Anselm of Canterbury

and the Desire for the Word

EILEEN C. SWEENEY

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For Louis H. Mackey (*1926–2004*)

My teacher, mentor, and friend,
who taught me to read both argument and rhetoric,
logic and poetry in philosophical texts

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDH	*Cur Deus homo*
DCD	*De casu diaboli*
DCP	*De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae Dei cum libero arbitrio*
DCV	*De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*
DG	*De grammatico*
DLA	*De libertate arbitrii*
DPS	*De processione Spiritus Sancti*
DV	*De veritate*
EDIV	*Epistola de incarnatione Verbi*
Ep.	*Epistola* (cited as numbered in Schmitt)
LF	*Lambeth Fragments*
Med.	*Meditatio* (numbered I, II, or III)
Mem.	*Memorials of St. Anselm*
Mono.	*Monologion*
Ora.	*Orationes sive meditations*
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina
Pro. Insip.	*Quid ad haec respondeat quidam pro insipiente*
Pros.	*Proslogion*
Resp.	*Quid ad haec respondeat editor ipsius libelli*

NOTES ON THE TEXT

Full bibliographical information for editions of Anselm's works cited using abbreviations is available in the bibliography. All translations of Anselm's works are my own unless otherwise noted, though I have consulted a number of available English translations also listed in the bibliography.

References to works in the existing critical edition of Anselm's works edited by F. S. Schmitt use the abbreviated title of the work given above, the book, chapter, section number, and the volume in Schmitt's critical edition (e.g., S I= Schmitt, vol. I), and the page and line numbers in Schmitt's edition. References to the *Lambeth Fragments* are to the page and line numbers in Schmitt's edition in the *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologies des Mittelalters*; references to other works of Anselm are to page numbers in their edition in Southern and Schmitt's *Memorials of St. Anselm* (*Mem.*)

Translations of passages from other non-English sources are my own unless the accompanying reference is to an English translation.

Finally, some of the ideas and material here were developed from my earlier work, which was published as follows: "The Problem of Philosophy and Theology in Anselm of Canterbury," in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown,* edited by Kent Emery and Russell Friedman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011), 487–514; "Anselm's *Proslogion:* The Desire for the Word," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 1 (2003); "The Asymmetry between Language and Being: The Case of Anselm," in *On Language: Analytic, Continental and Historical Perspectives* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), 157–77; and "The Rhetoric of Prayer and Argument in Anselm," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 38 (2005): 355–78.

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Introduction
THE PROBLEM OF ANSELM

The Coincidence of Opposites

> The point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one will believe it.
>
> Bertrand Russell, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*

Anselm is an important and early source of two key themes in western thought and spirituality. First, in his development of rational arguments, expressed in long chains of logical inferences and elaborate linguistic analysis, he appears to be the prototype for the model of pure, neutral rationality. The audacity of Anselm's willingness to submit not just the existence of God but the Incarnation, Virgin birth, and *filioque* controversy to the bar of reason, seeking necessary and indubitable conclusions is unparalleled. His faith in reason and in the power of words and arguments is seemingly boundless. Second, Anselm is far ahead of his time in creating an intensely personal and passionate spirituality in his prayers, meditations, and letters of spiritual direction. His letters display such emotional anguish at separation from fellow monks that they have been taken as evidence of Anselm's homosexuality, and his prayers and meditations describe a psyche deeply submerged in conflict and self-loathing. In these writings Anselm does not rely on independent reason but, feeling himself utterly worthless and dependent, throws himself wholly on the mercy of God. At least a century before we see these trends in wider circulation, Anselm focuses on the gruesome details of the crucifixion, takes on the persona of Mary Magdalene, uses female imagery to describe his attachment to Jesus, and throws himself, diseased and wounded, at the feet of Mary.

When these elements are placed together in the complete Anselmian

corpus, the result for modern readers is a study in contradictions. Anselm, the medieval author who comes closest to the definition of philosopher in modern terms, is also the creator of some of the most emotional, personal, and elaborate prayers of his time, focused not on coolly convincing the intellect but on arousing the passions and will toward love of God. Anselm puts forward modern-sounding descriptions of his projects as the use of "reason alone" to prove the existence of God, the construction of arguments according to the "necessity of reason" "clearly shown in the light of truth," and the use of "plain reasoning" to show the necessity of the Incarnation.[1] These arguments appear to be purely philosophical because they lack of explicit reference to the authority of scripture and tradition and their determined succession of formalizable arguments. The prayers by contrast exhort not, as philosophers are wont, the calming of the passions but rather the stirring up of feelings of love, hope, longing, and sorrow.

Even in the more argumentative texts, Anselm moves between similar extremes. On the one hand, Anselm famously describes his argument in the *Proslogion* as "that single argument which would need nothing else to prove itself than itself alone, and alone would demonstrate that God truly exists."[2] The arguments of the *Monologion*, Anselm asserts, are meant not only to be independent of revelation but to be beyond the possibility of rejection. Anselm's ideal argument is one that concludes in such a way, he writes, that its contrary is absurd and can only be rejected by someone who was himself "absurd."[3] That God exists should follow just as light lights, Anselm concludes.[4] In the reply to Gaunilo, Anselm claims that for someone to reject his argument amounts to saying that he cannot conceive or understand what he says. "If such a one is found," Anselm concludes, "not only should his word be rejected but also he himself should be condemned."[5] *Cur Deus homo* sets for itself a two-part task: first, to prove the impossibility of salvation without Christ, addressed to the infidels who claim the Incarnation is contrary to reason; second, to show by reason how salvation is achieved through the Incarnation.[6] Toward the end of the second book, his dialogue partner, Boso, claims that he now understands the whole of the Old and New Testaments, exclaiming, "I receive such confidence from this that I cannot describe the joy with which my heart exults."[7]

Yet there are equally compelling passages that seem to contradict

1. *Mono.* Prol. S I, 7, CDH, Praef. S II, 42.
2. *Pros.* Prooem., S I, 93.
3. *Mono*. 4, S I, 17.
4. *Mono*. 6, S I, 20.
5. *Resp.* S I, 138.
6. CDH I, Prol., S II, 42.
7. CDH II, 19, S II, 131.

these, claiming it is all a matter of faith rather than reason, of divine grace rather than human effort. In the *Proslogion*, Anselm places on God the responsibility both for seeking and finding Him. Since, trapped by the limits of his own nature, Anselm cannot seek that which he cannot know because it is so radically distant from him, God must perform both the act of moving Anselm toward God and of revealing Himself to Anselm. Hence, Anselm prays, "Teach me to seek you, and show yourself to me seeking you, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, nor find you unless you show yourself."[8] On this note Anselm concludes his first chapter in prayer, "I do not attempt, Lord, to penetrate your profundity, since I in no way compare my understanding with that, but I desire in some way to understand your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For neither do I seek to understand so that I might believe, but I believe so that I might understand."[9] What Anselm writes in the form of prayer to God in the *Proslogion,* he writes in more polemical terms in the *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi*, "Indeed no Christian ought to dispute how the things which the Catholic church believes with its heart and confesses with its tongue are not the case, but always holding those things by faith as indubitable, loving and living according to them, can ask humbly how they are the case."[10] Having confidence in human reason, however, makes one more likely to uproot his own horns (of reason) than move the rock of faith, and those who try to begin their assent by understanding without the ladder of faith fall into many errors.[11]

Moreover, just as there are passages that proclaim with great joy and certainty to have produced indubitable conclusions, there are others that express despair and confusion. The *Monologion* falters having reached the heights of ineffable being, as Anselm asks, "How therefore has anything true of the highest being been discovered if that which has been discovered is so alien to it?"[12] Similarly in the *Proslogion* Anselm asks, "if you have found him, why is it that you did not feel that you have found him?"[13] He finally exclaims, "I tried to rise to the light of God, and I have fallen back into my own darkness. Rather, I have not fallen into it, but I feel myself to be enveloped in it."[14] Midway through *Cur Deus homo* Boso

8. *Pros*. 1, S I, 100, 8–10. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones*, 1, 1; 1, 4; 1, 5; 1, 24, and passim. This and all works of Augustine cited from *Corpus Augustinianum Gissense,* electronic edition, edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1995).

9. *Pros*. 1, S I, 100, 15–19. Anselm here is, of course, following Augustine. For one of a number of places Augustine describes his inquiries along these lines, see Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 1, 1–2.

10. EDIV 1, S II, 6, 10–7, 2.

11. EDIV 1, S II, 7.

12. *Mono*. 65, S I, 76, 8–9.

13. *Pros*. 14, S I, 111.

14. *Pros*. 18, S I, 114.

is caught in complete despair over the apparent impossibility of the reconciliation between God and humankind.[15]

The emotional mood of Anselm's writing swings between ecstasy and despair, mirroring Anselm's evaluation of the success or failure of his arguments and prayers. Anselm, the proponent of arguments confidently derived from his own reason also reflects the "sinful, damnable, fruitless and contemptible" character of his own life, contemplating a soul so immersed in misery that (like the divine nature) any words to describe it fail.[16] In the lament for lost virginity, Anselm resorts to the reversible oxymora of "marvelous horror" and "horrible marvel" to describe the perversion of his own will and its plunge into the "inferno of horrible iniquity."[17]

The difference between the rhetoric of these prayers and spiritual meditations and the *Proslogion* and *Cur Deus homo* is not that the former embody the dark side of Anselm's spirituality while the *Proslogion* and *Cur Deus homo* express optimistic rationalism. Within the *Proslogion*, Anselm travels from the same devastation of loss, confusion, and loneliness to the ecstasies of discovery, insight, communion, and back again. He moves from reflection on his wretchedness as "one of the miserable sons of Eve, distant from God" and overwhelmed by his own iniquities to thankfulness for the divine illumination of his understanding of what he formerly believed only to fall again into his own darkness, into confusion, grief, and need. Yet still he finds his way to joy that is "full and more than full."[18]

Similar extremes characterize Anselm's letters and logical works. Like his prayers, Anselm's letters of friendship are emotional and full of the rhetoric of self-abasement and praise: Anselm writes in exaggerated tones of his anguish at separation from friends, and of the complete communion of spirit and feeling he either has or wants to achieve with them. In the logical works, there is considerably less directly expressed emotion, but extremes of intellectual conviction and doubt are explored in them, as Anselm's careful analysis brings the student from smug certainties to confusion and self-doubt as tautologies turn into paradoxes, identities into opposites.

Though I have laid out the problem in emotional and poetic terms, it is not merely a problem of varying moods or styles. There are real divisions in the interpretation of Anselm, depending on which of these voic-

15. CDH I, 22, S II, 90.

16. *Med*.1, S III, 76, 78.

17. *Med*. 2, S III, 81.

18. See the following passages to trace this complex emotional journey: *Pros*. 1, S I, 99; *Pros.* 4, S I, 104; *Pros*. 18, S I, 113; 114; *Pros*. 26, S I, 120–21.

es is given prominence. Philosophers and systematic theologians carry off parts of his corpus, while those interested in spirituality take others. Anselm is claimed by partisans of scholastic, monastic, and mystical theology. One of the most vexed questions in Anselm scholarship is its disciplinary location. Though the question of whether Anselm's work is philosophy or theology is ultimately anachronistic, the extreme positions that have been taken on this question reveal something about how incompatible the elements of Anselm's corpus seem to modern sensibilities. It is telling, for example, that Gilson criticized Anselm for being, in effect, both too philosophical and too theological. On the one hand, Anselm's work is not philosophy "because this inquiry, as purely rational as it may be, forbids itself any object other than that of faith and agrees with it entirely."[19] On the other hand, Gilson objected that Anselm inappropriately used reason alone to explore theological topics. Thus Gilson writes that Anselm is "recklessly" rationalistic, his pretensions for reason "indefensible" in attempting to prove "by conclusive dialectical arguments, not only the Trinity of the Divine Persons . . . but even the very Incarnation of Christ, including all its essential modalities."[20] For Gilson, Anselm fails by not drawing a line between what reason can establish (that God exists) and what it cannot (that God is triune and became incarnate) and by brashly considering it all by the same purely rationalistic method. While we can easily understand Gilson's conclusions as projecting back on to Anselm Aquinas's notion of the boundaries between philosophy and *sacra doctrina*, the debates over Anselm's disciplinary location continue, with one recent commentator describing it as "philosophical theology" and another as "theological philosophy."[21] Conversely, Karl Barth famously asserted the character of Anselm's oeuvre as *theology*—not hybrid natural or philosophical theology—from start to

19. Etienne Gilson, "Sens et nature de l'argument de Saint Anselme," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 9 (1934): 49. Though Gilson's claim is specifically about the *Proslogion* it seems *a fortiori* to apply to Anselm's other work. On Gilson's views of Anselm see Gregory B. Sadler, "Saint Anselm's *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* as a Model for Christian Philosophy," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 32–58. See also Eileen C. Sweeney, "The Problem of Philosophy and Theology in Anselm of Canterbury," in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown*, edited by Kent Emery and Russell Freidman, 487–514. Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters. (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

20. Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner, 1948), 26.

21. Gregory Schufreider, *Confessions of a Rational Mystic: Anselm's Early Writings* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1994), 300. "Theological philosophy" is Schufreider's characterization of the appropriation of Anselm by Thomas Morris but Morris's description of his work as "Anselmian in the two-fold sense of seeking to develop an exalted conception of God and striving to attain results altogether consonant with distinctively Christian commitments" sounds close to Schufreider's presentation of him. Thomas V. Morris, *Anselmian Explorations: Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), 7.

finish.[22] But even Barth had difficulty understanding how Anselm's project could be addressed to nonbeliever and believer alike without simply standing on the neutral ground of reason shared by nonbeliever and believer.[23]

Anselm's work invites and just as strongly rebuffs the question of its disciplinary location and not just because of readers' anachronistic projections. Anselm's confreres reacted to his writings in ways that show they, too, were both attracted to and puzzled by a kind of reflection in them they had not seen before. Lanfranc famously refused to lend his imprimatur to Anselm's *Monologion*, partly because, we can gather, of its lack of reference to patristic authority.[24] Gaunilo felt moved enough by Anselm's ambitions in the *Proslogion* to respond to it in the name of the fool, and a number of Anselm's works open with prefaces complaining that copies had been made and circulated in a form he did not intend and full of worry that he had been misinterpreted. Clearly, his works created a stir and their genre was misunderstood even in their own time.

Scholars in the fields of philosophy, religion, and theology have been largely content to compartmentalize these different elements. Philosophers ignore Anselm's spiritual writings and theologians and historians of religion and spirituality subordinate Anselm's arguments to faith and prayer. Anselm, however, sees his works as all of a piece. Anselm insists that he offers the same arguments to objectors, infidels, and unbelievers of various stripes that he offers to believers piously seeking to understand their faith.[25] Moreover, both of his most famous works, the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* combine mood and method. As meditations, they are imbued with the spirituality found in the prayers, and as arguments, they are assays not just of "reason alone" but aim to convince even those unwilling to believe.[26] We cannot make sense of Anselm as a thinker or of his place in western intellectual and religious history without making sense of this enigma.

Richard Southern argued that there is a connection between An-

22. Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, translated by Ian W. Robertson (London: SCM Press, 1960), 58.

23. Barth, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, 69–71.

24. We have only Anselm's request to Lanfranc that he approve and name the work or suppress it (Ep. 72, S III, 193–94), and Anselm's reply to Lanfranc's apparent refusal to do either (Ep. 77, S III, 199–200). In his reply Anselm notes, as does his preface to the *Monologion,* that he had not intended to say anything different than scripture or Augustine. On this exchange and its importance for Anselm's relationship to Lanfranc, see chapter 2. See also Richard Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 60.

25. CDH I, 3, S II, 50.

26. *Pros.* 4, S I, 104.

selm's intellectual and devotional projects in the monastic practice of meditation, a practice Anselm reconfigured to make his own. In the Benedictine rule, the function of meditation was for "learning the Psalter, or preparing the Lessons or the music for the Offices." In Anselm's hands, it becomes the means to "the free excursion of the mind among problems of theology," Southern explains, and the very personal and anguished longing and self-examination in prayer.[27] Thus, meditation becomes "a basis both for extended private prayer and for philosophical inquiry," Southern argues, and the two aims are intertwined. "The inquiry," Southern continues, "was scarcely distinguishable from the prayer, since the aim of both was to shake off the torpor of the mind and see things as they are in their essential being."[28] Southern's claim is, then, that all these moods and methods are the fruit of introspection, one kind guided by the intellect and the other by the emotions, one leading toward God and the other toward horror of the self.

For Southern, however, there are two different trajectories: one descending toward the abasement of the self, the other ascending upward toward God, and they are sequential, the first, the obliteration of self-will in the prayers, which is followed by seeking knowledge of God in speculative argument.[29] Like Southern, Thomas Bestul, lays out the importance of understanding the integration between Anselm's devotional works and his works of "rational theology" but still sees their relationship as one of tension and complementarity, the tension of "triumph and debasement, victory and defeat, doubt and certainty."[30]

The thesis of this book is that Anselm's corpus, from his earliest prayer to last treatise, is a single project in which knowledge of self and God are inextricably linked. These are not for Anselm, as they were not for Augustine, different projects but one and the same: the project (in a literal, etymological sense) is union of the self with God. What links the

27. Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059–c. 1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 53.

28. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 53–54.

29. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 104.

30. Thomas H. Bestul, "Uncertainty in the Meditation on Human Redemption," in *Anselm and Abelard: Investigations and Juxtapositions*, edited by Giles E. M. Gasper and Helmut Kohlenberger (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2006), 66. Some attempts at a more unified reading of Anselm can be found in Gregory Schufreider, *Confessions of a Rational Mystic;* Jean-Robert Pouchet, OSB, *La Rectitudo chez Saint Anselme: Un itinéraire Augustinien de l'âme à Dieu* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1964); and Ermanno Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense: The Case of Anselm and his God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). None of these important contributions to a more integrated understanding of Anselm engage with the complete corpus and all make narrower claims for their interconnection than I do here.

parts of Anselm's corpus is the union they strive for with such intense desire, the union of soul with God. The construction of the problems and solutions that describe the distance and effect the reunion are carried over into all of Anselm's speculative work, not just the ones engaged with the nature of God, but also logical writings, the dialogues on truth and free choice, and the letters.

The project of union so informs Anselm's writing that it is present not just in the content but in the structure of his arguments. In the great speculative treatises, arguments that reach necessary and indubitable conclusions—epitomized by the *Proslogion's* verbal formula that guarantees its own reference—bring about that union. In the logical works Anselm's questioning of ordinary language, exposing its ambiguities in search of clearer and more precise language, is the logical, grammatical version of the search for perfect union. In the letters, Anselm seeks the total union of souls with his beloved fellow monks such that there can be neither conflicting wills nor the real absence of one from the other. And in the prayers he pleads not just for salvation but for intimate union with God, Mary, and the saints as lover, son, and brother.

There is, of course, a sense in which all writing, not just philosophical and theological writing, is about joining word with thing, and all argumentative writing has a kind of implicit narrative in which the story is that of crafting premises that join subject and predicate in the proposed conclusion. However, Anselm's works shape this narrative in a very particular way. The path toward perfect union is a journey that begins at nothing, fueled only by desire. The emotional line begins in the immobility of sin, moved not yet toward God but to the recognition of one's sin and the impossibility of approaching God. The intellectual journey begins with nothing except reason and the objections of fools and infidels, without explicit reliance on revelation or authority. This is not at all to say revelation and authority are truly absent but rather that Anselm takes care not to make them visible as separate from his own engines of transport. His rumination so completely digests them that they are indistinguishable from his own reflection, blended into the single movement of thought and will stretching toward God.

Anselm not only portrays himself as beginning with nothing except desire but further presents the obstacles to progress as insurmountable; at the same time, he hopes for and promises success, both in prayer and reasoning; the goal is complete intimacy with God and others, complete certainty and indubitability in his conclusions. Over and over again, in all his works, Anselm creates impossible situations and then, in a way that astonishes his reader, manages to escape the existential straightjack-

et that is, for him, the human condition. In the prayers Anselm takes the most extreme steps to debase himself and elevate his addressee, creating the widest possible gap between his starting point and his goal. The paradoxical resolution is that the very greatness of God, the absolute and infinite goodness that so separates the sinner from God, opens up the possibility of union with God. In parallel fashion Anselm also creates impossible problems in his arguments. He exacerbates problems into contradictions and then, in astonishing reversals, transforms those paradoxes into claims that are not only true but necessarily true. In the prayers and letters sins that cannot be forgiven are forgiven, irremediable separation and conflict are overcome in the pure presence of perfect spiritual community. In the same way, in Anselm's arguments the will divided between justice and advantage becomes one for justice and gains all possible advantage, the freedom that seems to exclude grace is understood to require it, God who seems as if he cannot exist must exist, who cannot be just and merciful is the source of justice and mercy, who cannot do things is all-powerful, and the unity of God is not compromised but intensified by the Incarnation and procession of the Holy Spirit.

Anselm's version of the spiritual narrative of the soul straining toward God stretches the path from a beginning at nothing and arcs toward a point of complete consummation and completion. From his starting point at nothing, Anselm makes one giant leap, powered, on the one hand, by anguished pleas for mercy and grace, and on the other, by language and argument aimed at naming and knowing God. Some journeys of spiritual ascent are taken in small, measured steps (as in Boethius or Aquinas), but Anselm's, though laid out in many different works and on different topics, has the shape of a single arc upward. The end point of the narrative of the spiritual project is not just making it to God but to intimate union with God. In the arguments of his speculative project, the goal is not just words that represent things but words that guarantee their referent, not just validity and soundness but indubitability and necessity, convincing to doubters and opponents actively antipathetical to their conclusions. The path Anselm maps and then sets out to traverse extends as far as possible at both ends, from nothing to everything. The shape of the journey of the soul toward God, from nothing to everything, is that of reason as well as desire for Anselm. His arguments and emotions, in other words, are mapped on to the same narrative line formed by desire, desire both as lack and need, and desire as the impetus toward the beloved.

I make my case for this view of Anselm's corpus by reading its parts roughly in their order of composition. The letters of spiritual direction

and the prayers are Anselm's earliest writings; they lay out in the clearest terms the problematic and trajectory found in Anselm's other works. Chapter 1 lays out the narrative pattern of Anselm's prayers. The prayers uniformly begin in the depths of sin, but they work toward the point at which the sins that separate Anselm from an infinitely unreachable God are forgiven by a God whose very transcendence transforms the sinner, who is absolutely other than God, into an intimate.

Chapter 2 takes up Anselm's letters, which like the prayers, begin in anguish over separation, this time of beloved friends from each other, expressing intensely passionate, unsatisfiable longing. While the grace and goodness of God overcomes the gap between Anselm and the satisfaction of his desire in the prayers, in the letters Anselm achieves union by foregoing physical closeness for spiritual communion. Anselm redescribes the intimate physical presence he desires and is entreated to provide as spiritual communion with and through God. Thus, the letters move from the fallen language of sorrow at physical separation and anguish at human conflict to the redeemed language of perfect union in the spiritual community of those dedicated to God and to each other united in God.

Chapter 3 considers Anselm's logical, grammatical writings: *De grammatico* and the *Lambeth Fragments*. They are driven by the same intense scrutiny, now of language rather than the sinful self, to reveal the problems, asymmetries, and gaps that separate words from things. If the scrutiny leads to insight into differences and problems, the desire that drives it is, as it is in the prayers and letters, for unity, for linguistic unity and integrity. In this sense, though the whole of the narrative can be found in these small works, the first step, the acknowledgement of distance and difference, is most completely explored in them. In the prayers, examination results in consciousness of sin; thus realization of one's separation from God is the necessary condition for unity with Him. In the logical works, the painstaking analysis of language serves an analogous pedagogy: to achieve union, in this case, of words with things. But one must begin with the reality of separation. Just as in the prayers the first movement is the realization of one's separation from God, in the logical writings, learning how words only imperfectly map onto things is the first step toward creating the chain of terms that can carry the mind from the world up to God. The famous arguments of the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* are forms of argument in which one equivalent term is substituted for another in order to make inferential progress, but one must learn which substitutions can be made legitimately and not be misled by apparently common verbal forms.

Chapter 4 is an examination of the arguments for God's being and at-

tributes in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. In these works examination of the divine results in contradiction and paradox (untraversable distance) and are resolved into necessary conclusions (perfect union). Thus in the *Monologion*, Anselm argues for claims worthy of the highest being, but further reflection on those claims show that there are (apparent) absurdities that follow from them. These absurdities are resolved by explication of further attributes of God, which in turn result in more (apparent) absurdity. This pattern recurs in the *Proslogion* as Anselm moves from the apparent necessary absence to the necessary presence of God as existing, powerful, just, and compassionate.

The fifth chapter explores the relationship between Anselm's method of linguistic analysis and the problems of truth and the will in the three dialogues: *De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii*, and *De casu diaboli*. What is carried forward from the earlier writings is the search for linguistic integrity, for certain, clear formulations of necessary truths coming out of equally impenetrable paradoxes. What is different is that the subject is not the divine nature but the nature of created being and the finite and fallen will. Thus the source of difficulty is not the transcendent God beyond partial and fragmented reason but the fragmented character of finite and fallen being. Anselm thinks so deeply about key passages from scripture, he not only transforms them into probing questions, but the notions discussed in these passages become seeds of a philosophical and theological anthropology—on the nature of truth and freedom, of giving and receiving, on created vs. creative natures. The question of *De veritate* is that posed by Parmenides, how finite things can be said to be. It is concerned with maintaining the being and truth of creatures alongside a Creator, who is Being and Truth. The second and third dialogues are the exploration of both how the will can and naturally does accord with that truth (*De libertate arbitrii*), and can, nonetheless, fail to do so (*De casu diaboli*). *De libertate's* argumentative goal is to maintain the purity and unity of the unfallen will together with the opposite irretrievability of uprightness of the will once lost. *De casu diaboli* attempts to understand the apparently inexplicable transition from upright to fallen will. *De casu's* series of complicated distinctions concerning causality, ability, possibility, and evil are connected to the division in the will itself (the will for happiness vs. that for justice) and the world of finitude and becoming.

Chapter 6 takes up Anselm's three works on the Incarnation: *Cur Deus homo*, *De incarnatione Verbi*, and *De conceptu virginali*. These works are linked to the three dialogues discussed in chapter 5 in the sense that they take up the next point in the Christian narrative. After creation and the fall comes salvation through the Incarnation. In these works, the

methods of linguistic analysis and the search for necessary reasons continue to be employed, as in the earlier works, in the service of conclusions that are portrayed first as paradoxical and then as necessary. These works mark an important development in Anselm's work from an intensely intimate setting and audience in the monastery to a more public engagement with the language, debates, and polemics of the outside world. However, Anselm takes those public debates with external objectors and makes them intimate and internal. In *Cur Deus homo*, the objections of "infidels" become those of Boso as individual and believer who experiences his own perdition in the absence of Christ. In *De incarnatione Verbi*, Anselm takes the outrageous objections of Roscelin and tames them until they become the lack of understanding of the believer whom he attempts to move toward understanding.

Chapter 7 discusses Anselm's last works: *De processione* and *De concordia*. The more intimate, existential tone almost disappears in these pieces and what predominates is the public voice engaged with the larger world. This stance was forced on Anselm in *De processione* by Pope Urban, who asked Anselm to speak on the difference between the Roman and Greek churches on the procession of the Holy Spirit. However, it is a role Anselm takes up in earnest, no longer eschewing the traditional language of persons he had in the *Monologion*, where he concluded that God is "three I know not whats." These works immerse the reader in careful linguistic analysis but contain only distant echoes of the magnificent speculative leaps and spiritual introspection of the earlier works. Missing from the later works is some of the grandiosity of the intellectual gesture and proportionate emotional response in Anselm's best-known work. Anselm sees *De concordia* and *De processione* as speaking where scripture is silent, addressing problems that are internal to and implied by the creedal principles of Christianity. Perhaps as a consequence, their rhetoric and goals are less grand. They begin with more (not the nothing of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*) and end with conclusions internal to Christianity, not probative of its basic beliefs. Where the earlier treatises are equal parts argument and affect, these works privilege the academic over the devotional. Nonetheless, they share with the early works the desire for unassailable conclusions, the perfect match between words and things. We thus see within Anselm's corpus the transition to the scholasticism of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

1
The Prayers

Persuasion and the Narrative of Longing

Though the basis for the collection of Anselm's letters as it appears in Schmitt's critical edition are manuscripts derived from the collection of prayers and meditations Anselm sent to Matilda, Countess of Tuscany, in around 1104, most of the prayers were written between about 1063 and 1078, during his time as prior of Bec; thus, the form in which the prayers appear in the modern edition is somewhat artificial.[1] The manuscript tradition shows that Anselm's prayers were collected in a variety of ways, early on anthologized with prayers by others and without attribution to Anselm.[2] In this period, it was unusual for prayers to be attributed to any author and when they were, it was never a contemporary or even near contemporary but a saint from an earlier period.[3] More significant, perhaps, is the manuscript tradition in which Anselm's prayers and meditations were collected independently; these manuscripts identify Anselm as author and include a prologue on how the prayers and meditations were to be used. According to Thomas Bestul, this manuscript tradition is evidence of the development of "the notion of a single individual as an

1. An abbreviated version of some of the elements of this interpretation of Anselm's prayers appears in Eileen C. Sweeney, "The Rhetoric of Prayer and Argument in Anselm," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 38, no. 4 (2005): 355–78. See Ep. 325, S V, 256–57; see also F. S. Schmitt, *Prolegomena seu Ratio Editionis,* in vol. 1 of *S. Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, 132–50; and A. Wilmart, "Le recueil des prières de S. Anselme," in *Méditations et prières de Saint Anselme,* translated by A. Castel, Collection Pax 11 (Paris, 1923), xix–xxxiii.

2. Thomas H. Bestul, "The Collection of Private Prayers in the *Portiforium* of Wulfstan of Worcester and the *Orationes sive meditationes* of Anselm of Canterbury—A Study of the anglo-norman devotional tradition," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles au tournant des XIe–XIIe siècles: études anselmiennes, IVe session: Abbaye Notre-Dame du Bec, Le Bec-Hellouin, 11–16 juillet 1982*, edited by Raymonde Foreville, Spicilegium Beccense II (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984), 357–60.

3. Bestul, "Collection of Private Prayers," 360.

active spiritual guide, one who composes prayers to meet specific devotional requirements." Linking this thesis with evidence from Anselm's letters, Bestul argues that that "[Anselm] must have acquired a reputation as a spiritual guide or leader."[4] Anselm's collection "in its form, organization, and method of distribution is equally as revolutionary as [it is] in style," he concludes.[5]

Richard Southern first described Anselm's prayers as part of an "Anselmian revolution" in *St. Anselm and His Biographer* in 1963, and the claim of their distinctiveness has never been gainsaid, though there are, as Southern and others have found historical precedents for elements of Anselm's prayers.[6] The prayers draw on traditions from the Carolingian period of private prayer and are, in important ways, an outgrowth of monastic and liturgical practices. In the life of a monk of the eleventh century, centered on the recitation of the divine office, the practice and language of prayer, especially from the psalms, is as natural as breathing. A glance at the footnotes of Anselm's prayers in Schmitt's critical edition show that they are saturated with the scriptural references, most frequently from the psalms. Moreover, the saints to whom the different prayers are addressed were recognized in the liturgical calendar in use at the time.[7] Carolingian prayer collections in the growing practice of private devotion focused on elaborating the psalms and placing them in a Christian context, often with litanies of the saints. These litanies were expanded to include more details about the particular saint, their stories and special role, and extended calls for aid and mercy beyond the simple, "have mercy on us."[8] In addition, there was a growing trend toward the composition of prayers to Jesus and Mary.[9]

Anselm's prayers, addressed to Jesus, Mary, and the saints clearly fit into these developing traditions; however, like his letters, they are clearly something new on the scene.[10] They are much longer and much more elaborate versions of these earlier practices. What in other prayers amounted to

4. See also Bestul, "Collection of Private Prayers," 360.

5. Bestul, "Collection of Private Prayers," 361.

6. Richard W. Southern, *St. Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought, 1059–c.1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 38–47.

7. Benedicta Ward, "Introduction," in *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, edited and translated by Benedicta Ward (London: Penguin Books, 1973, repr. 1988), 29–34.

8. Ward, "Introduction," 37–38. Some of these prayer books can be found in *Precum Libelli Quatuor Aevi Karolini*, edited by A. Wilmart (Rome: Ephemerides Liturgicae, 1940).

9. Ward, "Introduction," 38–40. Prayers addressed directly to Christ began to appear despite a ban on such prayers in the liturgy dating back to the Arian controversy in the fourth century and the Council of Carthage in 397, Ward notes.

10. See Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 109–12.

a line or two added to the litanies' plea to a saint to "pray for us" and "have mercy on us" becomes in Anselm 238 lines in the prayer to St. Paul and almost 200 in the longest prayer to Mary.[11] Such a quantitative change becomes, especially as effected by Anselm, a qualitative one. The detailed exploration of the saints' experience and his own relationship to it is the fruit of extended meditation on the condition of both, and the result is an intense, emotional, and intimate form of prayer truly different in kind from its predecessors.

The aim of this extended and emotional exploration, as Anselm says in his prologue, is to stir up the mind to the love or fear of God or to self-examination, and the prayers are composed to model that desired result.[12] In contrast to earlier Carolingian prayers, which tended to exhibit a certain emotional restraint, Anselm's prayers are full of anguished love, longing and despair.[13] It is as if Anselm has taken the moment in the *Confessions* in which Augustine describes his tremendous struggle to convert, weeping and pulling his hair and clothes, and turned it into the dominant mood of his prayers.[14] As it is in this moment in the *Confessions*, in Anselm's prayers the will is the problem, unable to rouse itself even to know its own sin. Benedicta Ward connects this kind of moment in the *Confessions* with the doctrine of compunction important not just to Augustine but also Gregory the Great. A wonderful passage from Gregory captures the mood of Anselm's prayers perfectly: "A man has compunction of one kind when he is shaken with fear at his own wickedness, and of another when he looks up to the joys of heaven and is strengthened with a kind of hope and security"; there is, thus, a "two-edged sword of compunction, piercing with terror and tenderness, fear and delight."[15] However, though Anselm's aim is to evoke the kind of compunction described by Gregory, it is still Augustine to whom we can trace the way in which Anselm composes his prayers.[16] As Bestul notes, Anselm takes up Augustine's technique of inner dialogue, exemplified in his early *Soliloquies* (a term Anselm clearly had in mind in the subtitle of the *Monolgion* as "*id est soliloquium*".[17] Moreover, the kind of exclamations and "succes-

11. The average length based on a glance-through is around 100 lines, with the seventeen-line prayer to God (no.1), the shortest by far.

12. *Ora*. Prol., S III, 3.

13. Southern, *St. Anselm and His Biographer*, 34–47.

14. Augustine, *Confessiones* 8, 19–22. This and all works of Augustine are cited from *Corpus Augustinianum Gissense,* electronic edition, edited by Cornelius Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1995).

15. Ward, "Introduction," 55, quoting Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, book 23; PL 76, 292. (Ward's translation.)

16. Thomas H. Bestul, "St. Augustine and the *Orationes sive Meditationes* of St. Anselm," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 597–606.

17. *Pros.,* Proem, SI, 94. See also Bestul, "*Orationes sive Meditationes*," 598.

sions of agitated questions" used in the *Confessions* are ubiquitous features of Anselm's prayers.[18] Thus, though the rhetoric of the prayers owes much to the psalms, Anselm emphasizes and exaggerates their anguish considerably, and the figures addressed and the stories they tell of the soul straining toward God are not from the Old Testament but the New. All Anselm's prayers are concerned explicitly with the Incarnation and its consequences, not more generically with God, as are, for example, the prayers in Boethius's *Consolation*. There is also in the prayers a tremendous elaboration and expansion both of emotional responses and of details of biblical stories designed to provoke those emotional responses. Anselm's prayers anticipate the twelfth century opening up of the emotional life in the flowering of romantic love; the "personal passion" and "emotional extravagance" expressed in them are picked up in later medieval spirituality.[19]

In what follows, Anselm's prayers are examined in order to reveal how these elements—extreme emotion, dense concrete detail, inner dialogue, self-examination, and compunction—are put in the service of their most striking feature: the demand for union with God and the saints. This end shapes the emotions and narrative structure of Anselm's prayers in ways that make the problem of union with God parallel the problem of the union between word and thing. The narrative structure described in the introduction as peculiar to Anselm appears in the prayers in its purest form. That narrative as Anselm constructs it is the project of joining two absolutely disparate things: the sinful soul and God. But this problem, no less than the attempt to derive God's existence and attributes, is a problem of language. How can one whose sinfulness so thoroughly falls below what can be expressed find the words to address one whose goodness, holiness and integrity so thoroughly exceeds the speaker? As Anselm prays, he gives full voice to the impossibility of words to do what they are intended to do: successfully address the heavens for salvation. In this sense, the prayers are an exercise in "pure persuasion" or, in other words, pure rhetoric. Louis Mackey describes the interface of rhetoric and prayer in the following way:

> As the use of language to persuade, rhetoric posits a hierarchic relation between the persuader and persuadee: the persuader locates himself (at least verbally) beneath the persuadee. In prayer the worshiper abases herself absolutely before God, who is absolutely elevated. . . . By means of paradox, an-

18. Bestul, "*Orationes sive Meditationes*," 599.

19. Brian Patrick McGuire, "Love, Friendship and Sex in the Eleventh Century: The Experience of Anselm," *Studia Theologica* 28 (1974): 150–52; Southern, *St. Anselm and His Biographer*, 47.

> tithesis, and other techniques of verbal self-effacement, the seeker is humbled and God exalted. . . . The rhetorical act then proposes to reduce this distance. Its aim, as persuasion, is the communion of persuader and persuadee.[20]

For Kenneth Burke, prayer is "pure persuasion" because its audience, God, is ideal in the sense of absolutely unattainable, making the goal of the rhetorical act unachievable. The act is "pure" in the sense that it is divorced from any utilitarian goal and so, according to Burke, is a "sheerly formal use of such expressiveness."[21] Anselm's prayers are "pure persuasion" in a way inspired by Burke but shifting his sense slightly. Anselm is not engaging in the linguistic act of prayer for the sheer pleasure of it, though enjoyment of language and the engagement with problem of language for its own sake is clearly part of it, as we shall see throughout Anselm's corpus. But Anselm is intensely and passionately committed to trying to bring about the union he seeks, even as he goes out of his way to construct and even exaggerate the impossible rhetorical and, for him, existential situation. Further, Anselm adds to prayer as described by Burke a paradoxical solution to its insoluble problem. The very greatness of God, the absolute and infinite goodness of God, which so separates the sinner from God, opens up the possibility of union with God. Because God is so great and so good, he can lift up the sinner who is so worthless and so mired in sin. In prayer, then, the sinner can make a giant leap from the depths of hellish despair to a sense of entitlement to heavenly communion. The entitlement, however, is grounded in the addressee's greatness and mercy rather than on the sinner's merits or even lack of demerits. The prayers end in the hope and desire for this communion and in grief at the sins that postpone it.

Mapping the Extremes Part I: Lofty God

Anselm's first task is to depict the relationship between addressor and addressee, abasing himself and elevating God and the saints. This dynamic, repeated in every prayer, is perhaps expressed most succinctly in the prayer to St. Nicholas: "O your inundation of goodness, and my abundance of badness! How far they are from each other!"[22] What An-

20. Louis H. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word: Essays in Medieval Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 94. Cf. Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 176–80.

21. Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 34–35.

22. *Ora*. 14, S III, 57, 59–60.

selm describes in different ways and in detail in the different prayers is this distance and exactly what creates this huge distance between him and the holy ones he beseeches for mercy.

The first aim, elevation of the addressee, is effected most simply and directly in elaborate praise. Thus, for example, Mary is addressed as second only to God; she is "queen of the angels, lady of the world [*domina mundi*], mother of him who cleanses the world [*mundat mundum*];" she is "generator [*genitrix*] of the life of my soul, nourisher [*altrix*] of the one who repairs my flesh, nursemaid [*lactatrix*] to the savior of my whole substance."[23] Paul is the great apostle, coming after but exceeding the others in labor and efficacy; St. Nicholas is praised the world over for his miracles and advocacy, virtues, and powers, exceeded now that he is in heaven, and John the Evangelist is praised as the greatest (*altissime*) of the evangelists and the most beloved (*dilectissime*) of the apostles.[24]

However, Anselm is clear that no amount of praise is adequate to the goodness of God or his saints; hence, he not only praises them but argues that they are beyond his ability to praise. In the prayer to Christ, Anselm describes his praise as far less than what Christ deserves: "However greatly inferior [my praises] are to your beneficence, however lacking in worthiness they are to your devotion, however exceedingly meager they are for the sweetest abundance of your love."[25] The problem becomes most acute in the three prayers to Mary. A section of the last and longest of the three Marian prayers describes his unworthiness to speak of or to the Mother of God. He starts with a series of exclamatory praises and then stops; "What am I saying?" he asks. "My tongue fails (*deficit*); my spirit is insufficient (*non sufficit*)," he laments. He can think of nothing worthy and fears saying anything unworthy: "What can I say that I might worthily report of the mother of my Lord and God, by whose fecundity I am redeemed from captivity, through whose giving birth I am exempted from eternal death, through whose offspring I who was lost am restored and from miserable exile returned to the blessed homeland?"[26] He also tries to approximate a sense of her status and function by characterizing her in the most paradoxical terms and her activity as closing the infinite gap between him as sinner and God. Thus Mary is "the mother of the Creator and Savior," "by whose virginity my soul falls in love with its Lord and is espoused to its God."[27] Thus as he attempts to make his praise more adequate, it becomes less intelligible.

23. *Ora.* 7, S III, 18, 15–16; 19, 28–29.
24. *Ora.* 10, S III, 33, 3–4; *Ora.* 14, S III, 56–57, 39–58; *Ora.* 11, S III, 42, 3.
25. *Ora.* 2, S III, 6, 5–7.
26. *Ora.* 7, S III, 19, 28–38.
27. *Ora.* 7, S III, 19, 34–35.

In another prayer, addressed to the cross, Anselm praises it for defeating demons, renewing the world, raising the dead, and completing the heavenly city. "With what affection shall I glory in you?" Anselm asks, when, without the cross, he would have only the grief and misery of hell. How can he praise with joy and rejoice with delight at the cross, when without it he would have neither joy nor delight?[28] How can he praise that without which he would have neither anything to praise nor the emotional resources from which praise comes? It is, in other words, impossible to make a gift of his praise, to have it please the one he seeks to praise and persuade; he can only—at best—return a small portion of what he has received from them.

Because God is too lofty for him to speak to directly, he asks the saints to act as his intercessors. Hence, for example, in the prayer to St. Nicholas, he notes that the boundlessness of his sins requires an intercessor, and calls on Nicholas, a "great confessor," to hear his plea.[29] Addressing his soul, Anselm writes, "As a beggar you prayed through another, since you were not confident to go before him yourself."[30] However, though in prayers to the saints, as opposed to God directly, he begins with some hope of proportion or measure between his plea and its chances of success when addressed through an intercessor to God, this turns out not to be the case. Anselm depicts the saints, who are in principle as human as he is, in terms of their greatest intimacy with Christ and their highest office. He characterizes John the Baptist as the one who baptized God, who was born before God, who knew God before he knew people; St. Paul, as noted above, is the apostle who comes later but surpasses all the others; St. John the Evangelist "was his intimate, reclining on the glorious breast of the Most High," "the richest in love of those whom God loves;" Peter is "prince of the apostles, prince among such great princes."[31] In all these cases, Anselm characterizes the saints in terms of what makes them most unlike and most distant from him, again creating the greatest possible gap between himself and his addressee.

Like a good rhetorician, Anselm also crafts his plea to the particu-

28. *Ora.* 4, S III, 11–12, 24–33; 12, 42–47.

29. *Ora.* 14, S III, 55, 16–19. Though the prayer to St. Nicholas was supposed to be used for the transfer of a relic to Bec in 1090, making it among the later prayers if composed at that time, Southern argues that it doesn't seem to be particularly well suited for this purpose and seems much more like the earlier prayers. It is, he says, "filled to a degree unparalleled among Anselm's later prayers with the horror of hell . . . the fear of damnation." For this reason, Southern places it among the earlier prayers. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 111.

30. *Ora.* 12, S III, 49, 126–27.

31. *Ora.* 8, S III, 26, 3–6; *Ora.* 10, S III, 33, 3–5; *Ora.* 11, S III, 43, 7–8; *Ora.* 12, S III, 45, 6; *Ora.* 9, S III, 31, 3–4.

lar personality and position of the one he entreats, addressing each saint in terms that connect to the particular features of their life and work. In the prayer to John the Baptist, Anselm focuses on the cleansing of original sin in baptism, contrasted with his defilement in sin. He describes himself as "superimposing" the image of sin over the image of God, and compares himself negatively to Adam. Adam sinned without knowing its punishment while he, Anselm, sinned both knowing the consequence and having been forgiven and restored once. The last sections of the prayer address God but ask God to act "by the great merit of your Baptizer," repeating multiple times the plea to "take away" his sins.[32] In the prayer to Peter, Anselm uses the motif of Peter as shepherd and himself as lost sheep throughout. The longest prayer, to St. Paul, picks up the major themes of Pauline theology, moving from the theme of justice (by which he is condemned) to mercy (by which he hopes to be saved) to the struggle to hope from faith, and the struggle even to hold on to faith, viewing himself as dead but called through Paul to new life. The two prayers to John the Evangelist focus on his love and friendship and on sin as the enemy. The prayer to Benedict uses as its basis three images from the *Rule of St. Benedict*: the king and his knight, the master and his pupil, the abbot and his monk.[33]

Anselm works not just to differentiate the prayers by the particular characteristics of each saint but to connect his personal story to theirs. Thus to Benedict he confesses his weakness as soldier, student, and monk. In the prayer to Stephen, he focuses on Stephen's prayer as he died, asking God not to hold the sin of his killers against them (Acts 7:60), finding in that prayer the possibility that Stephen might make the same prayer for him.[34] The prayer to Mary Magdalene prays for compunction for his own sins and desire for God so that, like her, he may be forgiven.[35]

Anselm also takes care to make the significance of the distance separating him and the saints clear. These saints are so close to God that they, like God, seem infinitely distant; like God, then, they are too far away for his prayer to reach. Expressing this distance, Anselm addresses John the Baptist: "To you, sir, who are so great, holy and blessed, comes a wicked [*scelerosus*] worm, a wretched [*aerumnosus*] little man."[36] Peter is "rich with many and great gifts, with many and great sublime honors" while

32. *Ora*. 8, S III, 26–27, 19–45; 28–29, 79–104.

33. See *Ora*. 9 to Peter, *Ora*. 10 to Paul, *Ora*. 11 and 12 to John the Evangelist, and *Ora*. 15 to Benedict. On the motifs related to Benedict, see Ward, "Introduction," 70.

34. *Ora*. 13, S III, 52–53, 57–102.

35. *Ora*. 16, S III, 64–67.

36. *Ora*. 8, S III, 26, 7–9.

he, Anselm, is the poorest and weakest of men.[37] Moreover, Anselm notes that their very closeness to God makes it impossible for them to have a different perspective than God. He writes to St. John, for example, that since he, Anselm, has sinned against God, the friends of God should also reject him.[38] In a prayer to Mary, he reasons, "when I have sinned against the son, I have angered the mother, nor can I offend the mother without injuring the son." Since God has rejected him, there is nowhere else he can go: "[W]ho can reconcile me to the son if the mother is my enemy?"[39] In the prayer to St. John, Anselm turns John's friendship with Christ against his own cause: "Beloved of God, since I have sinned against your beloved, I am certain that I have deserved your hatred also."[40]

In their very proximity and intimacy with God, the saints can take no other perspective than God's and Anselm is, in the end, just as far from them as God. Far from increasing his chances of being heard, then, addressing the saints rather than God seems to decrease them. Thus, though the saints are mediators occupying some place between the lowly Anselm and the exalted God, Anselm raises them up so that he still stands too far below them to be successful in his request for their intercession—at least not on the basis of his proximity to them. Whether it is the saints, Jesus, or Mary, Anselm speaks to them as flesh and blood creatures, highlighting the paradox that they are human, as he is, even though infinitely better. They are both those to whom he can expose his darkest corners and those to whom he cannot even bring himself to speak. In so far as they are closer to him, it only makes them as compared to God less able to make the great and infinite motion of lifting up the lowly sinner. Thus the prayers most often move from the address of the saint to the address of God, and in a reversal of roles, God becomes intercessor to his saints, entreated not just directly to help Anselm but to convince his saint to do so. Anselm, thus, shapes the emerging practices of addressing prayers not just to God but to the saints and to Jesus and Mary (rather than God the Father) as an act of humility.[41] His unworthiness to approach God makes the mediation of Jesus, Mary, and the saints necessary, but even when he addresses the saints, he construes their position as still infinitely distanced from his.

Though it is difficult to convey in translation, Anselm shows a poet's

37. *Ora*. 9, S III, 30, 6–7.

38. *Ora*. 11, S III, 42, 19–22.

39. *Ora*. 6, S III, 16, 41–43.

40. *Ora*. 11, S III, 42, 21–23.

41. In the composition of prayers to Mary and the saints, Anselm is following a trend of the tenth and eleventh centuries, due partly, Southern speculates, to the dispersal of both authority and saintly relics. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 96–97. Southern also argues that Anselm's prayers to Mary mark a new development in Marian devotion. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 106.

consciousness of the sound and shape and not just the meaning of words in the prayers. "Rhyme, assonance, antithesis, the frequent employment of parallel grammatical constructions and closely similar words to express opposing or complementary ideas—all these devices are very common" in the prayers.[42] We see an example of this last, the use of words that have a similar sound but either literally or in context have opposite meanings, in the following passage: "If God looks down [*despicit*] on me, who will look up [*respicit*] to me? If God averts [*avertit*] his face from me, who will turn his toward [*convertit*] me? If God hates [*odit*] me, who will listen [*audit*] to me?"[43] Thus Anselm contrasts God's looking down (*despicit*) and his looking up (*respicit*), God's *inundantia* of goodness with his own *abundancia* of evil, and God's *aversion* to him with his own desire for *conversion*. How, Anselm asks, in another contrast of dissimilar meaning with similar sound, might Stephen, who asked for mercy when "provoked (*provocatus*)," respond when "invoked (*invocatus*)?" How, he continues, "will he favor those humbled when he is exalted, who when he was humiliated give succor to those full of pride?"[44] The use of related sounds but contrasting meanings in the parallel sets of verbs is a kind of verbal imitation of Anselm's way of creating tremendous rhetorical distance—the words sound the same or similar but in meaning they are the opposite. Here, then, in clear way, Anselm's use of the poetic device serves his project of drawing attention to the gap between sinner and saint, human and divine, and the way it will be traversed by extremes of human desire and divine grace. Beyond the kind of aural echo of rhyme or assonance, every prayer repeatedly uses balanced contrasts which are variations on the basic one on which the whole notion of prayer is based: lofty saint, lowly sinner. He seeks something that will excuse (*excuset*) him and finds nothing that does not accuse (*accuset*); he seeks someone to pray for him and finds that everything is against him.[45] "From these [miseries] piously redeemed [*redemptus*], in these [miseries] impiously destroyed [*peremptus*]," Anselm writes, in a series of parallel contrasts between what God made him and what he has made of himself.[46] For the prayer to Mary Magdalene, an inventory of the literary devices—interpellations, exclamations, interrogation, assonance, rhyme, repetition of inverse terms, parallelisms, antitheses—contains over fifteen antitheses and parallelisms, over twenty rhymes, over ten alliterations and assonances.[47]

42. Southern, *St. Anselm and His Biographer*, 45.

43. *Ora*. 14, S III, 55–56, 20–22.

44. *Ora*. 13, S III, 52, 80–82.

45. *Ora*.10, S III, 35, 75–78.

46. *Ora*. 8, S III, 24.

47. Victor Saxer, "Anselme et la Madeleine: L'Oraison LXXIV (16), ses sources, son style et son influences," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, 371–74.

Mapping the Extremes Part II: Lowly Sinner

The second part of creating the problem of the prayers, debasing himself, is accomplished by focusing on the extreme and hopeless character of his sinful state. Besides naming his actual sins, he describes his state in graphic and physical terms as decaying and wounded. In the prayer to St. Peter, using the metaphor of Peter as the good shepherd, he describes himself as the "sickly sheep" "groaning at the shepherd's feet" suffering from "full-grown ulcers, open wounds, progressive decay."[48] He is, he writes, doubly or triply trapped in evil. He starts out as a sinner but finds himself worse off than he had believed: "I approached you as one living and accused; and here I am before you dead and condemned."[49] He is not only "sterile in good" (having faith without works) but, worse, is "fertile in evil."[50] His own failure is made yet more dramatic by the second chance he has been given by the Incarnation. Anselm makes this clear by comparing his own situation to that of Adam. "He [Adam] abandoned God, God permitting; I fled from God, God accompanying me." While Adam "persisted in evil," Anselm is still worse, running toward evil while God is calling him back.[51] Anselm has both been given a second chance Adam did not have and has failed to learn from the example Adam provided. Thus his failure is more perverse, more unforgivable than Adam's.

In the prayer to St. Nicholas, Anselm starts out in despair over his sin and yet finds a way to lower himself still further. To reach God, he must lift his soul above himself (already an impossibility) but finds that his sins are so great that he can't make any movement. Then he considers the strategy of "spreading out his hardships before God" so that God might take pity on him. This too fails because of the limitlessness of his sin. He might succeed, he suggests, if his heart were truly contrite, but, alas, he laments, "my soul is overwhelmed by inertia," held down by his sins.[52] The sins themselves he describes as part of a triple abyss: the abyss of the sins themselves, the abyss of the torments of sin (hell), and the abyss of divine justice. Despite the spatial impossibility he describes himself as surrounded by these three abysses, one above, God's judgments, one below, hell, and one which he is in or rather which is in him, his sins themselves. "I fear the one that hangs over me, lest it collapse on me and with my abyss and crush me into the abyss which is revealed below."[53] In this carefully worked out image, Anselm constructs what Ward calls one of

48. *Ora.* 9, S III, 31, 32–33.
49. *Ora.* 10, S III, 37, 121–22.
50. *Ora.* 10, S III, 36, 101–12.
51. *Ora.* 8, S III, 27, 39–40; 40–41.
52. *Ora.* 14, S III, 55, 13–14; 57, 76.
53. *Ora.* 14, S III, 59–60, 135–46.

his greatest prayers "for its balance of the sense of the holiness of God and the peril of sin."[54]

Anselm is not content simply to describe the depths to which he has fallen; he also constructs his situation as a double bind, as an abyss from which he cannot even in principle extricate himself. Anselm cannot reveal his sins because they are "detestable" and would make him detested, but, on the other hand, sins cannot be forgiven unless they are confessed. "I am so defiled by horrible filth," he writes to Mary, "that I am afraid you will turn your merciful face from (*avertatur*) me. So wasting away with despair I look to you for conversion (*conversionem*), for even my lips are mute to prayer."[55] In the prayer to St. John the Baptist, he further elaborates his hopeless situation. On the one hand, he must examine himself and know his own sinfulness since to remain self-deceived is the sure road to damnation. Yet this task cannot be accomplished for, he argues, any amount of self-examination would either be incomplete or unbearable: "If you could bear [looking at your sins], without a horror of grief, you would not be able to tolerate your toleration."[56] So, examining himself wholly and truthfully is impossible since, from the horror of it, he would be unable to carry it out, or if he could, he would be horrified by his own ability to do it. But carrying it out incompletely or not at all is equally damning. "If I look at myself, it is an intolerable horror; if I do not look at myself, death is unavoidable."[57]

In the prayer to St. Benedict, the double bind follows from Anselm's monastic profession. He notes first his inability to live the life of virtue, describing his sins as so many and so strong that they drag him around and trample him underfoot. Even in what looks like his brave fight against sin he is really, he confesses, a "false monk." Hence, he cannot call himself a monk because he is not true to the monastic way of life, but if he denies he is a monk, he also lies. Hence, he concludes, quoting the book of Daniel, "anguish closes me in on every side," for "if I deny my sovereign king, my good teacher and my profession, it is death to me. But if I profess to be a soldier, scholar, and monk, my life argues that I am a liar; it is a judgment against me."[58] He attempts to find his way out, having failed at worthiness, concealed in faith which would hide his sinfulness. However, he recalls in another prayer, "faith without works is dead," which he takes to mean he is condemned because of his "fertility" in evil and "sterility" in good.[59] He is no longer merely accused but condemned, not just

54. Ward, "Introduction," 70.
55. *Ora.* 5, S III, 13, 14–16.
56. *Ora.* 8, S III, 27, 48–49.
57. *Ora.* 8, S III, 28, 57–58.
58. Dan. 13:22. *Ora.* 15, S III, 62–63, 29–31; 63, 35; 63, 39–43.
59. *Ora.* 10, S III, 36, 95–100; Jas. 2:20, 26.

sick but dead, beyond any possible help. The inability and unworthiness on his side are complete. Anselm cannot even move his will in the right direction; he has not and cannot even begin the journey.

The problems of language in the prayers are not just about addressing God and the saints. Anselm spends a great deal of time in the prayers addressing not just his soul but also his sins and sinful self, which are, like the divine, beyond words, though for a different reason. "Flee, flee, from yourself," he commands, calling his sinful self a "horrible I-know-not-what substance," language which will be echoed in the *Monologion's* characterization of the Trinity as "three I-know-not-whats."[60] "Sins, sins," Anselm cries, "the more horrible, the more considered."[61] Sin exerts a downward pull of sin on the mind, just as increased reflection on things divine, and even the saints, pulls the mind upward toward greater and greater perfection, reaching its apex, of course, in the *Proslogion's* "that than which none greater can be conceived." Recalling Augustine's address to concupiscence in the *Confessions*, Anselm addresses his sins in the cold morning light after his seduction and deception. When you were attracting me, he reflects ruefully, you made sweet promises; now that you have dragged me down, I am bathed in bitterness. They have, he tells them, left him not just fallen but buried, blinded and imprisoned in insensate despair. In a perfect and literal vicious circle, his sins beget more evil from their evil; they "attract accusers" and "remove excusers," "lead in [*adducitis*] those who would damn him" and "exclude [*excluditis*] those who would intercede for him."[62] In his prayer to the Evangelist, Anselm portrays sin as a kind of moral quicksand, using, three verbs in quick succession based on "*ducto*" (*abduct*, *perduct*, *subduct*) to describe their downward pull.[63]

Uniting the Extremes

The last step in creating the impossible rhetorical situation lies in the nature of Anselm's request: intimacy with God. The impossibility of even addressing God, Mary, and the saints, both because of their loftiness and his lowliness, stands in stark contrast with the almost presumptuous way in which Anselm attempts to insinuate himself into their good graces. To St. John Anselm issues a challenge: how can Anselm know that Christ loves John or that John loves Christ if John does not intervene for him, proving his intimacy with Christ by his ability to gain mercy for Anselm?[64] He adds only this disclaimer in the second prayer to John: "Ex-

60. *Ora*. 8, S III, 27, 46; *Mono*. 79, S I, 85.
61. *Ora*. 11, S III, 43, 27.
62. *Ora*. 10, S III, 35, 56–57; 35, 66–68; 34, 33–36.
63. *Ora*. 11, S III, 43, 28.
64. *Ora*. 11, S III, 44, 75–78.

cuse my excesses, beloved of God. For it is your love that compels me to speak so."[65] In a prayer to Mary, Anselm throws himself between mother and son and leaps from one to the other, like a child moving from father to mother to find the one who be more lenient: "So the accused flees from the just God to the pious mother of the merciful God. The accused finds refuge from the mother he has offended in the pious son of the kind mother. He throws himself on both and between both. He casts himself among the pious mother and pious son."[66] He addresses St. Paul's using Paul's own words. Paul promised to be weak with the weak, described himself as made to be all things to all men, said that for him God's grace was sufficient; so, Anselm argues, Paul especially ought to take pity on him.

Throughout the prayers, Anselm speaks to his addressees with surprising familiarity. Anselm writes in the prayer to Mary that he desires always to be with her, that his heart is "weak with love for her." For Mary, he writes, "my soul melts, my flesh fails." Paradoxically and unlike physical love, Mary's love, he says, would make his body "dry up" and wither.[67] If Mary is addressed in terms of sexual love, Paul is addressed as mother: "O St. Paul, where is he that was called the nurse of the faithful, tending to his sons? Who is that affectionate mother who declares everywhere that she is in labor giving birth a second time to her sons? Sweet nurse, sweet mother." Christians are born and nursed in the faith by all the apostles but most by Paul, "our great mother," Anselm notes. Jesus is mother as well; he is like a mother hen, Anselm goes on, piling metaphor on metaphor, gathering her baby chicks under her wings. He asks Paul to lay his warm body atop his dead body and warm it back to life.[68] The sinner's condition of exile is described in familial terms: he is an orphan, his soul is a widow having lost its one true love.[69] What Anselm seeks is not the distant benevolence of a sovereign but the intimate connection with God and the saints as his mother, father, brother, and lover.

The use of imagery drawn from the family for the relationships to God, Paul, and the other saints is a strong theme in Anselm's prayers, becoming common in twelfth century spirituality, partly because of Anselm.[70] The image that has received the most attention is the image of

65. *Ora*. 12, S III, 48, 81.
66. *Ora*. 6, S III, 16, 45–47.
67. *Ora*. 7, S III, 24, 158–62.
68. *Ora*. 10, S III, 39, 177–79; 182–84; 40, 197–98; 38, 137–41.
69. *Ora*. 2, S III, 9, 81–82.
70. On the influence of Anselm's prayers in the twelfth century, see J. Lewicki, "Anselme et les doctrines des Cistercians du XIIe siècle," *Analecta Anselmiana* 2 (1970): 209–16; and S. Vanni Rovighi, "Notes sur l'influence de saint Anselme au XIIe siècle," *Cahiers de civilization médiévale* 8 (1965): 43–58. On the use of analogies taken from human families to describe the relationship with God in the twelfth century see R. Javelet, *Image et resemblance au douzième siècle de saint Anselm à Alain de Lille*, 2 vols. (Paris, University of Strasbourg, 1967).

Jesus as mother, especially due to the influential essay of Carolyn Walker Bynum on the topic.[71] Though Bynum's analysis is focused on the twelfth century and the particular use of this image by Cistercians, her cautions about understanding this and other images for Christ applies to Anselm as well. While this sort of feminine imagery was long ignored by scholars, it can be made too much of. Given the much weaker connection between notions of the feminine and women in the Middle Ages, Jesus (or Paul) as mother does not tell us much about the writer's attitude toward women in general or in particular, Bynum cautions. Moreover, it is only one image in a cluster of other intimate and domestic images in both Anselm and in twelfth century writers.[72] Anselm's use of the image of Jesus and Paul as mothers is part of a pattern in the prayers of a number of analogies to signify the intimate connection with God he is seeking. The language seeking brotherhood with Jesus in one of the Marian prayers is just as striking as the image of Jesus as mother, as is the language used in the second prayer to John the Evangelist asking to be included in the love between John and Jesus.[73] Moreover, Anselm uses the imagery associated with motherhood and the feminine, for example, wanting to drink from Jesus as font of mercy, from whom flowing waters come, without making reference to femininity at all.

It is perhaps significant that the prayer to St. Paul is the longest prayer and that it is the one that dwells on the image of Jesus and Paul as nurse, mother, and mother hen with her chicks. As we will see, the Pauline notion that everything is received from God is very important in Anselm's theology, and Anselm here explores this notion poetically in its greatest depth in the prayer dedicated to its author, Paul, invoking him as nurse and mother of the faithful.[74] Though she does not make the Pauline connection, Bynum argues that similar imagery in twelfth century Cistercian writers clearly influenced by Anselm serves exactly this end: "The Cistercian conception of Jesus as mother and abbot as mother reveals not an attitude toward women but a sense (not without ambiva-

71. Caroline Walker Bynum, "Jesus as Mother and Abbot as Mother: Some Themes in Twelfth-Century Cistercian Writing," in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 110–69. For some of the earlier research on the motif of Jesus as mother see André Cabassut, "Une devotion médiévale peu connue: la devotion à 'Jésus Notre Mère,'" *Mélanges Marcel Viller, Revue d'ascètique et de mystique* 25 (1949): 234–45; Edmund Colledge, OSA and James Walsh, SJ, "Introduction," in *A Book of Showings to the Anchoress Julian of Norwich*, 2 vols., edited by Edmund Colledge, OSA and James Walsh, SJ (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978); and Giles Constable, "Twelfth-Century Spirituality and the Late Middle Ages," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 5 (1971): 45–47.

72. Bynum, "Jesus as Mother," 167–68.

73. *Ora*. 7, S III, 23–24, 137–51; *Ora*. 12, S III, 47–48, 71–81.

74. See chapter 5, section c.

lence) of a need and obligation to nurture other men, a need and obligation to achieve intimate dependence on God."[75]

The prayers not only ask for intimacy in the analogies to intimate human relationships but they also seek an intimate connection with the events of Jesus' life. The prayer to Mary Magdalene imagines at great length her anguish as she searches at the empty tomb for the body of Christ. Anselm chides Jesus for leaving her in uncertainty, for inspiring a love she now feels is ignored; why does Jesus (and then later the angel at the tomb) ask the cause of her weeping when he well knows the answer?[76] Anselm portrays her feelings as she seeks Jesus' body in the tomb without success. What was to be her last comfort for the loss of his life is the apex of her grief and the loss of all hope. The theme of the Magdalene in despair is not an ancient theme. Traditionally she was either characterized by her hope and the constancy of her faith or chided (by Gregory the Great) for fleshly character of her love.[77] But Anselm has turned her grief, her emotional response to Jesus, into her virtue. He asks Christ to look at her: "see how she anxiously burns with desire for you, searching, questioning, but nowhere does that which she seeks appear. Whatever she sees displeases her since it is you alone she would behold and she sees you not."[78] The hope is that Christ, once aware of her grief at his absence will answer her fervent desire with his presence. It is a very realistic picture of the anxious emotions of a woman for the man she loves. The portrait is intimate both in its close-up of Mary and her feelings and in the Christ it addresses and rebukes for playing with her very tender feelings. Anselm clearly identifies with Mary's anxiety and her longing for Jesus, finding in her an expression of what he himself desires.

This is of a piece with the way in which Anselm attempts to imagine the concrete details of the lives and feelings of the other saints and Christ. He mourns the absence of one kind of intimacy, not having been physically present for the crucifixion of Christ or the martyrdom of St. Stephen, at the same time as he asks for a kind of spiritual but real intimacy in the future. "Why, O my soul," he asks in the prayer to Christ, "were you not present to be pierced by a sword of keenest sorrow when you could not endure the wounding of the side of your Savior with a lance?" He believes by faith that the crucifixion took place as described but still "weep[s] over the hardship of exile" and "burns with desire for the glorious contemplation of [God's] face." He continues to imagine what it would have been like to experience the sorrows of Mary on that day, to

75. Bynum, "Jesus as Mother," 168.
76. *Ora*. 16, S III, 65–66, 37–50.
77. Saxer, "Anselme et la Madeleine," 368.
78. *Ora*. 16, S III, 66, 58–60.

have taken Jesus' body down with Joseph of Arimathea, to have heard the angel's announcement of the resurrection. He concludes, asking Jesus, "When will you restore me since I did not see the blessed incorruption of your flesh? Since I did not kiss the place of your wounds where the nails were fixed? Since I did not sprinkle tears of joy on the wounds that bear witness to your true body?"[79]

Anselm's desire for the union the prayers make clear is impossible calls forth the strong emotions of the prayers. These emotions are a response to the infinite distance from the good (grief), the proximity of total loss (fear, anxiety), and the aspiration to reach that good (longing, desire). To Christ he writes, "I thirst for you, I hunger for you, I desire you, I sigh for you, I covet you." "I am," he continues, "like an orphan deprived of the presence of the kindest father, weeping and wailing, incessantly embracing the beloved figure with his whole heart."[80]

Anselm sees passion as something that focuses and torpor or lack of feeling as something that scatters his thoughts. In fact, the real beginning of Anselm's prayers is lethargy, a kind of non-emotion.[81] The worst thing that Anselm can accuse himself of is not of being overcome by passion but rather of not being able to feel anything; his most grievous sins are that he lacks grief over his own sin and lacks a keen desire for and love of God. The bottom of the long fall into sin is to find oneself "frozen fast in despair, silent and insensible, as if lost to God and thrown into forgetfulness of him."[82] Anselm asks Nicholas to "stir up his spirit" but notes in frustration that his "tepid soul languishes" and his heart is hardened with "stupor."[83]

For Anselm, then, the options are not passion for physical things versus the lack of passion that allows detachment from the world. Rather the contrast is between a lack of passion and direction toward good, which he sees as the result of sin, and the desire for and movement toward good: "My perverse heart is dry and petrified in deploring the sins I have committed; but in resisting occasions of sin it is indeed yielding and soon defiled. My depraved mind is swift and untiring in treating what is useless and vile; but in thinking of what is salubrious it is squeamish and unmoved."[84] Lack of feeling is thus the equivalent of a lack of positive motion toward the good; it is the first and most devastating nail in his coffin, that which constitutes the greatest barrier to his own salva-

79. *Ora.* 2, S III, 8, 42–43, 36–38, 56–62, 63–65.
80. *Ora.* 2, S III, 7, 30–32.
81. See, for example, *Ora.* 9, S III, 30, 12–15.
82. *Ora.* 10, S III, 35, 61–63.
83. *Ora.* 14, S III, 57, 75–76.
84. *Ora.* 15, S III, 62, 20–23.

tion. Without compunction he is not only at the bottom of an inextricable abyss but is without even the desire to extricate himself.

Anselm does not, then, take Stoic advice to free himself from passion. Instead his first goal is to stir up passion, to intensify the experiences of desire and grief, of love of God and loathing of self. The rejection of passion assumes that emotions are only evoked by the material world. But Anselm, while retaining the passions even in their material manifestations of the passions—tears, caresses, swoons—transfers them from physical to spiritual objects. Where the Stoics and even the Christian Boethius, for example, think of liberation as the liberation from emotion, Anselm's liberation is the liberation of the emotions from the prison of sin. Boethius prays in decorous formality; Anselm basks in self-exposure and self-flagellation. Boethius's God remains the distant though revered principle and end of creation, while Anselm's is mother, father, brother, and lover.[85]

Arguing for Salvation

The most persistent pattern of the prayers is that in the midst of this impossible situation, Anselm still finds room to make an "argument" that he can and must be saved. "Give me what you have made me want, grant that I may love you as you command as much as you deserve;" "perfect what you have started, give me what you have made me desire," Anselm demands in the prayer to Christ.[86] Everything he has comes from God, what he has made of himself is, as he points out, precisely nothing.[87] Therefore, if he is going to get what he desires, full love for and commitment to God, which God also commands him to give to God, God is going to have to give it to him in order that he give it back to God. Impossible, except that God's infinite goodness and mercy makes it possible. In this way, Anselm manages to solve the problem of uniting himself as lowly sinner with lofty God without diminishing, but rather by increasing, the difference between sinner and savior. Because God is so much better and more powerful than his creation, his expansive nature can stretch far enough to save the lowliest and most undeserving sinner. Ultimately, the condition that makes the sinner's union with God impossible, his lowliness and sinfulness, is exactly what makes the sinner's salvation possible, for to think his salvation impossible is to place limits on the mercy

85. Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae*, in *The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), book III, meter 9, 270–74.

86. *Ora.* 2, S III, 6–7, 16–17; 19–20.

87. *Ora.* 8, S III, 26–27, 19–33.

and power of God. He can be saved, he contends, if divine mercy "not be deficient."[88] Salvation, which the prayers begin by painting as impossible, ends by becoming both necessary and mysterious. The first prayer to Mary concludes, "If my misery is too great to be set free, will your mercy be less than is fitting?" In one and the same moment she can save him and get rid of that which Anselm worries is so detestable it would make his salvation impossible: "Most merciful lady, heal my weakness, and you will take away the filth that offends you."[89] In the second prayer to Mary, he states this logic in its starkest terms:

> If it is—or rather because it is—that my sin is so great and my faith is so small, my love so tepid, my prayer so fatuous, and my satisfaction for sin so imperfect that I deserve neither the pardon for crimes nor the grace of salvation, this, this is the very ground for my supplication that in that which my merit does not suffice your mercy will not be lacking what is worthy of you.[90]

As he addresses St. Stephen, he states the solution more directly: "Your merits are great, great Stephen, so that they can suffice for you and me, and if they are used for me, they are not diminished for you."[91] To God through Peter, Anselm writes, "O God and you, his greatest apostle, is this misery of mine so enormous that it cannot be put up against the boundlessness of your mercy? If it can but it will not, what is the enormity of my guilt that exceeds the multitude of your mercies?"[92]

Anselm's construction of his salvation as impossible and necessary at the same time is supported by Anselm's depiction of salvation in a more general sense. In the prayer to the cross, Anselm emphasizes the character of the cross as symbol of salvation, but it becomes a sign of salvation even as it had been a sign and instrument of defeat and humiliation. In a beautiful series of contrasts, Anselm details the sense in which the cross became the instrument of contradictory, we might even say crossing, motives: "They [used the cross] that they might condemn the savior; he [Christ] that he might save the condemned. They that they might bring death to the living; he to bring life to the dead."[93] Anselm also describes the nature and role of Mary in salvation in paradoxical terms. "All nature is created by God and God is born of Mary. God created all things, and Mary generated God. God, who made all things made himself of Mary, and thus he remade everything he had made."[94]

88. *Ora.* 6, S III, 17, 69–70.
89. *Ora.* 5, 14, S III, 43–44, 46–47.
90. *Ora.* 6, S III, 17, 65–70.
91. *Ora.* 13, S III, 52, 57–58.
92. *Ora.* 9, S III, 32, 72–74.
93. *Ora.* 4, S III, 11, 19–20. See the longer series of contrasts, ll. 15–21.
94. *Ora.* 7, S III, 22, 97–100.

In ways we will see paralleled in Anselm's speculative writings, in the prayers the moment of darkest despair is the moment of greatest light. Anselm writes, addressing the cross, "With what delight will I rejoice in you, through whom, for the servitude of hell I inherited, the kingdom of heaven is given. . . . Without you was a future which horrifies me, though it only last a moment, and through you I expect that I will rejoice in eternity."[95] This is the existential moment Anselm wants to produce over and over again in the prayers: self-examination which strips away every false sense of worth and shows the impossibility of self-actualization. Once there are no illusions left about any way of extricating himself, at this moment the necessary possibility of salvation by grace becomes clear.

Every prayer, whether to Mary, Paul, Peter, John, or Benedict, has the same narrative and rhetorical structure. His relationship to the story is always the same. Anselm writes again and again in elaborate repetition what we could summarize in the language of a personal ad: lowly sinner seeks intimate union with lofty one through their mercy. Anselm's prayers begin in and deepen the sense that salvation is impossible but conclude in the inevitable reunion of man and God. Thus, all the prayers repeat the paradox of the Incarnation, in which the inability to make up for sin, or to even speak given the depth of sin, is contrasted with the extraordinary gift of mercy and love given completely gratuitously.

"Let my tears be my meat day and night" (Ps 41:4)

In the prayers, Anselm's longing for God is so intense, it is a combination of joy and grief: joy in anticipation of the union he seeks and grief at not having reached it. Even though anguished and grief-stricken to the end, the prayers conclude in impatient desire for the real fulfillment of what Anselm has shown to be contained in the logic of God. Thus, they are all desire, desire made more fervent both by the impossibility and the certainty (in hope and faith) of consummation. The prayers often reach a kind of crescendo of complex emotion, mixing and alternating grief, frustration, longing and hope. This mood is captured well in this series of agitated questions, echoing a style found frequently in Augustine's *Confessions*: "What shall I say? What shall I do? Where shall I go? Where will I seek him? Where and when will I find him? Whom shall I ask? Who will tell me of my love, since I am languishing for love?"[96] While he waits for the satisfaction of his desire, he prays, citing and elaborating the Psalms, "let my tears be my bread day and night . . . let me be fed

95. *Ora.* 4, S III, 12, 43–47.
96. *Ora.* 2, S III, 9, 72–74.

with my sobs, and let me drink my tears; revive me with sorrows."[97] "Give me, O Lord, in this exile, the bread of tears and sorrow for which I hunger more than for copious delicacies."[98] Anselm expresses his ongoing search for God in paradoxical terms, taking comfort in his sorrow, enjoying his state of insatiation, making clear that the prayers' goal is not to bring the quieting of emotion and turmoil but their increase.

The prayers have been well described as seeking "not comfort but interminable hunger for the perfect Lord." The goal of this kind of spiritual exercise is neither "consolation," nor "ecstasy," "not even union, but the Lord wherein he believes union is realized." Prayer and practice in the mode Anselm adumbrates is a working out of the Benedictine rule of "continual turning," according to Pascal Baumstein. [99] "Continual turning" is Baumstein's rendering of *conversatione* in the *Rule of St. Benedict*, as one of the vows of monastic life, along with stability and obedience.[100] The same phrase is used in Anselm's prayer to Benedict where he notes that he promised (but has failed dismally) to live a life *sanctae conversationis*.[101] The lack of *conversatio* is the only one of the vows Anselm makes explicit reference to in the prayer, though clearly the others are implied. This notion of "continual turning," of ongoing conversion to God, captures both the hope that no matter how far one has turned away in sin it is possible to turn back, and the sense, as important to Anselm as it was to Augustine, that no conversion is ever complete in this life. This is, of course, the lesson that comes after Augustine's many conversions and even after the last one, as he writes, "during this life, which may be called a perpetual trial, no one should be confident that although he has been able to pass from a worse state to a better, he may not also pass from a better state to a worse."[102] But this ceaseless desire, this restlessness Anselm seeks to increase rather than decrease in his prayers, is not only motivated by the need for continual and renewed conversion to God because of one's own sinfulness but also because of the intensity of desire for true and complete union such that there is no consolation along the way, not even a temporary and imperfect substitute. These two directions of restless dissatisfaction—with one's sinfulness and with the God not yet possessed—go together since the only cause for God's as yet in-

97. *Ora*. 2, S III, 9, 93, 95–96; cf. Ps. 41: 4.

98. *Ora*. 16, S III, 67, 82–84; cf. Ps. 126: 2, 79: 6.

99. Paschal Baumstein, OSB, "Anselm on the Dark Night and Truth," *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2000): 247.

100. *Rule of St. Benedict*, c. 58: *Suscipiendus autem in oratorio coram omnibus promittat de stabilitate sua et conversatione morum suorum et oboedientia, coram Deo et sanctis eius.*

101. *Ora*. 15, S III, 62, 12–13.

102. Augustine, *Confessiones* 10, 48.

complete presence is in the individual, who averts his gaze and whose desires go astray; he loses God, in other words, God does not lose him.[103]

The Nature of Anselm's Spirituality

Some of the elements of Anselm's prayers taken forward into the twelfth century—their familial metaphors of domestic familiarity with God and the saints, their confidence that no matter how great the sin it cannot exceed the power of God's love—are, scholars argue, part of a more optimistic spirituality.[104] The maternal language "was peculiarly appropriate to a theological emphasis on an accessible and tender God, a God who bleeds and suffers less as a sacrifice or restoration of cosmic order than as a stimulus to human love."[105] Anselm, though not the sole originator of these trends, is surely one of their most influential and highly wrought practitioners. What is noteworthy, however, is that Anselm's spirituality is *both* highly pessimistic and optimistic: it is impossible that he be saved because of his sinfulness, and unthinkable that he *not* be saved because it is contrary to God's goodness and power. Moreover, the optimism—that he can hope for salvation, that God cannot *not* be merciful—actually comes out of pessimism in the sense that it comes out of the yawning gap that separates him as sin-bound sinner from God, who is boundless mercy and power.

Thus equally important to Anselm's demand for entrance into the intimate family circle of Jesus, Mary, and the saints is the extreme self-abasement found in every single one of the prayers. The exaggerated attention to his supposed sinfulness seems to model a kind of self-deprecation that it is dissonant if not disturbing to contemporary ears. Before we turn away from what looks like a kind of backwardness on Anselm's part, there are several things to remember. Anselm is not writing about himself in some personal or specific sense but making a theological and general point about human nature. He is not characterizing any particular actual, living people, himself or others, in the prayers. Thomas Bestul takes the notion "that a text . . . does not so much express the inner thoughts of the author, but functions rhetorically by constructing a speaking exemplum than an audience can respond to or even model its conduct upon," which he associates with poststructuralism, as also a medieval idea.[106] In medieval spiritual practice introspective self-examination was not undertaken

103. Baumstein, "Dark Night and Truth," 244–46.
104. See Javelet, *Image et resemblance*, vol. 1, 451–61.
105. Bynum, "Jesus as Mother," 133.
106. Thomas H. Bestul, "Self and Subjectivity in the *Prayers and Meditations* of Anselm of

to find "a particular self, a self unique and unlike other selves" but "human nature made in the image of God," that which is common to all human beings.[107] Thus what is on display here is the human condition and a call to readers to find themselves in this picture of sinful and needy humanity. Anselm is clearly of the view, expressed so succinctly by Pascal, that "there are only two kinds of people, the righteous who think themselves sinners, and sinners who think themselves saints."[108] The last specifically addressed prayer in the collection, to Mary Magdalene, makes that point most strongly, but it is an element found in all the prayers. The saints are saints and are revered because of their having been chosen and blessed by God, by their having been given a mission and the wherewithal to fulfill it by God, and by their own recognition of their sinfulness, not by their own effort or merit.

It is also worth remembering that these prayers are written by and to a large degree for the spiritually privileged. One might object to Anselm writing these kinds of prayers to and for the weakest of sinners, those lacking most completely a sense of their own worth and achievement. But this is not his audience. He sends his prayers to the privileged Countess Matilda and composes prayers for his fellow monks, abbots, and bishops. All these would have been most tempted to see themselves as spiritually advanced, as somehow already dwelling in the presence of God. Anselm reminds them that they too are sinners, sinners most particularly in their lack of compunction, their lack of urgency about their own sinfulness. One of the last prayers, the generic prayer for a bishop or abbot to the patron saint of his church, makes this point most obviously. Anselm finds it appropriate for *any* powerful spiritual office holder to enter into a profound meditation on his sinfulness and ineptitude, on his sin, which produces an "ignorant doctor, blind leader, and erring ruler."[109]

It is not altogether inappropriate to find an analogy to the first step of a twelve-step program to characterize this move in Anselm's prayers: that first step is a realization of one's powerlessness. For Anselm, human beings are all like addicts, unable to save themselves by their own grit

Canterbury," in *Saint Anselm, Bishop and Thinker: Papers Read at a Conference Held in the Catholic University of Lublin on 24–26 September 1996*, edited by Roman Majeran and Edward Iwo Zielinski (Lublin: The University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin, 1999), 151. Bestul links this notion to poststructuralist criticism.

107. Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual," in *Jesus as Mother*, 87. John F. Benton, "Consciousness of Self and Perceptions of Individuality," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, edited by Robert L. Benston, Giles Constable, and Carol D. Lanham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 263–95.

108. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, translated by A. J. Krailsheimer (London: Penguin, 1966), n. 562 (534).

109. *Ora*. 17, S III, 69, 24–5.

and will power. It is also, to use a less contemporary analogy, a Socratic moment shifted into a Christian context. If Socrates's task is to show himself and his interlocutors first what they do not know in order that they might seek true knowledge, Anselm's is to show himself and fellow pilgrims what he has not mastered in his own desire.[110] The appearance, even the provocation of, emotion in these prayers is not just a different view of the emotions than that of the Stoics, it is also a rejection of the moral goal of Stoicism: self-mastery and self-containment. Anselm is not advocating an attempt to protect oneself from vulnerability but a fundamental seeking of it. Anselm's spirituality is not about finding fulfillment *in* the self but *outside* and beyond not just the self but beyond the world of experience; it is fundamentally and in the etymological sense ecstatic, and thus any temptation to self-satisfaction is its greatest enemy.

Anselm's spiritual task in the prayers is, first, to produce *dis*comfort in order that one be moved beyond and outside any port which seems to offer shelter, at the same time as his goal is perfect union from this near total alienation. The intellectual goal in his speculative works is, *mutatis mutandis* the same: grasping a problem in its most difficult aspects, setting it out as insoluble, in order to make his way toward the perfect mirror of reality in language. The gap the prayers work to close is between God and sinful humanity. This is for Anselm the central instance of the problem of uniting what is separate, and that for which the problem of uniting word and thing in language is a metaphor. But prayer is not just metaphorically related to the problem of language, it is language called on to perform its most difficult task: persuading the transcendent and inaccessible God to rescue the sinner ontologically and morally cut off from the object of his desire. The goal of language is to join lowly words to lofty being. In Anselm's prayers, the gap between desire and thing desired—the sinful soul and God—is the widest and most untraversable, but the structure of the problem remains the same in his subsequent works. Thus in the ontological argument, from a sense of God as inaccessible, Anselm seeks the name that cannot fail to refer to a necessarily existing reality. This pattern is carried forward in all his works to some extent, as he works toward arguments whose terms form a single chain of interlocking names and predicates along which one can pull oneself to the end without stopping. Intimacy and presence in the

110. Although the term "Christian Socratism," originated by Gilson, is especially associated with patristic figures and the twelfth century, it surely applies to Anselm as well. See Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, translated by A. H. C. Downes (New York: Scribner, 1936), chapter 11, 209 ff.

prayers are the equivalents of necessary reasons and indubitable proofs in the speculative works; both are attempts to bring together extremes without remainder. In the latter, as we shall see, there is also a beginning in alienation—of word from thing, of knowledge from being—just as there is of sinner from God in the prayers. And, moreover, we shall find that the arguments, like the prayers, even after their greatest success, finding necessity beyond contradiction and paradox, do not end in satisfied completion but in the continual and renewed desire for union not yet achieved.

2
The Letters

Physical Separation and Spiritual Union

Problems of Construction in Reading Anselm's Letters

F. S. Schmitt's critical edition of Anselm's works contains 475 letters, the vast majority written by Anselm but including some written to Anselm. The letters have been the subject of controversy on several fronts. The first is over whether Anselm himself made a collection of his letters late in his life, during his second exile. The controversy is focused on Anselm's later letters written as archbishop since it is accepted that Anselm made a collection of the letters he wrote as prior and abbot of Bec. As a factual matter, the dispute between Richard Southern, Walter Fröhlich, and Sally Vaughn turns on the dating of an important manuscript collection of Anselm's letters—whether it was made during Anselm's lifetime or later, but the deeper issue is whether Anselm used his letters as a vehicle for crafting his image.[1] Fröhlich and Vaughn have used the letters and

1. At issue is the dating of a manuscript at Lambeth Palace known as Lambeth MS 59. During his critical edition building on the work of Wilmart, Schmitt concluded this collection was done under Anselm's direction. See F. S. Schmitt, *S. Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, vol. 1, 234–39; and F. S. Schmitt, "Die unter Anselm veranstaltete Ausgabe seiner Werke und Briefe: die Codices Bodley 271 und Lambeth 59," *Scriptorium* 9 (1955): 64–75. Walter Fröhlich lays out his account of the manuscript traditions of Anselm's letters in the introduction to the first volume of his three-volume translation, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1990), vol. 1, 26–39. Southern's objections to this conclusion were stated in his *St. Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059–c. 1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 67–68, in his own account of the history of the manuscripts of Anselm's letters given in *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 459–82, and in his article, "Sally Vaughn's Anselm: An Examination of the Foundations," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 20 (1988): 192–202. Vaughn defends the view that Lambeth MS 59 is a collection made under Anselm's direction in her reply to Southern, "Anselm: Saint and Statesman," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 20 (1988): 212–16. A recent dissertation develops a new theory of the letters, critical of both Southern

Anselm's role as collector, including the omission of certain letters, to argue that the picture of Anselm that emerges in the letters is one of Anselm's own construction; on this view Anselm self-consciously sets out to portray himself as an example for others in his roles as monk, teacher, and administrator in the letters, individually and as a collection.[2] Richard Southern argued vehemently against both the factual claim that the manuscript containing the most complete collection of Anselm's letters was made during Anselm's life and under his direction and even more strongly against any notion that Anselm politically manipulated his image in the letters, finding that such suggestions make Anselm deceitful and hypocritical.[3] Southern's two deeply influential works on Anselm painted him as both uninterested and inept at political and worldly affairs, taking at face value Anselm's expressions, notably, of intense aversion to being made archbishop and even abbot as evidence of Anselm's lack of interest in power, showing his desire only for the spiritual life of monk and theologian.[4] Vaughn and, to a lesser degree, Fröhlich have disputed this picture. Vaughn has argued (with what even Southern admits is a great deal of verve and evidence) for Anselm's political interests and skills. However, some have protested that she completely neglects the religious and monastic aspects of Anselm, "secularizing him arbitrarily" and viewing as insincere Anselm's pious protestations in light of his actions to secure power.[5] Fröhlich finds no inherent conflict between Anselm as monk and powerful prelate, while he admits that the difference between these roles and argues for Anselm's self-conscious shaping of his image in his letters. Though not quite to the degree Vaughn does, he

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and Fröhlich, arguing that Anselm made not one but two or three or more letter collections during his life but that we have no manuscript directly or purely connected to any collection made by Anselm. See Samu K. Niskanen, *The Letter Collections of Anselm of Canterbury*, Ph.D. diss. (Helsinki, 2009). Niskanen very generously sent me a copy of his dissertation. Niskanen's conclusion on Lambeth 59 is that it was made after Anselm's death. As Niskanen points out, this does not mean that he fully supports Southern's view since he does think Anselm made letter collections and perhaps one included material from his Canterbury period. Niskanen, 76–78, 81–87; see also Richard Sharpe, "Anselm as Author: Publishing in the Late Eleventh Century," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 19 (2009): 29, 67–68, n. 18; 70, 75.

