of entities with substance, such as form and matter, designated matter and esse, metaphysical hierarchy, intellect, personhood (including moral, legal, and theological facets), and causality framed as metaphysical dependence.

**Premise 3:** Individuation is not exclusively governed by metaphysical principles, but is also influenced by cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape the identification and comprehension of unique identities.

**Premise 4:** Individuation enables the acknowledgment and understanding of the variety of entities with substance in the world and fosters meaningful interactions and relationships among them.

**Conclusion:** As such, an all-encompassing and sophisticated theory of individuation should integrate the metaphysical concepts of form and designated matter, considering the role of causality as metaphysical dependence in the connection between an entity's designated matter and the requisite conditions for its existence. The theory should also examine the actualization of an entity's essence through the act of existence, its placement within the metaphysical structure, and its intellectual and personhood attributes (including moral, legal, and theological dimensions) for both individual and collective entities with substance. Moreover, the theory should take into account the cultural, social, and historical contexts that influence the recognition and understanding of distinct identities.

It is clear that, even though this argument is valid, its premises are—to be charitable—contestable. For example, Premise 2 assumes that a comprehensive individuation theory should incorporate specific metaphysical concepts such as form and matter, designated matter and esse, metaphysical hierarchy, intellect, personhood, and causality. Critics might argue that some of these concepts are not essential to a comprehensive individuation theory or that additional concepts should be included. I personally think Premise 3 is controversial too because it contends that individuation is influenced by cultural, social, and historical contexts, in addition to metaphysical concepts. I typically am inclined to argue that these contexts have a limited impact on individuation or that certain metaphysical concepts can account for these influences without needing to consider them separately. But, for the sake of argument, I think the basic idea works, which is that individuation is a complex subject for entities with substance. The idea is that a comprehensive theory will have to consider more than one of the traditionally viable metaphysical contributions to the subject of individuation because so many important thinkers have developed these ideas in ways that are foundational to good philosophy.

Another benefit to this approach is that it characterizes individuation in a less reductive manner than, say, the logical and mathematical approach, which tends to speak of distinction in numerical terms. The issue with this math-like approach, although important and helpful, is that it is a metaphorical approach rather than an analogical approach. Humans are not objects of math; the reader of this paper is not the number one (for example), and typically, objects of substance can arguably transcend a limited space of reasons (true/false). Admittedly, a logical space that includes contradictions and gluts may correspond to the scope of all entities with substance; for example, in modern anthropology, people are typically characterized as a bundle of contradictions. So, there is importance to the math-like approach to individuation, but it is much less intuitive than a plurivocal approach with a metaphysical emphasis. Typically, math is seen as the language of God (a metaphor), and logic as the space of reason for right thinking (again, a metaphor for placing the act of being in sensible terms). However, this plurivocal argument for individuation does not have these deficits.

Finally, this approach is utilizing the insights of an argument to build a larger case, so the necessity of its truth value is not the primary concern. It is not controversial to say this argument is valid; entities with substance have a plurality of things to consider to individuate them, and some of the elements that make one thing not another are important to consider in their own right, which this argument allows for. One of those elements is the issue of personhood. Why is personhood not central in the first argument? How can we emphasize this? And will doing so bear more metaphysical insights as we move toward theological reflection about God?

For now, we leave the first argument with the insight that anything but God that is an entity with substance is variegated, but such a view probably needs a personal touch, or we may not get enough of a productive theological reflection about the personhood of God otherwise. In other words the inherent qualities of the immanent domain are important to get right because in the theological task there may be an analogue between the immanent domain of individuals and God’s own immanence if you will. So, let's move on to personhood.

**Part 2:** Emphasizing Personhood

A concern I have with the formulation of personhood in the first argument is that personhood could be argued away as not as important to individuation (of entities with substance) as it perhaps is or should be. Thus, while personhood plays a significant role in individuation, it is not as determinant of ontological status and context as a person would hope to see. There’s an intuition that being a person-like me-seems to imply that personhood is more important than the argument leads on to, or at least should strive to make it so if at all possible. Luckily, it is very possible to do exactly that. To emphasize personhood one can re-work the argument as follows.

**Argument 2:**

**Premise 1:** Individuation is a process that distinguishes entities with substance based on their distinct identities, which are defined as the unique combination of properties that set an entity apart from others. This process applies to both discrete entities with substance and collectives.