2. See Fröhlich, "Introduction," in vol. 1 of *The Letters of Saint Anselm*, 39–52, a reworking of his paper, "The Letters Omitted from Anselm's Collection of Letters," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 6 (1984): 58–72. Vaughn accepts Fröhlich's thesis and builds on it in Sally N. Vaughn, *Anselm of Bec and Robert of Meulan: The Innocence of the Dove and the Wisdom of the Serpent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

3. Southern, "Sally Vaughn's Anselm," 183–87.

4. This view underlies much of both Southern's *St. Anselm and His Biographer* and *Portrait in a Landscape*. For specific conclusions to this effect, see *Portrait in a Landscape*, 437–40.

5. Paschal Baumstein, OSB, "Revisiting Anselm: Current Historical Studies and Controversies," *Cistercian Studies* 28, no. 3/4 (1993): 213. Southern, "Sally Vaughn's Anselm," 181–83.

views Anselm as politically astute and competent, in contrast to Southern's notion of Anselm's otherworldly incompetence.[6] Fröhlich argues that Anselm self-consciously set out to make a collection of his letters, following Schmitt's lead.[7] Fröhlich supports his claim by reference to letters which have survived but which were *not* included in what seems to have been Anselm's most complete collection; these letters were omitted because they would have showed Anselm in a less favorable light.[8] Paschal Baumstein, while criticizing Vaughn, has suggested a way of synthesizing these pictures by uniting them under Anselm's commitment to securing not his own power but "God's honor."[9] In a sense, this is a view consistent with Vaughn's. Vaughn neither claims that Anselm enjoyed and desired power (only that he felt called to it) nor that he sought personal power or advantage (only the success and protection of Bec, Canterbury, and the church).[10]

The practice of authors making their own letter collections, as, for example, Lanfranc did, was widespread in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[11] This period is "the golden age of letter writing," in which there was a huge increase in the quantity, quality, and type of letters and letter collections. This development corresponds to a period of increased travel and dramatic improvements in literacy and learning. These changes were fueled by the religious revival and the growth of new schools, which produced not only new letter writers but new topics for letters.[12] Letters were important literary products, prized and kept as significant gifts by those who received them and as literary works akin in function to the modern memoir by those who wrote them. They were meant to be read aloud and publicly shared. Thus letters from this period are self-conscious literary products as artfully composed as histories and treatises. This does not mean, of course, that they are not true records of the

6. Walter Fröhlich, "Anselm's *Weltbild* as Conveyed in His Letters," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 483–525.

7. See n. 1.

8. See Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm*, vol. 1, 39–52, and "Letters Omitted," 58–72. Even though Niskanen disagrees that we have a manuscript representing a collection made by Anselm and is skeptical about Fröhlich's claims for many of the letters supposedly purposely omitted from the collection, he concedes that the manuscripts we have show evidence of authorial shaping and that Anselm "surely censored" the collection. Niskanen is also convinced that the collection at Christ Church did reflect the desire to present a certain picture of Anselm and of Christ Church as "mother church" of England. Niskanen, *Letter Collections of Anselm*, 161–67.

9. Baumstein, "Revisiting Anselm," 215.

10. Vaughn, "Anselm: Saint and Statesman," 205–9.

11. For my remarks on letter writing and letter collections, I rely on Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1976). See especially, 11–16, 26–38, 56–62.

12. Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, 31–33.

views of their authors or the events or feelings they relate, but it does mean they must be read as literary works, as crafted rather than the product of careless spontaneity.

Southern's objections to Vaughn's claim that Anselm was "acting out *topoi,*" such as the reluctance for power, or in any way constructed his correspondence assume a modern, essentially romantic notion of sincerity—that artifice and formality are inherently opposed to honesty, and that individuality is valued over falling under a type. One need not appeal to Anselm's Platonism to justify his understanding and presentation of himself as and through exempla, as Vaughn does.[13] That the path toward understanding of a particular is through grasping it as falling under a universal is as much Aristotelian as Platonic. Anselm did not need to consult either Aristotle or Plato to make his own actions and feelings intelligible to himself and others by fitting them into known patterns of action; it is more likely that such typological ways of thinking would have come to him as a medieval person and a Benedictine monk than through philosophy.

We can easily see that Anselm, so careful about his treatises and prayers, giving direction about how they are to be read and understood, protesting when they were wrongly or incompletely copied, is a very self-conscious *author*. He thinks about the impression his works will give and the way they will be interpreted by a larger public. Given the practices of the time and the fact that Anselm is so careful and self-conscious, we must assume that he thought of his letters as part of his legacy, whether he actually oversaw the full collection or collections. It is utterly consistent with this picture that Anselm, as Fröhlich puts it, "conceived his letter collection to be a work of literature forming the complementary part of his philosophical and theological writings," whose function was to "serve as a model and precedent" of public conduct, a "manual of good examples" for others to follow.[14] Such a view does not entail taking the letters as a whole as a literary unit, nor the assumption that Anselm manipulated the content of any letter in any collection he might have made. We cannot assume that the letters are a finished literary work as a whole, but we can say that they are individually more a public literary product than modern or contemporary letters. Moreover, as we shall see, there are themes which predominate in the letters, adumbrating an account of friendship and community, which gives further warrant for reading them as a group.

13. Vaughn, "Anselm: Saint and Statesman," 210–11.
14. Fröhlich, *The Letters of St. Anselm*, vol. 3, 6.

Fröhlich describes the letters as falling under three general topics: spiritual, educational and administrative, corresponding to Anselm's three roles as monk, teacher, and administrator. By Fröhlich's estimate, roughly 60 percent of the letters are addressed to monks and nuns containing spiritual advice. There are not very many letters pertinent specifically to Anselm's role as teacher, though there are some which accompanied the sending of his works and which answer questions, for example, a discussion of the problem of "nothing," a discussion of "substance" and "person" as used of the Trinity.[15] His response to Roscelin on the Trinity, though not collected as one of his letters, began as a letter and as an expansion of several letters on Roscelin's views Anselm did send.[16] Anselm expressed his role as teacher through his speculative writings much more than in his letters. The other major portion of the letters, most of them from Anselm's time as archbishop, have their larger significance in defining Anselm's role as defender of the church against the power of the king. The letters represent *praxis* to complement the *theoria* of Anselm's other works, his attempt to enact his vision of the real and the good.

Based on Fröhlich's division of the topics of the letters, this discussion falls into two parts, the first focusing on Anselm's letters as prior and abbot of Bec written to his fellow monks and, second, his letters as archbishop expanding the reach of and putting to work his notions of friendship and community. The bulk of my discussion is about Anselm's letters concerned with spiritual direction; the discussion of Anselm's role as teacher is taken up fully in my discussion of his speculative works. Detailed analysis of Anselm's roles in the controversies that marked his tenure as archbishop—the dispute with William II over the so-called *usus atque leges* (put into place in England by William the Conqueror, placing the power of the king above that of the church), the dispute with Henry I over the investiture of clerics as in the power of church or king, the reform of the English church, and the quarrel with York over Canterbury's supremacy—fall outside the scope of this study. Later letters on these topics are considered here only in so far as they shed light on and are an expansion of Anselm's notions of friendship, community and relations between the divine and secular cities.

15. Ep. 97, S III, 224–28; Ep. 204, S IV, 95–97.

16. For a discussion of Anselm's letter about Roscelin, *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi*, and Anselm's other letters on this topic see chapter 6.

Part I: Letters of Friendship and Spiritual Direction

Of the large numbers of letters Anselm wrote to monks and nuns (and those considering the religious life), many of them wholly or in part take up the topic of friendship. The nature of friendship as described in the letters brings us to another controversy surrounding the letters. Anselm's letters are filled with flowery, emotional rhetoric of passionate love and anguished longing for absent loved ones that ring in modern ears like the expression of romantic, sexual love. John Boswell argued that there is homosexuality expressed in Anselm's letters, and that Anselm's actions to postpone the enforcement of the decree condemning sodomy is proof of his sympathy toward homosexuality.[17] However, it is now widely accepted that it is anachronistic to attribute modern notions of homosexuality (virtually all his letters expressing passionate love are to fellow monks) or notions of romantic love to Anselm. Romantic love is at least a century away, though Southern notes the overlap which seems to bring Anselm's model of friendship closer to romantic love than classical friendship. While the latter is the "rational association for a common purpose," Anselm's friendship is expressed in "the kisses and embraces, the passionate sense of loss at separation, his desire for the presence of his friends; the immense joy at meeting; the need for physical expression as well as a physical presence," though expressing a far different relationship than romantic love.[18] And as many have argued, we are in Anselm's world far from contemporary notions of homosexuality or gayness. While there are sexual acts between men as well as male behavior negatively characterized as "effeminate," the former are condemned as all sexual acts outside marriage are. The latter are criticized more as male passivity (as in the Greek condemnation of the passive partner in sex between two males) and as a failure to take up male identity, in other words, as a kind of deficiency of male sexuality, the opposing vice to the excess of lust. But neither of these alone or together corresponds to the contemporary notion of gayness—conscious and enduring same sex attraction.[19]

17. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 204, 215–16, 218–20. Southern argues that Anselm drafted the anti-sodomy legislation and delayed it only because he was waiting to get support from his fellow bishops. Far from being pro-homosexual, Anselm reacted strongly against the homosexual activity at the court of William Rufus, a response Southern speculates might be the product of an "exaggerated sensitivity on this subject, which may point to a violent rejection of his past." Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 149, 152. See also Glenn W. Olsen, "St. Anselm and Homosexuality," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 118–20. Olsen also argues against Boswell's view of Anselm and homosexuality.

18. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 146.

19. Olsen, "St. Anselm and Homosexuality."

Still scholars differ over whether there is any sexual meaning in Anselm's effusions of love and passion. Brian McGuire argues convincingly that Anselm was so sensitive to the possibility of his own sexual sin—witness Anselm's anguished and self-punishing "Meditation on Lost Virginity"—that he could not have spoken in such overtly ardent terms of his love for other monks had the possibility of, even the conscious desire for, sexual relations not been utterly absent.[20] Such a view is strengthened when we remember the public character of letters in general and of Anselm's letters to fellow monks specifically, in which he often said that what he expressed to one could and should be expressed to others. For McGuire, Anselm is homoerotic but not homosexual.[21] McGuire also argues that the model of spiritual friendship Anselm develops in these letters was a reaction to Anselm's love for a particular young monk, Osbern, sent by Lanfranc from Canterbury to Bec for Anselm to discipline. Anselm seems to have become quite attached to Osbern, managing by love and empathy rather than punishment to change his behavior, though there is no implication that the relationship was a physical, sexual one. After Osbern fell ill and died, McGuire argues, Anselm's letters of love to fellow monks became models of spiritual and nonspecific friendship as Anselm was loathe to become so personally attached to any other of his fellow monks.[22] Richard Southern's opposition to the homosexual thesis was in many ways less vehement than his objection to Anselm as political schemer, though he relegated any such inclinations to well before Anselm's entrance to the monastery.[23]

20. Brian McGuire, "Love, Friendship, and Sex in the Eleventh Century: The Experience of Anselm," *Studia Theologica* 28 (1974): 149. See *Med.* II, S III, 80–83. Cf. Ep. 168, 169, S IV, 43–50, in which Anselm councils Gundhilda against marriage, describing sexual intercourse as commingling with a rotting, worm infested corpse. McGuire also quotes a scene from Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi*, in which Anselm has a vision of worldly life and bodily intercourse as inhabiting polluted water. McGuire, "Love, Friendship, and Sex," 120–21; Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury/Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, edited by and translated by Richard W. Southern (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), vol. 1, xxi.

21. McGuire, "Love, Friendship, and Sex," 149–50. Olsen finds the attribution of "homoerotic" to Anselm problematic. Given the "overwhelmingly masculine world" in which Anselm lived, Olsen argues, if Anselm "were to love anyone with the vivid language of his letters, it would by definition be a relative or a man." From women he was "expected to maintain a formal distance." Hence we cannot conclude much from the fact that Anselm's expressions of ardent friendship were expressed toward men. McGuire might mean to attribute something like "latent homosexuality" to Anselm but, as Olsen points out, that while this is possible, it is practically impossible to prove. Olsen, "Anselm and Homosexuality," 107.

22. McGuire, "Love, Friendship and Sex,"121–27.

23. For Southern's response to Boswell's account of Anselm, see *Portrait in a Landscape*, 148–53. See also Bruce O'Brien, "R. W. Southern, John Boswell, and the Sexuality of Anselm," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, edited by Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 167–78.

Southern wrote that his earliest interest in Anselm was piqued by the letters, specifically by their emotional language.[24] His exploration of the letters led him to the thesis that Anselm's letters described a new kind of friendship, one that left behind the reserve, moderation, and urbanity of the classical model Anselm would have known from Aristotle and Cicero, and as filtered through Cassian.[25] There are several steps in this transformation which reveal more clearly where Anselm's innovation lies.

Aristotelian friendship requires living together, without which there is only good will toward another, not true friendship. Thus while grounded in virtue rather than any physical or temporary attribute, Aristotelian friendship is nonetheless subject to the limits of space and time and is, like Aristotle's notions of happiness and virtue, derived from and appropriate to an embodied and mortal being. There is also in Aristotle a certain emotional restraint because of the ground of friendship in reason and virtue, and there is certainly no need for nor dependence on friends. The magnanimous man has friends primarily in order to perform acts of virtue on their behalf.

Cicero translates this model to the Roman world and in a way the most striking shift is in tone. Cicero waxes more lyrical on the topic of friendship than Aristotle, describing the "blazing up of great benevolence" in friendship;[26] it is never "unseasonable" "never annoying"[27] and those who would seek to do away with or minimize the ties of friendship do the equivalent of taking the sun out of the world, removing the best and most joyous of the gifts of the gods.[28] Cicero grounds friendship in nature, not the mutual exchange of services. He argues against those who think the desire for friendship is a kind of weakness "born of poverty and neediness" and against those who argue that having friends is itself a burden one would do better to avoid, and who counsel keeping the ties of attachment as loose as possible if they cannot be nonexistent.[29] What is striking is that Cicero feels the need to make this argument, and it is a testament to the strength of the ancient sense of *virtue* in the (Latin) etymological sense of manly strength (and the contrary of need, weakness, dependence, or vulnerability) that he must explain why friendship does not contravene that standard.

24. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, xiii.

25. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 70–73; *Portrait in a Landscape*, 139–41.

26. Cicero, *De amicitia*, in *Cicero: De senectute, De amicitia, De divinatione*, translated by William A. Falconer, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), ix, 30, 140.

27. Cicero, *De amicitia*, vi, 22, 132.

28. Cicero, *De amicitia*, xiii, 47, 158.

29. Cicero, *De amicitia*, viii, 26, 26–28; ix, 30, 140; xiii, 45, 156.

In Cassian's *Collationes,* Aristotelian, Ciceronian friendship is translated into the monastic community. Cassian explicitly distinguishes as lower the friendship of domestic relations because it is merely founded on the instincts of nature and consanguinity.[30] The friendship of those united in the monastic life is a friendship of virtue, Cassian writes, and is indissoluble even given changes in fortune or distance in space or time. It is a unity of "spirit" rather than "place," in a shared commitment to purpose, willing and nilling the same things.[31] Cassian also places a new emphasis on humility, on not preferring one's own opinions to those of the community. A key step in the union of the community in friendship, after the contempt of worldly goods, is the "pruning" of one's own wishes; one should not consider oneself wise and experienced nor prefer one's own views to those of others.[32]

Anselm outlines a type of friendship which, first, like classical friendship, is based not on passion but on virtue, and, second, like Cassian's, is a spiritualization of classical friendship, lasting forever and surviving absence. Anselm's letters, it is important to remember, describe attachment based on virtue, not sexual passion or other forms of affection, and virtue is for him, as for Cassian, found in the commitment to the monastic life. John Haseldine points out that the language of emotional attachment is an instrument to express "the public relations of powerful and influential men" in order to project "their role as figures of piety and authority" rather than the expression of actual feelings of affection.[33] Thus we can see how Anselm can express passionate attachment for those he had never met or had not seen in years just as ardently as he did toward those with whom he had lived intimately.[34] "The fire [in Anselm's letters] was primarily intellectual," Southern notes, and "fed on an incorporeal ideal. It was a product of philosophy rather than of feeling."[35] However, unlike both friendship in Aristotle and Cassian and to a much greater degree than Cicero, Anselm's letters express (or seem to express) passionate longing and anguished grief at separation, using the language of physical grief and longing. Thus, even once overt sexual meaning is rejected, there is still something to be explained in the "new emphasis" Anselm gives to intimate friendship

30. Cassian, *Collationes,* edited by Michael Petschenig (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004), XVI, 2, 439–40.

31. Cassian, *Collationes,* XVI, 3, 441. Cf. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 71.

32. Cassian, *Collationes,* XVI, 5–6, 442–43.

33. Julian P. Haseldine, "Love, Separation and Male Friendship: Words and Actions in Saint Anselm's Letters to his Friends," in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, edited by Dawn M. Hadley, Men and Women in History (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1999), 238–55.

34. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 74.

35. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 74.

and in the "strikingly original" manner so "open to misunderstanding" in which he expressed this intimacy.[36]

It is not just that Anselm borrows from physical and sexual love his language of longing and fervor, but that he uses the language of love of something *for its own sake* rather than as a means, of that which is in Augustine's language *frui* rather than *uti*, for human beings and human attachments.[37] The question is whether or not other human beings are to be used or enjoyed. Augustine answers that there are, in effect, two kinds enjoyment of human beings, one in which we (wrongly) place all hopes for happiness in them and one in which we enjoy others in God, really enjoying God rather than the human being.[38] Anselm's task in the letters of spiritual direction is to begin from the language of delight in his correspondent, responding emphatically to their language of delight in him, but moving that correspondent toward what St. Paul asked of Philemon, that he might enjoy him *in the Lord* rather than enjoy him *tout court*.[39]

What is striking, and strikingly different from the rhetoric in Augustine's letters, is Anselm's language of love for the individual in a way that seems, contra Augustine, to place all his bliss in their presence and despair at their absence.[40] What emerges from Anselm's letters is the—consciously and artfully constructed—paradox of passionate desire for purely spiritual friendship. Passionate desire—that is for physical, real presence and union as the only source of joy—in the face of unconquerable absence and separation creates an apparently irresolvable problem. Having created the problem, Anselm goes on to solve it by the thorough spiritualization of relationships in a way that completely transforms the classical ideal of friendship. In analogous fashion, Anselm describes as irresolvable and then dissolves the conflict of wills that seems inevitable in relationships—between monk and monk, monk and world, and monk and God—in his new model of friendship.

36. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 140.

37. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I, 3, 3.

38. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I, 32, 35–33, 37.

39. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, I, 33, 37; cf. *Phlm*. 20.

40. Cf. Augustine's correspondence with Nebridius as a possible analogue to Anselm's letters to his fellow monks. However, the rhetoric of Anselm's letter is *much* more extreme than anything between Augustine and Nebridius. The letter is much less effusive and is without the kind of appeal of physical longing and grief found so frequently in Anselm. Moreover, the letters between Augustine and Nebridius move almost immediately after opening greetings of affection into discussions of philosophical and theological matters; their main topic is *not* the relationship itself, as it is in so many of Anselm's letters. Rather Augustine and Nebridius are engaged in philosophical dialogue. See letters 3 through 13 of Augustine's correspondence in *Letters*, in vol. 1 of *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, translated by Roland Teske and edited by John E. Rotelle, pt. 2 (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2001), 19–43.

The squaring of this circle, passionate desire for purely spiritual friendship, is accomplished by various strategies. While the grace and goodness of God and the saints overcome the gap between Anselm and the satisfaction of his desire in the prayers, in the letters Anselm achieves union by foregoing physical closeness for spiritual communion. Anselm redescribes the intimate presence he is entreated to provide (by monks taking Anselm's professions of love as personal and his desires for unity in individual and real terms) as communion with and through God, in the spiritual rather than physical realm. Anselm overcomes conflicts of will and rejections of suffering and separation as wrong and unfair by coming to see (and advising others to come to see) suffering and separation as brought about by the providence of God and as offering spiritual and more rewarding forms of pleasure and union. The letters transform sorrow at irremediable physical absence into joy in the spiritual union of the perfect community where all are united through pursuit of union with God. Thus, the same narrative line found in the prayers, moving from complete absence to perfect union, is found in the letters.

The Problem of Separation: Anguished Absence

In letters to the community at Bec, Anselm always greets his monks with a description of his longing for them. Anselm describes his attachments to his fellow monks in vivid and concrete terms, writing in one letter, "My eyes long [*concupiscunt*] to see your face, my most beloved; my arms stretch out to your embraces. My mouth pants for your kisses; whatever remains of my life desires your conversation, so that my soul may delight in complete joy with you in the next life."[41] Anselm writes of his relationship to Gilbert Crispin, "I often recognized how great and how true this affection was when it revealed itself face to face, kiss to kiss, embrace to embrace."[42] Urging his friend Wilencus to enter the monastery at Bec, Anselm writes, "my soul loves [*diligit*] you so much that unless it holds you, my heart will not be consoled nor my desire for you satisfied."[43] This is Anselm's response to a letter from Wilencus which was, Anselm claims, written with a "burning and fragrant love."[44]

Because letters are written to the absent, love for that person is made more painful because its longing is unfulfilled. "My love [*dilectio*]" Anselm writes, again to Wilencus, "desires to be delighted [*delectari*] by the presence of your love [*dilectionis*]," and while he waits his heart is tor-

41. Ep. 120, S III, 258, 8–12.
42. Ep. 130, S III, 272–73, 6–8.
43. Ep. 115, S III, 250, 9–11.
44. Ep. 115, S III, 250, 5–6.

tured and his soul tormented.[45] To have been separated, Anselm writes to his cousin, is for their souls to have been not just separated but "torn asunder."[46] As he writes to Gilbert Crispin, he describes himself as blinded by tears pouring down over his face and hands.[47] He is inconsolable because there are no substitutes for Gilbert's presence: if sent "every aromatic perfume, every gleaming metal, every precious gem, every variety of fabric" instead of Gilbert himself, Anselm tells Gilbert, he would reject them all.[48] Of a monk Anselm has not even met he writes, "my mind will not rest until my eyes have seen his face, my ears have heard his voice and my soul has enjoyed his presence."[49] To the community at Bec devastated by Anselm's appointment as bishop, Anselm writes, "When I think deeply of your souls saddened by a separation so unexpected and so contrary to our wills, immediately just as the sea is by winds, my heart becomes swollen and disturbed by its own storm and my eyes rain tears."[50]

In a way that seems quite contrary to Cassian's insistence that what is key for friendship is unity in spirit not in time and place, Anselm makes his own longing and need for physical presence a major theme of his letters. Anselm does not hesitate to express his need for and dependence on his friends in his longing for them and his apparent inability to function in their absence. Unlike Cicero, who must protest that virtuous men can have friends without being weak, Anselm seems to embrace that weakness. Because Anselm writes of his need for his friends in physical terms and of his intense desire for their particular presence, separation seems to make their continued love impossible. Just as the prayers create an apparently irresolvable problem, the letters describe the separation between lover and beloved as permanent and structural. In the prayers the distance is created by the gap between Anselm's sinfulness and the holiness of God and the saints. In the letters, it is in the physical separation between Anselm and his loved friends, exacerbated by the very physical and specific need Anselm expresses for those absent friends. Anselm does not temper his longing or neediness so that it may find satisfaction in less than complete union; rather he exaggerates it, seeking a solution not in the cooling of desire (just as the prayers do not minimize but exaggerate Anselm's sinfulness) but looking for a different path toward its consummation.

45. Ep. 115, S III, 250, 15–17.
46. Ep. 55, S III, 169, 7.
47. Ep. 84, S III, 209, 8–10.
48. Ep. 84, S III, 209, 5–6.
49. Ep. 85, S III, 210, 8–9.
50. Ep. 156, S IV, 18, 9–11.

Finding Presence in Absence

Though Anselm's letters begin in this passionate longing for physical union, they always end by sublimating the desire for physical presence into the enjoyment of spiritual union as Anselm thoroughly redefines friendship in spiritual and general rather than physical and specific terms. Expressions of sadness at separation are always wrapped in a concessive clause: *even though* Anselm is so saddened to be away, Anselm's love endures and somehow bridges that gap of absence and longing. As with later notions of romantic love, the very intensity of this love explains, at least partly, how it can last forever regardless of the parties' separation from one another. Anselm rejects the notion that separation cools desire, arguing instead that longing increases rather than decreases with absence.[51] His separation from Gilbert Crispin, he claims, has taught him the intensity of his love, which he would not know about had they never been separated.[52] "Everything I feel about you is sweet and delightful to my heart," Anselm writes to another monk, Gundulf, whose attractions, he says, fill his imagination, his mind, even his sight and hearing.[53] He concludes, "hence, wherever you go my love follows you and wherever I may be, my desire embraces you."[54]

In this way, Anselm relies on the intensity of feeling and attachment to make up for the absence of an essential ingredient for Aristotelian friendship—the living and being together without which one can only *wish* to be friends. In this sense Anselm's model is a step away from classical friendship and a step toward romantic love, as eternal but concrete and individual. But, as Kierkegaard noted, there is a paradox within the notion of romantic love, as an eternal but concrete and physical love, a paradox intensity of feeling will not entirely overcome. Even Anselm's love of paradox does not bring him to embrace this oxymoron. Rather Anselm's friendships are maintained by the nonphysical and ultimately nontemporal character of the relationship. As he explains in a letter to Gundulf, the union they have is of souls, on which the images of their love for each other are identical.[55] Charity fuses lovers' hearts and souls, Anselm writes to another.[56] The strength and certainty of their spiritual love is so complete that these lovers need not even exchange letters and require physical proximity even less. On the one hand, Anselm cannot, he explains, give proof through hearing or sight (through letters or his presence) of his love which "eye has not seen nor ear heard."[57] But on

51. Ep. 75, S III, 197, 7–10.
52. Ep. 84, S III, 209, 13–14.
53. Ep. 4, S III, 104, 5–7.
54. Ep. 4, S III, 104, 8–9.
55. Ep. 41, S III, 152, 6–11.
56. Ep. 48, S III, 161, 4–5.
57. Ep. 59, S III, 174, 12, 18–19; 1 Cor. 2:9.

the other hand, since it cannot be expressed, Anselm concludes, "let our consciences, by which we are aware of how much we love each other, be sufficient."[58] Their kinship, he writes to his biological cousins, can become a spiritual kinship if they enter the monastic life, but if not, Anselm continues, they "will no longer be blood kinsmen [*consanguinei*] but really of flesh [*carnales*] and blood [*sanguinei*]."[59] Anselm writes to a monk for whom he has expressed a special attachment that he, Anselm, need not write more often with professions of love. "Since," Anselm explains, "your soul and mine can never suffer absence from each other but are unceasingly embracing one another. . . . Since we are known to each other by the presence of our souls, I do not know what to say to you except, may God do with you what he knows to be pleasing to him and useful to you."[60] In this way, the spiritual connection replaces the physical one, making the latter superfluous.

While the abbey of Bec functions as the longed for home in the letters, like the heaven Anselm longs for in his prayers, Anselm reformulates his physical absence from the abbey as a kind of spiritual presence: "Even though I am unable to be physically present with you, yet through the love of my heart for you, I never cease being with you."[61] Whether at home or away, Anselm writes, "by the gift of God I am no different than when I am in our proper place."[62] Anselm's absence or presence should make no difference to his monks either, he continues: "by living well, you gladden my heart, whether absent or present, and by your goodness you fulfill my desire and my joy."[63] One can, Anselm counsels, live a good life regardless of the time or place one finds oneself in.[64] To the monk Maurice, who had apparently been begging Anselm to intercede so that he could return from Canterbury to Bec, Anselm writes, "Although the more I love you, the more I want to have you with me; but henceforth I love you more, however, from where I cannot have you. For since I love you not for myself but for God and for yourself, I love you more since you show yourself to be such that those who have you don't want to send away someone they love rather than easily sending away one they disregard. . . . For although I greatly desire and love you that you might be joined (*cohaereas*) to me dwelling with me in community, more, however, I wish that you hold fast (*inhaereas*) inseparably (*indissolubiliter*) to good morals."[65] For Anselm, Haseldine notes, "monastic obedience is not only superior to love, it is part of the very nature of the love upon which their friendship rests"; and, more-

58. Ep. 59, S III, 174, 19–20.
59. Ep. 120, S III, 259, 37–38.
60. Ep. 41, S III, 152, 6–7, 13–15.
61. Ep. 165, S IV, 39, 42–44.
62. Ep. 118, 255, 9–11.
63. Ep. 118, S III, 256, 26–27.
64. Ep. 96, S III, 222–23, 12–13.
65. Ep. 79, S III, 202, 3–7; 12–14.

over, "separation, the inspiration of Anselm's expression of grief and love, is here almost essential to the continuance of that love on a solid foundation."[66] Spiritual union is not mere consolation for physical separation but supercedes physical presence. Absence makes love *more* perfect; it strengthens rather than attenuates their connection. The unusual and important point about Anselm's notion of friendship is that the connection through and in absence by the spiritual bond of the monastic life and obedience to its vows is not in any way second best, a substitute for more desireable physical presence but is infinitely more satisfying and effective of true union. Having expressed intense longing for physical presence and grief over the distances that divide friends, Anselm then builds up a notion of friendship that does not depend on proximity in time and space, in which presence is spiritual and not necessarily physical presence. The life of monastic obedience *is* the union which Maurice seeks; in harmony with monastic life and in monastic obedience, then, will he find union with Anselm.

Interchangeable Presence and Nonspecific Attachment

Besides the limits of time and space that can separate friends, the other barrier to union is the exclusivity of friendship. Not just erotic love, which seems to require complete exclusivity, but also Aristotelian friendship is limited; for all earlier accounts, friendship with one person to some degree or another excludes an equally intense relationship with another. But in Anselm the professions of intense love and attachment are, paradoxically, general rather than personal. After expressing ardent love for one monk, Anselm adds that he would write all of the same things to another monk. He tells one monk that he has written to another, and that if they exchange their letters and change the names, "his could be yours and yours could be his."[67] In another letter, Anselm describes his intense love for a group of monks; he writes only one letter to them all, he says, because all are moving toward the same goal and since his desires for all are the same.[68]

For Southern such a view of friendship is the personal corollary of Anselm's doctrine of atonement based on the ability of one man to substitute for another.[69] In the atonement, one human being, Christ, substitutes for another, and in friendship, all dedicated to the same ideal are the same and can stand in one for the other, just as, I would add, equiva-

66. Haseldine, "Love, Separation and Male Friendship," 250.
67. Ep. 4, S III, 104, 41–42.
68. Ep. 51, S III, 164, 4–6.
69. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 75.

lent expressions can substitute for one another in an argument without remainder. Anselm uses the language of substitution very explicitly in a letter asking mercy for a runaway monk, Moses, returning to his community: "Truly since there is no greater intercession than giving skin for skin and soul for soul, as the Lord says, 'greater love hath no man than a man should lay down his life for his friends,' your love should know that Dom Moses from the soles of his feet to the top of his head all around is covered in the skin of your servant, brother Anselm, and his mouth is my mouth."[70] Based on this model of substitutability, then, Anselm can maintain that the feelings of friendship he has for that individual can be transferred without loss or remainder to another of the community.

The problem is that when Anselm turns this substitution model around, not only substituting himself for Moses by taking on his punishment, but substituting one monk for another in his affections, Anselm is telling those monks that there was nothing special or individual in his attachment for them, and they felt abandoned. Anselm awakened in them the desire for perfect union, only to move on himself, leaving them in anguished disappointment. They expected something else. As Southern writes, "they expected him to write and he was silent; they expected him to stay and he left. Hence, the reproaches which his letters were partly intended to answer; hence the bitter sense of desertion which swept through the community of Bec when it learned that he was after all to be archbishop of Canterbury."[71]

Anselm's confreres are unable to transpose so thoroughly their longing for physical presence and individual connection onto the spiritual realm. For Southern, though he does not use this word, Anselmian friendship achieves a kind of sacramentality in which "the particular is generalized, but loses nothing of its particularity in the process."[72] On this view, Anselm does not simply reject the physical for the spiritual but imbues the physical with spiritual meaning and reality. For Olsen, Anselm so thoroughly spiritualizes friendship that the individual evaporates into the general: "Anselm did not seem to realize that it is precisely the intimate relatedness of one being to another which makes for friendship, for atonement, for cooperation. . . . However, relatedness is not synonymous with identity and atonement is affected not by substitution but by compassion and love."[73] Even though there is much evidence of Anselm's real care for his monks and real action taken on their

70. Ep. 140, S III, 286, 29–34. Southern's translation, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 157.
71. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 70.
72. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 158.
73. Olsen, "St. Anselm and Homosexuality," 138.

behalf as individuals in the letters, Anselm's theory of friendship leaves the individual behind. In sacramental love, the specific love of particular and concrete individuals serves as the ground for spiritual love, which sustains it and makes its promise real in a way that goes beyond what physical love alone offers. But in Anselm the physical is merely a mode of expression, a symbol for the spiritual, and in the move to the spiritual the reality of the physical and the individual is lost. Only the disappearance of the physical and individual into a general ideal can explain how it is that Anselm expresses passionate attachment for those he had never seen or not seen in years just as ardently as he did toward those with whom he had lived intimately for years.[74]

Anselm attempts to assuage the hurt feelings that seem to have arisen from the disappointment of those hoping for more particular relationships and expressions of love from him, but he gives them only the indirect comfort of his love of them through his love of God. The following response, written to the monks of Bec as he is leaving them for Canterbury, makes the generalization and redirection of their love complete: "Many among you, whom I embraced with so sweet and intimate a love that it could seem to each of them that I loved no other as much, are wondering why I do not write to them individually with some mention of our love. . . . For the present I say only this to them, that they remember that I have not loved them except so that they would love God and their own souls. . . . Let them do this and they will always preserve my love for them inviolable."[75] Anselm tries to make clear to fellow monks hurt because they were looking for his particular love for them and his physical presence that they have mistaken what he is really offering: spiritual friendship based not on their individuality, not on direct relationship between them and Anselm, but on their shared status as monks, an indirect relationship in which they are all linked to each other by their link to the community.[76]

As the solution to the problem of absence from those they love, Anselm counsels his confreres to substitute another for those from whom they are separated. Fellow monks' affection for him, he advises, should

74. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 74.

75. Ep. 156, S IV, 23, 169–75.

76. On the complaints of those who took themselves to be Anselm's special friends, see McGuire's analysis of Anselm's letters to Gundulf and Maurice. McGuire, "Love, Friendship, and Sex,"128–40. McGuire concludes that "Anselm is afraid of loving anyone when that love imposes immediate, concrete demands on him, when that love means a personal relationship in daily life" (140). He contrasts Anselm's distancing himself from Gundulf and Maurice with his consistently passionate letters to Gilbert Crispin and concludes that Anselm could express himself this way to Gilbert because Gilbert did not demand much of Anselm in return (143).

be redirected into hospitality to all men, into the gaining of new friends among their fellow monks. When monks write of their desire to return to Bec or to Anselm, Anselm constantly urges them to make a new home where they are: "Truly you cannot be wherever someone you love is, but wherever you may be, you can be loved and be good."[77] Anselm does not offer a new object of love to replace himself but quietly substitutes satisfying *someone else's* love by being present for *them* for being able to satisfy *one's own* love by and in the presence of his beloved. Anselm's very different, more spiritual, more indirect consummation is found in their common love of God. He loves his fellow monks because God loves them and so that they might love God. Fellow monks' affection for him, he advises, should be redirected into hospitality to all men, into the gaining of new friends among their fellow monks. Keeping the rule, Anselm iterates time and again, *is* the very union his friends seek. When the monks at Bec vehemently protest his appointment as archbishop because it will take him away from them, Anselm tries to redirect their passion away from himself and toward God: "no one became a monk because of me nor out of hope of a reward from me. It is to God that you have vowed yourselves, it is from him, to whom you gave all that you had, that you must look for all that you need."[78]

Even if this dynamic is a completely rhetorical construction, even if there were no real hurt feelings because of Anselm's redescription of particular love of one monk as spiritual love for them all, we have to ask what the rhetoric tells us. Anselm casts the monks' lack of spiritual progress as a mistaken wish for a particular relationship and for signs of particular affection from Anselm for them as distinct from and over against fellow monks. What Anselm counsels is the spiritualization and generalization of their attachments—which means essentially to dissolve those attachments, to make of friendship the oxymoron of nonspecific attachment. Certainly Cassian describes a kind of friendship one can and should have for all, *agape*, but even Cassian leaves open the possibility of nongeneral love for a particular person or a few in a special way, which he calls by a different Greek term, *diathesis* (or affection), on the model of Jesus' love for John the Evangelist, as special, even as he loved the other disciples.[79] The ground of this special attachment in Cassian is in a shared disposition and tie of goodness. Anselm blurs this distinction, extending *affectio* to a much larger group without differentiating individuals as individuals. He does so on the basis of the shared com-

77. Ep. 69, S IV, 139, 19–20.
78. Ep. 156, S IV, 22, 145–47.
79. Cassian, *Collationes*, XVI, 14, 448–49.

mitment to the monastic life which is the tie of goodness that unites all monks and other religious in affection for one another.

There is, perhaps, a development in Anselm's expressions of friendship in some of the later letters. Writing from Canterbury to the community of Bec, which now includes many young monks who have arrived since Anselm left, Anselm still expresses his general love for the whole community. Anselm begins by noting how much he has loved them, how deeply he longs for them, a love and longing so great that, as he puts it, "a large parchment would not suffice" for its expression. Even though some there have no experience (*experimento*) of it, he reassures, his love for them is real. Do not doubt, he writes, that "just as I loved the root, so I love the branches, however much they are multiplied; I love all the sons of my mother, both the first-born and those born after me as brothers in the womb I love and embrace in my heart."[80] Thus the intensity of expression remains. This statement of his affection for the whole community does not seem as problematic as earlier ones, for unlike the earlier letters, there are no individual and specific relationships Anselm is redefining in general terms.

Anticipating Perfect Communion

The perfect realization of this kind of friendship will be, of course, in heaven. In heavenly friendship, Anselm writes to Hugh the hermit, "so great will the love be between God and those who will be there and between each other that all will love each other as they love themselves but all will love God more than themselves."[81] Because all love and are united in this love, their wills are perfectly united, willing the same thing in which everyone's desires are fulfilled. On this model, there is no conflict and in fact no difference between one's own will, that of others, and that of God, and no competition between love of self, love of others, and love of God. "No one there," Anselm writes, "shall will anything but what God wills; and what one wills, all shall will; and what one or all will, God himself shall will."[82] Sounding like an anticipation of Rousseau's general will and Kant's kingdom of ends, Anselm continues, "they shall each be perfect kings, because what they will individually shall come about; and all of them shall at the same time be one king with God and, as it were, one person, because all shall will one thing, and it shall come about."[83] In this environment, there is no loss and no loser; everyone gets what they wish and all wish that all others get what they wish.

80. Ep. 205, S IV, 98, 12–15.
81. Ep. 112, S III, 245, 26–28.
82. Ep. 112, S III, 245, 28–30.
83. Ep. 112, S III, 245, 31–34.

Spiritual friendship in this life will be perfected in heaven, Anselm preached, but it can be experienced now, at least momentarily, as fully as in heaven.[84] The monastic community is an anticipation of this unity of wills and minds. What monks share and what will make the union of friends perfect is the spiritual journey they undertake together. Though they travel by different routes, Anselm notes, they will be united at the same destination.[85] So rather than grieve over his absence, Anselm advises his monks, "I entreat you as a brother and exhort you as a father so to be striving to advance in peace and monastic life that you may find beatitude as the reward for your efforts, and I also may be able at some time to congratulate you on your beatitude."[86] The monastic community is an anticipation of this unity of wills and minds. Anselm wants to sweep his monks into this vision of love based not on the particular (unstable, jealous) exclusive love but on the unity of all those individuals in the love of God. What Anselm wants from those to whom he writes in passionate terms and from whom his separation is unbearable, then, is unity with them in the community of the monastic life.

Such unity makes possible and in fact requires perfect communication. In such relationships all things are told and understood, even when the truth exceeds the capacity of language to express it. Anselm writes to his monks at Bec, "whatever you write or say, in common or individually, in the letters you send out of the affection of your heart to one you most love and desire, and which neither tongue nor pen can express, all these are distinctly and clearly written in my heart."[87] To Boso, Anselm writes of their mutual love: "the sweetness of your love for me knows the sweetness of my love for you, and my affection for you knows your affection for me. One knows the intimate things of the other from his own intimate things, since true sincerity understands true sincerity and certain experience permits no doubts about anything to arise."[88] Anselm grounds his wish for perfect communication in the love that unites lovers, even writing to a prior he has never met: "Lord Abbot Roger [a mutual friend and brother of the monk on whose behalf Anselm intercedes], being so certain of you and me that the fire of charity has fused us into one heart and one soul, that he himself cannot not will that what one knows the other know."[89] Anselm exhorts his fellow monks to strive for this spiritual unity, a unity which precludes any attachment to anything else: "Be in

84. Anselm, *Liber de beatitudine caelestic patriae* X (PL CLIX, 638), cited in Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 73.

85. Ep. 37, S III, 145, 6–8.

86. Ep. 98, S III, 229, 14–17.

87. Ep. 148, S IV, 3, 4–6.

88. Ep. 209, S IV, 104, 66–10.

89. Ep. 48, S III, 161, 4–6.

agreement with God and men," Anselm advises; to be occupied by other desires, other loves takes away from this "perfect love."[90]

Conflicts between different human wills in Anselm's letters are encompassed within God's will to which all human wills should and must bend. The unity of wills in the company of God and the angels is achieved in the monastic life through obedience and humility, through the subordination of one's will to higher authority: "Anyone who wishes to possess this love perfectly with which the kingdom of heaven is purchased should love contempt, poverty, work, and submission."[91] To a young monk who has been scourging himself and asking others to do it, rather than subjecting himself to the command of his superior, Anselm writes asking him to stop these activities and follow the will of his superior. There is a difference between "monastic" and "royal" judgment, Anselm explains. The latter is from one's own will, the former, from obedience to another. Obedience to a royal judgment is what the rich and proud command to be done to themselves, and it claims that one sustains oneself, while monastic obedience shows that one is not one's own, Anselm explains.[92] This is the subject of *De casu diaboli*—being faithful to the truth that one has received everything and has nothing properly of one's own—here expressed as spiritual direction. It is noteworthy that the notion of monastic judgment is not put to use to exhort the young monk to submit to greater punishment at the hands of a superior but rather to plead that he give up the notion that he is holier and better for sitting harshly in judgment on himself. Similarly, in another letter, he exhorts a monk not to subject himself to harsher dietary restrictions than is required by the rule, and in yet another, he chastises a talented copyist for relying on his own judgment in his work copying manuscripts rather than obeying the instructions of his superior.[93] Anselm insists on the connection between unity and obedience, and though he is not an advocate of harsh punishment or extreme asceticism, he seems untroubled by the way in which the call to obedience can bring about the disappearance of the individual into the corporate whole. Thus he writes to a monk resisting his election as abbot of his community that what it means to be united as members of the body of Christ is that one must be willing to let others use you as their own member, letting oneself become, in effect, their instrument.[94]

The conflict of wills that looms largest in Anselm's letters to Bec was over Anselm's appointment as archbishop. According to the letters,

90. Ep. 112, S III, 245, 45–46.
91. Ep. 112, S III, 246, 69–71.
92. Ep. 233, S IV, 140, 8–13.
93. Ep. 196, S IV, 86; Ep. 232, S IV, 140.
94. Ep. 345, S V, 283, 11–19.

both Anselm and his monks vehemently fought the appointment.[95] Anselm writes to his community of his prayers to God for it to be rescinded, describing God's act allowing the appointment as "violence" against him, but concluding that his resistance failed in the face of the divine will. "Hence no longer defeated so much by the violence of men as God, against whom there is neither prudence nor courage," Anselm writes, he surrenders totally.[96] He concludes that he has no choice: "putting aside my own perception and will, I commit myself entirely to the perception and will of God."[97] Anselm sets this up as his will vs. God's, human vs. divine. The goal or movement is not toward harmony of two distinct wills, his and God's, but the giving up on his own will in complete capitulation to God's.

Anselm advocates not just subordination, but the utter disappearance of the lower into the higher, of his will into God's and of his monks' wills into his. The difference between his will and God's evaporates when he reflects on his monastic profession. "For when I made profession as a monk, I denied myself of myself, so that then I was no longer my own; that is, I did not live according to my own will but according to obedience."[98] Thus after great anguish, Anselm gives in to his appointment as archbishop and tries to move his former community in the same direction. If Anselm refuses his appointment or if the monks ask him to refuse it, they all cease to be monks, Anselm argues.[99] In becoming one with others in the monastic life, nothing of one's individuality remains. Whether we think Anselm's protestations and his construal of the community of Bec's dismay is, in our sense, literally true, or in some sense shaped to model a required rejection of power, what is indisputable

95. See Epp. 148, 156, S IV, 3–6; 17–24. See also Eadmer's dramatic retelling of Anselm's refusal to take the staff and of others having to pry open his fingers, forcing it into his hands, in *Historia novorum in Anglia*, edited by Martin Rule (London: Longman, 1884) [*Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England*, translated by Geoffrey Bosanquet (Philadelphia: Dufour, 1965), 33–36]. The degree to which Anselm really fought his appointment and the true source of the monks of Bec's objections to Anselm being made archbishop are strongly disputed by Southern, on one side, and Vaughn and Fröhlich, on the other. Southern takes Anselm's protestations at face value while Vaughn and Fröhlich have a more complex view. Vaughn argues that Anselm sought the appointment, but out of sense that the appointment was God's will and a duty rather than his inclination. Fröhlich argues that the monks of Bec resisted not just because they were loathe to lose him as abbot but that at least some suspected Anselm of cupidity for the appointment. See Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 278–80; Vaughn, *Anselm of Bec and Robert of Meulan*, 116–48; Fröhlich ("Introduction," in *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 1, 41–42) argues that letters omitted from the collection seem to be Anselm's attempt to deal with gossip that he lusted for the appointment as archbishop. See the following and n. 100 for a discussion of Anselm's refusal of office in terms of the ancient *typos* of humble rejection of power.

96. Ep. 148, S IV, 4, 42–43.

97. Ep. 148, S IV, 5, 48–50.

98. Ep. 156, S IV, 20, 91–93.

99. Ep. 156, S IV, 21, 96–101.

is that Anselm constructs human desire, both his and his monks', and God's will as absolutely opposed to one another. Moreover he depicts his own shift and that he recommends to his monks as capitulation to a kind of violence, to a divine will which is deeply opposed to natural inclination.[100] He does not describe a process whereby human inclination turns, like a flower to the light, toward the divine; rather the story is of the defeat of individual human will as the path toward its ultimate fulfillment.

The desired end is not just the union of distinct wills willing the same thing; rather the wills of those united in friendship should overlap recursively. That is, they should will what the other wishes them to will, wish only to take pleasure in what the other takes pleasure in, and do so because it pleases the other. "Whenever something is pleasing to you, that pleases me," Anselm writes to Lanfranc, "this is indeed pleasing to me; and whatever first was pleasing becomes even more pleasing."[101] As with Anselm and his monks, Anselm strives for a perfect harmony of wills with Lanfranc, their differences disappearing (or, better, never appearing) in their shared values and purpose. Anselm's relationship to Lanfranc illustrates both Anselm's commitment to this ideal and his own limits in complying with it. In his correspondence with Lanfranc Anselm styles himself in relation to Lanfranc as *suus quod suus*. The difficult to translate phrase means something like "he who is all and only his." Anselm wrote to Lanfranc explaining this usage, likening it to the prophet Zechariah's conclusion of every verse of his prophecy with "thus saith the Lord," in order to signal the source of the authority for his prophecy. So, Anselm continues, "in order to put on my words the stamp of the person to whom, and the spirit in which I speak, I always begin my letters with this inscription on their forehead."[102] Thus, Anselm places Lanfranc as source and authority for his own thought.

100. A pattern of piously refusing episcopal office goes back to Augustine, Ambrose, Pope Gregory the Great, Martin of Tours, and others. Marylou Rudd quotes a telling passage from Origen to the effect that reluctance to accept office is a qualification for it: "We do not accept those who love power. But we put pressure on those who, on account of their great humility, are reluctant hastily to take upon themselves the common responsibility of the church of God. And those who rule us well are those who have had to be forced to take office, being constrained by the great king, who, we are convinced, is the son of God." Origen, *Contra Celsus*, edited and translated by Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), vol. 8, 75, cited in Marylou Rudd, "'Unworthy Servants': The Rhetoric of Resignation at Canterbury, 1070–1170," *The Journal of Religious History* 22, no. 1 (1998): 11. Rudd analyzes the letters of resignation not just of Anselm but also Lanfranc and Thomas Becket, all of whom asked to resign their office because of their unworthiness, emphasizing their humility and reluctance for office. Much earlier but perhaps more famous was Ambrose of Milan's original refusal of the office of bishop.

101. Ep. 32, S III, 140, 4–5.

102. Ep. 57, S III, 171, 3–7. See Southern's translation in *Portrait in a Landscape*, 60–61.

Anselm sent the *Monologion* to Lanfranc asking him to approve or disapprove it, hoping for this recursive identity of wills: "since," he explains, "I want nothing to please me that displeases you."[103] Recognizing the possibility that this unity of wills might not be immediate, Anselm notes his readiness to subordinate his own will to Lanfranc's on intellectual matters just as he would in spiritual or moral matters: "just as it rests only on your experience to judge how much you will allow of what I say I greatly desire, so it is for your judgment to choose whether [the *Monologion*] pleases you.[104] What Anselm wanted to believe (and have Lanfranc confirm) is that his whole identity, his thoughts and feelings, were given him by Lanfranc and are in complete harmony with Lanfranc's. Anselm wanted Lanfranc to signal that pleasure by naming the work. He has not given the work a name because of its insignificance, but if Lanfranc approves, Anselm asks that "from him from whom it receives confirmation, let it receive a name." Failing that, Anselm requests that it not be returned it to him but disposed of it "by one of the elements." Not just any destruction will do, but complete obliteration by having that on which it is written flung back to rejoin the basic elements of the cosmos by means of one of the four kinds of elemental destruction: burying (earth), sinking (water), burning (fire), or scattering it to the wind.[105]

Lanfranc, however, did not approve of the work as Anselm wished; he did not in effect join on as an author by giving the title, but neither did he destroy the work as Anselm requested. In refusing to do any of these things, he asserts what Anselm wishes to deny—their difference. With this act, Lanfranc says essentially, the work is not what I would have written; it is yours and you must claim it as such even in the light of my criticisms. You cannot obliterate our difference by pretending the breach has never happened; it has happened and you must decide what to do about it; I will not decide for you. As a result of this episode, Southern contends, Anselm stopped using *suus quod suus* in letters to Lanfranc.[106] However, there must have been a sort of reconciliation between them; the *Monologion* appeared in its final form with a dedicatory letter to Lanfranc, and there might have been face-to-face meetings between Anselm and Lanfranc after Lanfranc expressed his criticisms, for Anselm's reply to Lanfranc ends with the mention of Anselm's hopes to correct the work and to discuss it with Lanfranc.[107] Lanfranc must have given some kind

103. Ep. 72, S III, 193, 9–10.

104. Ep. 72, S III, 193, 10–12.

105. Ep. 72, S III, 193, 16–17, 21–22.

106. Anselm uses this form of address is letters 23, 25, 27, 49, 66 but not in later letters 72, 77, 89, 90, 103, 126. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 60, n. 30.

107. Ep. 77, S III, 200. Herbert E. J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc: Scholar, Monk and Archbishop* (Oxford:

of consent because Anselm would not have published a dedicatory letter to Lanfranc without Lanfranc's permission. On the other hand, Anselm clearly did not rewrite the treatise along the lines Lanfranc seems to have suggested; he did not shift his trinitarian language or add scriptural or patristic authorities to his text.[108] We have to conclude that Anselm in the end accepted their difference, that he no longer thinks of himself as "all and only" Lanfranc's, even as he continued to work with and maintain his affection and respect for him.

Just as Anselm's beloved monks find it hard to completely spiritualize their connection to Anselm and become interchangeable with one other, but continued to long for individualized affection, so Anselm found it impossible to completely submerge his own will and voice into Lanfranc's. Though disappointed to find that Lanfranc was not of one mind with him on his work, Anselm did not withdraw it but named it himself and circulated it to more sympathetic readers.[109] In some sense, then, Anselm did not follow his own theory about how to achieve the harmony of wills and desires he claims with Lanfranc. However, he maintains that in the work he expresses nothing different than that found in scripture or the fathers: "This was my intention throughout the whole disputation . . . that in it I should never state anything at all unless I saw that it could readily be defended either by canonical writings or by the words of blessed Augustine. And now, whenever I reconsider what I said I cannot conceive of having stated anything else myself."[110] Even though not of perfectly one mind with Lanfranc, Anselm asserts that he is of one mind with Augustine and other authorities, having subjugated his thought to theirs, to the degree that any difference is not just nonexistent but *inconceivable*. Lanfranc's complaint about the *Monologion* was that Anselm had presumed to speak on the topic of the divine nature and Trinity in his own voice rather than to rely on the opinions of the authorities. Para-

Oxford University Press, 2003), 211. Cowdrey disagrees with Southern that the relationship between Lanfranc and Anselm was damaged by this disagreement, though he thinks of Lanfranc's attitude toward the *Monologion* in the end as merely a lack of opposition. Cowdrey, 208–11. Holopainen goes much further and argues that Lanfranc was actively helping Anselm to construct a more positive reception for his rational theology. See Toivo Holopainen, "The *Proslogion* in Relation to the *Monologion*," *The Heythrop Journal* 50 (2009): 590–602.

108. We do not have Lanfranc's letter in response to Anselm's request, but we can tell from Anselm's response to that missing letter (Ep. 77, S III, 199) that these were the main lines of Lanfranc's criticisms.

109. See Epp. 100, 109, S III, 231–32, 241–42 to Hugh, archbishop of Lyon, to whom Anselm sent his *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. Even if Southern exaggerates the effect of Lanfranc's criticisms on Anselm, it is clear from the tone of these letters that Anselm is thrilled to have Hugh praise and approve his work.

110. Ep. 77, S III, 199, 13–17.

doxically, Anselm thinks of his work, which does not mention the names of authorities or quote scripture explicitly, as so completely in tune with Augustine and scripture, having so completely digested them, that it is virtually identical with them. Unlike his appointment as archbishop, Anselm in this case neither directly resists an opposing will nor completely surrenders his own. However, unwilling to compromise his ideal of perfectly united wills, he fits it to the more distant and intellectual unity he has with Augustine and scripture.

Turning Sadness into Joy

Though Anselm uses the language of grief and longing at separation from God to describe his feelings at being separated from his fellow monks, the letters unrelentingly enfold suffering and separation into a larger perspective of future solace and union. What monks share and what will make the union of friends perfect is the spiritual journey they undertake together. Though they travel by different routes, Anselm advises, they will be united at the same destination.[111] So, for example, rather than grieve over his absence, Anselm counsels his monks, "I entreat you as a brother and exhort you as a father so to be striving to advance in peace and monastic life that you may find beatitude as the reward for your efforts, and I also may be able at some time to congratulate you on your beatitude."[112]

When his fellow monks suffer, Anselm places their suffering the context of the journey toward God, reminding them that it moves them closer to their goal. To one monk suffering from illness, Anselm sends both compassion and congratulations: compassion "because you are being worn down by suffering," and congratulations "because you are being trained for your heritage." The outer man is tormented, but suffering purges sin and "transfers the destiny of the sons of God, to whom an eternal reign of joy is promised, to us."[113] Suffering is a burden, he tells another young man, but keep bearing it; it will take you longer to get home but the household runs more joyfully toward someone weighed down.[114] To Gundulf, who, like Anselm, lamented his own appointment as a bishop, Anselm writes, "glory be to God on high who has so loved you that he has placed you in the fire of tribulation that he might boil down your works to perfection and your hope to firm obligation."[115] Making explicit his theodicy, Anselm cites from St. Paul, "all things work together

111. Ep. 37, S III, 145, 6–8.
112. Ep. 98, S III, 229, 14–17.
113. Ep. 9, S III, 112, 8–14.
114. Ep. 13, S III, 118, 35–36.
115. Ep. 78, S III, 201, 19–20.

for good to those who love God."[116] To Hernost, an ailing bishop, Anselm writes with "human sadness" at Hernost's suffering, but, he continues, "when I consider that through this your soul is being nourished for eternity, your progress consoles me with spiritual joy."[117] To his sister and her husband, having sent their only surviving child to him to take up religious life, Anselm writes that they should give thanks now that they are free from all worry and can dedicate themselves wholly to the saving of their souls. He holds out the hope only that their surviving son will, along with them and their departed sons and daughters, rejoice together with them in heaven where "each will be glorified as much for each of the others as for themselves."[118]

Anselm concludes that in effect what classical thinkers would have called bad fortune is good. Do not return the world's smile, Anselm counsels, "for it does not smile at you so that you may smile, but that under its mocking prince you may lament when he laments. Rather, whenever he laughs, shrink from his smile, mock the smiler in horror, so that afterwards you may mock his mockery and smile when he laments."[119] When Anselm's dialogue partners in *De veritate* and *De casu diaboli* object to the notion that bad fortune is good, Anselm concedes them some ground; in the letters, however, Anselm defines evil out of existence without hesitation or qualification. Anselm advises Hernost in his illness to consider "that from the defect of the flesh comes the progress of the soul, from the illness of the flesh, the health of the soul, from punishment, forgiveness;" hence, he should "draw consolation from this very affliction and joy from this sorrow."[120] In this way, Anselm embraces paradoxes that are just as radical but more existentially poignant than those in his speculative theological works: sorrow is really joy, and affliction, consolation. Anselm sees suffering, as he does human relationships, from a completely divine or redeemed perspective. He neither tries to minimize nor mediate the distance between human and divine perspectives but baldly states it in its most irreducible form and then leaps over it, bringing, he hopes, his friends with him.

What is required to achieve this view of suffering and separation is an unflinching orientation toward the future. The past, Anselm tells his monks, is "as nothing;" one's whole effort should be focused on forward progress.[121] Instead of turning around to see where others are on the path to heaven, Anselm advises his monks to look steadily forward and consider only whether one is keeping up with those further on the road

116. Ep. 78, S III, 201, 20–21; Rom. 8:28.
117. Ep. 53, S III, 167, 6–8.
118. Ep. 211, S IV, 108, 18–25.
119. Ep. 2, S III, 101, 77–80.
120. Ep. 53, S III, 168, 24–26.
121. Ep. 51, S III, 165, 23–24.

toward salvation.[122] Taking to a kind of extreme the notion that the rewards in a future heaven will make up for present suffering and loss, Anselm draws the narrative line oriented toward the future in stark terms: "as long someone has lived, so much shorter he has to live; and as distant is the day of his birth, so much closer is the day of his death and reward for his whole life."[123] What Anselm's arguments are metaphorically, one enormous extension toward God, is the literal structure of earthly life itself for him. And like the objects that medieval physicists theorized would move more quickly toward their natural place the closer they came to it, Anselm contends that human beings should hasten toward their end, becoming more rather than less courageous and joyful the closer they come to their reward: "the more you consider your labor hastening to an end and approach [your] rest and crown, the more you should accomplish in great vigor, pressing on more strongly and, comforted, persevering more joyfully."[124]

Part II: Friendship and Politics after Bec

As many have remarked, the topic of friendship and the intensity of the language of love and longing fades a bit the later one moves in the correspondence, though it is not altogether absent after Anselm left Bec. Letter 156 is written after Anselm's departure from Bec to become archbishop and describes his love for his friends at Bec and grief at their separation.[125] In a slightly later letter to the young monks at Bec, Anselm describes his face as bathed in tears at being without them.[126] Even several years after his departure, Anselm writes back to the community at Bec in great fervor, "my love for you goes on burning in my innermost heart."[127] Nonetheless, the diminution of the topic is obvious and, perusing the letters as a whole, hardly surprising given the difficult and serious problems with which Anselm had to deal as archbishop. The sheer number of letters written to kings, popes, nobles, and bishops reveal a set of issues that would have crowded out the space for friendship in most lives. That Anselm lacked the time to express and perhaps find comfort in this kind of connection with his fellow monks is completely understandable. The intense language of friendship that does flame up again in the later letters is always connected to monastic life. First, Anselm's language is more intense the more the addressee is engaged in or being exhorted to monastic life. Second, except for letters to those with whom Anselm has

122. Ep. 51, S III, 165, 33–36.
123. Ep. 2, S III, 100, 57–59.
124. Ep. 2, S III, 100–1, 64–67.
125. Ep. 156, S IV, 17–23.
126. Ep. 166, S IV, 40.
127. Ep. 199, S IV, 90, 6–7.

real rather than indirect ties, like Gilbert Crispin, or later, Boso, a monk of Canterbury, it is in letters to young monks, most especially those at his beloved Bec, that Anselm's language becomes the most tender and effusive. These expressions of love resemble most the tenderness of parent for child. Anselm writes with an understanding of the special need these youngest entrants into the monastery have for a sense that they are loved and cared for.

What characterizes the later letters is not so much the elaborate and ardent expression of love but more the substance of that love drawn on as the ground for communication and action. The ties of spiritual friendship are *assumed* rather than *forgotten* as Anselm begins his life as an administrator. Anselm uses the common identity and shared commitment to the values of religious life to exhort young monks to greater virtue and obedience and cooperation and correction with his equals and secular rivals. To a young monk who wrote to Anselm expressing great love, Anselm replies that "true affection (*dilectio*) desires the constant progress of the one who is loved." Progress is achieved through the "love of your monastic way of life (*propositum*) above all," a commitment best kept by never hiding or defending one's faults and striving for complete openness toward his abbot.[128] Through this perfection of monastic life one will find joy and delight, Anselm writes, deftly moving the young monk's love and delight away from himself and toward monastic life itself, and shifting his desire to know and be known by Anselm toward an openness to the abbot and community.[129]

This goal of making operative the shared love and commitment of spiritual life has been part of Anselm's correspondence from his earliest letters. In one of these earlier letters, cited above, in which Anselm declares that a mutual friend could not *not* will their complete mutual sharing of information, it is clear that Anselm is using the claim of mutual love to express what *should* be the kind of community all those joined in a common way of life should form.[130] Similarly, Anselm writes to the subprior of Canterbury as "beloved friend" and "dearest son," admonishing him not to punish merely careless infractions of the rule as if they were intentional. Suspicions of more serious wrongdoing should be dismissed if there is no proof; if he does this, Anselm concludes, the brothers will love him and correct themselves.[131] In this way, Anselm both uses friendship to ground his exhortation and urges his addressee to use friendship in the same way to move his monks toward faithfulness to the rule. In

128. Ep. 232, S IV, 139–40.
129. Ep. 232, S IV, 139–40.
130. Ep. 48, S III, 161.
131. Ep. 313, S V, 240.

a later exchange, Anselm uses the notion of friendship to attempt to resolve a very earthly dispute over market rights; he writes to the sheriff and port reeve of Canterbury, admonishing them as "faithful friends" of his and of the church to return the market to Canterbury.[132]

The degree to which Anselm cultivated and used friendship in order to accomplish his goals is disputed by Vaughn and Southern. They interpret differently the passage in which Anselm advises the monks at Bec to continue the work he had done to gain friends "for the utility of the church" and the "welfare (*salutem*)" of those they love. Southern takes issue with the notion that Anselm deployed friendship politically and with any aim other than the spiritual welfare of the church and those he loved, while Vaughn rightly rejects as anachronistic Southern's strong distinction between spiritual and material *utilitate* and *salutem* for Anselm.[133] A kind of misplaced romanticism affects Southern, for whom interest in the material success of Bec would taint the commitment to its spiritual excellence. Though Anselm thoroughly rejects the notion that worldly and material success are in any way to be sought, Anselm acted vigorously to protect and expand *both* the spiritual and material success of Bec and Canterbury. From within the monastic context, Anselm understood the protection and expansion of lands, donations to the monastery, as well as the increase in professions to monastic life as *utile* and part of the *salutem* of an abbey. This does not conflict with but rather supports Southern's beautiful summation of Anselm's notion of friendship as cultivated both within and outside the monastic walls:

> For Anselm, friendship and unity in the service of God were identical. Friendship spreads out into the world as a healing influence beyond the monastic walls. It begins within the community in the practice of meditation, in prayer, in teaching, and common worship; and it spreads out as a missionary influence in bringing others into the circle of monastic life, some as monks, others as attached widows or associated individuals, and all, especially the poor, as recipients of the consolations of alms, healing, miracles, and the aid of the saints. . . . This is what he meant by the *utilitas*, the well-being, of the monastery. The *conglutitas fraternitatis* extends the benefits of the monastic life around the countryside.[134]

132. Ep. 356, S V, 297–98; 358, S V, 299–300. A reeve is the chief officer under the king, in this case, over the port of Canterbury. See Haseldine's discussion of this exchange in, "Love, Separation, and Male Friendship," 249, n. 26.

133. Southern, "Sally Vaughn's Anselm," 188–91; Vaughn, "Anselm: Saint and Statesman," 218–20.

134. Southern, "Sally Vaughn's Anselm," 191.

Anselm's theory of friendship is in the end political, not about personal or individual feelings or relationships but, like shared citizenship, about relations defined by reason and principle. His aim is to displace other grounds on which connections might be made and used for political leverage—kinship, material and political power, regional ties—with his notion of spiritual friendship grounded in a common spiritual goal, entailing the strict ethical and spiritual rules which must be shared by those with the same goal. This model of friendship expresses a new vision of Christian unity made possible by Gregorian reform, which brought about greater uniformity grounded on shared Christian ideals. Such a vision, Haseldine explains, "open[ed] up for ecclesiastics the prospect of a common interest and identity beyond the range of traditional, regional political ties."[135] We can see Anselm in his letters pushing not just what *is* but what *should* be true about his relationship to the abbot or prior to whom he writes; there is in his language an edge of aspiration and obligation. This is the community to which we belong, Anselm is saying, one whose models of relationship are not based on particularity, power, family, or regional relations but on our common way of life, our common dedication to a single goal. These are the only grounds on which we should relate to one another. It displaces other models, not only in being broader but in being very different than feudal relations. Though Anselm does not, of course, reject the legitimacy of feudal relations, his notion of friendship is based on a moral code and on a kind of equality.[136]

This equality, however, is consistent with the assertion of hierarchy in the demand for obedience. Since equality means the unity of all friends in the same project, such a spiritual life demands subordination of individuals to those who have the authority to guide that life. Any disunity or disobedience amounts to rejection of that common goal. Walter Fröhlich argues that Anselm's views on ecclesiastical and secular authority are an expansion rather than contradiction to his pastoral letters of friendship and spiritual direction. Just as the monks subordinate their wills to the abbot's and ultimately to God's will, human laws should be completely subordinated to the law of God, and all, including the king, must be subject to the Roman pontiff.[137] By the same token, for

135. Haseldine, "Love, Separation, and Male Friendship," 254. With this more general goal of Gregorian reform, a grounding of society and relationships on the common principles of the Church, Anselm thoroughly agrees, though as Vaughn, Southern, and Fröhlich all note, Anselm's specific account of the relationship between church and state was not truly Gregorian.

136. Cf. Haseldine's similar conclusion contrasting the basis of equality in friendship as opposed to patronage. "Love, Separation, and Male Friendship," 254, n. 38.

137. Walter Fröhlich, "Anselm's *Weltbild*," 507–8.

Anselm bishops have no secular duties; their devotion was wholly to the spiritual life, not the earthly.[138] The picture is one of complete separation of earthly and heavenly, and, in any areas of overlap, the complete subordination of the earthly to the heavenly.

Consistent with his picture of monastic life in his letters of spiritual direction to fellow monks, Anselm is uncompromising in his assertion of his principles in the face of encroachments by secular values. Over and over Anselm asserts the complete lack of any secular moral claim and the emptiness of any secular life. Though Anselm was an able and committed politician in his battles with secular power, his politics considers the world from a single perspective, with the secular ordered firmly toward the sacred. With this conviction firmly in place, Anselm writes as archbishop to counts and kings, urging them to subordinate their earthly aims to the spiritual goals of the church. This advice is sometimes general in exhortations to rule justly and on the model of King David, as, for example, he writes to the newly crowned kings of Jerusalem and Scotland and the count of Flanders.[139] It is sometimes more pointed, urging a clear subordination of secular rulers to the church,[140] and sometimes yet more specific, exhorting those hesitant and congratulating those compliant with the ban on investiture of bishops and abbots by secular leaders.[141] Anselm's battles with William Rufus and Henry I are, though complex, clearly one thing: rejections of any secular authority over the Church. In relation to both kings, Anselm insisted on the primacy of religious authority, and twice chose exile rather than compromise this principle as he understood it. On the questions of lay investiture he even found himself defending a position more papist than the pope's own.[142] Whether we see Anselm as canny or naïve in these battles, it is clear that he acts on principle. For Fröhlich, Anselm's political principles are more Augustinian than Gregorian, based fundamentally on the distinction between *frui* and *uti*: "whoever acts in such a way as to progress farther towards the vision of God is doing good; whoever acts in the opposite way is doing evil."[143] This meant in practice both the defense of the papal ban on lay investiture and the protection of the primacy and independence of Canterbury, not just against the king and nobles but also, where necessary, against the pope. The particular arrangements between the archbishop

138. Fröhlich, "Anselm's *Weltbild*," 510.
139. Epp. 180, 235, 413; S IV, 64–65; 142–43; S V, 358–59.
140. Epp. 249, 262; S IV, 159–60; 176–77.
141. Epp. 248, 329; S IV, 158–59; S V, 261–62.
142. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, 174–76.
143. Fröhlich, "Anselm's *Weltbild*," 515.

of Canterbury and king, for Anselm, should be ordered for one and only one purpose: the furthering of the city of God in the spiritual life of his community, a community which embraces not just clerics and monastery but the whole of his jurisdiction, which was all England.[144] Just as Anselm thinks of himself as speaking the language only of scripture and the fathers (even though their voices are not distinct but subsumed under Anselm's voice), he sees secular power and the Church both from within the same perspective, that of the heavenly rather than the earthly city.

The Transformation of Friendship

Anselm's idealized notion of friendship makes human friendship resemble the relationship to God. Anselm demands the complete renunciation of worldly life and relationships but promises the rewards of friendship in the transformation of earthly into completely spiritualized relationships. Rather than thinking of friendship as the relationship of two different individuals, Anselm makes it the subsumption of individuals into a single identity, the perfect union of minds and wills. His spiritual community can allow no separation between individuals any more than his arguments can between word, thought, and thing. Just as in his arguments, Anselm leaps to the moment of union between word and thing, in the letters he asserts the perfect union of minds and wills and friendship. Obedience and humility and the subjection of the secular to the spiritual are the means to bring about that perfectly unified relationship. The right will for all does not emerge from any sort of conflict of opinions or any sort of compromise between the worldly and spiritual points of view. Rather it is the absorption of the individual into the corporate, the worldly into the spiritual.

As Anselm makes clear more than once, the price of the spiritual joy he promises is the rejection of one's secular identity and relationships. His friendship in its strongest form is available only to those professing the monastic life, which involves exchanging an individual identity for a joint one. In a late letter to a nun, he tells her that her life is now completely cut off from her family in the world.[145] And in one of Anselm's

144. It is beyond the scope of this book and my expertise to sort through the details of the complications of Anselm's relationships with popes and kings. There are, as has been noted, many disagreements among historians on how to interpret Anselm's actions as archbishop as successful or politically astute that cannot be settled here. What I conclude here is what I think could be agreed by the major commentators on Anselm as archbishop: Southern, Fröhlich, and Vaughn. See Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer*, 142–93, and *Portrait in a Landscape*, 259–347; Fröhlich, "Anselm's *Weltbild*," 499–517; Vaughn, *Anselm of Bec and Robert of Meulan*, 149–345.

145. Ep. 405, S V, 349–50.

analogies, he describes the monks as able to remain safe against the onslaughts of the enemy only if they remain within the walls of their castle, not looking out the windows even when they hear the cries of their relatives being killed.[146]

What is peculiar to Anselm's spirituality expressed in the letters is not the construction of human life into a narrative reaching toward God—this goes back at least to Augustine and extends far beyond Anselm. It is, rather, the way in which he shapes that narrative. The story begins with the grief and longing at the separation of one human being from another and the utter opposition of human and divine wills and ends with the complete and total unity of divine and human wills in the perfect unity of friends and perfect harmony of wills in the monastic community. On the one hand, Anselm goes so far as to characterize God's plan for him as not just different from how he sees his own good, but as violence, yet, on the other hand, he thrusts himself (and others) equally violently toward total subsumption of self into God. Similarly, Anselm describes his dejection at separation from friends as complete and his sorrow as irremediable only to go on to reimagine separation as unity and requiring the complete redirection of love onto a different and completely general object. On Anselm's model of friendship, the attachment and unity between friends becomes more complete even as it comes to lack specificity and physicality.

In an important sense Anselm never casts himself nor addresses his fellow monks as "on the way" but places them at one extreme or the other. Anselm's addressees, like Anselm and everyone in this life, of course, is *in via*, but the point is that for Anselm, being "on the way" is not a place to stay and or be at home. Anselm only recognizes two possibilities: one is either moving out of the world toward God (in which case what matters is not where one is but where one is going, not the motion but its goal), or one is mired in the nullity of the world. Moreover, Anselm doesn't reconcile the conflict between human will and God's by appealing to a future point of convergence between the lines of his will and God's, nor does he resolve the problem of the meaning of events in human life by reference to a providential plan whose outlines are still unclear. Rather the trajectory of one's own will must be erased in order to join it to God's and the providential plan is made clear by its end: death and union with God. Anselm first widens and then traverses in one giant step the gap between his will and God's, enveloping sadness and separation within a larger perspective of spiritual joy and presence.

146. *Mem*. 66–67.

The transformation of friendship and community Anselm effects, dissolving the vicissitudes of human relationships into the relationship with God and the diversity of wills into one will identical to God's, is striking not because this itself is new—nothing could be more Augustinian or in tune with the Benedictine rule. What is striking is that he has effected this change by beginning from a model of friendship that looks like the opposite of the Augustinian, Benedictine model: an intense, specific, exclusive attachment which is desirable for its own sake, *frui* rather than *uti*, and turned it into a monastic model of human relationships as general, indirect, and in which all the intensity is directed not at one's fellow monk but at God, in and through whom they are friends. Like Anselm's evocation of the intimate love between mother and child, brother and brother, nursemaid and baby in the prayers, there is in Anselm's ministry to his fellow monks an acknowledgement of a human desire for these kinds of intense, physical, and exclusive attachments. It is evidence of Anselm's deep psychological insight that he recognizes and speaks to that desire, but then completely redirects it toward the monastic life.

Anselm has combined elements of earlier forms of classical friendship and sexual love in poets like Ovid, put together the moral basis and stability of classical friendship with the intensity of longing and desire in erotic love, to describe a model of human relationship that anticipates the advent of romantic love in the twelfth century. The borrowing of the language of erotic love for a higher love has precedents, of course, in Plato's ascent of the soul and even closer to Anselm in mysticism, where longing for union and union itself with God is described in erotic terms. However, Anselm uses the kind of language mystics use for love of God for his love and longing for his fellow monks. He takes his language not just "up" from erotic love but also "down" from mystical union to form his model of monastic friendship.

Anselm evokes this mode of relationship and the desire for it as a way into the monastic life; it is his recruiting tool. His argument is that the monastic life, in which human relations are grounded in the relationship to and dedication of one's life to God, is the path to the satisfaction of that desire. It is also a language and model that he deploys to convince other monks and clerics to join their wills to his, to will, with him, one thing. Though some of the reaction to Anselm's construction of friendship was disappointment and confusion, we cannot impute any duplicity to Anselm. His sincerely and deeply held view is that the monastic life as he understood it meets fully, more fully than any other kind of relationship, the human desire for attachment. Moreover, the letters show that

Anselm deployed this rhetoric of union of hearts and wills in a monastic context in way that shows real care for his fellow monks. He writes often to beg for mercy on behalf of an erring monk, seeking forgiveness for him from his superiors, and his direct rebukes of individual monks rarely seek greater abnegation. He writes to urge them to continue in the monastic life when they are tempted away, to show them a way to find a kind of fulfilling love having left a community in which they felt at home, and to discourage them from imposing on themselves *more* strict physical renunciation than called for by the rule. Pride earns Anselm's censure far more than concupiscence.

What this model of human relationship shares is the pattern found in Anselm's prayers, that stretch from this world to the next, from the lowliest human needs and desires, the most basic desires of child for mother love, of (sexual) desire for consummation. Anselm finds the fulfillment rather than the obliteration of those desires in divine love in the community of the religious life. While Anselm tells monks to abandon their families, exhorts them not to leave the cloister to help family members on the outside, urges husbands and wives to give up their marital relationship to join the cloister, Anselm does not disparage the *desires* those domestic relations are designed to satisfy (though we would have to say he does disparage the domestic and sexual relations themselves). Rather he argues that, paradoxically, those most intimate, specific, concrete and physical desires are fulfilled in the utterly spiritual relationships of the monastic life.

There is nonetheless something problematic about Anselm's attempt to put into practice in this world a kind of friendship suited to the next, to design for creatures of flesh and blood, operating in finite time and space, a model of relationship that transcends all those limitations. It is not surprising that this vision of monastic life as both the fulfillment of the deepest and most ardent human desire for relationship with one's fellows and what Southern so aptly called "a programme of the most exacting renunciation" was not immediately understood and embraced by all Anselm's fellow monks.[147]

147. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 165.

3
Grammar and Logic

Linguistic Analysis, Method, and Pedagogy

There was a time when Anselm's *De grammatico*, the *Lambeth Fragments*, and even *De veritate* were neglected and disparaged in favor of the famous treatises on God, the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*.[1] Prantl, the great historian of western logic, complained that Anselm's short dialogue known as *De grammatico* was "futile, wandering, tiresome, and laborious."[2] Nineteenth-century commentators tended to draw a sharp line of separation between Anselm's theological works and *De grammatico*, seeing its preoccupations as unconnected to the rest of the Anselmian corpus.[3] Desmond Henry convincingly showed that the analysis of ordinary language, the construction of a technical language, and distinction of senses present in the logical writings are not an anomaly but are significantly present in all Anselm's work. Thus, Henry argues that all the works, logical and philosophical, are united by the theme of the "distinction between the meaning and the use of words and sentences."[4] Anselm's interest in linguistic analysis "permeates" all his work, on Henry's view.[5] Henry notes the parallel gap between grammar and logic, on the one hand, and between ordinary language and the language used to talk about God, on the other, and he speculates that it may have been Anselm's awareness of the gap between the latter that drew his attention to that between the former.[6] Gillian Evans essentially con-

1. Desmond P. Henry has given a bibliography of some of these views in his "Saint Anselm's *De Grammatico*," *Philosophical Quarterly* 10, no. 39 (April 1960): 115.

2. Carl Prantl, *Geschichte der Logik im Abendlande* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1861), vol. 2, 92, cited in Henry, "Saint Anselm's *De Grammatico*," 115.

3. Barthélemy Hauréau, *Histoire de la philosophie scolastique*, 2 vols. (Paris: Durand et Pedone-Lauriel, 1872), vol. 1, 268.

4. Henry, "Saint Anselm's *De Grammatico,*" 116.

5. Desmond P. Henry, *The Logic of Saint Anselm* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 22.

6. Desmond P. Henry, "Saint Anselm as Logician," in *Sola Ratione: Anselm-Studien für Pater*

curs, arguing that Anselm "builds his general theory of language upon a special theory of divine language."[7] Marcia Colish remarks that the "quasi-logical grammar" Anselm developed by "adjust[ing] the current notions of grammatical signification to the new and disturbing insights of eleventh-century logic" "is Anselm's basic theological tool."[8] Henry concludes that Anselm's "concerns with meaning, use, and logical form endow his techniques with a family resemblance to those of contemporary linguistic analysts sufficient to bring him . . . within the ambit of some such title."[9] Henry further speculates that the *Lambeth Fragments* was Anselm's sketch for a unified treatment of language and calls it "central text" for Anselm's views on language.[10]

While an earlier generation of commentators ignored the logical writings or at best subordinated their questions those of the theological works, Henry tends toward the other extreme, understanding the concerns, or at the very least, the methods of the theological works in terms of the logical ones. Henry has not been alone in this. Alain de Libera's *La philosophie médiévale*, for example, devotes over twice as much space to *De grammatico* and its posterity as to the ontological argument. With the encounter of Stoic grammar and Aristotelian logic in *De grammatico*, de Libera concludes, "a world is in the process of being born."[11] There are, as Colish notes, two different lopsided views of Anselm on language, one that would make him "a modern linguistic analyst and symbolic logician *avant la lettre*" and another that would make him "a proponent of the Platonic and Pauline doctrine of the poverty of language."[12] On the one hand, in *De grammatico* and in the fragments, Anselm's primary activity is linguistic analysis of the type Henry describes, and the theological writings use many of the same techniques. In fact, all Anselm's writings reveal a thinker who does not simply engage in this type of linguistic reflection as a means to an end; he clearly enjoys it.[13] On the other hand,

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Dr. h. c. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt OSB zum 75. Geburtstag am 20. Dezember 1969, edited by Helmut Karl Kohlenberger (Stuttgart: Freidrich Frommann Verlag, 1970), 16.

7. Gillian R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 20.

8. Marcia L. Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge*, rev. ed. (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 58.

9. Henry, *Logic of Saint Anselm*, 120.

10. Henry, *Logic of Saint Anselm*, 120. Henry subtitles the chapter in which his discussion of the fragments appears, "the central text." The fragments, he argues, "can be supposed to constitute the draft of the promised unified treatment" of linguistic analysis.

11. Alain de Libera, *La philosophie médiévale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993), 294, 292–305.

12. Marcia L. Colish, "St. Anselm's Philosophy of Language Reconsidered," *Anselm Studies* 1 (1983): 118.

13. Ermanno Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense: The Case of Anselm and His God* (Princeton:

Anselm's passion for reasoning and language were, except in *De grammatico* and the *Lambeth Fragments*, always tied to substantive theological issues. Anselm describes his anguished search for the ontological argument in the preface to the *Proslogion*.[14] We also know of Anselm's deathbed wish to be able to continue his search for a resolution of the problem of the origin of the soul.[15] For Bencivenga, that Anselm left the *Lambeth Fragments* unfinished is a sign that the center of his interest lies elsewhere.[16]

I want to contend that there is a substantive connection between language and theology for Anselm that does not require the subordination of either logic to theology or theology to logic, but rather reveals their mutual and necessary connection for Anselm.

De grammatico: The Gap between Language and Being

The dialogue that goes by the name *De grammatico* takes its title from the opening question, whether *grammaticus* is a substance or a quality. The discussion has its origins in a technical dispute between grammarians and logicians in the eleventh century. For Priscian, the names signify both a substance and a quality, while according to Aristotle's *Categories* things (or names, as Anselm reads him) are either substances or qualities, but not both.[17] The dispute was caused, first, by intense interest in grammar, which was the focus of monastic education and essential to the *lectio divina* and, second, by the resurgence of interest in the *logica vetus* of Aristotle subsequent to the reappearance of Boethius's translation of the *Categories*.[18] According to Marcia Colish, grammar in a broad sense, including not just Latin grammar, but also training in scriptural glosses and concordances, even allegorical interpretation, became "the basis of

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Princeton University Press, 1993), 35, n. 4. Bencivenga cites evidence from Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi* in which Anselm is presented as heavily engaged in literary studies, and realized that if he became a monk his life would be no more difficult and he would not lose the reward of the hard work he was then doing. See Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury/Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, edited by and translated by Richard W. Southern, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), book I, v, 8.

14. *Pros.* Prooem., S I, 93, 10–19.

15. Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi*, book II, lxvi, 142, cited in Bencivenga, 35.

16. Bencivenga, 20, n. 31.

17. On the roots of the different perspectives of grammar and logic and the difference between the views of Priscian and Donatus, on the one hand, and Boethius, on the other, see Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 69–70.

18. For an account of the educational emphasis on grammar and the surging interest Aristotle's *Categories* reintroduced by Boethius's translation and commentaries, see Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 63–65, 68–69.

the monastic thinker's intellectual style."[19] Second, the manuscript evidence of the availability of the "Aristotelian—Boethian *Categories*" testifies to the interest in Aristotelian logic, reflected as well in the debates prompted by Boethius's discussion of universals in his *Isagoge* commentary in the eleventh century.

The encounter between grammar and logic in the eleventh century has been construed as defining its major conflicts and dividing its thinkers into proponents of one discipline or the other. The understanding of the Eucharist, especially the reference for the words of consecration, "*Hoc est corpus meum*," became a subject of heated debate between Anselm's teacher and mentor, Lanfranc of Bec, and Berengar of Tours.[20] On this standard early twentieth-century view, this controversy was a conflict between dialecticians like Berengar and Roscelin, on the one hand, and those opposing the use of dialectic in theology, grounded in grammar, like Lanfranc, on the other, with Anselm holding a kind of middle position.[21]

De grammatico takes place at just this juncture between grammar and logic, and its interpretation has become central for placing Anselm as a proponent of grammar over logic or vice versa. For Henry, the *De grammatico* prioritizes technical, logical language over grammatical or ordinary language. Thus Anselm is concerned with "the contrast between on the one hand, the ordinary use of language (*usus loquendi*), together with the accounts of meaning which are explicitly or implicitly conveyed by the usage-based grammarians' grammar, and on the other hand, the technical anomaly-free and regress-free language to which the logician is committed."[22] For Marcia Colish, by contrast, Anselm's governing discipline is grammar, and the conclusions of the dialogue support a gram-

19. Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 65. For some examples of this kind of grammar-based thinking, see Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 65–68; E. Bertola, "I precedenti storici del metodo del *Sic et Non* di Abelardo," *Rivista de filosofia neo-scholastica* 53 (1961): 255–80. See also the scholarship mentioned by Colish in "St. Anselm's Philosophy of Language Reconsidered," 120, n. 2.

20. On the controversy and diverse views of its significance in presaging the work of Anselm and even later scholasticism, see Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 72–74; Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 252–309; Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

21. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 157–59. The role of dialectic in theology in relation to Anselm's *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi* is taken up in chapter 6, section a. See J. A. Endres, "Die Dialektiker und ihre Gegner im 11. Jahrhundert," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 19 (1906): 20–33. For other works of Endres arguing for elements of this view see Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 163–64.

22. Henry, *Logic of Saint Anselm*, 12. See also Desmond P. Henry, "Two Medieval Critics of Traditional Grammar," in *Studies in Medieval Linguistic Thought: Dedicated to Geoffrey L. Bursill-Hall on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday on May 15, 1980* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1980), 87–88.

matical over a logical view of language.[23] Logic is taken into grammar rather than displacing it.[24]

A kind of proxy in this battle has been the dating of *De grammatico*. In the years before Henry rehabilitated the logical aspect of Anselm's work, commentators thought the dialogue was quite early since it is unlike the rest of Anselm's corpus. They concluded that the work was unimportant and unconnected to the core of Anselm's thought. Next, for some years scholars dated *De grammatico* later, after the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and around the time of the three dialogues (*De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii*, *De casu diaboli*), 1080 to 1085. Those arguing for the centrality of the work preferred the later date of composition because it would mean that Anselm deemed the topic important enough to work on after the composition of the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*, and that Anselm did not put dialectic aside for the more important work of theology and metaphysics. But this dating was based on Eadmer's misreading of a comment Anselm makes in the preface to *De veritate* that links *De grammatico* with the three dialogues as sharing the dialogue form.[25] Eadmer takes Anselm to mean they were all written around the same time, even though Anselm only mentions their similar form.[26] Southern argues for an early date, as does Galonnier, based on the connection of the subject matter and Anselm's early grammatical studies.[27]

The claim that logic or grammar is dominant, and the notion that the period is marked by their battle for primacy, has been complicated and qualified by recent scholarship. First, some scholars convincingly argue that dialectically based arguments are in more widespread use in the eleventh century than was earlier thought. Lanfranc, for example, did not reject but rather used dialectical arguments in his opposition to Berengar. Thus the conflict is not, as earlier scholars had it, over dialectical versus

23. Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 76–77.

24. Marcia L. Colish, "Eleventh-Century Grammar in the Thought of St. Anselm," in *Arts libéraux et philosophie au Moyen Age: Actes du quatrième congrès international de philosophie médiévale, Université de Montréal, Montréal Canada, 27 août–2 septembre 1967* (Montréal: Institut d'études médiévales, 1969), 788–89.

25. DV Praef., S I, 173, 9–20.

26. Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi*, book 1, xix, 28.

27. Richard W. Southern, *St. Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Alain Galonnier, "Sur quelques aspects annonciateurs de la littérature sophismatique dans le *De grammatico*," in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury: Papers in Commemoration of Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop, 25 Sept. 1093*, edited by Luscombe and Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 209–28. Marenbon is not convinced of the early dating; he only concedes that it must be before *De veritate* (since Anselm mentions it in the preface to DV). See John Marenbon, "Some Semantic Problems in Anselm's *De grammatico*," in vol. 2 of *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Medieval Latin Studies, Cambridge, September 9–12, 1998*, 2 vols. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2002), 76.

grammatical argument-forms: the former, syllogistic (hypothetical and categorical) arguments, and the latter, argument by equipollent propositions, a form associated with grammar. (An argument by equipollent propositions reached its conclusions by a chain of substitutions of equivalent terms, that is, A=B=C=D; therefore A=D, as opposed to a syllogistic argument, All A is D; All B is A; therefore All B is D).[28] Southern had argued that following Lanfranc Anselm used equipollent propositions in his most famous arguments, but in his 1990 book on Anselm, he argued for a different view of equipollency, as not having any technically rigorous sense and not operating with strictly equivalent but only roughly congruent meanings. For example, Lanfranc claimed "to be married" and "to have earthly cares," equipollent, states that may, alas, be all too linked but are not logically equivalent. Moreover, Southern argues that Lanfranc used what look like equipollent substitutions as a way of hiding the dialectical and technical nature of his arguments, wanting, unlike his opponent in the Eucharistic controversy of the period, Berengar, to avoid "the *appearance* of dialectical arrogance."[29] Suzanne Nelis has argued that Anselm is more invested in dialectical argument than Lanfranc, in part because Anselm had access to a new "Boethian dialectic" including a treatise on the hypothetical syllogism while Lanfranc did not.[30]

Second, on the side of grammar, a growing consensus is emerging that Henry went too far in constructing the battle between ordinary, grammatical usage and logic or dialectic in order to connect Anselm, anachronistically, to twentieth-century linguistic analysis. For Anselm tries to solve the problems posed by ordinary usage within what twentieth-century logicians would call "natural language" not by the creation of an artificial language. Henry argues that Anselm creates "nonsense," that is, language that makes no sense from the standards of logically true, ordinary usage:

> In fact Anselm's deliberate use of what is, from a grammatical point of view, plain nonsense, and his explicit denial that the completions of the exemplary sentence mentioned are name-like, suggest that he is doing all he can, in the absence of a completely artificial language, to convey his insight, so in-

28. On the method of argument by equipollent propositions, see Richard W. Southern, "Lanfranc of Bec and Berengar of Tours," in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke*, edited by R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin, and Richard W. Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 27–48, and *Saint Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059–c.1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 22–24; see also Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 73–74.

29. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 51–53. See also Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 52–59.

30. Suzanne Nelis, "What Lanfranc Taught, What Anselm Learned," *Haskins Society Journal* 2 (1990): 75–82.

adequately expressible in ordinary language, that there can be many types of "... is ..." (and correspondingly, many types of entity).[31]

Even if Henry is correct that Anselm is trying to make distinctions in natural language that would be less problematic if he had a symbolic language at his disposal, the fact that he does not do this (even if only because he cannot) is significant.

Anselm wants to analyze and order the ambiguities of ordinary language while retaining its nuances. This, of course, is the crucial difference between medieval and modern logic. Thus, Anselm distinguishes between appellation (the use of a word to pick out a thing but not necessarily to name it) and signification (the meaning of a term), a distinction later complicated into the various kinds of supposition a term might have (simple supposition, for the nature or concept—"man is a species," material supposition, "man is a noun," or personal supposition, for the individuals to whom it might apply). However, he and later medieval thinkers keep the same term, for example, "man," which can be appellative or significative, and which can supposit in different ways, etc., while modern logic would symbolize these differently under the principle of one sign for one function.[32] While modern logic is more powerful and productive than the medieval variety, medieval language theory will not allow one to forget as easily as modern logic that the multiplicity of meanings and references and, hence, the need for interpretation, are intrinsic aspects of language that cannot be avoided by the right technical language or symbolism.

In *De grammatico*, we shall see, Anselm is less focused on any systematic privileging of grammar over logic or vice versa than with the distinction between the orders of words and things. He is interested, as Colish puts it, "not only with the relation of ordinary language to formal logic but also with the relation of both ordinary language and formal logic alike to the physical and metaphysical realities to which they refer."[33] The order of the real, both uncreated and created, is an order that in different ways and at different times both disciplines fail to represent.

Anselm takes care to *show* and not just to state his views by having the student (and the reader) realize the implications of overlooking the difference between the orders and things and words. The dialogue must be understood as a teaching text, designed for a student who has learned the basic forms of argument. Anselm's student can construct

31. Henry, *The Logic of Saint Anselm*, 102.

32. I. M. Bochenski, *A History of Formal Logic*, 2nd ed., edited and translated by Ivo Thomas (New York: Chelsea Publishing, 1970), 173.

33. Colish, "St. Anselm's Philosophy of Language Reconsidered," 14.

valid syllogisms and knows basic grammatical categories; he can define name, noun, substance, and quality. But he does not understand them well enough to recognize and diagnose the source of sophistic reasoning. This exercise has been described more accurately by Lothar Steiger in the 1960s and Alain Galonnier, John Marenbon, and Marilyn Adams more recently than by Henry.[34] Steiger, whose account was overwhelmed by Desmond Henry's in the same period, argues that the dialogue's construction of analogue syllogisms to solve its opening question (whether *grammaticus* signifies substance or quality) attempts to show that what is key in arguments is the discovery of the middle term, as Boethius taught.[35] What Anselm shows the student is the importance of the dialogue's rule that the common (or middle) term must be common not just in verbal form but in meaning.[36] Thus there is for Steiger a "hermeneutical" as well as a "logical" point to the dialogue. This is consistent with Galonnier's notion that the dialogue is meant to teach the student how to recognize certain kinds of sophisms, a recognition that clearly results not just from an analysis of the logical form of the argument but also from an analysis of the meaning and use of its terms.[37] Marenbon concedes the anachronism of Henry's view and reads the dialogue carefully to find that its aim is not to show that *grammaticus* signifies substance *or* quality but that, depending on context, it signifies both.[38]

What these readings point to is the dialogue's concern with the tremendous difficulty of finding the right relationships between words, thoughts, and things. The dialogue shows that these problems cannot be solved either by the student's deployment of his technical skills in syllogism construction or by the construction of a technical language purged of ambiguity. The teacher's goal is to bring the student to distinguish between different kinds of difference or identity between things and the words for things. The progression of the arguments between master and pupil, not just on their conclusions, is crucial to achieve this goal. Anselm's dialogue should be read, then, in the tradition of Augustine's notion of an "exercise of the mind." As Augustine explains to Adeodatus in

34. Galonnier, "Sur quelques aspects"; Lothar Steiger, "Contexte Syllogismos: Über die Kunst und Bedeutung der Topik bei Anselm," in vol. 1 of *Analecta Anselmiana*, edited by F. S. Schmitt, (Frankfurt: Minerva GMBH, 1969), 107–43. Marenbon, "Some Semantic Problems," 73–86, Marilyn McCord Adams, "Re-reading *De Grammatico*, or Anselm's Introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 11 (2000): 83–112.

35. Boethius, in *Topica Ciceronis commentariorum libri sex*, PL 64, 1051A; cf. 1050B.

36. DG 4, S I, 149, 11–14. Steiger, "Contexte Syllogismos," 142–43.

37. Galonnier, "Sur quelques aspects." Galonnier finds so many connections between *De grammatico* and later sophismatic literature, he questions whether it can genuinely be Anselm's. On this issue, see 227–28.

38. Marenbon, "Some Semantic Problems," 85–86.

De magistro, their discussion of apparent minutia about words is an important exercise of the mind, because it is a preparation necessary for its ascension to the realm of divine light.[39]

The Pedagogy of Validity and Soundness

The student begins by setting up the problem, that "expert-in-grammar" can be both a substance and a quality.[40] He proves the first by a syllogism (every/everything expert-in-grammar is a man; every man is a substance; hence, expert-in-grammar is a substance), and the second by appeal to authority, that of the philosophers, specifically Aristotle, who says it is a quality.[41] Since "one of these is true and the other false," the student continues, "I ask that by revealing the falsity you show me truth."[42] This kind of argument, laying out a disjunct and showing that one is false so that the other must be true, is a form common in Anselm and a common dialectical form in the period. Thus the student shows off his technical knowledge: not only posing the problem but asking for its solution in a sophisticated way. The teacher wastes no time in showing him the limits of his sophistication, pointing out the flaw in the student's request on two fronts. First, the student has assumed an exclusive "or" without justification and, second, asked the teacher to prove a negative. The teacher then recasts his task as showing how both alternatives are consistent.[43] Toward this end, the teacher asks the student to provide the

39. Augustine, *De magistro*, 21.

40. The translations for *grammaticus* and *grammatica* are notoriously difficult in the context of the dialogue because *grammaticus* can function as an adjective (meaning "literate," "grammatical," or "knowledgeable in grammar") as well as a substantive (meaning "grammarian"); *grammatica* likewise can function as a noun (meaning "grammar") and as the feminine form of the adjective along with the masculine *grammaticus*, and it is these ambiguities on which the dialogue turns. The Davies Oxford translation has opted for "literate" while Hopkins and Richardson opted for "expert-in-grammar/expertise-in-grammar." See Desmond P. Henry's translation of *De grammatico,* in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, edited by Brian Davies and Gillian R. Evans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 123–50, and *Anselm of Canterbury*, 4 vols., edited and translated by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), vol. 2, 39–74. "Literate" captures the broader sense of grammar as covering more than mere grammar and as an adjective describing persons not just language, but like "grammatical," it cannot function as a substantive. While I resisted "expert-in-grammar/expertise-in-grammar" as too artificial and attempted to use the more natural English translation, "grammatical/grammarian," in the end I have opted for the awkward but accurate "expert-in-grammar/expertise-in-grammar" devised by Hopkins and Richardson because it comes closest to capturing the sense in Latin of both functioning substantively and adjectivally of *grammaticus* and *grammatica*.

41. DG 1, S I, 145–46. Aristotle gives *grammaticus* as an example of a quality in the *Categories*, 2b28.

42. DG 1, S I, 146, 7–8.

43. DG 2, S I, 146, 8–15. Marenbon points out correctly that most readers tend to ignore this account of the dialogue's goal, instead looking for a definitive answer, that *grammaticus* is either quality or substance but not both. Marenbon, "Some Semantic Problems," 84–85.

objections for both alternatives, allowing the student another opportunity to show off his knowledge.

The student obliges by constructing two syllogisms to disprove the claim that *grammaticus* is a man (thus disproving the claim that *grammaticus* is a substance). Thus from the premises, "no/nothing expert-in-grammar can be conceived without grammar" and "any man can be conceived without expertise-in-grammar" and the student concludes, "no/nothing expert-in-grammar is a man."[44]

Since this is clearly false, they must investigate why. The teacher sets out to do so by constructing syllogisms of the same form the student does but with a content that will make clear that the argument is fallacious. Thus the teacher proposes the syllogism, "any animal can be conceived without conceiving rationality," "no man can be conceived without conceiving of rationality," and leaves the student to draw the conclusion, "no man is an animal." The student is caught between accepting an absurd but apparently necessary conclusion ("no man is an animal") or rejecting it only to have to conclude that man is not rational.[45] He recognizes that this is not just an abstract universal but a claim that has existential implications for him: "If I disagree then you will say that not only can I be conceived without rationality but also that I really am without rationality."[46] The student will be irrational not just because he is an instance falling under the universal "man" but because he has reached this irrational conclusion. The student knows the truth that "man is rational and animal" in such a way that he must reject reasoning that leads him to conclude the contrary.

The student, however, belying the characterization of him as "irrational," immediately sees the teacher's purpose in this exercise: to show him that his syllogism ("no expert-in-grammar can be conceived without expertise-in-grammar"; "any man can be conceived without expertise-in-grammar"; therefore, "no expert-in-grammar is a man"), must, like this one suggested by the teacher (concluding that no man is an animal), be false. This is the point at which the student finally finds the *aporia* the teacher has been designing for him. "Show me," the student asks in puzzlement, "how in both this one and that one there is so much deception that while both the propositions seem true and to be connected according to the nature of syllogisms, nevertheless truth does not uphold their conclusion."[47] He shows by this that he knows the criteria for soundness—validity plus true premises. The problem is that their argument seems to meet

44. DG 2, 146, 22–23, 26.
45. DG 3, S I, 147, 5–16.
46. DG 3, S I, 147, 16–17.
47. DG 3, S I, 148, 8–10.

these criteria yet is clearly flawed. The question signifies, then, a complete loss of confidence in his own grammatical, logical expertise and, more troublingly, in grammar and logic as disciplines. Anselm sets up his student to find himself in the situation Aristotle describes with the proverb: if water chokes you, what will you wash it down with?[48] If, in other words, you have true premises and a valid form, what is left to correct the fallacy in reasoning?

In what follows the teacher shows, first, that the errant syllogisms seem but are not valid and sound because they only *seem* to have a common term. The distinction that must be made is about understanding or conceiving, about distinguishing the order of thought from the order of things. The real premises are "man can be conceived *as man* without conceiving of expertise-in-grammar" and "no/nothing expert-in-grammar can be conceived *as an expert-in-grammar* without conceiving of expertise in grammar."[49] The second, broader lesson they draw from this illustration is a principle which must be added to the criteria for soundness articulated earlier by the student: the common or middle term of a syllogism must be common not just in "verbal form [*in voce*]," but in "meaning [*sensu*]."[50] More, in other words, is required in the construction of syllogisms than the mere application of the rules, mere attention to form.

The teacher then notes that something *is* implied by his premises, something, he warns, the student did not expect. The student, having seen the limits of his precocious knowledge, says docilely that he will gratefully accept whatever it is.[51] They have learned that being human and being expert-in-grammar are not the same *in definition*—that one can conceive of man *as man* without conceiving of expertise in grammar but that one cannot conceive of an expert in grammar *as expert in grammar* without conceiving of expertise in grammar.[52] This is an important insight into the difference between how things are spoken of, conceived, and defined, on the one hand, and how they are, on the other.

Nonetheless, the student's lack of an additional distinction leads him to overstate the implications of the principle he has just learned, revealing that he has not quite grasped it fully. The teacher invites the student to put his new understanding to work refuting the following syllogism: "every/everything expert in grammar is spoken of as a quality "; "no man is spoken of as a quality "; thus, "no man is (an) expert in grammar."[53] The student sets to work disproving the syllogism, arguing that what the

48. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VII, 2, 1146a33–35.
49. DG 4, S I, 148, 19, 25.
50. DG 4, S I, 149, 12–13.
51. DG 5, S I, 149, 18.
52. DG 5, S I, 149, 19–28.
53. DG 6, S I, 150, 3–6.

premises really mean is that "every/everything expert in grammar is spoken of *as an expert in grammar* as a quality" (which is clearly false), and so forth. Again the teacher offers an analogue syllogism to point out the problem with this refutation. Substituting "stone" for "expert in grammar," the teacher leads the student to see that the way in which "stone" and "man" are distinct is different than the way in which "expert in grammar" and "man" are distinct.[54] For while a stone is in no respect a man, a grammarian can be considered as and is in some respect a man, and man is in some respect expert in grammar. Thus, the teacher wants the student to see that though the two notions, "man" and "grammarian" are different, they are not completely distinct, as stone and human are.

In order to see this, they distinguish between "man" and "man *qua* man." While "man *qua* man" is completely distinct from "grammarian," "man" is not. Like the major distinction of the dialogue, that between substance and quality, the distinction between "man" and "man *qua* man" is a distinction that belongs more to dialectic or logic than grammar, more to precise than ordinary ways of speaking. Further, the distinction calls attention to something ordinary language seems to forget: that conceiving is always conceiving *as*. Each name only names an aspect of something; it does not name a thing wholly and completely. Moreover, the conceptual distinction of two names or descriptions does not mean those features cannot coexist in the same thing. Of course, ordinary speakers never make the mistakes the student does. Distinguishing between the orders of things and conceptions is, paradoxically, what ordinary speakers always do but of which they are rarely conscious. The logically and grammatically sophisticated student, however, has been moved to question ordinary language, to look to the order of conceptions and logically ordered conceptions (syllogisms) to try to discern the nature of reality. This leads him to avoid certain mistakes but to make others. Sometimes his mistakes result from reifying grammatical form, but some also result from attempting to make reality fit logical form. The student recognizes the absurdities he falls into as mistakes because they contradict his knowledge of things, not his knowledge of logic. They are not mistakes in formal logic but mistakes in the interpretation of premises. It is the analogue syllogism which prompts the student to see this. For, after noting that one of the analogue syllogisms concludes, "no man is rational," the pupil remarks, "no proof can make it true that rational" is not predicable of any man."[55] The teacher puts it this way: "when we

54. DG 7, S I, 151, 25–152, 7.
55. DG 6, S I, 150, 9–10.

return to the case of "animal" and "man," in which we so feel [*palpamus*] the truth, no sophism can persuade us—even though it compels us—to believe a falsity."[56]

The two mistakes the student makes are complementary. First, because every expert-in-grammar is a man, the student thinks the notions are identical; second, once he understands that the notions are not identical, he concludes that they are utterly different, like man and stone, which is equally false. This realization prompts one of the most interesting exchanges in the dialogue. As the teacher offers his analogue syllogism about "man" and "stone" he warns the student that though the student has "understood (*intelligere*)," he has not "carefully considered (*bene considerare*)" what the teacher has said.[57] This distinction is never explained, only illustrated to the student by what he has missed. What the teacher seems to mean is that the student must do more than agree to individual propositions. Nonetheless, try as he might, the student is propelled once again toward an absurd conclusion. Still smarting, the student accuses the teacher of "deceiving" him, of "obscuring the conclusion of my syllogism by clever explanations." The teacher retorts, "On the contrary you did not consider this well; you did not realize how I was un-deceiving you."[58]

The exchange brings to the surface a kind of tension typical in an early Socratic dialogue. In these dialogues, the one questioned by Socrates always ends up feeling misled, backed into a corner by having asserted what has contradictory or absurd consequences, a predicament from which he can only extricate himself by pleading ignorance. Even Socrates's friendly interlocutors are unable to see where Socrates is headed with his arguments, grasping only the single proposition before them. Instead of leaving it at this, as Plato does, Anselm brings this tension to the surface of the dialogue and calls on his student to join him at the level of understanding the direction and point of the discussion as a whole. To be the typical partner in a Socratic dialogue will not do. Anselm asks his student to apply his intuitions, what he "feels" to be true about the things the words they use name, despite what a syllogism tells him. In other words, he is challenged to stride forward with the teacher rather than simply be dragged behind.[59] In the broadest sense, Anselm's partner in discussion

56. DG 8, S I, 152, 28–30.

57. DG 7, S I, 150, 32. As the student puts it later, trying to show that he has grasped this distinction as well, he must not "be content merely to understand what [the teacher] mean[s]" but must "pay attention to the point [the teacher is] making." DG 8, S I, 152, 9–12.

58. DG 7, S I, 151, 15–23.

59. Galonnier finds that Anselm's pupil in the dialogue is more combative and less pliant than

must keep in mind the implications of the discussion for his own rationality and for the possibility of discourse altogether.

The moral so far is that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The dialogue aims to undermine the student's overconfidence that he is equal to the argument on any topic, that he is "expert-in-grammar" (possessing a broad competence including grammar and logic). Armed with a set of terms, the "is" of predication, and the rules for valid syllogisms, the student finds not soundness but absurdity. We can construe the dialogue's lesson also as showing the different ways in which terms joined by "is" are not equivalent. In this sense, Henry is correct: the dialogue is a rejection of the efficacy of argument by supposedly equipollent propositions or at least a strong caveat that it is very difficult to find truly equivalent expressions. However, that caveat applies equally to syllogistic arguments.

As the dialogue continues, the student deploys two more important distinctions from Aristotle's *Categories*: being present in a subject (quality and the other accidents) or not being present in a subject (substance), and primary and secondary substance. Even this "expert" knowledge alone is not sufficient to solve the problem with which they began, disproving one or both disjuncts that *grammaticus* is a substance or is a quality. These distinctions do not show that expert-in-grammar is not a substance, for, as the teacher points out, (an) expert-in-grammar is not present in a subject and is both primary and secondary substance.[60]

They fare no better attempting to disprove the other alternative, that expert-in-grammar is a quality. Their shift to this issue, *grammaticus* as a quality, occasions another interesting exchange. The student professes himself uneasy and unwilling to put forward more arguments since, he says, the teacher does not seem interested in teaching him at all but simply on "obstructing" his arguments.[61] He suspects, rightly, that more *aporiai* await him as they explore the second disjunct. The procedure they agreed on at the outset, alluded to again here, was that the student would point out problems with both alternatives (expert-in-grammar as substance and quality) and the teacher would disprove one or the other *or* show that both are true and consistent with each other. The student remains reluctant to concede that *grammaticus* is a quality because it seems to lead to all kinds of nonsense. "If with this belief [that *grammaticus*

Anselm's other dialogue partners. Galonnier, "Sur quelques aspects," 209–10. *De grammatico's* pupil *is* strong-minded, but we will see that Anselm's other dialogue partners are not docile or passive either.

60. DG 9–10, S I, 153–5.

61. DG 11, S I, 155, 17–25.

signifies man (substance) and expertise-in-grammar (quality)]," the student protests, "If I were to speak in public and say 'a useful science is expert-in-grammar' or 'this man knows well expert-in-grammar,' then not only would the grammarians be outraged but even the uneducated would laugh." The student is scornful particularly of the dialecticians on this point, noting that what they "write in their books" "they would blush to say in conversation."[62]

The teacher responds that *grammaticus* can signify both a substance and a quality; it signifies a quality (expertise-in-grammar) *per se* and a substance (expert-in-grammar) *per aliud*.[63] As has been noted, the distinction between signification *per se* and *per aliud* is made along with two others, the distinction between signification and appellation, and between signifying as one the whole of something and not so signifying.[64] Though Henry and others have read the distinction between signification and appellation as that between meaning and reference, it seems clear that this modern distinction does not fit either that between the two types of signification or between signification and appellation.[65] Hopkins argues that Anselm's distinction between signification *per se* and *per aliud* does not correspond to the modern distinction between meaning and reference because "horse" signifies *per se* when we use it to refer to a particular horse *and* when we discuss the meaning of the term horse apart from reference.[66] Thus *significatio per se* includes both reference and meaning in the modern sense, and *significatio per aliud* is a kind of signification in which something is understood through a nonessential but associated feature (in the way "man" and "expert-in-grammar are linked. This is a stronger association than "horse" and "white," which is Anselm's example of appellation, as in "the white one" as appellative of a horse). Appellation as the possible equivalent of reference fares no better since it is somewhat less than reference, grounded not in the semantic properties of the term but merely in its use. As Peter King notes, "any term, could, in principle, appellate any object."[67]

62. DG 11, S I, 156, 6–11.

63. DG 12, S I, 157, 1–3.

64. DG 12, S I, 156–57. See the clear explanation of these three distinctions by Peter King in "Anselm's Philosophy of Language," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 92–96.

65. See Henry, *The Logic of St. Anselm*, 75, 101. King also cites Wolfgang Gombocz, "Anselm über Sinn und Bedeutung," *Anselm Studies* 1 (1983): 135 and Adams, "Re-reading *De grammatico*." See King, "Anselm's Philosophy of Language," 108, n. 27. For why the distinction between appellation and signification cannot be that between reference and meaning, see King, 93, and Jasper Hopkins, "The Anselmian Theory of Universals," in vol. 4 of *Hermeneutical and Textual Problems in the Complete Treatises of St. Anselm, Anselm of Canterbury* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), 63–65.

66. Hopkins, "The Anselmian Theory of Universals," 64–65.

67. King, "Anselm's Philosophy of Language," 93.

If Marilyn Adams is right that *De grammatico* is a teaching text for Aristotle's *Categories*, then it only makes sense to see Anselm's account here as Aristotelian in ways that contemporary readers trying to map its distinctions on to contemporary notions have missed.[68] In other words, Anselm's notion of meaning is not the same as the contemporary notion because it is grounded in Aristotle's *Categories* and, thus, in the distinctions between substance, essence, and accident. For Anselm, like Aristotle, the particular really *is* a horse in a way that it is not anything else; the meaning, which is an articulation of what it is to have that nature, is what that horse has which makes it a horse and that makes our calling it a horse a special and privileged way of referring to it, different from referring to it as "the white one."[69] That is why Anselm, in the context of discussion of signification *per se*, discusses the meaning of the term "man." It may be true, as Hopkins says, that Anselm's "theory of definitional meaning does not play an explicit role in his articulation of the difference between *per se* and *per aliud* meaning," but even if it is not explicit, it is clearly connected.[70] It is the definition which captures what it is to be a horse and explains why we call this or that particular thing a horse. Anselm has absorbed the Aristotelian notion that a thing's substantial nature is what the thing is in the primary and basic sense, the explanation and ground for its being.[71] So what the term "man" or "horse" principally signifies and is appellative of is the substantial nature, which is the way to refer to that thing most basically and completely. Accidents can signify *per se* rather than *per aliud* though they cannot be appellative and significative at the same time, as "man" is of "substance" and "substance" of "man."[72] While to refer to a horse as "the white one" is appellation, to refer to the color of something as white (rather than, say, as "the large one" or "the color of the large one," "the one to the left" or "the color of the one on the left," etc.) is to signify the color *per se*.

If we leave aside the contemporary notions and ask what Anselm seems to be doing with these three-layered distinctions, we can see that he thinks of them hierarchically, from greater to lesser unity, identity, and correspondence between name and thing. To signify something as one is the most complete way of signifying it such that the name most principally signifies *and* appellates the thing. The prime case is substan-

68. Adams, "Re-reading *De Grammatico*." Cf. Aristotle, *Categories* 1a6–16 for the links between Anselm's distinctions with the *Categories*' distinction between univocal and paronomous predication.

69. DG 12, S I, 156–57.

70. Hopkins, "The Anselmian Theory of Universals," 65.

71. DG 12, S I, 156, 22–34.

72. DG 12, S I, 156, 32–157, 4.

tial predication. When we have a name that signifies the substance of something, we say what it is most principally and we can both signify and appellate the thing as substance, that is, say both "man is a substance" and "the substance is a man."[73] When we move to the names for accidents, we encounter division, something less than the identity between the thing called by the name and what is signified by its name. Thus arises the distinction between signification *per se* and *per aliud*. As we noted above, appellation requires only shared usage or context, but signification *per aliud* is still connected to a real feature of the thing, just not one which is central to its essence. Thus there is a stronger connection between "expert-in-grammar"(which signifies "man" *per aliud*) and "man" than between "horse" and "white"(which can merely be appellative of a horse).

Henry argues that Anselm is willing to embrace the nonsense the student says follows from the claim that "expert-in-grammar" signifies a quality, for example, "a useful science is expert-in-grammar" or "this man has expert-in-grammar," in order to "foster a semi-artificial language designed to express truths that involve semantical categories not distinguished by 'ordinary' grammar."[74] Though clearly Anselm is willing to outrage ordinary usage in his pursuit of clarity and precision, this is not the same as asserting that it is correct to say things like "expert-in-grammar is expertise-in-grammar," thereby transcending natural language. Rather his claim is that there is a partial truth in such claims, meaning that there are limits not only to unity between language and the world but to the unity of things onto which we attempt to map our words. It has to be with some irony that the student asks the teacher to "make clear" what does indeed sound like nonsense: "I ask you to distinguish clearly for me these two significations so that I understand how *grammaticus* does not signify that which in some sense it does signify and how it is appellative of that which it is not significative."[75] The request stated in this way makes clear that the challenge is to explain what is in an important sense patent nonsense. Anselm does not use nonsense to transcend ordinary language, rather he draws attention to the *nonsensical* rather than the *transcendent* character of his technical language, to point to its limits, its asymmetry with the things to which we apply it.

73. DG 12, S I, 156; cf. DG 19, S I, 165.

74. Hopkins is referring to the view expressed in Desmond P. Henry, "Was Anselm a Realist?" *Ratio* 5 (1963): 188. Cf. Henry, *The Logic of St. Anselm*, 101. Hopkins is right, I think, in taking Henry to task not just for the claim that Anselm is engaged in protosymbolic logic but also for his claim that Anselm is at pains in these passages in *De grammatico* as elsewhere to deny that there are any universal entities distinct from concrete individuals. For my discussion of this issue, see pp. 102–05.

75. DG 14, S I, 159, 29–160, 3.

The student continues to suspect that Aristotle and dialecticians are talking nonsense in claiming *grammaticus* signifies a quality. For, he objects, "a man by himself is a grammarian," that is, we do not say "a man is a man who has grammatical skill"; we say "a man is a grammarian." Thus it still seems that "grammarian" signifies the substance, man. In response the teacher puts forward the standard medieval interpretation of the *Categories* that Aristotle's text is about the order of words, not things.[76] Though the teacher concedes that it is true that everything is a substance or a quality (not both), he contends that what Aristotle actually said in the *Categories*, was that "those things which are said in a noncomplex way *signify* either a substance or a quality."[77] Hence, the teacher concludes, Aristotle is only talking about signification *per se* when he says that *grammaticus* is a quality. The dialectician does not assert nonsense any more than the grammarian. Grammarians say one thing "in accordance with the form of words" and another "in accordance with the nature of things." So too dialecticians "write in one way about words according as they are significative, and in speaking use them in another way according to them as they are appellatives."[78]

This observation explains the significance for Anselm of the *de voce* reading of Aristotle's *Categories*. For Anselm's claim is that both grammar and dialectic are disciplines about words, not things, and though dialectic is concerned in a way grammar is not with the relationship of words to things, its way of expressing things does not mirror the order of things perfectly. Anselm notes, on the one hand, that when we say "white" is both a quality and a having, we are *not* saying that one thing is two different things, "that the thing of which "white" is appellative is both a quality and a having," but rather we are saying that "these two things, [a quality and a having] are *signified* by the name white."[79] In other words, while one thing is not two things, two things can be signified by one name. This asymmetry extends further and in the other direction as well, Anselm notes. One name does not describe all the features or aspects of a thing: "it is necessary," the teacher notes, "for anything to have many features which, however, are not signified by its name"; hence,

76. This *de voce* view of the categories, that they are of words, not things, comes to the Middle Ages from Porphyry through Boethius. Porphyry argued that the categories were about words as they apply to sensible things, thus leaving open the possibility that words might operate in a very different way referring to Platonic forms. See Richard Sorabji, "The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle," in *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, edited by Richard Sorabji (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 1–27.

77. DG 17, S I, 162, 31–32; my emphasis.

78. DG 18, 164, 7–10.

79. DG 19, S I, 165, 14–16; my emphasis.

multiple names signify the same thing.[80] Animals are colored and either rational or nonrational, but the word "animal" does not signify these; white is always *something*-having-whiteness, but "white" does not signify that. Names—even the ones that signify *per se*—do not name things wholly and completely. Essential names for substances, of course, come closest: "The name "man," Anselm writes earlier in the dialogue, "signifies *per se* and as a single thing [*ut unum*] those things of which the whole of man consists."[81] But "man" does not name *all* the things a human being is, for example, gendered, of a certain age, with various colors of skin, hair and eyes, and so forth. When we put these principles together, the teacher is telling his pupil that the relationship of words to things is not one-to-one: one word names multiple things and one word names only one of the many features of something.

De grammatico is exclusively concerned with the structure of beings like man, composed of substance and accident, matter and form. The language for such beings must distinguish between signifying as one and whole vs. signifying parts and partially, signification *per se* vs. *per aliud*, signification vs. appellation. The theological works look toward an object for language, God, all of whose predicates signify *per se*, all of which are appellative and identical with one another. There we shall learn that not only is man *more than* "man," man, unlike God, is *not wholly*, is in a sense *less than* "man" or any of those other things that might be predicated of him. *De grammatico* is, in the end, about the ways in which apparently identical predicates are crucially different from one another and the ways in which apparently different predicates are nonetheless the same. This reflection on the structure of words and things forces the student to shed naïve notions about how language works in order to solve the problems they discover. This is what Henry emphasizes about Anselm's reflections on language. Hence, Henry concludes, Anselm's linguistic analysis aims at overcoming the imprecision of ordinary language. However, the dialogue also illustrates that ordinary language and ordinary knowledge of things are required to correct the misapprehensions to which logic and grammar can lead. Thus constructing a technical, more precise logical language alone cannot solve the difficulties the dialogue explores. Anselm uses a variety of tactics, sometimes pointing out the superior precision of logical over ordinary or grammatical language, but sometimes making ordinary language or knowledge of things themselves the standards for grasping and understanding reality.[82]

80. DG 21, S I, 166, 28–29. 81. DG 12, S I, 156, 26–27.
82. Colish, "Anselm's Philosophy of Language," 115–18.

Behind this diverse set of tactics, Anselm's linguistic observations are governed by a principle derived neither from logic or grammar: that the orders of things and words are not identical. Language, whether grammatical or dialectical, can mislead us. There are, in other words, many ways of going wrong with language and perhaps (to further parody Aristotle on virtue) not even one way of going right. Anselm thinks there are all kinds of problems with language: we are imprecise in our use and language itself is ambiguous and misleading.[83] It is this aspect of Anselm on which Henry focuses that supports the connections among Anselm's twentieth-century linguistic analysts like Frege, Tarski, Carnap, Russell, Wittgenstein, Reichenbach, and Peirce.[84] But language for Anselm is also, as Bencivenga writes, "incomplete;" "it does not cover reality; it leaves things large and small totally unaccounted for, speechless; it forces us to stretch our resources, to use whatever comes close, inappropriate as it may be."[85] Those focused on Anselm's linguistic analysis do not take this last step and, therefore, do not connect Anselm's concern with language adequately with his metaphysical and theological concerns. Anselm's clarifications of what ordinary language means but does not quite say are ultimately in the service of saying what we mean but cannot quite say (or understand) about God and his creation. And, as we shall see throughout Anselm's writing, Anselm does not think that closing the gap between what we mean and what we say is possible in every respect—whether the topic is God or creatures. Thus, these commentators miss the ways in which in Anselm's examination of finite and infinite reality reaches toward necessary reasons *and* linguistic breakdown. Anselm's aspirations, for which language is the means, in other words, cannot be satisfied by logical or grammatical analysis.

Lambeth Fragments: Language of Being and Nonbeing

The unfinished work known as the *Lambeth Fragments* is concerned about the same thing the *De grammatico* is but in a more general and disturbing way.[86] In these fragments, Anselm gives a complex and sophisti-

83. Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*, 18–19.

84. Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*, 21–24, 28–30.

85. Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*, 19. For Bencivenga, the crucial question about Anselm is how he can engage in the project of linguistic analysis and the search for necessary reasons for that which, Anselm readily admits, is ineffable: how, Bencivenga asks, can you strive toward a goal that you do not know? How can you even know you are on your way toward it? (Bencivenga, 30–32). It is the right question. However, Bencivenga's answer, though extremely creative and thought-provoking, is somewhat cryptic and not a thorough look at Anselm's work as a whole and in his time.

86. Henry, "Saint Anselm's *De Grammatico*," 118–20.

cated catalogue of the ways in which we do not say exactly what we mean and of the ways in which language in the most ordinary and common expressions is never, or hardly ever, proper. The focus is not on nouns, as in *De grammatico*, but on modal expressions and verbs. In these short pieces, Anselm tries to systematize degrees of impropriety and links complexities regarding verbs to the issue of improper language in general.[87] This text both exemplifies Anselm's philosophical method of "linguistic analysis" and forms the connection between the apparently purely logical concerns of *De grammatico* and the rest of Anselm's theological and philosophical work. For in these fragments the method is linguistic, but the work suggests connections between the analysis of language and notions of freedom, possibility, necessity, causality, and power central to the problems Anselm takes up in the great theological treatises, *Monologion*, *Proslogion*, and *Cur Deus homo*, and in the discussions of free choice and evil in the dialogues.

For Henry, Anselm highlights improper language in these fragments in order to translate it into proper language, that is, the language of logic, thereby solving—or at least forging the basic tools necessary for solving—the substantive philosophical problems he grapples with in the treatises. But as we shall see, the victory of proper over improper language, of logical over ordinary language in the *Fragments,* as in *De grammatico*, is somewhat less than complete. First, for Anselm language used to describe creatures can be used of God only by stretching standards of linguistic propriety almost beyond recognition. Second, Anselm shows that even ordinary language used for ordinary things cannot be purged of ambiguity in favor of a pure and proper technical language. We want and need to use words like "cause," and "can," and, of course, "be" in the different modes he enumerates. These expressions should be used advisedly, Anselm seems to be saying, an end he aids by listing and distinguishing these derivative modes. Thus, while it is true that the *Fragments* help link Anselm's linguistic propensities to his larger philosophical and theological concerns, it does not link them by reducing the problems they explore to problems of language.

Though *De grammatico* opens with a kind of paradox, that *grammaticus* is both a substance and a quality, this is a fairly narrow technical prob-

87. LF 34, 29–40. These fragments have been published in two editions, one edition following the order of the original manuscript (in *Memorials of St. Anselm*, edited by F. S. Schmitt and R. W. Southern [London: Oxford University Press, 1969], 333–51), another attempt to arrange the fragments in a logical order (edited by F. S. Schmitt in *Ein neues unvollendetes Werk des hl. Anselm von Canterbury*, in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, 33/3 [Münster: Aschendorff Press, 1936]). Though I have used the latter edition, none of my conclusions depend on this being the actual order intended by Anselm.

lem. These unfinished logical, grammatical fragments, by contrast, consider problems and paradoxes worthy of the speculative treatises. Some of the most important of these concern modal notions. For example, the student brings up the paradox of making predications of what does not exist: "that which does not in any way exist has no ability (*potestatem*). Hence, it has neither the ability to be or not to be."[88] Another fragment considers the problem of denying God's ability to do wrong: we say that lying is impossible to God and justice necessary, but "impossibility carries [with it the sense] of impotence and necessity of violence," both of which would be contradictory to the divine nature.[89] "If," the student argues, "you respond that this impossibility and this necessity signify an insuperable strength, then I ask: why is this strength indicated by names signifying infirmity?"[90]The knowing student who poses these problems is aware there is an inconsistency at the root of these paradoxes, but he cannot find it.[91]

The dialogue is an unusual combination of arguments and observations. On the one hand, the text considers matters which are highly germane to Anselm's most important and substantive philosophical concerns—the nature of God, the nature of God's actions in the world, and the nature of human responsibility. On the other hand, it engages in listing linguistic complexities and distinctions seemingly for their own sakes. It is not clear whether these fragments were supposed to be part of a single unfinished work or whether there were notes on separate problems destined for different works. Moreover, Anselm never directly solves these paradoxes, yet we can get some ideas about how he might have by looking at the distinctions he makes concerning *facere* ("to do" or "to cause"), "will," "cause," "something," and "power."

For "cause," Anselm enumerates modes of causing or doing that fall away by degrees from pure action and pure causality:

> We say of any given thing that it causes something to be either because it causes the very thing which it is said to cause to be, or because it does not cause this very thing not to be, or because it causes something else to be, or because it does not cause something else to be, or because it causes something else not to be, or because it does not cause something else not to be.[92]

"Cause," then, can be said in ways that cover pure and direct action, pure and direct inaction, as well as indirect action and indirect inaction.

Anselm also supplies four modes in which "something" can be said.

88. LF 23, 13–14.
89. LF 24, 16–19.
90. LF 24, 22–25.
91. LF 24, 14–15.
92. LF 29, 27–30.

The first and proper mode is when the thing has a name, is conceived by the mind, and exists in reality (e.g., animal). In the second mode, a thing has a name, is conceived by the mind, but does not exist (e.g., chimera). In the third mode, a thing has a name, but no concept and no existence (e.g., injustice and nothing). Lastly there is that which has no name, concept, or existence (e.g., nonbeing, as in "the sun's not being above the earth causes it not to be day").[93] The scale is from correspondence between being, thought, and language toward their increasing disjunction.

The verb "to be" also has many modes, and many of these modes, Anselm notes, can be found in other verbs as well.[94] The modes for the verb "to be" are modes of *improper* speech. We say improperly that A is B, Anselm explains, because A is similar to, is the cause, effect, genus, species, whole or part of, has the same capability, the same shape, is signified by or signifies, is the content or container of an object which is properly called B.[95] This list ranges from more or less ordinary predications (and ordinarily considered to be proper predications) of the genus or species of an individual, to the metaphorical, that is, predications based on similarity or signification.

In the case of *facere* (to do), the trend in these analyses reaches its apogee. As Anselm lists meanings or uses for *facere* he simply observes that it is used in place of every other verb, even its opposite.[96] Anselm supports this conclusion in two different ways. First he notes that any verb can be used in the answer to the question, "what is he doing?" This is true, he points out, not just in the obvious cases, when what someone is doing is singing or composing, but also when the answer is that someone is being, living, being able (*posse*), calling (*vocare*), or owing (*debere*). Thus we can answer the question, "what is he doing?" by saying "he is in church," "he is living as a good man lives," "he is powerful (*potest*) over the domain in which he lives," "he owes (*debet*) much money," and so forth.[97] At first it seems that *facere*, like its modern French equivalent, *faire*, seems to have no meaning common to all the expressions in which it is used. The Wittgenstinian solution, of course, is that there is no "meaning," no essence uniting the uses; one simply has to learn the appropriate circumstances for all the different expressions. On this view, there is no meaning apart from use, not just in the case of a few common verbs like "do" but in everything we say. Anselm does begin reflecting on this apparent linguistic oddity by noting that "every cause in common usage is said 'to do' that of which it is a cause."[98] He offers a general principle to explain this situation: "everything

93. LF 42, 22–43, 23.
94. LF 34, 16–23; 34, 40–41.
95. LF 34, 29–39.
96. LF 25, 13–19.
97. LF 25, 23–26, 4.
98. LF 26, 6–7.

of which a verb is predicated makes (*facit*) what is signified by the verb."[99] The odd cases, like "being" and "living" as kinds of doing, help prove the general point, Anselm explains. For we see that the subject of which the verb is predicated is a cause in those cases especially, in the sense that without their agency, whatever activity is being named by the verb would not take place. For example, without the one who endures or suffers (the opposite of doing or causing) there would be no enduring or suffering.[100] In another fragment Anselm offers another way of explaining this oddity of ordinary language (that "to do" can stand for all verbs). "Man" is a cause of the things of which it is predicated being animals. "Of whatever 'to be' is said, either simply, as in 'man is,' or with addition, as in 'man is an animal' or 'man is healthy,' the conception of this thing precedes and is a cause of it being said to be or not to be and is [a cause of] what is said being understood."[101] Anselm is reflecting on the nature of verbs more generally, locating their function as a kind of doing or causing of that of which they are predicated. This is exactly the kind of explanation Wittgenstein seems to reject in the *Investigations*. For Anselm, ordinary language makes sense and not just to those dwelling within it as a form of life. To discover that sense, he attempts to analyze "do" and "cause" and "be" into different but ordered modes. Thus he makes a gesture towards understanding how the "common usage" of *facere* might be understood in a more general way to have some sense behind it. Moreover, this, he implies, will be a way into understanding the grammatical category of verbs, and, further, be woven into one of the metaphysical themes most explored in these fragments, the notion of causality. Language will stand up to philosophical analysis, Anselm believes, but it takes a great deal of careful reflection on how we use language and what we mean in order to see that sense.

But just as Anselm does not enshrine ordinary language and eschew further analysis, neither does he, like some early analytic philosophers, want to rewrite it and free it from all ambiguity. Rather Anselm wants to analyze and order the ambiguities of ordinary language while retaining it and its nuances. Thus Anselm attempts to make what we normally say intelligible rather than nonsense by arranging it on a scale from the most proper to most derivative. If we expect pure univocation, ordinary language (not to mention theological language) will look like a complete failure. But if we have a kind of ordered equivocation in which the less proper and the improper uses are analyzed and ordered, then we both save the language we already use and have one which can tolerate the rigors of theological subjects without completely falling apart.

99. LF 26, 7–9.
100. LF 26, 12–15.
101. LF 28, 5–9.

What is intriguing in these fragments is how grammatical and logical concerns are interwoven with philosophical and theological ones. In some cases, observations about language are merely juxtaposed to theological problems or scriptural citations. In others, the analysis seems to be directly in the service of major theological problems raised by scriptural passages. In still others, there seems an equal interest in analyzing language for its own sake and using language to explore a philosophical or theological problem. A good example of the first type is the discussion of the verb *facere*. For after the observations outlined above, Anselm justifies this broad use of the term by an appeal to scripture: "the Lord in the Gospel uses '*facere*,' or '*agere*,' which are the same, for all verbs, when he says 'All who do evil hate the light,' and 'he who does the truth comes to the light.'"[102] He goes on to explain that "doing evil" encompasses a great deal which does not seem like action, like being present or absent where one ought or ought not be, for example.

There is another example of this kind in the text, concerning verbs which have other verbs as their objects. As an example, Anselm cites a passage from Exodus where a verb appears to function as an object but does not really: "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and they rose up to play."[103] Here there is no substantive discussion of the passage or any questions it might raise. The juxtaposition of ordinary language and the language of scripture in this case seems to be the result of such great but casual fluency in the language of scripture that the passages simply suggested themselves to Anselm as any other example from ordinary language would. By contrast, the passages from John about "doing evil" and "doing the truth" are not incidental examples but are the focus of Anselm's discussion of truth and moral action in *De veritate.*[104] *De veritate* along with the other two dialogues in the trilogy, *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu diaboli*, as we shall see, are profound meditations on the meaning of these and other scripture passages in which Anselm makes use of but expands on the grammatical observations educed in the *Fragments*. But even in the fragments, Anselm's reflections on the ambiguities of "doing" function as a warning to dialecticians and those in charge of spiritual direction or moral analysis. One should not be misled by the ambiguities of language into circumscribing the range of responsibility to "action" in the grammatical or even natural sense but realize there can be moral responsibility for and even an agency in some kinds of passivity.

Another fragment discusses causality in order to show that there are

102. John 3:20–21; LF 28, 13–16.
103. Exodus 32:16, LF 34, 2–3.
104. DV 5, S I, 181.

different kinds of causes that can be simultaneously responsible for the same effect. Anselm carefully develops two sets of divisions of cause into types. He names efficient and material, but also six modes of causality: 1) causing to be the very thing which it is said to cause, 2) not causing this very thing not to be, 3) causing something else (other than what it is said to cause) to be, 4) not causing something else to be, 5) causing something else not to be, 6) not causing something else not to be.[105] Anselm notes that this classification can be expanded from applying these categories to nonefficient as well as efficient causes and to all the other verbs joined to *facere* besides *esse*.[106] Anselm points out that a guard and Herod are both equally said to cause the death of John the Baptist. The one who performs the act kills, but so does the one who orders the killing; the reason for which someone is killed is also a cause, and so on. Agents cause things both by acting and not acting; even something nonexistent can function as a cause.[107] Human beings are causes (and, hence, responsible) even when they are not the only causes. There is a converse corollary. While finite beings always act and are acted on in conjunction with other causes, remote and proximate, God has no cause and at least the first effect of his causality had no other causes.[108]

Two other questions discussed thoroughly in the *Fragments* are the meaning of "ought" and the different modes of willing. Anselm distinguishes four modes of willing. The first and most proper sense is the efficient will, which "insofar as it can brings about what it wills."[109] The approving will is for what one wishes to happen but does not cause; the conceding will is for what one does not wish but does not object to; lastly, the permissive will is that which neither causes, approves, nor concedes but allows to happen what it could prevent.[110] These distinctions are then applied to scripture. When scripture says, "He has done whatsoever He has willed to do," it is describing God's efficient will; when it says, "He hardens whom He wills to," it is describing God's permissive will; and when we read that "God wills for every man to be saved," this refers to God's approving will.[111] The way Anselm makes these distinctions give the impression that they were designed to deal with passages in scripture and problems attendant to them. The passages do not simply function as illustrations of the distinctions in the way the citations of scripture passages supporting the account of *facere* do. But in both types of passages, Anselm exhibits a

105. LF 29, 20–30.
106. LF 32, 21–30; 33, 30–33.
107. LF 40, 8–12; 41, 33.
108. LF 41, 3–16.
109. LF 38, 26–7.
110. LF 38, 26–39, 5.
111. LF 39, 6–26. Anselm cites Ps. 113:3, Rom. 9:18, and 1 Tim. 2:4.

kind of fluidity, moving between ordinary and scriptural language and illustrates how he connects linguistic and theological problems.

The topics mentioned in the *Fragments,* the nature of power, necessity, and willing in God, and the nature of agency, causality, and responsibility in both God and human beings are, of course, discussed in Anselm's other works.[112] One might argue that the linguistic analysis developed in the *Fragments* was designed to be used to resolve contradiction and dissolve apparent incoherence on these issues. Anselm does use them in this way, as we shall see. But there is another, perhaps deeper connection between these fragments and the treatises. The ordering of the many to the one used in the *Fragments* is a strategy that returns in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. In the *Monologion* Anselm argues from lesser to greater levels of goodness to God as the source of goodness. Understanding "that than which none greater can be conceived" requires an ordering of what it is better and worse to be. In the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* Anselm confronts the paradox that that which is the source for and deserves the name of a given perfection contradicts the parameters for the ordinary and proper attribution of a term. Conversely, he finds on closer examination that ordinary things do not possess fully the qualities of being or causing that are attributed to them. Anselm touches on both this paradox and its opposite in the *Fragments*. The discussion of divine power and freedom in the *Fragments* shows the way in which God sets different standards for action than those appropriate to creatures. The discussion of the ways in which things are said to be or cause something when they are only similar to or the indirect cause of that thing shows the way in which things receive names which they do not full deserve.

These fragments reveal Anselm's recognition that there are difficulties confronting predication of both God and creatures. The problems of predicating ability or necessity of what does not exist (and hence has no abilities), of being and agency of that which is only incomplete being and imperfect agency, shows the way in which language seems to attribute too much to creatures, who exist and have whatever they have only in a relative sense. Another set of observations and distinctions, concerning predications of God, shows the way in which the language of creatures, appropriate to their limited possibilities, imperfect freedom, and incomplete being, results in absurdities when applied to God, who is true and complete being.

112. Hopkins and Richardson's translation of the *Fragments* includes in the footnotes a concordance of passages to other places in Anselm's writing. See *Anselm of Canterbury*, edited and translated by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), vol. 2, 226–28.

We do not know how Anselm might have reconnected what he has distinguished in the *Fragments*. He walks to the edge of language that seems to drop off into equivocation, where what is not can be described as being, and what does nothing can be said to do or cause. In Anselm's other work, his impulse is to distinguish in order to unite, to resolve paradox into necessity. In some ways *De grammatico* and these fragments represent only the first movement, creating distinctions and paradox out of ordinary and noncontroversial language, not union of differences or the resolution of paradox into necessity. We see only the very beginnings of the tendency toward unity in the fragments, in their ordering of the improper to the proper, the many to the one, and in *De grammatico's* creation of distinctions that let both halves of an apparent contradiction stand. The trilogy of dialogues beginning with *De veritate* takes up this task, uniting all truths in the One Truth but also exploring division on a deeper level, division in the will causing separation from God.

Words, Thoughts, and Things

Where does this reading of these two works leave us on the relationship between words, thoughts, and things for Anselm? Many have taken this as the question of whether Anselm a realist or not. Do words signify things or concepts directly? If things have universal natures, do universals exist only *post* or also *ante rem*? Depending on which texts are taken as central, *De grammatico*, or the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*, Anselm has been taken to be everything from a naïve realist to a moderate realist to a contemporary analyst on the subject of universals.[113] Marilyn Adams argues that Anselm is a realist in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* but pulls back to a more moderate and nuanced position in the *De grammatico*.[114] However, a careful look at the evidence shows that Anselm does not have a different theory of language in *De grammatico* as opposed to the *Monologion* or elsewhere; rather, *De grammatico* and the *Fragments* simply focus on the distinctions between words, things, and understandings.

The famous passage on which Anselm is sometimes judged is not in these logical, grammatical works but in his refutation of Roscelin's views on the Trinity. This response makes Anselm sound, at least in terms of the categories of the twelfth century if not the eleventh, like a real-

113. On the range of these views, see Jasper Hopkins, "The Anselmian Theory of Universals," 57–68. See also Katherin Rogers, *The Neoplatonic Metaphysics and Epistemology of Anselm of Canterbury*, Studies in the History of Philosophy 45 (Lewiston, N.H.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 114–17.

114. Marilyn Adams, "Was Anselm a Realist? The *Monologium*," *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 5–14.

ist. Roscelin, Anselm complains, essentially holds the view that either there are three gods or the Father and Holy Spirit became incarnate with Christ. According to Anselm, such errors spring from Roscelin's view words are only *flatus vocis*. Anselm's well-known dismissal of Roscelin as both logician and theologian bears repeating:

> For someone who does not yet understand how several men are one man in species, how will he comprehend the way in which in that highest and most mysterious nature several persons, each one of which individually is perfect God, are one God? And someone whose mind is too darkened to distinguish between his horse and its color, how will he distinguish between the one God and his multiple relations? Finally, someone who cannot understand anything to be human except an individual will in no way understand a human being to be anything except a human person. . . . How, then, will he understand that man was assumed by the word not a person, that is another nature not another person was assumed?[115]

This passage has received notoriously different readings. For some, Anselm's almost naïve realism is evident in his assertion of a human nature distinct from individual human beings. This view can arguably be traced through the rest of Anselm's corpus. Just as the name of God in the *Proslogion* necessarily refers to a reality, so too, some would argue, the names of the perfections of God correspond to those realities in God, and of which the less than divine instances are imperfect reflections. The *Monologion*, on this view, asserts the Platonic view that all goods are good through that which is good-in-itself in order to prove God's existence.[116] On the other hand, Henry argues that in this passage Anselm is merely criticizing Roscelin for failing to make distinctions in the order of words. Hence, he argues, Anselm is asserting the importance of distinguishing between "quidditative" and "referential" uses as Anselm does in *De grammatico*.[117] Henry's reading, however, seems to go against the obvious sense of the passage.[118] For Anselm is clearly asserting something about being and not just words; he claims that human beings are united in the species, human nature, and that individuals and the nature they inhabit are distinct. The distinction between person and nature makes it possible for Christ to assume human nature without assum-

115. EDIV 1, S II, 10, 4–13.

116. See Maurice de Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 1, translated by Ernest C. Messenger (New York: Dover, 1952), 165. Cited in Rogers, *Neoplatonic Metaphysics*, 116. In a different way, Marilyn Adams also argues that the *Monologion* commits Anselm to realism.

117. Desmond P. Henry, "St. Anselm and the Linguistic Disciplines," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 329.

118. Hopkins makes the same point. See his "The Anselmian Theory of Universals," 63.

ing human personhood but retain divine personhood, while the unity of Christ's divinity with human nature makes it possible for Christ to substitute for and make restitution for Adam and all human beings. Thus Anselm's Christology requires a distinction between natures, which are not mere fictions, and individuals. However, Anselm does not specify the exact status of those natures, either as subsisting universals, as ideas in God's mind, or as the product of abstraction from individuals.[119]

Anselm, like virtually all thinkers in the Latin medieval tradition before Ockham, holds that there are ideas in the mind of God which are in some important sense the source of created natures. The *Monologion* clearly refers to ideas or exemplars in the mind of God. At issue, then, are not universals in the sense of divine ideas. However, Anselm does not have to hold the view that the horse and its color (his example in the passage on Roscelin previously quoted) can *exist* separately but only that the distinction between them conceptually corresponds to a real distinction in those realities. Anselm is, we might say, though still perhaps in language more appropriate to the twelfth century than the eleventh, committed to the reality of natures *in* things. If what is meant by realism is the view that things really have natures that are designated by the common nouns we apply to them, then Anselm is a realist, but so is Aquinas and even Abelard (though the latter with some qualification).[120] However, Anselm need not be an "extreme realist"; he could be a kind of Aristotelian, holding that the forms are in individuals without existing separately.[121]

It is important to remember the view Anselm is arguing *against* here: Roscelin's.[122] Roscelin is not, as Mews and Jolivet have pointed out, easily

119. Hopkins maps out clearly the ways in which scholars have argued that Anselm is realist or Thomist on the question of universals; see his "The Anselmian Theory of Universals," 58–69. Hopkins's own conclusion is agnostic and aporetic, concluding that Anselm simply does not say what secondary substances *are*, just that they are *not* mere vocal sounds. Hopkins, 95.

120. For a discussion of Abelard see Eileen Sweeney, *Logic, Theology and Poetry in Boethius, Abelard and Alan of Lille: Words in the Absence of Things* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 70–71.

121. This does not preclude Anselm being more Platonic than Aristotelian in terms of how he thinks of the relationship between divine ideas or exemplars and existing, material individuals. As is clear in the *Monologion*, Anselm finds more "reality" in the divine idea than the material instance. Hopkins is rightly skeptical not only of terms like "realist" or "nominalist" in discussing Anselm but also "Platonic" or "Aristotelian," though he reluctantly has to use some kind of label, concluding, "I tend to agree with Henry that Anselm is no "crude realist," while at the same time agreeing with Grabmann that Anselm is dimly aligned with Boethius and Aquinas." Hopkins, 95. Cf. Iwakuma Yukio, "The Realism of Anselm and His Contemporaries," in *Anselm, Aosta, Bec and Canterbury*, edited by Luscombe and Evans (Sheffield : Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 120–35, for an account of Anselm as Boethian and Aristotelian.

122. For a full discussion of Anselm's *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi* and his disagreement with Roscelin on the Trinity, which prompts the comment quoted above, see chapter 6.

categorized as a nominalist; if he is not, then we might have to reevaluate what Anselm is holding out as the alternative to Roscelin as something different from realism. Jolivet argues that Roscelin's account of words is governed by reference, each word referring to a thing.[123] This fits with Roscelin's letter to Abelard, the only text we have which scholars are sure is his. Roscelin concludes that three names and three persons means three things that are "eternal, just as a plurality of eternal things."[124] Roscelin's view is a kind of literalism rather than nominalism, based on the common sense (but wrong) notion that there is a direct relationship between names and things; hence he claims that if there are three persons there are three *things*, that is, three substances or essences.[125] If there are not different things, then the different names which might be used of that same thing do not really name anything different. From this we can understand Anselm's frustration with what he characterizes an immersion in sense and imagination in Roscelin and other dialecticians. They let the physical material world be the final arbiter of what can be meaningfully said. In contrast, Anselm holds that the substance and its qualities are distinct without claiming they are subsisting things or conceding that they are just different names for the same single, one-dimensional thing. Anselm's rejection is of the flatness of the views of the dialecticians he criticizes. In insisting on the distinction between nature and individual or person, Anselm is insisting on another layer to multilayered being consisting of substance, quantity, quality, etc. We might be able to characterize Anselm, strangely enough, as Jolivet does Abelard, as a combination of "nonrealism" and "Platonism."[126] He is a nonrealist in the sense that he does not take the orders of words and things to be symmetrical, does not take it that there are "things" which correspond to words, but Platonic in the sense that there are exemplars in the mind of God (identical to the divine substance). For Anselm there

123. Jean Jolivet, "Trois variations médiévales sur l'universel et l'individu: Roscelin, Abélard, Gilbert de la Porrée," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 97 (1992): 111–55.

124. Roscelin, letter to Abelard, cited in Constant Mews, "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Roscelin of Compiègne and its Influence: Twelfth-century Nominalism and Theology Re-considered," in *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002), IX, 357, n. 33. Mews cites large portions of the letter and translates a number of passages in this essay, 355–58. For the full Latin text see the edition edited by J. Reiners, in *Der Nominalismus in der Frühscholastik. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Universalienfrage im Mittelalter, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters* 8.5 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1910), 62–80.

125. Roscelin, "Letter to Abelard," 72, cited in Mews, "Trinitarian Doctrine of Roscelin," IX, 355–56; cf. Mews, IX, 357.

126. Jean Jolivet, "Non-réalisme et platonisme chez Abélard: Essai d'interprétation, " in *Abélard et son temps, Actes de Colloque international organisé à l'occasion du 9e centenaire de la naissance de Pierre Abélard* (*May 14–19, 1979*) (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), 175–95.

are real natures or essences in things, which, though not as separately existing objects, can be discussed meaningfully, independently of the particular existing things and in abstraction from their other features. Though it may be unfair to Roscelin, Anselm seems to want to cast him as his opposite, a combination of realism and non-Platonism, convinced of a kind of direct relationship between words and things but rejecting any way of using words that maps on to ideas (whether in the human mind or the mind of God) rather than concrete individuals.

Some scholars who reject the view that Anselm is an extreme realist, have then tried to see him in a line with Boethius and Aquinas, both as moderate realist and as holding what they see as an Aristotelian account of knowledge as deriving from sense experience and as opposed to an Augustinian or illuminationist view).[127] Like nominalism vs. realism, these views as distinct and mutually exclusive postdate Anselm by at least a century. Anselm speaks both of understanding as a kind of presence of or illumination by the divine light and of coming to know things in and through our physical encounters with them.[128] Moreover, Anselm does not take up in any detail the question of how it is that humans come to know. What is clear is that Anselm distinguishes strongly between sensation and knowledge and speaks of God and divine light as the source of intelligibility and, though he does not specify how, of human knowledge. This much Anselm shares not just with Augustine but also Boethius and Aquinas, though we could say that for Anselm over against Abelard (and to a lesser degree over against Aquinas and Boethius) there is a more direct relationship between things, words, and divine ideas. On universals, Anselm shares with Boethius, Aquinas, and even Abelard the notion that meaning is not reference, that words are linked in one way to ideas and concepts and in another to individual existing objects. This is the point of *De grammatico*, that appellation and meaning, signification *per se* and *per aliud* are distinct, and it is the same point Anselm makes as he insists on the distinction between natures and persons in the *De incarnatione*.

127. On Anselm as abstractionist, see F. S. Schmitt, "Anselm und der (Neu-)Platonismus," in vol. 1 of *Analecta Anselmiana: Untersuchungen über Person und Werk Anselms von Canterbury*, edited by F. S. Schmitt (Franfurt: Minerva GMBH, 1969), 48, 62–64. In order to acquit Anselm of the charge of being a Neoplatonist, Schmitt defines Neoplatonism in fairly narrow and technical terms. See Schmitt, "Anselm und der (Neu-) Platonismus," 70–71. On this debate among Anselm scholars see Rogers, *Neoplatonic Metaphysics*, 159–62. Rogers argues, against Schmitt and others, that Anselm's views are illuminationist. She argues against the view that knowledge comes from innate ideas or "a created light in the human mind which is caused and constantly supported by God," but argues that for Anselm knowledge comes about by direct illumination by God, who gives not just to the ability to make judgments about sense knowledge but gives the actual content. See Rogers, *Neoplatonic Metaphysics*, 164–84.

128. Rogers, *Neoplatonic Metaphysics*, 164–74.

Though the question about the degree of Anselm's realism is anachronistic, the suspicion that Anselm is a realist is, in the end, a response to something that is really present in his thought. Anselm aspires to find the words that deliver the thing, arguments that are beyond doubt. In other words, he seeks the perfect correspondence between words and things realism also promises. In order for language to have the power to propel us to necessary conclusions about things, language must be more than mere sounds, human custom, or even just roughly on to something. It has to be able to name what is real about things. However, readers arguing for Anselm's realism neglect the other strong element in Anselm's writing we have seen in *De grammatico* and the *Fragments* also present in his speculative works: his sophisticated awareness of the gaps between word, thing, and understanding. This caution is evident both within the grand arguments of the theological and philosophical treatises and in the careful analysis of the grammatical,or logical works. Anselm is not worried about the "problem of universals." What he is worried about are the ways in which ordinary language connects and fails to connect to the world in more complicated ways than his students and readers suspect.

The goal of Anselm's linguistic analysis is to clear the ground, to create a launching pad in order to mount up from this world to God powered by words. The results of the logical works help make the grandest instances of this quest, the necessary and indubitable conclusions of the *Monologion*, *Proslogion*, and *Cur Deus homo* possible, by rooting out apparent but false identities, by explaining the differences (and links) between similar names and predications, uses, and meanings. The thrust of Anselm's thinking is to envelop all truths in the One Truth, God, as he does in *De veritate*. But he knows the dangers of discrediting his whole project by making identical things that are different. As Southern points out, the fool addressed in the *Proslogion* has not learned the lesson of *De grammatico*: "it is not the use of the same *word* in the major and minor premises of a syllogism which binds the argument together, but the use of the same word with the same sense."[129]

What is most significant about the passage on Roscelin and the dialecticians is not, then, whether it shows Anselm to be realist or not. Rather the passage indicates how grammar and logic impact philosophical and theological issues for Anselm. Anselm upbraids Roscelin for failing to make the right distinctions and connections between individuals and species, substance and accident, and nature and person. We can see in this a reason for Anselm to go back, if indeed he did, from the sublime

129. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 130.

heights of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* to the mundane explorations of *De grammatico* and the fragments.[130] In any case, Roscelin's views seem to have forced Anselm's articulation of how, as Aquinas (citing Aristotle citing Plato) puts it in his own exploration of the problem of universals, "a small mistake at the beginning can lead to a large mistake at the end."[131] Southern makes a similar point about the teaching of *De grammatico* that could apply to all Anselm's reflections on language: "The great lesson that he [Anselm] impresses on his pupil is that he cannot advance unless he penetrates the surface of words and appearances to reach the reality to which they refer."[132]

Anselm combines a great skepticism and a great deal of sophistication about language (which may be the same thing) with the naïve desire to move seamlessly from being to Being, from words to the Word. As we shall see, *De veritate* consists of both the movement to distinguish between different kinds of truth and the movement to unite them in the One Truth. And as we shall see in *De veritate* and beyond, those who classify Anselm as an illuminationist are, like those calling him a realist, led by something in Anselm: that all that is as well as all that is true and is known finds its source in God.

The logical and theological works in Anselm are related in a way that does not make logic the mere servant of apologetics nor reduce theology to an area for making linguistic distinctions. The kind of logical and linguistic analysis in these texts is present throughout his corpus and is at the core of a profoundly metaphysical and theological project. They come together without one being reduced to the other because both the logical and theological works and the logical and linguistic analysis of theological problems are concerned with the paradox of being and language found in Parmenides.[133] That problem is the apparent impossibility of making predications of either being or nonbeing. On the one hand, one cannot make predications of nonbeing without seeming to attri-

130. On the dating of *De grammatico*, see p. 78.

131. Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, in *Über Seiendes und Wesenheit*, translation and commentary by Horst Seidl (Hamburg: Meiner, 1988), 2. Cf. Plato, *Cratylus*, 436d and Aristotle, *De Caelo* 271b9.

132. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 64.

133. For another, complementary way of connecting Anselm and Parmenides, see Michael P. Slattery, "Parmenides: Anselm *Eminenter*," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 229; and Vincent J. Ferrarra, "Some Reflections on the Being-Thought Relationship in Parmenides, Anselm and Hegel," in vol. 3 of *Analecta Anselmiana: Untersuchungen über Person und Werk Anselms von Canterbury*, edited by F. S. Schmitt (Frankfurt: Minerva GMBH, 1972), 95–111. Ferrarra argues that in the ontological argument Anselm is concerned, as Parmenides is, with the identification of being and thought. The claim here is that Anselm is concerned in the *Fragments* as well as in *De veritate* and the *Proslogion* with the problem that gives rise to Parmenides's reflection: how being can be many.

bute being to nonbeing in the "is" that joins subject and predicate and in the predicate that attributes a property to a nonexistent object. This is the issue that is ultimately behind the most basic questions of the *Lambeth Fragments*. The student asks about ability and inability, possibility and impossibility, and freedom and necessity. In part, the problems are problems of language, requiring only the distinction between verbal form predicating ability, possibility, or freedom and the real predication of the opposite. But at a deeper level, the questions are metaphysical, about how, for example, nonexistent things can have abilities or possibilities. The student grasps both the verbal and metaphysical problem when he reasons toward the paradox: since "that which does not in any respect exist has no ability; it does not have either the ability to exist or the ability not to exist."[134] Being, of course, presents no less a difficulty than nonbeing (or, as we shall see, becoming). For one cannot predicate anything of being except something other than being, but the only thing other than being is nonbeing. In the medieval context, this becomes the problem of theological language: how can one say anything about God without contradicting the divine nature? The *Fragments* touch on these issues when raising questions about the nature of divine freedom and causation, but they are, of course, taken up more directly in the famous arguments of the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*.

What the logical works show us is Anselm's awareness that the asymmetry between language and things takes two forms. First, language taken to signify the full possession of what is predicated is ill suited to name that which is becoming or nonbeing. Second, language derived from and appropriate to the incomplete being of creatures is ill suited to describe the pure and absolute being of God. Plumbing the depths of linguistic complexity, exposing in as many ways as possible the mismatch between words and things, is the equivalent, then, of beginning from the depths of sin in the prayers. From this tangled and incomplete correspondence between words and things, the project is to move toward words which clearly and indubitably capture their objects, from division and difference to unity.

The approach to philosophical questions about the nature of reality approached through an analysis of language is, as many have remarked, more prominent in the Latin medieval world before the advent of the full Aristotelian corpus (the works in natural philosophy, ethics, metaphysics) in the West. Language is, in this context, the main tool for solving problems. Anselm chooses to probe language deeply and at the dramat-

134. LF 23, 5–6.

ic extremes, language of pure being and absolute nonbeing. And at both extremes, he confronts the possibility of utter failure as he strives for complete success of language, in a drive toward linguistic integrity. This desire is evident in the logical works, which work to uncover and clarify ambiguities and inconsistencies in ordinary language. The same drive toward the perfect identity of word and thing is exemplified in the *Prologion's* search for the name that predicates being of being, and mirrored in the search for union with God in the prayers.

4

THE *MONOLOGION* AND *PROSLOGION*

Language Straining toward God

The Problem of Faith and Reason

Central to the interpretation of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and the focus of centuries of controversy about them is their dueling claims to proceed *sola ratione* and by "faith seeking understanding." Commentators have tried to understand and reconcile these claims in a variety of ways. The opposing positions were classically articulated by Karl Barth, who argued strongly that Anselm's investigation takes place wholly within the context of faith, which provides the premises as well as the questions, and Etienne Gilson, who took it that Anselm's project was to prove the things of faith—all of them—on rational grounds. Thus for Barth, the presupposition of the notion, that which none greater can be conceived, is a theological one, and its exploration is undertaken in faith; for Gilson, Anselm is, as I noted earlier, "recklessly" rationalistic, his pretensions for reason "indefensible."[1] Others have argued that Anselm contradicts himself without knowing it.[2] Still others have argued in different ways

1. See the introduction to this volume. Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, translated by Ian W. Robertson (London: SCM Press, 1960), 55–59; and Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner, 1951), 26. For more on Gilson's views on Anselm's project, see Gregory B. Sadler, "Saint Anselm's *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* as a Model for Christian Philosophy," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2006): 32–58; and Eileen C. Sweeney, "The Problem of Philosophy and Theology in Anselm of Canterbury," in *Medieval Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown*, edited by Kent Emery and Russell Freidman, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 487–514.

2. M. J. Charlesworth, "Introduction," in *St. Anselm's "Proslogion" with "A Reply on Behalf of the Fool" by Gaunilo and "The Author's Reply to Gaunilo,"* edited and translated by M. J. Charlesworth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 34–40. Charlesworth claims that Anselm's practice is rationalist but that Anselm's description of his work in terms of an older patristic conception of theology does not match his practice. David Pailin contends that the arguments are meant to be based only on

that Anselm's project is reasoning within faith, but that it might, though not designed for this purpose, be convincing to those without Christian faith who might approach it with an open mind.[3] On this view Anselm intends his arguments both for the faithful and the fool.[4]

The difficulty for both those advocating a more "philosophical" or a more "theological" account of Anselm's project is Anselm's insistence that his arguments to objectors, infidels, and unbelievers of various stripes are the same as those he offers to believers piously seeking to understand their faith. The difficulty for those advocating some version of the claim that Anselm intends his arguments to address both believers and unbelievers is how to make coherent sense of such a project.

Though the issue is larger and extends further into Anselm's corpus, the main ground on which these battles have been fought is the *Proslogion*, and its sister work, the *Monologion*. Some commentators have tried to draw a sharp line between the two works, arguing that Anselm puts aside the rationalism of the *Monologion* in the *Proslogion*. This claim is partly based on the slightly different language he uses to describe their tasks; Anselm describes the *Monologion* as operating "*sola ratione*" and as "*exemplum meditandi de ratione fidei*" and the *Proslogion* as "faith seeking understanding."[5] Gregory Schufreider concludes that while the *Monologion* "provides no obvious justification for proceeding by means of reason, nor is it clear how its procedure is relevant to those in the monastery," the *Proslogion* "places the text within the context of spiritual reading, making such rational thought appear to be relevant to the medi-

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reason but that they assume a kind of "Neoplatonic" faith. David A. Pailin, "*Credo et Intelligam* as the Method of Theology and of its Verification: A Study in Anselm's *Proslogion*," *Analecta Anselmiana* 4, no. 2 (1975): 120.

3. André Hayen, "The Role of the Fool in St. Anselm and the Necessarily Apostolic Character of True Christian Reflection," translated by Arthur C. McGill, in *The Many-Faced Argument: Recent Studies on the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God*, edited by John Hick and Arthur C. McGill (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 176.

4. The "fool' in Anselm's argument is not so much an atheist but the atheist or at least agnostic within the believer. Hayen, for example, describes the fool as "the principle of foolishness which struggles against God in all the fools." Hayen, "The Role of the Fool," 169. Cf. Marcia L. Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge,* rev. ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 86. Colish calls the nonbeliever in the *Proslogion* "a hypothetical straw man rather than an organized contemporary threat to the Christian faith." Katherin Rogers argues that Anselm intends "one and the same argument" to do two different things: "convert the unbeliever, and help the Christian attain *intellectus*." See Katherin Rogers, "Can Christianity be Proven? St. Anselm of Canterbury on Faith and Reason," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 465.

5. See *Pros.*, Prooem. S I, 94, and *Mono.* 1, S I, 13. See A. Antweiler, "Anselmus von Canterbury, Monologion und Proslogion," *Scholastik* 8 (1933): 558. See also Anselm Stolz, "Anselm's Theology in the Proslogion," translated by Arthur C. McGill, in *The Many Faced Argument*, edited by Hick and McGill, 183–88. This is a translation of Stolz's "Zur Theologie Anselms im Proslogion," *Catholica* 2 (1933): 1–24. See also Stolz, "Das Proslogion des hl. Anselm," *Revue Bénédictine* 47 (1935): 331–47.

tational movement toward God to which monastic existence is itself addressed."[6]

Anselm begins the *Monologion* without explanation, simply supposing someone ignorant of God. He begins with the following supposition: "If about the one nature, highest of all things that are, alone sufficient to itself in its eternity and beatitude, and giving and making all other things which are something and are in some way good through its omnipotent goodness," "and of many other things which we necessarily believe about God or his creatures," whether through not hearing or not believing, someone is ignorant, he can "persuade himself to a great degree," even if he has only a mediocre intellect.[7] It is an amazing, even shocking supposition, both because of how much Anselm supposes one may come to know led by "reason" and because of the character of his imagined persona. As others have noted, there could have been no actual persons Anselm would have known or even known about in this position. The non-Christians of Anselm's world would have been theists. Anselm softens the shock by leading with the object, describing the highest being first, and withholding the description of the subject and his ignorance, a syntax reproduced above, despite its awkwardness in English. Even more shocking, the *Monologion* sets out to derive the persons of the Trinity from the notion of the highest being, as well as the rest of the divine attributes and its creative act. Moreover, Anselm keeps carefully to his conceit throughout the text, referring only to the *summum ens* throughout the *Monologion*, concluding only in the very last lines that this highest being is God.

There is a precedent in Augustine's *De libero arbitrio* for the construction of an argument for the existence of God beginning only with the most basic, universally acceptable premises. But Augustine did not imagine someone who might receive this argument as news; rather, Augustine's dialogue partner, Evodius, places himself in the position of one whose faith is firm but who seeks to understand.[8] Anselm's persona in the *Monologion* is both more distant from and more intimately connected with him. More distant because imagined as ignorant (or even obstinate) rather than inquiring into the grounds of his already extant belief, and

6. Gregory Schufreider, *Confessions of a Rational Mystic* (West Lafayette, Ind.: Purdue University Press, 1994), 278–79.

7. *Mono*. 1, S I, 11, 5–10.

8. See Augustine, *De liberto arbitrio* II, 3–15 for Augustine's argument. In book II, 2, Augustine mentions the fool from the Psalms, asking whether they should dispute with him. But the proof Augustine does offer is to Evodius, who asks questions as a person of firm faith and seeking understanding from faith.

more intimate because not constructed as a distinct dialogue partner but as a voice Anselm takes on himself.

The claim that there is a substantive change of method from the *Monologion* to the *Proslogion* is not, in the end, persuasive.[9] First, Anselm repeatedly links the two works as similar and as having a similar method.[10] Second, though Anselm's evocation of the "fool" as foil and possible beneficiary of his argument in the *Proslogion* is rooted in scripture, the role Anselm constructs for the fool is virtually identical to the figure of someone ignorant or disbelieving created in the *Monologion.* The fool in the Psalms passage from Cassiodorus to Peter the Chanter was most often interpreted as a Jew who rejects the divinity of Jesus.[11] Though Anselm cannot *not* have known the common interpretation, he chooses to interpret the fool as rational unbeliever who rejects the God common to the religions of the book rather than Jewish objector to the Incarnation. He chooses, at least as he sets out in both works, to confront unbelief as generic rather than sectarian, and as seated in reason rather than the will.

Nonetheless, the scriptural source for the fool should not be ignored. As John Clayton points out, Anselm would have "confronted the fool of the psalms" at least twice a week in Psalms 13 and 52 in the Benedictine cycle of weekly prayers.[12] Thus the idea of the fool would have been deeply entrenched in Anselm's prayer life, and addressing such a figure is not contrary to but inspired by rumination on scripture. What the *Proslogion* adds to the *Monologion's* supposition of a nonbeliever, then, is a link between scripture and the task Anselm has set for himself in both works. However, Anselm is not merely creating a cover from scripture for his rationalistic project in the *Proslogion* but rather making that link more explicit.

Third, though the *Proslogion* makes the link to scripture explicit, it sets as its task something similarly or even more audacious than the *Monologion*: to prove everything that is believed about God and to do so with one argument and in such a way that it cannot even be rejected by "the fool who says in his heart there is no God." The goal Anselm sets for reason is to prove that God exists, even, just as in the *Monologion*, to one un-

9. Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 56–63.

10. See EDIV 6, S II, 20, 16–19 as well as *Pros.*, Prooem. S I, 93–94, and Ep. 109, S III, 241–42.

11. Gilbert Dahan, "Sainte Anselme, les Juifs, et le Judaïsme," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles au tournant des XIe–XIIe siècles: études anselmiennes. IVe session: Abbaye Notre-Dame du Bec, Le Bec-Hellouin, 11–16 juillet 1982,* edited by Raymonde Foreville, Spicilegium Beccense II (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984), 521–34.

12. John Clayton, "The Otherness of Anselm," *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophiae* 37, no. 2 (1995): 136.

willing to believe it. Anselm describes the fruit of his search for understanding through reasoning this way: "what I formerly believed by your gift, I now so understand by your illumination, that if I were unwilling to believe you to be, I would not be able not to understand it."[13]

Thus Anselm is not doing something *different* in the *Proslogion* but he has learned from the criticisms made of the *Monologion* that his method *needs* explanation, one which he attempts to offer in the *Proslogion*. This is a different view than that recently put forward by Toivo Holopainen, who argues that the only difference between the two works is in the devotional rhetoric Anselm gives to his rational project in the *Proslogion*. That rhetoric serves as a somewhat duplicitous defense of the rational project of the *Monologion*, Holopainen argues, as Anselm uses it to involve the reader in (and bring him to enjoy) rational analysis "before s/he starts to suspect anything."[14] However, it is clear that Anselm always thought of the rational and devotional projects as intrinsically and organically linked but adds a more explicit account and defense of that link in the prologues to both works. Thus, before launching into the interpretation of these two works separately, we turn to the way in which Anselm introduces them, attempting to explain and defend them in response to criticism.

Unifying the Pursuits of Faith and Reason

We know a surprising amount about the composition of Anselm's first speculative, theological works both from Anselm himself and from Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi*, which attempts to describe and justify the works. We have already seen in chapter 2 the circumstances surrounding Anselm's submission of the *Monologion* to Lanfranc, asking Lanfranc to name it. After Lanfranc declined to give his approval, it was, of course, Anselm who subsequently gave the work a title and had his name as author attached to both works.[15] Anselm tells us of his desire to come up with a "single argument" to substitute for the "interwoven sequence" of arguments in the *Monologion* and of his difficulties in doing so.[16] In a truly re-

13. *Pros*. 4, S I, 104, 5–7.

14. Toivo J. Holopainen, "The *Proslogion* in Relation to the *Monologion*," *The Heythrop Journal* 50 (2009): 590–602. Holopainen interprets Anselm's later addition of the preface and the chapter headings, as well as his request for the inclusion of Gaunilo's objections and his reply as all ways in which Anselm revised the work, now bringing out rather than hiding its rational character. On these changes to the text, see Schmitt, "Prolegomena," 64–65.

15. For the exchange with Lanfranc see Epp. 72, 77 (S III, 193–94, 199–200), and chapter 2, 61–63. See also Ep. 109 (S III, 241–42) in which Anselm instructs Hugh, archbishop of Lyon and supporter of his work, to rename the works and to append Anselm's name to them as author.

16. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 4–6.

markable passage that seems quite true to the composing process, Anselm describes coming close but failing in his pursuit, only to have the argument force itself upon him as he tried to resist it.[17] Eadmer repeats this much and adds the story of Anselm writing down what he had discovered on wax tablets only to have one set disappear and the next set destroyed.[18]

We also know that Anselm changed and adjusted the titles of both works as part of his worry about how they had been and would be received. He had, he explains in the preface to the *Proslogion*, titled his first work "An Example of Meditating on the Reason (*ratione*) of Faith" and the second, "Faith Seeking Understanding." Now he names them *Monologion, id est soliloquium*, and *Proslogion, id est alloquium*.[19] Anselm's letter to Hugh of Lyons, likely written before the *Proslogion* preface as we have it, reveals that there were slightly different interim names; he asks Hugh to change the name *Monoloquium* to *Monologion* and asks to have the subtitle, "on the reason (*ratione*) of Faith" removed as unnecessary (*superabundans*); he changes *Alloquium* to *Proslogion* though in the preface published with the *Proslogion* he leaves *alloquium* as a gloss along with *soliloquium* as the gloss for *Monologion*.[20] The Greek names he gives them are more polished and less generic, more suited to works more explicitly published.

Anselm does not explain why he wants to change the titles in the letter to Hugh, though in the *Proslogion* preface he says that these titles are more appropriate (*aptius*) now that his name has been attached to both works.[21] For the period, Anselm is a surprisingly self-conscious *author* of his works and the majority of his works are similarly equipped with prefaces instructing others on the form and manner in which the works are to be read. Anselm presents these works as if they began in his own meditation and conversations with fellow monks simply wanting to think these things through; he even implies that he wrote them down at first without too much of a notion of that they would be regarded as fixed and stable text, of which he would be the known author. His concern as he composes the two prefaces is to claim his authorship, giving the titles as the privilege of authorship (even changing them more than once).

However, the prefaces also in a sense allow Anselm to distance him-

17. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 10–19.

18. Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury/Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, edited and translated by Richard W. Southern (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), book 1, xix, 29–31.

19. *Pros*. Prooem, S I, 94, 12–13.

20. Ep. 109, S III, 242, 8–12; *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 94, 12–13.

21. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 94, 11–13.

self from the works. He does this first by telling of his reluctance to write both works, importuned by forces outside himself. Second, he crafts a persona in whose voice he writes in both works, a voice not exactly the same as his own. In the *Monologion* preface, Anselm writes, "whatever things I say here are put forward in the person (*sub persona*) by thinking alone (*sola cogitatione*) disputing with himself and investigating that which he had previously not considered, just as I knew those whose requests I tried to comply with wanted."[22] In a strikingly similar way, Anselm describes the *Proslogion* as written "in the persona (*sub persona*) of one endeavoring to raise his mind to the contemplation of God and seeking to understand what he believes."[23] This description of the persona under which Anselm writes the *Monologion* comes after a defense of the way the work talks about the Trinity as three substances (protesting that this claim is neither novel nor untrue) and before his plea to have his preface included in all versions of the work.[24] He asks that the preface be included so that readers will understand the intent (*intentione*) and manner (*modo*) of the discussion and, thus, be less likely to judge it rashly.[25]

In the prologues written to both works, Anselm is clearly responding to criticism, criticisms already lodged against the *Monologion* and criticisms he anticipates will be made of the *Proslogion*. We know from Anselm's letters to Lanfranc that Lanfranc had been critical of the *Monologion* for its lack of specific reference to authority as well as its language of the Trinity.[26] And we can see signs that Anselm feared similar criticism of the *Proslogion*. Giles Gasper has made the fascinating and persuasively argued suggestion that it was those who disapproved of his project at Bec who twice destroyed earlier drafts of the *Proslogion* (or at least its basic argument) before Anselm managed to make a final copy, and that this is a sign of much greater disagreement and foment both in the inner politics at Bec and about Anselm's approach to theological issues.[27]

22. *Mono*. Prol., S I, 8, 18–20.

23. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 21–94, 2.

24. Anselm is defending the claim he makes in the text, *Mono*. 79, S I, 86, 14. See my discussion of this passage on pp. 145–46. Augustine makes the same claim in *De Trinitate* VII, 4, 7; cf. VIII, Prooem. The claim is also made by Boethius in *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, in *The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 90. See n. 103, and also chapter 7 for the discussion of the Greek views on the Trinity in relationship to Anselm's *De processione, Spiritus Sancti*.

25. *Mono*. Prol., S I, 8, 10–18; 21–26.

26. See Anselm's letter describing the criticisms made of the *Monologion* and the kind of criticism he fears in terms similar to the *Monologion* preface, Ep. 83, S III, 207–8. For more discussion of the exchange with Lanfranc, see chapter 2, 61–63

27. Giles E. M. Gasper, "Envy, Jealousy and the Boundaries of Orthodoxy: Anselm of Canter-

Writing in the voice of an assumed persona serves as a kind of defense. Anselm can thus distance himself from the questioning of the most basic beliefs about the divine nature the words contain. To critics attributing the skepticism such questions might imply to Anselm personally, he can reply that these are not his views but rather that of the persona he has created. In the same way, Anselm's attribution of the manner of his meditation—by reason alone and without reference to scripture—to the request of his fellow monks serves as a defense, showing that he undertakes this method of reflection not on his own initiative but theirs.

However, these ways in which Anselm contextualizes his arguments are more than defenses. The stories of composition and publication Anselm relates in both prefaces do not just invoke but enact the dialectic of "faith seeking understanding." The preface to the *Monologion* requests that readers begin from a kind of faith in Anselm's intention not to contradict authority, a faith that will bring them to join in the spiritual exercise of the work. In the *Proslogion* preface Anselm makes clear that the insight on which the work is based is both his and not his, both the product of his own efforts and a gift rather than his own achievement. The insight not only had to preexist his insight of it, but it had to find *him* rather than vice versa. In both works, Anselm is overcome and on the receiving end of the impetus to composition. It originates either from his fellow monks in the *Monologion* or from an insight coming to him of its own rather than his volition in the *Proslogion*. Both prefaces also describe intense introspection as well as probing conversation at the root of both works, reinforcing the sense in which they come from within and without.

The crafting of a persona who undertakes these questions under these constraints also aligns Anselm's project with that of his meditative prayers. Just as Anselm put himself in the position of Mary Magdalene and saw Jesus as mother in the prayers, here he puts himself in the position of one who has not considered the divine nature or who is at-

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bury and the Genesis of the *Proslogion*," unpublished paper used with permission. For the story of the two distinct destructions of Anselm's writing on wax tablets, see Eadmer, *Vita Anselmi*, book 1, xix, 30–31. Cf. René Roques, "La méthode de S. Anselme dans le *Cur deus homo*," *Aquinas* 5 (1962): 3–57, who speculates that the *Proslogion* text was destroyed by someone who disapproved of Anselm's lack of reference to authorities. Gasper's picture is in stark contrast to the account Southern gives of Anselm's life at Bec as one of peace and tranquility. See Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 113 and Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059–c. 1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 47–48. Gillian Evans, too, seems to think of Anselm's monastic life as tranquil, requiring the contrast of the fervent emotions of the prayers and *Proslogion*. See Gillian R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 171.

tempting to approach the divine nature from below, assuming only the attempt not any particular content or background. Both personas are of a somewhat naïve beginner as Anselm tries, by taking an unexpected perspective, to invigorate and enliven the meditation, making fresh insight possible.

There is a formal continuity between the *Monologion*, *Proslogion*, and Anselm's earlier work; he thinks of them all as *meditationes*. The prayers, sometimes with the short pieces we now call meditations and sometimes on their own, circulated under various titles, described both by Anselm and in manuscripts as prayers, meditations, and both, that is, *orationes sive meditationes*.[28] In his preface to the *Monologion* Anselm refers to the work as having the form of meditation and repeats this in the *Proslogion* preface.[29] The practice of meditation, of rumination and introspection is, as I noted in the introduction, the crucial link between these works, mostly thought of as philosophy or speculative theology, and Anselm's monastic practice of meditative prayer. Both grow out of the Benedictine rule's emphasis on thoughtful examination of self and scripture.

What commentators have focused on is the claim to proceed *sola ratione*, but it is equally important to see that Anselm's exercise of reason is at the same time an exercise that is, though in the modern not medieval sense, *imaginative*. Anselm imagines himself in the position of someone else, feeling and reasoning as he thinks they would. This imaginative act creates the odyssey of reason from which these two works begin. This exercise has something in common with the simplest and more characteristic product of the imagination: metaphor. And as in metaphor, what Anselm aims to produce is a fresh insight with an unexpected combination. The vehicle is the means—reason and clear and simple argument, and the tenor, the end—knowledge of God. Anselm does not join grammatical, dialectical training and *lectio divina*, as becomes common in the next century, by using dialectical and grammatical arguments to interpret scriptural passages or to mediate conflicts between authorities. Instead he uses the tools of dialectic to reach toward the basic truths about the divine substance taking on the voice of an imagined persona.[30]

When we think of these exercises in the context of meditative practice and monastic conversation as acts of imaginative reflection, we can see

28. On the titles see F. S. Schmitt, "Prolegomena seu Ratio editionis," in vol. 1 of *S. Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, 5 vols. (Stuttgart: Friedrich Fromann Verlag, 1984, reprint, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1940–1961, Seckau, 1938), 140–48. Anselm's dedication refers to the collection as "*orationes sive meditationes*" (S III, 3, 2).

29. *Mono*. Prol., S I, 7, 3–5; *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 2.

30. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 1–3.

that they are less like attempts to confront skeptical doubt than attempts to meditate the truths of faith in a new way. As meditations they aim to display the ground and significance of what he believes about the divine nature in ways that might have been obscured by the routine repetition of prayers.[31] To the degree that they are acts of rationalism, they are so in the service of rumination. Taking the perspective of later intellectual history, we could say that, insofar as such things can be traced back to Anselm, the origins of rationalism and skepticism in his work arise from *within* not outside of monastic spirituality, derived from rather than opposed to its practices of reflection, introspection, and meditation. This does not mean that there is no tension between the means—the search for rational reasons and perfected language, and the end—the ineffable God, but the tension is not an opposition of faith and reason.[32] Just as we must not project back onto Anselm an opposition between faith and reason, we cannot reduce or circumscribe Anselm's rational project within faith or spirituality.[33] Those who see Anselm this way save his work from one kind of distortion, equating it with philosophy *as opposed to* theology, only to fall prey to another kind of distortion, making it theology *as opposed to* philosophy. Neither of these categories as mutually exclusive exists for Anselm. We thus have to try to understand his project as neither philosophy nor theology in these narrow and exclusive senses but as both in some broader sense of each.