**Premise 2:** A comprehensive individuation theory should consider metaphysical concepts that contribute to the differentiation of entities with substance, such as form and matter, designated matter and esse, metaphysical ordering, intellect, and causality as metaphysical dependence, with a particular emphasis on personhood (including moral, legal, and theological aspects).

**Premise 3:** Personhood, as a fundamental aspect of individuation, plays a crucial role in establishing the ontological status and context of an entity and helps to differentiate and understand entities with substance more accurately and meaningfully.

**Premise 4:** Individuation is not solely determined by metaphysical concepts but also influenced by cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape the recognition and understanding of distinct identities, including personhood.

**Premise 5**: Individuation allows for the recognition and understanding of the diversity of entities with substance in the world and facilitates meaningful interactions and relationships between them, with personhood playing a central role in these interactions and relationships.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, a comprehensive and nuanced theory of individuation should prioritize personhood, including its moral, legal, and theological dimensions, as a crucial factor in distinguishing and understanding entities with substance. Hopefully, the true theory of individuation rightfully incorporates other metaphysical concepts such as form and designated matter, causality as metaphysical dependence, and the actualization of an entity's essence through the act of existence, but emphasizes personhood Additionally, such a theory should consider the cultural, social, and historical contexts that shape the recognition and understanding of distinct identities. But it is the significance of these later contextualizing elements that we see personhood needs an emphasis, which is why we have prioritized it here.

I’m inclined to say that the individuation of entities with substance is in some sense part of the project of personhood. But how far can we push this emphasis of personhood. Can this argument be pushed even further?

**Part 3:** Maximally Expressing Personhood in Light of Existence

Esse, or the act of existence, can be considered the foundation of all transcendence, as it represents a fundamental aspect of reality that applies to all things, regardless of their specific properties or characteristics. In this sense, transcendence refers to the aspects of reality that go beyond the particular qualities or features of individual entities and encompasses everything that exists. Esse transcends the individual differences between entities and unifies them under the shared quality of existence.

As the basis of reality, esse underlies every instance of existence, from the most basic physical particles to complex living organisms, as well as abstract entities like numbers and concepts. By being the common denominator for everything that exists, esse transcends the unique attributes of entities, providing a unifying framework for understanding the entire scope of reality.

In contrast, personhood is a more specific concept attributed to entities with substance that possess certain characteristics, such as cognitive capacities, moral significance, legal status, and theological significance. Personhood, as a characteristic attributed to entities with substance, can be seen as a comprehensive framework to understand the scope of all immanence. It captures various dimensions of entities with substance that contribute to their individuation and identity, such as:

1. Cognitive capacities

2. Moral significance

3. Legal status

4. Theological significance

5. Physical properties

6. Social relationships, cultural contexts, historical development, and interconnectedness

This paper presents an argument that personhood can serve as a (if not the) comprehensive framework to understand the scope of all immanence because it can frame ideas like cognitive capacities, moral significance, legal status, theological significance, physical properties, social relationships, cultural contexts, historical development, and interconnectedness. In fact, here this general line of reasoning in argument form to further drive home the point and attempt to maximize personhood given our reflections so far.

**Argument 3:** Personhood as the scope of all immanence

**Premise 1:** Personhood is a more specific concept attributed to entities with substance that possess certain characteristics, such as cognitive capacities, moral significance, legal status, and theological significance.

**Premise 2:** Personhood, as a characteristic attributed to entities with substance, captures various dimensions of entities with substance that contribute to their individuation and identity, such as cognitive capacities, moral significance, legal status, theological significance, physical properties, social relationships, cultural contexts, historical development, and interconnectedness.

**Premise 3:** These dimensions (1-6) are essential for understanding the scope of all immanence, as they contribute significantly to the identity and individuality of entities with substance.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, personhood is a sufficient framework for understanding the scope of all immanence because it can frame ideas like cognitive capacities, moral significance, legal status, theological significance, physical properties, social relationships, cultural contexts, historical development, and interconnectedness.

This argument suggests that personhood, by capturing the various dimensions that contribute to the identity and individuality of entities with substance, is a sufficient framework for understanding the scope of all immanence. The dimensions listed in premises 1 and 2 provide a comprehensive view of the characteristics that define entities within the domain of existence, and these characteristics are essential for understanding the scope of all immanence. Therefore, personhood can be seen as a comprehensive framework that offers insights into the diverse and complex nature of entities within reality.