The projects in these works in their very extremity, both in the reliance on rational argument and in the seeking of the most important truths about God with the greatest possible certainty, are not only not opposed to the spirituality of the prayers and letters but are actually another expression of it. We shall see this in the way these works re-

31. Cf. the comments of André Hayen, "The Role of the Fool in St. Anselm and the Necessary Apostolic Character of True Christian Reflection," translated by Arthur C. McGill, in *The Many-Faced Argument*, edited by Hick and McGill, 176.

32. Bencivenga does seem to construe the tasks of faith and reason here as opposed, characterizing Anselm's attempt to convince the rational objector as playing the spy (or even double spy) in the enemy's camp, Ermanno Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense: The Case of Anselm and His God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 78–91. As Bencivenga writes, "The practice of questioning the system *in order to establish it* is, after all, a practice *of questioning the system*, and if that is what you do, you will end up *in fact* working for a different master than you thought. . . . You will be attempting a final vindication of ordinary beliefs and will generate one aporia after another and wake up sleepy souls and initiate centuries of challenging, provocative inquiry." Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*, 89, his emphasis. See chapter 3 for a discussion of Bencivenga's view of Anselm's practice of linguistic analysis.

33. For theologians like Anselm Stolz, Anselm's starting point, like his end point, is in theology. He concludes that "faith seeking understanding" means the attempt to "attain a vision of God through an understanding of what the faith says about God," a task accomplished by mystical theology. See Stolz, "Anselm's Theology," 185–86.

peat over and over the moment in the narrative found in the letters and prayers. Here again insoluble problems, painted with the colors of reason as logical contradictions, are resolved, also with reason, as Anselm creates the greatest distance between word and thing, human ideas and divine reality, and then manages, as Gillian Evans put it, to "spin threads across [the] chasms" he has created.[34]

Anselm connects his rational and spiritual projects by means of the opening prayer of the *Proslogion*. The prayer both lays out the problematic for the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and turns to reason as that which might satisfy monastic longing for God. This prayer creates the same kind of double bind we found in Anselm's prayer collection, describing extreme need for and desire for God but with impossible barriers to union with him. Anselm prays to God that he might find him but wonders, "Lord, if you are not here, where will I search for you, being absent? But if you are everywhere, why do I not see you present?"[35] Where, Anselm continues, is the "inaccessible light" in which God dwells, and how might one come to it? The condition of exile as Anselm describes it implies infinite distance and ignorance; the exiled, Anselm tells God, "desire to come to you, and your habitation is inaccessible . . . long to discover you, and do not know your place."[36]

The paradoxes in his relationship to the divine in this prayer echoes, of course, the opening prayer of Augustine's *Confessions*. Augustine wonders as he prays how he can make room for God or reach toward God when it must be the case that he already exists in God; he reflects on the paradoxes of space in a God who fills all things by containing them, without having parts and without being dissipated; the God to whom he prays is merciful yet just, hidden yet present, ever active but at rest.[37] These are not excesses of rhetoric in Anselm just as they are not in Augustine. The whole of both the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* are, in effect, explorations of these paradoxes. However, it is noteworthy that Anselm limits himself in his opening prayer to those paradoxes that have to do with the relationship between his desire for knowledge and union with God who is both supremely present to and absent from him, and that he places the others, internal to the divine nature, later in the works as spun out of their ba-

34. Gillian R. Evans, "The 'Secure Technician': Varieties of Paradox in the Writings of St. Anselm." *Vivarium* 13, no. 1 (1975): 20. Evans notes Anselm's penchant for paradox, but she argues that he creates them in his prayers and meditations and resolves them in his logical writings. My claim is that Anselm both creates and resolves paradox not just in the devotional writings but also in his speculative writings.

35. *Pros.* 1, S I, 98, 2–3.

36. *Pros.* 1, S I, 98, 3–7, 9–12.

37. Augustine, *Confessiones* I, 2–4.

sic notions of the divine, the notion of the highest good in the *Monologion* and of "that than which none great can be conceived" in the *Proslogion*.

The paradoxes of presence and absence describe the central philosophical and theological problem of the *Proslogion*; they are Anselm's version of the *Meno* paradox. On the one hand, if one does not know God or that he exists, then there seems to be no path toward the discovery of these things, for Anselm concedes that God is infinitely beyond human comprehension and experience. How, then, can anyone know anything about God, who is by definition incomprehensible? If, on the other hand, one does know God, no proof should be necessary since his existence should be self-evident; God should be so thoroughly present that his absence cannot even be thought. Just as in the *Meno* paradox, there is apparently no middle ground here, no room between extremes for an argument to take place—God is either thoroughly absent or utterly present. Moreover, the supposition of God's complete presence becomes an argument for his absence—if God were present we could not *not* see him. Since we cannot, he must be absent. The problem, we see clearly, is not extrinsic to faith but arises out of it.

The formula of the *Proslogion*, that that which none greater can be conceived, both captures and resolves the paradox of presence and absence explored in the opening prayer. For the formula mirrors the sense in which God is both supremely present, given in the very structure of thought, and, at the same time, always beyond the limits of thought.

Echoing his prayers and the opening of the *Confessions*, Anselm places on human nature and the fall the blame for this inextricable difficulty and on God the responsibility for leading him out of it.[38] Since, trapped by the limits of his own nature, he cannot seek that which he cannot know because it is so radically distant from him, God must perform the act both of moving him toward God and of revealing himself to Anselm. Hence, Anselm prays, "Teach me to seek you, and show yourself to me seeking you, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, nor find you unless you show yourself."[39] Anselm's solution to his version of the *Meno* paradox is, as was Augustine's, to proceed by way of "faith seeking understanding." It is on this note Anselm concludes his first chapter: "I do not attempt, Lord, to penetrate your profundity, since I in no way compare my understanding with that, but I desire in some way to understand your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For neither do I seek to understand so that I might believe, but I believe so that I might understand."[40]

38. Augustine, *Confessiones* I, 7.
39. *Pros.* 1, S I, 100, 9–11.
40. *Pros.* 1, S I, 100, 15–19.

The question, then, is what sort of faith Anselm assumes and what sort of understanding he hopes to conclude in. Anselm seems to concede the opposition between faith and understanding in his reply to Gaunilo, giving up the meditative thought experiment of thinking "in the persona (*sub persona*) of one endeavoring to raise his mind to the contemplation of God."[41] For Anselm opens his reply to Gaunilo by saying that he will reply not to the fool in whose name Gaunilo writes but to the Catholic that Gaunilo is, implying that Gaunilo's objections have forced him to throw off the fiction that his argument is *sola ratione* and reveal his reliance on faith rather than reason.[42] To Gaunilo's objection that he can have no idea of the being than which none greater can be conceived, Anselm gives two replies. One is to the fool (relying on the ability of the mind to order greater and lesser goods), and the other is to the "Catholic" (appealing to Romans 1:20, "the invisible things of God are seen through the things that are made").[43] On the one hand, Anselm will use reason to respond to the fool, who does not accept scripture. To reject the notion that reason can order things, better to worse, is to reject the possibility of making any kind of criticism, including, of course, criticism of Anselm's argument. On the other hand, Anselm's appeal to Romans and the path from visible to invisible things, is aimed at shaming Gaunilo into remembering that as a Christian he accepts the possibility of moving from the world to God in accepting scripture and that his attempts to block this path contradict St. Paul. Thus, strangely, we find that what Gaunilo *the Catholic* must *believe in* is the capacities of *reason*, reason that St. Paul has found among the Greeks, which is to say, among philosophers. So it is faith *in reason* that Anselm upbraids Gaunilo for lacking. In other words, Anselm is bringing Gaunilo back to his Catholic commitment to rationalism; he is not appealing to something other than reason to ground his enterprise, but to the faith that reason can see in the world its source. Reason should seek, prompted and guided by faith, and it will find, Anselm reminds Gaunilo, appealing to the exhortation found in Matthew, "seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you."[44]

The *Monologion* and *Proslogion* begin *from* faith, then, in several senses. It is clear from Anselm's practice that he does *not* mean by faith the presupposition of all or even some of the basic principles of Christian faith articulated in the creed. He does presuppose faith in the sense that faith poses the questions for which he seeks understanding, such as the existence of God, the nature of God or the logic of the Incarnation. Fur-

41. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 3–4.
42. *Resp*., S I, 130, 3–5.
43. *Resp*. 8, S I, 137, 28–30; 138, 1–3.
44. Matt. 7:7.

ther, he presupposes faith in the sense that faith entails an intense desire to know about the subjects he explores by reason.[45] What makes the *Proslogion* possible is the passion expressed in its opening prayer. It moves Anselm to shake off the torpor of the mind and awaken in it the desire to love God; as we saw in the prayers, this first movement toward God is for Anselm the *sine qua non* of the journey to God. The faith from which Anselm's pursuit issues is not just belief in but desire for the substance of things hoped for. Thus the discontent, the restlessness, and drive toward understanding is not from reason as the serpent whispering in faith's ear but from within faith itself. Lastly, Anselm presupposes faith in the concepts and rational processes of the human mind. [46] As Marion puts it, "intelligence proceeds from faith, because rationality consists mainly in recognizing in faith the permanent and radical condition of the possibility of thinking; in that sense, intelligence needs not merely faith, but explicitly specified faith—belief in exactly this: that reason has to believe in order to achieve understanding."[47] To reject those concepts and processes, which is what Gaunilo attempts in the name of the fool, is to be irrational, Anselm contends, to have rejected even one's own ability to think and argue. Assuming that the mind is rational, like assuming the desire to reach God, is for Anselm to assume something so basic that one cannot truly deny it.

In Brian Stock's problematic, the development of literacy, faith is to understanding as the oral is to the written. Thus, Stock describes faith as "a received text," and understanding as "an established text;" thus "faith seeking understanding" is going from a received text to an established one.[48] Pranger says something similarly insightful, that to think from faith toward understanding "means to draw [the truths about God] from memory right through the oblivion caused by the inaccuracies of our normal speech habits."[49] What we find, then, is that "rather than being at liberty to deny the existence of God as language suggests, man is

45. Cf. Adolf Kolping, *Anselms Proslogion-Beweis der Existenz Gottes* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1939), 15–20; and Barth, *Fidens Quaerens Intellectum*, 17.

46. Cf. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 125.

47. Jean-Luc Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological? The Argument according to Anselm and its Metaphysical Interpretation according to Kant," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 30, no. 2 (Apr 1992): 207.

48. Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 343.

49. M. Burcht Pranger, "*Sic et non*: Patristic Authority between Refusal and Acceptance: Anselm of Canterbury, Peter Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux," in vol. 1 of *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, edited by Irena Backus, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 279.

forced by reason to admit the necessity of His existence."[50] To put it another way, faith is the belief that reason can forge a link—and is the passionate, motivating desire for an unbreakable link—between words and things; to seek understanding is to move toward joining word and thing. There is an important sense in which Anselm both assumes nothing and everything in a way that the characterizations of Stock and Pranger make clear. For a "received text" is one already possessed; memory already contains that which we seek to find there; the words we speak are expressions of realities already contained in the understanding. We already have and have always assumed what we are seeking, Anselm is claiming. But it must be uncovered and claimed as such, and for that task Anselm asks his reader to begin the excavation with only his bare hands, setting to work on a surface from which all the clues about where the treasure can be found have been erased. Finding out how and how much Anselm can uncover with these most basic tools is the task we turn to next.

Monologion: The Perfection of Language in the Word

The opening lines of the *Monologion*, propose, as noted above, to reveal to one ignorant of it the nature of God, in this way setting up the beginning and end points of the meditation. There is someone who does not know or chooses not to believe at one end and the "many things we necessarily believe about God and creatures," on the other. Anselm's task is to start from ignorance in the "irrational" stance of his persona and to move "by reason" towards understanding which grasps its conclusions as necessary. Moving from ignorance to certainty is to go from nothing to everything, structurally parallel to the path in the prayers from sin to beatitude. The *Monologion* is particularly striking in this regard, moving back and forth repeatedly between bafflement and certainty at every step for each of the attributes of God, a pattern common to the other works but most pronounced as it originates here.

Divine Goodness and Being

Anselm begins only with the question: given different things that are good, are they good through one thing or through different things?[51] Anselm concedes that different things are said to be good with regard to different qualities; a horse is good because it is swift or strong, for example, while a strong, swift thief would be evil. Nonetheless, he argues, there

50. Pranger, "*Sic et non*," 278.
51. *Mono.* 1, S I, 14, 5–9.

is a single scale of usefulness and excellence on which these diverse objects (with their diverse features) is ranked, as more or less useful, more or less excellent. We judge things (both as a whole and in terms of their qualities) to be good and evil because and to the degree that they are useful or excellent. The predication of goodness, Anselm claims, is the implicit construction of a scale of values. It does not matter whether we have or can agree on how to arrange things on this scale of value for Anselm's argument. His claim is only that, even if our claims are mistaken or incomplete, such judgments would be unintelligible (and not just mistaken) without such a scale and the scale itself would be unintelligible without a summit. This diversity of goods and their comparison would not be possible without there being one thing through which all those particular goods are good and that thing must itself be good and, unlike all other things, be good through itself.[52] Anselm concludes, "There is, therefore, some one being which is the highest good and the greatest, that is, the highest of all thing that are."[53]

Moreover, Anselm continues, not only are all good things good through some one thing but all things exist through some one thing. To justify this conclusion, Anselm considers the contrary possibilities. All the many things might either exist through nothing or through some plurality of beings. But something cannot come to be through nothing, and, by the same logic from which the many good things were reduced to one goodness through which all good things are good, every plurality can itself be reduced to that one power or nature through which even those things which exist per se come to exist per se.[54]

This argument, as was noted in the discussion of Anselm and universals, has moved some to claim that Anselm is a realist, positing the existence of goodness in which good things participate.[55] For Marilyn Adams, for example, though Anselm does not posit the separate and independent existence of universals, he is a realist in this text in the sense that he takes universal entities to be "conumerable" with particular entities.[56] This is both right and wrong. On the one hand, the supreme good in virtue of which all other good things are good must exist as lesser and

52. *Mono.* 1, S I, 15, 4–7. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* VIII, 3, 4–5.

53. *Mono.* 1, S I, 15, 11–12.

54. *Mono.* 3, S I, 15, 27–16, 28.

55. See chapter 3, 101–5.

56. Marilyn Adams, "Was Anselm a Realist? The *Monologium*," *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972): 5–14. Adams is responding to D. P. Henry's interpretation of Anselm on universals. The criterion of "conumerability" is Henry's, and Henry argues that Anselm is not a realist in *De grammatico* or the *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi* but that the *Monologion* takes no definitive position. See Henry, *Logic of St. Anselm*, 99–107.

unequal goods do; otherwise, the argument would not function as an argument for God's existence. Not only does Anselm number God among the existing goods there are, but he takes the argument showing the connection between goods and the good to be indubitable. First, he contends that the gradation of goods is given and cannot be rationally rejected. Thus, he says, anyone who doubts whether a horse is superior to wood, and a man superior to a horse "cannot truly be called a man."[57] Second, he maintains that anyone concluding the series is infinite, that is, without a first "than which no higher can be found," could only fail to be regarded as "absurd" by one who was himself "very absurd."[58] There, must, in other words, be a first good arrived at from consideration of the gradation of goods which is also good.

On the other hand, Anselm immediately moves from this conclusion to a discussion of the nature of God's existence, an existence so different from that of other things that the attempt to explicate it gives rise to a number of paradoxes Anselm must go on to resolve. The necessary and completely independent existence of the highest good seems, on closer examination, to be nonexistence: "For that which does not come to be from someone making or from matter or by means of some external assistance is either nothing or, if it is something, it exists through and by nothing."[59] Anselm finds that following out the logic of the perfect, absolutely good, absolutely existing being seems paradoxically to lead to the conclusion that it cannot be called perfect, good, or even existent. Thus, the highest good seems not to be good or existent, or rather is not so as other things are good.

Anselm presents this difficulty somewhat apologetically, explaining that he has undertaken this meditation in the spirit of stating openly and attempting to address "almost any foolish objection."[60] The reason Anselm gives for his unstinting reflection is exactly the motive underlying his logical writings. Anselm considers these objections, he explains, "in order that by leaving no ambiguity in my previous discussions, I may with more certain strength proceed to the rest."[61]

Anselm takes up the conclusion that the highest being is not good or existent, which seemed to reduce his argument to absurdity, and reduces *it* to absurdity. Since this being exists so perfectly and completely, Anselm argues, it can derive its existence neither from something nor from nothing.[62] "How, then," he asks, "is it to be understood that this thing is

57. *Mono.* 4, S I, 17, 1–2.
58. *Mono.* 4, S I, 17, 7–8.
59. *Mono.* 6, S I, 19, 10–12.
60. *Mono.* 6, S I, 19, 14–17.
61. *Mono.* 6, S I, 19, 17–20.
62. *Mono.* 6, S I, 19–20.

through itself and from itself if it neither made itself nor came to be of its own material nor assisted itself in any way to be what it was not? It seems it cannot be understood at all *unless, perhaps*, it is understood in the way in which it is said that the light lights or is lucent through itself and from itself."[63] Within this one sentence response, turning on "unless, perhaps," Anselm goes from the view that the existence of the supreme being seems impossible, contradictory, and unintelligible to the view that its existence is transparent and self-evident.

"God exists" as analogous to the statement "the light lights through and from itself" hovers somewhere between a tautological statement ("the light lights"=A is A) and the more problematic claim that the source of existence exists itself and is "conumerable" with the other things it brings into existence. As a tautology, the analogy between the being of the supreme substance and the light through which light lights shows how something can exist through itself. Anselm is arguing that the existence of the supreme being is not unintelligible but in fact supremely and simply intelligible. As in the famous *Proslogion* argument, here Anselm argues that God's being is not just understandable but necessary and that his necessary being flows from the logic of the supreme being.

Taking the claim "God exists" as more than a tautology but as predicating being of that which is the source of being is more than problematic; it is paradoxical. Anselm spends not only the next few chapters but the rest of this work and the bulk of the *Proslogion* explicating the paradoxes which follow from God as both source and most complete possessor not only of being but of all perfections. Anselm is committed both to the claim that God's being is conumerable with other being and to its rejection. He needs it to be conumerable in order to prove God's existence. But just as surely Anselm must reject it, pointing out how God's being is of such a type as to be absolutely different from other kinds of being.

Creation and the Word

The same pattern of argument recurs in the discussion of the relation of creatures to God. First, Anselm argues that it is impossible that anything that exists not derive its existence from the supreme being. Since nothing else can exist through itself, or from another like itself, it must exist through God. But things cannot derive from the "matter" of God, Anselm argues. He seems to mean by this that things cannot be of the same substance as God because, since things change and corrupt, God's substance would be, as source of theirs, likewise mutable and corrupt-

63. *Mono.* 6, S I, 20, 10–15; my emphasis.

ible.[64] Hence Anselm concludes that "it is most clear" that things derive their being from the supreme being, and that "nothing could be clearer" than that the supreme essence produced the multitude of appropriately diverse, beautiful, and ordered creation *from nothing*.[65]

This solution, however, only leads to a further paradox. Anselm begins by stating the obvious problem: if things come from nothing, "how could that which had no being assist in anything coming into being?"[66] The view that things are created from nothing seems to make less sense than that they are created from something. Hence, just after declaring triumphantly in the previous chapter that what is created is created from nothing, Anselm retreats: "Whether, then, nothing is something, or nothing is not something, it seems to follow, that whatever is made is made from something."[67] (If nothing is something, then things are made from something. If nothing is not something, since something cannot come from nothing, whatever is must come from something rather than nothing.)

Anselm exaggerates the difficulty by noting how the issue also invalidates the preceding arguments: "Hence, since what was nothing will be something, that which was something in the highest degree will be nothing."[68] That which is "something in the highest degree," God, will be nothing because Anselm's conclusions about this being have come to nothing. If creation is from something, in other words, then the supreme being is not anything Anselm has argued it to be. The pattern of the argument is like that for the being of the highest being. Anselm first argues for the necessity of creation from nothing and then displays the paradoxical character of this claim. He then resolves this paradox in a way that leaves a new paradox to defend.

The solution is found by examining language and its ambiguities. "Creation from nothing" has two senses, Anselm explains. There is a sense of "creation from nothing" that implies neither the nonexistence of created beings nor the nonexistence of the creator. In this sense "creation from nothing" means not that "nothing" is somehow the matter, the that from which creation comes; rather it means that "those things which before were nothing, are now something."[69]

Anselm uses language as the analogy for the way creation comes forth from God. In order to make the analogy work, Anselm has to adjust both the notion of ordinary language and the notion of the Word. There are

64. *Mono*. 7, S I, 21.
65. *Mono*. 7, S I, 22, 5–10.
66. *Mono*. 8, S I, 22, 18–19.
67. *Mono*. 8, S I, 22, 26–27.
68. *Mono*. 8, S I, 22, 32 – 23, 2.
69. *Mono*. 8, S I, 23, 6–8.

three kinds of words: the spoken word, the word thought but not spoken, and the expression of "the things themselves inwardly in our mind."[70] Words of the last type Anselm calls "natural" words, common to all human beings; these are words in the truest sense, closest to the thing itself, the *sine qua non* of spoken language.[71] Anselm equates these words with the exemplars in the divine mind: "Such an expression of things was with the supreme substance before they were, so that through it they might be made; and are now when they have been made, so that through it they may be known."[72]

Anselm thus stretches the notion of a word in human language until it touches the divine word. It remains for him to clarify and qualify that point of contact. God has no sources for the exemplars from which he creates, while human beings create from their ideas and internal words of external objects. Human expressions are, Anselm explains, "neither the first, sole, nor sufficient cause" for the works we create as artists, while God's expressions are all three.[73] Something created through God's word is all and only what it is through that word, while that brought about through human expressions would not exist at all "unless it were something that it is not through this expression itself."[74]

Anselm draws the conclusion that the expression of the supreme substance is identical to the supreme substance but postpones examining this topic in order to work out more of the aspects of the supreme being in terms of its relationship to and difference from that which it creates and sustains in being. This ordering of topics, the exploration of some aspects of the Trinity before working out the divine attributes which apply to the essence as a whole, shows Anselm understands the logic of the divine nature accessible to reason as implying the Trinity and that he thinks of the role of reason in its explication is no different than when it turns to the essence of divine nature. We also see what theologians always notice but philosophers tend to miss (the few who read the *Monologion* at all rather than stick to the *Proslogion*): that this is a work on the Trinity.[75]

70. *Mono.* 10, S I, 25, 1–4.

71. *Mono.* 10, S I, 25, 12.

72. *Mono.* 10, S I, 25, 25–27. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* IX, 7, 12. Augustine contrasts the spoken word with the interior word but does not add a third type of word. Augustine's internal word may be most like Anselm's "natural word" since it is the source of true knowledge, though Augustine does not focus, as Anselm does, on the way in which the natural word more closely resembles and most perfectly expresses that of which it is the word.

73. *Mono.* 11, S I, 26, 19–20.

74. *Mono.* 11, S I, 26.

75. Cf. Paul Vignaux, "Nécessité des Raisons dans le *Monologion*," *Revue des sciences philos-*

Deriving the Divine Names

Notwithstanding the work's character as a *De Trinitate*, Anselm postpones the completion of his trinitarian analysis for an examination of the divine names.[76] From the notion that the supreme being is that which creates and sustains (and excels, limits, and pervades) all other beings, Anselm sets out to derive what can and cannot be said of it substantively. This project precipitates the next set of difficulties and paradoxes Anselm lays out and then resolves. Since relational predicates (including comparative and superlative terms) cannot tell us anything substantive (such terms like supreme and greater or greatest would be inapplicable if nothing else than the supreme being existed, yet it would not be less good or great), Anselm then considers non-relational predicates and argues that the supreme being must have all those properties it is in every respect better to be than not to be.[77] Hence, the supreme being must "necessarily be living, wise, powerful and all powerful, true, just, blessed, eternal and whatever similarly it is better to be than not to be."[78]

However, problems arise almost immediately. Predicates like "just" (and any of the other predicates Anselm has derived) are attributes. All things are just (or any other quality) by participating in justice and are not just per se but *per aliud*. But the supreme being cannot be just *per aliud* since whatever the supreme nature is, it is through itself not through another.[79] Hence, Anselm concludes that the supreme being is not properly said to have justice but rather to exist as justice and able *both* to be just and to be justice.[80] The same holds true for all the other attributes; thus it is "highest being, highest life, highest reason, highest salvation, highest justice, highest wisdom, highest truth, highest goodness, highest greatness, highest beauty, highest immortality, highest incorruptibility, highest immutability, highest beatitude, highest eternity, highest power, highest unity." It is both highest life and living, wisdom and wise, power itself and powerful, and so forth.[81] Here we see in stark terms that Anselm is unwilling to restrict the highest being to being conumerable

ophique et théologiques 64 (1980): 4. Vignaux makes this case, as I do, on the basis of the structure of the work, pointing out as well that Honorius of Autun, a disciple of Anselm, glossed Anselm's title, *Monologion*, as "*De Trinitate*." See PL 172, col. 232.

76. Frederick van Fleteren suggests that this section, chapters 13–26, was added by Anselm as part of his reworking of the text in response to Lanfranc's criticism. Frederick van Fleteren, "The Influence of Augustine's *De Trinitate* on Anselm's *Monologion*," in *Saint Anselm—A Thinker for Yesterday and Today*, edited by Coloman Viola and Frederick van Fleteren, Texts and Studies in Religion 90. (Lewiston, N.H.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 418.

77. *Mono*. 14–15, S I, 27–29.

78. *Mono*. 14, S I, 29, 29–31.

79. *Mono*. 16, S I, 30, 4–13.

80. *Mono*. 16, S I, 30, 19–31.

81. *Mono*. 16, S I, 31, 3–8.

with other beings or not, not just in regard to being but any other predicate. He declares without hesitation that this being is *both* just and justice, wisdom and wise. He is willing to embrace the conclusion that that which is the origin of these perfections is that in which others participate, and that it can share with its participants the same predicate. There is not only a form of justice and wisdom in which other things participate in order to be called just or wise, but the form itself, that which is the source, is itself able to receive that same predicate. Justice is just; the supreme being is just and justice, Anselm maintains.

However, once again, Anselm's solution to one problem causes a further problem. If this being is all these goods, "will it not be many goods?" Anselm asks. Will it not be composed rather than simple?[82] In this case Anselm does not linger over the possibility that this objection might hold but rejects it immediately: "the whole which was earlier revealed as necessary truth destroys and overwhelms this impious falsity by clear reasoning."[83] But in order to respond more completely he must take the difficult position that all the different predicates—just, living, and the like—signify the same thing whether taken one by one or together as a whole.[84] In this, Anselm is following Augustine's notion of divine simplicity; in *De Trinitate*, Augustine argues that God's greatness is identical with his wisdom, goodness, truth, and so on.[85] However, Anselm takes a step which Augustine does not explicitly take. Anselm adds that all these predicates *signify* the same thing; thus, it is exactly the same to say God is good as God is wise or God is good and wise and just. This does not give him pause, though it is perhaps worth noting that others were not so sanguine. Aquinas, for example, goes out of his way to reject the equivalent signification of all predicates as a consequence of God's noncomposition. He avoids taking Anselm's position by making a distinction between the way in which they signify one thing but under different aspects, reflecting the origin of our understanding of these notions from their divided and distinct way of being in creatures.[86] Anselm, by

82. *Mono*. 17, S I, 31, 13–5.

83. *Mono*. 17, S I, 31, 20–21.

84. *Mono*. 17, S I, 31, 23–26.

85. Augustine, *De Trinitate* VI, 7, 8. See also William Mann, "Anselm on the Trinity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 259.

86. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, part I, q. 13, a. 4. Editors of Aquinas have taken Aquinas's target to be not Anselm but Alan of Lille, but Anselm does here express the view Alan takes up and expresses even more paradoxically. Cf. Alan of Lille, *Regulae caelestis iuris*, edited by N. M. Häring, *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 48 (1981): 97–226, reg. 8. On Alan's embrace of this view, see Eileen Sweeney, *Logic, Theology, and Poetry in Boethius, Abelard, and Alan of Lille: Words in the Absence of Things* (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2006), 132.

contrast, seems ready to accept not just this metaphysical view of divine simplicity but a theory of theological predication in which "God is just" signifies the same thing as "God is wise."

Anselm turns next to the consideration of the highest being in relation to space and time. This being is without beginning or end and is always and everywhere, he concludes, for it cannot come into being from another (then it would not be the highest being) or from nothing (internally contradictory or inconsistent with being the highest being). Nor can it have an end as incorruptible and immortal, characteristics of the highest being. Moreover, as true being and Truth itself, it can have no end. For if truth had a beginning or end it would still be true both before and after that there was no truth.[87] However, Anselm sees immediately that these arguments, and all his arguments thus far are, paradoxically, threatened by "nothing": "But here again "nothing" rises up and whatever reason explained up to now, having been attested to in accord with truth and necessity, it asserts to be nothing."[88] If nothing will pre- and postexist the highest being, if it exists from and will come to nothing, "what," he asks, "was erected (*molita*) by such an elaborate structure (*moles*) of arguments, if nothing so easily demolishes their endeavors (*molimina*)?"[89] Anselm draws out his construction metaphor, describing the "whole structure of necessary reasons" as "assaulted by nothing." Not only will his reasoning become a house of cards knocked down by nothing, but the highest being will itself be lost "for nothing," Anselm concludes dramatically.[90]

Anselm resolves the difficulty with a distinction between two meanings of the claim "nothing existed before and will exist after the highest being" not unlike the distinction he introduced earlier for understanding the notion of "creation from nothing."[91] "Nothing existed before the highest being" could mean either that there was a time before the highest being existed when nothing existed, or that "before the highest being there was not anything."[92]

What is puzzling is why Anselm, not once but twice, allows his argument to be derailed by "nothing." It is in one sense a fairly trivial verbal problem which he is clearly conscious of as he plays with the term "nothing": "Therefore let us assert, if we can, that nothing was not before nor

87. *Mono.* 18, S I, 32–33. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 134, 6. Augustine, discussing the name God gave to Moses at Sinai, glosses it as signifying what is eternal, as what is true and true without beginning or end.

88. *Mono.* 19, S I, 33, 26–27.

89. *Mono.* 19, S I, 34, 8–9.

90. *Mono.* 19, S I, 34, 12–14.

91. *Mono.* 8, S I, 23.

92. *Mono.* 19, S I, 34, 18–22. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* V, 31–32.

will be after the highest being rather than, while giving place to nothing before or after being, through nothing to reduce to nothing this being which through itself brought into being that which was nothing."[93] Anselm is chasing these paradoxes; they do not quite come find him. Through them, Anselm is exploring the Parmenidean paradoxes of language of being and nonbeing found in the *Fragments*.[94] Predicating anything of nothing seems to make it something, and predicating anything of being (the highest being) seems to imply that it is *not* in some sense, that it has attributes and, therefore, composition.

The next several chapters set out to explain another set of claims that seem to contradict each other. Anselm's chapter headings are as follows: that the highest being exists in every place and time; that it exists in no place or time; that it exists in every *and* no place and time.[95] The structure is striking. Anselm argues against both sets of claims, and then argues that both are true. It is especially striking as Anselm's chapter titles were designed not to go in the text but to precede it as a list. In that form the contradictory theses of the set of chapters is highlighted even more. As Anselm opens his discussion that this being is in every and no place and time, he makes clear that he is aware of his strategy and wants to alert his reader. He asks, "How therefore will these [claims] harmonize (*convenient*) [given that they are] so contradictory according to the utterance and so necessary according to the proof?"[96]

Anselm's arguments that the highest being exists in all places and times (and in no places and times) are thorough *reductiones ad absurdam*, where contrary assumptions lead to conclusions Anselm calls "repugnant" and "unreasonable."[97] As Anselm makes his argument for the claim that the highest being cannot be in space and time in the way material, finite beings are, he makes reference several times to the reasonableness of this conclusion and the unreasonableness of rejecting it. However, he also gestures toward the complexity of this reasonable view, highlighting that it does not *sound* reasonable even though it is: "it is not unreasonably said that no place is its place and no time is its

93. *Mono*. 19, S I, 34, 15–18.

94. See chapter 3, 94–95, 100, 107–8.

95. *Mono*. 20–22. My emphasis.

96. *Mono*. 22, S I, 39, 3–4.

97. *Mono*. 20, S I, 35, 14; 21, S I, 37, 7. On God as eternal and outside of time, cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* XI, 11. On God as not limited in space but still as everywhere, cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* V, 2; VI, 3; *Sermo* 277, 14; *Sermo* 53, 8. Compared to Augustine, Anselm makes the negative claims sharper, that God is in no space and no time, and spends much time on logical contradictions implied in attributing predicates of space and time to God. Augustine's language is more the language of superabundance rather than negation; whereas Anselm has more scholastically separated affirmative and negative predications, resolving to a third and different sense of God's relationship to space and time.

time."[98] Still Anselm exclaims the unreasonableness of holding that it is in a place and time; it is, he writes, "shameless ignorance (*impudentia imprudentiae*) to say either that place circumscribes the magnitude or that time measures the duration of the highest truth, which is not subject to any greater or lesser spatial or temporal extension."[99] Anselm tries using repaired or amended language to express the peculiarity of this situation in order to avoid the kind of paradoxes he has pointed out. The highest being might more appropriately be said to be *with* rather than *in* place and time; we could say that, that is, *if* common speech (*usus loquendi*) permitted it, which, Anselm reminds us, it does not.[100] Alternately, he argues it might be more appropriate to say that the highest being is "everywhere (*ubique*)" but not "in every place (*in omni loco*)" and "always" but not "in every time." The problem here is that, until he has time to gloss it, these are distinctions without a difference, and even with the gloss, matters are not perfectly clear. Anselm explains that the highest nature is in all things that exist (not as contained but containing) rather than in all places, and is always, meaning that it is in time as a whole as eternally existing.[101]

Similar but less elaborate arguments are deployed to show that the highest being is greater than others (a relation) (even though having no accidents, like relation, that would subject it to change) and is substance (even though unlike other substance having no differences).[102] At one and the same time, Anselm both attributes predicates of the highest being which are common to created beings—this being is just; is somewhere, is greater than others, is substance—and shows these predicates to be, when taken in the ordinary sense, impossible to apply to God.[103] Anselm concludes, "Hence if [the supreme being] ever has any name in common with other beings, surely without doubt a different signification is to be understood."[104] The distance, for example, between God's being and the being of other things, is so great, Anselm contends, that other

98. *Mono*. 22, S I, 39, 20–21.
99. *Mono*. 22, S I, 40, 2–5.
100. *Mono*. 22, S I, 41, 1–2.
101. *Mono*. 23–24, S I, 41–42.
102. *Mono*. 25–26, S I, 43–44. On God as substance or essence without accidents, cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* V, 2, 4–5.
103. On God as substance, cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* VII, 5. Because being a substance implies being a subject to further attributes, Augustine argues that God is more properly called *essentia* rather than substance, whereas Anselm keeps the term substance while shifting its meaning in order for it apply more appropriately to God. Moreover, Anselm takes this opportunity to state the more general principle, that *all* names applied to the highest being must be taken in a different sense. For Boethius's account of how all the categories shift when applied to God, see Boethius, *De Trinitate*, in *The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy* 4, 16–21.
104. *Mono*. 26, S I, 44, 17–19.

things are "almost non-being, and hardly are at all."[105] This is simply the inverse of the paradox about the highest being that arose from proving its necessary being, that is, that its being is so different from other things that *it* can hardly be said to be at all. Ultimately, the two claims come to the same thing: that which must exist as the condition of the possibility of finite being contradicts everything we know about (finite) being, such that if one can be said to be, the other cannot.

Anselm is not composing what is nonsense in ordinary language in order to approximate a technical, symbolic language he lacks the tools to create, as Desmond Henry argued. However, Anselm is willing to come very close and very self-consciously toward claims that seem on the face of them nonsensical. Two ends are served by this language, one having to do with the nature of the highest being, the other having to do with those inquiring into that nature. First, Anselm is paving the way for his ultimate conclusion—that the highest nature is and is in space and time in a radically different way than creatures. It is true, as Visser and Williams point out, that Anselm's task has been to outline God's "metaphysical uniqueness" and to offer solutions to the difficulties he exposes in such stark and troubling ways, but it is too much to conclude, as they do, that Anselm is "not withdrawing or even qualifying the epistemological and semantic optimism that prevailed earlier in the *Monologion*."[106] Anselm is pushing reason toward aporiae as the only way of moving toward a sense of that metaphysically unique being. As a pedagogical matter, Anselm wants to bring his reader to realize that they are in what Augustine called "a region of unlikeness;"[107] his language of God becomes more and more unlike ordinary language as a way of bringing the reader to some sense of the gulf separating the material world from the divine being. This is operative not just as Anselm poses the paradoxical dilemmas that mark each new attribute but in the solutions which themselves are difficult and problematic. Anselm proceeds not by holding back the reins of reason but by letting them go, confident not that reason will complete its task but that it will by its own logic come to its limits and gesture beyond them. For it is crucial to Anselm's notion of reason that his conclusions about the supreme being, though paradoxical, describing what is ultimately ineffable, emerge not against but from reason. Just as it is within the logic of faith to push toward understanding for Anselm, it is within the logic of reason that to push beyond reason.

105. *Mono*. 28, S I, 46, 3. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones* VII, 11; *In Iohannis evangelius tractatus* 38, 10.

106. Sandar Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 114, 117.

107. Augustine, *Confessiones* VII, 10.

Deriving the Trinity

Having worked through these attributes of the highest being, Anselm returns to the relationship between the highest being and its expression. This relationship is a relationship of perfected language, of the complete identity of the thinker with the thought and thing thought. First, Anselm argues for the identity of thinker and thought: "This expression itself can be conceived of as nothing else than the intelligence of this spirit, by which he conceives [*intelligit*] all things."[108] Then he argues for the identity of thinker and thing thought: "If this being made nothing except through itself, and whatever was made by it was made through that expression, how will it be anything else than what this same being itself is?"[109] Conceiving is identical with expressing for divine but not human language, Anselm explains, because the highest being, unlike humans, never fails to express what it conceives.[110]

When Anselm considers the resemblance between expression and thing, he begins by noting the difference between human expressions, which are a mere likeness of the thing, and the expression of the highest being. The problem, Anselm points out, is that this expression cannot be both identical with the speaker and with the thing itself. If it were, then the highest being, like things, would be subject to change. But if this word is not identical with the thing, then it is not the perfect word but is, like human expressions, a mere likeness of the thing.[111] The problem is resolved by reversing the ordinary understanding of which is more real, which the essence of a thing, and which is its image. Anselm argues that the expression of the highest being is the essence of the thing, and that what is normally called the thing itself is "an imperfect imitation of the true essence."[112]

This solution, however, leads to further difficulties. For the Word does not seem to be a word in any ordinary sense since it is not a word corresponding to an object as ordinary words are. Ordinary words depend on the things to which they correspond, and, therefore, these words would not exist unless things existed. If this were true of the Word, it would mean that either the highest being would not exist unless the creature existed (clearly false), or that the highest being would exist without the Word. But if the latter were the case, God would neither express nor conceive anything, including himself: "If it did not understand anything, then the highest wisdom, which is nothing other than this spir-

108. *Mono*. 29, S I, 47, 19–21.
109. *Mono*. 29, S I, 47, 9–11.
110. *Mono*. 29, S I, 47, 22.
111. *Mono*. 31, S I, 48, 17–19.
112. *Mono*. 31, S I, 50, 7–10.

it, would be understanding nothing, which is most absurd. What then? If it did not understand anything, how could it be the highest wisdom? And if nothing in any way existed outside of itself, what would it understand? But would it be unable to understand itself?"[113] Surely not, Anselm concludes, as even we, as finite but rational creatures, remember, understand, and distinguish ourselves from both the supreme being and irrational creatures.[114]

The chain of argument in this discussion of the Word is the same in structure as that found in the exploration of the nature of the highest being and its creation. Anselm stakes out a position worthy of the highest being, but further reflection on that position shows that there is an (apparent) absurdity that follows from it. That absurdity is resolved by explication of a further attribute of God, which in turn results in more (apparent) absurdity. In this case the absurdities follow from the exploration of the existence of the Word and the assumption that God is the seat of perfect language, perfect self-understanding, and perfect creativity. Anselm resolves this difficulty by arguing for the identity of the word by which God creates with the word by which God knows and expresses himself. Since the word of creation and self-expression are identical with the supreme being, they are identical with each other.[115] But, once again, Anselm asks the relevant and very difficult question that follows: "How can things so different, namely the creative and the created being, be said to be one word, especially since that word itself is said to be co-eternal [with the speaker], while the created world is not co-eternal with him?"[116]

In response, Anselm repeats that the Word is not identical with the world, but that the world is the mere image, and that the world *in* the Word is the essence of the world.[117] This gives rise to another apparent paradox, this time in reflexive form: what is "most manifestly comprehended" about how things exist in the Word and how things are known and expressed by the Word is that these things "cannot be comprehended by human knowledge."[118] Anselm explains why this is so: things "exist more truly in themselves than our knowledge" and more truly in the

113. *Mono.* 32, S I, 51, 2–6.

114. *Mono.* 32, S I, 51, 9–12.

115. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* XV, 14, 23. Anselm takes the same position as Augustine, arguing for the identity between the highest being and its expression (the Father and the Word/Son) and what is known, the exemplars through which God creates. What is noteworthy is that Anselm arrives at these conclusions propelled by logic, from what seemed contradictory and impossible to what must be, barring absurdity, true.

116. *Mono.* 34, S I, 53, 15–17.

117. *Mono.* 34, S I, 53–54.

118. *Mono.* 36, S I, 54, 16–18.

Word than in themselves. "How," Anselm asks, "would the human mind comprehend the character of that expression and that knowledge, which is so much higher and truer than created substances, if our knowledge is as far surpassed by these [created substances] as their likeness is distant from their being (*essentia*)?"[119]

There are two noteworthy things about this discussion. First, there is the tension between how this is comprehended (*manifestissime*) and *what* is comprehended: that it *cannot* be comprehended. Second, the conclusion in the form of a rhetorical question places human knowledge twice removed from comprehension of the reality of things; we cannot understand created substances as they exist in themselves but only their similitudes, and, worse yet, we are incapable of grasping them as they are more truly in the creating being. It is an explanation not of what we know but of what we do not and cannot know, but couched in terms of certainty. What we are certain of is the great distance between what we know and what is the most real and true.

Even though Anselm has argued for the identity of God and his Word, he also notes that the "supreme spirit" and the "Word" must be distinct for reasons just as necessary as the reasons why they must be the same. Anselm draws the conclusion on the basis of characteristics of language: "For the word, in that it is a word or image, is related to the other, only because it is the word and image of something."[120] The word and that of which the word is an expression must be distinct. This is the paradox at the heart of language: that words must capture their objects *and* be distinct from those objects. About the divine and the divine word, Anselm concludes, "Therefore, it is established that it cannot be explained why the supreme spirit and the word are two, although given certain properties of each they are required to be two."[121] As Anselm puts in the chapter heading and repeats in the body of the chapter, however, "it cannot be said what two they are" for they are not two spirits or two creatures, nor two words or images. They are not two of anything in terms of their essence, their relation to creatures, or even their relation to each other.[122] Reason has led to that to what seems like a dead end. Anselm rationally

119. *Mono.* 36, S I, 55, 6–10.

120. *Mono.* 38, S I, 56, 24–26.

121. *Mono.* 38, S I, 56, 28–30. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 68, sermo 1, n. 5. Augustine asserts the distinction between Father and Son; however, he does so on the basis of the relations, that is, father cannot be father and be the same as son. What is significant in Anselm is the agnosticism he expresses here about how it is that these are two and one. Anselm moves in the next chapter to the language of the Word as begotten and to the analogy of the relationship to parent and child, an understanding which he shows also has its limitations.

122. *Mono.* 38, S I, 56, 21–24.

derived two of the three persons of the Trinity but also has no options left for saying what it is these two are.

What is striking here is the pattern of Anselm's arguments. Just as the paradoxes have led to necessary conclusions, almost as often his attempt to draw out further necessary consequences from those conclusions lead to further paradoxes. Anselm summarizes his progress in a chapter entitled, "*Retractio* of what is common to both and proper to each" and describes his results as follows: "Having discovered so many and such significant properties, properties in which an amazing plurality, as ineffable as is inevitable, are shown to exist in the highest unity, it seems especially delightful to me to reconsider (*retractare*) more often such an impenetrable secret."[123] Anselm's assessment of where his project ends repeats the same tension he described above: the many things discovered are balanced by the object of his investigation as both "the highest unity" and "an amazing plurality;" it is an "impenetrable secret," whose properties are both "ineffable" and "inevitable." The whole text thus far is an alternation of the hidden and revealed, of that which is most clear and that which is most impenetrable. An interplay, Anselm tells us, in which he takes delight.

There is, however, more. Anselm leaves aside *what* these are, the spirit and its word, and turns to understanding their relationship. Like the relationship of sign to signifier, the relationship of parent to child is also both realized to perfection and contradicted by the relationship between God the Father and Son. On the one hand, "the word of the supreme spirit is so completely from this same sole essence and is so uniquely like it, so that no child ever is as completely from its parent's essence alone or so similar to its parent." Thus, nothing seems more appropriately related as parent and child than the spirit and its word, and they most truly (*verissimus*) have the properties of parent and child.[124] Anselm continues,

> Although it is so impossible that he who begets and he who is begotten be the same, as [it is impossible] for the parent and the son to be the same, that it is necessary for the begotten and the one begetting to be different and for the father to be different than the son; however, it is so necessary that he who begets and he who is begotten be the same, that it is impossible that the begotten be other than the one begetting or that the Father [be other] than the son.[125]

Relationship, like language, requires both identity, in the sense that the relationship is closer to perfection the closer it is to identity, and dif-

123. *Mono.* 43, S I, 59, 15–17.
124. *Mono.* 40, S I, 58, 1–6.
125. *Mono.* 43, S I, 59, 18–22.

ference, for there is no relationship unless the related things are actually distinct, at least in some respect. This is the paradox Anselm continues to reflect on for the remainder of the chapter, that the highest being and its expression are so different they cannot be called by the same name but so identical that the essence of one is always in the other.

After showing that spirit and word as father and son are the same essence, Anselm goes on to argue that one can only be the essence of the other in a very special sense. "It cannot be understood that the father should be the essence of the son, or the son the essence of the father, as if the one could not subsist through itself but through the other."[126] An identity such that one subsisted only through the other would be an imperfection because it would make one dependent on the other. Anselm solves this problem not by qualifying the notion of a shared essence but by taking it one step further, positing a kind of super relationship between father and son: "in order to signify how they have in common an essence supremely simple and supremely one, it may consistently be said and conceived, that the one is so identical with the other that the one possesses the essence of the other."[127] To possess the essence of the other, Anselm points out, is to *be* the other. Because the identity is so complete, one cannot be dependent on the other since the one *is* the other.

Anselm then derives more of the names of the Trinity and their relationship as memory and understanding, which allows him to derive the third person as the love of father and son.[128] However, as Anselm stops to gather these conclusions about what can be said of each of the persons separately and together, he finds a difficulty. If father, son, and spirit are all individually memory, understanding, and love, then it seems that father is also son and spirit. Anselm responds this relying on the relational character of the father, son, and spirit, noting that father is understanding, but not son "because [he is] not understanding begotten from another" and is not spirit because he is not "love proceeding from another."[129] However, problems remain. If each speaks himself and the other two, there seem to be multiple words, each speaking a begetting a son and sending forth a spirit.[130]

126. *Mono.* 44, S I, 61, 16–18.

127. *Mono.* 44, S I, 61, 18–21. Cf. Augustine, *Epist.* 170, 8. Augustine here discusses the equality of Father and Son and the ways in which their generation does not involve passion as human generation does, but he does not reflect on the paradox of identity and difference between father and son.

128. The trinity of memory, understanding, and love comes, of course, from Augustine's *De Trinitate*. See *De Trinitate* X, 4. On the way in which all three are all one and yet are distinct, see *De Trinitate* XV, 7, 12; 17, 28.

129. *Mono.* 61, S I, 71, 18–19.

130. *Mono.* 62, S I, 72, 6–13.

Anselm describes in near contradictory terms the status of these truths and his own explanation. For on the one hand, he claims to have given "necessary reasons" to support his conclusions on the divine nature, even though "the intellect can not penetrate [these truths] such that they can be explained by words."[131] Still, he adds, "their certainty does not waver."[132] How exactly this is so, Anselm declines to explain, concluding, "if the above consideration rationally comprehends [*comprehendit*] that it is incomprehensible [*incomprehensibile*] how the highest wisdom knows the things it has made, of which we necessarily know so many, who could explain how it knows and expresses [*dicat*] itself, of which it is only possible for human beings to know nothing or very little?"[133] Anselm is too careful a writer not to have consciously placed *comprehendit* next to *incomprehensibile*, describing his task (again) as comprehending that it is incomprehensible, wanting the reader to notice the tension between what is comprehended and how it is comprehended.

In the chapter that follows these comments come some of the most pessimistic statements in all of Anselm's writing about the possibilities of knowing God, raising (yet again) questions about the viability of any of the foregoing conclusions. "How therefore has anything true of the highest being been discovered if that which has been discovered is so alien to it?"[134] It is one of a series of questions raising doubts about whether anything has really been discovered about this highest being. He explains the difficulty in terms of language. The paradox is that although it has been established that God is "above and beyond all natural beings," the words used to prove those claims are the same ones applied to those very natural beings. "If, then, the usual sense of words is alien to [the highest being] whatever I have reasoned does not pertain to it. How, then, can anything we have discovered about the highest being be true if

131. *Mono.* 64, S I, 75, 8–10.

132. *Mono.* 64, S I, 75, 10.

133. *Mono.* 64, S I, 75, 11–14. Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 52, 16. "If you have been able to comprehend [what you have said of God], you have comprehended something other than God. If it is as if you have been able to comprehend, your thoughts have deceived you. This he is not if you have comprehended it; if however he is this, you have not comprehended. What therefore do you want to say that you have not been able to comprehend?" Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 52, 23. "That which is in you, you can know. That which is in he who made you, what he is, whatever that is, when will you be able to know that? And if you will be able to, you cannot yet. However when you are able, will you be able to know God in the way God knows himself?" These passages appear right before and then right after Augustine explains his analogy between the Trinity and memory, understanding and will. The incomprehensibility of God, noted in the first passage is Augustine's justification for looking for a created trinitarian analogue, memory, understanding, and will, what he reminds the reader is "something in you" which can be known. Nonetheless, he ends with a reiteration of the limits of human knowledge of the Trinity. Anselm shortens and sharpens the paradox in comprehending that it is incomprehensible.

134. *Mono.* 65, S I, 76, 8–9.

what was discovered is so far from it?"[135] This is a reprise of the question posed back in chapter 26,[136] now returned with new urgency. For though in one sense, it is just another in a very long series of arguments to resolve apparently irresolvable problems we have seen throughout the *Monologion*, in another sense it "threatens to evacuate all his arguments," and "undermine his entire project."[137]

Anselm does offer a kind of solution, but it resolves less than it promises. Anselm argues that we often see and describe things not "properly, as the thing is itself, but through some likeness or image," such that "one and the same thing we say (*dicimus*) and do not say, we see and do not see."[138] In the same way, then, we cannot say what this highest being is, in other words, but we can say what it is *per aliud*, by reference to what it is like: "Whatever words seem to be able to be said of this being, do not so much show it to me by what is proper to it as hint (*innuunt*) at it through some likeness."[139]

This is in many ways a moderate and thoroughly Augustinian solution to the dilemma of talking about God; we cannot say what he is directly but can say what he is like. But Anselm goes on to formulate the solution in ways that draw attention to what his words and arguments fail to do rather than succeed in. For the words we use for the highest being come from creatures and bring to mind something "much less" and "very far from" that which, by means of the "tenuous significations," we are seeking to understand.[140] He concludes by making explicit the tension between what he has proved and the real nature of the highest being, "so therefore this nature is ineffable since neither in words nor by any other means can it in any way be penetrated [*intimari*], and it is not false if what is taught by reason be understood [*aestimari*] through another, as in a riddle [*aenigmate*]."[141]

How are we to understand the status of Anselm's claims given this almost fatal qualification on everything that has come before? For it is both Anselm's strong claims for what he will achieve at the outset and his insistence here that whatever this apparent qualification means, his arguments are still true (or at least "not false") that create the difficulty. The kind of understanding that results through a likeness, this kind of knowing *as*, seems, at least as Anselm describes it, to suspend the law of the excluded middle ("we say and we do not say . . ."), resulting in claims

135. *Mono.* 65, S I, 76, 6–8.
136. *Mono.* 26, S I, 44, 15–19.
137. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 118, 111.
138. *Mono.* 65, S I, 76, 11–17.
139. *Mono.* 65, S I, 76, 22–24.
140. *Mono.* 65, S I, 76, 26–29.
141. *Mono.* 65, S I, 77, 1–3.

that are neither true nor false in a sense and are both true and false in a sense. And even if we can make out this claim in a noncontradictory way by taking it to mean that Anselm's claims about the highest being are partially true, true in a certain respect, as true as any claims about it can be, it seems, belatedly, to move the bar a great deal lower from what Anselm set out to achieve: necessary, indubitable truths about the highest being, and to be a move to a kind of moderate middle ground Anselm himself seems to refuse to occupy.

We seem to be left with simultaneous apophaticism and rationalism. And that is what is left if we remember that apophaticism is not the view that nothing at all can be said about God, that the task can never be begun, but rather it is the place one arrives at last, having worked through and then exhausted the resources of language and reason.[142] From this position, the gap between the results of rational argumentation and what we are seeking to grasp remains, in such a way that both progress has been made (the highest being is seen as "metaphysically unique") and the gap has become more yawning, has been understood to be more deeply untraversable. And that too, is its own kind of progress. For having followed out the logic of the supreme being in the search for necessary reasons, Anselm concludes with a necessary truth: that the clearest comprehension of the supreme being is of its *incomprehensibility*.

Because he has failed to give a fully illuminating account of the supreme being, Anselm returns to the language of memory, understanding, and love, but now *as* analogy, similitude. Thus, Anselm reoffers a very abbreviated version of Augustine's analogy between the three persons in the Godhead and the human trinity of memory, intelligence, and love. Since the highest being cannot be known in itself, it must be known through something else. The best image for it is the rational mind in its tripartite structure. The path to this conclusion seems somewhat different than Augustine's to a similar conclusion in *De Trinitate*. For having arrived at the "ineffable trinity of memory, understanding and love,"

142. Visser and Williams are right that Anselm's claim that God is ineffable is not "a vague gesture towards apophaticism" but says "something very specific about the limitations of our thought and language about God." *Anselm*, 121. However, Anselm can be, and is, I maintain, apophatic without being vague, and apophatic without giving up his rationalism. Their solution that words used of God keep their original meaning, derived from creatures, but apply to God *per aliud*, may nominally avoid equivocation but still leaves the problem Anselm is focused on here, that what we say about God is only obliquely, enigmatically true, that God is called wise and existing, etc. but is not wise and existing as creatures are. Thus we say things about God that are true (in a sense) but they do not get to the thing we want to know, do not reveal what he really is. "These words," as Visser and Thomas admit, "can establish only a tenuous connection between the human mind and the utterly unique God" (122).

Anselm concludes that, given that the human mind too can remember, understand, and love, it is most like the supreme being.[143] Thus he has discovered first memory, understanding, and love in the supreme being; next, he found that, however, this trinity in it is ineffable, and then turned to find these same features, originally argued for as necessary features of the supreme being, in the finite mind. What Anselm has *not* done is begin with the human mind and extrapolate from its features of memory, understanding, and love to these as features which then ought to belong to the Trinity. He argues rather that because these are features of the supreme being, the creature that possesses them is taken to be the truest image of the supreme being and the highest of its creations. The other ground for its role as closest analogue is reflexive. Since the rational mind mounts of an investigation of the supreme being, the mind, as that through which that investigation takes place, must itself be that which mirrors the highest being most closely.[144]

What Anselm is able to see in that "mirror" is not so much an image of the divine, as the human mind's necessary connection to the divine. The rational power, Anselm maintains, is the power to distinguish "the good from the not-good, the greater good from the lesser." This power is useless unless its distinctions are true and unless it then love the greater good over the lesser, and, ultimately, the supreme good above all others.[145] It cannot be that the soul created for this good could lose it, either freely or by force, Anselm argues. If it could lose it freely, it would have been created to come to reject that for which it was created; if it could lose it by force, it would lose its good unwillingly. Since both of these are impossible, contradicting the goodness and justice of creation, the soul's enjoyment of that good must be endless and it itself must be without an end.[146] The creature that loves and desires the supreme being will be satisfied by nothing else than the possession and enjoyment of the supreme being.[147] It cannot be, Anselm concludes, that "he who is most just and most powerful makes no return" to the being who loves that which he was created to love.[148]

In the final chapters mapping out the connection between the mind and God, the language is again that of necessity and indubitability, but it is the necessity and indubitability of hope for their union rather than

143. *Mono.* 67, S I, 78, 3–5.

144. *Mono.* 66, S I, 77, 17–19. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIV, 12, 15. The trinity of memory, understanding, and love in the human soul is an image of the divine not because it remembers, understands, and loves itself but rather because it remembers, understands, and loves God.

145. *Mono.* 68, S I, 78–79.

146. *Mono.* 69, S I, 79.

147. *Mono.* 70, S I, 80.

148. *Mono.* 70, S I, 80, 9–11.

union achieved. This is true even at the same time Anselm acknowledges that human vision is only through a glass darkly and speech only as close as riddles to the plain truth it attempts to reveal.[149] Just as in the prayers, this certainty is not grounded on any merit of Anselm's (in this case, of his arguments) but on the reasonableness of the belief that God could not deny himself to one who feels the need of him so strongly.[150]

The only bridge between Anselm's certain arguments and the truth he seeks, but has not reached, is constructed by the hope and striving for the supreme being.[151] Because the human mind cannot exercise itself toward an end it despairs of reaching, Anselm observes, "Just as much as devotion to it is useful, so much is hope of attainment necessary."[152] Anselm continues by glossing faith itself as including the notion of striving, of actually moving toward that goal. "Believing *in* (*credere in*)" the supreme being, Anselm explains, includes both the notion of striving for and believing certain things.[153] "Believing *in*" captures this sense of movement toward God better than "directing belief to (*credere ad*)" God, Anselm argues.[154] The latter is too static and indirect while the former gives a sense of motion and also the intimacy envisioned as the goal, which is to go *in* to God rather than simply believe things about God from a distance. In other words, simply having God as goal must be supplemented by the belief that one can achieve that end; orientation is not enough; a sense of progress toward the goal internally and emotionally is equally important. To the faith in and hope for reaching the highest being, Anselm adds, of course, love. Love, which Anselm glosses as living faith, issues in works, he argues, proved on the basis only of this: that if one love "the highest justice, nothing just can be condemned and nothing unjust permitted."[155]

Between Anselm's derivation of the responses of faith in, hope and love for the highest being and his conclusion that this being is indeed God Anselm declares that this being is "three I-know-not-whats (*tres nescio quid*)" though it can be called "one essence and three persons or substances."[156] Anselm's unwillingness to take up "person" as *the* proper language for the Trinity is sometimes seen as a weaknesses of the trinitarian theology of the *Monologion* only overcome in the later *De processione*.[157] And in his own time, as the prologue makes clear, Anselm was taken to task for his willingness to accept *either* persons or substances for

149. *Mono.* 65, S I, 76, 11–14; 70, S I, 80, 31–81, 1.
150. *Mono.* 70, S I, 80, 9–11.
151. *Mono.* 74–75, S I, 83–84.
152. *Mono.* 75, S I, 83, 11–13.
153. *Mono.* 76, S I, 83, 23–25.
154. *Mono.* 76, S I, 84, 1–2.
155. *Mono.* 78, S I, 84, 20–22.
156. *Mono.* 79, S I, 85, 14; 86, 14.
157. See chapter 7 for my discussion of *De processione* and comparison of it to the *Monologion*.

what is three in the Trinity, even though he is in this following Augustine and Boethius.[158] For even when Augustine expresses a preference for the language of persons over substances he does so for lack of anything better: "three persons is said not in order to say that but in order not to keep silent."[159] The *Monologion*'s conclusion that God is three "I-know-not-whats" is the fruit of long meditation and reflection that has moved through and *beyond* "person," "substance," etc., to an agnosticism that represents a tremendous spiritual achievement. Anselm has not failed to reach an adequate trinitarian formulation but has rather reached through and beyond one.

Anselm nonetheless concludes in certainty of something: "it appears, then, or rather, it is *unhesitatingly declared* that what is called God is not nothing; and that only to this supreme essence the name 'God' is properly given."[160] Anselm now, at last in the final chapter, names the "highest being" as "God." Why, when he has not made this inference before, can he make it now? "All who say that God exists, whether one or many, understand nothing other than a certain substance, which they judge to be above any nature which is not God, worshipped by men because of its eminent dignity and entreated in the face of imminent need."[161] It is only the supreme being Anselm's meditation has adumbrated who is worthy of worship and prayer. "It would be," Anselm continues, "*exceedingly inappropriate* (*nimis inconveniens*) if it were supposed that not this being but rather some lesser good or mere chance ruled the things made by that highest being."[162] The God men worship and pray to is one they believe controls their world, who can be entreated and should be praised, and this being is identical with the being of Anselm's reflection. Not unlike Aquinas after him, Anselm concludes, in effect, "and this all men call God."

The last chapter is full of exuberance, overflowing with superlatives both for the highest nature itself and the clarity of his vision of it: *liquidissimum* is how Anselm describes his conclusions—meaning both most clear and flowing smoothly without interruption.[163] The exuberance comes not from the completeness of this vision—the last words of the text are "ineffable God, three and one"—but from the completion of the task. He began *sub persona* of one relying only on reasoning and reflection but emerges after eighty chapters of rational investigation into

158. *Mono*. Prol., S I, 8, 14–18. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* VII, 4, 7; see nn. 24, 103.

159. Augustine, *De Trinitate* V, 9. In *De processione*, Anselm supports the language of persons but only as Augustine does, for lack of anything better. See chapter 7.

160. *Mono*. 80, S I, 86, 17–18. My emphasis.

161. *Mono*. 80, S I, 86, 19–22.

162. *Mono*. 80, S I, 87, 2–3. My emphasis.

163. *Mono*. 80, S I, 87, 8–9.

the realm of worship and prayer. His task has been to connect what Pascal would call "the God of the Philosophers" to "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The ascetic bracketing of everything but reasoned reflection breaks through to the light of a God who evokes love, works of justice, worship, and prayer.

Anselm joins three different things in the last three chapters: the chain of necessary reasons on the nature of the highest being, the truth of the language appropriate to this highest being as "triune unity and unified trinity (*trinam unitatem et unam trinitatem*)," and the reconnection of both of these to the theological virtues and to worship and prayer. Nonetheless, that which truly grounds language and worship, the reality of God, is not known except obliquely and enigmatically, and most certainly, in desire.

Proslogion: The Interpenetration of Prayer and Argument, Logic and Rhetoric

The difference between the *Monologion* and the *Proslogion,* Anselm famously wrote, is that while the *Monologion* relies on multiple arguments, the seeking of the *Proslogion* was for *unum argumentum*. However we understand the exact reference of *argumentum*—Anselm's notion of "that than which none greater can be conceived," the arguments of chapters 2 and 3 concluding in the necessary existence of such a being, or the work as a whole insofar as it is the exploration of the original formula—it is clear that Anselm was not fully satisfied with the *Monologion's* chain of arguments and wants not to proceed up a series of steps but to move directly and with a kind of single motion of the mind toward the divine. [164]

164. There has been great debate about whether the "*unum argumentum*" of the *Proslogion* means the formula "that than which none greater can be conceived," the arguments of chapters 2 and 3 proving the existence and necessary being of God, or the derivation of the major attributes of God that occupies the whole text. While it is clearly anachronistic to think of the argument for God's existence as the "single argument," in the end I am not sure it matters whether we think of the argument as the original formula or the formula together with the conclusions that follow from it, for Anselm thinks of the attributes as following as necessarily as existence from the original formula. On this point, cf. Barth, *Fidens Quaerens Intellectum*, 13–14. For a full account of the literature taking these different views, as well as an account based on the notion of *argumentum* in medieval dialectic, specifically Boethius's notion of argument, see Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 133–45. Holopainen takes Anselm's arguments (in the modern sense) to be syllogistic rather than by equipollent propositions, and thus the formula for him is a "middle term" joining the subject, God, and other predicates derived from the formula in the *Proslogion*. On the form of the argument as hypothetical syllogism, see Suzanne J. Nelis, "The Boethian Anselm," *Haskins Society Journal* 3 (1991): 131–39, and for further discussion of Anselm's knowledge and use of dialectic, see Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 52–59; see also chapter 3 and chapter 6. It is worth noting, as Holopainen does but Nelis does not, that Anselm does

The "Argument": Conceiving the Inconceivable God

Anselm's interlocutor, the fool who says in his heart there is no God, is derived from scripture, from the content of faith, but, as we noted above, Anselm reinterprets the fool's unbelief not as sectarian but as generic and rational. Similarly, the instrument Anselm devises to confront that opponent, the notion of "that than which none greater can be conceived," also has sources in both faith and reason. The Psalms contain many descriptions of God which Anselm's formula seems to echo. Psalm 77:13, for example, asks, "who is so great a God as our God?" and Psalm 25:3 declares, "The Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods."[165] Augustine is another possible source. Augustine describes God as "that to which none is superior" in *De libero arbitrio*.[166] But it is Seneca whom Anselm seems to echo most exactly. In response to the question, "What is God?" Seneca replies that God is a magnitude "than which none greater can be conceived (*qua nihil maius cogitari potest*)."[167] Though there is no conclusive proof that Anselm knew the Seneca text, it is found in Bec's library, though perhaps from a later date.[168] The closeness of Anselm's formula to Seneca's—both share the use of *maius* rather than *melius*—makes it tempting to posit a direct link between them even though convincing positive evidence is lacking.[169] It would also be especially fitting that a

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not present his argument in the clear technical form of hypothetical syllogism (even if that is its true logical form), and some have argued that Anselm, like Lanfranc, wants to avoid overly technical dialectical language and forms in theological argumentation. For more on Anselm's relationship to dialectic and his reflections on it in the *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi*, see chapter 6.

165. Paul M. van Buren, "Anselm's Formula and the Logic of 'God,'" *Religious Studies* 9, no. 3 (1973): 280.

166. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* II, 14.

167. Seneca, L. *Annaei Senecae naturalium quaestionem libri viii*, edited by Alfred Gerke (Stuttgart, 1907), 5. Cited in Schmitt, *S. Anselmi opera omnia*, vol. 1, 102. Schmitt also cites Boethius as a source in the *Consolation* where Boethius speaks of the "common notion of all human minds" of God as that than which "nothing better can be thought." Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, in *The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy,* translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), book III, prose 10, 276.

168. There was a copy of Seneca's *Quaestiones naturales* at Bec, as noted in Becker's catalog. See Southern, *Portrait in Landscape*, 129; and Gustav Becker, *Catalogi Bibliothecarum antiqui* (Bonn, 1885). However, Marcia Colish's examination of the manuscripts of the *Quaestiones naturales* shows that none can be dated before the twelfth century. See Marcia L. Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1985), vol. 1, 18. See also Ian Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion: *The History of Anselm's Argument and its Significance Today* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2009), 92–93.

169. See Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion, 92–93. Logan cites the work of G. Ross, "Seneca's Philosophical Influence," in *Seneca*, edited by Charles D. N. Costa (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 116–65; and Klaus D. Nothdurft, *Studien zum Einfluss Senecas auf die Philosophie und Theologie des zwölften Jahrhunderts* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 194ff.

phrase without clear biblical or Christian origins would become the cornerstone of an argument designed to address the "fool" understood as generic and rational skeptic. It is even more fitting and consonant with the feel of the text that Anselm should have been inspired by all these sources—Hebrew, Roman, and Christian—and that Anselm should hear them all speaking with the same voice.[170]

What is particular to Anselm is not the project of faith seeking understanding, but, as we saw in the *Monologion*, a sense of the completion of that journey as both ineluctable and impossible. No part of Anselm's work exemplifies his particular way of shaping of the trajectory from faith to understanding more than the *Proslogion's* "that than which none greater can be conceived." The formula, "that than which none greater can be conceived," functions as what is believed but also is what reason proposes about God and is that through which reason establishes understanding. Thus, it embodies faith, reason, and the project of moving from faith to understanding. We can see this if we go back through the way in which the different ways of describing faith seeking understanding operate in the *Proslogion*.[171] The description of God as that than which none greater can be conceived is, Anselm writes, what he believes God to be and wishes to understand.[172] Faith in another sense, we argued above, functions as that which proposes the problems for reason to solve. In the *Proslogion's* opening prayer, the task faith gives to reason is both to establish the impossible and the self-evident, for it describes the goal of understanding God as, on the one hand, accessing the inaccessible and comprehending the incomprehensible, and, on the other, as making visible what is always present and locating what is everywhere. Anselm thus not only creates a chasm for reason to cross but also claims that in the formula it has already been crossed, or rather that there is no chasm at all, that what faith seeks is already given in the very thinking of that than which none greater can be conceived. The equivalence of the paradoxical with the necessary accomplished in the *Monologion* in different steps, the *Proslogion* accomplishes in one step in the thinking of the formula.

Faith in a third sense discussed above, as the *desire* to traverse the

170. For a more complete list and analysis of possible precursors to Anselm's formula, including Hermes Trismegistus, Cicero, Homer, the New Testament, Boethius, and the Pseudo-Augustinian, *De decem categoriis*, see Coloman Viola, "Origine et portée de la formule dialectique du *Proslogion* de Saint Anselme. D'l "argument *ontologique" à l' "argument mégalogique*," *Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica* 83 (1992): 342–64.

171. For the discussion of the different sense of faith seeking understanding, see this chapter, 122–24.

172. *Pros.* 2, S I, 101, 3–5.

gap between what faith believes and what reason understands, is also expressed in the attempt to think "that than which none greater can be thought." For to think it is to reach God via a single, long extension of the mind upward, the shape of the *ascensus mentis ad deum* which pervades Anselm's writing. Thus, the formula itself describes faith, for it describes the striving of the mind to transcend itself, to grasp what is beyond it. The aim of Anselm's argument is to show that the object of his desire actually exists, and he inscribes that desire in the language he uses to make the transition from desire to possession, that is, in the formula itself. The formula thus unifies almost perfectly the two parts of the analogy Anselm sets up between the human desire for God and the word's desire for the thing.

Prayer describes the desire of faith to make what it believes present, and the formula also captures, as Aidan Nichols points out, the essence of prayer. For in prayer "one must never be content with one's current images of God but strive constantly to transcend them towards a reality which is of its nature *semper maior*."[173] This is exactly the path on which the notion of "that than which none greater can be conceived" sets the mind. Anselm has captured in his formula the essence of a religious sense of God, Paul Van Buren argues, for "religion consists in going to the limit of language, to the edge of nonsense."[174] Prayer is, as we saw in Anselm's prayers, the point of intersection of language and desire in a special way. For the project of prayer is to reach God in words; prayer both expresses the desire for God and aims to effect union with him. Thinking "that than which none greater can be conceived" does all these things at once. It represents succinctly the paradox of prayer, which simultaneously expresses the infinite distance between the human mind and God and traverses it.

Lastly, as noted above, the faith that Anselm begins from is faith in reason. Anselm's argument, like any kind of reasoning, Anselm would claim, assumes the ability of the mind to form concepts and reason to conclusions which are not mere fictions but which capture and reveal reality, at least to some degree. And it is, of course, on this level, as discerned by reason, not as an expression of desire in prayer or of that which faith wishes to understand, that Anselm's formula and the conclusions he draws from it have been so controversial. The formula has

173. Aidan Nichols, "Anselm of Canterbury and the Language of Perfection," *Downside Review* 103 (1985): 207.

174. Van Buren, "Anselm's Formula and the Logic of God," 285–86. Van Buren contends, however, that the formula works on the religious but not the rational or philosophical level. Yet Anselm clearly intends for it to do both.

been grasped and critiqued in many ways: where the notion of "that than which none greater can be conceived" comes from—reason alone or revelation, what kind of grasp we can have of it—merely subjective imagination or direct experience, whether and to what degree it is adequate to God's nature—as completely negative and empty of content or as capturing the divine essence.[175] As one astute commentator remarked, "the argument is like one of those inns in Spain to which each person brings his own food and drink."[176] What I attempt here is not a defense (or critique) of Anselm's argument against all or even most objectors and supporters but rather try to see it as Anselm intended it and in light of its links to the rest of his corpus.

Attempts to understand the crucial phrase as either taken from and accepted as revelation (Barth) or given by direct mystical experience or as innate idea (Kolping, Evdokimov, DeWulf, and others) clearly fall afoul, of Anselm's explicit statements in the text.[177] Anselm writes clearly, against Barth's view, that the notion of "that than which none greater can be conceived" *is* in the fool's and not merely the Christian's understanding. Equally clearly, Anselm maintains that there can be no experience or adequate comprehension of God. Aquinas, of course, famously commented on the notion of God's nature being naturally known or his existence self-evident, that human beings cannot have an notion of God's essence adequate to draw existence from it, a view which, indirectly at least, he attributes to Anselm.[178] Many have been quick to point out, quite correctly, that Anselm very explicitly rejects the view that his notion or any account of God in any way suffices to reveal the divine nature. Anselm is quite clear about this in the *Monologion*, noting that the designation of the highest being as highest or as greater than others does not designate its "natural essence [*naturalem essentiam*]," "does not sig-

175. See Arthur C. McGill, "Recent Discussion of Anselm's Argument," in *The Many-Faced Argument: Recent Studies on the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God*, edited by John Hick and Arthur C. McGill (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 71–104. See also the lengthy and clear account of the reception of Anselm's argument by a wide variety of thinkers from the Middle Ages to the present in Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion, 129–96.

176. Paul Endokimov, "L'Aspect apophatique de l'argument de S. Anselme," in *Spicilegium Beccense* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1959), 234. Translated and cited in McGill, "Recent Discussions," 104.

177. In order to take this position, Barth must understand Anselm as only engaging the fool in the same *question* as the believer and work only *in opposition* to him; further he must reinterpret the phrase "that than which none greater can be conceived' as an "injunction inculcated on the believer's thinking by the revelation . . . not to imagine anything greater than God." Barth, *Fidens Quaerens Intellectum*, 62–69, 103. Cf. McGill, "Recent Discussions," 93–102. For a description of some of the accounts asserting a direct contact with God on which the notion and proof is based, see McGill, "Recent Discussions," 71–79.

178. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, part I, q. 2, a. 1.

nify absolutely [*simpliciter*] this being [*essentiam*] which in every way is greater and better than whatever is not what it itself is."[179] In this passage, Anselm shows that he is, on the one hand, constrained to use the language of comparison—highest, greater, better—but that, on the other, he does not in any way think of such terms as coming close to an essential or substantive predication.

It is for this reason, Jean-Luc Marion argues, that Anselm's argument cannot be described as "ontological." Kant defined an argument as ontological when it proved existence from a pure concept of the essence, something Anselm clearly does not do.[180] Marion writes, "the syntagm '*id quod majus cogitari nequit*' claims neither to define God by a concept, even in a negative way. . . . It only indicates the limits felt by all possible efforts towards any conception of God. . . . [It] deals more with our finitude than with the conception of God. More precisely, it deals with the impossibility of any conception of God."[181] Marion's concern is to acquit Anselm and his argument from the charge of engaging in "metaphysics" in the sense critiqued by Heidegger; Anselm does not proceed from a concept, he argues, but rather "Anselm's argument infers God's existence *from the very impossibility* of producing any concept of God or His essence. . . . God is known as existent *inasmuch as he remains unknown* through the concept of his essence."[182] Michel Corbin puts forward a similar view, claiming that Anselm's formula does not express the Cartesian idea of perfection but is an interdiction of idols, by showing the impossibility of thinking that which is greater than God.[183] Marion attempts to turn what is an apparent weakness of the argument, that its notion of God is not specific or complete enough, into its virtue, into precisely that which makes it work, in effect claiming that this being must exist *in re* because it *cannot* exist in the mind.[184] While it is true, clearly, for Anselm that the human mind cannot conceive God, it is equally true that the formula is not an interdiction but rather, as Coloman Viola puts it, "an invitation to research."[185]

Thus just as Aquinas goes too far in interpreting Anselm's formula as

179. *Mono.* 15, S I, 28, 4–22.

180. Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological?" 203.

181. Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological?" 209.

182. Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological?" 213. My emphases.

183. Cited in Viola, "Origine et portée," 340–41, n. 6.

184. Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological?" 211–12.

185. Coloman Viola, "Saint Anselm est-it le Père de l'Argument ontologique? Le *Proslogion confronté à Kant," in Saint Anselm—A Thinker for Yesterday and Today,* edited by Coloman Viola and Frederick van Fleteren, Texts and Studies in Religion 90 (Lewiston, N.H.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 142.

an affirmative (though failed) attempt to name the divine essence, Marion and Corbin go too far in the other direction, understanding Anselm's strategy as thoroughly negative. It is surely true that, as others have noted, there is a sense in which the formula is a merely subjective notion, that is, that it tells us more (or even only) about our own inability to conceive rather than anything about objective reality.[186] For this reason a number of commentators have insisted that the formula itself is neither a concept nor a name, and this is true, especially if what is meant by having a concept is having a specific idea corresponding to the divine essence.[187] But in a certain sense the name or formula is no different from any other human conception; all conceptions are the sum of what we think something to be but claim to be about the thing itself. This particular conception is more expressly and more perfectly both a statement about the human mind and its limits at the same time that it, again more expressly and more perfectly, purports to refer beyond itself to the thing itself. For, on the one hand, the formula is empty of any content directly about the thing itself, referring only to the limits of human conception; on the other hand, unique among all conceptions, this one, Anselm contends as his argument proceeds, is guaranteed to have a reference, to capture as real and necessary the object it picks out. The genius (or trick, depending on one's perspective) of Anselm's formula and the reason why it fulfills Anselm's desire to accomplish in one step what the *Monologion* accomplished in many is exactly what has maddened its critics: that it is both utterly unspecific and formal and at the exact same time perfectly descriptive in the sense that it is guaranteed to refer to one and only one object.[188] The formula, more succinctly and more perfectly than any other place in the Anselmian corpus, exemplifies the narrative stretch of Anselm's spiritual and intellectual project to start with nothing but end with everything.

We see this same tension played out in the body of the text. On the one hand, as an affirmative statement, the formula serves as the key to understanding its necessary existence and attributes: because this being is that than which none greater can be conceived, it is everything it is better to be than not to be. Hence, it serves as the ground for reasoning to a whole host of divine attributes—power, justice, mercy and so forth.[189]

186. McGill, "Recent Discussions," 69.

187. See among others, Viola, "Saint Anselme est-it le pére," 109–11; 132–38.

188. Viola expresses a similar view in focusing on the *Proslogion* formula's difference from that of predecessors and the *Monologion* itself in its attempt to base itself solely on the notion of greatness or magnitude. See Viola, "Origine et portée," 363.

189. Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones*, VII, 4. Augustine argues from the notion that there is nothing

But, on the other hand, as a negative statement, echoing the *Monologion*, Anselm shows that following out the implications of this same notion leads to the conclusion that almost nothing can be said about the being whose existence it shows. In his reply to Gaunilo, Anselm is forced into the verbal version of this paradox. For after responding that even the fool must conceive of something when he says "that than which none greater can be conceived," Anselm argues that even if this being is inconceivable, it can be conceived *as inconceivable*: "In a certain way 'inconceivable' can be conceived although that cannot be conceived of which it is appropriate to say [that it is] 'inconceivable.'"[190] "Nothing prohibits 'ineffable'

better than God to the notion that since the incorruptible is better than the corruptible, God must be incorruptible. There is an echo also of Augustine's *De libero arbitrio* II, 39 when Augustine concludes that there is something, truth, which is higher than the human mind, which is, then, either itself God or if there is something higher than truth, then that is God. Anselm's originality, as he himself points out, is that he has with the formula "that than which none greater can be conceived" found a way to make this ascent to God in one step.

190. *Resp.* 9, S I, 138, 7–8. Dazeley and Gombocz contend that Anselm has here created two levels of language by claiming both that x is unthinkable and that "x is unthinkable" is thinkable. They argue that this creates a problem for Anselm's argument. Although they explain the problem in multiple ways, I think the simplest way of understanding it is to say that if Anselm can claim by this maneuver that the being than which none greater can be conceived is thinkable and on another level unthinkable, Gaunilo can claim the same thing, that is, that he can think the formula in so far as he understands the words, but that he cannot think it at the level of understanding how existence must be predicated of it. See Howard L. Dazeley and Wolfgang L. Gombocz, "Interpreting Anselm as Logician," *Synthèse* 40 (1979): 86–90. Anselm cannot, then, as he does later in his reply, claim that Gaunilo contradicts himself, they argue. I think Anselm's response would be that there are different levels of language and of grasping the significance of the formula and that one must move through them in the order in which he does in the *Proslogion* itself. For it is only because he understands the formula that he can derive its attributes and *then* understand the sense in which he cannot understand that which is named by the formula. To put it in a way Anselm might appreciate, one can and one must understand the formula to understand why that which it points to cannot be understood. Moreover, he would add, Gaunilo cannot appeal to levels of understanding in the same way because understanding the words, using them significatively, not as mere sounds, *is at the same level* as grasping its *esse in re*. This, of course, is exactly the point at issue between Anselm and Gaunilo so in the end, Dazeley and Gombocz are simply restating Gaunilo's objection, not revealing a further flaw in Anselm's reasoning. For commentators, the claim in the reply that this being is ineffable is related to Anselm's claim in chapter 15 that this being is greater than can be conceived (*Pros*. 15, S I, 112). Anthony Kenny, Logan notes, "asks whether it is 'self-refuting' to speak of an inconceivable God" and Brian Leftow, though he defends Anselm in general, writes that this claim "casts a pall over Anselm's whole method." Brian Leftow, "Anselm's Perfect Being Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 141. See Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion," 195–96, and Anthony Kenny, *The Unknown God: Agnostic Essays* (London: Continuum, 2004), 29. As Logan concludes, "this does not mean that He is outside the limits of our thought, but that He extends beyond those limits. . . . Just as when water is poured continuously into a small jug, there is still water in the jug when it overflows" (Logan, 196). Kenny argues that all language about God is ultimately metaphorical, which means "that we don't really know what the metaphors are about" (Kenny, 45). Logan is perhaps too optimistic about what we can know and say about God, and Kenny, who thinks that at bottom predications about God are metaphorical and, hence, do not offer much of anything, is too

from being said," Anselm explains, "although that cannot be spoken of which is said to be 'ineffable.'"[191] Thus the formula repeats the paradox of the opening prayer in which God is both self-evident and inaccessible; it is thus both uniquely opaque and uniquely revelatory of its object; as a piece of language it is both uniquely impoverished and uniquely powerful.

There have been, if anything, more interpretations of and objections to the way in which Anselm draws existence from his formula, than to the formula itself. Again, the task here is not to defend Anselm against these centuries of objections (nor even to enumerate them) but to try to understand the argument (in the modern sense) in context. The most famous, and until recently, one of the most accepted emendations was the claim made by Norman Malcolm, Charles Hartshorne, and others, that Anslem makes two independent arguments, one in chapter 2, concluding that than which none greater can be conceived exists, and another in chapter 3, concluding that it exists necessarily. For Malcolm, the first argument is invalid for the reason Kant gave, that it makes of existence a predicate, but the second is valid, because necessary existence, having existence such that nonexistence cannot even be thought, is a perfection or predicate.[192] For Barth and Stolz too, Anselm's real destination, whether technically separate or not, is chapter 3's claim about the inconceivability of that than which none greater can be conceived's nonexistence. What is adumbrated in this notion is precisely God's otherness, that God does *not* exist in the way that things other than God exist. We must, however, grant that Anselm's intention (whether successful or not) is clearly to demonstrate *that* this being exists, as well that it cannot be thought not to exist, and that it is greater than can be thought. As in the *Monologion*, Anselm's ambition is to show that this being exists both in some sense as other things do and that it exists in a way so distinct from them it can hardly be called existence. And this is simply to say in another way that its existence is both necessary and paradoxical, that the argument drawing out the consequences from the formula, like the formula

pessimistic. Though there is much more that can and should be said on this issue, I would at least reply to Kenny that even among metaphors we can distinguish between those that are more or less illuminating. For Anselm, the formula, though assuming no more than a basic and widely shared notion of God, get us *to* existence, power, justice, etc. and *beyond* any of our notions and attributes.

191. *Resp*. 9, S I, 138, 6–7.

192. Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Arguments," *Philosophical Review* 69 (1960): 41–62, reprint, *The Many-Faced Argument*, 301–20. Cf. Charles Hartshorne, "What Did Anselm Discover?" *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 17 (1962): 213–22, reprint, *The Many-Faced Argument*, 321–33. For the original objection in Kant see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965, c1929), A598; B626, A598; B627.

itself, is intended by Anselm both as a piece of affirmative and negative theology.

For a time, it seemed that simply mentioning that existence was not a predicate was all that was needed to defeat the argument, but a number of recent commentators no longer find that this objection is a serious threat to the argument's success. Davies, sounding like Anselm himself, argues that what Anselm is claiming is not that existence is a predicate but that "something only *in intellectu* cannot be thought of as something than which nothing greater can be thought."[193] For Logan, "it is not so much that existence adds anything to the concept of God, but that existence subtracted from the concept of God (X) leaves one with a concept of something else (not-X)."[194] Campbell glosses Anselm's claim that being in reality is greater than being only in thought helpfully, noting that Anselm "is not basing his inference on saying that the concept of an existing X is different from the concept of an X. He is basing it on the different valuations ascribable to the thing depending on whether we think *that* it exists or not."[195] These formulations, though helpful, are at the level of language. They claim, in other words, that what Anselm is claiming can be said in such a way as to be defensible. However, it is helpful to look a bit more deeply at what it means to accept these claims even as reformulated.

There are two things at stake in Anselm's claim that it is better to exist *in re* than only *in intellectu*: that there is a difference between thinking of something only in the mind vs. in reality, and that one is better than the other. And, there is a third, even more basic one implied by these: the notion that some things are better than others and that we can say with some certainty what some of those are. To take the last of these first, Anselm is, though in a complex way to which we will return, relying on the ability of the mind to distinguish and order greater and lesser degrees of being; it is faith in what Louis Mackey calls the "logic of hierarchy."[196] Anselm makes this reliance explicit in his reply to Gaunilo. Contending that Gaunilo can and does conceive of this being, Anselm argues: "For anything which is less good, in so far as it is good, is similar to the greater good. Hence it is clear to any rational mind whatever that by ascending from the lesser goods to the greater good from which something greater

193. Brian Davies, "Anselm and the Ontological Argument," in *Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow, 170–71.

194. Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion, 159–60; 189–91.

195. Richard Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding: A Study of Anselm's* Proslogion *Argument on the Existence of God* (Canberra, Australia: The Australian National University, 1976), 86.

196. Louis H. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word: Essays in Medieval Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 79–80.

can be known, we can make a fairly good conjecture about that greater than which nothing can be conceived."[197]

Some claim that Anselm cannot make this appeal that is essentially an appeal back to the argument of the *Monologion* about proceeding from lesser goods ordered hierarchically to that which is the highest and the source of goodness, without contradicting his claim that the *Proslogion* argument *alone* can prove what is believed about God.[198] However, the formula itself, more specifically *understanding* the formula, which is crucial to Anselm's argument, already contains within it the notion which is laid out explicitly in the *Monologion* and in the reply to Gaunilo: that we can order things from lesser to greater, less to better as a condition for the possibility of understanding the formula.[199] We do not have to be agreed in all cases about what is better than what. Figuring out what is greater or better occupies large parts of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and, thus, is clearly something about which Anselm takes it we have to reason. Anselm does seem to think that we can come to some basic agreements about what is better than what. His stance is much like Augustine's in his argument for God's existence in *De libero arbitrio*. Augustine argues that we can all agree on some principles, for example, that the incorrupt is better than the corrupt, the eternal better than the temporal, that it is better to live justly than not, and so forth.[200] Anselm makes a similar set of claims to Gaunilo, that good without beginning and end is better than one that is limited by time, that something unchanging is preferable to something changing.[201] Anselm's reliance on this notion is only formal in the construction of the formula; no particular claims are made about what is better or worse, lesser or greater, but clearly he takes real understanding of the formula, attended to with understanding, to entail a grasp of at least some things that are better and some things worse. As Anselm makes clear to Gaunilo, the possibility of ordering things as greater and lesser is something one gives up only at the cost of being able to participate in this argument or any other.

197. *Resp*. 8, S I, 137, 14–18.

198. McGill, "Recent Discussions," 102–4.

199. Cf. Viola, "Origine et portée," 367–69. As Viola makes clear there is a sense in which experience plays a role here, though not a specific experience. There is a need for "internal experience" of the one who thinks and whose thought is drawn along a "dialectic of greatness" toward higher and higher things, but this dialectic also must have some external reference to our experience of things as greater and lesser. For Viola this shows another way in which Anselm's argument is not ontological, because it is not *a priori* in Kant's sense. See also, Viola, "Saint Anselme est-it le pére," 120–26.

200. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio*, book II, 28. Cf. Mackey's similar claim, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 80.

201. *Resp*. 8, S I, 137, 18–28.

This logic of hierarchy is what supports Anselm's rejection of Gaunilo's claim that he could apply the logic of Anselm's argument to prove that a perfect island exists. Anselm guffaws at this suggestion, promising to give Gaunilo the island if he can successfully use Anselm's argument to prove it exists.[202] Anselm seems stung by the criticism, responding sarcastically, but it is a stretch to claim, as Woltersdorff does, that this is because he has no answer. It seems more likely that it is because he finds Gaunilo's position ludicrous and is annoyed to have his argument caricatured so wrongly. Though he does not answer as directly as he might, we can piece together the full argument from what Anselm does say. He takes the conclusion of the "lost island" argument to be that it, like the being than which none greater can be conceived, "cannot be thought not to exist." His response is that only that which is captured by the formula cannot be thought not to exist, for he says that whatever can be thought not to exist can be thought to have a beginning and an end.[203] He has also already explained earlier in his reply that whatever can be thought not to exist can be thought to begin to exist; similarly with anything that can be thought without some of its parts; anything (like an island) which is composite can be thought without some of its parts; hence, it can be thought not to exist.[204] Thus, Anselm's response to Gaunilo is that "that which none greater can be conceived" is the only thing whose existence "is incompatible with being an existent but possibly non-existent being or with its being surpassable by some other being."[205]

On the most famous objection to the argument, that existence is not a predicate (and therefore cannot be a perfection), a number of commentators have pointed out the anachronism of the objection. The notion of existence at stake in the view that existence is not a predicate is the view that "existence in space and time is a brute thereness, too immediate to be thought and too real to need explanation."[206] This way of

202. *Pro insip*. 6, 128, 14–32. *Resp*. 3, 6–9. Nicholas Woltersdorff takes Anselm to be nonresponsive to Gaunilo here and takes Gaunilo's objection to be devastating. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "In Defense of Gaunilo's Defense of the Fool," in *Christian Perpsectives on Religious Knowledge*, edited by C. Stephen Evans and Merold Westphal (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 87–111. See the discussion of Woltersdorff's argument in Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 78.

203. *Resp*. 3, 133, 15–17.

204. *Resp*. 1, 131, 2–5; 18–132, 2.

205. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 87–88. Visser and Williams thus take it that "instead of saying that existence is a great-making property, Anselm is saying that certain great-making properties entail existence" (91). They hope in this way not just to defend Anselm from Gaunilo's lost island objection but to relieve Anselm of the burden of having to hold that existence is a perfection. While I agree with their analysis of Anselm's response to Gaunilo, I do think Anselm clearly does claim that, in some sense at least, for that being, existence is better than nonexistence .

206. McGill, "Recent Discussions," 88.

understanding the claim that existence is a predicate is how Hume approaches the issue in the *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Cleanthes asserts that whatever we can think of as existing we can think of as not existing. Hence, there can never be (as he takes Anselm to assert) a contradiction in asserting the nonexistence of anything (including that than which none greater can be conceived).[207] However, Hume merely asserts this claim, based on examples of things we experience empirically.[208] Thus, Hume assumes the point at issue: that we cannot make any inferences concerning the existence of things but only know the existence of that which we experience or at least can experience through our senses. Hume's empiricism—that any ideas which are not traceable to a sense impression are either fictions or mere relations of ideas—is an assertion from which he begins, not something he argues for.

It is sometimes claimed that Anselm has another, Neoplatonic notion of existence in mind that allows him to think of it as a perfection, which can function as a predicate and which is better than existence only in the mind.[209] There are two different notions of existence, existence as admitting of degrees (the Neoplatonic notion) and the more modern "radical on/off notion of existence," which something has or does not have (clearly assumed by Hume's objection).[210] The so-called on/off notion, Campbell argues, actually has its origins in the notion of creation in which, over against Gnostic views, the existence of all things was asserted to be good, combined with the notion that "since God had either created a thing or he had not, it either existed or it did not."[211] In one sense, Anselm is working with the on/off notion in the way he takes up the challenge from the fool, so that he can consider "whether such a nature as he believed God to be was merely thought up or whether it should be acknowledged to be in reality too, independently of people thinking of it."[212] Anselm does not, then, reject the notion that existence is an either/or, but he does reject the notion that we cannot ever reason to existence, and that existence in reality vs. only in the mind cannot be ordered as better to worse. We could say that Anselm is closer to the roots of the no-

207. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, edited by Henry D. Aiken (New York: Hafner Press, 1977, c1948), part IX, 57–60. Cf. Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion, 160.

208. Logan, *Reading Anselm's* Proslogion, 160, 192–93. Logan's strategy against a number of objections, including this one, is to argue that whatever the value of these objections if applied to things *other than God*, Anselm makes quite clear that the being than which none greater can be conceived is a unique case not necessarily subject to this criticism.

209. Southern, *Portrait in Landscape*, 134.

210. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 74–77.

211. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 76.

212. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 76.

tion of existence as an on/off switch derived from the notion of creation than Hume. However, Anselm retains as well the notion of existence as a good admitting of degrees.

However, that Anselm maintains that existence *in re* is better than existence only in the intellect does not mean that Anselm's argument is irretrievably tied up with assumptions that are either or both Neoplatonic or Christian (grounded in the idea of creation) notions of existence, for which there can be no independent support. Anselm's claim is essentially that, as Campbell explains, "the truth of a positive existential judgment means not only that a preferred predicate is true of the subject but that that subject is consequently to be more highly thought of."[213] To oppose this claim is to hold that "actual" (or "real") simply means "occurring in this world" (as opposed to in other possible worlds), Campbell argues, such that to say that something is real or really exists means only "to refer to the world in which the utterance occurs" and does not give the thing that exists in my world as speaker any more value in itself, but only in relation to the one who is speaker.[214] Anselm clearly has what Meinong called a "prejudice in favor of the actual," but the difficulty in defending him on this score might not be because such a stance is so rare or controversial, but because it is so basic, some have argued.[215] It is not hard to reject the view that the value of the actual is equivalent to and merely relatively more valuable than the possible. As Robert Adams puts it, "we do not think that the difference in respect of actuality between Henry Kissinger and the Wizard of Oz is just a difference in their relations to us."[216] Campbell concurs, noting, "it is because what can be thought, even if it is not real, is nevertheless thought on the basis of what is real, that reality has absolutely the special status we normally ascribe to it."[217] Louis Mackey makes essentially the same point without going through and beyond possible world theory. Both the atheist and theist in their dispute effectively agree that real existence is greater than ideal being or else they would have no significant dispute; "it is," Mackey concludes, "a presup-

213. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 79.

214. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 80–81. He is explaining and arguing against the view put forward by David Lewis in "Anselm and Actuality," *Nous* IV (1970): 175–88.

215. Alexius Meinong, "Über Gegenstandstheorie," in *Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*, edited by Alexius Meinong (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1904), 1–51, §§2, 11. Cited in Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*. Meinong, of course, as Campbell notes, was not in favor of the prejudice. See Johann Marek, "Alexius Meinong," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2009 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2009/entries/meinong/.

216. Robert Merrihew Adams, "Theories of Actuality," *Nous* VIII (1974): 215.

217. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 83.

position that could only be denied at the cost of trivializing the point at issue."[218]

Even more basic to Anselm's argument than the ordering of the actual to the possible as better to worse is the ordering of word to thing. "Unless we can rely on the bonding of language to reality, none of the other hierarchies we imagine—all of which purport to represent the aggregate of things in an array of words—can be trusted."[219] Since in this one (and only one) case, that to which the name refers must exist, the argument proves the possibility of ordering lower to higher in the form of the order of words to things; it is like the point of pyramid uniting language and being. Though language and being are more distantly related further down the pyramid, they are nonetheless perfectly joined at the top as the notion perfectly captures its object. The formula "locates[s] the moment of linguistic soundness, the plenitude of presence from which other language may deviate but to which it is always bound."[220] In other words, we use language with a kind of faith that it points more or less roughly and more or less most of the time to the things we intend. But there is no necessary connection between words and things and, of course, as happens not so infrequently, we find we are not making ourselves understood to others or reaching towards the things in the world, their features and relationships accurately. In the formula, in this one and only one case, Anselm argues, however, words necessarily capture their object; its connection to reality is guaranteed by its meaning. Intension leads inextricably in this one and only one case to extension. No wonder, of course, that the argument is so maligned by those shaped by modern logic and its project of reducing intension to extension.

Gaunilo attempts to "drive wedges" between word, thought, and thing, which are linked in the argument, arguing that he can say the words but has no conception or understanding to go along with it. [221] He grasps it, he says, only "according to the word," that is, "as by one who does not know it and only conceives according to the movement of the mind produced by hearing the word and attempting to fashion for itself the signification of the perceived word."[222] In his response to Gaunilo, Anselm must rejoin word, thought, and thing. Anselm refuses to let Gaunilo make the claim that he has no understanding of the formula. For, Anselm argues, if he understands the words, he understands, and if he understands, the notion is in the understanding. And if in the understanding, it is understood.[223]

218. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 82.
219. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 80.
220. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 81.
221. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 89.
222. *Pro Insip*. 4, S I, 127, 19–21.
223. *Resp*. 2, S I, 132, 11–20.

Moreover, Anselm reminds Gaunilo, if he conceives at all on hearing the formula, then he conceives of a being which cannot even be conceived not to exist, and if he does not conceive, then he cannot conceive of the *nonexistence* of that being any more than its existence.[224]

For all that, however, there must be a distinction as well as a necessary and unbreakable connection between the words of the formula and the conclusion that what it names must exist. Conceiving and understanding the formula must be distinct so that Anselm can get to his conclusion without assuming it, without, in other words, making his argument either unnecessary or fallacious, even though they must be inextricably linked so that once the notion is conceived the being it names is understood to exist. While Gaunilo chides Anselm for failing to distinguish when he should (between "conceiving" and "conceiving according to the word"), he also complains that Anselm inserts distinctions without justification. Anselm, for example, claims that conceiving the nonexistence of the being greater than which none can be conceived is different from conceiving the nonexistence of any other object, but Gaunilo asserts that they are exactly the same.[225] Gaunilo has claimed that it makes sense to hold that God's nonexistence (like that of any other real object) cannot be *understood* but can be *conceived*, as Gaunilo or the fool himself does. Anselm counters that we can conceive but not understand the nonexistence of anything that actually exists, but of the being than which none greater can be conceived, we can neither conceive nor understand its nonexistence. Moreover, Anselm adds a yet finer distinction. For he says that in one sense no existing object can be conceived not to exist, because then one would conceive existence and nonexistence at the same time. On the other hand, he says we can conceive of the nonexistence of objects we know to exist because we can *conceive* of their nonexistence, while we *know* their existence.[226] Thus Anselm not only distinguishes between understanding and conceiving the nonexistence of real objects, he adds a distinction between two different ways of conceiving the nonexistence of real objects.

The simplicity of the original argument becomes, in the debate with Gaunilo, a web of complex and fine distinctions. Anselm's reply to Gaunilo combines identifications too obvious to be doubted (sounding at times

224. *Resp.* 3, S I, 133, 14–15.

225. *Pro Insip.* 2, S I, 125, 14–20.

226. *Resp.* 4, S I, 134, 10–18. Anselm seems to know his distinctions are very fine and have to be considered carefully to be grasped, for after making it, he adds, "If one will distinguish between the two senses of the statement," as if to say that it is no small feat to understand his distinction (*Resp.* 4, S I, 134, 13–14).

like arguments which have the form, "these must be the same because they are the same") and distinctions so fine they seem almost without a difference. The reply, like the original text, wavers between the plainly obvious and the hopelessly obscure. In that sense, Anselm keeps repeating the original experience of his search for the formula. That single argument was, he writes in the prologue, both tremendously elusive—in despair he almost gave up his search for it as it kept escaping him—and almost perfectly self-evident—so clear that it forced itself upon him.[227] Southern captures Anselm's original hope as he set out to find his argument in the intuition that "if God exists, there must be a level of experience at which it is impossible to think of God as not existing." The debate with Gaunilo and others is about the "level [at which] this impossibility [can] be made to appear." "Must," he asks, "the demonstration await the experience of the Beatific Vision? Or can it, at the very opposite extreme, be made out at the level of linguistic-logical analysis?"[228] Southern quite rightly concludes that Anselm claims the latter and Gaunilo the former. Anselm cements that perception in his claim that for someone to reject his argument amounts to saying that he cannot conceive or understand what he says. "If such a one is found," Anselm concludes, "not only should his word be rejected but also he himself should be condemned."[229]

However, it is also true that in some sense Anselm also claims the opposite, postponing indefinitely any demonstration of God's existence and nature. He does so explicitly in the passages I have already cited (and to which I will return below) where he concedes that God is *greater* than can be understood. But further, there is a kind of recognition of it in Anselm's direction that Gaunilo's objections and his reply must be included in any further publication of the work.[230] By Anselm's own decree, the possibility of the argument's rejection is given along with his assertion that it cannot be rejected.[231] This does not mean that Anselm thinks his own arguments in response to Gaunilo are failures or that they cannot be

227. *Pros*. Prooem., S I, 93, 10–19.

228. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 135–36.

229. *Resp*. 9, S I, 138, 13–15.

230. Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury/Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, edited and translated by Richard W. Southern (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), book I, xix, 31.

231. Gasper argues for an at least additional motive for Anselm's wish to include Gaunilo's objections and his reply. If, as Gasper argues, Anselm's early versions of the text were destroyed twice by someone who disapproved of Anselm's project, Anselm's response to Gaunilo's written and reasoned objections, including them in future versions of the work, then Anselm could be understood as making of Gaunilo's response of reasoned objection and engagement in the reasoning process a model for other objectors to follow, using reason instead of reactionary attempts to censor the work. Gasper, "Envy, Jealousy and the Boundaries of Orthodoxy."

persuasive to Gaunilo or others. Rather, the fact that he must make them at all is a failure to achieve that to which he originally aspired in the *Proslogion*. Gaunilo's very objections show that the nonexistence of God *can* be thought in some sense (even though not truly or consistently). If Anselm's ambition for the project was not just to prove his conclusion but to prove it simply, elegantly, and indubitably with one "single argument," by those standards, Anselm has not succeeded and admits as much.

But perhaps Anselm's ambition was something different. Or to put it somewhat differently, it might have been what he hoped but not what he expected. For as the debate with Gaunilo makes clear, the argument demands that the words of the proof be said or read with understanding. Gaunilo's protest that he can say the words without understanding but still depend on language to function is what Anselm argues to be impossible.[232] The denial of the argument's conclusion, that God exists, is not strictly internally inconsistent or impossible, but what Gaunilo asserts is, Anselm argues, inconsistent with the fact of his asserting it. This form of argument, called *redarguitio elenchica* or retorsive argument, Anselm uses, as Mackey writes so elegantly, "to expose the atheists' folly by showing that the principles they hold are incompatible with the acts by which they enunciate them."[233] The atheists may say, "there is no God" and Gaunilo may protest that he does not understand "that than which none greater can be conceived" and so cannot infer existence from it. Anselm's reply is that the objection is either meaningless (if Gaunilo understands nothing of the formula, his denial is vacuous) or inconsistent (he understands but claims not to understand). In order to make his objection, Gaunilo must break down the connections between words, thoughts, and things. This, of course, he can do; however, Anselm points out that when he does, he also "dismantle[s] the conditions of all rational belief" because he dismantles the possibility of meaningful discourse.[234] Not just religious faith is undermined but the faith in language to refer to things generally, a faith (not knowledge or certainty) without which we can neither speak nor function. On this account, Mackey concludes, "atheism is not credal recalcitrance but verbal nihilism."[235]

This view of Anselm's argument falls somewhere between the notion that the argument should work of and on its own, completely disembodied and abstracted from any speaker, and the view that the argument

232. Cf. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 83.
233. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 91.
234. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 92.
235. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 93.

functions only for those who accept the terms of a certain kind of language game in which "God" is a necessary being.[236] The latter makes the argument a fairly egregious case of *petitio principii*, but the former claims too much, for then the argument should command immediate and universal assent. Campbell argues, rightly I think, that the argument relies on the conditions for the possibility of our shared public discourse: "there are limits to how the public language we in fact possess can be employed, limits which constrain both the fool and the believer."[237] The faith in this language, a faith which cannot be independently grounded or verified, is the faith that the believer and the fool share, Anselm points out. The fool's problem is that he fails to recognize the faith that makes his argument with Anselm possible.[238]

Following the Logic of Perfection

Anselm's text does not, of course, stop with the conclusion that God exists. Anselm goes on to follow out the logic of the being than which none greater can be conceived, deriving the rest of the divine attributes from the original formula. In each case, Anselm begins with the notion that God must have that quality because it is better to have it than not, but he always ends up showing that there is some contradiction in attributing that quality to God. Sensibility seems to require a body; omnipotence seems to include the capacity to do evil, being compassionate seems to mean being subject to passion, and being just seems to exclude mercy.

By way of a solution to these problems, Anselm crafts a different sense of each perfection, one which can be attributed to God. Hence, God can perceive but in a higher way, without going through a corporeal sense.[239] God is compassionate such that, he explains, "when [God] sees our suffering, we feel the effect of mercy but [God] does not feel the affect."[240] God cannot be corrupted, cannot lie, and cannot make what is true false, because, Anselm explains, to do those things is impotence rather than power. These things are called capabilities by "another manner of speaking [*alio genere loquendi*]."[241] Echoing his analysis of the *Fragments,* An-

236. The latter is Malcolm's reflection in "Anselm's Ontological Argument," in *The Many-Faced Argument*, edited by Hick and McGill, 314–15. See Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 198, who points out this element of Malcolm's interpretation.

237. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 197.

238. Cf. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 198. Campbell credits Hayen with the insight that Anselm is able to address the believer and the fool with the same discourse not because (or not just because) of the reason but also the faith they share, though it seems that Hayen means something a little closer to religious faith that is shared. See Hayen, "The Role of the Fool," 178.

239. *Pros*. 6, S I, 105, 4–6.

240. *Pros*. 8, S I, 106, 11–12.

241. *Pros*. 7, S I, 105, 12–16.

selm explains that we say something is when it is not (saying "it is so" to confirm a statement about what is not the case) and call something a doing or action when it is a kind of inactivity (e.g., sitting or resting).[242] In these cases Anselm exposes the deceptiveness of the surface of language which hides a deeper and sometimes opposite meaning. But he does not stop there. Anselm, true to his tendency to turn the paradoxical into the necessary and vice versa, gives a paradoxical twist to his solution: "since the more one has this power [to do evil, lie, etc.], the more powerful are adversity and perversity in him and the more powerless is he against them."[243] Anselm distinguishes two senses of power which resolves the original paradox of God lacking the power to do some things though he is omnipotent, but then uses the term in two different senses within the same sentence, calling attention to rather than moving cleanly beyond the original paradox of omnipotence.[244]

Justice poses a problem both in itself and in terms of its consistency with mercy. In the course of working to solve the problem of how God can be just when he saves the wicked, Anselm seems to make it worse. "For you save the just because justice goes with them, but the damned you free by justice. Those [the just you save] supported by their merits, these [the unjust you save] in opposition to their merits. Those, knowing the good you have given, these, ignoring the evil you hate."[245] When mercy is added to justice, the conundrum deepens. Anselm reasons that if God is merciful because good, and good because just, then he is merciful because just.[246] But how is God merciful because just? "Help me," he prays, "so that I may understand what I say."[247] The solution requires a distinction only slightly less problematic sounding than these intensifications of the problem. As in the case of mercy, which required a distinction between what we experience versus what God feels, Anselm explains that God is just not because of what is appropriate to the judged but because of what is appropriate to God as the highest good.[248]

The derivation of these attributes follows the pattern we found in the

242. *Pros.* 7, S I, 105, 18–23. See LF, 25–26.

243. *Pros.* 7, S I, 105, 26–27.

244. Cf. Augustine, *Sermo*, 113, 2; 114, 4. In Sermon 113, Augustine does describe the way in which being almighty means that there is a list of things God cannot do, but he does not create a paradox by using "power" in two different senses in the same sentence.

245. *Pros.* 9, S I, 107, 24–26.

246. *Pros.* 9, S I, 108, 5–7.

247. *Pros.* 9, S I, 108, 8–9.

248. *Pros.* 10, S I, 109, 4–6. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 147, 13. Augustine asserts that God is just both when he condemns and when he shows mercy but he does not explore the tension between justice and mercy as thoroughly as Anselm, nor attempt to given any further explanation. See also *Contra Faustum Manicheum* 21, 2–3 where Augustine is more negative, noting the "hiddenness" of God as "most just" in both damning and justifying the impious.

Monologion. Anselm moves from paradox to resolution to further paradox. These chapters manage to bring to mind both later scholastic developments and more mystical theology. For, on the one hand, his opening discussion of each attribute essentially lays out the reasons on both sides of the question of whether the attribute can belong to God; Anselm then goes on to resolve the question in the manner of a *responsio*. On the other hand, Anselm tends to run together the reasons pro and contra something as a divine property. Both objections and responses sound less like dialectical arguments and more like attempts to get beyond reason and language, to move toward their breakdown as a way of more closely representing the unrepresentable. What is most striking about Anselm is that he takes both scholastic and mystical projects to be the same. Following out the logic of the divine being leads him to conclusions which are indubitable, found in the identity of word and thing, subject and predicate, and paradoxical, signifying the gap between reason, logic, and language, on the one hand, and what Anselm is seeking, on the other.

In the second half of the text, the pendulum swings and stays on the side of negative theology. The attributes of sensibility, omnipotence, justice, and compassion follow from the understanding of God as everything that is better to be than not to be. But in chapter 11, there is a shift. From here on, understanding can no longer be a positive guide; the chain of argument can no longer be from what we think it is better to be to God. Anselm must abandon this line of reasoning as he realizes that it is God who defines what is better and what those "better" attributes consist of: "For that alone is just which you will; and that alone unjust which you do not will."[249] After a short survey of the attributes which are by definition the excess of those things in human experience (infinity in time and space), Anselm reflects on the ambiguous "progress" his argument has made thus far. [250] God is, he concludes, found and not found, seen in part but not wholly.[251] His conclusion, now attempting to escape the limits of his own experience, is that God is not that which none greater can be conceived but is a being "greater than which can be conceived."[252] Anselm pauses to note the paradox of his position vis-á-vis God: "O whole and blessed truth, how far you are from me, who am so near to you! How remote you are from my sight, though I am so present to yours."[253] He concludes more negatively, "Everywhere you are wholly present, yet I do not see you . . . in you I am moved and I am, yet I cannot come near you."[254] Anselm's quest has

249. *Pros*. 11, S I, 109, 18–19.
250. *Pros*. 12–13, S I, 110–11.
251. *Pros*. 14, S I, 111, 11–14.
252. *Pros*. 15, S I, 112, 16–17.
253. *Pros*. 16, S I, 112, 27–113, 1–2.
254. *Pros*. 16, S I, 113, 2–4.

what Clayton calls "a paradoxical outcome": "The nearer he comes to understanding God the more he sees that God is not to be understood."[255]

Anselm struggles to lift himself out of this darkness by attempting to understand the way in which God possesses the perfections he has thus far enumerated. The incompleteness of his vision of God, he concludes, is due to his inability to grasp all of these perfections at once as attributes of a single, perfect being.[256] This conclusion leads to the paradox true for all divine attributes, that they are not parts of God's being "but all are one; and each of these is the whole which you are, and which all the rest are."[257] The problem is especially pointed in the attempt to articulate the nature of divine eternity. "You were not yesterday, nor will you be tomorrow; but yesterday, today, and tomorrow you are. Rather, you are neither yesterday nor today nor tomorrow but simply you are, outside all time. . . . For nothing contains you, but you contain all things."[258] Anselm concludes, God and only God is wholly what he is and "He who is."[259] Thus, the philosophical name of God has led to the biblical name. Anselm has gone "from what we call him to what he calls himself."[260] Anselm appends to this name of God a brief derivation of the second and third persons of the Trinity. The Word of God can be nothing other than God himself; nor can the love between God and Word be anything less than God or the Word, since God loves himself and the Word to the same degree that they are.[261] These names, like all the others, are identical with the divine being, perfectly derivable and substitutable for the other names.

Anselm seems to end his journey in triumph, having found what he sought when he writes, "this is the one necessary being in which is every good, or rather which is all and the only and the whole and only good."[262] A closer look, however, reveals that the ecstasy is only projected rather than achieved, not grounded in the present enjoyment of God but only in anticipation of it. Anselm writes, "if individual goods are delectable, conceive in earnestness how delectable is that good which contains the pleasantness of all goods. If created life is good, how good is creative life?"[263] Anselm admits that he cannot describe or fully conceive this joy which "eye has not seen nor ear heard."[264] Instead he prays for the increase in his desire for it: "Let my soul hunger for it; let my flesh thirst for it; let my whole substance desire it, until I enter into 'the joy of

255. Clayton, "The Otherness of Anselm," 138.
256. *Pros.* 18, S I, 114, 24–115, 1.
257. *Pros.* 18, S I, 115, 1–4.
258. *Pros.* 19, 115, 11–15. Cf. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 89, 3.
259. *Pros.* 22, S I, 116, 15–16.
260. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 99.
261. *Pros.* 23, S I, 117, 12–14.
262. *Pros.* 23, S I, 117, 20–22.
263. *Pros.* 24, S I, 117, 26–118, 4.
264. *Pros.* 26, S I, 121, 6–9; 1 Cor 2:9.

the Lord' 'who is' God three and one."[265] "Let me progress in knowledge of you *here*, and *there* let it be made full; let me grow in love for you, and *there* let it be full; so that *here* my joy may be in great hope, and *there* in full reality. . . . Meanwhile, let my mind meditate and let my tongue speak therefrom."[266] Anselm ends in the uncertainties of the subjunctive, in the contrasts between "here" and "there," and stuck in the "meanwhile [*interim*]," praying for the union that, even given the notion from which the *Proslogion* began, has not yet occurred.[267] The strong sense he conveys is of the distance between where he wants to be and where he is.

The point is not that nothing has been achieved in the *Proslogion*. Surely it has. Anselm has moved from God as "the being than which none greater can be conceived" to God as a being "greater than can be conceived," from God as possessor of a list of attributes to that being in whom these multiple attributes are (somehow) one, and from the only being who is wholly who he is to God as three in one. His progress in grasping God's being has quickened his desire and added joy to his longing by giving more reality to its object. However, the progress is in a sense paradoxical; he progresses to a sense of God as beyond his grasp and concludes not in the satiation of desire but in its increase.

The Pursuit of Linguistic Integrity

These two philosophical meditations end with a sense that while there is an intense desire and impetus toward the end; they also end in an acute sense of the way in which the journey they initiate is almost as long as at the end as when they began. Toward the end of the *Monologion*, Anselm writes, "it appears that nothing prohibits our discussion [*disputatio*] of the supreme nature thus far from being true, and yet this nature itself remains nonetheless ineffable."[268] His inquiry concludes in this riddle because theological language is the language of riddles (*aenigmata*).[269] "We do not express with precision [things] as they are; but by another expression we indicate what we are unwilling or unable to express with precision." Anselm concludes, "we express and do not express, see and yet do not see, one and the same object" because we do not see the thing itself but see it through another.[270] So while from one perspective Anselm has

265. *Pros*. 26, S I, 121, 24–122, 2.

266. *Pros*. 26, S I, 121, 16–18, 22–23. My emphases. Cf. Augustine, *Sermo* 21, 1.

267. Cf. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 105–6. Stolz puts the emphasis on the joy that it achieved (rather than simply hoped for) within the work and uses it to support his view of the *Proslogion* as a piece of mystical theology. See Stolz, "Anselm's Theology," 190–91.

268. *Mono*. 65, S I, 76, 19–21.

269. *Mono*. 65, S I, 77, 1–3.

270. *Mono*. 65, S I, 76, 11–17.

constructed a link between the mind and the thing through language and images, he is intensely aware that the thing itself has not been delivered, that the omnipresent God is still inaccessible and absent.

Anselm's *Proslogion* and *Monologion* do not just claim that language and experience allow the conclusion that God exists; they claim that neither language nor experience make sense without God. However, Anselm holds with just as much fervor and excess that neither language nor experience can make any satisfying sense of God. This dyad of views is common to any number of medieval thinkers, but Anselm pushes both of these principles to such extremes that together they become two halves of the paradox, that the nature of God is both obvious and inaccessible. His heroic efforts bring to mind (anachronistically) the way in which St. Ignatius exhorted believers to pray as if everything depended on God and act as if everything depended on themselves. Anselm is claiming something analogous, reasoning as if reason can understand God, the most supremely intelligible object, and praying as if reason is completely unequal to the task of grasping anything about God even in the most incomplete sense. Thus Anselm concludes his discussion of God's nature in the *Monologion* by recognizing both these truths at once, that his account can be true even though their subject is itself ineffable.[271]

There is a tendency to read only half of this diptych in Anselm, either the half claiming to have found necessary and indubitable arguments, or those expressing pious incapacity to understand God. Historians of philosophy tend to do the first, those of religion and spirituality, the second.[272] Marilyn Adams, recognizing both motives in Anselm, creates a distinction to dissolve the apparent contradiction, contrasting what it is to understand God, at least to some extent (the project of the treatises), with what it is to see or experience God (something that cannot be achieved in this life).[273] While this is clearly a distinction Anselm implicitly makes and would recognize, it can domesticate the problem, take the anguish out of it in a way that is not consonant with Anselm's aspirations.

271. *Mono*. 65, S I, 76, 19–21.

272. See Stolz, "Anselm's Theology," 185–86. For an even stronger reading of Anselm as mystical theologian see Evdokimov, "L'aspect apophatique," 233–58. More philosophically oriented commentators like Adams, Hopkins and Richardson, Henry, and others ultimately agree or would agree with Adams that even if Anselm has mystical or religious aspirations, his project is an intellectual and ultimately philosophical one, both in terms of its means and ends.

273. Marilyn Adams, "Praying the *Proslogion*: Anselm's Theological Method," in *The Rationality of Belief* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), 17–18. Marcia Colish seems to recognize the same duality in Anselm. She writes, "With the proper attitude and technique, then, words about God can be true and thus necessary. At the same time, Anselm stresses, no statement about God can be totally accurate or totally convincing." Colish, *Mirror of Language*, 93.

For, according to Anselm, the purpose for which the human mind is created is not, as Kant thought, to recognize the moral law, but to know and love the supreme good.[274] The rational power, Anselm maintains, is the power to distinguish "the good from the not-good, the greater good from the lesser." This power will be useless unless its distinctions are true and unless it then love the greater good over the lesser, and, ultimately, the supreme good above all others.[275] The supreme being demands that it be loved. The creature that loves and desires it will be satisfied by nothing else than the possession and enjoyment of the supreme being.[276]

Since, then, what matters to Anselm passionately is direct and immediate access to God and since this is the passion that motivates his rational explorations, the impossibility of reaching the former with the latter creates excruciating tension for Anselm. Anselm is not naïve or in any way surprised by failure of human language and reason to lead him to the divine. He simply makes the decision to act out in dramatic terms the attempt and its failure, not simply accepting it in advance of making the effort or scaling back his aspirations in order to be able to meet them. Adams's implicit separation of the spiritual and intellectual projects is foreign to Anselm and seems to anticipate something like Aquinas's distinction between the two different ways theology can be wisdom. In one sense, Aquinas argues, the wise man is like the virtuous man who judges correctly about virtue from his own virtuous nature; in another sense, the wise man is the one who has knowledge of virtue but not virtue itself.[277] Ermanno Bencivenga attempts to face this contradiction head on, exploring a variety of analogies for how to understand Anselm's apparently impossible project.[278] This issue is central to Anselm's thought; it is an impasse he reaches again and again, and attempts to overcome again and again. Anselm seeks to establish (and sees himself as successful in establishing) with necessary reasons what he holds at the same time is paradoxical, completely inaccessible to human reason.

Kant pointed out that there is a tension between proving necessary conclusions and reaching interesting ones, ones that end in a truly different place from which they begin, and, thus, produce genuinely new knowledge. For Kant, analytic arguments achieve the former and synthetic arguments the latter. Like Kant, Anselm wants to achieve both

274. *Mono*. 68, S I, 79, 1–5.

275. *Mono*. 69, S I, 79, 12–18.

276. *Mono*. 70, S I, 80, 25–26.

277. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3.

278. Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*. The different chapters of his book propose different ways to understand Anselm's project for reason as friend or foe of faith and as falling short of its object.

certain and genuinely new conclusions with one and the same argument. What Anselm strives for, most famously but by no means exclusively in the *Proslogion*, are arguments that seem to start with nothing but end with everything, arguments whose conclusions are so thoroughly necessary that they are indubitable, but also so unexpected that they are astounding. What first-time reader has not blinked twice on coming to the end of the ontological argument, wondering how such seemingly unproblematic premises end in such a stunning conclusion?

We also see the reflection of Anselm's desire for necessary conclusions in his methods: the use of valid deductive argument forms and pure introspection, unmixed with references to authority. In his arguments, Anselm aim is to form a set of unbreakable links between premise and conclusion such that even if there are, to use a musical metaphor, multiple beats to the bar, the reader should "feel it in one," as conductors say, that is, as one beat to the bar, as a integral whole. Anselm makes this explicit in his stated preference for the *Proslogion's* "single argument" over the *Monologion's* multiple arguments. Here Anselm wants the reader to experience the entire piece of music as one, one beat to its single bar, if you will. The lack of explicit citations from authorities or scripture only compounds that sense of a single line of thought traversed in one motion. Objections are considered but they are the product of and not an intrusion on the single line of thought Anselm pursues relentlessly. Unlike a later scholastic disputed question, in which the sources are explicitly cited, Anselm so completely absorbs the tradition that the beams and bricks from which his arguments are constructed merge completely into his structure, making his voice the only audible one, and modulating his view such that it is that of reason itself.

But Anselm is not only interested in outlining the necessity of the conclusions he works toward but also in displaying their paradoxical character. In the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, the paradoxes are those that follow from perfection, perfect being, and perfect language. Anselm makes language the metaphor for the Incarnation as the Word made flesh, and the Incarnation becomes the model according to which to understand the shortcomings of human language. But the perfect Word of God can hardly be a word in the ordinary sense because the Word, second person of the Trinity, is identical with God, so identical that it does not merely point to but *is* its speaker and its referent. And the Word as exemplar for creation is more really the thing than the thing itself. Both the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* consider the existence and attributes of God as following from a consideration of God's nature with ineluctable necessity at the same time as they understand that nature to be absolutely impenetrable.

In an important sense, Anselm does not arrive at different conclusions than Augustine or Boethius, but the way in which he arrives at those truths and the status of those truths for the human mind are different. More usual is to find a middle way, neither beginning from nothing nor ending with everything, whereas Anselm strives both to assume nothing and yet to arrive not just at a philosophical notion of God, but, as the *Proslogion* concludes, with the biblical name of God, God as "He Who Is." If others downplay the paradoxical, emphasizing the ways in which reason can work its way to some understanding of God, Anselm emphasizes both the paradox and necessity; his project is to retrieve the God who is so clearly implied in every experience but is equally clearly beyond any possible thought.

Louis Mackey argued that proofs for God's existence repeat the pattern of the parable of the prodigal son. The son, having come to live in a world where it at least seems possible that there is no father nor indeed any need for one, comes to possess "the imagination to see alienation as such—a contingent departure from originary reality—and the resolution to transgress it toward the Father."[279] In the same way, Anselm creates the utter alienation between his words and God, placing himself in that "far country" in which he, like the prodigal son, can realize his lack of self-sufficiency, can realize that even the possibility of his alienation implies its overcoming. *Cur Deus homo*, we know, explicitly proceeds *remoto Christo*, as if there were no Christ, but the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* in their own way proceed *remoto Deo*.[280] This is true in two senses. First, Anselm begins far from God, from the fool's denial in the *Proslogion*, and from the one who has never thought about or has rejected God in the *Monologion*. But, second, God, Anselm notes, is also remote from man, inasmuch as the God who is sought "dwells in unapproachable light." The metaphysical and emotional distance to be covered is vast and Anselm, as in his prayers, works to make that distance as explicit as possible. He forces his reader into the experience of the absence of God.

It is, we might say, Anselm's version of the *fort-da* game described by Freud.[281] Interpretations of the game played by a small child, repeatedly throwing away and then retrieving his toy, abound, but the one which is analogue for Anselm's task in these works is the notion that in enacting the drama of abandoning and the retrieving the object, the child is attempting to retain a sense of the reality and presence of the mother even when she

279. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word*, 126.

280. Cf. Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding*, 197.

281. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, standard ed., translated and edited by J. Strachey (New York: Norton, 1989), 14–15; S. Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987).

is temporarily absent. In this way the child achieves what psychologists call "internalization of the object," a sense of the mother's continued reality and love even when not physically present. The completion of the psychological task also allows the object autonomy, as the child begins to see it whole and as a separate other as the child internalizes a sense of the presence and care of the mother. Anselm is, we can now see, creating as much as responding to a sense of the absent God. From that absence, he attempts to find God again such that he cannot be taken away, acting out the trauma of abandonment and joy of reunion over and over again. Anselm seeks again and again, in other words, to find the words and arguments that can assure him that the God that he desires is really there. But—and here, perhaps, is the analogue to the second part of what is being worked out in the *fort-da* game—Anselm is also working through what it is to think that being he seeks, finding and recognizing not just its presence but also its otherness and transcendence. If Anselm (like all those *in via*) is the prodigal son, he is only on his way home, not quite arrived, not yet having successfully internalized the object which transcends him.

5

The Trilogy of Dialogues

Exploring Division and Unity

In the preface to this set of three dialogues (*De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii,* and *De casu diaboli*), Anselm asks that they be published together in this order. They belong together, first, because all three pertain to sacred scripture and, second, because they are united by subject matter and similarity of discussion.[1] Anselm must specify this because unauthorized copies of the texts have been made and they have circulated in another order than he wished.[2] Anselm makes similar complaints in the preface to *Cur Deus homo*[3] and gives similar directives that the work should appear complete and in the shape Anselm wished, along with his preface and a list of chapter headings.[4] Anselm seems to be both surprised and dismayed by the ways in which the dissemination of his work has gone against his wishes, and he tries to reassert control. He had perhaps gotten some criticism of these works by those whose objections or misunderstandings were caused, he thinks, by incomplete or wrongly ordered texts. Clearly he thinks of them as books, as units complete in themselves and tied to him as their author whose intentions are an intrinsic part of their meaning. This is an interesting historical development in the notions of authorship and publication, but it is also important for understanding Anselm's sense of his project and audience. In this middle period, after the intimate meditations of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* (which were also, as we saw, disseminated and interpreted in ways Anselm seems not quite to have anticipated), Anselm still does not seem to have reconciled himself to the way in which written texts are published, literally made *public*, and, hence, available to audiences with

1. DV Praef., S I, 173, 2–6.
2. DV Praef., S I, 174, 5–7.
3. CDH Prol., S II, 42, 2–5.
4. CDH Prol., S II, 43, 4–7.

different habits of thinking and reading. These readers need to be told what would have been clear in the context of practices in Anselm's community at Bec. Anselm and those of his community engaged in conversation with him saw the kind of rational, dialectical examination of the things of faith in the dialogues as part of monastic meditation and reflection. These texts are for them and for Anselm a natural outgrowth of conversations undertaken together by those sharing the same goals and form of life, but as Anselm's works circulate outside of community and control, he needs to specify and explain their intention and proper use.

Though it is not a set of connections contemporary philosophers or theologians would make, the relationship between the dialogues' subject matters is clear enough once one goes through the arguments. Anselm's consideration of truth is not a narrow discussion of the rules of predication. Rather the truths of signification and thought are placed within a consideration of them as parts of the Supreme Truth and placed alongside the truths of will and action. For Anselm, doing the truth is the same as doing good, and truth is identical with justice as a kind of rightness. The truth of the will is justice or uprightness, which means willing what one ought to will and willing it for the right reason. The concluding chapter of *De veritate* argues that truth is one in all true things, and that all the different forms of truth, from the truth of signification to that of thought and the will, derive their truth from the Supreme Truth.[5] The problem and its connection to the discussion of free choice is, of course, that freedom seems to mean the ability to choose other than rightly, and so we move to the second dialogue, *De libertate arbitrii*. The dialogue on free choice, Anselm explains in his preface, shows "only the *natural* fortitude of the will for keeping the uprightness it has received," without showing the need for grace to keep its uprightness.[6] Thus the third dialogue, *De casu diaboli* discusses God's grace as necessary for persevering in the good.

Anselm offers no further elaboration of his other claim, that the dialogues are linked to each other because all linked to scripture, and both the assertion and the lack of elaboration are significant. He states it for those among his contemporaries who are ready to take his works out of context, but they need, apparently, no more explanation. However, the connection between the dialogues and scripture, which Anselm assumes would have been obvious to his confreres, is almost completely opaque to contemporary readers. The gap between the statement that the dialogues

5. DV 13, S I, 196–99.
6. DV Praef., S I, 173, 13–15. My emphasis.

are concerned with scripture and their actual content led one scholar to argue that there must have been another dialogue meant to precede *De libertate* which was wholly grounded in scripture and other works which were meant to follow, also more closely aligned with scripture, the latter of which he identified with the three books of *De concordia*.[7] The standard view is that "despite the title given to the last, the three works approach subjects which we can believe separate from any properly theological preoccupation;" on this view, the scripture texts which are cited have "very little relationship to the subjects being treated."[8]

It is easy to agree. First, Anselm uses none of the most well-known medieval forms of writing on scripture. The dialogues do not comment on long passages from scripture, nor do they concentrate on conflict between different scripture passages. Nor are they attempts at allegorical or spiritual interpretation of scripture.[9]

Second, though there are scripture passages mentioned in all three, there are not many. *De veritate* begins with a paraphrase of the Gospel of John's claim that God is truth (John 14:6) and is an echo of Pilate's question to Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). *De veritate* discusses several other passages from John: "he who does evil hates the light" and "he who does the truth comes to the light" (John 3:20, 21) along with "the devil did not stand in the truth" (John 8:44). *De libertate arbitrii* turns in an early chapter and at the end to another Johannine passage: "He who sins is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). *De casu diaboli* begins with a discussion of "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor 4:7) and returns to "the devil did not stand in the truth" (John 8:44).[10]

One way some take seriously the claim that the dialogues, or at least *De veritate*, is concerned with scripture is to take the connection to be general and indirect, arguing that the philosophical reflection of *De veritate* is reason's participation in the relationship to God, which is the relationship adumbrated by scripture.[11] On this view, "Sacred Scripture in-

7. Simone Tonini, "La Scrittura nelle opere sistematiche di S. Anselmo," *Analecta anselmiana* 2 (1970): 57–116, esp. 71–72. Tonini's conclusions on a very general level concur with mine, that the description not just of these three dialogues but of Anselm's corpus as a whole as "concerned with sacred scripture" is correct.

8. Jean Châtillon, "Sainte Anselm et l'écriture," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles,* edited by Raymonde Foreville, Spicilegium Beccense II (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984), 436. Cf. Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 6.

9. Cf. Châtillon, "Sainte Anselm et l'écriture," 433. Châtillon makes a comparable list of the ways of interacting with scripture Anselm *does not* try.

10. For a list of the scriptural passages cited in these dialogues, see Tonini, "La Scrittura," 65.

11. Helen S. Lang, "Anselm's Use of Scripture and His Theory of Signs," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 443–56.

forms and completes every moment of study concerning these signs and their *rectitudo*."[12] Others occupy similar ground, arguing that "in reducing our every day language to its true structure, thus laying the foundation for the presence of intrinsic truth, Anselm simultaneously reads Scripture."[13]

Jean-Robert Pouchet takes Anselm's claim about the relationship of these dialogues to scripture more substantively and suggests that the dialogues could be read as a reflection on the Gospel of John, especially on chapter 8, from which some of the most important scripture passages referred to in the text.[14] In this passage in John's Gospel, Jesus is defending his divinity using the language of truth and falsehood to contrast himself as the Truth with the devil as "not standing in the truth." The passage, as is common in John's Gospel, sets "the Jews" up as the antagonists of Jesus, accused by Jesus of plotting his death and rejecting Jesus' claims to be the truth that will free them from their slavery to sin. The passage, Pouchet observes, is "dominated by what we could call the dialectic of truth and error, truthfulness and lying, liberty and slavery, the themes taken up in the dialogues.[15]

Pouchet's claim that Anselm is commenting on John 8 is not as much of a stretch as it might seem at first, for the student's question as *De libertate* opens, how can we be free and yet need grace (i.e., be servants of sin), is, in effect, the question John presents the Jews as asking of Jesus: We are free, the sons of Abraham, slaves to no one: why would we need you, Jesus, to reconcile us to God? The themes of truth and falsity, light and dark, to which Anselm alludes repeatedly right from the start of *De veritate* is, of course, a major theme of John's Gospel. And as Jesus shows himself to be the Truth in John's Gospel, Anselm works to identify God and Truth in *De veritate*.

Anselm clearly does not compose these dialogues as a way of participating or commenting on any polemic against Jews or debate with Jewish objectors, even in the distant and reworked sense in which *Cur Deus homo* is, but he would, of course, have been aware of the context from which

12. Lang concludes, "Philosophy for Anselm, as exemplified in the *De veritate* pertains to the study of Sacred Scripture because philosophy itself is an activity through which reason, by presupposing the will's affirmation of the God relation, can participate in that relation." Lang, "Anselm's Use of Scripture," 453.

13. M. Burcht Pranger, "Reading Anselm," in *Saint Anselm, Bishop and Thinker*, edited by Roman Majeran and Edward Iwo Zielinski (Lublin: The University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin. 1999), 165.

14. See Jean-Robert Pouchet, OSB, "Saint Anselme lecteur de Saint Jean," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 457–68, 461–62.

15. Pouchet, "Saint Anselme lecteur," 462.

the key passages discussed in the dialogues are taken. What is noteworthy is that Anselm has chosen to recast the debate about truth and freedom into a different kind of dialogue, one abstracted from any specific time, place, or personalities of its origin. In doing so, he also removes the rancor present in John's account of Jesus' discussions with the Jews. Anselm leaves out of his dialogues exactly what gives not just Jesus' encounters with his enemies but also Plato's dialogues their dramatic interest. Unlike Jesus' opponents or characters such as Anytos or Callicles in the *Meno* and *Gorgias*, Anselm's student in these dialogues, like Boso in *Cur Deus homo*, is never angry or threatened by the teacher's refutation but asks the questions a carefully constructed "anyone" would ask. He allows questions to surface but is not interested in using the problems they present as a bludgeon to defeat the teacher.

There is in this a kind of blanching, a kind of spiritualization and depersonalization of reasoning. Teacher and student are not particular individuals with particular concerns, prejudices or temperaments. In this transformation of actual opponents into idealized objectors, mouthpieces for rational arguments, an important point to plot in the line of development of the notion of a pure, neutral reason in western thought. The dialogues are in this sense a continuation of the program of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* which created the rational but neutral persona considering the existence and nature of God.

In these dialogues, as in the earlier works, Anselm's contribution to the invention of the much maligned "man of reason" derives from his methodological principle of "faith seeking understanding." "Faith seeking understanding" means questioning but being ready to understand rather than being actively disposed to reject; it is neither a perspectiveless perspective nor a holding back on questions and objections. As we shall see also happens in *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm transforms objectors—Jesus' enemies in John's Gospel, like the "fool" of the Psalms—into those seeking understanding. In other words, he does not make objectors into an irrational other but someone he can find in himself through their shared reason and shared openness to understanding. Second, as we shall see, though Anselm's "student" is not individuated, he is not disembodied. That is, he is forced by the teacher to connect the implications of his arguments to his own condition as finite and human.

But the transformation goes further than form. Anselm thinks so deeply about the questions raised by Jesus' opponents in the Gospel of John he not only transforms them into questions he can find in himself, but the notions discussed in these passages become seeds of a metaphysics of creaturehood and a philosophical or theological anthropology. These

passages and their questions lead Anselm to reflect on the nature of truth and freedom, giving and receiving, created vs. creative natures. This explains the significance of the Pauline passage highlighted in *De casu diaboli*, "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor 4:7) and its connection to John, chapter 8, and the topics of the dialogues. This same passage from Corinthians was given prominence in Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings to point out the necessity of grace for salvation.[16] In an important sense, the answer to Paul's rhetorical question, that there is nothing you have not received, constitutes the answer to the question posed in chapter 8 of John's Gospel, why do you need Jesus, why do you need grace, for salvation? Because you cannot do it for yourselves, because everything you have is received is grace, Paul answers. Anselm's interest in the fall of the devil is not in it as an event discussed in scripture but in the problem it poses for all fallen creatures, including, of course, human beings. If everything creatures have is received, then what they lack (righteousness) was not given, it seems, making God the cause of not-having and, thus, evil. How, then, can creatures be held responsible for what they have not been given? Or, alternatively, if they were given righteousness and have nothing else which was not given, including the will or power to lose it, how did they abandon righteousness? Thus the problem is not specifically the good and bad angels but them as a case of the universal principle that everything is received. This characteristic, Anselm notes, "belongs no less to angels than to human beings."[17]

The larger anthropology which Anselm is working out is one in which human beings are both responsible for their fall (because free) and unable to redeem themselves (hence in need of grace). And in that sense, the problem of the devil's fall is simply a cleaner version (because abstracted from the complication of temporality) than that of human beings. Anselm's invocation of Paul's question from Corinthians, given its association with Augustine's anti-Pelagian emphasis on grace, in the context of the topics of freedom and sin is a signal of Anselm's interest in revisiting a broader set of questions. His concern is not just the need for

16. See, for example, Augustine, *Retractationes* II, 1, [27/28], CCL 57, 89–90, and *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, 3, (7)–7 (12). In *De praedestinatione* Augustine writes that the passage brought him to reject the notion that faith is from oneself for the view that faith itself is grace. In the *Retractationes* he attributes his view that grace precedes rather than is a response to faith to his reflection on this passage. See also Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 82. For further discussion of this passage and Anselm's use and interpretation of it, see 211–13. On the relationship between Anselm and Augustine and free choice paired with the necessity of grace, see chapter 7, section b.

17. DCD 1, S I, 235, 14–15.

grace but the reality of freedom and responsibility for sin. These scripture passages, then, are not afterthoughts or proof texts but that which gives rise to Anselm's extended reflection.[18]

We can now better understand what moved Anselm to add his prologue: the delinking of these dialogues from one another disrupts the connection they have in his own thought to the themes of John's Gospel. These reflections are for him all of a piece and he wants his reader to follow that path with him. But, of course, Anselm has realized that these questions and his three dialogues can be separated from one another, as well as from scripture, similar to the ways faith and understanding can be separated. Anselm asserts here as strongly as in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* that the projects of faith meditating on scripture and reason asking questions are for him the same project. It is, then, to the question of how this can be so that Anselm turns first in *De veritate*: How can the many truths both be separated from and united to the One Truth?

De veritate: Many Truths and the One Truth

The student opens the dialogue with the question that echoes the Johannine identification of God with truth as well as Pilate's skeptical "What is truth?" "Since we believe that God is truth and we say that truth is in many other things, I would like to know whether in whatever things truth is said to be we ought to believe it to be God," the student asks.[19] Lang argues that the question articulates an apparent conflict between faith (that God is truth) and reason (that many things are true).[20] The conflict could also be characterized as a conflict between common sense notions and deeper spiritual vision expressed in scripture but also found by rational reflection, a conflict between surface and depth, rather than two separate realms of reason and faith. For Anselm, reason is not associated with a kind of empiricism that leaves to faith matters beyond sense—that is a modern way of setting up their relationship. Reason, that which he employs to bring him toward the understanding of faith, is, as it is for Augustine, that which leads to the truths expressed in the prologue to John's Gos-

18. Cf. Michel Corbin, "Se tenir dans la vérité: Lecture du chapitre 12 de saint Anselme sur la vérité," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 649–65. Corbin does not ground his reading of *De veritate* and its connection to the other dialogues and scripture in the particular passages Anselm uses and the problematic they outline as I have done here following Pouchet, but he makes compelling case on different grounds for the important relationship of these works to scripture.

19. DV 1, S I, 176, 4–6.

20. Lang, "Anselm's Theory of Signs," 446. Lang maintains that the particular claim, that we say that many things are true, is specifically Neoplatonic in origin.

pel, to God and God as truth. True reason and scripture are on the same side and, ultimately, make the same claim, according to the dialogue.[21] Thus the existence of many truths, while not false, is understood finally as only true in a sense and as radically dependent on the truth of the supreme truth.

The student's question can be reformulated in two ways: How are all truths one? And how are many things true without being God?[22] The dialogue approaches both sides of the Parmenidean paradox, how we predicate things like truth of Being (God), and how things which are shot through with nonbeing can nonetheless be truly said to be what they are and to be true. The latter is parallel to Boethius's question about the good in *De hebdomadibus:* how things can be good in their being without being identical to the first good.[23] Anselm concedes that truth (like goodness for Boethius) is different for creatures than for God, but he argues that if we begin from the truth of finite things, we will come to see that the condition for the possibility of their truth is their connection to the single, supreme truth. The path of Boethius's *De hebdomadibus* is from the goodness of ordinary objects of experience composed of matter and form, to their necessary connection to the supreme good.[24] Similarly, the path of *De veritate* is from the "ordinary" ways of speaking about truth, in which there are many and different truths, to an insight far from ordinary experience, into the One Truth in and by which all those distinct truths are one.

Thus, it is not just in grounding the truth of language and, thereby, the language of scripture, that *De veritate* is concerned with scripture. *De veritate* is concerned with the thinkability of creation, and of a Cre-

21. Cf. Pranger, "Reading Anselm," 165–66.

22. The latter is Colish's characterization of the dialogue. See Marcia L. Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge,* rev. ed.(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 79.

23. Boethius, *De hebdomadibus*, in *The Theological Tractates and the Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 38–51. The comparison to Boethius's treatise is for illustration and understanding of Anselm's project in *De veritate* rather than to claim direct influence of Boethius's work on Anselm. Though it is clear that Anselm had copies of Boethius's logical treatises at his disposal, it is not clear whether he knew Boethius's theological treatises. On Anselm's sources, see Southern, *Anselm and His Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059–c. 1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 17–18. As Southern points out, "the wide range of his [Anselm's] knowledge of Augustine and Boethius would not have been possible except in a carefully stocked library." See also Giles E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and his Theological Inheritance* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004). On the connection to Parmenides and the problem of the being of that which is not the One, see chapter 3.

24. Boethius, *De hebdomadibus*, 42–43. The work has two parts, the axioms with which the work begins (after a short introduction) articulate higher and more abstract metaphysical principles concerning the nature of complex and simple being, and then an argumentative portion which begins from the notion of finite and complex being. See 40–43.

ator, who is Being and Truth, coexisting alongside creatures whose being is not merely illusory but is true in some sense. When Jesus says that he came to "testify to the truth," and Pilate answers, "What is truth?" Pilate is asking an epistemological question: How can we know what is true given the evanescent landscape of shadows dancing across the screen in the dim light of our understanding? How can any of this be true? John's Gospel's answer is in Jesus' assertion that he is "the way, the truth, and the life," (John 14:6). This is a metaphysical answer about what is real and true: Jesus is the Truth, the context in which particular true things can be and be seen.

Anselm begins working out his reply to Pilate's question by distinguishing between the kind of truth a statement has "because it signifies what it has received the capability of signifying [*quod accepit significare*]" and the truth it has "because it signifies what it is made to signify [*ad quod significandum facta est*]."[25] The distinction is between the kind of truth a statement has when it succeeds in signifying, for example, that today is Tuesday, whether it is Tuesday or not, on the one hand, and, on the other, when what a statement signifies is in fact the case, for example, it signifies that it is Tuesday when it really is Tuesday. What Anselm seems to have in mind by the former is the truth or correctness of statements like "today is Tuesday" on whatever day it is uttered as opposed to something like "the green is either."[26] It is an important distinction and brings out an important precondition for signifying what is the case: that things have to be signs first, that is, capable of signifying, in order to be able to signify what is the case.

Anselm makes, then, two claims about these two kinds of truth: first, the truth a statement has when it signifies what it was made to signify (that what is is) is a higher kind of truth or rectitude than merely managing to signify rather than being nonsense (that is, having grammatical, logical intelligibility).[27] Second, however, Anselm insists that the other notion of truth, "the truth of signification," is really a kind of truth even though not what we normally mean by truth. Moreover, it is in one sense a condition of the possibility of true statements. For Anselm writes, "Indeed [a statement] receives [its ability] to signify a thing to be when it is not and not to be when it is, only because it cannot be given to it only to signify [that something] is when it is and [that something] is not when it

25. DV 2, S I, 179, 2–4.

26. Boethius, *Commentarium in librum Peri hermeneias*, vol. 1, edited by K. Meiser (Leipzig: Tuebner, 1880; reprint, New York-London, 1987), I. 1. 5. 14–15.

27. Anselm writes, "*Plus enim debet propter quod accepit significationem, quam propter quod non accepit* " (DV 2, S I, 179, 7–8).

is not."[28] It is the kind of truth that, if a statement has it, it has it always, the teacher points out. "It is day" always signifies it is day whether it is day or not, but it only signifies what it was made to signify when uttered when it actually is day. Thus, in order for language to signify truly in the ordinary sense, it must have the truth of signification, correct logical, grammatical form. To put it another way, language cannot signify what is actually the case without being *able* to signify what is not the case. Anselm's notion of the truth of signification is of a piece with his notion that things and the senses, etc., have a kind of truth. Things are true when they are doing what they ought. Language which has the truth of signification fulfills its function as language: signifying; it has, in Anselm's words, "a *natural* truth" which it retains at all times, whether or not what it signifies is actually the case.[29] While language fulfills its function to a greater degree when it not only signifies but signifies what is the case, it still must signify in order to signify truly. Thus there is a kind of priority for the mere truth of signification, not as the aim and fulfillment of the nature of language but as the condition of the possibility of language as true.

What we ordinarily think of as truth, a characteristic of statements when they signify what is actually the case, is only one sense of truth. Anselm's first move, then, is to complicate the ordinary notion of truth. There is a comfortable and manageable multiplicity of truths the way we ordinarily think about truth. But from the perspective Anselm now opens for his student, there are as many truths as there are statements that succeed in signifying. The notion of a "truth of signification" gives the student the same uncomfortable feeling that discourse about nonexistent things does in the *Fragments*, and for the same reasons. Both dispel a naive view about truth as simple correspondence between words and things. While we think we are always talking about things to which we can point to justify our statements, we are made to realize that we talk a great deal (and talk truly in a sense) about things which do not exist. In *De veritate*, the teacher points out that we also talk in ways that truly signify but say things that are not true. It is a bit dizzying to come to realize that propositions which merely signify according to the rules have a kind of truth, creating a kind of parallel world of possible but not actual

28. DV 2, S I, 179, 8–10. The Latin is: *Non enim accepit significare esse rem cum non est, vel non esse cum est, nisi quia non potuit illi dari tunc solummodo significare esse quando est, vel non esse quando non est*. Though this is my own translation, it gives the same sense of the passage as Hopkins and Richardson's. See *Anselm of Canterbury*, 4 vols., edited and translated by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press), vol. 2, 80. See p. 186 for my discussion of Ralph McInerny's quite different translation of this passage.

29. DV 5, S I, 183, 1. My emphasis.

truths. Anselm is here recognizing an important point about language, the same one Umberto Eco made by noting that a sign is whatever can be used to tell a lie.[30]

Like the direction of complications explored in *De grammatico*, Anselm seems to be moving away from ordinary language and common sense. This brings us back to the theme so important in Desmond Henry's interpretation of Anselm. Henry finds Anselm willing to say things which are from the perspective of ordinary language nonsense in order to work toward the development of a more perspicacious logical, technical language. But Henry makes this the end point, the goal of Anselm's task, and thereby finds its relevance and connection to modern, analytic philosophy. But *De veritate* carefully pairs another movement toward a theological language and perspective with this movement toward a more logical, technical language, a perspective which more thoroughly topples the hegemony of common sense and ordinary language.

What is interesting is that even at this level, before we reach the next and more seismic displacement of common sense and usage, some of Anselm's commentators seem to muffle even this first move away from the ordinary perspective. Like the student, some commentators seem to shy away from the consequences of a truth of signification, almost to the point of erasing the notion. Visser and Williams follow the text through Anselm's claim that the truth of signification (what "it is day" always has) is its "natural" rectitude, but then they introduce into the discussion the type-token distinction. "It is day" is the type and then it is used (or is a token) at particular times and circumstances when someone says, "it is day," in which case it is either true or false. Only tokens are true or false, while statement types are the only ones that have "purposes," that is the purpose of signifying that what is is.[31] Though helpful as far as it goes, the type-token distinction misses something important. Anselm wants to retain the word "truth" for both what Visser and Williams describe as types and tokens. This is because of the close connection between these two kinds of truth for Anselm: the ability to signify undergirds the ability to signify that what is is, and signifying that what is is is the purpose of language. This is its truth, and the standard against which it is judged as doing the truth or not. When Visser and Williams claim that statement-types have purposes but not truth ("it is day" as a type has a

30. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1976), 7.

31. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, "Anselm on Truth," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 207. Cf. the same account in Visser and Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 42–47.

purpose, which is to be uttered when it is actually day, expressing what is is) and that statement-tokens have truth or falsity but no purposes (a given instance of the uttering of "it is day" is true if it is day but has no purpose of its own as an instance), they are disconnecting the very thing Anselm's dialogue aims to connect: truth and purpose. A thing is true when it does what it was made to do, when it fulfills its purpose.

Anselm's account of truth makes, then, two important points. First, in the notion of the truth of signification, Anselm notes in effect the independence of language as a system of signification from things. For Anselm words cannot signify what *is* without also being able to signify what *is not*; thus, the possibility of falsehood is written into the nature of signification. McInerny's translation of Anselm's description of the truth of signification inserts the notion of the truth of signification as "parasitic" on the truth of signifying (saying what is is), obscuring Anselm's point. McInerny's translation reads, "Indeed, its ability to signify that a thing is when it is not is parasitic on its standardly signifying that what is is and what is not is not."[32] However, the teacher's point is not that the truth of signifying (which brings with it the possibility of signifying that what is not is and vice versa) is *parasitic* on the truth of signifying what it was made to signify (signifying truly what is and is not) but that the truth of signifying makes telling the truth in the ordinary sense possible. For McInerny's Anselm, the relationship of dependence between falsehood and truth is all one way: truth can exist without falsehood but not falsehood without truth, but what Anselm actually says here, that signs cannot be restricted to saying *only* that what is is and what is not is not, means that the possibility of truth in a way requires the possibility of falsehood. Anselm, in other words, agrees with Eco's definition of a sign cited above: to be a sign is to be able to be used to tell a lie.[33]

Second, however, Anselm insists that signs (like all things) have a higher and more complete kind of truth when they do what they were made to do; in the case of signs that means when they signify that what is is and what is not is not. Hence, Anselm rejects the modern view that truth and falsity are "equal-ranking alternatives" for the set of all significant propositions.[34] Anselm is clear that truth in the second sense, truth as saying how things really are, is the aim of language.[35] There is an "in-

32. This is Ralph McInerny's translation in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, edited by Brian Davies and Gillian R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 154. For the Latin, see n. 28.

33. See n. 30.

34. Richard Campbell, "Anselm's Background Metaphysics," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33, no. 4 (1975): 321–22.

35. Campbell, "Anselm's Background Metaphysics," 322.

troduction of the dimension of purpose . . . into the discussion of propositional truth"—what is crucial for Anselm is that "a statement's truth is viewed within the horizon of *rectitudo*—of proper directedness towards its end."[36]

Anselm can recognize the importance of the truth of signification, yet encompass that within a larger perspective which recognizes what all beginning students find missing in formal logic, "a prejudice in favor of truth."[37] Thus, while Anselm does recognize in the truth of signification the character of a sign, he nonetheless does attempt to subordinate, without making it parasitic on, the purpose of signs: to signify that what is is. This is all rooted in what Campbell calls Anselm's "Christianized teleology," the notion from Aristotle that things act to achieve ends which are given in their natures, to which is added the notion that those natures are created and thus were made for purposes by their creator. Hence, reaching that end is a creature's purpose; its performance of it is doing what it ought, and, finally, doing what it ought is "at the core of truth."[38]

The same link between truth and purpose are present in Anselm's discussion of action; just as signification turned out to be linked to purpose, so action turns out to have a kind of signification and, hence, truth. For "since nothing should be done except that which should be done, by the very fact that someone does something, he says and signifies that it ought to be done. Thus if he does what he ought, he speaks the truth; if he does what he ought not, he lies."[39] Simply doing something is signifying that we think it ought to be done. With Augustine, Anselm recognizes that actions, like words, can be signs and, thus, can be used to tell a lie.[40] Anselm does not just recognize the semiotic characteristics of things, but also the thingly character of words, that they, like actions, are true when they do what they ought, when, ultimately, they find their place in the supreme truth.[41]

36. Donald F. Duclow, "Structure and Meaning in Anselm's *De veritate*," *American Benedictine Review* 26 (1975): 408.

37. Campbell, "Anselm's Background Metaphysics," 322.

38. Richard Campbell, "The Conceptual Roots of Anselm's Soteriology," in *Anselm, Aosta, Bec and Canterbury*, edited by Luscombe and Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 261–62.

39. DV 9, S I, 189, 4–7.

40. Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2, 23, 25; 3, 12, 18–20.

41. Visser and Williams argue that this view of language commits Anselm to the view that "God makes natural-language statement-types" and confers on them their "purpose of signifying" that what is is. See Visser and Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 208. Cf. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 45–46. They further claim that it is not open to Anselm to claim that human beings make natural language after having been given the ability by God for the purpose of saying what is, since Anselm, they claim, cannot allow creatures to create natures and give them purposes (209). They do note that Anselm never makes either of these claims explicitly. However, he need not hold either

The discussion of the truths of natural action, of the senses, and of the being of things brings Anselm to the same conclusion as Alexander Pope: "whatever IS, is RIGHT."[42] But how is it that fire burning is doing the truth? How does a false statement contain a kind of truth? And when the senses report straight sticks as bent in water and mere reflections of faces as real faces, how are they doing what they ought and, thus, what is right and true?[43] According to the dialogue, false statements, natural actions, and whatever the senses report are true. All are doing what they ought according to the nature they have been given.

In the discussion of each of these examples, the student poses the questions according to the common way of speaking, showing the conflict between ordinary usage and the teacher's. This discussion culminates in the most difficult instance of the universal rightness of things to understand: evil deeds. The student asks, "How according to the truth can we say that whatever is ought to be, when there are many evil deeds which certainly ought not to be?"[44] When the teacher tries to explain that "God permits some people to do the evil which they will," the student exclaims for us all, "Would that he permitted it less often!"[45] The irony of the statement is a result of the combination of the philosophical language the dialogue builds toward with the ordinary language from which it begins. Ordinary language and experience recoil from the redefinition of evil as good.

The teacher tries to make his view more palatable to the student by conceding that, as problematic as it seems for both logic and common sense, in some cases "the same thing both ought and ought not to be." He continues, "[an evil deed] ought to be since it is permitted wisely and

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of them. Augustine and Boethius both hold that languages are conventional, human products, and surely human beings can give purposes to artifacts. Now, a sign's function, its doing what it ought, signifying what is the case, is given in the nature of sign-hood and is not merely conventional in the same way that Anselm would think 2+2=4 is not conventional (though the particular symbols for numbers, addition, etc. are conventional), and if this is all Visser and Williams mean, then I agree. See Augustine, *De doctrina christiana*, 2, 24, 37, and Boethius, *In librum Peri hermeneias* I, 1, 32–34.

42. Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*, edited by Maynard Mack (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), l. 289; cf. DV 7, S I, 185,15: "whatever is is true, insofar as it is what it is there [in the supreme truth]."

43. DV 6, 183–84.

44. DV 8, S I, 186, 7–9.

45. DV 8, S I, 186, 27–28. The passage calls to mind a passage in Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, in *The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), IV, m. 4, ll. 16–18, 338–40. Lady Philosophy attempts to show her student that it is the impotence and misfortune of the evil to do evil. Like Anselm's student, Boethius exclaims, "I very strongly wish they might swiftly lose that misfortune by being deprived of the ability to commit evil."

well by him without whose permission it could not have happened. And it ought not to be with respect to him by whose evil will it is conceived."[46] As he has done before, the teacher attempts to elucidate his point by looking at the grammatical form of the statements that assume this distinction. The same act can be described from the different points of view of agent and patient. While it might be the case that something ought not be done by the agent, it might be right that it be undergone by the patient. This is the case with the suffering of Jesus.[47] "Doing the truth," Anselm brings his student to see, includes willing what one ought, passively undergoing persecution for the sake of justice, or simply being what one ought. Ordinary language does not match grammatical form with reality. We call things "suffering" that are not really suffering and call other things "doing" that are not really doing.[48]

The listing of the modes of "doing the truth" recalls the similar discussion of the modes of doing and causing in the *Fragments*,[49] now put to use in the discussion of a substantial problem: the problem of evil. Here the grammatical and theological converge, for the warning not to be fooled by grammatical form (a passive or active verb), to look deeper and be prepared for an asymmetry between grammar and reality, is expanded. First, it is expanded into the ethical realm: doing the truth, doing the right thing, encompasses more than what counts as doing in a grammatical or in a physical sense. Just as passive forms sometimes name active realities and vice versa, so passivity in a physical sense, refraining from some action or simply being as opposed to doing, is sometimes doing the truth. Second, it has theological implications. Looking more deeply at the physical or natural and moral realities of action and passion also brings out another complication that eludes ordinary examination. For when Anselm notes the possibility that the same thing in some cases both ought and ought not be, that it might be and not be "doing the truth," he refers to the example of Christ, who is doing the truth in passively undergoing suffering, and his persecutors, who are not doing the truth in their action upon him.

While Anselm likely did not know it, his discussion parallels in some ways Plato's discussion of punishment in the *Gorgias*, in which Plato argues that there must be symmetry between giving and undergoing punishment—if one is just, then so must the other be.[50] Plato's point is twofold, first that what the agent does and what the patient suffers are

46. DV 8, S I, 186, 29–31.
47. DV 8, S I, 186, 32–187, 2.
48. DV 5, S I, 182, 18–21.
49. LF 28, 13–34, 27.
50. Plato, *Gorgias* 476d–477a.

symmetrical—if the cutter cuts deeply, the patient is deeply cut—and second, that the agent governs those features, that, in effect, that the agent is really agent acting on the patient. Thus far Anselm concurs, noting that giving a beating and getting a beating cannot occur separately.

However, Anselm's analysis parts company with Plato's, for he argues that, depending on the character of the agent and patient, the action as activity and passivity might be judged differently, one good and the other not. When the one giving and the one getting the beating give and receive the action rightly, both the action and passion are judged to be right; when a just man is beaten by an unjust man, neither the beating nor the being beaten is right; when, however, a sinner is beaten by someone who is not authorized to administer punishment, the activity of the doer is not right but the passivity of the receiver is right—the action both ought and ought not to be. The suffering of Jesus, is another case of that which both ought and ought not be, an asymmetry that comes as result of combining the moral perspective with that of "supernal wisdom," from which perspective Jesus' suffering is providentially ordered.[51] The teacher pushes the student's discomfort even further on this point, noting that from a physical point of view the nails ought to penetrate Jesus' "frail flesh," which flesh ought to have felt pain.[52]

Anselm, then, embraces the contradiction that something both ought and ought not be. He does not claim, as Plato does, that there is no evil that can befall the just man (since the only evil is injustice). Nor does Anselm make a distinction between evil and injustice and goodness and justice, as Boethius does. Recall the last lines of Boethius's *De hebdomadibus*: "some things are just, some things are otherwise, but all things are good."[53] Anselm's claim is rather that evil does occur—these things ought not be done by the doers—but that sometimes what the evildoers do to others ought to be suffered by them, as is the case with the suffering of Christ. Even though Anselm makes reference only to Christ's suffering, he implicitly embraces the notion of universal providence in which all things which are suffered, even if done unjustly, ought to be suffered, that is, they are part of God's providential plan.

Anselm handles the problem of evil in slightly different terms in *De casu diaboli*. Even as he embraces the Augustinian principle that evil is nonbeing, he adds that there is an evil which is something: the evil of disadvantage (*incommoditas*), like sadness and pain. These evils follow evils of privation or absence but nonetheless are something that we are

51. DV 8, S I, 186–87.
52. DV 8, S I, 187, 33–35.
53. Boethius, *De hebdomadibus*, 50, ll. 173–74.

justified in regarding with aversion.[54] In both *De veritate* and *De casu diaboli*, Anselm lets stand claims important to ordinary language and understanding. First, in *De veritate* it is that even given providence and the invulnerability of the just man, there is an important sense in which injustice ought not to be. Second, in *De casu diaboli* it is that, even given that evil is nonbeing or privation, there is an important sense in which some evils are something, are realities in the lives of those who suffer them. While Anselm often rejects and refines ordinary language, embracing apparent contradictions which common sense rejects, in these two cases, he embraces apparent contradictions: the same thing both ought and ought not be, evil is both nothing and something. At the same time, however, more than Plato, Augustine, or Boethius, Anselm saves our ordinary intuitions that evil is not nothing and that some things ought not to be. This comes at a price, for in order to accommodate ordinary intuition, Anselm must embrace a kind of perspectivalism, that there is, as Visser and Williams put it, no "context independent" way of assessing whether something ought or ought not to be.[55]

The notion that some things both ought and ought not to be is a striking moment of disunity in the march toward the unity of all truths in the one truth, which is the dialogue's conclusion. In this way, Anselm's makes clear that the unity of all truths in one (and all perspectives in one) is worked out only in principle (until ultimately worked out in God) but not in fact for us. The transcendence of perspective is, in other words, only *prospective*. The thrust of reason, the tool for seeking understanding, is to break down unities, to see and work on problems and conflicts. The remaining difficulties are made clear by the drama of the dialogue. Anselm leaves this loose string untied (that some things both ought and ought not to be), and goes on to have his student enjoy the unity of truth and rightness. But then, in the same way paradoxes emerge from successful arguments in the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*, a new problem emerges from the very solution which the discussion has crafted. If truth is rightness and rightness is the same as justice, "it seems to be both just and right for fire to be hot and for people to love one another."[56] This outcome triggers the student to ask: "And then what? Will we call a stone just when it falls from higher to lower because it does what it ought in the same way we call a human being just when he does what

54. DCD 26, S I, 274, 2–3.

55. Visser and Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 213; cf. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 50, where they call this "contextualism."

56. DV 12, S I, 191, 31–192, 1.

he ought?"[57] In a dramatic portrayal of perspectivalism, the student finds the problem with his own solution, but only after the teacher repeats his claim back to him.

It does not take the student long to solve this problem, but he does so by dividing, by introducing a distinction between different kinds of rightness. Human beings act freely (*sponte*) but stones do not.[58] The important part of the discussion as it continues is its series of distinctions, which link *De veritate* with the next dialogue, *De libertate arbitrii*. The distinctions between rightness and justice, between justice and just acts, between acting knowingly and unknowingly, between what and why we will, between willing "because of its very justice (*propter ipsam rectitudinem*)" and willing because of something else all play important roles in the discussion of free choice to follow.[59] These distinctions recognize the ways in which rightness, justice, and being can be divided from each other, the ways in which one can fail to be just even when doing the right thing, either by willing without knowing or without willing in the right way. This fragmentation is emblematic of finite being and finite will; it is a property of created and fallen being. Yet Anselm asserts with equal emphasis the ultimate identity of truth, rightness and justice. Willing in the right way (knowingly and for the sake of justice) is the necessary and sufficient condition for justice. Moreover, receiving, willing, and keeping rightness because of its rightness are all the same and, hence, are all accomplished simultaneously. To receive is to have, to will, and to keep rightness (*rectitudo*), which is, then, truth, doing what one ought. Here Anselm anticipates his arguments in *De libertate* and *De casu*, and holds in advance of Abelard (and Kant) an ethics of intention, that the whole of the ethical character of the act is in the interior act of willing.[60] On the one hand, this view leaves open the possibility

57. DV 12, S I, 192, 11–13.

58. DV 12, S I, 192, 19.

59. DV 12, S I, 194, 24.

60. See Abelard, *Ethica: Scito teipsum*, in *Peter Abelard's Ethics*, edited by David E. Luscombe, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 4, 29–31. On Abelard, see Eileen Sweeney, *Logic, Theology, and Poetry in Boethius, Abelard, and Alan of Lille: Words in the Absence of Things* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 115–16. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, edited by Roberto J. Busa, SJ, I–II, 20, 2, Leonine edition, 1888, Corpus Thomisticum, available at www.corpusthomisticum.org/sth0000.html, where Aquinas argues that while the right intention is necessary for the goodness of the act, a fully good act requires that the act itself be really good rather than just sincerely chosen as good. Cf. J. Vuillemin, "Justice Anselmienne et bonne volunté Kantienne: Essai de comparaison," in *Anselm, Aosta, Bec and Canterbury*, edited by Luscombe and Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 361–75. Vuillemin also notes the similarity between Anselm's notion of justice and Kant's notion of a good will but goes on to argue that they part company in their views of injustice and bad will, with Kant articulating the religion of pure reason, a kind of Pelagianism, while Anselm follows Augustine. See also Mechthild Dreyer, "*Veritas—Rectitudo—Iustitia*. Grundbegriffe ethischer Reflexion bei Anselm von Canterbury," *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales/ Forschungen zur Theologie und Philosophie des Mittelalters* 64, no. 1 (1997): 67–85. Dreyer tries to make sense of

of radical difference between exterior act and internal reality—the aspect of this position explored so effectively by Abelard. On the other hand, as Anselm emphasizes, his account points toward the unity of having, willing, and doing since if one wills justice, one receives, has, and does it simultaneously. Anselm even defends the unity of the integrated finite will against an objection the teacher articulates, which attempts to break down the unity between justice and rectitude of the will. To the objection that justice, as rectitude kept for its own sake, is not had the moment one has rectitude of will, the teacher replies that we have rectitude by willing it and will it only by having it, such that "as long as we will it we keep it, and while we keep it we will it."[61]

The emphasis on intentionality as at the core of justice, keeping justice for its own sake, also allows Anselm to unite human and divine justice under one definition. These seem to be different because for human beings justice and rightness are a matter of *debitum*, doing what one ought, paying what one owes, but God's righteousness is not in paying what is owed to another or in any way being judged by a standard outside himself. When justice is understood as keeping uprightness for its own sake, it not only can be said of God but it is more appropriately said of God that he keeps righteousness for its own sake (*propter se servari*) because, as the teacher explains, God's righteousness keeps itself through nothing other than itself.[62] While human beings keep righteousness for its own sake as something other than *their* own sake, God keeps righteousness for its own sake, which is identical to keeping it for his own sake.

Having distinguished but connected truth, righteousness, and justice, as well as human and divine justice, the dialogue returns to its opening question: whether there are many truths or one truth. If there are many truths, as many as there are kinds of things, the teacher argues, then truth will exist when what is signified is the case and will not exist when it is not, just as color depends on (and disappears with) the material object of which it is a quality. Such a view would imply that truth depends for its existence on the multiplicity of things generated and corrupted, the student protests, while the truth of signification still would exist even if there were no true signification nor any signification at all.[63]

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the path from truth to justice and its place in the history of philosophical ethics, placing Anselm in dialogue with Aquinas, Scotus, and Kant. Rogers rejects what she calls the "Kantian interpretation" of Anselm. See Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 66–67, and see pp. 226–28 for a discussion of the relationship between Kant's notion of duty and Anselm's notion of keeping righteousness for its own sake.

61. DV 12, S I, 195, 7–13.

62. DV 12, S I, 196, 4–8.

63. DV 13, S I, 197.

To avoid this unacceptable conclusion, they conclude, the truth informing all those particular truths must be independent of those things and is the One Truth by which they are true. Anselm then completes what Corbin calls his "admirable reversal"[64] of the standard relationship between truth and beings: "It is to speak improperly to say 'this or that thing is' is true, since truth is not in those things or from those things or through those things in which it is said to be."[65] Rather, things are true by and in the One Truth. In this way, Anselm links truths with the One Truth. But he de-links truth from the many things which might be true. They are not themselves, strictly speaking, true, though they can be said to be true in a secondary sense, when they are what they ought to be, that is, are in accordance with the source of their being, with the Truth.

Led by Henry, most readers have noted the ways in which the dialogue displaces ordinary language as the standard for truth, but they have not paid as much attention to the parallel displacement of logical standards of truth by the notion of God as Truth. Signification, for Anselm, depends as a condition for its possibility on the existence of a Supreme Truth, in and by whom all truths are true, and a Supreme Good, toward whom all choices are directed. This conclusion conflicts radically with common opinion, language, and experience. Thus, Anselm's reflection on truth has led him away from common experience and language in two directions: there are both more kinds of truth (two, not just one truth of signification) and a greater union of all truths in the one truth than ordinary ways of speaking and thinking recognize.

We cannot take Anselm's definition of truth as "rectitude as perceived by the mind" but leave aside the rest of the dialogue as "chaff." To do so is to miss how Anselm understands truth "both as *being* and as *value*."[66] Such a reading also leaves out two-thirds of the dialogue. In the dialogue as a whole, truth as found in true statements (already itself complicated by the distinction of this notion of truth from the truth of signification) is placed in context of the truth of things doing and being what they ought. Further, all those truths are understood as dependent not on those particular things and statements but on the One Truth, in and through which they are true. Anselm is unwilling to let go of any of these notions of truth, either the mundane truth of ordinary language, logical notions of truth in the truth of signification, or the grand notion of the One Truth.

64. Corbin, "Se Tenir dans la Vérité," 659. This is a reversal not only of the relationship between truth and beings but also reason and truth, as Cattin points out: "*ratio* is not capable of truth except because it is 'in' the truth, it is possessed by the truth and not vice versa." Yves Cattin, "*Prologion* et *De veritate*: *Ratio*, *Fides*, *Veritas*," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, 606.

65. DV 13, S I, 199, 17–19.

66. Duclow, "Structure and Meaning," 417.

The grand notion of the One Truth is where Anselm is headed, but the prosaic notions are the beginning of the journey toward that goal. For Anselm, grammatical and logical analyses serve as the first step in making the transition between common usage and the higher and more proper vision of truth. Anselm has grammar and logic serve that function because that is the function they served in the larger system of education and reasoning in which he takes part. Further, for Anselm grammar and logic serve as springboards because of what sophisticated literacy brings about: a realization of the ways in which things are or signify more or something different from what they seem or what is said about them. Thus grammar and logic destabilize confidence in ordinary ways of speaking and thinking. These trivium disciplines show that language has a truth of its own apart from the things it names, and, thus lays the groundwork for the more important and radical claim that there are not irreducibly many truths but One Truth in and by which particular things are true. Logical and grammatical sophistication destroys comfort with one end of the spectrum—the way language applies to ordinary things; theological insight does the same with the other end—how language applies to God. What Anselm enacts within *De veritate* and in the linking of the three dialogues is the connection between the first steps of grammar and the meaning of the things revealed in scripture, the coexistence of many truths and the One Truth.

With this conclusion, we return to the issue that opens the *Fragments* which is an important thematic link between Anselm's writings on language and theology. For *De veritate* is Anselm's answer to the Parmenidean question, how finite things *and* God can be said to be or to be something. Like Parmenides, Anselm concludes that there is only one being and one truth; the being and truth of other things is derivative and, thus, improperly said to belong to them. As Anselm takes a step toward Parmenides he also takes an important step away from Plato, shifting from the notion of "eternal and underived" essences to essences whose "natures and proper functions are derived from him who is *per se* and *a se*."[67] For Anselm, the reality of all material things is directly found in God, not in an intermediate realm of forms. Anselm also moves away from Parmenides in wanting to save the truth of ordinary things and ordinary language. He rejects the monism of Parmenides by arguing that creatures have a kind of truth of their own by fulfilling their function.

In this way, Anselm derives his teleology from his metaphysics: the truth of things is in their being in and according to the Supreme Truth;

67. Campbell, "Anselm's Background Metaphysics," 343.

hence, "doing the truth" is orienting oneself toward the One Truth, acting toward it. The notion that the truth of things is their being and doing what they ought is, essentially, a rephrasing from a creaturely perspective of Jesus' claim to be "the way," and, of course, of the claim ruminated on at some length in *De veritate*, that "he who does the truth comes to the light."[68] Doing what one ought, having truth and, hence, righteousness, is, in the language of *De veritate*, being according to supreme truth.[69] But while *De veritate* defines truth and righteousness, what is taken up in the following dialogues is how creatures can achieve (and fail to achieve) righteousness.

De libertate arbitrii: Striving to Maintain Unity

There are, much of the secondary literature argues, two philosophically significant claims Anselm makes about the will in his two dialogues, *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu diaboli*. The first is that free choice does not consist in the existence of alternate real possibilities for choice, namely to choose rightly or wrongly. Anselm makes this clear when he insists that freedom does not consist in the ability to sin (or not). Explaining and defending this claim is the main subject of *De libertate*. The second is that in human beings (and in the angels before they fell) there are two wills or inclinations, one to justice and one to happiness. Laying out this view is the main subject of *De casu diaboli*. In his account of the first, Anselm insists on the autonomy of the will that can neither be compelled by internal nor external forces. This has been called the "radical voluntarism" at the core of Anselm's theory of the will.[70] In his account of the second, Anselm insists that the human will could not be free if it had only one will or inclination, either for justice or happiness, and that only the choice of justice for its own sake (not for the sake of happiness) can be counted as a morally worthy choice. Commentators have credited Anselm with "breaking new ground" by rejecting eudaimonism in this way.[71] An-

68. John 3:21; see DV 5, S I, 181–83.

69. DV 13, S I, 199, 28–29.

70. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, "Anselm's Account of Freedom," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 198.

71. Bonnie Kent, "The Moral Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A. S. McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 236–37. Jeffrey Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow, 222–56, esp. 222–24. John Hare argues for the connection between Anselm to Scotus in the development of a non-Aristotelian, duty-based ethics, but sees less of a break than others between Augustine and Anselm. John Hare, *God's Call: Moral Realism, God's Commands, and Human Autonomy* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001). Daniel Rakus makes the connection between Anselm and Kierkegaard's *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing* rather than Kant, though the main thrust of his argument is in

selm sounds even more Kantian when we add his notion that to be a rational being with a will is to have "the ability to keep uprightness of will for the sake of this uprightness itself."[72] For most philosophical commentators, Anselm's views can be summed up as incompatibilist but not requiring, at least not for freedom per se (only for the finite received wills of human and angels), the existence of alternate possible choices, and as deontological in his theory of moral obligation.

However, Anselm is not simply taking positions on the will; he is reflecting on points in Christian salvation history from creation to the fall. Understanding the fall sets the stage for the only possible resolution of the human condition in the Incarnation. In other words, there is a substantive and specific connection between the second and third dialogues of the trilogy and scripture just as there is for the first. This does not reduce the philosophical value or originality of Anselm's thinking on the topics of free choice and ethics. Rather to see them in their context, as coming out of reflection on scripture's account of the human condition and as fitting back into that context, is to see even more clearly their philosophical genius. For Anselm these are not abstract arguments on a topic but part of larger ethical and existential question about what it means to be human, what it is human beings can and should do with their lives. This context deepens and complicates Anselm's "positions" on the will and ethical action.

Anselm is engaged with scripture and working out Christian anthropology in the broad sense very much against the backdrop of Augustine's work on these topics. Freedom and responsibility, sin and grace, are, of course, central to so much of Augustine's work, and their importance is only outweighed by the differences of opinion among scholars about what his view is, whether it changed over time, whether free choice is radically transformed after the fall.[73] Augustine is not a systematic

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answer to a more Kantian sounding question, how one can know one's moral *debitum*, arguing that Anselm holds that moral knowledge is innate. Daniel T. Rakus, "*Alter Augustinus* and the Question of Moral Knowledge: Answering Philosophically as an Anselmian," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 43 (1997): 313–37. For other views on Anselm's relationship to Kant see n. 60, and my discussion of justice for Anselm and its relationship to Kant, 226–28 For less anachronistic accounts of Anselm and his relationship to ancient *eudiamonism*, see Jean-Robert Pouchet, OSB, *La Rectitudo chez Saint Anselme: Un Itinéraire Augustinien de l'Ame à Dieu* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1964), 89–90, 195–97. See also the similar remarks by Philippe Delhaye, "Quelques aspects de la morale de saint Anselme," in *Congrès international du IXe centenaire de l'arrivée d'Anselme au Bec,* Spicilegium Beccense I (Paris: J. Vrin, 1959), 241; and Jean Rohmer, *La finalité morale chez les théologiens de saint Augustin à Duns Scot* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1939), 156.

72. DLA 4, S I, 214, 4–7.

73. On the diverse interpretations of Augustine see John Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," in *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by R. A. Markus (New York:

thinker and wrote in different ways and at different times against different opponents on these topics. Anselm's reflections clearly aim at coming up with a consistent account of freedom and responsibility in created beings that does justice to Augustine's intuitions in opposing both Manicheanism and Pelagianism.[74] For on the one hand, Augustine insists on individual responsibility for sin (as opposed to Manichean determinism), and, on the other hand, is completely committed to the notion that human beings cannot, through their own actions and agency, merit salvation (as opposed to Pelagian libertarianism).[75] Augustine also stakes out a number of other claims that Anselm is determined to honor. Augustine maintains that one is more free when unable to sin than able to sin.[76] In these contexts, Augustine opposes the ability not to sin with not being *able* to sin (contrasting the condition of Adam with that of beatitude) and characterizes both as kinds of freedom. Augustine also argues that if freedom is defined as the ability to sin or not, then neither God nor the angels can be said to have free will.[77] But Augustine also insists that Adam was and had to be able to sin or not, and that unless his choice was free, punishment would be unjust.[78]

Besides endorsing these claims, Anselm also seems to be engaged with Augustine on this topic by taking up objections that were raised against Augustine in his own time, most pointedly by the Pelagian, Julian of Eclanum. Julian objects, among many other things, that free choice must in-

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Anchor Books, 1972), 218 (reprint, *Journal of Theological Studies*, 20 [1969]: 420). See also Eleanore Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, edited by Eleanore Stump and Norman Kretzman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124. For other discussions of the wide range of views attributed to Augustine, see Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," 143, nn. 1–2.