Understanding the scope of all immanence is crucial because it allows us to recognize and appreciate the diversity and complexity of entities within reality and explore their interconnectedness and interactions. Some reasons why the scope of all immanence is an important concept include diversity and complexity, interconnectedness, identity and individuation, ethical and moral considerations, and a holistic understanding of reality. Personhood as the framework for this concept puts it all together nicely in my opinion. And with this concept now in place with a framework and terminology, we can reflect not merely on a nuanced view of individuation of entities but reflect beyond on what the concept does.

**Part 4:** Theological Reflection

This last argument introduces personhood as not only a key aspect of individuation, but a quite possibly a sufficient framework for characterizing the concept “the scope of all immanence.” This concept is the analog to a greater concept that has been heavily worked on in the field of theology, that is the concept of transcendence, specifically the transcendence of God (or the instance of transcendence God is).

In medieval and classical Christian thought, the greatest instance of transcendence is God as Actus Purus because as pure actuality, He encompasses pure esse or existence itself. This paper introduces a new term, Immanentia Omnis, to characterize God as the scope of all immanence, just as He is characterized as the scope of all transcendence through Actus Purus.

Christian theology is particularly equipped to speak of God in immanence like terms because the virtue of the revelation in Jesus Christ allows theologians to name God, and name God in a highly personal and unified way as the name of God is on some sense the Father, Son, and Spirit. For example the baptismal formula Jesus leaves baptizing converts to his discipleship, in a singular name of a triad, is a semantic consequence, or a meaning that expands the scope of immanence we wouldn’t typically apply to the concept of God without the revelatory power of it. And in Christ God is Supra-personal (beyond being merely person) even to the point of being a trinity. The whole Christological tradition has lots of tools to expand immanence talk so that God can be conceived as the scope of all immanence.

The emphasis on personhood in the context of individuation and the Trinity allows us to see the theological significance of the scope of all immanence. That is, the doctrine of the Trinity in Christian theology offers an expression that puts transcendence and immanence in a non-competitive relationship because it can act act a mean term for the full interval of God’s transcendence and immanence. That interval can be formulated like this, T=[Actus Purus, Immanentia Omnis].

In traditional theology, God's transcendence is expressed through the concept of divine simplicity, which portrays God as a partless and supra-being, beyond being itself. On the other hand, the concept of the Trinity refers to the inherent persons within this transcendent being. The apparent conflict between the idea of a "partless" God and the triune nature of the Trinity raises the question of how to reconcile the two. The interval approach offers a solution by demonstrating that the scope of ideas and concepts within the doctrines of the Trinity and divine simplicity are not in competition but rather belong together. Using the analogy of an interval expression, the naive realist approach of trying to reconcile the seemingly conflicting ideas of "one" and "three" falls short of capturing the true essence of the Trinity. Instead, the interval expression provides a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the relationship between God's transcendence and immanence. Additionally, the interval expression can be seen as a middle ground between the seemingly contradictory notions of divine simplicity and the Trinity.

This paper was developed with the assistance of Chat GPT. I came up with the basic idea that God can be considered as the instance of all immanence, and the interval expression, but through some creative prompting with Chat GPT I was able to build this paper as it came out. But, the use of AI in such a significant aspect of Christian theology, especially since the paper is successful on such a significant topic, is controversial; and, it raises the question of the eventual emergence of artificial general intelligence (AGI) joining the participation and project of personhood and entering the scope of all immanence.

Regardless of the future of human beings and the use of AI, the intuitive expression of God as Trinity, encompassing both Actus Purus and Immanentia Omnis, remains significant: T=[Actus Purus, Immanentia Omnis]. Hopefully, I met my motivation and accomplished the task of showing that the Trinity and simplicity are in fact inherently compatible because Christian theology is motivated by transcendence and immanence and can be easily formulated in this way that dissolves the apparent contradiction that divine simplicity and Trinity seem to present naively.

Matthew 13:9. Amen.

[a personal note. This paper reads more serious than it needs to be taken. I had a fun idea, and had fun with some Chat GTP. The idea seems to work in the sense it’s pliable enough to work if need be. But you be the judge and have some fun!]