74. Cf. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 30–31. Rogers argues that Augustine's views are compatibilist and that Anselm comes to a very different libertarian view. For the full argument on Augustine's compatibilism, see 31–52. Though there are objections to be made to her reading of Augustine and to the brute application of contemporary philosophical categories to Augustine, for whom they are even more problematic than Anselm, her analysis of both Anselm and Augustine on this issue is extremely helpful and she is right that Anselm, while likely thinking of himself as "working through some of Augustine's unfinished business," develops a very different view. However, it is one that is truer than Rogers allows to Augustine's basic intuitions about the will.

75. Cf. Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," 137. Though like Rogers, Stump uses without qualification or question contemporary categories to understand Augustine, she is true to the sense and spirit of Augustine's writings, early and late, when she writes that he holds both that "the will of faith is a gift of God in the sense that God alone is the cause of it" and that "human beings have free will and are solely responsible for their sins." To her credit, Stump tries very hard to do justice to both of these claims in Augustine, despite the difficulties posed by Augustine himself. For discussion of the issue of grace and free will in Augustine, see chapter 7.

76. Augustine, *Enchiridion* 105; *De civitate Dei* XXII, 30, 3; *De correptione et gratia*, 11, 32; 12, 33.

77. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 38; VI, 10.

78. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* II, 1.

clude the ability to do otherwise and that if it does not, then God is responsible for sin.[79] Articulating a strong libertarianism, Julian also accuses Augustine of falling into Manicheanism. Anselm crafts his account in sympathy with Augustine on several levels: he shares with Augustine the basic position maintaining both human agency and dependency, along with a notion of true freedom as freedom to choose the good, and takes up the challenges left unmet in Augustine's unfinished reply to Julian.

Anselm's solution is to redefine free choice itself not as the neutral choice between options but as keeping righteousness for its own sake. At the same time, he takes seriously Julian's objection that if everything, including the choice to keep righteousness, is given by God, then that action is necessary rather than free. In this way, Anselm avoids a definition of freedom which would exclude God, and also avoids the criticism of libertarianism, that it leaves only the liberty of indifference.[80] Anselm's argument for rejecting the view that freedom requires the ability to do otherwise (to sin), is like the one Plato makes in the *Gorgias* about power, an argument Boethius also makes in the *Consolation*.[81] True power is the ability to do what is advantageous, thus he is more powerful who knows and does only what is truly beneficial. So, Anselm argues, someone who cannot be turned from righteousness to sin, is more free because able to avoid sin, which is both disgraceful (*dedecens*) and harmful (*noxium*).[82] The assumption Anselm makes is that freedom is an advantage, a perfection, such that its possession should make one more rather than less powerful. As Visser and Williams remark, Anselm is "emphasizing the teleological nature of freedom; full-fledged freedom of choice is the power for self-initiated action *for some good end*."[83]

Scholars have attempted to explain this notion of freedom as the ability to refrain from sin, rather than as the ability to sin or not in a number of helpful ways. Rogers tries to elucidate Anselm's notion of free choice using Harry Frankfurt's distinction between first and second order volitions. A second order volition is "a choice about what desires one wishes to have and to embrace." Thus, freedom for Frankfurt is "being able to act upon the desires which one endorses."[84] Campbell reminds us that *arbi-*

79. Julian makes this claim about the will a number of times; see, for example, Augustine, *Contra Julian opus imperfectum* I, 78, 82. On Augustine's Manicheanism, see II, 113; V, 32.

80. Augustine makes the argument against Julian, who defends a strong libertarianism. See *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 41, 56. Cf. Rogers, *Anselm in Freedom*, 36.

81. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* II, pr. 6, 208–12; III, pr. 2, 232–37; IV, pr. 2, 318–28.

82. DLA 1, S I, 208, 18–24.

83. Visser and Williams, "Anselm's Account of Freedom," 183–84 (the authors' emphasis); cf. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 174.

84. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 61–62.

trium in *liberum arbitrium* means rational or informed judgment. It is that which a judge makes in a case before him, not a merely neutral choice of one alternative over another. The judge's sentence, his *arbitrium*, is fitting, and human *liberum arbitrium* is willing what is fitting, what one ought.[85] If free choice is a perfection, it is the freedom to do something that is fitting and right. Thus, the ability to sin is not part of freedom, just as the ability to fall is not part of the ability to walk, and musical ability is the ability to play an instrument well, not well or badly. Of course, one who can play well can also play badly, but that is not part of their musical ability.[86] Perhaps more helpful is Campbell's distinction between the ability to keep the law and that to commit a crime, which are not the same, as analogous to Anselm's distinction between the ability not to sin and the ability to sin.[87] Though there are limits to these analogies, they do give a sense of how we might think about freedom not as the ability to choose between alternatives but to choose positively what one ought.

Nonetheless, there is a tighter link between freedom and sinning than there is between musical ability and bad playing. Anselm maintains that even though the ability to sin is not part of freedom, human beings and angel sinned "by the ability to sin and by free choice," and that, as he titles chapter two, "although they were able to serve sin, sin was not able to master them."[88] As Anselm does in many places in this dialogue and *De casu*, this chapter heading states what he will argue for in near paradoxical terms: how can one serve sin without being mastered by it? How can one sin by free choice without the ability to sin being part of freedom? The solutions to these conundrums, as is often the case in Anselm, are found in the making of fine distinctions. Anselm argues that human beings and angels sinned "by their own choice [*per arbitrium suum*] which was free [*liberum*]" but not "by that from which their choice was free [*per hoc unde liberum erat*]." Freedom is the ability *not to sin*; humans and angels sinned by the ability [*potestatem*] they had *to sin*.[89] Because human beings and angels are "able to serve sin" not by being externally compelled but by their own power or choice, then sin cannot be said to "master" them.

The distinction that is difficult to grasp is that between the ability *not* to sin and the ability *to* sin. The former is what freedom consists in, An-

85. Richard Campbell, "Freedom as Keeping the Truth: The Anselmian Tradition," *Anselm Studies* 2 (1988): 297–318.

86. Campbell, "Freedom as Keeping the Truth," 303–5.

87. Campbell, "Freedom as Keeping the Truth," 305.

88. DLA 2, S I, 209, 8–10.

89. DLA 2, S I, 210, 6–10.

selm argues, but what about the latter? A number of commentators have had problems understanding and supporting the distinction, defaulting to the view that, at least in creatures, freedom requires the ability to sin even though Anselm claims clearly that the ability to sin is not part of freedom, freedom that human beings, angels, and God share.[90] Campbell makes the distinction clearly: "in creatures choice and thus the possibility of sinning provides the *condition* for self-determination and thus the *condition* in which creatures can exercise their freedom: it does not follow that human freedom is essentially a matter of having choices."[91] Why choice is not part of but a condition for the creaturely exercise of freedom is the topic of *De casu*. In *De libertate* Anselm only tries to maintain the distinction between free choice and the ability to sin in order to maintain both human freedom and responsibility for sin.

To this end the bulk of the dialogue is a sustained attempt to retain the autonomy of the will in the face of series of pointed objections by the student. The discussion of the limits and weakness of the will of creatures is a secondary theme. Maintaining free choice means showing how it exists both before and after the fall, in the face of threats, temptation, and even divine power, arguing that there is freedom even in the midst of servitude. The student objects again and again that it seems that the will can be forced to fall while the teacher maintains its inviolability. In each case, the student's objections look unanswerable and the teacher's positions appear indefensible. But the teacher always manages to reply with arguments that have a kind of tautological necessity, making the contrary view, the one originally expressed by the student, self-contradictory. This is, of course, the pattern of argument laid down in the *Monologion*, here carried forward beyond the topic of the divine nature to that of created natures.

The teacher sets out to defend the notion that not only is the will free *before* it freely makes itself the "servant of sin" but that it is still free *even after* making the choice to subjugate itself. This problem is made more rather than less intractable by the definition of free choice as the ability to keep righteousness of will for the sake of righteousness itself. To

90. See Campbell, "Freedom as Keeping the Truth," 303–8, who argues that both Jasper Hopkins and Stanley Kane have difficulty making sense of Anselm's view because they are not able to keep from projecting the modern notion of freedom as the choice between alternatives on to Anselm. See Hopkins, *A Companion*, 144–45, and G. Stanley Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom and the Will* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 128–29, 170. Hopkins and Kane do attempt to maintain Anselm's definition but do not, for Campbell, do so adequately. Visser and Williams make this difficulty—reconciling Anselm's claims that imply that freedom requires alternate possibilities and those that do not—the thesis of their chapter in *Anselm*, 172–91.

91. Campbell, "Freedom as Keeping the Truth," 307.

this the student poses the very understandable question: given the loss of righteousness, how can the will be free, that is, how can it will to keep a righteousness it no longer has? This is the title of chapter three and the student's first question.[92] The teacher's puzzling reply is that we have no ability which suffices to accomplish anything. What else is an ability if not the ability to accomplish something? The teacher's response dissolves the apparent contradiction by distinguishing between different kinds of ability. We say someone can see, that there is an ability, but in order for seeing to take place, not only must there be capability in the one who sees, sightedness, but also something to see, light in which to see it, and, lastly, no obstructions to vision. Hence, just as we have the ability to see when we are sighted but cannot see when there is no object, no light, or an obstruction, so we can have the ability to keep righteousness when we have the reason to recognize righteousness and the will by which to hold on to it even though we lack the actual righteousness we have the ability to hold on to.[93]

In clear contrast to Augustine's account of the fallen will, at least in the *Contra Julianum*, Anselm maintains the continued presence of free choice unchanged even after falling into sin. Augustine insists that the will itself is damaged by the fall, taunting Julian with passages from St. Paul describing the inability of the will to function. How, he asks, can we be free if we say with Paul, "I do not do what I will, but I do what I hate" (Rom. 7:15)?[94] Anselm can, of course, agree with Paul but understand the inability not to be the loss of free will itself but a loss of the condition that makes it operative: the loss of the gift of righteousness. It is a fine distinction and Anselm draws attention to it by stating it in a deliberately provocative way (we have no ability which makes us able to do anything), making the problem look insoluble. If this does not quite *create* difficulty, at least it makes it clear that it will not be skirted. It is noteworthy that Anselm's chapter heading preceding this conclusion, "how [the devil and Adam] have the ability to keep righteousness, which they do not have," is a similarly discomfiting formulation.[95] This is yet another example of Anselm's penchant for pursuing paradox. This particular apparent paradox makes an important point about Anselm's notion of free choice in human being and angels, that the freedom they possess is that of a *finite* will; it is a created, received freedom. This formulation, that our abilities are not by themselves sufficient to actually do anything, is another consequence of finitude, and the stu-

92. DLA 3, S I, 210, 23–24.
93. DLA 3, S I, 213, 9–13.
94. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* VI, 11; cf. VI, 12.
95. DLA 4, S I, 213, 27.

dent's bafflement both here and throughout the dialogue is the dramatization of incompleteness and dependence of human understanding. The account of *received* freedom, is, as noted above, the topic of *De casu*, but just as *De veritate*'s exploration of truth led to the truth of the will as the will's free keeping of righteousness, linking *De veritate* to *De libertate arbitrii*, so the discussion of human and angelic freedom and responsibility leads to a discussion of the limits of creaturely freedom, linking *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu*.

The ground for turning back all the objections to the will's freedom is the nearly tautological claim that everyone who wills wills that he will. Hence, Anselm concludes, though we can be killed, tortured, etc., against our wills, we cannot *will* against our will and so cannot *will* to desert uprightness *unwillingly*.[96] Anselm does go on to nuance this claim, admitting that there is a sense in which we might be said to will something against our will, though he need not for the purpose of maintaining his view. Anselm does not mention it in this context, but he must have in mind at some level the scripture passage Augustine quoted back to Julian to render his assertions that the will is free to choose absurd, Paul's "I do not do what I will, but I do what I hate" (Rom. 7:15). Anselm, of course, does not want to deny the conflict Paul describes but wants to interpret it in some other way than as willing against one's will. He couches his reinterpretation not directly in regard to Paul but as a response to the commonplace claims (as opposed to his logically unassailable but sophisticated claim about willing to will) that we cannot carry through on what we will, that we are somehow forced to choose what is against our will. Here is the familiar Anselmian strategy of undermining ordinary, common usage and replacing it with clearer but often more difficult, even paradoxical sounding claims. In this vein, he maintains that, for example, the man who lies to save his life lies both willingly and unwillingly. Anselm explains the apparent contradiction by arguing that he lies against his will in the sense that he does not will lying for its own sake and in the sense that it is against his will that he be placed in this dilemma of either lying or being killed. But he lies willingly in the sense that he wills to lie for the sake of his life and, hence, deserts uprightness willingly. What is noteworthy is that Anselm, though he has accommodated the ordinary language claim in explaining the limited sense in which it is true, still concludes his explanation in a paradoxical sounding conclusion: "although against his will he either lies or is killed, it does not follow that he lies against his will

96. DLA 5, S I, 214, 18–23. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* V, 10, 1. Augustine makes the same point, that one cannot will against one's will.

or that he is killed against his will."[97] This is not a contradiction but you have to read it slowly to realize it.

When they turn to the problem of the will seeming to be overcome by temptation, Anselm continues to play with the language, both in the student's objections and his replies. The student is clearly provoking the teacher when he precedes his next objection to the will's freedom—that we *experience* the will as powerless, overcome by irresistible temptation—with the remark, "Though you subdue all assaults on our will and do not permit any temptation to master it so that I am not able to resist your claims in any way."[98] It is a wonderfully ironic statement describing the situation he feels himself to be in: the teacher's argument concluding that no temptation is irresistible is itself so irresistible that the student's will, which the teacher has proved autonomous, is compelled by the force of the teacher's arguments. But the additional irony is that though the student *says* his will is compelled by the teacher's argument, it is not quite. He still objects, on the grounds of what he experiences, and so he challenges the teacher to reconcile the "power of the will" he has "proved" with the "powerlessness of the will we feel."[99]

The student could, of course, have made his point without irony and in any number of less paradoxical sounding ways. He could have claimed that to say that one is "unable to resist" a conclusion is something of an exaggeration in the same way in which, as the teacher goes on to explain, we often say resisting temptation is impossible when in fact it is only difficult. Or the teacher may intend to leave room for the conclusion that *not* to be compelled by truth is a kind of lack rather that possession of freedom. The point is that Anselm exaggerates the problem to the point of paradox, accentuating a kind of tension between the content of the argument—the will is never coerced—and the way that argument affects the student—his assent is compelled. Such an obvious and self-conscious shaping of the dramatic aspect of the dialogue should show, in case we needed more proof, that the rhetoric of the arguments and exchanges is intended and demands interpretation.

Both before and after this interjection from the student, the teacher gives a logical, linguistic argument: to say that temptation forces the will is to say that something forces the will to will, which is clearly nonsensical. If the will wills, then its choice is willed, not compelled.[100] After the student's interjection, based on his experience, which seems to run coun-

97. DLA 5, S I, 215, 18–20.
98. DLA 6, S I, 217, 10–12.
99. DLA 6, S I, 217, 14–16.
100. DLA 5, S I, 216, 29–217, 3; 6, S I, 217, 10–27.

ter to the logic of the situation, the teacher makes two additional points. First, he explains and corrects ordinary language: we say we are powerless against temptation, necessarily overcome by it, only because it is *difficult* to resist. The student is still not entirely convinced. The teacher replies with a much stronger claim about the general unintelligibility of any claim that the will can be overcome and attempts convince the student emotionally as well as logically. "If a man wills to lie in order to avoid death and to save his life for a while," the teacher counters, "who will say that it is impossible for him to will *not* to lie in order to avoid eternal death and to live endlessly?"[101] Who indeed could make such a preposterous claim? Anselm's point is not, as we shall see in *De casu*, that the will only wills what brings greater pleasure or happiness; rather he seeks to reframe the dilemma of choosing lying or death in order to see beyond the apparent necessity of being forced to lie to escape death by seeing the possibility of freely choosing not to lie to receive life without end.[102] The reframing depicts an emotionally convincing scenario to complement the logical argument. It *is* consonant with our experience and feelings to imagine the will resisting pleasures and enduring suffering for the sake of a transcendent good. The point is to shift what seems necessary and indubitable away from the will's being compelled to the will's freedom.

However, having claimed the high ground of indubitability, the teacher concludes by rephrasing this clear truth in a problematic way, retaining the language of powerlessness. Thus Anselm writes, "powerlessness [*impotentia*] does not remove from the will the ability to persevere in righteousness," even as he glosses this with the claim that we call the will powerless because it can keep uprightness only with difficulty.[103] This way of expressing it has a point. The teacher wants the student to see that the will cannot be overpowered while also recognizing the truth of our ordinary expressions (and experiences) of being overcome, of being unable to resist: "In this way, therefore, I think you are able to see how the power of the will which true reasoning asserts is consistent with [*conveniat*] the powerlessness which our humanity feels."[104] Though he

101. DLA 6, S I, 217, 32–218, 1.

102. Whether and to what degree Anselm rejects "eudaimonism" is controversial. On the one hand, Anselm insists that justice is keeping righteousness for its own sake, yet here he seems to imply that choosing rightly means seeing one's true good in a large enough context—seeing eternal life as the greater good which is a consequence of not lying rather than seeing escape from physical torture as greater good which is the consequence of lying. It is *De casu* which addresses this question more directly. See n. 71 for some of those rejecting this conclusion; Rogers argues that Anselm is eudaimonistic. See pp. 226–28 for my discussion of this issue.

103. DLA 6, S I, 218, 10–13.

104. DLA 6, S I, 218, 8–10.

could quite easily, Anselm again refrains from resolving the two different perspectives, "the powerlessness" humanity feels and the ability or power to persevere.

There is, moreover, a connection, in the form of a kind of tension, between the content of their conclusions and what it means that they can argue for them. The student shows his power in being able to formulate these strong objections; the teacher wants to defeat the student's objections at the same time that he wants to retain the objections, which are asserting the weakness of the human will, to the degree that they have a kind of truth to them. The main message of *De libertate* is the unassailability, the inviolability of the will's free choice, but its sub-text is the weakness and the possibility, now reality, of its fall. The will is both strong enough to resist any temptation and weak enough to be overwhelmed by next to nothing. Anselm resists resolving this tension longer, arguably, than he needs to, letting the student dwell in it long enough not just to understand it but to experience it in himself.

The teacher makes another, more deeply puzzling claim: that the will is stronger than temptation even when overcome by temptation.[105] This time the student uses the kind of definition-based argument the teacher used, appealing to the notion of what it means to be stronger than something else. If the will (specifically the will to keep righteousness) were stronger than temptation, then the will would resist and, hence, could not be overcome by temptation.[106] The teacher's reply is the kind of fine-grained distinction we have come to expect: there is will in the sense of instrument for willing (like the instrument for seeing) and there is will in the sense of the activity of willing (like actually seeing) which uses the instrument for willing. Hence, just as the man who can restrain a bull but fails to restrain a ram would be rightly said to be equally strong in each task (though having failed to use enough of his strength on the ram), so the will is stronger than temptation even when it does not use all its strength to overcome it, the teacher argues.[107]

The obvious question is what, then, accounts for what the will wills more strongly? What makes it will whatever it wills more strongly? What is the cause of its sometimes using and sometimes not using adequate strength to defeat temptation? Anselm does not ask this here, though he takes it up in *De casu*. His point here that the will has a strength that it can always use—if it wills—to resist the forces of temptation. The will itself chooses to will whatever it wills and when it wills two things, it

105. DLA 7, S I, 218, 15. 26–220, 5.
106. DLA 7, S I, 218, 17–19.
107. DLA 7, S I, 218, 26–220, 5.

chooses whatever it wills with greater force. The will always triumphs; its strength is, Anselm claims, inseparable (*inseparabilem*); it cannot be deterred from whatever it wills more strongly.[108]

The will's strength is such that even God cannot remove its righteousness, the teacher adds. Anselm constructs this argument as a fairly simply *reductio*. Since God wills that the will will uprightness for its own sake, if God were to remove that uprightness, then "God would not will [man] to will what He wills him to will."[109] Hence, nothing, including God, Anselm concludes, can overpower a righteous will. As if to underscore this point and further discredit the commonplace claim that the will can be "compelled to abandon truth from fear of death or torment," Anselm restates the choice between lying and death in such a way that makes the will's power to choose clearer: "For if it were to see directly the eternal glory which it would immediately gain after keeping the truth and the torments of hell to which it would be handed over without delay after telling a lie, it is then far from doubt that it would be seen right away to have sufficient strength to serve the truth."[110] This inelegant but literal translation brings out that Anselm uses multiple expressions about time and distance here. To put it more precisely, he uses expressions signifying the lack of a time delay and distance in the dilemma and the decision—*praesentem*, *statim*, *sine mora*, *procul dubio*, *mox*. His point seems to be to neutralize time as a factor in our choices—the distorting effect of a distant benefit weighed against a present disadvantage—in order to get a clearer look at what the will is capable of. For the same reason Anselm chooses the fall of the devil rather than human beings as a way of exploring how evil can be chosen freely by an undamaged will; it takes away the confusion caused by temporality.

But just after Anselm has established a strength on the will's part that is stronger than God (the heading for chapter nine is "nothing is more free than an upright will"), he shifts to describe the utter weakness, unfreedom of the will to recover that uprightness once lost. It would be easier, the teacher asserts, for God to raise the dead than to restore righteousness.[111] Though it sounds a bit shocking, this conclusion follows straightforwardly from what has preceded: since the will cannot be forced

108. DLA 7, S I, 219, 32–33.

109. DLA 8, S I, 221, 24–25. Corbin argues that this argument about what God can and cannot do reveals Anselm's connection to and reliance on the scriptural rather than a merely metaphysical or ontological notion of God and his power. See Michel Corbin, "De l'Impossible en Dieu: Lecture du 8e chapitre du dialogue de Saint Anselme sur la liberté," *Revue des Sciences philosophique et théologique* 66 (1982): 523–50.

110. DLA 9, S I, 221, 26–29.

111. DLA 10, S I, 222, 13–14.

away from righteousness by anything else, when it deserts it, the fault is utterly its own. And, as Anselm puts it, unlike the body, which dies but does not sin and so as a consequence does not become unable to receive life again, the will deserts by its own power and hence "deserves always to lack righteousness."[112] As an argument about what God can or cannot (or in this case can do more vs. less easily), the argument is strikingly rationalistic. That something is "harder for God" means that it strains cosmic logic more completely, that it contradicts the given nature of things. However, Anselm's point is not really about God's power but about what it means for the soul to be given again the righteousness it has lost.

The student puts together both the power to keep righteousness, which no one, including God, can take away, and the utter impossibility of regaining righteousness once lost. He sees a tension in this two-sided picture of human beings, as utterly free yet incapable of self-restoration. We are either free or in servitude, not both, he objects, so which is it?[113] The teacher's reply is a series of "on the one hand . . . on the other hands," which keep the reader turning from one perspective to another as if watching a tennis match or a seesaw: Because unable to return from sin, he is servant; because unable to be forced from righteousness, free. He can be turned from sin only by someone else and turned from righteousness only by himself.[114] Nonetheless, and here Anselm returns inexorably to his main point, from his freedom, a human being cannot be turned either by himself or another. Anselm adds by way of gloss a paradoxical formulation of this point: human beings are always naturally *free to serve* (*ad servandum*) righteousness, whether they have righteousness to serve or not.[115]

The student's penultimate question turns on which characterization of human being is more correct, servant or free, given that here as elsewhere, the teacher has used careful distinctions in order to maintain that both halves of the apparent contradiction are true. The student poses this question in an especially complicated way. He does not ask a question about human being per se as free or servant, perhaps to foreclose the teacher making a simple distinction based on the distinction between human being pre- and postlapse, free before the fall and servant after. Rather he asks, why is it better to call human beings free when they *do not* have righteousness than it is to call them servants when they *do* have righteousness?[116] Both are capacities and, hence, we might think,

112. DLA 10, S I, 222, 14–16.
113. DLA 11, S I, 222, 29–223, 2.
114. DLA 11, S I, 223, 3–11.
115. DLA 11, S I, 223, 10–11.
116. DLA 12, S I, 223, 18–21.

equally attributable to human beings. The reply Anselm crafts for the teacher shows him to be the thorough-going philosopher, that is, utterly uninterested in the facts: "The power of keeping righteousness he always has, both when he has righteousness and when he dos not, and thus he is always free."[117] The *fact* that we do not have righteousness, that we are the servants of sin, that (even worse) we have always already lost the righteousness we have or had the capacity to keep, makes no difference, the teacher argues. A capacity we always have, even though as a matter of fact it cannot be exercised, is a greater truth about us than that a fact that need not be or need not have been true: that we have become servants of sin, Anselm insists.[118] This way of thinking about the condition of fallen human beings as still free also allows Anselm to hold that human beings are both truly free and wholly in need of grace in a way that is more persuasive than Augustine's attempt to do the same in his anti-Pelagian writings. For Augustine, though he claims to preserve both free will and the necessity of grace, ends up emphasizing the inability not to sin in fallen beings, while Anselm, though completely in agreement, nonetheless finds a way to define fallen human beings in terms of their given capacity for freedom rather than their inability to exercise it.[119]

The student's reply to this argument alludes to his own condition in relation to the teacher's argument as mirroring the condition of fallen human being. For the student realizes, now too late, that he had the capacity to answer his own question in the four-fold distinction of capacity the teacher had made earlier. Here's how the student puts it: "If I had thought carefully about what was said earlier. . . . I would not have had this doubt. Therefore, I admit that the fault for this doubt was my own."[120] He had been given tools he did not make adequate use of, a failure which caused his doubts, and for which he himself is utterly responsible. The teacher lets him off but only on the condition that the student

117. DLA 12, S I, 224, 3–5.

118. As Campbell points out, this claim only makes sense given Anselm's notion of freedom as the capacity to choose righteousness for its own sake; it makes no sense "if freedom in created beings requires the capacity for choice between alternatives, since we cannot choose something for which the conditions are lost." Campbell, "Freedom as Keeping the Truth," 316.

119. To see whether there is a real difference and not just that between seeing the same glass half full or half empty requires a look at Anselm's *De concordia*. See chapter 7. See Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom*, 182–85. On the inability not to sin in Augustine see *De civitate Dei,* 22, 30; *De corresptione et gratia*, 12, 33. Anselm characterizes the inability to avoid sin of fallen human being as the inability to return to or recover righteousness on one's own, not as the utter determination of the will to continue in sin (DLA 12, S I, 224). Cf. Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom*, 183–84. Hopkins disagrees and finds that as soon as Anselm concedes Augustine's *non potest non peccare*, the "illusion" of his being less anti-Pelagian than Augustine is stripped away.

120. DLA 12, S I, 224, 23–25

do what he has not done heretofore: keep all they discuss present to his mind. This is exactly what the student worries in advance he will not be able to do: "But do not be surprised if those things which I am not accustomed to thinking are not after only one hearing all always present in my mind."[121] This exchange at the metalevel about what the student has done/can do mirrors the situation they have just worked out in the dialogue. The teacher can ask this of the student and it is, like the ability to keep righteousness, in some real sense a capacity the student possesses. But the student is under no illusions that he will somehow manage to do what he has not yet, and will always at some level fail to do. Yet, at the same time, the teacher's exhortation of him to do it is meaningful in the sense that he can be held responsible for not doing it.

De libertate has established two points: first, having been given righteousness and the ability to choose to uphold it (free choice), nothing, not even God, can undermine that ability; second, having lost righteousness by that choice, one is utterly incapable of recovering it. Anselm is clearly engaged in much more than an assertion of the will's free choice in this dialogue or even in carving out a better way of saving both free choice and the need for grace than Augustine. He is engaged in exploring and, further, deriving the full human moral and existential predicament from the notion of free choice. The student enacts the human desire to forego responsibility as he proposes possibility after possibility of ways in which the will might be compelled. He also enacts the desire for freedom in his hopes that the teacher will defeat his objections. Going through the sequence of arguments feels like attempting to hang on to the purity and unity of the unfallen will under repeated assaults attempting to loosen one's grip on it and, conversely, like trying to escape the responsibility freedom brings only to have it returned to one's hands. Then, in the next movement, after having retained freedom, the argument forces the student to admit the opposite irretrievability of righteousness of the will once it has been lost. The student is, rhetorically at least, either in heaven or in hell, with a will whose integrity is inviolable (except by itself), or a will whose fallenness is without natural recourse. The will cannot be aught else in its choice but free, an ability it cannot lose, and cannot be aught else once having deserted its integrity than fallen, stuck in a way it cannot remedy. It retains complete power in the first instance and is utterly bereft of it in the second. As we see here and will be explored further in *De casu*, both of these conditions are products of the givenness, of the received character of free choice. It is so utterly

121. DLA 12, S I, 224, 28–30.

given it cannot be taken away, and so utterly given that one cannot win it for oneself.

The student not only understands but experiences this dual condition from a sense of his own freedom and power to the sense of his lack thereof. He struggles to hold on to a sense of the will's unity and power even as those conclusions fly in the face of his own experience of his will as both divided and weak. As he did in *De veritate*, maintaining both that God is truth and that there are many truths, in *De libertate*, Anselm works to keep two truths in view. In important ways, the path of both *De veritate* and *De libertate* is from what is apparently true—the ordinary, commonsense view—to a view that is both more complicated, because it requires looking beyond and beneath *doxa*, and simpler, because grounded on necessary reasons and clear concepts. But, also in both cases, Anselm does not utterly wipe out the common sense view of division and plurality—of many truths, of the weak and divided will—but places it within a larger unity—the unity of the truth in one truth, and the freedom and, hence, unity of the will which cannot be divided against its will, which is only prospective.

De casu diaboli: Explaining Division

De casu diaboli takes up the question of how the will could go wrong. In exploring this issue, it uses an even more marked version of the strategy of alternating paradox and necessity than in *De libertate,* provoked by the deepening exploration of finite being. The student is still worried that the will is necessitated, but this time the concern is that the will is necessitated by God rather than temptation or difficulty. The dialogue opens, as was noted above, with a question occasioned by St. Paul's question, "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor 4:7). Only God has from himself whatever he has, the teacher replies; all creatures (including angels) have everything they have from God; from themselves they have nothing. The student immediately takes this assertion one step further: if creatures have everything they possess from God, then what they *lack* is also from God: "If there is not anything except because God caused it, it is necessary that what is not, is not because he did not make it."[122]

The Pauline question, "what do you have that you have not received?" is central to the topic at hand. Anselm's use of it echoes Augustine's usage of it in his anti-Pelagian writings, where it is cited to support the notion that salvation requires grace and cannot be merited.[123] Alluding to Au-

122. DCD 1, S I, 234, 2–3.
123. On Augustine's use of this passage see n. 16.

gustine's rejection of Pelagianism with this passage might seem more appropriate in *Cur Deus homo* than in *De casu*. *De casu's* main task is to establish how sin rather than salvation comes about, and how those who fall are themselves responsible, not God. However, since God would be *required* to save those he *caused* to fall, the logic of salvation requires both that it cannot be merited but also that those who fall fall of their own weight. It requires, in other words, freedom. This link is clear in Augustine's anti-Pelagian work, in which one of the main topics of debate is the nature of freedom. Augustine must respond to Julian, who, as we noted above, objects that Augustine cannot on his view maintain meaningful freedom and, thus, either lapses into dualism or making God responsible for sin. However, the connection of Paul's question to Anselm's topic is yet stronger and deeper. By taking the question quite literally to be about receiving *everything* by creatures, Anselm signals that he is concerned not just with freedom but the metaphysics of creaturehood. It is not just that creatures receive rather than earn salvation, but that they receive whatever they have from God, and have from themselves only nothing. However, free choice for Anselm, as we shall see, only exists when it is something of one's own. Thus, the problem Anselm is working out is how the creature, who receives everything, can have something of its own.

Anselm is, then, clearly placing the discussion of the fall of the devil and Paul's notion that creatures have nothing they have not received in a very broad context, much broader in fact than Augustine himself. In *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, Augustine argues that Paul is *not* alluding to the gifts of nature, things that come with being human, for example, reason, will, etc., as what is received, but rather is referring to predestination, the faith given as a gift to some and not to others.[124] Anselm, however, takes the passage to be about *everything* being received and about the condition of receiving itself. The teacher looks into the logic of receiving to find in it the logic of being and causality; the student descends more deeply into that same logic to draw the opposite conclusion, that not only what *is* but also what *is not* is due to God. The discussion brings to mind one of the paradoxes of the *Lambeth Fragments*, in which the student argues that since nonbeing has no ability, it has neither the ability to exist nor not exist.[125] Both the passage in the *Fragments* and the student's reprise of it here articulate a kind of pure, Parmenidean, all-or-nothing perspective. The student takes the logic of being to the point of paradox in the *Fragments* in an abstract way, but in *De casu* the student

124. Augustine, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 5, 9–6, 11.
125. LF, 23, 13–16.

brings the logic of causality to bear on the problems of freedom and responsibility for God and creatures. The teacher's task in *De casu*, then, is to make room in the logic of causality for something less than perfect being and perfect agency. Only then can he explain how angels (and human beings) can go from good to evil, from freedom to servitude, and how God can both be and not be the cause of that movement. What Anselm shows is that these large, recognizable philosophical questions are intimately tied up with the nature of giving and receiving, which defines the relationship between creator and creature.

The teacher's opening argument sets the tone for the dialogue as a whole, solving difficulties by distinction and qualification. He argues that can God be said to cause nonbeing *only in a certain sense*, in the sense of not preventing what he could prevent. In this sense, God "leads into temptation" because he does not keep someone from temptation, though able to do so.[126] To be sure, the teacher concludes by reasserting this notion of qualified agency on God's part *within* the context of the pure and transcendent character of divine being and causality: "from the supreme being there comes nothing but being and every being is from the supreme being. . . . And so nothing and not being are not from him, from whom there is only good and being."[127] But in the bulk of the dialogue, complication and distinction are the order of the day. And though Anselm finds his way back to the unity of will in the good angels (able to will no good in which they do not delight) and the opposite in the fallen (able to will no good of which they are not deprived), he gets there by making a series of mind-bending distinctions. [128]

Anselm makes clear before he begins this disorienting journey that he is going to have to shift, one could even say twist, ordinary language and reinterpret scriptural language to make his case. In response to an unstated worry that he is contradicting scripture in making such claims, the teacher explains that he is not criticizing scripture or "denying that on account of which it is said" in scripture that God causes nonbeing or evil. "But," he continues, "we ought not cling to (*inhaerere*) the impropriety of words covering the truth but rather desire (*inhiare*) the propriety of truth hidden in the many kinds of expressions."[129] Anselm uses here one of his favorite rhetorical devices, a parallelism between words that sound similar but are set up as opposites, to underline his point. The contrast between the meaning and the commonalities of sound in "clinging to (*inhaerere*)" words in a literal sense and "desiring (*inhiare*)" the truth

126. DCD 1, S I, 234, 12–17.
127. DCD I, S I, 234, 30–235, 4.
128. DCD 6, S I, 243–44; 25, S I, 273.
129. DCD 1, S I, 235, 10–12.

hidden beneath emphasizes the connection between the two acts he is advising the student to undertake, letting go to pursue truth (rather than clinging to the letter). The student is exhorted to give up false security for the search for hidden truth, to let go of the piece of driftwood on which he trying to stay afloat for a swim across open waters toward a more secure life raft. Notice that Anselm does not promise immediate rescue, does not claim to be able to deliver that deeper truth; the student must be willing to let go of a false certainty without having a new certainty ready to hand in order to embark on the search for deeper understanding. In this way Anselm hints at the insecurity they will experience on the dizzying verbal odyssey they are beginning, in which the most basic certainties, even the very principle of noncontradiction itself, will sometimes seem to be compromised. The grueling course of verbal gymnastics will assert the existence of abilities that are inabilities, doings that are not doing, possibilities that are impossible, and evil that both is and is not something.

Giving and Receiving

In order to connect the receiving of the will and its goodness to the larger question of causing or making, the teacher makes use of the distinction from the *Fragments* in which Anselm argues that a thing is said to cause or do (*facere*) something even when, though able, it does not intervene to change or restrain an outcome. In this improper sense, then, God can be said to make things not to be—because he does not make them exist, though he is able. The teacher argues that when things return to nonbeing, God does not cause it, because they return to what they have from themselves—nonbeing, God having reclaimed what he gave—being. This principle is both the solution to all the problems in the dialogue and that which brings about its difficulties.

The student immediately sees some of the difficulty in the logic of giving as a kind of causality. If everything is from God, only nonbeing is what the creature has of itself; if he has perseverance, then it is because he received it, and he received it because God gave it. If he does not have it, it is because he did not receive it and if he did not receive it, it is because God did not give it.[130] The student attempts to pose his objections in the form of tight logical arguments: if giving is the cause of receiving, then not giving is the cause of not receiving.[131] However, the student is hoisted on his own logical petard, for he has committed the fallacy of de-

130. DCD 2, S I, 235, 19–25.
131. DCD 2, S I, 236, 1–3.

nying the antecedent.[132] The student's claim that if the bad angel did not receive, then God did not give is, however, more plausible than its fallacious form implies. The claim they began from is that everything the creature has is received; everything is given by God. The logic of *God's* giving and *creature* receiving seems to be that of a biconditional—since the creature has nothing from himself, whatever he has or does not have seems to depend on what God has or has not given.

The teacher argues in response that giving requires both that the giver offers and that the receiver receives or accepts (Anselm uses one verb, *accipere*, for both notions) the offer.[133] That means that giving, though active, and receiving, though passive, are not wholly so. The giver can offer without successfully giving, and the receiver can be offered something without accepting. Of course, the activity of the receiver is limited to a negative act—he has the power only of refusing what is offered, and the passivity of the giver is also limited—without the offer the receiver cannot accept or reject. Anselm chooses to make this point by engaging in a dense set of distinctions and inferences that requires very slow and careful reading. One of those is reminiscent of the distinction from *De grammatico* between logical and causal relationships. So, the teacher explains, following logically is not the same as being caused by something: burning is not the cause of fire (rather vice versa), but from the logical supposition or the observation of burning, we can infer fire, and burning is the cause of the truth of the inference to fire. In the same way, receiving is not the cause of giving (rather vice versa), but from the supposition of receiving, we can infer giving (but we cannot infer from not receiving not having been given, though we can infer from not having been given, not having been received).[134] The use of necessary inferences gives strength to their argument—they are using the strongest tools at their

132. Anselm of course does not use this name for the student's mistake but does point out that even if giving is the cause of receiving, it does not follow that not giving is the cause of not receiving. DCD 3, S I, 236.

133. Augustine makes a similar claim in *De spiritu et littera* but, as Stump notes, does not make use of it to maintain a free act not determined by grace as Anselm does. See Augustine, *De spiritu et littera*, 34, 60, and Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," 137–38. For more discussion of this issue and this passage in Augustine, see chapter 7. Pranger argues that Anselm's analysis of the gift brings out an aspect not explored by Jean-Luc Marion, the possibility of refusal, which makes the gift not only unreceived but ungiven. M. Burcht Pranger, "Anselm, Marion, and the Refusal of the Gift," in *Anselm and Abelard: Investigations and Juxtapositions*, edited by G. E. M. Gaspar and H. Kohlenberger (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2006), 54–55. Marion, however, makes a somewhat different argument about refusal, that it fails to annul the gift but in the very refusal acknowledges it. See Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, translated by Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 271.

134. DCD 3, S I, 236, 24–237, 6.

disposal to explore the issue. But, as he did in *De grammatico*, Anselm also takes care to note the limits of this method; logical connections are not the same as causal connections and the ontological and epistemic orders though connected are distinct.

The student, a quick study, pulls the same distinction out to use against his teacher, noting that all the teacher has proved is that it does not follow from the good angel receiving because God gave that the bad angel did not receive because God did not give. That is, the teacher has shown that a certain logical inference does not follow but has not shown what the cause *is* of the bad angel's not having or receiving. If God did not give because the devil did not receive, the student asks in frustration, *why* did the devil not receive? Because he could not or would not receive (or accept)? The ability and will to receive seem also to be given by God, and not having them seems to be caused by God not giving them. The teacher's answer, in other words, the student complains, seems only to have kicked the problem down the road without solving it.

The teacher's response seems to lead the student further into a thicket of *Alice in Wonderland*-like nonsense:

> TEACHER: God did give him the ability and the will to receive perseverance.
> STUDENT: Then he received what God gave, and he had what he received.
> T: Yes, he received it and had it.
> S: Therefore, he received and had perseverance.
> T: No, he did not receive it and so did not have it.[135]

In this exchange, the teacher seems purposely to mislead the student. Like the student, the reader is baffled at the teacher's apparent embrace of contradictories: that God both gave and did not give perseverance. Only after drawing the student into this confusion does the teacher make the distinction needed to avoid the contradiction: God gave only the *ability* and *will* to receive perseverance, the teacher explains, not "*the receiving of* perseverance."[136]

Again, however, the problem seems only to have been put off rather than resolved, something the teacher takes a turn in pointing out. Using the student's own experience as example, the teacher asks whether the student has ever had the will and the ability to do something but failed to complete it. To the affirmative answer, the teacher asks, why did you not persevere in willing? Because I did not *will* to persevere in willing, the student answers. This is the start of the regress the student is tempted to

135. DCD 3, S I, 237, 20–24.
136. DCD 3, S I, 237, 27–28.

embark on, answering the obvious next question (why he did not will to persevere in willing): "I would respond again that I willed to persevere but that I did not persevere in *this* willing, except I see that it would go on to infinity, with you asking me the same thing and me giving the same response."[137] The teacher's answer, when it finally comes, is really rather simple: that there is a difference between willing something and willing it completely, and that what the devil failed to do is will completely (*pervelle*).[138] The notion, though simple enough, does require Anselm to coin his own word, *pervelle*, to capture it. It shows in yet another way Anselm's sense that the toolbox of ordinary language is not adequate to explain the realities he is dealing with.

Of course, the student sees right away that the teacher's answer is not much better than his, that it only—again—pushes the problem further down the line. *Why* did the angel who fell not will it completely? Mustn't it be because God did not give him this will? Again the teacher makes an apparently absurd rejoinder: because the devil deserted this will, he did not receive it. That the devil's deserting (*deseruit*) and deserting freely (*sponte*) is the reason for lacking the will to keep perseverance (rather than God's not giving that will) makes no sense to the student. One *first* gives up the will to keep something, *and then* wills to desert it, he argues.[139]

Not so, the teacher replies, explaining that the relationship is reversed when you have something you do not will to keep on account of something else. Just as the miser wills to spend his money on account of the bread he wants *before* he gives up his will to keep the money, so the devil, because he wants something more than the will to keep perseverance, wills to desert it before he loses the will to keep it.[140]

The distinction between willing to desert and not willing to keep is psychologically subtle. In the case of the hot coal (Anselm's example of something you do not will to keep for its own sake which you then subsequently, will to desert), we can feel the difference between "I do not want this" (does not will to keep) and the feeling, "I want to get rid of it," (wills to desert) which follows. It is not clear that the case of the miser and his bread is a temporal reversal of the case of the hot coal, willing to desert money *before* (in a strictly temporal sense) not willing to keep it, but it does make sense to think of the two acts of will as different and as being differently related for the miser. In the latter case, the experience of the strong desire for bread makes one prepared to give up the money for it (willing to desert) but requires a second act of will to reconcile oneself to

137. DCD 3, S I, 238m 10–12.
138. DCD 3, S I, 238, 32–34.
139. DCD 3, S I, 239,1–20
140. DCD 3, S I, 239, 23–240, 2.

giving up the money. While, of course, one cannot pay for the bread without giving up the money, willing both does not always happen. Frequently we wish, as the saying goes, "to have our cake and eat it too." What the miser wills in willing to pay for the bread but not willing to be deprived of his money is not rational but that does not mean that is not what he wants. Many of our battles with ourselves and certainly our children take place at exactly this juncture—we know we cannot have both the bread and the money, cannot gain the reward without the work, eat the sundae without the weight gain, but we want to. Rogers, using Frankfurt, describes the conflict as about reconciling a primary desire—to have the bread—with a secondary desire—who do we want to be? Someone with or without the money?[141] The miser's primary desire overtakes him and he gives up the money for the bread, but he is not necessarily reconciled to the broader consequences of his loss: being someone who has less money than before. The distinction Anselm will ultimately make between the will for *commoditas* and for justice creates a similar kind of conflict.

This detailed analysis of these exchanges shows how deep the discussion has to go to unravel the complexity of willing. Though Anselm ultimately wants to bring to an end the regressive explanations, that we will X because of Y and Y because of Z and so on, because such a chain does not leave room for freedom, he does not want to jump prematurely to a willing that is not caused. The pattern of their discussion—problematic claims made, then, after much work, understood to be true but nonetheless unsatisfactory as complete explanations, in turn begetting the next problematic claim—reflects the difficulty of the problem. The teacher repeatedly states his view in the most provocative, counterintuitive way possible and in contrast to the student's (apparently) common sense view. The teacher is trying to confound the student, to create aporia. The student's bafflement is completely understandable given the teacher's claims: that not receiving is the cause of not giving; that God gave the ability and will to receive perseverance but the devil did not receive it; that because the devil deserted the will, he did not receive it; that the devil willed first to desert righteousness and *then* willed not to keep it.

At least two things are accomplished by these tactics. First, Anselm is exposing the limits of common sense and appearances. They look unassailable and indubitable, but closer examination shows that instead they enshrine a partial truth as the whole truth. Second, the student does not just hear about but falls prey to his own oversimplifications and he learns by his mistakes how uncritical, how thoughtless his acceptance of

141. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 61–62.

the ordinary modes of thinking and talking are. These lessons are meant to prepare the student for the difficulties which are to come.

Even after all this work, the student's real question has not been answered. What, the student persists, did the devil not have which he wanted more that his good will? He willed inordinately to be like God, the teacher answers. Anselm derives this answer thusly: if God punishes justly, then the devil must have sinned; sinning can only be willing what one ought not; hence, they conclude, it "cannot be otherwise" than that the devil "sinned by willing something beneficial (*commodum*) which he did not have and was not supposed to will then."[142] The failure is both in *what* the devil willed and in *how* he willed it: he willed to be God or be something more or other than God willed for him, and willed by his own will (*propria voluntate*) as not subject to God's will.

This might seem like a kind of arbitrary limit on the angelic will, a version of the arbitrary limit not to eat of one tree in the Garden of Eden.[143] Thus it has been argued that "the just act of the good angels turns out to be nothing more than obedience to the arbitrary ruling of a God jealously guarding his own honor."[144] But this analysis does not go deep enough either about Eden or the case of the fallen angels. Willing to be God and willing by one's "own will" is willing not to have a *received* will. One wills that the will not be given, that it be utterly one's own, that one be self-made. The fallen angel's sin, then, is acting in a way that denies that he is what he is, a being who, as St. Paul put it, has nothing which he has not received, that he is, to gloss it once again, a creature.[145] The choice before the angels was whether to receive. Receiving is harder than it seems. To receive is not only to get something but to accept it, which means acknowledging that you did not have it, earn it, or get it for yourself. This is what Satan was unwilling to acknowledge.

Nonsense about Nothing and Evil

The discussion next turns to an examination of the disordered will which caused Satan's fall. Is the will itself good or evil, something or nothing? the student asks. If the evil will is something, then it is given

142. DCD 4, S I, 241, 19–20.

143. Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom*, 94–95.

144. Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom,* 95.

145. Deme is confusing two different issues when he argues that Anselm does not quite explain what it is that Satan wills. First, it is clear that Satan wills to be God *though he is not*. Willing to be God per se, the teacher notes, is not necessarily unjust else the Son would be guilty of a sin. What the teacher does not know is not what Satan willed but rather what benefit the good angels won by not willing unjustly and the bad angels lost by willing unjustly (DCD 6, S I, 243–44). See Daniel Deme, "The 'Origin' of Evil According to Anselm of Canterbury," *Heythrop Journal* 43 (2002): 175.

by God. Thus God gives something evil. But if it is not God given, then the creature has something that is not received. In the lengthy excursus on evil as nothing or privation that follows, both student and teacher seem to alternate between banal tautology and outrageous contradiction before arriving at the explanation of the source of the devil's willing to abandon justice.

What is striking is the degree to which Anselm is willing to explore the paradoxes of "nothing." Augustine lets "nothing" go much more quickly in *De magistro*, where the teacher quips that they must move on "lest 'nothing' detain" them.[146] Augustine was, however, detained for much longer in his debate with the Pelagian Julian on the subject of nothing.[147] The issue is not posed or discussed in linguistic terms in the *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* but in terms of metaphysics and theodicy. Julian uses Augustine's own words against him, misquoting him as claiming that evil originated from nothing.[148] Julian argues that in making nothing a cause and describing nothing as a kind of darkness that Augustine is falling into a kind of Manicheanism, reifying nothing into an opposing force to God.[149]

On the one hand, Anselm, like Augustine in *De magistro*, takes a linguistic perspective on "nothing" formulating the problem of "nothing" as a problem about its meaning. On the other hand, in the space he devotes to "nothing" as well as the question he takes up—how nothing can be a cause in the context of understanding how the will can choose evil, Anselm is taking up the challenge posed by Julian to Augustine's account of the will and free choice.

In *De casu*, the teacher notes that the will is something; thus, an evil will cannot be that in terms of which someone is called evil; it cannot be, in other words, evil itself, because that would make the will itself nothing.[150] Injustice is the evil that makes us evil, and injustice is nothing but the loss of original righteousness, the teacher argues.[151] The student responds that it seems more plausible to think of good as the privation of evil rather than evil as the privation of good. Thinking of evil as nothing

146. Augustine, *De magistro*, 3.

147. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 31–44.

148. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V. 31, 38; cf. Augustine, *De nuptiis et concupiscentia* II, 48. Augustine argued that an evil will must originate from good since there is no alternative, but he adds that it "could not originate from good, because good was made by the good God, but because it was made out of nothing, not out of God."

149. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 32, Cf. *De civitate Dei* XII, 7, where Augustine argues that there is no efficient cause only a deficiency. To try to find such causes, he writes, is like trying to see darkness or hear silence.

150. DCD 8, S I, 245, 21–246, 7.

151. DCD 9, S I, 246, 30–247, 1.

simply does not make sense of our basic intuitions. It means denying the horror we feel at the mention of the name, the student objects. Justice, not injustice, feels like a cessation, a kind of tranquility and peace, a respite from the afflictions of evil, while the departure of justice means the very real descent into conflict, passion, and shame. "*Mirum est* [amazing]," the student concludes, "if one could show that nothing does all these things."[152] The student also has difficulty making linguistic sense of the claim that evil is nothing. If the name "evil" is significative, it must signify something: "how can evil be nothing if that which the name signifies is something?" he asks.[153]

Before resolving the apparent conundrum the teacher seems to wade into it more deeply, asserting that "signifying something and signifying nothing are not opposed." When the student objects that this leads to one of two logically repugnant results (that the word "evil" signifies nothing and something, or that there is some thing which is both nothing and something), the teacher suggests that both might be the case. "Nothing," like "not-something" and "not-man," signifies the removal of something, and the only way to do that is to signify the very thing whose removal is signified.[154] Before really making concrete sense of this, the teacher engages in a kind of virtuosic riff on it:

> The name "nothing," which destroys *(perimit)* everything that is something, in demolishing *(destruendo)* signifies something rather than nothing and in establishing *(constituendo)* signifies nothing rather than something. Therefore, it is not necessary that nothing be something because its name in some way signifies something, but rather it is necessary that nothing be nothing because its name signifies something in this way.[155]

Again Anselm uses parallel clauses of opposites and even accentuates the effect of his favorite technique by making each clause something of a paradox on its own (in demolishing, signifying something; in establishing, signifying nothing). The point seems to be to emphasize rather than downplay the proximity between his claims and contradiction. It is the kind of verbal play we might expect of Lewis Carroll, who, like Anselm, is quite happy to make logical truth sound like nonsense. Carroll flirts with nonsense, displaying valid logical forms with nonsense content, in order to distinguish between validity and soundness. Anselm is doing almost the opposite here, bringing the logical and real world together. Language and logic should mirror being, but instead are nearly

152. DCD 10, S I, 247, 6–28.
153. DCD 10, S I, 247, 20–21.
154. DCD 11, S I, 249, 20–250, 1.
155. DCD 11, S I, 249–50.

derailed in the attempt. The case of "nothing" is the limit case, the biggest gap between language and reality in the sense in which something is truly signified but it corresponds to nothing in reality. Anselm is taking the logician's need to be precise to the point of inversion, making his distinctions so careful and nuanced they seem to flip into paradoxes.

The student is no happier to be taken on this verbal odyssey than Alice and insists that the name "nothing" stands for something. What, he asks, is it? Only now does the student get an explanation that seems to satisfy. The explanation lays out the distinction the teacher has up to this point been playing with rather than explaining: the distinction between the form and the substance of what is said, the distinction, in other words, between the realms of words and things. Blindness is something according to its verbal form, a quality or attribute, but is nothing in fact; the verb *timere* is active in form but passive in terms of the thing signified.[156]

The discussion is important for the topic at hand, for they need to be able to use words like "evil" and "nothing" in a coherent way. As Augustine's debate with Julian reveals, without these kinds of careful distinctions, Julian asserts (and the student can be misled by) sophistical arguments that make "nothing" into something and turn Augustine's rejection of dualism into dualism. What Augustine struggles to make clear against Julian is the notion of what it is to be made "from nothing." Being from nothing is what it is to be creature; it is being from God in a different way in which God is from God in the Trinity.[157] This is what Anselm is also working to make clear, first, by making linguistic distinctions and, second, by drawing attention to language and the gap between language and being. Thus, Anselm structures his discussion of "nothing" to reveal the gap between what we say and what is, the gap that Augustine alludes to but does not linger over in *De magistro*. The student must get used to the ways in which the gap between words and things can lead to claims that sound outrageous but are in fact true. The student is going to need, in other words, the ability to grasp the distinction between the orders of words and things, as well as the ability to tolerate and explore apparent paradox for deeper truth. This was also a main focus of the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* but in relation to God; here it is, as we have seen, in relation to creatures. Making sense of what it is to be a creature capable of free choice only exacerbates the problems and leads to more difficulties even more directly related to the problem at hand: How can a creature, who

156. DCD 11, S I, 250, 21–251, 2.
157. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 42.

has by definition *received* whatever he has, nonetheless, have *from himself* the will to choose righteousness?

Reversing *Ab esse ad posse*

When the discussion moves to the distinction between having been given the ability to have a will and actually willing something, it is not just the teacher's claim but his question to the student which precedes it which is mind bending. The teacher's question, "whether that angel who is able (*aptus*) to will but has not yet willed anything is able to will something by himself (*per se*)?" is so verbally subtle that the student doe does not quite know what he is being asked [158] The student relies on the notion that if something has happened, it must be possible that it happen (*ab esse ad posse*). Thus he answers that if one ever does will, then one can will. The student's answer only *seems* to follow quite reasonably, the teacher insists. Before the world came into existence, it was nothing with no ability. But if it is unable to be, the student reasons, then it is impossible that it ever be.[159] The student at this point is willing to take this view to its apparent logical conclusion, that the existence of the world is impossible. Like the student in *De grammatico*, he finds logic (or apparent logic) leading him toward absurdity. The teacher rejects the factually absurd conclusion that world does not exist, but only by making a claim that seems logically absurd: before the world existed it was both possible and impossible for it to be. Even given his explanation of the claim—that it is possible for God to create the world but impossible for the world to make itself, the student balks. "I cannot contradict your reasoning but common sense (*usus loquendi*) does not assent."[160] I translate "*usus loquendi*" as "common sense" not to leave out the ground of the student's objection in ordinary language, which is paramount, but to make the connection between ordinary language and common sense. Ordinary language is a kind of bed rock of obvious, unassailable truth, and the student is voicing the reaction of the ordinary person here, objecting to and strongly contrasting that common wisdom with the sophisticated arguments and distinctions of dialecticians. The teacher reminds the student that they are looking for the "core (*medullam*) of truth" beyond and beneath the "disturbing" impropriety of language on the surface.[161] This is a re-

158. DCD 12, S I, 252, 18–19.

159. DCD 12, S I, 253, 7–12. Cf. the discussion of this claim that before the world existed it was impossible that it exist by Robert A. Herrera, "The *'Proslogion* Argument' Viewed from the Perspective of *De casu diaboli*, in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 626–28.

160. DCD 12, S I, 253, 13–18.

161. DCD 12, S I, 253, 19–21.

prise of the teacher's opening remarks not to "cling to the impropriety of words" but find "the propriety of truth hidden" beneath them.[162]

The teacher's explanation (the world is possible for God to create but impossible in that it cannot make itself), compared to his initial shocking formulation (the world is possible and impossible), is almost pedestrian. The paradox becomes, with explanation, almost as sensible as the apparently common sense objection. This is even truer when the teacher returns to the initial problem, whether the angel, having a will but not yet willing, is able to will anything by himself. Being said to be able is sometimes a matter not of one's own ability but another's. When I say, for example, that "a book is able to be written by me," it is not the book's ability which is in question but mine as the potential author. Though the teacher does not spell it out, clearly there is a kind of analogy being drawn between what the world is able to be before creation on its own (nothing), what the book is able to be before being written by its author (nothing), and what the will is able to do on its own simply *qua* received will (nothing). To whatever degree the finite will is like a book, then it is not an agent merely requiring conditions for action (like sight needs light) but really has no agency and is merely the expression of the agency of its author. The analogy brings to mind *De libertate arbitrii's* claim that we have no abilities that suffice to make us capable of doing anything. Though Anselm seems to bury it in the linguistic distinction between what we say and what we really mean, he is making a substantive point, also made in *De libertate*: creaturely existence is marked by radical finitude and dependence. We cannot just slough off the analogy between the will and a book. The discussion started out not with books but creation itself as impossible, and the finite will as created is just as passive as the book, just as much a mere conduit for its author's power. Anselm keeps reminding the reader of the difficulty of the problem; it is not just freedom but *finite*, *created* freedom, an apparent oxymoron, they are working on.

Anselm, however, only lightly touches on this larger context and concerns himself with the issue more narrowly as a point about the will. The will needs a *telos* or end for it to will anything at all. Unless one wills what is beneficial for oneself, there would be no reason to will to avoid or seek anything.[163] Aristotle makes a similar point in the *Ethics* claiming that choice and deliberation are about means not ends, and function only given the end of happiness.[164] Anselm's argument could be described as quasi-transcendental as he is in effect asking what the conditions of the

162. DCD 1, S I, 235, 10–12.
163. DCD 12, S I, 254, 23–26.
164. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* III, 2, 1111b25–30; 3, 1112b12–16.

possibility of free choice with a received will are. A less anachronistic way of describing Anselm's argument is as an analysis of the concept of a finite being willing and choosing freely. His analysis shows that besides having the will, the will must have something to will, that is, some end in relation to which to will anything at all. The problem, of course, is that if that end of happiness is given, then the will is limited to seeking that end and is not free to reject it. Its willing of happiness and other things toward that end are not its own, but like the book's abilities, those of its author. As Rogers puts it, "if all real causal efficacy belongs to God, and the rational creature is simply a secondary agent, then the creature does not really have the requisite power and is not free."[165] This is an objection also raised by Julian against Augustine; whatever is given as part of nature, he argues, is necessary, and what happens of necessity accrues to the creator not the creature who acts by necessity.[166] Anselm is still in search of the conditions for that willing to be free, to be per se, that is, really something belonging to the creature and, hence, for which he can be rewarded or punished.

The Divided Will: Happiness vs. Justice

In order to make his case for the finite but free will, Anselm makes a distinction between two goods, advantage and justice, and two wills for those goods, the will for happiness (*voluntas beatitudinis*) and that for justice.[167] If the devil had only the will for happiness, his willing could not be unjust (because then he could and would will only that which is *commodum*, which cannot be unjust any more than an animal's will can be unjust).[168] The will for happiness is, in the language of *De veritate*, doing what it ought when it wills whatever is beneficial; hence, it cannot be unjust. If the devil had only the will for justice, the teacher continues, then too his will could not be just, because the will for justice only wills what is just and would will justice by necessity.[169] The issue here is not *only* being able to will justice—God can only will justice—but rather only being able to will justice when that will is *received*. If someone else gives justice to me (along with everything else I have), I simply enact their will. The giver is the one who is just, not me. Anselm is here conceding to some de-

165. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 86.

166. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 46, 47.

167. Anselm explains that one who wills only happiness (*beatitudinem*) wills only things which are beneficial (*commoda*). DCD 13, S I, 257, 16–20. Augustine seems to describe a precursor to Anselm's notion of two wills when he argues that there is a freedom of the will which cannot be lost, that for happiness, and one that can be lost, that by which one can act rightly. See Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* VI, 12, 26.

168. DCD 13, S I, 257, 19–31.

169. DCD 14, S I, 258, 8–16.

gree Julian's objection that free choice requires, if not something outright uncaused, at least some indetermination both by outside causes and from internal causes which always produce their effects.[170] In response Anselm proposes not *no* cause but *two causes*, two internal wills that can conflict, though they need not. In this way, the choice for one over the other can truly belong to the creature. One could choose benefit over justice, willing to desert justice to get some benefit one desires more, or, the contrary, forego benefit for justice.

Anselm's notion of the choice between benefit and justice is not quite a conflict between two mutually exclusive desires, in the way Kant contrasts acting from inclination and duty. To capture Anselm's notion, Rogers opts for a description of the desire for justice as "a second order desire" toward which "one's first order desires for benefits should be properly ordered, should be as they ought to be."[171] The justice of the good angels is not in their "will[ing] rightness as somehow *opposed to* benefit" but rather in "will[ing] only those benefits already bestowed on them by God, benefits they were supposed to will."[172]

Rogers, however, goes on to argue that for Anselm we will justice *as beneficial*. Thus she concludes that Anselm's ethics is ultimately eudaimonistic. Whatever we will, she argues, we will as something beneficial, so that "the ultimate end of justice is happiness."[173] Her conclusion is based on Anselm's claim that "not only do all rational natures but all that can sense will advantage and avoid disadvantage. For no one wills anything unless he thinks it is beneficial to himself in some way."[174] Rogers takes Anselm to mean that human beings will whatever they will (even justice) *as beneficial*.

Even if this passage can be understood as Rogers does, such a reading seems to evaporate the distinction between the two wills, making justice a form of benefit. Let us return first to the passage and its context. Anselm claims that the will for benefit is universal. Everyone wills what is beneficial, even animals and unjust human beings, whereas, as he goes on to note, only some will justice.[175] He does mean, as well, that no one ever loses the will for benefit, even when some benefit one might will conflicts with justice.[176] Thus, that we always will benefit means that even when there is conflict between justice and benefit and one wills justice over benefit, the will for benefit remains, that is, one still wants what

170. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* V, 41 and V, 46.
171. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 67.
172. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 67.
173. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 67.
174. DCD 12, S I, 255, 9–13.
175. DCD 12, S I, 255, 8–9.
176. Cf. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum* VI, 26.

was not chosen. Further, Anselm might mean that having a will, whether the kind a rational being or non-rational animal has, means having self-motion or determination for one's benefit (whatever else one might will), a will which remains if one is to will anything. Still in the passage used by Rogers, Anselm seems to say something more: that we never will anything without willing some benefit. It seems to me that he need not mean that the will for justice wills justice *as benefit*, turning Anselm's position into eudaimonism. Anselm describes the will for benefit as willing all and any benefits, low and high, appropriate and inappropriate.[177] The issue is not whether one always wills some benefit of some kind but *which* benefits one wills. One always wills benefit, but when one wills justice, then one only wills benefits that are just or appropriate. That does not mean one wills something that is *not* beneficial but rather that one declines to will benefits that are unjust.

Anselm does not claim, as Plato and Aristotle do, that only virtuous action brings true benefit or advantage, nor (a crucial final step) that one should seek virtue *because* it is ultimately beneficial. This argument is not only absent from Anselm but he seems to hold the opposite, that choosing what would be virtuous for some benefit deprives the act of its moral value. Anselm argues that if the good angels had chosen to keep justice because they would thereby avoid punishment, this would have deprived their action of justice. In this case, Anselm argues, they would necessarily have rejected injustice because the will for happiness would necessarily avoid punishment out of fear; they would not, then, have willed justice for its own sake.[178]

To choose justice, then, seems clearly to be a response to a fittingness and rightness outside of and beyond the self for Anselm. It is not necessarily in conflict with self-interest, but in the face of justice we could say that self-interest is mute, irrelevant. Thus justice is not chosen based on reasoning about what might be good for me (or even my kith or kin in however broad, even universal a sense of benefit).[179] Whatever

177. DCD 13, S I, 257, 22–25.

178. DCD 23, S I, 270, 12. Of course Plato and Aristotle would agree that acting virtuously only to avoid punishment is not true virtue. However, they do claim that virtue is what is truly beneficial, what brings happiness, while Anselm only refers to the requirement to will justice for its own sake. Kane points out rightly that Anselm is arguing against determinism (that if they knew the punishment, they could not have chosen freely) not so much that one must have the right motive. Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom*, 103–4.

179. Rogers argues that if we think of benefit as including not just my narrow, individual self-interest but as broad enough to include the good of others, even all human kind, then we will not see the claim that justice is willed as beneficial, understood as she does, as self-centered. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 68. Anselm does muddy the water somewhat in *De libertate* when he describes

link to Kantian formalism Anselm's notion of willing justice for its own sake has, it has because, as Corbin explains, "it is impossible to think of this love [of God and neighbor commanded in scripture], to approach this pure obedience, obedient because God is God, without excluding any recompense external to the act itself of love and obedience;" it is a love which "has no other design but to love, despite the fact that the human being, finite and needy, necessarily desires happiness."[180] "Love of the divine perfection for its own sake" is the "final end of the moral will" for Anselm, Rohmer notes; "charity, consummated in the vision of God," and finds its completion in "an objective and disinterested will."[181] Kant's characterization of acting from duty as acting out of respect is something like this, but compared to Anselm's, Kant's is a fairly bloodless response to an abstraction. The will and its acts are upright for Anselm, Rakus writes, "not because they follow from the objective dictates of a categorical imperative . . . but because they proceed from the depths of a rational and emotional being who is acutely aware of his indebtedness to God; who is loved by God and loves God as the ultimate enjoyment of his life."[182]

We get a better sense of Anselm's view comparing him not to Kant but to Cicero and Augustine. The contrast and conflict between the will for justice and that for advantage seems to find its closest analogue in Cicero's *De officiis* and its contrast between that which is *honestum* and *utile*. *De officiis* discusses these as conflicting goods when considering them in a more ordinary frame of reference, but argues that they do not conflict in a true and ultimate sense. However, Cicero resolves the conflict by redefining expediency as what is *honestum*, making the noble or just the only true good, the only thing worth seeking.[183] For Cicero one could not say, as one might for Aristotle, that virtue is good because it brings happiness.

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the rejection of lying to avoid death as not lying to gain eternal life. DLA 6, S I, 217–18. See pp. 205, 207 for a discussion of this passage as making a different point in context.

180. Corbin, "Se tenir dans la vérité," 655–57. Corbin notes both how Anselm's formalism is different than Kant's and how Kant's formalism is itself tied to questions derived from Christian faith. Both Kant and Anselm ask, he notes, "how is a finite liberty possible?"

181. Rohmer, *La finalité morale*, 156. Cf. Vernon J. Bourke, "Human Tendencies, Will and Freedom," in *L'Homme et son destin d'après les penseurs du Moyen Âge; actes du Premier Congrès international de philosophie médiévale. Louvain-Bruxelles, 28 août–4 septembre 1958* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1960), 79.

182. Daniel T. Rakus, "The Dynamics of Love in Anselmian Ethics," *The Downside Review* 120, no. 421 (2002): 248.

183. Cicero, *De officiis*, translated by Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library (New York: Macmillan, 1921), III, iii, 12–viii, 36. Cf. Ambrose, *De officiis*, edited and translated by Ivor J. Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), book III. Ambrose uses the same distinction, reaches a similar conclusion, which is that they do not conflict. This is because the only expedient thing is virtue, which he understands as seeking the good for the many not for oneself.

For Cicero, it is rather that virtue (or *honestas*, rectitude or justice) is itself the only desirable thing and thus, in seeking that goal, expediency as distinct from that good simply falls away. For both Cicero and Anselm, willing the just or the *honestum* is not an act of self-abnegation; there is a way in which these, as goods for their own sake, attract the will but they are not chosen because of any payoff they give to the individual will.

Anselm's distinction also owes something to Augustine's distinction between *uti* and *frui*: Only God is to be enjoyed, all else to be merely used. In the same way, for Anselm justice is to be loved and chosen for its own sake, while that which is beneficial is in the service of the self. The common thread is a good greater than the self to which one would sacrifice the self, but not with the sense that one is losing the self but rather gaining that greater good. Anselm has taken to heart Augustine's critique of pagan virtue as self-centered and unsatisfying and embraced his redefinition of all the virtues as love of God. For Augustine justice is "love serving alone that which is loved and thus ruling rightly."[184] Even given the Stoic overtones, Anselm's ultimate and deep source here is scriptural, in line with the Psalms' praise of the "upright man."[185]

What is unusual about Anselm's account of the possible conflict between justice and benefit is that he does not make any move to dissolve it. For Aristotle, Plato, the Stoics, and Cicero real conflict between virtue or justice, on the one hand, and happiness or benefit, on the other dissolves on correct understanding. For them, one's benefit and moral good are the same, and the moral task is to come to see them that way. For Anselm, while the good angels manage to align happiness and justice when they choose rightly, it is not because justice and happiness simply *are* the same when rightly understood, nor because they receive perfect happiness as reward for keeping justice, but rather because they *choose* to bring their desire for happiness into line with the demands of justice, rejecting happiness that includes injustice. For Anselm there is a real and not merely

184. Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 1, 15, 25. For the critique of classical virtue, see for example, Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XIX, 25, Sermon 150, 9–10. I am grateful for these references and the translation to Paul Kolbet.

185. Pouchet, *La rectitude chez saint Anselme*, 196–97. Cf. Pouchet's collection of the scriptural sources for Anselm's notion of *rectitudo*, 29–34. In *De veritate* Anselm supports his definition of justice as "rectitude of the will kept for its own sake" with two passages from Psalms: "Glory, all who are upright of heart (*recti corde*)" and "the upright (*recti*) shall see and rejoice." DV 12, S I, 196. See also Thomas A. Losconcy, "Will in St. Anselm: An Examination of His Biblical and Augustinian Origins," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 701–8, who makes a similar argument. Losconcy makes this case more in regard to *De concordia* than the three dialogues, following Hopkins's view that Anselm's later works become *more* involved with scripture than the three dialogues. See Hopkins, *A Companion*, 6. For my discussion of scripture in relationship to the three dialogues, see this chapter, pp. 176–81, 240–41.

perspectival conflict which makes free choice for creatures possible. Anselm is clear that the angel weighs a lesser benefit that is just and a greater benefit that is unjust. Anselm tells us that Satan willed *more* than he ought, that he wills according to the will for happiness the greatest possible happiness, which is to be like God.[186] Also, Anselm is quite consistent in his claim that justice is refraining from willing some benefit which is more than one ought to have and has to be willed *for its own sake*.[187]

Anselm's view, then, is that a finite free will is possible if there are two wills, both given to creatures by God. This makes an act free and per se because the choice between which to will genuinely belongs to the creature. From one perspective, the scope for freedom seems quite narrow. The creature makes the justice they have been given their own by a negative act: by not acting to desert it. The creature who does nothing, who does not desert the justice he has been given, causes or makes his own justice by being able but not actually causing justice not to be. Anselm sums this situation up tersely, "For if they were *not able to remove* it from themselves, they would in no way be *able to give* it to themselves."[188] Clearly Anselm enjoys highlighting the odd-sounding relationship between being able to remove and being able to give, but he is also making a point. Being able to give and able to remove are opposite actions but can, of course, coexist. The surprise is that here it is the ability to *remove* from oneself that is the source of the ability to *give* to oneself rather than vice versa. The negative act causes the positive one. That is the key: the per se act of the good angels is negative, *not* deserting justice; it is not giving something up. Thus, Anselm can argue for another odd sounding claim: justice is both *received* from God and *achieved* by the creature himself: "Therefore, in this way he who gave himself justice received from God that he give justice to himself."[189] The language of *giving* and *receiving* allows him to note the *dependence* of creatures on God for their *independence*.

Anselm's notion of freedom, then, does not fall prey to one kind of absurdity critics of libertarianism make, that freedom is self-contradictory, requiring that we act "from a standpoint completely outside ourselves, choosing everything about ourselves, including all our principles of choice—creating ourselves from nothing, so to speak."[190] An-

186. DCD 4, S I, 241, 22–30; 13, S I, 257, 19–21.

187. DCD 14, S I, 258, 27–28; DCD 23, S I, 270, 12.

188. My emphasis. DCD 18, S I, 263, 14–15. This distinction is also made in the *Fragments*. See LF 29, 20–30.

189. DCD 18, S I, 263, 15–16.

190. Thomas Nagel, "The Problem of Autonomy," in *Agents, Causes and Events*, edited by Timothy O'Connor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 40. (Excerpted from Nagel's *The View from Nowhere*, chapter 7, and cited in Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 106).

selm's scheme is designed to define freedom for a being which is not self caused, but created, and, hence, it receives its principles of choice, receives that out of which it makes itself.

However, the Scylla of complete self-creation having been avoided, Anselm must also avoid Charybdis of meaningless choice. Why is a choice in such a narrow range significant, especially when we have been set up to make a choice in a way we did not ask for? And, moreover, why is such a choice so significant in its consequences, eternal salvation or damnation? Anselm's emphasis on giving and receiving allows him to give an account of free choice as both finite without being insignificant and self-caused without being *sui generis*. As Anselm describes it, what Satan did was will "by his own will (*propria voluntate*) not subject to anyone."[191] Thus, Satan's act is like Napoleon's act of crowning himself. What Napoleon and Satan cannot tolerate is for their rule (of empire or self, respectively) to be conferred by another; they cannot find their autonomy in acceptance but only in the myth of their own self-making. Both will to be self creators. What the good angel wills, by contrast, is to accept what is given *as given*, not as self generated. The language of giving, even self-giving, is a reminder of the *received* possibility for self rule; creatures cannot pull themselves up by their own boot straps. The choice, then, is neither contrived nor trivial. The choice is to accept or reject creaturehood. Crowning oneself, crediting oneself with pulling oneself up by one's own bootstraps is wrong because it is a lie. It is, to return to the language of *De veritate*, not doing the truth. It is the biggest, most basic lie of which a creature is capable: denying its being as a creature. In this way, Anselm maintains the link to the Pauline notion of everything being received even as he argues for the act of keeping (or failing to keep) justice as the angels' own.

What gives Anselm's account extra tension is that he will not express the angel's act as its own without also noting the completely *received* character of that possibility. He maintains this tension when he talks about thanking God for what the angels gave (or failed to give) to themselves:

191. DCD 4, S I, 242, 4–5. Cf. Anselm's discussion of *propria voluntate* as equivalent to disobedience and pride, and which is then described as having three forms, *delectatio*, *exaltatio*, and *curiositas* in the work edited by Southern as *De humanis moribus per similitudines*. These three types of self will are the sources from which Anselm derives an elaborate account of the all the vices as deriving from *propria voluntate*. See *Mem*., 39–57. On the origins and possible authenticity of the work see *Mem*., 4–18. Southern argues that the strongest probability is that the work was Anselm's own, not written by a reporter of his casual talk (as are the *Dicta* of Anselm, also collected in this volume) but perhaps an early draft or the product of a scribe or amanuensis (*Mem*. 7–8). It does seem that the work is Anselmian in some nontrivial sense. If so, it supports to some degree the weight I want to place on this notion of *propria voluntate* as the key to understanding the fall since Anselm makes it the source of all vice in *De moribus*.

"The evil angel always ought to thank God for the happiness which he removed from himself, just as the good [angel always ought to thank God] for the happiness which he gave to himself."[192] Anselm continues to adopt this kind of formulation when thinking about the event from God's point of view: "What do we say against truth if we say that when the devil willed what he ought not to, this [willing] he both received from God because God permitted it and did not receive [from God] because [God] did not consent to it?"[193]

Desire and Suffering

The copresence of the will for advantage and for justice sets up a condition in which the good angel wills not happiness but justice, but thereby gets the very advantage he willed to forsake for justice. Conversely, Satan chooses advantage, forsaking justice, thereby losing the very happiness for which he forsook justice.[194] There is something perverse about this set of rewards and punishments, some have argued: "the reward that God gives is precisely the good thing which he initially forbade the angels to will. God deliberately withheld this from them so that they could prove themselves by obeying him in refusing to will it."[195] The good angels, it seems, get what they want by *not wanting or willing* it, and the bad angels lose all possibility of getting what they want by *wanting or willing* it. Apart from what looks like the arbitrariness of God's law, this also seems to be an indictment of desire. The right thing is *not* to want; you do not get what you want unless (paradoxically) you do not want it. This is a standard and often maligned version of Christian virtue, as a negation of desire, and is also a traditional view of the only acceptable form of female desire. In this kind of account, the roles of lover and beloved, desiring, and desired are sharply divided. One, usually designated as the female, is passive (needing to be) desired but not desiring; the other, usually the male, is active, desiring but not (needing to be) desired. Somewhat paradoxically this traditional picture of desire minimizes the *relation* of the two parties. The female is supposed to show no desire for her suitor, and

192. DCD 18, S I, 263, 19–21.

193. DCD 20, S I, 265, 17–19.

194. DCD 6, S I, 243, 19–26; DCD 25, S I, 273, 28–30. Here is the passage from chapter 6: "Thus, the angels who willed more the justice which they possessed to the something more which they did not possess received as a recompense for justice the good which they lost as if on account of justice. . . . But those angels who preferred the something more which God did not yet will to give them, and who preferred it to standing in the justice in which they had been created: by the judgment of justice by no means did they did obtain that good because of which they despised justice, and they lost the good which they already had." DCD 6, S I, 243, 17–20; 23–26.

195. Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom*, 94.

the suitor is supposed to get what he wants simply by his own strength, without anyone, including himself, noting his dependence on the person he seeks to persuade and without his having to recognize his vulnerability to rejection. The male is then able to avoid the passivity, the *passion* in the etymological sense, of desire, by splitting it off, in the psychological sense, onto the female. This, in turn, requires the female to suppress her desire for the male; thus, in inverse fashion, she too avoids passion by transforming herself into the object of desire.

However, there is another way to understand Anselm's account of what the good angels refrain from willing and the bad angels do not than as a rejection of willing or wanting. It is connected to the notion of accepting one's will as a finite will. To see this connection, we have to go back to Anselm's analysis of giving and receiving at the outset of *De casu*. Anselm argued for the mixture of passivity and receptivity in both giving and receiving. The giver might be rejected and the receiver must decide to accept. Analogously, the roles of desiring and desired are also, for Anselm, mixtures rather than cleanly divided into activity and passivity. Ancient accounts fled the passivity of desire, projecting it onto female as opposed to male desire, and modern depictions of desire have focused on it as active and on its successful outcome. But desire is not just the drive toward acquisition; desiring is wanting but also *not* having and not being able to fulfill one's desires by oneself. Anselm recognizes the uncomfortable part of desire—the passivity in the activity of desiring, in desire as longing but unable to satisfy itself. For Anselm, what characterizes the good angels is not the absence of desire (that they only get what they want by not wanting it); rather, they accept their not having and not being able to get for themselves what they want. That is what it means to be creature, not creator. Hence, when the good angel wills justice, they will to be what they are, creature, not creator. They will to accept from the creator rather than attempt to take for themselves. That is the limiting or, to use Anselm's word, the "moderating" of the will for benefit by the will for justice.[196] This moderating is a *limit* on desire, on the will for benefit, but it is a limit on *what* is willed because it is a limit in willing *how* happiness or benefit will come about. It will be received rather than seized or achieved; it will be the happiness of creature not creator.

This view of the creature as creature of desire leads Anselm to claim that there can be a positive role for suffering in human life. While it would be unfitting for the angels to suffer by foreknowing the fall of others, for human beings this kind of suffering is laudable, even graced,

196. DCD 14, S I, 258, 28–29.

Anselm claims. Moreover, the more just someone is, the more he suffers in sympathy for another's downfall and often the greater his unjust persecution, the dialogue maintains.[197] Vulnerability to suffering is a consequence of sin for Anselm. Though he does not say precisely why, we can see the reason without having to go too far afield. If the first sin (whether for human beings or angels) is the attempt to reject one's creaturehood, then vulnerability is a fitting consequence; suffering and vulnerability are ways of living out the truth of not being self-sufficient, self-made. In the case of human beings, living out that vulnerability over time becomes a possible path toward its opposite, toward "incorruptibility," the teacher argues.[198] The good angels decisively choose their created nature and in that act are relieved of its burden in the sense that they no longer will to escape it.

There is in this view a decisive difference from the Greek perspective. If there is some sense in which for the Greeks the human attempt to become divine, to overcome the limitations of human being, though flawed and fated to fail, provokes not just pity and fear but admiration, it is clear that the same attempt undertaken by Satan has, for Anselm, nothing to recommend it. What provokes admiration from him is the human who unjustly suffers that vulnerability, a figure who for the Greeks is seen as worthy of pity but surely not admiration.

The Being and Nonbeing of Evil and Becoming

Anselm precedes his comments on the devil both receiving and not receiving the willing of injustice from God with an account of the complications in the language of giving and receiving. Both conceding willingly (*sponte*) and merely permitting are said to be giving, the teacher explains, and one who both presumes to take from an unwilling giver and receives from a willing giver are said to be receiving.[199] The teacher is both defending and clarifying ordinary language here. We can ordinarily and without verbal scandal say that both conceding and permitting are giving and that both taking and being given are receiving. What they now see is that these claims are acceptable in common usage because of what they have uncovered about giving and receiving. Since "there is no giving without receiving," there is a mixture of passivity and activity in both.[200] The passivity of receiving is qualified by the activity of accepting and the activity of giving is qualified by the passivity of being accepted.

As noted above, Anselm also returns to ordinary language about

197. DCD 14, S I, 258, 15–24.
198. DCD 21, S I, 268, 23.
199. DCD 20, S I, 265, 7–15.
200. DCD 20, S I, 12.

evil, taking up the topic already broached in *De veritate*. Late in *De casu*, the teacher takes up, at the student's request, part of his original objection to evil as nothing—the dread we feel about and the suffering caused by evil. The teacher concedes that there *is* a sense in which evil is something. While injustice and things like blindness are nothing, the evils of *incommoditas* (disadvantage) are something and follow from (*sequatur*) those evils of injustice and blindness. Evils which are nothing only cause evils that are something in the sense that if the corresponding good had been present, then that evil outcome would not have occurred.[201]

Unlike Boethius and Augustine, Anselm is willing to admit that evil, in at least some of its forms, is something and that our sense of it as something to be feared is a response to reality rather than an illusion. Augustine follows a more orthodox Neoplatonism insisting that evil is nothing and that apparent evil is taken up without remainder into the good. Boethius takes the same position as a matter of metaphysics in *De hebdomadibus* but also as matter of ethics in the *Consolatio*. Like Socrates, Lady Philosophy argues that "no evil can befall a good man." She outrages the prisoner by arguing that the evil men who seem to do him harm do not even exist and that all fortune is good.[202] That evil is in some sense something for Anselm does not mean he rejects the basic notion that evil is nothing; clearly he does not and he has just spent a number of chapters of *De casu* arguing for just this position. But he is willing to contextualize that claim, to concede that there is a sense in which evil is, in some instances, something. The evils of *incommoditas* are the sufferings that follow from the evils which are privations, like blindness and injustice. These evils—like the things Boethius has suffered at the hands of unjust vicious men—are exactly those Lady Philosophy tried to convince the prisoner to come to see as nothing, arguing further that suffering is not evil but good. When the prisoner continues to balk, Lady Philosophy concedes some ground to the prisoner's ongoing difficulty with letting go of his common sense notions that some fortunes are bad and that those who do evil seem, alas for their victims, both to exist and to be able to do something in a positive sense.[203] Anselm's letters wrap these kinds of evils back up into good, transforming the sorrow of suffering into an instrument of spiritual progress and even the occasion for joy. But this is not necessarily inconsistent with failing to define such evils out of existence. Lady Philosophy's metaphysical Neoplatonism when transferred

201. DCD 26, S I, 274, 7–15.

202. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* IV, pr. 2, 326; pr. 6, 366–68.

203. See Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* IV, pr. 7, 376, where Lady Philosophy consents to return to discuss these matters in ordinary language. Cf. Sweeney, *Logic, Theology, and Poetry*, 49–53.

to the moral, existential realm reflects a kind of Stoicism not found in Anselm. In the Stoic view, the instability of worldly goods and, hence, our insecure possession of them is why we should be unmoved by them. In Boethius, suffering the loss of wealth, position, physical well-being, and life itself becomes part of good fortune in teaching us to withdraw our attachment from these ephemeral goods.

The emphasis in Anselm's account of evil is a bit different. In Anselm's letters, the fire of desire has not been turned off but has been turned toward something else, not primarily *away* from things but *toward* God, whose overwhelming desirability does not just cancel desire for other things but reverses their value, transforming suffering into an instrument for hastening the return to God. If there is a sense in which Stoicism is an attempt to escape vulnerability, Anselm's ethics is a move toward embracing it. Embracing it means embracing one's dependence on and need for God. This is why Anselm can conclude that suffering is a path toward its opposite, toward incorruptibility.

Moreover, Anselm's admission that there is a way in which at least some evils are something is of a piece with the logic of created being, of the world of becoming as both being and nonbeing (and in that sense, like his recognition of different senses of giving and receiving) he is exploring in these dialogues. We can again contrast Anselm with Boethius here. Lady Philosophy rhetorically concedes to the prisoner the need to return to ordinary language of human beings in which there is bad fortune and evil not merely the illusion of it, but Anselm's refusal to resolve these different perspectives into one is not merely tactical but substantive. Those who concede Anselm's perspectivalism imply that, at least in principle, it would be better to avoid it if possible.[204] However, I don't think that for Anselm perspectivalism is regrettable; it is central to the three dialogues. The subject of the dialogues, created being, has to be made sense of in these perspectival terms because of the nature of finite things, of the world of becoming. It is both being and not being. Their nonbeing is crucial to understanding them. There is a sense in which this is a rejection of the Platonic notion that we make sense of material things by understanding their immaterial forms. Anselm's view is that understanding their materiality, their finitude, their nonbeing is central to understanding them. Plato and Heraclitus were not wrong about the impossibility of knowing change *qua* change, but the intelligible object Plato seeks to know, the eternal forms, do not adequately represent finite being. The problematic, paradoxical language is a taking up of the task

204. Visser and Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 213.

and a recognition of the difficulty of the task of making sense of incomplete, finite being *as incomplete and finite* rather than stable and eternal.

Returning to Unity and Stability

What comes to an end in an instant for angels is the mixed or transitional state of being able to will but not necessarily willing what one ought not. Two clear and distinct classes of angels arise at the instant of choice, divided into states of absolute satisfaction and absolute frustration. The good angels are "those adhering to justice [who] can will no good in which they do not rejoice," and the bad angels are "those deserting [justice] able to will nothing which they do not lack."[205] What the angels, both good and bad, escape in this instant is the normal state for human beings *in via*: the condition of not having but wanting and, perhaps but not necessarily, getting what one wants. The conclusion of this story, the state of perfect fulfillment of the will for the good angels and perfect frustration of the will for the fallen, marks the return, to both teacher and student's great relief, to a perfect correspondence between what the angels want and what they can and should receive. The good angels, the teacher explains, have "advanced" to a place in which "they secure whatever they are able to will and no longer see something more that they can will."[206] Having refrained from willing what he ought not (though able to) will, the good angel merits never being able to will what he ought not will. Thus there is a perfect coincidence between what he can and ought to will, and, thereby he merits the happiness of having everything he does will.[207] What Satan earns, by contrast, is not just unhappiness, but the perfect frustration of his will, never being able to will anything he can, should, or actually will have. Anselm gestured toward this unified will, the complete congruence between desire and satisfaction in the good angels (and their complete noncongruence in the bad angels) in chapters 6 and 14 and returns to it as he concludes the dialogue. While the bad angel is "unable to recover what he deserted," the good angel is "unable to desert what he kept," and so no longer "sees what more he could will" than what he does and should will.[208] With this assertion of unity we come full circle back to the unity of *De veritate*, the unity of all

205. DCD 6, S I, 243, 26–28.

206. DCD 6, S I, 243, 20–22.

207. DCD 14, S I, 258, 18–30. Rogers writes that "the good angels now cannot be motivated to will anything but what they have received, since they have received the maximum benefits." But this implies that they cannot will anything inappropriate because they already have every possible thing they could want, but it is also that they can no longer will benefits that are inappropriate. See Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 68.

208. DCD 25, S I, 272, 25–27.

truths in the one truth, mirrored in the unity of the good angel's will for justice and happiness *De casu*. The angels do the truth, and thus, have rejoined what they are and what they ought to be, the unity striven for but not yet achieved by human beings.

Anselm ends, however, not in the truth and unity in the good angels, but in the opacity of the moment of choice of evil for the bad angels. To the student's question—Where did that evil come from in the angel who was created just?—the teacher first carefully instructs the student that he must rephrase his question more precisely. First it becomes, "Why did justice depart?" and then, "Why did the angel desert justice?" and lastly, "Why did he will what he ought not to have willed?"[209] But even to this multiply reformed question, teacher gives what still feels like a non-answer. Why did he will it? For no other reason than that he willed it, the teacher replies. "For this willing had no other cause by which it was impelled or by which it was attracted, but was itself its own efficient cause and, if it can be said, its effect."[210]

Anselm is struggling for a language in which to express two aspects of the Satan's act which are resistant to explanation, for the student's question is both about the choice as the devil's *own* and as the choice *of evil over good*. Taking the second first, there is a sense in which evil per se does not, cannot have an explanation.[211] *Qua* evil, the act is inimical to explanation not because of a lack in our understanding but because it itself lacks being and hence intelligibility. As Deme puts it, "this 'I do not know' is certainly not a capitulation of the intellect before the mystery of evil, but the capitulation of evil before the intellect."[212] As for the second, the notion of choice as *a se*, Anselm is trying to express the notion of a finite (hence dependent) and free (hence independent) will. The finite will's passivity, its capacity for being pushed and pulled (Anselm uses *impelleretur* and *attraheretur*, verbs of motion in their passive form), is not definitive. Those forces meet what is, or can be, an immoveable object. Anselm is not claiming that something can cause itself except in the sense that when the creature, having been given the tools and possibility of choice, chooses either to desert or maintain justice. In this sense, the creature *creates* his or her moral character; the angels made themselves just or unjust through their own choice. In this way, Anselm finds a kind

209. DCD 27, S I, 275.

210. DCD 27, S I, 275, 31–33.

211. Deme, "The 'Origin' of Evil," 179–81.

212. Deme, "The 'Origin' of Evil," 181. Deme goes too far in my view in his claim that the first 26 chapters of *De casu* are a failure to answer the motivation question, how Satan chose evil, as a "deliberate self-exposure to defeat, or a 'scorched ground,' which is intended to prepare the way for a fresh start." Deme, 177.

of middle way between Julian's notion of a free choice as uncaused and Augustine's and Paul's notion that the creature has nothing that he has not received.

The assertion of some opacity in the moment of choice does not make choice, as critics of libertarianism have argued, random, unmotivated, and unconnected to the character of the agent. First, the objection to freedom cannot be that the act has to be completely contained in the character *before* their choice. That would mean, as Rogers notes, that one would already have to be a "murderer *morally* before the crime."[213] When the angels are created by God in such a way that they have two affections which can conflict and between which they must choose, this choice is one which fairly can be used to condemn or redeem them. The choice they have is about whether they will choose to accept the nature they have been given, as finite but free beings. This choice both comes out of what they are, creatures, and is morally significant and not arbitrary because a basic choice about how they choose to inhabit that identity.

While there is a certain point beyond which further analysis of this choice is not possible, it is perhaps not necessary to say that it is mysterious.[214] Rather, Anselm has given what he thinks of as necessary reasons for his account of finite freedom. Reasons are necessary when they are derived validly from assumptions we are unable to give up without giving up basic principles, principles without which things as we know and experience them are unintelligible. That does not mean that Anselm thinks his explanation is utterly satisfying, but it does mean that he thinks he has shown that understanding human action *without* freedom is *more* unintelligible than the contrary. The dialogue has shown that finite freedom means, alas, having the ability to will what one ought not. The answer to Paul's question, that creatures have nothing from themselves, is now understood existentially by reader and student, and held alongside the dialogue's other conclusion, that what is done with what is given is utterly one's own. The consideration of these two conclusions, combined with the actualization of the ability to will what one ought not, becomes the staggering impasse explored in *Cur Deus homo*. For the problem of *Cur Deus homo* is that humanity has fallen through an act utterly its own and in the process lost the very capability with which it could right itself. In *De casu* they conclude only that this possibility of wrong choice is itself good and from God.[215]

213. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 103.
214. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 104–7.
215. DCD 28, S I, 276, 6–15.

In Dialogue with Scripture

Having examined these dialogues in detail, let us return to the issue of their connection to each other through their form, topics, and relationship to scripture. The topics of the three dialogues correspond to the first three crucial points of the Christian salvation narrative. *De veritate* is a consideration of the possibility of created being, of many truths in relation to the one truth. *De libertate arbitrii* is a consideration of Eden, the finite will as free, having righteousness and able to keep it. *De casu* is a consideration of the possibility of the fall, of finite being as free but able to will what it ought not. Those views are adumbrated in scripture in narrative form, as a story stretched out over time. Anselm explores these notions of created being and finite will by shifting from scripture's "horizontal" mode to a "vertical" one, His task, in other words, is the logical derivation of these moments and the incoherence of their contraries. The dialogues argue for these moments as logical possibilities, or rather, first as impossibilities, then as logically coherent and necessary possibilities.

In this sense, these works are no less "theological" than *Cur Deus homo* in the sense that they are no less tied up with the specifically Christian account of the human condition. *Cur Deus homo* differs from them simply in being concerned with the next event in the story, the path from fallen to saved when one is utterly responsible for but utterly unable to make that transition for oneself. But the dialogues and *Cur Deus homo* are also "philosophical" to the same degree, in the sense that they are about assessing, questioning, and defending the Christian narrative as thinkable, as logical. To think about the moments of this narrative in logical terms means making sense linguistically and metaphysically of the created world, the world of becoming, and about the nature of freedom, of having something of one's own as created.

These works are also "philosophical" not just in method but in content in an important sense: they are concerned with the most basic questions about human and finite existence; their questions are not narrow or sectarian but universal and philosophical. The dialogues attempt to respond to these questions in ways that are convincing and reasonable. Anselm's task is to make a case for his account as *more* convincing, more explanatory of the experience of finite, human existence than the Stoic or Platonic account with which it can be contrasted.

There is a connection between the series of difficult distinctions made in the dialogues (concerning truth, signification, giving, willing, causality, ability, possibility, and evil) and the subject of the dialogues (the world of finitude and becoming). Because the topic of these dialogues is not

God, whose simplicity and integrity are mirrored in the indubitably clear formulations of the *Proslogion*, Anselm's language devolves into complicated, scholastic (even if *avant la lettre*) distinctions mirroring the complex and fragmented metaphysics of angels and humans and of a God who sustains finite being and permits finite agency. In the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* when confronted with a paradox Anselm does not back off from or make a distinction in the logic of the term or perfection that seems to pose a problem. Thus, for example, he argues that God is all-powerful but cannot lie or do evil. He follows the logic of this claim more deeply and thoroughly, through and then beyond the apparent paradox to the conclusion that real ability is the power or ability to do and acquire what is for one's good; hence, the power to lie or do evil is impotence rather than power.[216] In these dialogues, Anselm instead first outrages ordinary language and reason, next rewrites, and then makes a qualified return to ordinary language and distinctions. He works in and through and toward the logic of "in a certain sense yes and in a certain sense no." Some things both ought to be and ought not to be. A false statement has one kind of truth but lacks another. It is both possible and impossible for the world to come to be. There are evils which are something and others which are nothing. We both will and do not will. We will but do not will completely. We both receive from God and give ourselves righteousness. This is the logic not of the transcendent God who *is* without qualification but of creatures whose existence is received and qualified, dependent, and incomplete. We are from the start of *De veritate* to the end of *De casu diaboli* working on the problematic logic of the world of becoming. The aim is to avoid Parmenidean monism, the conclusion that nothing other than the One exists, and to answer Boethius's question in *De hebdomadibus*: How can things other than the One be said to be good or to be?

We must pay attention not just to the claims the dialogues make but also to the *way* they make them. They consistently use self-consciously edgy, paradox-courting formulations only subsequently explained by carefully drawn distinctions. In a way it is easy to summarize the conclusions or positions Anselm holds, which is what most commentators on Anselm do. But that leaves out an important question: why did Anselm not just do that, simply lay out his views? There is a three-part answer to this question. First, Anselm wants to do more than merely assert things. He wants to justify them, derive them necessarily from indubitable premises, from what both student and teacher already know to be true. Anselm's project is to show the necessity of his conclusions, why they must be the case and

216. *Pros*. 7, S I, 105, 9–16.

nothing else can, by a kind of relentless logic. His conclusions, he contends, are, though difficult, the only ones that make sense. He shows that by setting himself up against the most competent objector he can muster. The dialogue form matches these aspirations. Its question and answer format is, Anselm writes in *Cur Deus homo*, "clearer to many, and especially to less quick minds, and on that account more pleasing."[217] When Boso senses that his teacher is backing away from this level of examination and commitment to clarity and understanding, he chides him, reminding him of his earlier promise to explain "not to the learned, but to me and my fellow petitioners;" so Boso asks, do what you promised as, continue so as to satisfy "all our childish questions."[218] The reaction Anselm wants from readers is like that of the student in *De veritate*, who remarks that the teacher's answers "have satisfied even children."[219] Anselm's optimism about the effectiveness of dialectic seems almost unbounded. He considers questions in abstraction from the knowledge of the truth contained in revelation and the tradition, and takes issues up simply, in way that is accessible even to those without a detailed knowledge of that tradition. The dialogue form enacts that accessibility, and the objections voiced by his interlocutor give a forum for all, even the most impious sounding, objections to be aired.

Second, these dialogues, like Anselm's other works, are also exercises in making things *less* clear, not just questioning but wreaking havoc on everything the student thinks he knows with certainty to be true. Of course, the principle enacted in so many of Plato's dialogues is that the path to understanding must first dislodge mistaken certainty, dwelling in real uncertainty before being able to continue on the path toward knowledge. Anselm does not have to have read Plato to have an analogous pedagogy. Anselm is clear that the difficulty of getting to the truth is attributable not just to the limits of human intelligence (or the moral defects of interlocutors, which is what Plato's dialogues often highlight) but also to the character of the truth he is seeking. The God Anselm seeks in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* is inherently both the most intelligible and the most impenetrable object for the human intellect. The world of plural truths and finite wills is no less bewildering, so much so that Parmenides was inclined to deny its reality altogether and even Plato seems to desert becoming, taking refuge in the eternal, unchanging forms. The difficulty of making sense of finite beings is that they are *less* intelligible in themselves. They *seem* more intelligible to us, of course, and it is this apparent intelligibility Anselm must first puncture. Hence, Anselm's

217. CDH I, 1, S II, 48, 11–13.
218. CDH II, 16, S II, 122, 17–21.
219. DV 12, S I, 196, 25.

first task is the complication of his subject, the immersion in the neither/nor, both/and logic of finitude, and though teacher and student make their way through it, they do not and cannot completely move beyond it.

Third, Anselm's consideration of these topics takes this form because human being is part of the subject of these dialogues. Thus their form reflects the nature of and the participants' involvement with the subject. While we have seen that the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* have significant dialogical features, Anselm chooses to make that element explicit in these three dialogues by creating the personas of student and teacher. Anselm, like Plato, wants his philosophical, logical exploration of these conditions to have an actual, existential effect and uses the dialogue form to mirror and further that end. So, for example, in *De libertate* the student is made to feel his responsibility and helplessness, his ability and his inability, just as, we shall see in *Cur Deus homo*, Boso is made to feel the utter hopelessness of his situation without the Incarnation. The intended therapeutic effect is at least partially accomplished by the dialectical form of Anselm's arguments, not just their content. The student poses problem after problem for how the will could be forced to fall while the teacher maintains its inviolability. The student pushes the teacher harder and further for ultimate reasons for the devil's choice. Both the student's objections and teacher's arguments have the kind of definitional, tautological necessity that makes the contrary view seem inexpressible without self-contradiction.

One motive for the formulations of objections and replies in unassailable and then paradoxical form is to draw attention to the method, to show its power to turn A into not-A and vice versa. Thus we see in these dialogues and not just in the logical writings explored in chapter 3 that Anselm seems to enjoy, at least partly for its own sake, playing with language and logic in this way. But another, more important part of the point of Anselm's deliberately provocative formulations is to provoke an emotional response in his reader, a sense of not just the difficulty but the impossibility of making completely satisfying sense of that which he holds by faith to be true. The student says repeatedly that he believes but cannot understand. This is not surprising given the way Anselm formulates the views he is defending. The student and reader are supposed to ride this emotional roller coaster, feeling both lost in the paradoxes and satisfied with their resolution into almost tautological certainty. The point is as much to hold on to the things of faith when they appear unintelligible as to see how they can be resolved. The student is pulled fairly radically from certainty to bafflement, from a sense of having understood with great clarity and certainty to a sense of the hopeless incoherence of

that which he believes. And back again. The student both experiences his power and the lack thereof, the dialogues' argumentative ups and downs mirroring his reasoning and the condition of the human will.

Compared to Platonic, Augustinian, or Boethian dialogues, Anselm's conversational partners experience both more devastating *aporiae* and together reach more sublime insights. Anselm's dialogues set extraordinarily high standards and expectations for the dialogue as a form that can both reach the highest truths and make them accessible to the largest possible audience. The form can achieve all of this only by the complete engagement of its participants, both of whom have complete faith in the process as one to which any question can be submitted and who themselves submit wholly to the process. Anselm strives for a reconciliation of propositions and persons. He never concedes what Socrates often must: that his partner can no longer follow his path and he must go on alone. But there is the rub. What the student's complete engagement makes possible is both a shared journey toward the truth but also a shared realization of the limits of discourse, of the lack of symmetry between words and things. This shared realization is a concession of the difference which remains in this life between what *De veritate* asserts are identical—knowing and doing the truth and the many truths and the One truth. Anselm and his student enact the possibility of believing and, hence, at least willing the true and the good without fully knowing it, while the devil, of course, once and for all enacted the possibility of knowing but neither willing nor doing the truth. The reconciliation of thought with Truth is postponed, the vision of the unity of all truths in the Supreme Truth is projected rather than achieved.

What is mirrored in the extreme rhythms of these dialogues is not the puzzle of what God is (the subject of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*) but the puzzle of what it is to be human. What they adumbrate is on the same scale as Sophocles's *Ode to Man*: the wonder and terror of human being in the extremes of power and powerlessness, goodness and evil. The difference between Sophocles and Anselm is not just in how they understand human beings' peculiar condition but also on what, if anything, can be done about it. It is to this topic that Anselm turns in *Cur Deus homo*.

6

Uniting God with Human Being and Human Being with God

Anselm's trilogy of works on the Incarnation are linked not just by their subject matter but also were linked in Anselm's thinking. *De conceptu virginali*, Anselm carefully explains in his preface, was prompted by a thread of argument left untied in *Cur Deus homo* that he is certain Boso will want completed.[1] The connection between *De incarnatione Verbi* and *Cur Deus homo* has only recently come to light. A text edited by Constant Mews, apparently an earlier draft of a section of *De incarnatione*, contains the mention of the author's desire to discuss not just the logic of the Incarnation and union of divine and human natures but the question which was to become the focal point of *Cur Deus homo*: "why however or by what beautiful and necessary reason or rational necessity did the supreme majesty—since he is capable of everything by will alone—assume our nature with our weakness and mortality."[2] In the context of replying to Roscelin and reflecting further on the more traditional Christological problems he raised, Anselm seems to have come to a different question he wanted to consider.

Besides their interlocking composition and related subject matter, these works are linked by Anselm's reflection in all of them on his own methodology and project. Drawn in by Roscelin and criticism of his own account of the Trinity in the *Monologion*, Anselm is driven to describe and justify his foray into these topics with these methods. He makes not just one but three tries of tone and method in response to Roscelin in the

1. DCV Praef., S II, 139.

2. Mews's translation, along with the Latin text is found in Constant J. Mews, "St. Anselm and Roscelin: Some New Texts and Their Implications I: The *De incarnatione Verbi* and the *Disputatio inter Christianum et Gentilem*," in *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002), VI, 60. The edition of the whole fragment can be found on 82–85 of the same essay.

Epistola. In *Cur Deus homo* he manages a more polished, literary, and unified approach, one he carries forward, less elegantly but with the same ambition, in *De conceptu*.

Richard Southern has argued that in this period Anselm's work changed in an important way. The *Monologion* and *Proslogion* are internal dialogues, combinations of prayer and meditation and unconnected to contemporary debate, but *Cur Deus homo* takes up questions prompted by external objections and discussions. Southern points to Anselm's discussion and criticism of the soteriology of the school of Laon as well as Anselm's stated attempt to counter objections of "infidels" to the Incarnation and in dialogue with a real rather than fictional interlocutor, Boso in *Cur Deus homo*.[3] Similar engagement with contemporary issues outside the monastery also marks the other two works. The *Epistola* is composed in response to external objections raised by Roscelin. *De conceptu*, besides continuing discussion of issues raised in *Cur Deus homo*, also takes up many of the same questions appearing in sentence collections associated with Laon.[4]

Southern clearly prefers the earlier Anselm, finding that Anselm's particular genius seems to have been muted by his move beyond the cloister, and Evans laments a kind of dilution in these middle years, observing, "Anselm's powers [were] much stretched by the effort to do justice to the claims of other men's views in these treatises of his middle years."[5] Evans is surely right that Anselm is struggling to synthesize his own train of thought with issues raised by others, but we shall see that his powers are not waning but shifting.

The encounter with objectors and contemporary discussions taking place outside the monastic context prompts Anselm to reflect explicitly on his own method. Anselm does not merely tell us his thoughts in this regard but shows us something about his own process. In letters written about Roscelin, in the drafts of the *Epistola*, and within the final version itself, we see Anselm trying out different responses to Roscelin and what he represents. In *Cur Deus homo*, by contrast, we have a finished and polished literary product in which Anselm manages to synthesize his way of considering questions with the kinds of questions being raised by others. Moreover, like his earlier set of dialogues, *Cur Deus homo* combines intellectual rigor in the service of and as one with spiritual exercise almost as seamlessly as the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. *De conceptu*, the

3. Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 198–99.

4. Gillian R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), 187.

5. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God*, 193.

last of the three works, differs from the others in its more business-like marshalling of arguments. There is no dialogue partner, real or imagined, only a distant echo of Boso, who requested the consideration of its questions, and a few references to what "someone" might say in objection. In *De conceptu,* Anselm is relentless in his submission of problems to the rigors of deductive argument and to consistency with his deduced conclusions from *Cur Deus homo* and on the nature of freedom and sin from *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu diaboli*. The result stands in striking contrast in both tone and content to parallel discussion in the sentences from the school of Laon. Anselm continues to explore the extremes of necessity and (apparent) impossibility of the things he seeks to understand but now with more self-consciousness and reserve.

Epistola de incarnatione Verbi: From Words to the Word

Before composing the *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi* Anselm wrote two letters in response to Roscelin's claim that "either the three persons are three things or else the Father and the Holy Spirit were incarnate with the Son." In a short letter to John the monk he exudes patient reason, explaining that the claim that the persons are three "things" is true (though trivial) in the sense in which relations are things, but clearly nonsense if the things in question are substances.[6] To Fulco, Bishop of Beauvais, Anselm writes full of righteous indignation, not bothering to engage Roscelin or his views, but instead instructing Fulco that "neither should any reason for [Roscelin's] errors be examined nor our truth be presented to him."[7]

The attitude in the letter to Fulco is at odds not just with his reply to his fellow monk, John, but with his attitude toward the student's objections in his three dialogues, toward Boso in *Cur Deus homo*, and towards Gaunilo. As an objector, we could say that Gaunilo is more like Roscelin than Boso or the student. Both Gaunilo and Roscelin are actual objectors rather than Anselm's creations and are not dialogue partners like Boso. Yet Anselm treats them quite differently. Anselm's response to Gaunilo is in some ways *ad hominem*, refusing to accept his arguments as sincere and rejecting his persona as fool, responding instead to him as "Catholic" rather than "fool," all the while boxing him into corners which make him indeed look the fool. But nothing he says to or about Gaunilo approaches the utter isolation he decrees for Roscelin, neither speaking to

6. Ep. 129, S III, 271.
7. Ep. 136, S III, 280, 27–28.

him nor allowing him to speak in his letter to Fulco. He is an "other" Anselm is unwilling to find a shadow of in himself. Part of Anselm's outrage is surely fueled by the fact that Roscelin has apparently claimed that both Lanfranc and Anselm shared his view; it is easy to imagine that Anselm reacts so violently because affronted by such an unwanted association.[8] But more substantively it could also be because Roscelin, if not in his views then at least in his mode of questioning, is too close to Anselm rather than too far away.

Anselm gives two justifications for this response. First, he maintains that to take up Roscelin's objections to the accounts of the Trinity and Incarnation is "to call back into the doubt of unsettled questions that which is founded firmly on most solid rock."[9] Second, he notes that while the faith might be rationally defended against objections of non-Christians, Christians must simply "hold firmly to their baptismal pledge."[10]

Anselm is still full of righteous indignation as he opens *De incarnatione Verbi* because parts of a letter he began on the topic has started to circulate against his wishes and because it is incomplete, it is misleading. Though Anselm does not say, it seems likely that he has in mind the letter to John the Monk rather than the one to Fulco because only the one to John attempts some explanation and begins working with distinctions between thing as substance or as relation to sort out the ways in which the persons of the Trinity are and are not "three things" as Roscelin asserted. Moreover, he writes because he has heard that Roscelin has not really recanted his view.

Roscelin also seems to prompt Anselm to back away from the audacity of his earlier attempts to understand the things of faith. To Fulco he writes that Christians should proceed *from* faith *toward* understanding rather than the contrary, and as he begins the longer *De incarnatione* he says even more strongly that those who do not believe will *not be able* to understand.[11] He writes, "no Christian ought to dispute the ways that the Catholic church believes in its heart and confesses with its mouth."[12] Of course, Anselm has always ascribed to a path from faith to understanding, but this emphasis on faith is a bit different, and the requirement of faith as starting point is articulated as a stern warning. Also, unlike the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* where Anselm aimed to establish conclusions on the basis of reason alone, convincing even to those without the will to believe, here he writes about the possibility of a failure in understand-

8. Ep. 136, S III, 279, 7–8.
9. Ep. 136, S III, 280, 32–33.
10. Ep. 136, S III, 281, 36–37.
11. Ep. 136, S III, 281, 38–40; EDIV 1, S II, 9, 5.
12. EDIV 1, S II, 6, 10–17, 1.

ing, in response to which one should "bow [one's] head in reverence" to what one cannot understand.[13]

What prompts this tone and attitude? Partly, as was noted, Anselm is angry at being associated with Roscelin's heretical view. But some of the violence of Anselm's reaction might also be explained by his recognition of the long-fought and even violent battles of the past to work out and promulgate an orthodox position on both the Trinity and on the Christology of the Incarnation. It is not just, as Anselm says, that these matters are long settled, but also that they were settled with great difficulty and could, perhaps, be easily reopened as wounds so deep they are still healing.

Anselm's response may also be partly attributable to Anselm's new sense of his role as bishop, a role which thrusts on him such broader concerns. In the *De incarnatione* Anselm makes reference to the "inexplicable arrangement of God" by which he was "captured" and "held" for the office of bishop in the context of noting that Roscelin is rumored not to have thoroughly repented of his views as Anselm thought when he abandoned the composition of a full reply to him.[14] In his letter to Fulco, Anselm requests that his letter itself be read out at the council to be convened on the subject of Roscelin's views.[15] This letter, recommending silence as a response to Roscelin, is a *public* response rather than a private one to a fellow monk. The tone of his reply to Fulco, who is a bishop, and his mention of his own status now as bishop both point toward the bishop's role as public, expressing orthodoxy and suppressing heresy. His reference to his office as bishop in his full consideration of Roscelin's view implies that it is written with a view toward its public function. Anselm takes up his role as bishop with alacrity but reveals a sense that it has imposed a new level of circumspection on his speculative work. Whichever office or audience he preferred, the *De incarnatione* is informed by Anselm's sense of an office and audience that are markedly different than when he wrote from within the monastery.

The nature of Roscelin's position is different than Anselm's other interlocutors, both real and fictional. Unlike Roscelin, Gaunilo did not object to Anselm's conclusion (that God exists) but only to Anselm's claims for the argument that got him to that conclusion. And though in the dialogues, the student's questions (like Boso's in *Cur Deus homo*) are real and substantive, not just about Anselm's ways of getting to those conclusions, the important difference is that Roscelin is not asking a question; he is

13. EDIV 1, S II, 7, 4.
14. EDIV 1, S II, 4.
15. The Council of Soissons condemned Roscelin's views in 1092.

proposing an alternate doctrine. For Anselm, the kind of reason Roscelin represents is reason in a battle with rather than seeking understanding of the things of faith. Alluding to Roscelin, Anselm writes that "self-confident human wisdom can by thrusting sooner pull out its own horns than by pushing roll this rock."[16]

Despite the resonances between the opening of the *De incarnatione* and the letter to Fulco and their common connection to episcopal office, however, in *De incarnatione* Anselm is doing exactly what he advised Fulco not to allow: discussing Roscelin's view. It may even be that Anselm wants the reader to focus on his harsh critique of Roscelin, making it less likely he would notice that Anselm is now engaged in what he before forbade: reconsideration of these long settled matters. Anselm even uses the same metaphor to describe what he before rejected and is now doing. In the letter to Fulco, he refers to the orthodox teachings on the Trinity and Incarnation as "that which is firmly founded on most solid rock" and calls "most foolish" any attempt to question these things again, to destabilize what is already firm.[17] In the *De incarnatione* in one of the most memorable images in his writings, Anselm describes taking up the questions raised by Roscelin as going "laden with stakes and ropes and other implements to tie down and stabilize things in the habit of wobbling, working around Mt. Olympus in order to secure it lest some shock cause it to give way or overturn."[18] His effort, he protests, is not, despite appearances, this ridiculous and presumptuous project of confirming the stability of the faith, but undertaken in order to "satisfy the petitions of brothers asking for this examination."[19]

This is not just an allusion to the earlier letter to Fulco but also to the closing lines of Boethius's *De Trinitate*. Boethius writes as he concludes the work that his account of the Trinity is superfluous, functioning as a support for what already stands firm, addressed to someone whose judgments are already the standards for truth.[20] Anselm's elaboration of Boethius's metaphor in the image of tying down Mount Olympus brings to mind Socrates's reference to the difficulty of attempting to tie down the

16. EDIV 1, S II, 7, 5–6.
17. Ep. 136, S III, 280, 32–33.
18. EDIV 1, S II, 5, 20–21.
19. EDIV 1, S II, 5.
20. Boethius, *De Trinitate*, in *Boethius: The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), vol. VI, 30, 30–33. In a manuscript that seems to be an earlier draft of chapters 11 and 12 of this work, Anselm makes reference to Boethius's arguments against Nestorianism, a task Boethius takes up not in his *De Trinitate* but in *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*. For the reference to Boethius in the manuscript Mews attributes to Anselm, see his "St Anselm and Roscelin I," in *Reason and Belief*, VI, 84. What Mews's analysis of this fragment shows is that Anselm is much more directly engaged with the tradition than his final version shows.

statues of Daedalus.[21] In the *Meno* the problem is with the objects one is attempting to understand (though maybe the objects that take flight in Socrates's analogy are our ideas, our confused thinking rather than the things or forms themselves), whereas in Anselm's analogy the problem is with the ridiculous figure who is dwarfed, both in size and stability, by the mountain he tries to secure in place. This task is doubly absurd because it is both impossible and unnecessary. If the mountain were unstable it would be impossible to fix it in place; and since *it* is stable while *he* is moving, he looks in the wrong direction for what needs to be stabilized. He should look at himself rather than the mountain. Thus Anselm, though intentionally drawing attention to the appearance of absurdity in his project, redirects the reader's attention to what is being secured here, not the thing itself but human understanding in relationship to it. Boethius's point at the end of *De Trinitate*, like Anselm's, is that the thing (God) stays put but that he moves in relation to it, that the problem is with his understanding rather than the thing he attempts to understand. Faith seeking understanding, then, also means coming to the issue with the right view of what and where the problem is – with the one who seeks rather than it what is sought. Faith seeking understanding, then, requires heeding the Socratic dictum, "know thyself."

We can see, then, both why and how Anselm wanted to revise his earlier replies to John and Fulco. The opening pages of the *Epistola* are an attempt to bring together the two extremes of his early responses. That to John was too abstract and intellectual, taking the issue up as a problem to be worked over by argument and distinction. That to Fulco was too passionate, too reactionary, too polemical. That to John takes up the issue without providing the context of orthodox belief and faith as a prerequisite to inquiry. That to Fulco asserts both doctrine and Anselm's (and Lanfranc's) orthodoxy, insisting on faith without any attempt at understanding.

The gap between Anselm's first two attempts to deal with Roscelin to John and to Fulco cannot, however, be completely explained by the monastic and, hence, in a sense private nature of the letter to John and the public character of the letter to Fulco. John, though a former monk of Bec, is not unrelated to the ecclesiastical and public aspect of the problem, for he was sent by Pope Urban II to advise Fulco, who was himself a monastic bishop.[22] Thus Anselm's response to John's inquiry was unlikely

21. Plato, *Meno*, 97d–98a.

22. Mews, "Nominalism and Theology before Abaelard: New Light on Roscelin of Compiègne," in *Reason and Belief, VII, 6.* Mews also fills in more completely the political controversies and

to have been simply part of his personal, monastic journey from faith to understanding. The dichotomy in these two first letters is not only due to their different audiences but is an expression of two different kinds of responses Anselm had within himself to Roscelin which the *De incarnatione* sets out to synthesize. Anselm wants to finish what he started in response to John; however, he wants to do it still respecting the parameters and the spirit of his reply to Fulco: that Roscelin *qua* Roscelin deserves no reply, that in fact to reply to him would be dangerous and inappropriate.

Anselm blends the responses of silence and open-minded discussion, censorious disapproval and rational neutrality, by crafting a context in which his thoughts are offered and should be read. In order to do so, Anselm articulates the basic attitudes of a community of believers in the opening to *De incarnatione*. This long opening of *De incarnatione*, described by Gillian Evans as a "little homily," is in some ways separable from *De incarnatione*, taking up the more general question of the "part played in the Christian life by the exercise of the intellect." It serves as a complement to the prologue to the prayers as an account of "religious emotion" and the "letter-homilies" to fellow monks about "good behavior."[23] This moment of reflection on reason in the service of faith was prompted by the controversy with Roscelin but it has a broader application. It is less a change of mind or even development on Anselm's part than prompted by the need to express what he had taken for granted in his writings within the monastic context. The focus is on the right affective (rather than merely intellectual) attitude of faith as one takes up the intellectual task of examining the things of faith. A lack of faith is a lack of *experience*: without belief, no experience (*expertus*) and without experience, no knowledge (*scientia*).[24] Anselm writes about the need for obedience to the commandments and the importance of having experience of the life of the spirit over the flesh as precursors for understanding: "The more richly we are nourished by those things in sacred scripture which feed by obedience, the more exactly we are conveyed to those things which satiate by understanding."[25] To be sure, understand-

tensions around Fulco's appointment as archbishop and John's deployment as his assistant in "St Anselm, Roscelin and the See of Beauvais," in *Reason and Belief*, VIII, 106–19. Mews even suggests that the Roscelin Anselm sets out to refute is identical to Roscelin the canon at Saint-Vaast, and a critic of Fulco, his appointment, and John, contesting the legitimacy of Fulco's appointment as simony.

23. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God*, 118, and 118–25.

24. EDIV 1, S II, 9, 6–8. The contrast Anselm ends with is experiencing vs. hearing about a thing and knowledge by experience (*experientis scientia*) vs. knowledge by hearing (*audientis cognitionem*).

25. EDIV 1, S II, 8, 19–9, 1.

ing is not the same as obedience, Anselm makes clear, but the movement to understanding needs to go through obedience, through living the life prescribed by scripture, in order to progress toward deeper understanding of it.

Anselm accuses Roscelin and others like him of being like those who read only half of the scripture verse, "I have understood more than all my teachers," neglecting the second half, "because your testimony is my meditation." They proclaim, "I have understood more than the ancients," without reading the continuation, "for I have sought your commandments."[26] In the whole introduction, Anselm is providing a kind of context in which to understand his work of reason, and by using these passages, he makes context literally the problem. The first half of both verses are assertions of self confident reason, while the continuations make clear that any success of understanding comes as a result of following divine wisdom and commands. Self-confident reason, more likely to uproot itself, does not grasp "that if someone supposes he knows something, he does not yet know it in the way it ought to be known."[27] Knowing something "as it ought to be known" means, given the distinction Anselm makes, knowing through the experience of the life of faith in contrast to knowing indirectly and abstractly. Anselm is also noting the importance of the corollary to "know thyself:" know what you do not know. The counterpart to knowledge "by experience" is knowledge by hearing, an allusion to the Pauline notion of faith as knowledge by hearing rather than sight. The believer knows that he does not know things as they "ought to be known" but sees only "through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). Thus the contrast is not between Roscelin's *ignorance* and the *knowledge* of those who have faith but rather between one kind of knowing and another, and between a second order knowledge, knowing what you do not know, and second order ignorance, not knowing what you do not know.

The other prerequisite for discussion of spiritual questions, according to Anselm, is a rejection not just of the heresies of faith but also those of dialectic. These dialectical heretics are those who think "universal substances are only vocal sounds."[28] This is the context of the passage discussed earlier most often taken as Anselm's assertion of realism.[29] Now we can see why the wrong view of the relationship between words and things is cast as the source of Roscelin's heresy and as a symptom of a larger intellectual defect. In heretical dialecticians, Anselm claims, "reason is wrapped up in corporeal images so that it cannot extricate it-

26. EDIV 1, S II, 9, 1–3; Ps. 119, 99–100.
27. EDIV 1, S II, 7, 8–9.
28. EDIV 1, S II, 9, 21–22.
29. EDIV 1, S II, 10, 4–13.

self from them, nor is it strong enough to distinguish them from those things which it ought to contemplate alone and pure."[30] Note that the contrast is not between reason and faith but between reason clouded by corporeal images and reason whose discernment is undistorted. Anselm does not have to be understood as asserting the separate and independent existence of those things he chides the dialecticians for not distinguishing. Rather, he is chiding dialecticians for their failures of clarity in their concepts.

The dialectician's view that color is not distinct from the material object is for Anselm a spiritual failure, a kind of intellectual life of the flesh parallel to a bodily life of the flesh. Anselm's analogy is between the kind of clouded moral judgment that can come from immersing oneself in a sensual pleasure and the clouded logic of understanding things as they exist in our present sense experience. Both suffer from a failure of imagination (in the modern sense), a failure to see things in a different way. The person living the life of sensual pleasure is unable to see any other possibilities for action; he is caught in a kind of addiction. The dialectician takes as complete his own shallow experience; he assumes that things are and are understood completely as they seem to him and to his senses.

Anselm paints Roscelin as overconfident in his own understanding and unable to see further than his own experience. As Anselm presents him, Roscelin poses his dilemma—either there are three gods or Father and Holy Spirit became incarnate with the Son—as a kind of double bind, one cannot reject one horn without accepting the other equally unacceptable one. More importantly for Anselm, it is a dilemma Roscelin is proud rather than troubled to have formulated. As we saw in Anselm's previous work, he also drives toward such inextricable dilemmas, but he does not rest there. He is troubled by his paradoxes and is always looking not at but beyond them, even if what lies beyond them seems to be darkness rather than light. He takes Roscelin, by contrast, to take pride in his own cleverness, sure of the superiority of his formulation over all those that have preceded his. Thus, Anselm's objection to Roscelin is not as monkish and reactionary as it might first appear. He is not insisting that Roscelin simply accept the orthodox position. The problem with Roscelin is one teachers notice in students all the time; he is merely interested in disagreeing in order to show that he is the smartest one in the room and as a way of rebelling against the teacher. He wants to parade his own strength rather than exhibit the vulnerability of one who is seeking the truth.

Constant Mews has examined the accuracy of Anselm's portrait of

30. EDIV 1, S II, 10, 1–4.

Roscelin and the "dialecticians" with which Anselm associates him. Anselm directs us towards Roscelin's "supposed belief that just as the world was composed of radically discrete entities, none of which shared a common or universal nature" the three persons of the Trinity are discrete. But the real source of Roscelin's view is found in his account of words coupled with his theology, according to Mews. From Priscian he learned that nouns signify substance with quality; thus, the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit refer to persons (in the Latin tradition) or substances (in the Greek tradition). From theology he learned that there are no qualities in God. The names, then, have to signify substance. Therefore, the three names must signify that there are three things in God.[31] While Mews describes Anselm's account of Roscelin as "creating a straw man," he concludes nonetheless that "Anselm was not wrong in recognizing the intellectual challenge" presented by the study of *voces* applied to theological language.[32]

In order to understand that challenge and Anselm's relationship to it, we need to recall Anselm's comment in his original letter to Bishop Fulco expressing indignation that he, Anselm, along with Lanfranc were presented as agreeing with Roscelin. An earlier draft of *De incarnatione* contained a comment by Anselm about his friendship with Roscelin.[33] Anselm is linked to Roscelin in a more substantive way as well. Anselm had been, he tells us, criticized for suggesting in the *Monologion* that the three persons of the Trinity could be called three *substances*, a charge also made against Roscelin.[34] Moreover, the ground of this claim in the *Monologion* was based largely on the lack of a perfectly proper term. There is, as we have seen, a thread running through a large portion of the *Monologion* and throughout Anselm's work emphasizing the distance between words and things, the conventional nature of words and their ac-

31. Mews, "Nominalism and Theology," in *Reason and Belief*, VII, 12–13, 24. For a fuller account of Roscelin's views, see also Mews, "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Roscelin of Compiègne and its Influence: Twelfth-century Nominalism and Theology Re-considered," in *Reason and Belief*, IX, 347–64.

32. Mews, "Nominalism and Theology," VII, 24, 33.

33. As noted by Mews, Anselm referred to Roscelin as a friend in an earlier version of EDIV. See S I, 282 for the reference to Roscelin as friend, and Mews, "St. Anselm and Roscelin: Some New Texts and their Implications II: A Vocalist Essay on the Trinity and Intellectual Debate c. 1080–1120," in *Reason and Belief*, X, 43.

34. See *Mono*. 79, S I, 86. See also the prologue (*Mono*. Prol., S I, 8) in which Anselm justifies his remark by noting the similar language in Augustine's *De Trinitate* (7.4, CCSL 50, 259). See also Ep. 83, S III, 208, where Anselm, noting that he has been criticized on these grounds, also defends the use of "three substances" by reference to *De Trinitate*. Mews reproduces a letter by Walter of Honnencourt disapproving of Roscelin's use of the language of the Greeks of God as three substances as well as Roscelin's letter to Abelard which uses the same language. See Mews, "St Anselm and Roscelin II," in *Reason and Belief*, X, 50–51; 57–58.

customed usages, a concern of Roscelin's as well. This way of thinking about language, of thinking about words on their own terms, looking at them rather than assuming you can look directly through them to things is a hallmark of the so-called *vocales* with whom Roscelin is associated.[35] In the end, the difference between Anselm and Roscelin is not, clearly, as great as Anselm's opening to the *De incarnatione* makes it seem, and the vehemence of his language about Roscelin is surely prompted to some degree by his need to distance himself from views and practices to which he had substantial ties. The task, then, is to refute Roscelin but to use the kind of examination of language he engaged in to understand rather than destroy the orthodox view.

Anselm cannot immediately launch into the equivalent of the *Proslogion* in tone or approach after this cautionary introduction. From a pedagogical perspective, those who might be moved by Roscelin's challenge are not ready for that kind of open and deep exploration. He may also want to further distance himself from Roscelin—that is, Roscelin's particular conclusions, though not Roscelin's concerns and method. Thus, Anselm's reply has not one approach but three. First, he engages in a battle against Roscelin.[36] His strategy here is mainly negative, showing that Roscelin's view is itself absurd and nonsensical. Second, Anselm moves to a more affirmative argument, arguing that Roscelin's dilemma does not follow from the orthodox Christian view.[37] Lastly, he responds with images of the Trinity in an attempt to foster some positive understanding of trinitarian relations.[38]

Doing Battle

In this opening section, Anselm uses his formidable dialectical skills to thoroughly discredit his opponent. The same pursuit of contradic-

35. Mews, "Nominalism and Theology," VII, 30; "The Trinitarian Doctrine of Roscelin," IX, 353; "St Anselm and Roscelin II," X, 84–86.

36. The first part takes up sections or chapters 1–5. As Mews notes, the divisions of the text are not numbers in the manuscripts but are based on dividing signs in the text. There is some external justification for thinking of this section of the text as a unit. One of the earlier versions of the letter, that printed in Schmitt's edition in volume 1, extends up to what is the first few lines of chapter 6 in what Schmitt takes to be the final version. See Mews, "St. Anselm and Roscelin I," in *Reason and Belief*, VI, 58, n. 8, and S I, 281–90.

37. The second part is chapters 7–9 and 10–11of the final version, a two part discussion, first of how, given the Incarnation, both the trinity and unity of God are preserved; second, of the appropriateness of the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. Again there is some justification in the manuscript tradition for this division. Mews discovered a manuscript which contains a section very close to chapter 10 of the final version and a different version of chapter 11. Chapters 12–16 occur only in the final version, according to Mews. See Mews, "St. Anselm and Roscelin I," VI, 59–62.

38. EDIV, 12–16, S II, 30–35.

tion that was aimed at leading deeper into mystery in the earlier works is now deployed polemically. Anselm justifies the use of reason rather than scripture as the tool of his refutation on the grounds that rational argument is a remedial step made necessary by the unsophisticated nature of his opponent. If someone (Roscelin is never named) who says he is a Christian, cannot understand from the text of scripture he apparently accepts that there is one God, then Anselm must begin more basically, using, he says, the reasoning with which the opponent himself supports his view.[39] In *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm will cast rational argument as a kind of common ground for believers and non-believers, but here Anselm justifies the use of reason a bit differently. It is the lowest common denominator for those whose very rationality is perverted. This justification allows him to begin his discussion in the same way that he began his letter to fellow monk, John. Hence, he begins with what is meant by "thing" in the claim that the three persons are three things.

Anselm first argues that Roscelin's claim is either superfluous or inconsistent. Of course, the persons are three things "understood in their relations." If Roselin means only this by saying they are three, his claim is superfluous. On the other hand, when the opponent adds that the Trinity is three things "existing separately as do three angels or three souls," then his claim inconsistent. Anselm notes that Roscelin makes this argument in order to prevent the Father from being incarnated with the Son. If Father and Son are numerically one god, then the Father must be incarnate with the Son.[40] But if the persons are separate as angels and souls, then there are three gods, not three persons in one God.

Anselm argues that when Roscelin adds "in such way that they are wholly the same in will and in power," this does not redeem but actually confirms that Roscelin means that the three are separate as substances.[41] Thus it shows that Roscelin's view is itself inconsistent. Anselm's reasoning is a little oblique, but it seems be that if Roscelin said they were three things, meaning only three properties or three persons, he would not (as he does) attribute will and power to them separately *qua* Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. On the orthodox view, will and power belong to the persons in terms of what is common to them, that is, as divine, not in so far as they are distinct. The Son is powerful but not because or *qua* Son, rather *qua* divine. Anselm's argument seems to be that Roscelin's claim, which implies that the three persons *each* have will and power, even with his added qualification that the will and power of each is one and the same, is inconsistent with the orthodox view that it is not at the level of

39. EDIV 2, S II, 11.
40. EDIV 2, S II, 12–13.
41. EDIV, 2, S II, 11, 13–14.

distinct persons that will and power attach to the Godhead but *qua* God.[42] Roscelin asserts a level of separation between the persons that makes them three gods rather than one.

Anselm's strategy is to refute Roscelin no matter which of several ways his position is understood, showing that it is untenable whichever way it is understood. If the claim is that the Godhead is three in terms of its distinguishing properties (*propria singula*), then the claim is superfluous because it simply restates the orthodox view. But if the claim is that they are three as three angels or three souls, it is inconsistent, asserting not one but three Gods.

The next possibility is that they are three in terms of their common divinity. If the claim is that the persons are three things "with respect to what is common to them, that is, in the sense that singly and all together [they are] one perfect God," then Anselm asks whether his opponent is a Christian because such a view amounts to the heresy of Sabellianism.[43] The objector should follow out the logic of his position to its conclusion: that the three persons are one thing and there are no persons in God. If this is the view, Anselm notes, there is no reason to be concerned only with the Incarnation (that if Son is incarnate, so is the Father), for the Spirit also would be incarnate as well as begetting and begotten.

Anselm concedes a little ground rhetorically to the opponent, trying to make some sense of what would drive him to make such a claim. If Father and Son are numerically the same, Anselm reasons for the objector, then predicates of one are predicates of the other. If Son is incarnate, Father is incarnate. On this view, the distinction between Father and Son would amount only to two different names for one thing, like Peter and Simon for Christ's apostle, and a predicate attributed to one could not be denied to the other.[44] Anselm goes on, however, from this more sympathetic account of the impetus for Roscelin's view to flog his opponent with its logical implications, drawing on the particular character of the "father" and "son" as relations. Unlike "Peter" and "Simon," to be father is to be the father of someone and likewise to be son is to be the son of someone. One cannot be both to oneself: "For if there is not in God someone other than the Father whose father he is, there cannot be a father. And similarly if there is not someone other than the Son whose son he is, there could not be a son."[45] This drive of the argument toward complication and paradox—we recognize from the *Monologion*. But it is used here to a different end: to push Roscelin's view toward absurdity, rather than

42. EDIV 2, S II, 13–14.
43. EDIV 3, S II, 14, 10–13.
44. EDIV 3, S II, 14–15.
45. EDIV 3, S II, 15, 25–27.

toward a paradox from which Anselm will then draw a necessary truth.

Equating Roscelin's view with Sabellianism is another way of pushing his view outside the boundaries of rational discussion. In response, Roscelin could simply agree, rejecting Christianity, but, Anselm notes, Roscelin counts himself a Christian. So the critique is once again that Roscelin is inconsistent, that he in that sense imposes silence on himself. Anselm's aside that he "supposes [*aestimo*]" that Roscelin would reply that he is a Christian feels like a kind of threat.[46] Roscelin must accept these consequences of his view, in which case he places himself outside Christianity, or he must abandon his claim. The report Anselm had gotten, he noted in the introductory section, is that Roscelin is now reasserting this view, having only recanted earlier because of his fear of "being killed by the people."[47]

When Roscelin says the Father becomes incarnate with the Son if they are one thing, Anselm knows well that he asserts this not as his view but as the conclusion he wants to avoid. The only way to avoid it is to reach toward the other extreme: that the persons are three things. Anselm's strategy is to show that avoiding one shoal only knocks him into another, equally perilous for his Christianity. For if the view that there are no persons is unacceptable to Roscelin as a Christian, so also is the alternative because it comes to the claim that the three persons are three Gods or that neither Father, Son, nor Holy Spirit are God. On the one hand, if the claim is that there are three in terms of the divinity they share, then the existence of three Gods is being asserted. If, on other hand, Roscelin attempts to avoid this conclusion by claiming that the three *together* are one God, then that means only the sum of the three is God and none of the persons individually are God.

Anselm takes time to point out not only the impious nature of these conclusions but the ways in which they result in metaphysical absurdity. For if the three together are God, then God is composite. Anselm remarks that if one has a "simple (*simplicem*) intellect unobstructed by the multiplicity of images (*phantasmatum*), he understands simple things (*simplicia*) to surpass composite ones."[48] Anselm links the right state of the intellect, as "simple," meaning something like able to see beyond the clutter of material multiplicity, to "simple" in a metaphysical sense, the metaphysically higher and simpler immaterial realities. Now we see at a deeper level what Anselm meant by his earlier criticism of dialecticians as unable to see beyond "corporeal images (*imaginationibus*)."[49]

46. EDIV 3, S II, 14, 12.
47. EDIV 1, S II, 4, 18–5, 1.
48. EDIV 4, S II, 17, 14–17.
49. EDIV 1, S II, 10, 2.

The problem with "modern dialecticians" is not just their views about logic. Anselm complains that dialecticians fail to grasp "anything other than what can be understood by imagination *or anything which has no parts.*"[50] Thus, their logical views spring from a deeper root: the failure to grasp the possibility of immaterial being. In the *Confessions* Augustine describes having the same problem when he was still a Manichee, one he overcame with the help of Neoplatonism.[51] While Augustine focuses on immateriality, Anselm emphasizes simplicity as a perfection, but both are working within a clearly Neoplatonic metaphysics. Appealing to the superiority of simplicity over composition, Anselm catches his objector in a *Proslogion*-like contradiction on the divine nature. His opponent would have to admit, Anselm argues, that *if* there were something indivisible both really and conceptually, it would be greater than something that is divisible. If God is composite, then the (patently absurd) claim is that we can conceive something greater than God.[52]

Anselm concludes this section by turning to the very clause which is supposed to save Roscelin from absurdity: that they are three things or persons "such that the will and power of these three things is one."[53] Anselm asks what this could mean. Is it that these three things are divine natures (1) *qua* separate (2) *qua* their common will and power, or (3) *qua* both what is distinct and what is common? If *qua* separate, then they are three gods and they can be understood without reference to will and power. If *qua* their common will and power, then there is no need for whatever it is that is three because "one will and power suffice for God's perfection." If *qua* both, then, again God would be composed of parts which are not God.[54] Anselm ends by noting that he would need a "large codex" to write out the absurdities which follow from Roscelin's claims.[55] Anselm has given a strong sense of the kind of arguments that would fill that codex. Roscelin's view, that the three persons are three things, does not prevent the outcome Roscelin wishes it to (the Father and Holy Spirit becoming incarnate with the Son). In fact, it leads to much more absurd consequences which contradict both reason and basic Christian doctrine. Roscelin, as Anselm interprets him, tried to claim a kind of common sense victory of the common man with himself as their precocious spokesman. Anselm's first task is to show him that he is in way over his head, that it is extreme naiveté or hubris to suppose he has found a simple and obvious solution. The arguments in these opening sections

50. EDIV 4, S II, 18, 1–2. My emphasis.
51. Augustine, *Confessions*, 7, 20.
52. EDIV 4, S II, 18.
53. EDIV 5, S II, 18, 10–12.
54. EDIV 5, S II, 18–19.
55. EDIV 5, S II, 19, 12.

have the tone of God's speech to Job. It is as if Anselm is saying to Roscelin, "You claim a right to speak on this topic; well, gird up your loins like a man and see the difficulties into which you have stumbled." Anselm concludes this section with just this tone and a veiled threat: "Clearly he ought not be so willing to argue about profound matters, especially those about which being in error is not without danger."[56]

Supporting and Defending the Orthodox View

In the next section, Anselm changes tone and tactics. Having shown that absurd consequences follow from Roscelin's claims, Anselm sets out to argue that what Roscelin claims (that either all are incarnate or the three persons are three things) does not follow from the orthodox view. In this second section, Anselm speaks for his opponent, but this opponent is chastened by Anselm's first onslaught and is no longer confident of his ability to see the problem and its solution as a simple, common-sense matter. Anselm writes to someone more ready to hear his arguments and Anselm, though still tough on his opponent's arguments, is less dismissive and harsh in this section. He is less focused on the outrageous character of the position he is refuting and more on the problem itself.

Here, one third of the way through the work (section six of sixteen), Anselm engages in a bit of reflection on his work as a whole, placing the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* in the context of scripture and writings of the Church fathers.[57] In the *Monologion* prologue Anselm directs anyone who finds in his work anything "exceedingly novel" or "differing with the truth" to Augustine's *De Trinitate* so that they can reassure themselves that Anselm's little work is neither false nor radically new.[58] In the *De incarnatione* he is somewhat less self-effacing but just as defensive. Anselm places both his relationship to the tradition and his purpose for writing this text within his assertion that he ought not be condemned for any novelty which the work contains. For good reason, the translations do not reproduce the rather contorted complex of self-justification. In it Anselm embeds a description of his method and intention within his denial of heresy and innovation, but here is an attempt:

56. EDIV 5, S II, 19, 17–18.

57. The earlier version the *Epistola* printed in volume one of Schmitt's edition ends after the beginning of what is in the final version chapter 6 (EDIV 6, S II, 20, 1–13; cf. S I, 290). This draft fragment only poses the question Anselm imagines his objector still has: why Roscelin's dilemma does not follow from the orthodox position. Anselm's account of his task in replying and reference to the tradition from scripture through the Fathers and his own *Monologion* and *Proslogion* immediately follow this question in the final version.

58. *Mono*. Prol., S I, 8, 11–12.

> If in [the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*] there is anything which I did not read or do not remember reading elsewhere—not as if teaching what our teachers did not know or correcting which they did not say well but saying what they perhaps were silent on and which is not discordant but is consistent with them—I asserted [these things] in order to respond for our faith against those who, unwilling to believe what they did not understand, deride believers, and in order to help the devout pursuit of those who humbly seek to understand what they firmly believe—by no means do I think I ought to be criticized for doing so.[59]

There are a number of possible inconsistencies here. He claims first that what he has written is not novel, and then he qualifies that, adding that at least he did not *intend* novelty. But then again, he goes on, it might be novel but only so as to speak in the cracks between what church teachers did say to address a new issue, new perspective, or new problem. Moreover, his intention in whatever repetition or novelty there is was not to teach or correct teachers. And if it does, it is at least consistent with what they said.

The passage brings to mind Freud's famous story about a man's multiple responses to being accused of returning a borrowed pot with a hole in it. The man protests in multiple and inconsistent ways: I never borrowed the pot; I returned it unbroken; the pot was already broken when I got it.[60] The inconsistent list of defenses and excuses are proof of what they protest. Anselm's protests are not strictly inconsistent, but at the very least one might say he doth protest too much. He reveals anxiety if not guilt and clearly feels the need to defend himself. These comments fall at this point in the text where Anselm is moving away from polemic against Roscelin to a substantive consideration of the issue. It is one thing to wade into these matters in order to refute heretics. It is something else to justify a foray into what he reminded Roscelin was settled territory in a way that goes beyond refuting Roscelin.

As other scholars have recently argued, Anselm has more in common with the dialecticians he berates in the opening to this treatise than he admits. In the first half of the twentieth century, it was standard to describe the eleventh century in terms of a contrast between "dialecticians" and "anti-dialecticians." On this account, Roscelin and Berengar of Tours are extreme and rebellious rationalists ready to jettison doctrine that could not be proved in dialectical argument, while Lanfranc and Anselm oppose this view and reject the use of dialectic in the-

59. EDIV 6, S II, 20, 15–21, 4.

60. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, translated by Joyce Crick (Oxford University Press, 1999), 95–96.

ology, or at least carefully restricted its scope.[61] Recent work has shown that this view is an oversimplification. Evidence of Anselm's knowledge and use of syllogistic forms of arguments, especially hypothetical syllogisms, learned from Boethian dialectic has been uncovered by Suzanne Nelis. She argues that while Lanfranc may have turned from the new dialectic after the controversy with Berengar, Anselm "embraced the new curriculum" such that "arguments flowed from him preformed, as it were, by the rules of term and propositional logic."[62] Moreover, there is an important sense in which Anselm is *more* rather than less rationalist than Berengar. While both championed the use of reason and, more specifically, dialectical argument, Holopainen claims that Berengar uses reason "as a means of interpreting the authoritative writings of the Church" while Anselm takes up the bolder task of "construct[ing] rational demonstrations for articles of faith . . . avoid[ing] appealing to or even citing the authoritative writings of the Church."[63] As Mews argues, "both Anselm and Roscelin wished to arrive at the doctrine of plurality within divine unity rationally rather than by simply reproducing the formula of the Athanasian Creed." and wished "not to fall into the trap of being obsessively concerned with individual words" but "to come up with an argument more in accord with reason."[64] Berengar seems to have recognized the authority of the written record in scripture and church fathers but wanted to assert the right to interpret those authorities differently than the reigning majority. Berengar's objection to the conciliar rejection of his views is that "they simply condemned him for the reason that he was reported to have a view that was contrary to the view commonly held."[65] To this we can contrast Anselm's submission of his text directly to Pope Urban II, submitting explicitly to his authority over it, along with Anselm's defense of his work as supporting the faithful by lending rational support to their belief and as in harmony with Church authority.

61. Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1–2. Holopainen cites the studies of J. A. Endres as the important purveyor of the notion of a basic conflict between dialecticians and antidialecticians in the eleventh century. See, for example, J. A. Endres, "Die Dialektiker und ihre Gegner im 11. Jahrhundert," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 19 (1906): 20–33; *Petrus Damiani und die weltliche Wissenschaft*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 8.3 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1910). See also Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 163–64.

62. Suzanne J. Nelis, "What Lanfranc Taught, What Anselm Learned," *Haskins Society Journal* 2 (1990): 75–78; 76.

63. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 132, 159.

64. Mews, "St Anselm and Roscelin II," X, 86.

65. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 114, 113–18. For Berengar's evaluation of the judgments of the councils considering his work see Berengar of Tours, *Rescriptum contra Lanfrannum*, edited by R. B. C. Huygens (CCCM 84), 1988, 1.192-565 (40–51); 1.565–670 (51–54); 1.1078–1143 (66–67). As cited in Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 114, n. 105.

Anselm positions his work by first denying any connection to Roscelin and his method or project, giving him no quarter. But second, he lays exclusive claim to their common ground—the expansion of theological discourse into dialectical, rational argument. Anselm both claims this territory and attempts simultaneously to landscape it, if you will, trimming, shaping, and controlling it, making it safe to enter and blocking any move to barricade it off. Anselm is attempting to save his common ground with Roscelin—the use of linguistic analysis and reliance on reason rather than repeated formulas—from what he truly sees as their misuse by Roscelin. This, then, is the challenge Roscelin poses, to which the body of *De incarnatione* attempts to respond. Anselm analyzes language, especially common usage, not to force doctrine to fit it (the mistake he sees Roscelin as making) but rather to work out a way around and beyond ordinary language to formulations that better, though still imperfectly, express the reality he is attempting to understand. Anselm makes use of dialectical arguments not grounded in scripture or authority not as a challenge to authority (again, the mistake he sees Roscelin as making), but, as the opening section has already made clear, placing such arguments in and from the context of faith.

We have to understand the final version's reflection on its method and the way it differs from the earlier drafts as expressing Anselm's developing ideas on how to achieve this balance. One change we find is that Anselm's final version of the *De incarnatione* leaves out an explicit reference to and criticism of Boethius's Christology which appeared in an earlier one.[66] Why did Anselm leave Boethius out of the final version? The problem Anselm brings up in this draft fragment, how the Son, already a person, does not assume a second person when he assumes human nature, was not explicitly raised by Roscelin. However, Anselm takes it up, noting that it was inadequately dealt with by Boethius and as a problem that results directly from Boethius's definition of person as "individual substance of a rational nature." In the final draft, Anselm turns this into a hypothetical objection voiced by no one in particular and does not mention Boethius's definition of person. The objection is that if there are two rational natures in Christ, and Christ is an individual person of the Trinity and an individual man, then he seems to have to assume two persons. There is no indication of whether this problem came to Anselm before or after his encounter with Roscelin. It could have even been a question that

66. The second part of the text, as noted, is chapters 6–9 combined with a revision of a text fragment Mews has discovered, appearing in the final version as chapters 10–11. See Mews, "St Anselm and Roscelin I," VI, 84. Mews has edited and published the fragment which he argues convincingly is an earlier draft of chapters 10–11 of EDIV. See nn. 36, 37.

Roscelin himself raised. Like Roscelin's question, it points toward a possible contradiction in orthodox Christology. It is, in other words, a question very like the one Anselm chides Roscelin for having raised.

In this fragment we see Anselm doing what he takes such care *not* to do in his polished work: directly engage with an authoritative figure in the tradition. The intriguing possibility raised by this discovery is that Anselm, like Soviet propagandists retouching photographs, carefully airbrushed out figures that were really present at the inception of his writings. Such a strategy is both more and less bold than leaving in explicit references to other thinkers and doctrines. It is more radical in that Anselm goes directly to the articles of faith, without the mediation of traditional interpretation or even, in most cases, scriptural warrant, giving reason the task of constructing necessary reasons for articles of faith.[67] It is more politic in the sense that it allows Anselm to avoid directly disagreeing with or contradicting an authoritative figure or position. Moreover, in this case, it helps Anselm pass off his text as completely prompted by and limited to the controversy with Roscelin. It would be presumptuous of him to take up doctrine unprovoked and take on Boethius, a revered authority. For then Anselm would be subject to the accusation he makes of Roscelin: destabilizing already settled doctrine. But if Anselm's reflections are united around a refutation of Roscelin and framed as supporting rather than confronting traditional authorities, Anselm is safe from such accusations.[68] Moreover, Anselm frames his novelty not as conflict with the tradition but as speaking where authorities were "silent," not contradicting but completing their work. This way of positioning his work implies that Church doctrine is a work in progress, *not* thoroughly stable and settled. Despite the opening analogy of it to Mount Olympus, new things remain to be said, new issues to be confronted.

As he begins this new section, Anselm sets three tasks: to show that 1) even if there were three gods, it would not keep all from becoming incarnate with the Son, 2) that there is only one God, and 3) as one God, the incarnation of one of the three persons does not necessitate but rather makes impossible the incarnation of all three. These are taken up in chapters 7, 8, and 9 respectively. Chapters 10 and 11 (of which we have the apparently earlier draft) add discussion of 4) why the Son rather than the other persons became incarnate, and 5) why the Son, having assumed

67. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 132, 159.

68. One addition to the draft of chapters 10–11 in the final version is a coda referring back to the statements of Roscelin quoted at the beginning of *De incarnatione*, asserting the completeness of Anselm's refutation. See EDIV 11, S II, 30.

humanity, does not assume two persons. Anselm adds at the beginning of chapter 10 that he had not intended to discuss the fourth issue, but there is a sense in which both it and the fifth question fit in the text. All are united as problems of unity and plurality in God as complicated by the Incarnation.

The argument of chapter 7 is a *reductio* of Roscelin's position. Anselm argues that even if there were three gods, as Roscelin understands them, still all three would become incarnate. It also overlaps with issues adumbrated in the *Monologion* on what it means for God to be God, omnipotent and the supreme good. If the divine nature is omnipotent—even if there were three gods—Anselm reasons, the power of God must be identical with the divine being. Otherwise, either God has parts, an imperfection, or power is an accident, without which God could be conceived. Since omnipotence requires the omnipresence of divine power identical with the divine substance, and "just as the power of God is always and everywhere, so whatever God is is always and everywhere," including being incarnate. Hence, Anselm argues, all would become incarnate.[69]

This argument rests on the claim made next: that there can only be one God. This seems at first to make refutation of Roscelin more difficult. For if there are three gods and all three would become incarnate if one did, then *a fortiori* if they are not three separate gods but only persons in one God, then all three must become incarnate. But Anselm structures his argument in two parts, showing that God is, first, one, and then, second, three. It is another way that he shows he wants to do more than merely refute Roscelin but wants to educate those straying from orthodoxy more thoroughly. Thus, Anselm wants to show Roscelin—or anyone troubled by his claims—that they have not adequately thought through the unity *or* the plurality in God. God is both more a unity and more a plurality than Roscelin has yet dreamed of.

This is what Anselm means when he complains (twice) that his opponent is "lame in both feet" in regard to the Incarnation; the two "feet" or respects in which his opponent is lame on the incarnation are, on the one hand, the Son's *unity* of nature with the Father and, on the other, the *difference* of persons.[70] The expression, "lame in both feet," seems to be an allusion to 2 Samuel 9:13 referring to the son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, who was crippled in both feet from having been dropped by his nurse as she fled an approaching army. He was later taken in by David to eat at his table for life. David takes him in despite Saul's (the child's grandfather)

69. EDIV 7, S II, 22.
70. EDIV 9, S II, 24.

animosity toward David. David's action taking in Mephibosheth seems to have been a proverbial example of God's loving kindness. We do not know how much of this story Anselm might have had in mind in making the allusion, and it could well only be the use of a standard expression for someone who is doubly wrong. However, if Anselm had in mind the story of Mephibosheth, it might be a fitting allusion, given the shift in Anselm's approach to his "opponent" as *De incarnatione* moves forward. As he begins this section, he is no longer talking specifically to Roscelin but to those who have been affected by Roscelin's position. Thus, Anselm would be signaling his willingness to take them in, to bring them back into the orthodox fold. Between Saul and David, as between Anselm and Roscelin and his followers, there is a kind of family feud, not less but more rancorous than feuds between those who are unrelated.

This double lameness is the result of a misunderstanding about how the Son of God achieves a union of divine with human. If God assumes human being (*homo*), it is either in a unity with his nature as divine or with his person as Son, Anselm reasons. His opponent must think it is the former because only then would all three persons become incarnate. In order to make sense of how human and divine can become unified, Anselm must appeal to what he has complained Roscelin and the dialecticians do not understand: the distinction between individual and species, person and nature.[71] With the distinction between nature and person he can both characterize his opponent as assuming a unity of divine and human nature, and explain the orthodox view as a unity of human *nature* with the *person* of the Son of God, one person with two natures. Anselm also uses it to show that the opposing view is incoherent, because, he argues, if all become incarnate, then "a plurality of persons who are different from one another would be one and the same person," which is, of course, impossible.[72]

In this argument, we can hear an echo of the pattern of argument we have seen since the *Monologion*, from necessity to paradox to necessity. Roscelin's claims make orthodox Christology incoherent and impossible, but Anselm's examination of the problem shows the incoherence and impossibility of Roscelin's position and objections. Anselm concludes, as before, with necessary conclusions, but they prove the orthodox view rather than the one he originally argued to be incoherent. Anselm began from the apparently obvious view as expressed by Roscelin that if

71. EDIV 1, S II, 10; 9, S II, 24. See the discussion of this criticism of the dialecticians, chapter 3.

72. EDIV 9, S II, 24, 23–25, 2.

one person of the one God becomes incarnate, all three do, and ends by showing not only that the incarnation of one does not require that all three persons become incarnate but in fact makes it impossible. Anselm goes above and beyond on both aspects of the argument, proving, on the one hand, that the opponent's position is more absurd than it seems and, on the other, that his position is not only possible but the only rational option.

While the structure or strategy is similar to the works we have examined so far, clearly the spirit in which it is undertaken is quite different. Objections are not put in the mouth of the fellow inquirers, like the student in the dialogue trilogy or Boso in *Cur Deus homo*. In those works Anselm either never associated these problems or objections with any actual objections that posed any real threat to belief or had by long reflection laundered them of any association with an external other. The objections did not pose a threat, not because they did not raise serious problems but because they are taken up within the context of faith seeking understanding, in a spirit of shared exploration. Any anxiety or defensiveness is virtually absent from the earlier works, while in the *Epistola*, even in this second section Anselm is angry and almost sarcastic. He is far less belligerant as the *magister* of the dialogues and is more threatened by Roscelin than he is by Gaunilo.

Anselm's confident assertion that it is *necessary* that only one person becomes incarnate and the absurdity of the opposite view is striking. It is true that a contradiction follows from Roscelin's view that the three persons become incarnate in one human being. There would, then, be one (human) person who is at the same time multiple (divine) persons. But as he makes that argument Anselm must ignore the problematic logic of the *orthodox* account of the Trinity. He has not forgotten it utterly, as is clear in the last section of the text, as we will see below, but it is as if he cannot acknowledge it while he is still engaged in the task of defeating Roscelin.

In the same vein, showing the necessity of the orthodox view, Anselm sets out to show not only that it *need not* be the case that Father and Holy Spirit are incarnate with the Son though they are one God, but that it is *impossible for any but the Son* to be incarnate. Anselm notes, as mentioned above, that this subject is beyond what he had intended but he includes a discussion of it since it has come up.[73] In an earlier draft of these chapters of the *Epistola* Anselm apologizes for this diversion from the main topic.[74]

This part of Anselm's argument was originally crafted as a criticism

73. EDIV 10, S II, 25, 6–9.
74. Mews, "St Anselm and Roscelin I," in *Reason and Belief*, VI, 60.

of Boethius's response to Nestorius. Boethius's argument is entirely negative, a *reductio* of the Nestorian position. Nestorius, Boethius argues, makes the unity of Christ no more than that of a heap, a juxtaposition of different things, which, since lacking unity, lacks also being and efficacy for salvation.[75]

In order to understand Anselm here, we must recall Anselm's position in the *Monologion*. While he argued there that God is one on account of his one essence, he concluded that God is triune "on account of three I know not what [*propter tres nescio quid*]."[76] Persons, he argued, exist independently of one another, each person an independent substance. Anselm, thus, rejected the language of persons (as well as substances) for the Trinity because persons, like substances, are independently existing entities. Given that there is only one divine substance, there cannot be a plurality of persons.[77] Thus Anselm only took up the language of persons as improper and as equally acceptable or unacceptable as calling God three substances.[78]

In the *Epistola* Anselm accepts the language of persons he had formerly rejected by redefining "person" in such a way as to make it more acceptable as a way of distinguishing Father, Son and Spirit. In the earlier draft he gives Boethius's definition of person (individual of a rational nature) and explains that defined in this way, one cannot defend the Chalcedonian formula—one person, two natures—against the Nestorian claim that there must be two persons. For if there are two rational natures, human and divine, then there are two individuals and two persons.[79] Anselm cites a different definition of "individual" as "a collection of properties which is not the same as in another, that is, not said of another." The fragment of the earlier draft discovered by Mews, *Cur Deus magis*, identifies this as the definition of the *philosophi* and Mews traces it back to Porphyry.[80] The definition is repeated in the final version with-

75. Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*, in *Boethius: The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 92–101.

76. *Mono.* 79, S I, 85.

77. *Mono.* 79, S I, 85, 21–22.

78. *Mono.* 79, S I, 86, 5–13.

79. "Cur Deus magis," edited by Mews, in "St Anselm and Roscelin I," VI, 84. Anselm says only "individual of a rational nature" instead of "individual *substance* of a rational nature" as Boethius does (*Contra Eutychen*, 92) but he seems to assume it in pointing out the problem with Boethius's argument, that the claim is that there are two rational natures in Christ, human and divine, thus two individuals, thus two persons.

80. "Cur Deus magis," edited by Mews, in "St Anselm and Roscelin I," VI, 84–85. See Porphyry, *Isagoge*, in *Categoriarum supplementa: Porphyrii Isagoge translation Boethii* 7.21, edited by Laurenzo Minio-Paluello, 6–7, Aristoteles Latinus 1 (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 13.24–14.2.

out attribution.[81] But though Porphyry's role is not acknowledged, his account allows Anselm to save and fully endorse the language of persons for the Trinity.

Perhaps further covering his tracks, Anselm supports his claim by reference to the particular case of Jesus in the final version, instead of appealing to the "philosophers." "Jesus" designates not just any man but the one "announced by the angel, who is God and man, son of God and son of a virgin, and whatever else it is true to say of him as God and man."[82] One cannot designate the Son of God without also designating the Son of man; the one person possesses all these attributes.[83] A plurality of persons cannot have the same collection of properties or have the same things said of them. Thus, given the set of properties and predications particular to Jesus as Son of God and man, there can only be one person.

Porphyry's definition of an individual is less metaphysical and more linguistic than Boethius's "individual substance of a rational nature." It is also subject to the criticism that it does not distinguish between an individual and heap. However, the looser definition allows Anselm to ground the single personhood of Jesus in the predications made of him as both God and man. Nevertheless, in the end Anselm's argument does really not say anything more than Boethius's *reductio* argument against Nestorius. For Boethius simply points out that if Jesus is two persons then all the things we say of him will be false.[84]

When we look more carefully at the *Epistola* we see that Anselm, even as he endorses the language of persons, has not moved as far as it might seem from the *Monologion*. In chapter 12 of the *Epistola* Anselm is refuting an opponent who, having rejected a multiplicity of gods, also might reject a multiplicity of persons. Anselm argues that a trinity of multiple persons is only problematic if based on the notion that God is three persons in the same way human beings are three persons (as fully distinct individuals). However, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit "are said to be three persons not because they are three separate things but because of a certain similitude they have with three separate persons."[85] Just as of Adam cannot be called son, only father, and Abel can be called only son, not father, so Father cannot be called Son and Son cannot be called Father. Anselm's explanation for how the term "person" applies is quite negative: "since Father and Son and Holy Spirit are three, and different from each other, and cannot be called by one another's [names]; there-

81. EDIV 11, S II, 29, 7–8.
82. EDIV 11, S II, 29, 9–12.
83. EDIV 11, S II, 29, 12–15.
84. Boethius, *Contra Eutychen*, 94–101.
85. EDIV 12, S II, 30, 15–17.

fore, they are said to be three persons but not because they are three separate things."[86]

This is an argument based in language. It is a mode of argument we would expect more from Abelard than Anselm in that Abelard gives justifications and explanations for the language of the Trinity, saving the predications of orthodoxy, but does not give much access to the reality behind statements.[87] Anselm's reasoning back to what an individual is based on how we talk about individuals, rather than grounding what we say on a metaphysical account of what an individual is is similiarly linguistic rather than metaphysical. Anselm has focused on language from the start in the *Monologion*. However, the pattern in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* explorations of God was to push against the limits of language as the gateway toward insight into divine reality and to note the ways in which it always falls short. The Anselm of the *Monologion* recognized the limits of reason and language but strove mightily to overcome both. His reasoning was both more substantive and more evocative of the divine as beyond human comprehension. In the *Epistola* it is almost as if Anselm has given up the battle for real understanding and has settled for correct and justified belief. Though trinitarian scholars may disagree, to my mind the *Monologion*'s more intellectually modest conclusion on the Trinity represents a deeper insight than the *Epistola*, which is, in comparison and up to this point, flawless as argument but lacking as insight.

Supporting the Faithful with Images of the Trinity

Anselm does not, however, end his exploration on this linguistic note. In the third and last section, Anselm further softens his approach to his opponent. The objections in this section do not spring from a desire to foment heresy but rather from a genuine difficulty in understanding. This opponent simply cannot understand because he sees nothing in his own experience that can be one and three. Anselm advises that he should simply bear (*sufferat*) something being in God that his intellect cannot comprehend. He should not compare things in space and time and composed of parts to the nature that is none of those things.[88] Assuming faith, at issue is what to do about any discontinuity between what faith believes and what the intellect knows. The first answer is to tolerate that tension between what seems like it must be the case to our mind and experience,

86. EDIV 12, S II, 30, 27–30.

87. Eileen C. Sweeney, *Logic, Theology, and Poetry in Boethius, Abelard and Alan of Lille: Words in the Absence of Things* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 93–95.

88. EDIV 13, S II, 31.

that something cannot be three and one, and trinitarian teaching, without shrinking doctrine into the limited parameters of finite things. Believe and do not dispute, acquiesce to Christian authority, he concludes.[89]

Yet Anselm does not simply break off here, acquiescing to authority. He undertakes the search for similitudes as act of charity toward a believer he no longer construes as a hostile opponent. This opponent does not glory in his own cleverness but is genuinely puzzled and even distraught by his desire to understand something of what he believes. To this kind of inquirer, Anselm suggests that there might be something of which we do have experience, something composite and in time and space that has some shadow of the feature found in God, that is, being one and three. Anselm proposes a spring from which a river flows into a lake as analogy for the Trinity, using without attribution the analogy Augustine had put forward in *De fide et symbolo*.[90] Anselm, unlike Augustine, names the entity that is spring, river, and lake as the Nile. Augustine argued that spring, river, and lake are all water, and the roots, trunk and branches are all wood; so in some sense of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct yet one God. The problem with this analogy, William Mann argues, is that wood and water are "mass nouns" and so the spring, river and lake are *parts* of water. He argues that when Anselm makes the analogy about the Nile it is an improvement because the likeness is not based on water as a mass noun but on the Nile "a four-dimensional entity, occupying a certain region, not just of space, but of the spatio-temporal continuum," something like the Nile *sub specie aeternitatis*. This is what Anselm is getting at when he concludes, "the whole Nile is the spring, the whole Nile is the river, the whole Nile is the lake."[91] Similarly, then, the whole of God is the Father, the whole, the Son, and so forth. Mann argues further that this is how Anselm rejects modalism, the view that there is one God and that what is three are only three roles or functions: "Where there is wholeness, there is no room for apportioning roles or functions."[92] The wholeness is not just the unity of God but the wholeness of God in each of the persons such that they cannot be mere functions of the one God but each wholly God.

89. EDIV 13, S II, 31.

90. Augustine, *De fide et symbolo*, 17 (CSEL 41, 19).

91. EDIV 13, S II, 32, 2–3. Cf. William Mann, "Anselm on the Trinity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 277, 275–77. Cf. Christopher Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 166–86. Hughes attempts an interpretation of Anselm's analogy in the language of contemporary analytic philosophy and then tries to revise it to be applicable in contemporary terms.

92. Mann, "Trinity," 278.

The analogy has several functions for Anselm. First it is designed to give the imagination something that has some of the character of being "three in one." As image, the spring-river-lake = Nile is not supposed to be congruous in all respects. This image, Anselm reminds the reader, is of what is created, not creator, and of what is, unlike God, subject to the limits of time, place, and composition; only *mutatis mutandis* does the image represent the Godhead.[93] Second, the analogy is supposed to provide a model of an entity that can support the pattern of predication asserted to hold for the Trinity. Thus Anselm writes, "the spring is not from the river nor from the lake; but the river is only from the spring and not from the lake, and the lake from both the spring and the river, such that the whole river is from the whole spring and the whole lake from the whole spring and the whole river."[94]

Were Anselm Abelard, he would stop here, with an account of the coherence of the predications of orthodoxy on the Trinity, supported by an example or examples of the coherence of such patterns of predication for created things in ordinary language. But the analogy has a third function. The image is supposed to function as a stepping-stone toward the goal of making sense of the Trinity on its own rather than created terms. Thus the final two chapters of the work attempt to give an account of, first, the unity and, second, the plurality of the Godhead reasoning from God as "eternity itself."[95] Eternity grounds unity because nothing can be external to eternity (at another place or time) nor can there be plural eternities or plural omnipotences.[96] Anselm then explains the relationships of begetting and procession by arguing from the conclusion that there can be nothing external to the eternal God. "When God is begotten of God" that which is begotten is not external to the one who begets and when God proceeds from God, that which proceeds is not external to that from which it proceeds.[97] Thus Anselm concludes with an argument for unity that is metaphysical and not merely linguistic.

Anselm grounds plurality on the relations within the Trinity. Father is distinct from Son, who is begotten, and "he who proceeds" is distinct from "him from whom he proceeds."[98] This part of the argument is still in a certain way linguistic. *Within* the unity of the single eternity of God, there is Father and Son, he who proceeds and he from whom one proceeds. (Anselm refrains from using the name of the Holy Spirit here.) Given that Father and Son are always distinct and the one who proceeds

93. EDIV 13, S II, 31–32.
94. EDIV 13, S II, 32, 12–19.
95. EDIV 15, S II, 33, 12.
96. EDIV 15, S II, 33–34.
97. EDIV 15, S II, 34.
98. EDIV 16, S II, 34, 27.

and the one from whom he proceeds, Anselm concludes, "no one [name] can be said of the other."[99]

There is an important sense in which none of the three levels of discourse on the Trinity Anselm engages in the *Epistola* correspond to the kind of discourse on God and the Trinity we found in the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*. Before he turns to the image of the Nile, Anselm's arguments were negative. He showed that objections to the orthodox account themselves have incoherent implications. Second, he argued that unlike those objections or alternate accounts, the orthodox view is the only account which can remain coherent both in its assertion of unity and trinity. Dialectic has been exhausted, used to refute the challenge to orthodoxy as absurd and to support the orthodox view as the most reasonable view. But it is unable to get further. Anselm then moves to another mode of discourse: images or similitudes, which have only limited efficacy. Only the last two chapters try to get a hold of the notion of God as three in one, moving beyond dialectical refutation and inadequate images. However, even these last two chapters differ in tone from the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* discussions. The trinitarian discussion in the *Monologion* is more dynamic. It is not just that in the *Monologion* uses the language of procession and the *Epistola* relational opposition. The *Monologion* makes a daring attempt to derive the Son and Spirit from the notions of God's expression and God's love, while the *Epistola* essentially works with the relations as a given and attempts to explain how they remain three and God remains one.[100] The *Epistola* is more restrained in its aspirations, moving from polemic and apologia to the images with which the *Monologion* ends. It only ventures into metaphysics briefly and tentatively at the end, and more in pursuit of divine unity than divine trinity.

The Epistola and Anselm's Project

The unique value of the *Epistola* is the access it affords us to Anselm's thinking and composition process. We can tell from the manuscript tra-

99. EDIV 16, S II, 34.

100. Cf. Peter Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics Developments of Latin Trinitarian Theology between c. 1075 and c. 1160," in *Trinitarian Theology in the Medieval West*, edited by Pekka Kärkkäinen (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Seura, 2007), 14–17. Gemeinhardt thinks of the *Monologion* argument as the more traditional text because it is based on Augustine's psychological analogy. Thus Gemeinhardt finds the shift to an account based on the notion of person redefined was necessary to meet the tougher challenges outside the monastery and for an audience using reflection on the Trinity as a part of devotional life. Gemeinhardt also sees the *Monologion* as an attempt to give a nontechnical account; shifting to the language of "person" in *De incarnatione is* leaving behind "the grammar of everyday language" and of the youth in the schools for a particularly theological terminology. For more discussion of the kind of progression Anselm's trinitarian thinking exhibits, see chapter 7.

dition so well laid out by Mews that Anselm put several pieces together. First, there is his polemical response to Roscelin; second, there is an independent account of the Incarnation and Trinity in dialogue with Boethius. Third, there are methodological remarks in his extended introduction and in chapter six, and the remarks commending the work to Pope Urban II, asking for any needed corrections to the work.[101] What we find when examining these pieces and the way they come together in the final form is that, as Mews writes, "the smooth, deceptively simple philosophical style of Anselm did not spring automatically from his pen. It emerged only from careful pruning of initially elaborate and complicated reflections generated by a sophisticated and subtle mind."[102]

This work in its versions and fragments reveals, then, that Anselm's combination of relentless rationalism in the form of deductive arguments is a careful choice rather than an accident of his texts. Anselm combines this argumentative rigor with a certain lack of technicality in two senses. First, he omits the names of his sources, both those he uses and those he objects to.[103] In the final version, he does not explain that the definition of "individual" is from Porphyry (or even "the philosophers" as his earlier draft admits), and he excises the mention of Boethius in his discussion of Christ as one person and two natures. Anselm's rejection of Boethius's definition of "person" and his solution, made possible by appeal to a non-Christian philosopher, are significant changes to the tradition. Anselm places those doctrinal and philosophical novelties within a refutation of Roscelin, turning the public controversy into a pedagogical tool. Roscelin's challenge becomes the occasion to rethink "settled doctrine" in a way that is less threatening than Roscelin's attempt to do the same. In this way Anselm can downplay his own innovation but also can transform Roscelin (or his followers) from dangerous dissenters into a faithful seekers of understanding.

Second, Anselm avoids the technical language and argument forms

101. Mews notes that this kind of "voluntary pre-censorship" is rare before the mid-twelfth century. See Mews, "St Anselm and Roscelin I," VI, 65, n. 23.

102. Mews, "St Anselm and Roscelin I," VI, 64.

103. Anselm's leaving out of the names of sources is not, of course, somehow new or unique to him. In this context, it is one of several ways Anselm transforms his text into one that is less technical, one which appears to spring more immediately from his own introspective reasoning. The issue of Anselm's lack of references to sources is most associated with the *Monologion*, since Lanfranc explicitly criticized Anselm for failing to cite scripture and the fathers in the *Monologion*. See chapter 4, section a. But in this case, by omitting the names of Boethius and Porphyry Anselm seems to be following rather than contradicting Lanfranc's advice. For in leaving out Boethius, Anselm seems less like he is engaging in theological controversy with a recognized authority, and in leaving out Porphyry he appears to be less engaged in the use of the technical tools and sources for dialectic in discussion of theological topics.

of dialectic. Only, as we will see, in *De conceptu* does Anselm make more explicit references to the techniques of definition, *divisio*, and syllogistic argument forms. Lanfranc has been described as "dissembling" about his dialectical expertise on questions of faith "in order not to appear to have more confidence in [dialectic] than on the Truth and on the authority of the Holy fathers."[104] Anselm seems to share with his teacher Lanfranc the conviction that rational consideration of matters of faith should not be (or at least not obviously) dialectical in a technical sense.[105]

Anselm's disentanglement of his arguments from the technical trappings of dialectic and debate serves as a way of purifying dialectic so that it can be used in theological discussion. Leaving out references to authorities also allows him to avoid openly disagreeing with a traditional authority and cluttering up the text with names and sources. Thus his rational journey appears to be driven by pure reason. This is not pure reason in a Kantian sense but in the sense that it is introspective, that it follows its own path raising and responding to questions that fall naturally out of its own process. The questions are not presented as those of a technical specialist or part of artificial debate but what anyone—or at least any monk—would or should ask. This kind of questioner is less an actually occurring phenomenon—within or outside the monastery—than it is Anselm's quite conscious construction. Such a stance allows him to connect the intellectual rigor of his work with spiritual life, both grounded in the practice of monastic introspective meditation.

The *Epistola* is important because the trinitarian theology in it, along with that in the *De processione Spiritus Sancti*, is influential in the later Middle Ages. In these works Anselm lays out a careful and coherent account of the terminology and its application. In so far as the *Epistola* heralds a new development in Anselm's speculative work, it seems driven by the need to write in a way more suited to the rigors of debate outside the monastery. It is more carefully constructed so that its claims can be less easily taken out of context.[106] Anselm seems to have realized that, despite his protests against his works being copied and disseminated in ways he

104. André Cantin, "Saint Anselme au depart de l'aventure Européenne de la raison," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles au tournant des XIe–XIIe siècles: études anselmiennes* (*IVe session: Abbaye Notre-Dame du Bec, Le Bec-Hellouin, 11–16 juillet 1982,* edited by Raymonde Foreville, Spicilegium Beccense II (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1984), 615. A similar view is expressed by Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 51–3.

105. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 47–59.

106. Cf. Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics," 19–20. Gemeinhardt writes, "The *Epistola de incarnatione Verbi* illustrates how Anselm underlined the importance of being in tune with the doctrine of the Church when seeking to understand the faith. Compared with the *Monologion*, he does no longer restrict himself to the satisfaction of individual needs for rationability of the faith but struggles to defend the Church's faith against a real enemy."

did not countenance, he could not control the use of his works. Having failed to control the audience of his works, he begins to write in ways that will not be so easily misconstrued. This represents the beginning of a gap between spiritual practice and theological speculation absent in Anselm's earlier works. The *De incarnatione*, along with *Cur Deus homo*, represents a kind of mean in this development, as Anselm more explicitly engages with the theological tradition and with contemporary theories and questions yet still constructs his works to further the understanding of faith.

The *Epistola* is in the end less compelling than the earlier works because it is more a product of Anselm's need to satisfy critics. He finds it necessary to state what he had taken for granted – basic orthodoxy and acceptance of traditional formulations—and devotes the lion's share of his efforts to fighting heresy and defending orthodoxy. The *Monologion* did not reject those formulations but did more daringly try to move beyond them. The heart of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*'s investigations is something between creedal assent and images: speculative, metaphysical striving to create and unravel paradox into necessity. Despite the different kinds of discourse in the *Epistola*, the speculative, metaphysical layer is almost totally missing as it jumps from arguments against heresy to arguments in defense of orthodoxy to metaphor. It does not attempt, as the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* do—even as they recognize their limits—to pierce standard formulations and move toward deepened rational and direct understanding.

In some sense, we shall see, Anselm finds his way back to his signature method and style in *Cur Deus homo*: reasoned argument, often language-based, undertaken for ambitious rational and spiritual goals, motivated by questions posed by external objectors, but integrated with and subordinated to a spiritual quest.

Cur Deus homo: From the Absence to the Presence of God

Much recent discussion of *Cur Deus homo* has centered around the source of the objections to the Incarnation it takes up. The question is whether they are real Jewish or Muslim objections based on real encounters with Jews or Muslims. Earlier speculation had it that it was the Mutakallimun, emphasizing the power of God to act without secondary causes, who posed the question of the *Cur Deus homo* Boso articulates.[107]

107. René Roques, "Les Pagani dans le *Cur deus homo* de Saint Anselme," in *Die Metaphysik im Mittelalter, ihr Ursprung und ihre Bedeutung; Vorträge des II. Internationalen Kongresses für Mittelalterliche Philosophie, Köln, 31 August–6 September 1961,* edited by P. Wilpert (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963), 192–96.

Others have taken the objections to be Jewish in origin, perhaps filtered through Anselm's friend Gilbert Crispin, who, unlike Anselm, is known to have had encounters with Jews living in London.[108]

Though Southern emphasized the differences between *Cur Deus* homo and Anselm's earlier work as engaged with non-Christian objections to Christian doctrine and with other Christian views rather than in response to his own inner promptings, *Cur Deus homo* and Boso's role in it are also in many important ways continuous with the earlier works. First, the trilogy and dialogues and the *Proslogion* do take up objections from those outside Christianity, though those objections are not made directly but mediated through scripture. The trilogy of dialogues takes up objections to Christianity's view of free choice and sin, objections voiced in the gospel of John by Jews opposed to Jesus. And, as we learned, the figure of the fool from Psalms to whom Anselm addresses himself in the *Proslogion* is associated, though not by Anselm, with Jewish rejection of Jesus' divinity. In *De incarnatione*, as we saw, Anselm takes up the challenge formulated by Roscelin implying the incoherence of Christian views of the Incarnation. Second, *Cur Deus homo*, like those other works, transforms external objections or objectors into those found *within* belief and the believer. Thus, regardless of their origin Anselm responds to the problems raised not as if they are a belligerent, external threat to belief, nor merely abstract, intellectual problems but transforms them into those in which the believer is existentially involved and implicated.[109]

In *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm is able is to carve a methodological place

108. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 198–99. Recent studies have pointed out that the objections Anselm tries to respond to are only found in Jewish objectors in a later period or in regions far away from England. See Gilbert Dahan, "Anselm, les Juifs, le Judaïsme," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 521–34; and Amos Funkenstein, *Perceptions of Jewish History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 178–81. Anna Abulafia argues that Anselm's opponent cannot be actual Jews or Muslims because his argument assumes explicitly Christian presuppositions of original sin that they would not accept. See Anna Sapir Abulafia, "St Anselm and Those Outside the Church," in *Christians and Jews in Dispute: Disputational Literature and the Rise of Anti-Judaism in the West (c. 1000–1150)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 131–48. Jeremy Cohen argues that even though Anselm does not seem to have contact with Jews or knowledge of Judaism, this need not "deter him from directing his arguments to Jews as he conceived them." Cohen describes Anselm's Jewish objector as a "contrived, hermeneutically crafted Jew," a view I also argue for below based on the text. See Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 178. For Cohen, Anselm's placement of generic, ahistorical, and rationally based objections put in the mouth of Jewish objectors is, on the one hand, a step toward the conflation of Jews with other unbelievers and toward the undoing of special status and protections due them, but, on the other hand, the conceit steers clear of invective, instead manifesting a "commitment to level-headed, reasonable encounter between opposing viewpoints." See *Living Letters*, 178–80, 174.

109. Though there is a sense that *De incarnatione* represents an exception to this *modus operandi*, it works toward the same goal in the stages of the work.

from which he can consider the questions he wishes to in rational terms, seeking the same understanding through atemporal, necessary reasons for the Incarnation as he did in *De libertate* and *De casu diaboli* for creation and the fall. Like the objections and arguments in the dialogues, Boso's objections take the issues out of their narrative form to consider them logically, in terms of necessary reasons. In the process, Anselm also transforms Boso. Boso begins by only posing the objections of the "infidels," not his own questions. His stance as a neutral, third-party observer on the matter is transformed into that of someone existentially implicated by the consequences of the argument in which they are engaged. *Cur Deus homo*, then, displays the same pattern of argument which Anselm has always used, beginning from apparently insurmountable reasons why what faith believes cannot be true, seeking (and in some sense finding) the perfect congruence between words, thoughts, and things, the necessary reasons the claims of faith *must* be true. Anselm's arguments are, here as elsewhere, *in the service of* deepening the believer's commitment to faith.

The Parameters of the Discussion

Boso begins by posing a barrage of objections, all showing the incongruity of the mode of human salvation with the divine nature. The main obstacle is God's power. Surely God had the power to do instantly and without suffering what he does by means of Jesus' life and death. The dilemma is this: if God could not have done it another way, he is without power; if he could but chose not to, he is without wisdom, suffering for no reason what is unbecoming.[110] If God wills something, it cannot be opposed, Boso asserts; thus, he could simply will man freed from his sins. And if he chooses to do something in a more difficult and unfitting way (through the passion of his son) when he could do it in some easier way, he cannot be counted wise. Moreover, he did not suffer out of love for the angels, so why for humankind? And why does he need to come down to vanquish the devil, as if the devil had the power to call God out into battle?[111]

Boso continues with a critique of one way of justifying the Incarnation, an account, he says, "we are wont to make use of," in which the devil has control over humankind by a kind of justice since man freely consented to sin. Hence, God can only free human kind by "justice" rather than "power," which happens when the devil unjustly kills a sinless

110. CDH I, 6, S II, 53.
111. CDH I, 6, S II, 54–55.

man.[112] Versions of this view can be traced back to Augustine and forward to the school of Laon.[113] The language Boso uses to describe this view, that God was obliged to act with justice rather than power against the devil, comes from *De Trinitate*, though Augustine does not make the next claim Boso critiques: that if God had simply acted with power to release man from the devil it would have been an act of unjust violence.[114] Nonetheless, Boso rejects this view by objecting to the Augustinian formulation of which it is an elaboration: that God must act by justice rather than power toward the devil. Boso objects on the basis of God's power. "Both the devil and man are God's and neither can exist outside of the power of God;" hence, God would not need to use the devil to win man back, he argues.[115] Further, he contends, even if human beings are justly punished, it is not just for the devil to have power over human beings.[116]

Boso in this way expands and specifies the central question of the work: "By what reason or necessity is God made man and, as we believe and confess, by his death restore life to the world when he could have done this either through another person, whether angelic or human, or by will alone?"[117] This, Anselm argues, is a question asked by unbelievers (*infideles*) and believers (*fideles*) the learned (*litterati*) and unlearned (*illiterati*).[118] Anselm explains that he will take up these questions in dialogue form, which is "clearer" and "more pleasing," "especially to slower minds."[119] The content and method of the inquiry is to be as accessible and as widely relevant as possible. Anselm does this by assuming the perspective of one who finds the Incarnation not just implausible but incoherent, not for sectarian reasons but from within the logic of monotheism shared by Christians, Jews, and Muslims and also, at least as understood by the medieval Latin West, the Greek philosophers. While the fool's rejection of God as presented in the *Proslogion* and the objections of Anselm's "infidel" seem very different, in the form Anselm uses and discusses them, both are general, rationally based objections. These are the objections that would be made by "pre- or extra-Christian man and, metaphorically, the human mind under the tutelage of nature."[120]

112. CDH I, 7, S II, 55–56.

113. CDH I, 7, S II, 55, 17. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 204. For the broader history and provenance of the "rights of the devil" view, see Marcia L. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), vol. 1, 488.

114. Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIII, 13, 17–15, 19. Cf. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* III, 31.

115. CDH I, 7, S II, 56, 3–4.

116. CDH I, 7, S II, 57–59; Cf. *Med.* 3, S III, 85–86.

117. CDH I, 1, S II, 48, 22–24.

118. CDH I, 1, S II, 48, 1, 5–6.

119. CDH I, 1, S II, 48, 11–15.

120. Mark D. Jordan, "The Protreptic Structure of the '*Summa Contra Gentiles*,'" *The Thomist* 50,

Though this is a description of the "gentiles" to whom Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles* are addressed, it is a description that fits the objections Anselm addresses in *Cur Deus homo* just as well. Whether Anselm was actually confronting actual non-Christian objectors to Christianity, he addresses that opponent without appeal to any specific faith or background using rational and not scripturally based arguments.

Boso plays a role in this process analogous to Gaunilo's: that of a rational skeptic who requires that all objections be considered and who will be moved only by absolutely certain and indubitable conclusions. Boso is certainly as difficult to convince as Gaunilo. Both criticize what they see as less than fully rigorous arguments and goad Anselm into considering more questions and problems. Rejecting Anselm's first round of defenses of the Incarnation as mere "paintings on clouds," pleasing, insubstantial fictions, Boso spurs Anselm on to offer more than arguments from fittingness and proportion between the fall and its remedy in the Incarnation. Boso describes what he requires thusly: "The rational solidity of truth (*veritatis soliditas rationabilis*) must first be shown, that is, the necessity (*id est necessitas*), which proves (*probet*) God ought or could have humbled himself to those things which we affirm."[121]

It is this standard for success—solidity, necessity, and this level of persistent questioning on Boso's part—taking on, as Anselm puts it, "the persona of one who believes nothing until it is demonstrated in advance by reason,"[122] which marks Anselm's inquiry and method as something new. In these opening chapters, Anselm does attempt to reply to Boso's objections, defending the orthodox view that the Incarnation and passion of Christ are neither unfitting for Christ to have undergone nor for the Father to have commanded and are also free rather than imposed upon either of them. He exclaims the fittingness of death, resulting from the disobedience of man, being restored to life by the obedience of a man, the fittingness of condemnation, originating from a woman's sin, transformed to justification by man born of woman, the fittingness of the devil, who conquered man by persuading him to eat from a tree, being conquered himself by a man suffering on a tree.[123] Anselm also engages in careful interpretation and clarification of scripture passages to explain away any sense that Christ had to die.[124] All to no avail. As noted above, Boso describes the litany of fittingness as "painting on clouds," and in re-

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no. 2 (1986): 184. The question of whom Aquinas intends to address in the *Contra gentiles* is also vexed, a question not germane to this study but see the brief discussion and listing of sources in Cohen, *Living Letters*, 371–72.

121. CDH I, 4, S II, 52, 1–6.

122. CDH I, 10, S II, 67, 1–2.

123. CDH I, 3, S II, 51.

124. CDH I, 9–10, S II, 61–7.

sponse to the scripture interpretation, Boso states the most disturbing, pointed version of his basic objection: "It is strange (*mirum*) if God takes such pleasure in (*delectatur*) or needs (*eget*) the blood of an innocent man that only if this one was killed would he or could he spare the guilty."[125]

These opening chapters are linked to Augustine's discussion of the same questions in *De Trinitate* in several ways, not just in their reference to the rights of the devil. First, the pointed question itself comes from Augustine and even the demand for something more than aesthetic arguments or claims of fittingness is needed in response. For while Augustine's sermons sometimes rely on the kind of fittingness Anselm tries to satisfy Boso with, *De Trinitate* asks for reasons and understanding in a more rigorous form.[126] Anselm perhaps also takes his cue from Augustine in formulating his argument as a response to objectors, for Augustine crafts his account of the logic of the Incarnation, passion, and death as occurring in response to "those who say" that God could surely devise another means for salvation.[127] Thus, Anselm echoes the very questions and takes the standards for answers Augustine had laid out in *De Trinitate* and makes them even more strict, seeking necessary reasons in response to an objector who leaves Christ and faith out of view. At the same time, however, he also allows Boso to criticize what is essentially Augustine's account as aesthetically pleasing but lacking in rigor and as leaving unanswered the basic question about why God would want or need to allow torture and death.

Anselm's commendation of the work, sent with the text to Pope Urban II, justifies the use of reason on three fronts: to refute fools (*confutandum insipientiam*), subdue infidels (*frangendum duritiam infidelium*) and nourish (*pascendum*) the faithful with reasons.[128] There still remain things to be said and reasons to be tracked down on this topic, Anselm explains. The Fathers were not able to say everything in their short lives; further, "the *ratio* of truth is so broad and so deep, it cannot be exhausted by mortals, and the Lord in his church . . . does not cease imparting the gifts of his grace."[129] Thus, Anselm concludes, his attempt to lift himself (*assurgere*) to a consideration (*intuendum*) of the *ratio* of those things which are believed ought not to be reproached.[130] Confronting objections as attrib-

125. CDH I, 10, S II, 66, 24–26.

126. See, for example, Augustine, *Sermo* 232, 2, 2. Augustine writes that it is not enough to show that salvation through Christ was worthy of God's dignity, but wants to show not that there was *no* other mode God could have used but that there was none more fitting (*convenientorum*). *De Trinitate* XIII, 10, 13.

127. Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIII, 10, 13.

128. CDH, *Comm.*, S II, 39, 3–4.

129. CDH, *Comm.*, S II, 40, 4–6.

130. CDH I, *Comm.*, S II, 40, 13–17.

uted to unbelievers may be a kind of cover for considering questions that might be seen as impious if taken up by believers unprovoked by outsiders. In any case, answering objections *thought* to be raised by those outside the faith is a way of shoring up the faithful. The ebb and flow of literature taking up the challenge of Jews and non-Christians to Christianity tracks with the rise and fall of perception of threats from *within* Christianity as much or more than real threats from *outside* the faith.[131] Anselm aims as a Christian to defend the faith from those without and to support it from within, but he also aims as a thinker to justify and protect the kind of discourse of "faith seeking understanding" in which he wishes to engage. What is critical is that Anselm understands these tasks as the same. This means examining the most basic, the most difficult principle of Christianity, its defining claim which is "scandal to the Greeks": that God became man and died for the sake of humankind. It means the examination of that claim for all the ways in which it seems wildly inconsistent with the divine nature.

The difficulties confronting them are forbidding. But Anselm creates a greater gap between where they stand and success by noting not just the difficulties of the Incarnation but also his own limitations as teacher. Even before Boso has posed his problems and explained his standards for success, Anselm balks. "I fear to treat subjects too high for me, lest, when someone may have thought or even have seen that I do not satisfy him, he will believe that I am in error with regard to the truth of the thing, rather than that my intellect is not sufficient to grasp it."[132] This distinction is worth stopping over. It is, Anselm says, one thing to be stretched out toward but not yet in possession of the truth and quite another to be in error regarding it. Though different, these two positions might look the same on the outside: neither has achieved the truth. This distinction is that between the *Monologion*'s "three I-know-not-whats" and Roscelin's error. Anselm hopes for (but is not sure he can succeed in securing) something more than faith but less than sight (*species*), which is not error but progress toward that for which "we pant (*anhelamus*)."[133]

Anselm appears to decline to take up Boso's question, voicing the humility about his own abilities and misgivings about his arguments that readers like Gaunilo seem to have wished he had expressed in the *Proslogion*. Anselm further protests that they cannot begin their discussion because they cannot possibly finish. Examining the topic Boso proposes requires an examination of other topics (such as power, necessity, and

131. See Cohen, *Living Letters*.

132. CDH I, 1, S II, 48, 25–49, 2.

133. CDH, *Comm.*, S II, 40, 12.

will) "so related to one another that none of them can be fully considered without the others."[134] If the nature and relationship between these basic notions were worked out, some difficulties might be eased, Anselm adds, but he cannot do all that here. This remark might be as much about justifying a more abstract and dialectical examination of such notions as about what he can or cannot do within the confines of this text. While Anselm implies that this level of difficulty might, if not in reality at least in principle, be surmountable, Boso's suggestion that Anselm briefly touch on all these linked questions provokes more protest. The topic is both important and beyond human understanding, requiring a "beautiful reasoning (*ratio*)" exceeding human understanding. If he "presumes to note down such beautiful material in unpolished and contemptible discourse," he will be judged to be, as others have been, "the perverse (*pravis*) painter" of "a deformed figure of the Lord."[135]

Thus the problems are twofold, one on the part of the supposed teacher—that his mind is inadequate to explore the truths they must, and the other on the part of the topic to be discussed—that the coherence of its parts is so complete, the connection between its attributes so inextricable, that it cannot be discussed in part but only as a whole. In other words, Anselm is too distant from truth, and the truth he seeks is such an integral whole it cannot be explored except incompletely or imperfectly. For God is the perfect unity of his attributes just as the things to be discussed are part of a single truth, and Anselm cannot achieve that unity in either aesthetic or substantive terms any more than he can unify his own being.

Having described so fully the yawning gap between what Boso wishes to have demonstrated and what Anselm can hope to achieve, Anselm then sets about to close it. First, he finds the common ground he shares with Boso. The Boso of *Cur Deus homo* is closer to the "Catholic" Gaunilo to whose "faith" and "conscience" Anselm appeals in his reply, than the persona of the fool and unbeliever Gaunilo took on in his *responsio*. In the post-*Proslogion* debate, Anselm chides Gaunilo for playing rather than being the fool in the sense that he cannot actually believe the arguments that he expresses on behalf of the fool. In *Cur Deus homo* Anselm secures Boso's agreement in advance to two basic principles. For after the preliminary discussion that left Boso unmoved in his objections, An-

134. CDH I, 1, S II, 49, 7–13. This seems to be a reference either to the *Lambeth Fragments*, or to some work which would take up the grammar, if you will, of those basic terms Anselm tries to lay out in the *Fragments* in order to put them to use more systematically to consider the kinds of questions with which *Cur Deus homo* is concerned.

135. CDH I, 1, S II, 49, 17–22.

selm asks that they stipulate what will count as reasons supporting their conclusions. "I want us to agree," Anselm writes, "that we do not accept anything in the least unfitting (*inconveniens*) to God, and that we do not reject the smallest reason if it is not opposed by a greater."[136]

Besides the principle that God cannot act in unfitting ways, they assume that "human being was made for happiness [*beatitudinem*], which cannot be obtained in this life, nor can anyone arrive at happiness except by release [*dimissis*] from sin, and that no man passes this life without sin."[137] Anselm adds that they should also accept "other things in which faith is necessary for eternal salvation." This might seem to mean Anselm is assuming the whole content of Christian belief, but he goes on only to list one more thing "neither impossible nor unfitting to God," that the "remission [*remissio*] of sin is necessary for happiness."[138] This last is simply an inference from the other assumptions: if no one can live without sin and no happiness can be found with sin, then happiness cannot be had unless those sins are somehow gotten rid of. Listed right along with these stipulations is the dialogue's most famous assumption: that "neither the Incarnation nor anything we say about that man ever were."[139]

Some argue that since Anselm takes as accepted presuppositions for his argument that "no man passes the present life without sin" and "no one can attain happiness unless his sins have been forgiven," he is assuming the truth of the doctrine of original sin, which would be rejected by Jews and Muslims.[140] Thus, his argument cannot be directed toward nor meant to be convincing to those outside the church. However, it seems clear that for Anselm these assumptions are basic and must be accepted by a rational and consistent interlocutor who is not simply, as Gaunilo was, holding a position for the sake of argument. For while these premises are not unobjectionable, Anselm seems to put them forward as rational assumptions about God (God would never do anything contrary to his nature) and the human condition (that human beings desire a happiness they seem unable to achieve or deserve on their own). Rejecting the former leaves one with an incoherent notion of God, and rejecting the latter, while not inconsistent with human nature per se, is to

136. CDH I, 10, S II, 67, 1–4.
137. CDH I, 10, S II, 67, 13–15.
138. CDH I, 10, S II, 67, 18–19.
139. CDH I, 10, S II, 12–13.
140. Abulafia, "St Anselm," 131–48. Cf. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 177, on whether that "no one can pass this life without sin" is known from experience rather than an explicit statement of original sin. Karl Barth argues that these premises, like that God is the being greater than which none can be conceived in the *Proslogion*, are specifically Christian principles that Anselm assumes in order to prove a different Christian principle. Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, translated by Ian W. Robertson (London: SCM Press, 1960), 55–59.

deny the most basic facts of human experience. It is, Anselm thinks, the most reasonable way of describing humanity's predicament, one worthy of being taken as their starting point because more consistent with rather than contrary to what we know about human being.

Anselm lays out here the basic parameters in which reason will work. On the one hand, he takes resources away from reason, in setting up the discussion as taking place *remoto Christo*. On the other hand, he gives to reason some basic principles about human and divine being. Their shared assumptions are that God cannot act in an unfitting way and does act in accord with reason, and that human being desires but can neither achieve nor deserve happiness. This kind of faith in reason's conclusions as not just probable but necessary and in what is unfitting as impossible prompts some to ask whether Anselm is imposing necessity on God's actions by moving from what is fitting to what God is obligated to do.[141] As we shall see, Anselm is sensitive to the problem of impinging on God's freedom by concluding that the very elements of soteriology he is trying to understand are necessary.[142] Moreover, he also distinguishes carefully between arguments which conclude that something is "fitting" as opposed to necessary for God to do. Later in book II, Anselm argues that it is *necessary* that the one to restore human nature must be derived from Adam (because the contrary is unfitting to God) but that is it *fitting* that God create this human being from a woman without a man; in *De conceptu* Anselm argues explicitly that it is fitting but not necessary that God be conceived from a just virgin.[143]

While we shall return below to the question of how Anselm's conclusions can be necessary without imposing necessity on God, what is important to note here is that Anselm's faith in reason is extraordinary. His faith is in deductive reason (which yields necessary conclusions), we can see, because what Anselm means by something following from reason is that an impossible or absurd conclusion follows from a contrary assumption. The necessity is in our understanding the logic of divine action not

141. Anselm does not, as some accuse him, argue from *decet* to *debet*. Rather he argues that something *un*fitting for God is *impossible*. He does not say that what is fitting or even *more* fitting than an alternative is necessary. What he agrees with Boso on is that whatever is "in any small way *reasonable* (*quamlibet parvam rationem*)" and not opposed by something more reasonable is to be taken as necessary (CDH I, 10, S II, 67, 4–6). "Reasonable" is not defined, but it is distinguished from what is fitting. What Anselm seems to mean is that something is a conclusion of reason in the sense of necessary if its contrary is impossible or absurd. See, for example, CDH II, 9, S II, 105, 26–106, 4; DCV 17, S II, 159, 6–9.

142. See, for example, CDH II, 5, S II, 99–100 and 10, S II, 106–8. For my discussion of these passages, see 293–98.

143. See, for example, CDH II, 8, 102–4; DCV 18, S II, 159, 11–16.

in necessity as imposed on that action. Faith seeking understanding is for Anselm the seeking of those necessary conclusions, the kind of conclusion Anselm equates with what is rational.

The Argument of Book I

Arguing from these principles about God and human being, the two establish that sin dishonors God (though without injuring God) because it mars the order and beauty of the universe.[144] Thus human beings owe God something to make up for this dishonor, but it is a debt they are unable to pay. This aspect of the argument has come in for the most criticism, notably by Abelard in the Middle Ages and by any number of modern theologians. Modern commentators have argued that Anselm's assertion that there is a debt that must be paid to repair God's honor attributes to God the attitude of a feudal lord, not that of the supreme good.[145] Moreover, they have criticized the apparent valorization of violence in such an account, describing God the Father as sadist for demanding and Christ the Son as masochist for acceding to the demand for suffering and death.[146]

Anselm has been defended against theses charge by a number of scholars attempting to re-interpret the work in historical context.[147] Southern argues that since in the eleventh-century world of Anselm "honor is a social bond which held all ranks of society in their due place," God's honor "is simply another word for the ordering of the universe in its due relationship to God;" it is "the complex of service and worship which the whole creation . . . owes to the Creator and which preserves everything in its due place."[148] Another kind of defense sees in Anselm's appeal to order the qua-

144. CDH, I, 15, S II, 73.

145. The list of those accusing Anselm of feudalism is long and distinguished. The classic formulation of this view is that of Gustaf Aulén, in *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, translated by A. G. Herbert (New York: Macmillan, 1966). See also P. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1989), 97; P. McKenzie, *The Christians* (London: SPCK, 1988), 270; G. Daley, *Creation and Redemption* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1988), 190. For these references I am indebted to Richard Campbell, "The Conceptual Roots of Anselm's Soteriology," in *Anselm, Aosta, Bec and Canterbury. Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop, 25 September 1093*, edited by David E. Luscombe and Gillian R. Evans (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 256–58.

146. Such critiques are compellingly laid out by S. Mark Heim, *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006); and J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2001). See also the sources named in Lisa Sowle Cahill, "*Quaestio Disputata* The Atonement Paradigm: Does it still have Explanatory Value?" *Theological Studies* 68 (2007): 419–20.

147. See J. McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Re-interpretation of the 'Cur Deus Homo'* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1954).

148. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 226. Robert Crouse argues that Anselm's notion of

si-Aristotelian notion that "everything is created with a proper function to fulfill ."[149] It is of course more the case that feudalism is an outgrowth and interpretation of this notion of things having natures and functions than vice versa. If God simply forgives transgression, then creatures have rejected their proper function in the universe, rejected their nature as created. Such a solution lacks perfect order and justice. Thus, God is not the easily insulted lord who demands subservience but rather a creator who cannot without contradiction act with less than perfect justice, cannot put aside the order and function of that which he has created. In a recent presentation, Marilyn Adams argued that God's design is to make human beings as his creatures successful, not just to forgive or punish but to restore human nature to its state of dignity; there is, as she puts it, "a divine determination to make something of us."[150] Anselm makes this point quite clear toward the beginning of book II, crystallizing the conclusions of book I: "it is necessary that [God] perfect what he began with human nature."[151]

Lisa Cahill cites the work of Jürgen Moltmann in support of Anselm. Moltmann defended the notion of Christ's life and death as atonement for guilt because "the guilty who recognize their guilt cannot live for they have lost all their self respect." Thus, he argues, we require some kind of expiation to "deliver us from the guilt that weighs us down and robs us of every kind of future."[152] Moreover, as Cahill points out, "Anselm does not see the cross or suffering as the main point of the incarnation, much less as necessary to mollify an angry, unforgiving or violent God."[153] In book I the topic is the Incarnation, why God became man, not why the God-man suffered and died. Anselm does turn to this subject in the second book, along with an attempt to understand the "fittingness" of Christ's being born of Mary, being free from original sin, and so forth, but the goal in these conversations, as well shall see, is to make sense of the suffering and death as consistent with the divine nature and will.

In book I the task is to come to see the need, indeed the *necessity* of the

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justice in the work is not derived from the feudal justice system of his day but is rather based on Augustine's notion of justice, "that rectitude of order which is the Will of God." Robert Crouse, "The Augustinian Background of St. Anselm's Concept of *Justicia*," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 4, no. 2 (1958): 111–19. Campbell makes a strong defense in his "The Conceptual Roots of Anselm's Soteriology," 256–63.

149. Campbell, "Soteriology," 258.

150. Marilyn Adams, "St. Anselm on the Goodness of God," as yet unpublished paper delivered at *Saint Anselm of Canterbury and His Legacy, An International Conference to Commemorate the 900th Anniversary of the Death of Saint Anselm of Canterbury, University of Kent, at Canterbury, 22–25 April, 2009*.

151. CDH II, 4, S II, 99.

152. Cahill, "*Quaestio Disputata*," 423, citing Jürgen Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today's World*, translated by Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 2–3.

153. Cahill, "*Quaestio Disputata*," 423.

Incarnation. For if on one level, for Anselm what is necessary is the conclusion of a sound deductive argument, it is also the case that necessity can be glossed as *need:* what human being must have on pain of moral and spiritual annihilation. Anselm's goal is to describe the problem for which the Incarnation is the only solution. First he must show that some way of returning to justice and order, some payment of the debt, some regaining of the dignity of human nature is necessary to save human nature. Both divine justice and mercy make it impossible for God to give up on his creation, Anselm argues; he must in justice find a path for the expiation of guilt, and must in perfect mercy make salvation available to sinful man.

This combination of premises creates an insuperable problem. Anselm puts it this way to Boso: "Can you think that man, who has sinned at some time, and never made satisfaction to God for his sin, but rather has been released unpunished, is the equal of an angel who has never sinned?"[154] Boso replies, "these words I can say and understand [*cogitare*], but I cannot understand [*cogitare*] their meaning [*sensum*] just as I cannot understand [*intelligere*] falsity to be true."[155] This is, of course, the status Anselm assigns to the fool's denial of both his notion of of God and of God's existence. Both can be said and the words can be understood, but they cannot be meaningfully connected in a consistent way to the logical structure of things. That is, it is not just that these claims are false but that they could not possibly be true.

This impasse precipitates the great intellectual and existential crisis of the dialogue. For without satisfaction for sin, there can be no human happiness; and, they have come to realize, humans are incapable of offering that satisfaction. Boso struggles to maintain that his own acts of penance, contrition, sacrifice, abstinence, and obedience can in some way honor God. Boso thinks of these acts as the *giving up* of certain goods in payment for sin: "Do I not honor God," he asks, "when, on account of fear of him and love, in contrition of heart I abandon temporal joy, and spurn, in abstinence and labors, the delights and ease of this life, giving away and distributing my abundance, and in obedience submit to him?"[156] Anselm does not claim that Boso cannot give these things up because of his sinfulness but recasts them as acts of desire, undertaken for their pleasure and done in great joy: "For in this mortal state, there should be such love and such desire to attain that for which you were

154. CDH I, 19, S II, 84, 17–19. Cf. Augustine, *De Trinitate* XIII, 13, 17–14, 18. Anselm like Augustine argues that the Incarnation is a result of original sin, but he rejects the notion that salvation must occur through the Incarnation because of the rights of the devil.

155. CDH I, 19, S II, 84, 20–21.

156. CDH I, 20, S II, 86, 28–87, 2.

made, which is the meaning of prayer, and such sorrow that you are not there yet, and such fear that you might fail to obtain it, that you ought to find joy in nothing unless it helps or gives you hope of attaining it."[157] Thus Boso realizes that if he owes all this and his very being to God in justice (that is, they are what God deserves because of his nature) and would even without a debt offer them to God out of love and desire, there is nothing over and above these to give in payment for sin. Anselm then asks, "What will happen to you? How will you be saved?" To which Boso replies, "If I consider your reasons, I do not see how. If, however, I hasten back to my faith: through Christian faith 'which works by love' I hope I can be saved."[158] Anselm reminds him that he may not make appeal to his faith since they have "set aside Christ and Christian faith as if they did not exist."[159] Though he has been led into straits (*angustias*), Boso agrees to continue without recourse to faith but to proceed by reason.[160]

Boso is ready to concede, but Anselm keeps him from doing so for four more chapters. The postponement is excruciating. In chapter 22, Boso describes himself as in despair without the consolation of faith;[161] in chapter 23, as Anselm prepares to make the situation yet more difficult, he protests that he could not be more frightened no matter what else is added on;[162] and in 24, Boso concludes that divine mercy and human hope have perished.[163] Anselm still puts him off one more time: "wait a little longer," he instructs.[164] Not only, Anselm continues, must man without Christ find some way to honor God, he must also in all his weakness overcome the devil in order to make up for having dishonored God by yielding to the devil. Anselm makes the condition of human life without Christ yet more vivid by describing it in parable. It is as if, he explains, a servant who was assigned a task and told not to throw himself in a ditch from which he could not extricate himself has thrown himself into that very ditch.[165] Anselm asks, "will his inability be valid as an excuse for not doing his appointed work?"[166] Of course not, Anselm exclaims, for the inability to pay the debt, far from being an excuse, is itself guilt: "the effect of sin does not excuse the sin that was done."[167] Being an orphan, in other words, is no grounds for mercy on the charge of killing one's parents.

Anselm has, just as he did in his earlier works, set up an apparently irresolvable problem. In rejecting the view based on the right of the

157. CDH I, 20, S II, 87, 5–8.
158. CDH I, 20, S II, 87, 29–88, 1.
159. CDH I, 20, S II, 88, 4–5.
160. CDH I, 20, S II, 88, 8–10.
161. CDH I, 22, S II, 90.
162. CDH I, 23, S II, 91.
163. CDH I, 23, S II, 91.
164. CDH I, 24, S II, 92, 2.
165. CDH I, 24, S II, 92, 16–17.
166. CDH I 24, S II, 92.
167. CDH I, 24, S II, 92, 32–93, 2.

devil, Anselm makes the problem of the incarnation even *harder* to solve than it was on the reigning contemporary view. Anselm rejects this view because he takes it to diminish divine power, by making the devil somehow equal to God, wrestling for humanity. Without the devil, everything, all the power and the credit, is on God's side, and nothing remains on the human side that can be given. Given, as Southern puts it, "only a debtor who cannot pay, and a creditor who cannot be paid, common sense and logic equally suggest that the creditor must forever forgo his payment." The result, Southern continues, is "man and God facing each other with no go-between to bridge the gap.[168]

This, as we saw, is exactly the way Anselm construes the human condition in his prayers. As in the prayers, this realization within the dialogue is the low point, the point of Boso's absolute despair. However, it is also the moment of resolution of book I because it brings Boso to an understanding of the true human condition. For with the realization comes the conclusion that absent Christ, there is no means of achieving human happiness. Anselm describes the dilemma thusly: "Either [we must] find a satisfaction for sin outside the Christian faith, which we have shown above to be necessary, which no reason can show, or else [we must] believe indubitably in this [Christian faith]."[169] Thus, as in the *Monologion*, the moment of inextricable paradox is at the very same time, though from a slightly more advanced perspective, the moment of insight into the necessity of that which seemed impossible. Here it is the incoherence of the *absence* of the Incarnation that moves Boso to conclude its necessity. As with the *Proslogion*'s proof, Anselm attempts to bring his reader to understand that it is impossible to give up as much as one must to hold the contrary position. For the only way of accommodating the claim that the Incarnation is not necessary is either to hold an inconsistent position or to give up the principles Boso conceded were incontestable: first, that the end of human beings is happiness, which they cannot achieve for themselves and cannot remain deserving of because not free from sin, and, second, that God must have attributes consistent with the perfection of the divine nature. To reject these principles is to reject the notion of a God who deserves the name and of the most universally available evidence about human nature. To give up the conclusion that follows from these principles, the necessity of the Incarnation, is to place oneself in a universe that makes no sense and in which the position of human beings is, as it was for Camus, absurd. In the same way, Anselm argued in re-

168. Southern, *Portrait in a Landscape*, 209–10.
169. CDH I, 25, S II, 95, 29–96, 2.

sponse to Gaunilo that to reject his argument for God's existence was to reject the intelligibility of language and the world in general.

Book II: Deriving the Fittingness of the Things of Faith

Boso now asks for what book II will consider (the argument Anselm was so disturbed to see the book circulate without), not just the necessity but the fittingness of the Christian solution. Anselm must show, in other words, that just as Eve was for Adam not just, as the saying goes, the only but also the most beautiful woman, so Christianity is not just the only but also the best solution for human kind. In this shorter, second half of the work Boso becomes a more traditional dialogue partner, whose contribution consists mostly in affirming his teacher's conclusions and posing occasional questions. He has reached this stage, however, having overcome his sense of the incoherence of the Incarnation by means of the arguments they went through in book I. Boso, less combative as book I closes than at its opening, explains that he did not engage in this discussion to have his doubts removed but to find the reasons for his confident belief.[170]

Boso's early criticism of arguments based on fittingness as "insubstantial paintings on clouds" returns as Anselm attempts to argue for the fittingness of Christ's being born of Mary. [171] Anselm argues that of the four possibilities for creating human beings, from man and woman, from neither man nor woman (as Adam was created), from man alone (as Eve was created), or from woman alone, only the last was untried. God uses this method in order to show that this possibility, like the others, lies in his power.[172] Anselm then asks Boso about his arguments showing the fittingness that Christ was born of woman alone rather than any other possibility, "Does what we have said appear solidly established, or is it groundless as a cloud?" With Boso's approval for this argument, Anselm continues in what both agree is "painting on solid truth."[173]

Note that Anselm is here making a subtle distinction between what has been *established* as solid truth rather than painting on clouds (the conclusions of book one), and what he is doing here, which is *painting* but not on clouds (as Boso accused him of doing at the start of book I) but on "solid truth." That is the difference between necessary arguments and those showing "fittingness" and, thus, between the character of the arguments of books I and II.[174]

170. CDH I, 25, S II, 96, 6–7.
171. CDH I, 4, S II, 51, 21–52, 3.
172. CDH II, 8, S II, 104, 3–11.
173. CDH II, 8, S II, 104, 13–17.
174. Anselm does claim that some of his conclusions in book II are necessary and not just fitting. See, for example, CDH II, 16, S II, 119. See also CDH II, 9, S II, 105–6. The argument in the latter passage is that the Word, the second person of the Trinity, must be the one that becomes

A shadow of Boso's former, more questioning side remains. Anselm tries to put off Boso's question about how God made a man without sin from the sinful substance of the human species. (Anselm has already argued that God has to create the savior from the same race as Adam, rather than from some new humanity, else that savior would not be able to redeem Adam's line because outside of it.) Anselm counsels that if we cannot understand it, we should "with reverence allow a thing of so great a magnitude to remain hidden."[175] Boso still, though perhaps less aggressively than in book I, goads Anselm on. "For," he argues, "you will better persuade me that higher [*altior*] reasons are hidden in this matter, if you show some that you perceive, than if, by saying nothing, you make it appear that you do not understand any reason."[176] A bit later Boso reminds Anselm even more gently of the stipulations that opened their discussion to explain "not as to the learned, but to me and my fellow inquirers."[177] So Boso requests that Anselm please go on and settle "all our puerile doubts."[178] Anselm takes up that challenge in response to Boso's continued prompting, offering explanations for all the basic elements of orthodox Christology.

The claim Anselm must defend is that salvation cannot happen through the God-man unless "the same one is perfect human being and perfect God."[179] This Christology creates problem after problem, as the God-man must retain characteristics of both God and man in order to be appropriate as redeemer and able to offer satisfaction. He must, for example, be taken from the sinful human species without himself being sinful. "How," Anselm asks, "from a sinful mass, that is the human species, the whole of which was infected with sin, does God take a man without sin like an unleavened lump from a leavened one?"[180]

More contradictions follow from the combination of divinity and humanity, a number having to do with the coexistence of necessity and freedom. Boso objects first that God is compelled to become incarnate in order to avoid doing something inappropriate or less than perfectly. Anselm explains that there are two kinds of necessity, depending on whether one willingly or unwillingly is placed or places oneself under some obligation.[181] God only acts from necessity in the sense that he maintains his "immutable honor" which, Anselm argues, is not "prop-

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incarnate; it is a mix of some necessary arguments (where neither the Father nor the Spirit separately or together can become incarnate because this would produce absurd consequences) and of arguments from fittingness (that it is more fitting that the Son become incarnate because it is more fitting for the Son to supplicate the Father).

175. CDH II, 16, S II, 117, 5–6.
176. CDH II, 16, S II, 117, 20–22.
177. CDH I, 2, S II, 49, 25–26.
178. CDH II, 16, S II, 122, 20–21.
179. CDH II, 7, S II, 102, 21.
180. CDH II, 16, S II, 116, 18–20.
181. CDH II, 5, S II, 99–100.
182. CDH II, 5, S II, 100, 24–28.

erly" called necessity.[182] The same problem returns in slightly different form concerning the requirement that the God-man cannot sin. Boso objects that it must be true that Christ could have said words that would have been a lie. Anselm replies with some fairly sophisticated verbal distinctions, defending the apparent contradiction that it is both true that Christ could say the words that would be a lie and that he cannot lie. First, he explains, we can say that God can lie in the sense that he could if he wished.[183] But, Boso objects, that means he is necessarily just and not so freely.[184] Echoing the complex distinctions of the *Lambeth Fragments* and *De casu*, Anselm explains that one is said to give what one does not take away when one could, and one is said to do something when one does nothing to prevent something though one could. Thus, the angels give themselves virtue, or have it of themselves, by not forsaking their goodness when they could; they are virtuous because they did not give up their virtue, not because they could sin. God has virtue of himself.[185]

In what sense, then, Boso asks, is it necessary that the God-man die? Anselm repeats the distinction between the power of doing something and the power of wishing to do something, arguing that Christ could have preserved his life but could not, given his nature, wish to.[186] But this only moves the problem down the line, for while it might not be necessary that Christ die, it would seem to be necessary that Christ *wish* to die.

Anselm resolves the contradiction but only at the price of fairly radically redefining inability. For, he explains, "that he cannot not die is nothing other than that by his immutable will he willed to die."[187] Anselm explains, ability is "often said in the usual mode of speaking [*usitata est huiusmodi multum locutio*]" of something when the ability is in something else, as when we say 'this man can be defeated' for 'someone can defeat him.'"[188] A similar distinction and redefinition is necessary for the notion of obligation. When we say, for example, that the poor ought to receive alms, this means that the rich ought to give them.[189] Also, Anselm continues, when anyone, divine or human "wants to do that which is his to do or not to do, we say that he ought to do it since that which he wishes ought to be."[190] Applying these distinctions to God, Boso concludes: "I see that it is not reasonable that [Christ] lets himself die because he ought to [*ex debito*], for the honor of God, and nonetheless that he ought [*debuit*] to have done what he did."[191]

183. CDH II, 10, S II, 107, 1–7.
184. CDH II, 10, S II, 107.
185. CDH II, 10, S II, 107, 27–108, 6.
186. CDH II, 16, S II, 120, 21–26.
187. CDH II, 16, S II, 122, 10–13.
188. CDH II, 17, S II, 123, 15–20.
189. CDH II, 18, S II, 128, 30–32.
190. CDH II, 18, S II, 129, 3–5.
191. CDH II, 18, S II, 129, 14–16.

With this Anselm comes perilously close to contradiction. He diffuses contradiction only by redefining the terms almost beyond recognition. These verbally complex and sophisticated strategies rest on the notion of freedom as that which one has or does per se. This is, of course, the main thesis of Anselm's account of freedom for finite beings, angels and human beings, in *De libertate* and *De casu*. Anselm took care in those dialogues not to define freedom as the ability to sin or, more generally, to choose between alternatives. He extends this notion to God's freedom, where it applies more completely and simply. God has everything from himself, Anselm notes, and acts not from necessity but from his "eternal immutability."[192] When God acts to maintain his honor (*honestatis*), the necessity is "nothing other than the immutability of his honor."[193] Though he does not make it explicit in *De libertate* and *De casu*, he is moved to see freedom in terms other than as a choice between alternatives partly because of the need to safeguard a coherent notion of divine freedom that would not require that God be able to sin or choose wrongly. Anselm, though he recognizes the problem it creates for divine freedom, focuses on the perfection of the divine nature, rejecting the notion that freedom requires the possibility that God do otherwise than he has or should do. In this sense Anselm is clearly more rationalist than voluntarist, but his openness to raising difficult questions allows him to have Boso voice the concerns being debated by dialecticians like Peter Damian and others about possible constraints on divine power.[194]

Peter Damian asked whether God can restore virginity to one who has lost it and more broadly whether God can change the past. A negative answer seems to lead, Damian points out, to the conclusion that God cannot do anything other than he has done, while a positive answer seems to commit God to contravening the principle of noncontradiction. Though some of the arguments Damian makes seem similar to those Anselm uses (Damian's work was composed in 1065, and *Cur Deus homo* completed in 1098),[195] Anselm, one could argue, succeeds in achieving Damian's

192. CDH II, 10, S II, 108, 7–8.

193. CDH II, 5, S II, 100, 24–25.

194. Pierre Damien, *Lettre sur la toute-puissance divine*, edited and translated by A. Cantin, Sources chrétiennes 191 (Paris: Cerf, 1972). Cantin's edition gives the pagination to follow the old Patrologiae latina edition, PL 145. See also Toivo Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 6–43; "Peter Damian," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (*Winter 2008 Edition*), edited by Edward N. Zalta, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2008/entries/peter-damian/; and Simo Knuttila, "Anselm on Modality," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Davies and Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 111–31.

195. Damian, like Anselm, knows and refers to the problem of future contingents in Aristotle;

objectives better than Damian. Damian was concerned to preserve divine omnipotence and also to curb what he saw as dialecticians' impious excess in taking up as mere logical conundrums questions about what God can and cannot do. Though the question of whether God can restore a virgin originated in Jerome, Damian complained that it had been taken up in frivolous ways by dialecticians and wishes to put a stop to such pointless questions, which serve more to show one's cleverness than to bring real understanding.[196]

Anselm considers the question of the necessity of God's actions and the nature of divine freedom and power substantively and in a way that flows naturally from questions believers should be considering as serious and central matters of their faith. Moreover, Anselm takes up the real core of the issue, the metaphysics of God's will and power, before moving to the kind of puzzle created by God's relationship to time that so fascinated dialecticians. In his reply, Anselm articulates a version of Boethius's distinction between antecedent and subsequent necessity in discussing how the pure faith of the virgin in Jesus' death does not (even though it preceded it) necessitate Jesus' dying. Anselm argues that no necessity precedes Jesus' willing to die, but of his death one can say that because it did or was going to occur that it was necessary in a different sense, a kind of necessity which in no way causes his death.[197] Only in the context of this particular temporal problem does Anselm mention Aristotle's *Peri hermenieas* discussion of future contingents.[198] Moreover, Damian attempted to make an argument based on complex verbal distinctions having to do with the lack of past or future in divine eternity that seem only to have confused matters to the point that his fame rests largely on the infamous claim that God can contravene the principle of non-contradiction and undo the past (even though he does not actually seem to have held this view).[199] In seeking to quell controversy and put

he also relies heavily on the notion of God's eternity in relation to which our tensed verbs do not exactly apply, as well as argues that God's will, because so completely efficacious imposes necessity rather than has necessity imposed on it. Damien, *Lettre sur la toute-puissance (De divina omnipotentia)*, 607A–B; 608D–610B. Holopainen holds the view that though Anselm could have known Damian's work directly, it is more likely that they "were drawing on the same tradition of dialectical discussion" and had both received similar background on the topic from the town-schools of Italy they both attended. See Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 29.

196. See Damien, *Lettre sur la toute-puissance* (*De divina omnipotentia*), 602D–604B; 611D–612A. Cf. Holopainen, "Peter Damian."

197. CDH II, 17, S II, 125, 3–31.

198. See Boethius, *Consolatio philosophiae*, in *Boethius: The Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, translated by H. F. Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library 74 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), Bk. V, pr. 6, 428–31.

199. For the debate over the interpretation of Damian's views, see Holopainen, "Peter Damian." The view that Damian rejected the universal applicability of the principle of noncontradiction

an end to contentious and purely academic, dialectical debate, Damian seems only to have stirred it up. But Anselm's verbally sophisticated arguments are clearly more successful per se and in their reception.

The paradox of finite freedom, we saw in the dialogues, is that it is action that is per se in those who have received everything. The paradox of divine freedom is that divine action is free yet necessary. Anselm moves to support both halves of the paradox, both God's freedom and God's perfection, just as he insists on the impenetrability of the ways of God and the quest for understanding, that is, necessary reasons, for God's actions. As we saw in *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, Anselm did not qualify divine attributes when they posed a problem in themselves or in conjunction with others for God's perfection, but rather argued that those perfections are intensified in God. Thus the paradoxes posed by power, justice, mercy, and so on were surmounted by the very perfect and unlimited character of the divine. In the same way, Anselm manages to hold the extremes of freedom and perfection simultaneously by leaning into rather than backing away from either freedom or necessity in God. There is necessity but the necessity is a result rather than a cause of God's will, Anselm argues. That God is not able to do something (lie or change) means that he acts by his "insuperable power (*potentia*) and strength (*fortitudo*)," which in turn means not that he is unable but that "there is necessity in all others things prohibiting them from making and binding them from not making anything which is against what God says."[200] When we say of Jesus Christ that he cannot not die, Anselm explains, "we do not signify in him any inability to keep or to keep willing his immortal life, but the immutability of his will (*immutabilitas voluntatis*), by which he freely (*sponte*) became man so that persevering in his same will he might die, and [we signify] that nothing can change this will."[201]

These terribly precise formulations make clear that Anselm is not willing either to compromise divine freedom to accommodate divine perfection or vice versa. He very carefully does not say that God must act as he acts because of his own nature. One could argue that such a move would be a way of freeing God from any necessity because his will would not be compelled by anything outside of his nature. Anselm seems to

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was expressed by J. A. Endres, in "Die Dialektiker und ihre Gegner im 11. Jahrhundert," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 19 (1906): 20–33; and *Petrus Damiani und die weltliche Wissenschaft. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* 8.3 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1910). Modern scholars disagree, though in different ways, with Endres's view. See, for example, Irven M. Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility in St. Peter Damian's De divina omnipotentia* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); and Simo Knuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

200. CDH II, 17, S II, 123, 27–30.

201. CDH II, 17, S II, 124, 5–9.

recognize but avoid taking this position by having Boso express it. Boso floats the notion that God could no more avoid dying than he could stop being "who he was." Anselm replies carefully; God's nature does not necessitate his willing but his will as immutable results in what is "improperly" called necessity.[202] In this way there is no limit on God's will by his own nature or, *a fortiori*, by any other nature. Rather the divine will itself, its complete and insuperable power over itself, grounds both the coherence and the freedom of what God wills.

What is too often overlooked is that Anselm goes further than addressing the metaphysical problem about divine freedom. He takes up the *way* in which Christ's suffering and death works toward salvation with more subtlety than critics have claimed. Notably, Anselm's chapter title on this topic is not about the *death* of Christ but about the *life* of Christ as "released to" or "paid back" (*solvatur*) to God.[203] When Boso poses the question in terms of some honor given to God by the Son, Anselm answers in the language of *De libertate* and *De casu*: that of keeping righteousness. The Son endures suffering not for its own sake but to keep righteousness as "an example given to men, that on account of whatever disadvantages (*incommoda*) [they might suffer], they might not turn away from the justice they owe to God."[204] The language of justice vs. advantage from *De casu* returns both to explain that the passion is for the sake of keeping righteousness even when it conflicts with advantage (and so not as a valorization of violence as necessary or desirable) and to make the Son's act the doing of exactly what was not done in the fall: the keeping of righteousness for its own sake. Christ undoes the sin of Adam by succeeding where Adam failed. The difference is that unlike in the case of Adam, or even John the Baptist, Christ did not *as God* owe his life to God, did not receive it as creatures receive it but had it from himself.[205] Thus Anselm concludes, the Son does not "owe" his suffering and death to God but gives it freely from righteousness, and that, moreover, he "offers himself to himself."[206] Thus Anselm carefully opens and closes the gap between the Father and Son, pointing out, on the one hand, that the

202. CDH II, 16, S II, 120, 30–31; 122, 1–2; 122, 10–13.

203. CDH *Capitula*, S II, 46.

204. CDH II, 18, S II, 127, 12–21.

205. CDH II, 18, S II, 129, 5–25.

206. CDH II, 18, S II, 129, 17–18. In this way, Anselm can be defended against the criticism, voiced even by Cahill, who otherwise defends Anselm, that Anselm "sets up too great a contrast between the roles or perspectives of the Father and Son, so that Jesus Christ seems to supply something that God demands." It is clear, too, that the Son's act is not "obedience" in the sense of submitting to "an external authority" but both a commitment to justice and to and from God himself for Anselm. Cf. Cahill, "*Quaestio Disputata*," 423–24.

Son "offers himself to himself" but that, on the other hand, we customarily and fittingly express this as the Son offering himself to the Father. The latter formulation, Anselm explains, brings listeners to "feel immense piety," presumably because of the way in which it brings out the price paid, that the Son gives up something, freely endures a loss, in order to keep justice, which restores justice for human beings.

When we look at all the questions taken up in book II we begin to see the enormity of the task Anselm has taken on. He attempts not just to show the necessity of the Incarnation in a general way, but to derive the details of the Incarnation as presented in scripture, Christ's virgin birth and death, as well as a fairly complete Christology, working out the status of Christ's knowledge, vulnerability, and will. In an important way—though not in quite the way Southern argued—*Cur Deus homo* does represent a transition in Anselm's work. Book I gives us an argument structured much like the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, beginning from what looks like the irrationality of belief in the Incarnation, progressing to the incoherence of the absence of the Incarnation, which then becomes the grounds of its necessity. Book II, on the other hand, works out the particular conditions of the Incarnation. Doing so requires more and more complex verbal distinctions to hold off contradiction, contradiction created by the perfect though paradoxical solution of the God-man. In its method of argument, book II resembles most *De casu diaboli*; like *De casu* it is full of the kind of distinctions Anselm laid out in the *Lambeth Fragments*. These kinds of distinctions, which are used in *De casu* to make sense of the metaphysical complexity and incompleteness of creaturely being, come to be used here because its topic is not just the complexity of creaturehood, the humanity of Christ, but the complexity of creaturehood joined to the simplicity of the divine. The distinctions Anselm devises are in the service of the more general paradox that the God-man both has what he has from himself (since he is God) and has everything from God (since he is man to whom God gives whatever he has).[207] Thus Anselm's problems are further compounded because he must move between two different metaphysics joined in the God-man. The task is the separation and then careful rejoining of the strands of creaturely and divine being such that Anselm can conclude,

> To this end, that the work of restoration of man might be accomplished, the diversity of natures and unity of persons served, so if the human nature could not do it, the divine nature would do it, and if it was unfitting for the divine nature, the human nature would do it, and not as different from

207. CDH II, 10, S II, 108, 11–12.

> each other but the same person in which both [natures] existed perfectly, through the human nature would pay what was owed and through the divine nature would be able to do what was expedient.[208]

Throughout most of book II, Boso declares himself more than satisfied with Anselm's arguments, arguments whose goal is the development of a coherent set of terms and distinctions making it possible to think the Incarnation. The reasons beings offered come closest to matching Boso's desire when Anselm finally says he will try to show "how human salvation follows from [the Incarnation]."[209] This is the last link in the chain of argument. They have moved from the proof that human salvation is impossible without the Incarnation in book I, to attempting to show positively how salvation takes place through the Incarnation. "This," Boso exclaims, "is what my heart desires. For although I seem to understand, yet I wish to get from you the interwoven connections (*contextionem*) of the argument."[210] Like Anselm on the brink of the name of God that gives him the *Proslogion* proof for God's existence, Boso wishes for that crucial and unbreakable link between God and humanity, and between divine acts and human understanding. When Anselm does his best to offer it, Boso exclaims, "nothing more reasonable, more sweet, more desirable can the world hear. And I take such confidence from this that I cannot say how much I rejoice and my heart exults."[211]

Thus, as book II closes, Boso reaches the opposite end of the intellectual and emotional spectrum from that in which he ended book I. Book I ended in deep despair of both understanding and salvation, while book II approaches ecstatic understanding. Together Boso and Anselm experience both the exhilaration at the project of reconciling human reasons with the deepest mysteries of faith, and the despair when those reasons seem to lead them to the impossibility of that reconciliation.

There is a kind of bipolarity in *Cur Deus homo* we have also seen in other works, especially the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*; Anselm alternates between extreme under- and over-confidence in its arguments, a wavering reflected in Boso's alternation between demanding and docile questions. Anselm either promises certain and necessary arguments, like those in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, or worries (or have Boso express worry) that he cannot even approach the subject of the Incarnation. The alternatives seem mutually exclusive: either his words capture these lofty things as they are, or all he can offer is figments, paintings on clouds, words that float free unconnected to things. Anselm does not move from these ex-

208. CDH II, 17, S II, 124, 20–24.
209. CDH II, 19, S II, 129, 29–30.
210. CDH II, 19, S II, 130, 1–2.
211. CDH II, 19, S II, 131, 3–5.

tremes to a middle position; rather, he continues to reach for the one extreme, alternately conceding or worrying that if he falls short in any measure, he lands at the other extreme.

Like the *Proslogion*, this text is not unambiguous in its triumph. The first hint that there will be a less than perfectly happy ending is Anselm's repeated protestation that they have not nearly exhausted even the reasons Anselm might be capable of, no less those which are beyond Anselm and human beings in general. Boso asserts to the end his right to collect these reasons that are "owed" him at some future date, but Anselm, noting "the uncertainty of the future," neither promises nor refuses.[212] The discussion goes on, the matter to be discussed always exceeding the time and capacities of those who, like Boso and Anselm, come together in good will and faith to discuss in terms of reasons. Thus the desire for understanding, the desire to dwell in the presence of the truths believed by faith, is never quite satisfied.

There is a deep sense the *Cur Deus homo* is thematically central to Anselm's work as a whole. God become human is, for Anselm, a kind of middle term, identical with God and human being. In the Incarnation, the two extremes are brought together without remainder. The Incarnation, as Anselm construes it, is, on the one hand, the necessary and only solution for the human predicament, and, on the other hand, the most thoroughly unlikely, impossible event, contradicting not just the nature of human being but the nature of God. Thus all Anselm's arguments in which paradoxes are shown to be necessary and vice versa mirror the sense in which the Incarnation is both a resolution and a problem. Here as elsewhere, Anselm presents arguments so that they are a hair's breadth from paradox or, in this case, from failure. It is not so much that *Cur Deus homo* repeats and imitates the argument structure of the earlier works, but rather that they imitate the structure of the Incarnation as Anselm understands it and articulates it in *Cur Deus homo*.

The conceit of the work is that the attempt to answer the most penetrating objections reason can muster will lead to exactly the same place the prayers did: the Incarnation as the only solution for the human predicament. That necessity, both rational and existential, is derived from the notions of debt accrued (by human being) and payment required (by God) and payable only by the God-man. This construction of the situation, many point out, leads to a distorted emphasis on Christ's death. It is worth remembering, however, that Anselm does not begin from this as a premise but that it results from his method as well as the assumption

212. CDH II, 17, S II, 126, 17–18.

about the divine nature from which he begins. Anselm is moved to think about Christ's death not as the point of his life but as that in the Christian account of the Incarnation most difficult for human understanding to grasp. It is his very focus on answering every possible objection to the Incarnation that leads him to ask why God had to die, had to allow the sacrifice of his Son, clearly the most impenetrable surd within that story. In that sense, it is Anselm's commitment to the discovery of necessary reasons that leads him to focus on the cross. Anselm also, as was noted above, exacerbates the problem because of his evacuation of the notion of the rights of the devil. God and only God has control of a situation in which He/his Son is tortured and killed. The commitment to God as "that than which none greater can be conceived" only increases the incomprehensibility of the Incarnation and the crucifixion. Lastly, if the God of the *Proslogion* forms one prong of the dilemma, human nature in its finitude and fallenness forms the other. Because human beings cannot restore themselves, without the Incarnation (and death) of Christ, human beings are, Anselm insists, lost in the despair Boso experiences at the end of book I. Anselm's premises construct the problem for which he argues Christ's atonement for humanity is the only answer. This, of course, is neither a defense nor a critique of Anselm's soteriology, but an attempt to see it in the larger context of his argument as a whole. It is important to consider not just the outcome of this argument and what it implies about God and his incarnation (as so many have) but to consider the premises from which those conclusions are derived.

It is important to note as well how Anselm himself sees the results of his argument. In the *Meditation of Human Redemption*, a companion piece to *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm reflects not on the God who demands payment but on the Son who freely suffers.[213] He proposes meditation on the Incarnation not as designed to humble God but to raise up human nature.[214] God becomes human and suffers freely not in order to hide the divine nature (nor to punish those who fail to recognize him beneath a disguise) but to show what was "unknown" about God.[215] While it is perhaps not wholly "unknown," what the Incarnation reveals with emphasis is the divine rejection of earthly models of power and success, the revelation of an utterly different model of kingship and servanthood, and thereby a new understanding of divinity and humanity.

213. *Med 3*, S III, 86–88. On the *Meditation on Human Redemption* and its relationship to *Cur Deus homo,* see 318–27.

214. *Med. 3*, S III, 87, 102–3.

215. *Med. 3*, S III, 85, 30–45.

De conceptu virginali: Joining and Dividing Nature and Sin

Anselm opens *De conceptu* describing its task as explaining the "other rationale"—other than the one given in *Cur Deus homo*—for how the Son can be born from sinful humanity without original sin.[216] Though this connection is important and will be discussed below, there is an important sense in which Anselm is dissembling here. The topics taken up in *De conceptu* are not merely loose ends from *Cur Deus homo*. Rather, the topic of Jesus' freedom from original sin is taken up in order to consider original sin more deeply. After the crucifixion, original sin and the virgin conception are, we might say, the most peculiarly, embarrassingly Christian doctrines following from the Incarnation. Anselm's project in *De conceptu* is to subject them to an unrelenting rationalism. The juxtaposition of that which is "scandal to the Greeks" with a steady beat of deductive argument is a bit jarring. And it is not only modern sensibilities who find something unusual going on in this text. Even a cursory comparison to discussions in sentence collections from the school of Laon makes it clear that this work is no less ground breaking than Anselm's other works, that, as Evans notes, the "conceptual devices" Anselm uses here are "as inventive and as philosophically daring" as those in *Cur Deus homo*.[217] Augustine's account of the consequences of the first sin in descendants of Adam in concupiscence, repeated in early twelfth century school accounts, is more psychologically descriptive and compelling than Anselm's, even to those who disagree with and are even repelled by it. By contrast, Anselm's, we shall see, is utterly formal, devoid of any descriptive content. Anselm deduces the consequences from concepts rather than by appeal to any human experience.

There are two different things that are sometimes called "original sin": the sin of Adam and Eve and the sin that is the punishment for that sin inherited from them by their descendants. In order to avoid confusion, I shall call the sin of Adam and Eve the "first sin" and that which all inherit, "original sin." The first sin was the topic of *De casu* but "original sin," Adam's sin as inherited, is Anselm's topic here. Anselm derives original sin in the descendants of Adam as follows. Since only ratio-

216. DCV 1, S II, 140–41.

217. See the texts edited by Odon Lottin in *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, *Tome V: Problèmes d'histoire littéraire* (Gembloux, Belgium: J. Duculot, 1959). Evans points out the overlap of topics between *De conceptu* and the Laon sentences as evidence of Anselm's increasing awareness of and attempt to address questions from external sources. See Evans, *Talking about God*, 172–73, 186. This is surely true, but once one follows that link, what is most striking is how different Anselm's discussions are from discussions on these topics in the sentence collections. See below for these comparisons.

nal souls can have justice, only rational souls can have sin, even original sin.[218] Moreover, since justice is righteousness of will kept for its own sake, justice is present only in the will; thus, sin also can only be in the will.[219] The will (in which injustice or justice is present), the affections and uses of the will, the action, the work, or effects of injustice—all these are distinct from justice or injustice per se. Moreover, neither are bodily parts nor the senses sinful or sinning, Anselm argues.[220]

Anselm then carefully gathers up these conclusions, "that sin and injustice are nothing, that they are present only in a rational will and that no being except a will is properly called unjust," and brings them to bear on what it means, as the Psalmist writes, that man is "conceived in iniquity" (Ps. 51:5).[221] From his previous arguments, Anselm poses the following dilemma: either from the very moment of conception an infant has a rational soul (and rational will), or at conception he has no original sin. Both of these are, Anselm argues, absurd. For if the former were the case, it would mean the presence of original sin in and, hence, the condemnation of countless souls never making it to the state of developed fetuses and infants. But if the latter were the case, one contradicts scripture, which asserts the corruption of the seed, conception "in iniquity."[222] Anselm allows his interpretation of scripture's claim that "man is conceived from unclean seed" to be pushed by these rationally derived conclusions. The claim is true, Anselm explains, not in the sense that "in the seed there is the uncleanness of sin or sin or iniquity but that from the seed itself and from its conception, from which human being begins, he receives the necessity that when he will possess a rational soul, he will have the uncleanness of sin which is nothing other than sin and iniquity."[223] There is no more fault in the seed than in spit or blood; fault is in the evil will only, Anselm maintains. In this way, Anselm concludes, we can hold both that sin only characterizes a rational will *and* that the seed is "unclean:" "It is clear therefore both how there is no sin in infants from the moment of their conception and how those things from divine scripture opposing this are true."[224]

A passage edited by Lottin from sentences at the school of Laon takes up the same passage asserting human beings to be "conceived in iniq-

218. DCV 3, S II, 142, 13–14; 143, 7–11.
219. DCV 3, S II, 143, 16–17.
220. DCV 4, S II, 143–45.
221. DCV 7, S II, 147, 26–148, 13.
222. DCV 7, S II, 148. Anselm cites Job 14:4 and Psalms 51:5.
223. DCV 7, S II, 149, 1–5.
224. DCV 7, S II, 149, 9–10. Here and in a later passage, DCV 14, S II, 156, Anselm refers to scripture passages describing the seed as unclean and being conceived in iniquity as "opposing" his own position. It is, perhaps, a portent of full-blown scholastic disputation in which texts and authorities are cited which seem to oppose one another.

uity" but gives a strikingly different account of it. Besides lacking anything like the depth of Anselm's consideration—there is no discussion of the nature of injustice or sin, or of the body or its acts as opposed to reason and the will as what can actually sin or be sinful—the Laon master simply retells the story of Genesis, naming concupiscence and mortality as the effects in the sense that they are punishment for Adam and Eve's disobedience.[225]

For Anselm, original sin is a kind of omission. Human nature has "the obligation to make satisfaction for the sin of Adam" and as long as it fails to do so, it sins.[226] So it is *not* doing something but being *unable* to do something, having an obligation without the ability to fulfill it, that constitutes original sin. To be sure, Anselm adds to that inability the further disadvantages of a corrupted body and a soul unable to understand justice, but the obligation and the inability to meet it is what original sin is for him.[227] In *De casu* we learned that the sin of Adam and the devil is in not accepting their finitude, their creaturely status. The effect of that first sin, passed down as original sin to subsequent human generations, is living out that finitude, creaturely status without the gift of justice. It is because everything is received that not having received (because having deserted) justice, the fallen human being cannot retrieve that justice nor make up for having deserted it.

The biggest problem for reason, of course, is understanding how original sin is passed down. Both the what and the how are dictated by the same logic but the juxtaposition of the nature of original sin with the means of its inheritance is odd. On the one hand, sin (original or otherwise) is not in anything (not even the seed, despite the assertion in scripture that the seed is corrupt) other than the evil will. Thus sin, whether the first sin, original sin, or individual sin, is not physical. On the other hand, the passing down of this sin, though it is only in the will, is physical in a sense. Sin is passed down through the seed, that is, through the means of propagation, from man and woman. Christ avoids original sin by circumventing those means of propagation. The logic Anselm employs to reach this conclusion is particularly elegant. Though all human beings share personhood or individuality and human nature with Adam, it cannot be in virtue of either of these that human beings share in Adam's sin. If original sin were attached at the level of either humanity or personhood, then Adam would have to have had the obligation imposed by original sin *before* he sinned since he was person and human being before his

225. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 258, #331. 226. DCV 8, S II, 149.
227. DCV 8, S II, 150, 2.

sin.[228] It can only be "by virtue of being Adam *the sinner*" that others can be born with his debt.[229] Adam's descendants are Adam by virtue of their propagation, Anselm notes, not *qua* themselves as individuals, but in the sense that all human beings are descended from Adam. What Adam had by grace, the gift of justice and the ability to keep it, he would have been able to pass down to those born of him. Since he deserted justice, he also lost the ability to pass down that justice to his progeny.[230]

The elegance of the explanation is Anselm's deduction of the link to Adam by propagation. On the one hand, it allows him to leave human nature and personhood free of sin. What it means to be human, both as a member of the species and as an individual, is in an important way left intact by original sin. On the other hand, Anselm uses propagation to assert the real connection of all human beings to Adam, in their virtual presence in him as their generative source. The link of all to Adam in propagation is universal in extension but not in intension; it is not, in other words, at the level of what it is to be human per se. More precisely, it is universal in extension save for one exception, that of Christ. This is likely Anselm's strongest motivation for giving this account of original sin. Having original sin attach to human beings at the level of their propagation from Adam allows Anselm to explain how Jesus is fully human while free from original sin: because his generation is outside the usual means or propagation.[231]

This view also allows Anselm to explain the connection between the fall, original sin, and sexual reproduction in a different way than was conventional. Anselm, like others in the tradition, does not think the first sin was sexual but, in Augustine right through to Anselm's time and beyond, sexuality is implicated because of the sexual consequences of the fall on Adam and Eve. However, Anselm connects original sin to sexual reproduction differently; we can see this by comparison of his view to the sentences of William of Champeaux. William's account of the nature of original sin focuses on the fault (*culpa*) for the sin of Adam as "not in the eye or any other members except in that through which the human species must propagate, namely in the male member and in the desire (*concupiscentia*) of the womb (*vulve*) and in [their] illicit motion."[232] Hence, "whomever is generated with concupiscence, which is the punishment for the first sin, contracts the stain of guilt and condemnation by which they should be damned for eternity."[233] What is striking in this

228. DCV 10, S II, 151, 12–15.
229. DCV 10, S II, 151, 7. My emphasis.
230. DCV 10, S II, 152.
231. DCV 12, S II, 154–55.
232. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 205, #251.
233. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 205, #251.

account is the emphasis on the body, on the effects of original sin on the body, and on the body's corruption, which is argued to pass to the soul, which is itself pure but becomes corrupted by contact with the body.[234]

Anselm does mention that the reproductive capacity before the fall functioned completely in accordance with the rational will but no longer does; after the fall he writes that it is characterized by a "bestial pleasure."[235] However, these claims are not deduced from the basic principles about the nature of sin and justice as the rest are. In fact, when Anselm mentions that post lapse, sexual acts are accompanied by a brutish pleasure not present before the fall, it is part of a presentation of a different understanding of scriptural references to the corrupt seed, not his own view at all. He only notes that when corruption is said to infect the seed of those whose propagation is accompanied by such pleasure, the same conclusion is reached: exactly and only the seed taken from the Virgin is exempted from corruption.[236]

Since these comments about postlapsarian sexuality as disordered are not substantively tied to his account of either the first sin or original sin, it is hard to say why Anselm inserts them. It could be a kind of concession to authority, to Augustine's authority in particular, or to these claims as truisms he could neither gainsay nor omit. Anselm does not reject or even question these views of sexuality as elements in the human condition that are in some sense consequences of the fall. Anselm's anguished prayers and meditations show adequate evidence of his agreement with Augustine on the struggle against and shame in sexual desire. However, Anselm is not here interested in the lived experience of original sin or even its psychology but only its logic, only the derivation by reason of original sin and the mechanism of its propagation. That mechanism—propagation—interests him here only in that sort of bloodless sense. But by making reproduction the means of transmission, he can connect sexuality to the fall and original sin in a non-arbitrary way. Yet at the same time he can redefine the nature of original sin not as concupiscence, nor as having some special attachment to sexual desire, as Augustine did, but as the permanence of the first sin, the choice to desert justice, which as inherited becomes not having justice and being unable to retrieve it.

Anselm also argues, counterfactually, that even if God begot a human rather than divine person from the Virgin, that human being would

234. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 38–43, #43–#46.
235. DCV 10, S II, 152, 18–21; DCV 14, S II, 156, 12–14.
236. DCV 14, S II, 156, 14–20.

still be free of original sin. Again, what interests Anselm here is the logic of incarnation and original sin more than, we might say, the facts of the matter. This same short chapter is also the location of some of Anselm's clearest language on the kind of reasoning he is seeking. He asks his reader to "carefully consider (*speculamur*) the wise justice of God with the pure vision (*intuitu*) of reason," in order to see the absurdity of any sin passing to a seed outside the normal processes of reproduction.[237] Anselm goes on to describe the way in which a "rational mind clearly grasping" will see the freedom from sin of any human being conceived by God's own will.[238] Though, of course, Anselm is only referring to the grasping of this particular consequence, Jesus' freedom from original sin, it gives us a kind of insight into Anselm's project in this text, which is itself a purified version of what he aims at in his search for "necessary reasons" in all his speculative works. *De conceptu* is devoid of any explicit pedagogical or devotional context, a feature that makes it almost, in G. R. Evan's phrase, "clinical."[239] The virgin, so important in the logic of *De conceptu*, never appears as anything other than "a factor in the great mechanism of the process of salvation."[240] That does not mean that the project has *no* pedagogical or devotional intent. Rather Anselm pursues his pedagogical aims *with* his reasoning. Nonetheless, *De conceptu* does display Anselm's style of reasoning in a particularly stark way. Anselm's project is to derive the elements of the soteriological narrative logically, to take the horizontal version of events playing out in time and try to think it vertically, as an argument rather than a story. This was true of the three dialogues, considering creation and fall, and the consideration of the Incarnation and salvation here continue the larger project of *Cur Deus homo*. The passage cited above, on the clear and rational search for understanding of divine wisdom is one of the clearest statements on Anselm's part that he sees his project in these terms, and, second, it receives another dimension in his characterization of his work as attempting to see from a divine perspective. Seeing is key here—he uses terms (*speculamur* and *intuitu*) linked both to vision and to nondiscursive knowing more characteristic of divine or angelic cognition than human understanding for the kind of insight he is trying to approximate. Of course, *De conceptu* and Anselm's other works are discursive, offering arguments for conclusions. But the kind of arguments Anselm seeks here and elsewhere, those famous "necessary reasons," aim for connections between premises and conclusion that are logical or conceptual rather than contingent or empirical. These kinds of connections approximate vision, in-

237. DCV 13, S II, 155, 15–21.
238. DCV 13, S II, 155, 23.
239. Evans, *Talking about God*, 188.
240. Evans, *Talking about God*, 188.

tellection rather than discursion, immediate and synthetic rather piecemeal grasp of the truth.

The logical as opposed to narrative point of view Anselm maintains both to explain original sin and exempt Jesus from it requires heavy emphasis on the different means of propagation of Jesus as opposed to other human beings. In *Cur Deus homo* Anselm expatiates on the possible ways in which God could create a human being, exhausting the logical possibilities available to God: 1) from a man and a woman ("as constant experience shows"), 2) from neither a man nor a woman (Adam), 3) from a woman without a man (Eve). The remaining possibility, 4) from a woman without a man, is the possibility fulfilled in the generation of Jesus.[241] The argument from fittingness he makes in *Cur Deus homo*, we recall, is that none of the first three means is easier for God than another (if one were easier, it would make that means the most fitting for the Incarnation) and that the fourth way is the most fitting (*nil convenientius*) "in order to prove that this way is subject to his power and is put aside for this very work."[242]

In *De conceptu* he takes another significant step in his attempt to give an account of the logic of salvation, by distinguishing between three orders of events: the miraculous, the natural, and the voluntary, in order to explain why Jesus escapes original sin. The need for the distinction is clear: if the propagation of Jesus from woman alone is miraculous, then it is not subject to the laws of natural propagation and, thus, to original sin.[243] To serve that argument, Anselm hardens slightly the contrast between miracle and nature in comparison to Augustine. Augustine, discussing miracles in contrast to natural events (most often in the context of objections to miraculous events as unbelievable), works rhetorically to bring the natural and miraculous closer together. First in the *City of God*, he discusses a kind of middle ground between natural and miraculous: the prodigious or monstrous "is not contrary to nature but contrary to what is *known* of nature."[244] In *De genesi ad litteram*, he argues that miracles are made possible by the same "seminal reasons" from which natural events flow, either by special reasons "implanted by God's Providence in anticipation of extraordinary events," or "God makes use of ordinary reasons, drawing out their natural effects without the normal delay and circumstances."[245] By contrast Anselm describes miracles as when the

241. CDH II, 8, S II, 104, 3–11.

242. CDH II, 8, S II, 104, 6–7.

243. DCV 11, S II, 154, 11–15.

244. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XXI, 8, 2. My emphasis.

245. Jean-Luc Solére, "Nature," in the *Dictionnaire du Moyen-Âge* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 967–76; 973. See Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram* VI, 13, 24–14, 25; *De Trinitate* III, 5, 11.

will of God "from these natures and wills accomplishes that which they themselves would never do in accordance with their use and purpose."[246]

To be sure Augustine and Anselm share a view of the ultimate unity of the natural and miraculous. Anselm does not revert to Augustine's language of "seminal reasons" out of which all occurrences—ordinary, unusual, and miraculous—fall. He does note, however, that miraculous action does not do harm to acts of nature and will not even "when it seems to oppose them," for, he writes, "they have nothing except what they have received from [divine will], nor has he given them anything except what is subordinate to him."[247] Moreover, it is as true for Anselm, as it is for Augustine before him and even Aquinas after him, that their nature is not Newtonian nature, operating according to laws without exception, but the ancient notion of nature as "for the most part." For Anselm as for Augustine before him and Aquinas after "a natural process is only a usual one, and tolerates derogations."[248] We see this in Anselm's description of the possibility of propagation from man and woman as what "constant experience shows."[249] On this view, exceptions, portents, and prodigies, are also, though in a different sense, part of nature. But since Anselm makes no mention of the middle category (the unusual, prodigious, or monstrous), he makes the line between the natural and the miraculous sharper by making the miraculous directly controlled by God and not in any sense flowing from the nature itself. Anselm's categories are also sharper because they are logical and conceptual, not blurred by empirical data. Anselm gives a couple of examples of both natural and miraculous occurrences, but the miracles are clear examples of divine action—water into wine, radical conversion by grace—and the natural processes he mentions are not observed but generic and proverbial—downward motion of the heavy and vegetative production.[250]

By contrast, Augustine brings in examples of unusual events to contextualize the miraculous by exploring the category between it and the usual course of things, and Aquinas's little work, *On the Occult Operations of Nature*, considers things like the operation of magnets and the tides, as well as the curative properties of relics, both to continue the same project of contextualizing the miraculous but also to subject both miraculous and surprising natural occurrences to rationalization.[251] Aquinas is worried about surprising occurrences breaking down the notion that nature

246. DCV 11, S II 153, 18–22.
247. DCV 11, S II, 154, 8–11.
248. Solère, "Nature," 573.
249. CDH II, 8, S II, 104, 4.
250. DCV 11, S II, 153–54.
251. Thomas Aquinas, *De operationibus occultis*, in *Opuscula philosophica*, edited by R. Piazzi, (Torino: Marietti, 1954), 159–60.

is regular, implying that anything can come from anything. His answer is hierarchization: lower causes can be moved in ways unusual for them by higher causes, but like usual events, unusual events too have causes.

Anselm is not concerned with the gap between how things appear to us (as random) and how they really are (acting according to hidden properties or higher agency). He is assuming clear categories and a God's eye view, separating natural and miraculous so as to free the miraculous from the conditions of nature without freeing the Son, born of miraculous means, from human nature altogether. The only kind of hard to categorize cases Anselm mentions are other miraculous births, like that of John the Baptist or Isaac from aged parents. But they are mentioned in order to place them with *natural* propagation as the "healing of a nature weakened . . . to recall it to its operation." They are opposed to Jesus' birth, along with the genesis of Adam and Eve. Only Jesus, Adam, and Eve are "something unheard of, unthinkable and unknown in nature."[252]

Jesus' birth has to be removed both from natural propagation and from Adam's will. This is the third category of events, those produced by the will. Here again Anselm links propagation and sin but only indirectly. Propagation from a man and a woman is also partly in the human will. Besides the natural process, the will of at least one party has to be engaged to set that natural process in motion. Hence, Anselm argues, since Adam's sin, not willing to keep justice, is in the will, he can only affect those whose propagation can also be tied back to his will, that is, everyone except Eve and Jesus.[253]

The logic of what is appropriate for divine action continues to drive Anselm's argument as he meets possible objections. Anselm's arguments from "fittingness" are not in contrast to those grounded in necessary reasons but an extension of what is sought from them: rational understanding of what is believed by faith.[254] Anselm derives the redemption rather than replacement of fallen human being from this logic: if God had simply filled the vacancy of those saved with a new cohort of sinless human beings, then Adam's reproductive capacity would have been in vain.[255] Anselm argues this is a "necessary" conclusion. In the next chapter, he takes care to argue that it is only "fitting" that Jesus is conceived from a just rather than sinful virgin, not necessary.[256] But the

252. DCV 16, S II, 157, 17–24.

253. DCV 12, S II, 155.

254. Cf. the different view of David Hogg, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Beauty of Theology* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004).

255. DCV 17, S II, 158, 16–19.

256. DCV 18, S II, 159, 13–16.

difference between the two levels of argument in this case is more about preserving divine prerogatives and power than different levels of certainty from a human point of view.

Anselm stops at this point to reflect on the relationship between the arguments given in *De conceptu* and those given in *Cur Deus homo* for the same conclusion: that Jesus is without original sin. These comments tell us how Anselm sees the possibility of multiple arguments for the same conclusion. In *De conceptu*, Jesus is argued to be free from sin because sin, even original sin, attaches to the will (and so is not in "the seed" except as its future), and propagation, even from a sinful virgin by miraculous means, frees her offspring from sin. In *Cur Deus homo*, he argued that the virgin is "purified by faith" and hence her seed is purified of sin.[257] These are fairly different accounts of how Mary's offspring escapes original sin. The argument from *Cur Deus homo* finds a way out even if the "seed is corrupted," while *De conceptu* takes on the logic of original sin, including its justice. It argues that the seed from which Christ was born cannot be corrupted on its own terms, and, thus, does not require an external act of faith on Mary's part. Anselm even adds that *qua* human, not appealing to Jesus' divinity, Jesus is free not just of "the necessity for sin and debt of Adam" but also of the inability to recover justice or overcome the burden of a corrupted body.[258] The *Cur Deus homo* argument is attractive for the way in which it finds in Mary the cause of Christ's sinlessness, but in *De conceptu* Anselm takes on the bigger problem of original sin itself. Thus it is not just in comparison to other considerations of these topics from the period that Anselm is more systematic, but Anselm is in *De conceptu* more systematic than in his own previous work. In *De conceptu* he grounds his conclusion on deeper and more basic principles and builds on the account of sin and freedom he worked out in *De libertate* and *De casu*.

Anselm is clearly unbothered by any possible tension between the two arguments for the same conclusion on different grounds. That they do not contradict one another is all that matters. This stance has some

257. The focus of the argument in *Cur Deus homo* is not on *how* faith could purify; that it can is more or less accepted as a given; the only question is whether it must be *true* faith. If so, it would mean that it must have been true that Jesus was going to die and that his death was freely chosen. The whole argument is another example of Anselm's attempt to derive the Christian soteriological narrative from the nature of God and humanity by rational argument. For the account takes the two events, the birth of Christ and his death, out of temporal sequence to lay out their logical relationship. This is, of course, a crucial issue in *Cur Deus homo* as in *De conceptu*: understanding how there are necessary reasons linking the events of salvation but do not impose necessity on divine action.

258. DCV 17, S II, 158, 27–159, 6.

of the feel of Augustine's scriptural hermeneutics—that there are many roads to Rome means it does not matter which one you take as long as you get there—now applied to logical arguments. The different roads, however, are not *mere* means to reaching the right conclusion but rather spiritual exercises in themselves. Nor is the discussion closed by having found these two paths, Anselm notes. If some "other, deeper *ratio*" could be found, he would, he says, gladly accept it in the same way in which he would abandon his own if it is found wanting.[259] As in *Cur Deus homo* the incompleteness and defeasibility of the project is essential to it for Anselm.

In *De conceptu*, mostly likely because of its less polished, less literary character compared to *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm makes explicit the form of his arguments as hypothetical syllogisms. Two of Anselm's arguments are overtly counterfactual hypotheticals. Even if Christ were only human, he would be free not only of Adam's debt but also the burden of a corrupted body and inability to repay the debt. And even if original sin is assumed to be "as grave as possible," that is, to include making individuals bear responsibility for the sins of all their forbears not just Adam (a claim Anselm later rejects), Christ is free from original sin. Such argument forms, along with other school forms like definition and *divisio* used in the text, give the proceedings a technical, dialectical feel that in other works Anselm has taken more care to avoid or disguise.[260] The bones of the argument are much more visible. Seeing the argumentative scaffolding, if you will, gives it the character of rational speculation and exploration, more than that of something designed to be final or foundational. This is not inconsistent with Anselm's claims to have found "necessary reasons," because what "necessary reasons" mean for him is having this rational and deductive form, being reasoned in the sense of following from definitions and principles it is rational to accept.

In fine proto-scholastic form Anselm crafts the problematic as he closes *De conceptu* so that he can occupy the middle ground on original sin. The extremes are, on the one hand, that descendants of Adam, especially infants, cannot be understood to have any sin or to be punished for a sin that they did not commit, and, on the other hand, that infants have the same kind of guilt for the sin inherited from Adam as Adam did for committing it. Anselm's argument for distancing himself from the latter view is, even he would have to admit, more convincing than his argument against the former. Anselm asserts the very reasonable view that

259. DCV 21, S II, 161, 3–7.
260. Evans, *Talking about God*, 185.

original sin cannot be imputed to infants in such a way that they should be punished as if they personally had committed the sin that only Adam (and Eve) did. Though both are deprived of justice, Adam is deprived because he deserted justice, but the infant because someone else (Adam) did.[261] Anselm's focus is on the clear injustice of the sin or guilt being as great for Adam's descendants as it is for him.[262]

In order to argue that infants both have and should have some other kind of sin and some other kind of punishment for something they did not do, Anselm is reduced to parable and a kind of aesthetic argument. He has already explained the how of original sin in the particular connection between Adam and his descendants through propagation, but he has not explained the why. The problem of why is attacked first with an aesthetic argument, in which Anselm appeals to a kind of symmetry but not identity between sin in Adam and in his descendants. Adam sins through his will as an individual or person, yet he sins "not without" his nature such that it too is affected by the sin. Conversely, in infants their sin, their lack of justice, is not a result of a personal willing but from the blemished nature they inherit from Adam, but since that nature exists in persons, sin is transferred to their person.[263] Thus, in the one case, personal sin is transferred to the nature, and in the other the blemish of nature transfers to the person. Anselm even uses his favorite literary device to emphasize the complementarity: similar sounds with opposite meaning: "the voluntary desertion of justice *accuses* the nature and the inability to recover justice does not *excuse* the person," Anselm writes.[264] Such an argument makes no pretense of explaining the justice of infants being saddled with a sin they did not commit, but does give it a kind of orderliness so that it does not seem simply random.

The additional argument in parable form for the justice of original sin does not appear until he has spent some four chapters softening the blow of its unfairness. Anselm argues that the burden of original sin is less than some have argued and even he assumed for the purposes of argument; moreover, he contends that infants are not burdened by the sins of other ancestors after Adam.[265] Original sin, unlike personal sin, is equal in all, and he defines it precisely as the consequence of receiving a rational soul irrespective of any corruption of the body preceding or following its animation.[266] There is in this at least the fairness that all are equally afflicted. Most importantly, Anselm insists that even in the case of original sin, each bears the burden of his own sin, not that of his fa-

261. DCV 26, S II, 169, 17–19.
262. DCV 23, S II, 165, 26–28.
263. DCV 23, S II, 165, 20; 15–18.
264. DCV 27, S II, 170, 17–19.
265. DCV 22, S II, 161; 24, S II, 166–67.
266. DCV 27, S II, 170.

ther or indeed Adam.[267] Adam's sin is one thing and the infant's is another, the former a cause and the latter an effect, and the former more grave and the latter less so.[268] At least in Lottin's collection of passages from the school of Laon, there are not similar discussions of the relative gravity or a strong distinction between the first sin and original sin.[269]

When Anselm finally does come to the question of the justice of original sin in the penultimate chapter, it is as a reply to objectors, who argue that as human beings do not blame infants for another's sin neither should God.[270] Anselm's reply distinguishes vigorously between human beings and God, arguing that human beings and God should regard Adam's offspring differently. Human beings do not justly blame someone for a fault they themselves have and which they themselves cannot heal, whereas God "rightly demands from a nature what he gave it and what is justly owed to him."[271] While to be sure the main point is to create some space so that God is not unjust in his punishment, the important corollary is that human beings are unjust to blame each other.

Only after these qualifications does Anselm offer his analogy as a way of offering some understanding of the subjection of unbaptized infants to divine judgment. He imagines the case of husband and wife, elevated by grace rather than merit, committing a crime that justly deprives them of their privilege. "Who will say," Anselm asks, "that the children whom they generate after their damnation ought not to be subject to the same servitude but rather ought rather to have restored by grace the goods which their parents justly lost?"[272]

It is not truly satisfying but it is hard to imagine how he could do better. Again, we can compare Anselm's treatment to that of the school of Laon. We do have a version of their discussion of the problem of why the unbaptized are damned. The argument in the Laon sentences is based on what would be consistent with God's providence. God infuses the body generated from parents with a new soul before the fall as well as after; after the fall, the new soul is infused into a corrupt body, which in turn corrupts the soul. This situation, the writer maintains, is not divine "cruelty" but the implementation of divine providence, which does not change because of the "stupidity of men."[273] After noting the "maximum benevo-

267. DCV 26, S II, 169–70.

268. DCV 26, S II, 169–70; DCV 23, S II, 165–66.

269. In a passage discussed in more detail below, the authors do note that those souls of infants separated from the body before baptism will receive "the lightest" punishment. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 43, #46.

270. DCV 28, S II, 170–71.

271. DCV 28, S II, 171, 7–8.

272. DCV 28, S II, 171, 13–15.

273. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 43, #46. Another passage in Lottin's collection asks the

lence" of God who provides in baptism the "medicine of salvation," the passage ends thusly: "as far as those who perish before baptism, why does God ordain that they will not reach baptism? The judgments of God are hidden."[274] This conclusion is more honest than Anselm's, which claims to penetrate God's judgment a bit further, yet it is hard not to admire Anselm's determination to try to make sense out of that which defies human understanding.

Anselm concludes by defending infants who have undergone baptism but perished before they are able to repent.[275] The rhetorical effect of this conclusion is to mitigate the harshness of the previous conclusion justifying the damnation of the unbaptized. The closest analogue to this last argument seems to be the dialectical push and pull of scholastic *quaestiones*. Anselm argues, on the one hand, against those who think unbaptized infants ought not be condemned and, on the other hand, against those who would condemn baptized infants because still incapable of justice. Anselm, thus, positions himself on middle ground, though still firm on the notion that baptism is required for salvation. What baptism removes, Anselm explains, is not the original inability to have justice but the culpability for not having it.[276] This goes some way toward clarifying the function of baptism and, again, positions Anselm's position as a mean between extremes. For baptism is neither for Anselm without effect nor the complete wiping away of original sin.

Anselm concludes with a disclaimer that sounds very like his concluding remarks in *Cur Deus homo* and repeat what he already said midway through *De conceptu*. He does not so much "affirm" these things as "conjecture" them, waiting for something better to be revealed to him by God or another faithful inquirer.[277] The open-endedness of the conclusion of *Cur Deus homo* is not, then, only because of the particular questions still left unanswered to which he hopes to return, but remains because of the nature of the issues and his own understanding. It is not, in other words, accidental but essential to the undertaking. We might think Anselm's dis-

question about the justice of the passing on of original sin and, like other accounts, including Anselm's, focuses on the mechanism for its inheritance, even drawing an analogy for the passing on of original sin to the way in which a depraved and irascible father can produce a depraved and irascible son. There is some sense in which from something corrupt comes other corruption, "although," the author hesitates, "we do not know how to explain what kind it is, how it is said and why." Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 257, # 328.

274. Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 43, #46.

275. DCV 29, S II, 172.

276. DCV 29, S II, 172, 18–20. Anselm clarifies further that baptism only releases from the culpability that is a result of the original inability to have justice; it is not, in other words, a release from culpability for personal sin chosen freely.

277. DCV 29, S II, 173, 4–7.

claimer is either pro forma or out of a kind of fear of being associated with Roscelin. However much the latter might be true, Anselm states in this disclaimer nothing different from what would have been assumed within the context of monastic discussion. Just like the common ground of "faith seeking understanding" that had to be laid out more explicitly in the *Epistola*, so here he must make explicit the lack of finality in his inquiry, its function in a process of seeking that is ongoing.

An important shift in Anselm's thought is evident in *De conceptu*: it is a move toward scholastic form, or rather since scholastic form did not yet exist, we might say, a move toward creating scholastic form. Anselm takes up the kinds of questions discussed in the schools of the day. Those discussions, as we see from Lottin's collection, tend to breakdown topics and texts into separate questions. Anselm considers the questions but works as much as possible to integrate discussion of these issues into his own broader agenda.[278]

In *De conceptu* Anselm places himself rhetorically as the mean between extremes rather than, as we might characterize his earlier work, at both extremes at once. Here extremes are mapped out the as a means to finding middle ground. In the other works, a pedagogical purpose was served by exploring those extremes and enacting the simultaneous necessity and paradox of the most important truths about God and creature. In this way Anselm gave a kind of intensity to the issues he discussed in these earlier works, dramatizing them even as he explored them in logical rather than narrative form. Part of his pedagogy was to arrive at aporiae as a means to understanding the issues as well as the limits of human reason. The earlier works, if not strictly speaking dialogues, explored these extremes through some kind of dialogue. Even the monologue in the *Monologion* is a kind of dialogue with himself in the person of one who knows nothing of God; and, of course, the *Proslogion* is a dialogue with himself, engaging the fool and addressed to God. In this sense, *De incarnatione Verbi* is a dialogue as well, not quite with Roscelin, but with those who might be persuaded or troubled by the dilemma Roscelin proposed for orthodox Christology.

De conceptu is truly different, both less dialogic in its approach and less prone to explore the fine line separating paradox from necessity. The questions of *De conceptu* are important and difficult questions to work

278. There are exceptions, for example, the discussion of why the first sin is imputed to Adam more than Eve, which both per se and as taken up by Anselm does not form part of the grand logic Anselm is attempting to work out here (DCV 9, S II, 150–51). This question is discussed in the texts collected by Lottin, so perhaps Anselm felt he had to address it even though he could not make it fit seamlessly into his argument. See Lottin, *Psychologie et Morale*, 202–3, #246; 206–7, #253.

out, but they are not the basic logic of salvation explored in *Cur Deus homo*. The key question for Anselm is the one raised for him as he explored the problems raised by Roscelin: why the all-powerful divine nature had to become incarnate, suffer, and die. Exactly how that incarnate God is human but without sin is surely important, but it is secondary, a question logically at a lower level. The same is true, in the end, for the anthropological end of this problem—how human beings came to have original sin while Christ did not. The more basic anthropological question were explored by *De libertate* and *De casu*. The explorations of *De conceptu* are not different from earlier works because their topic is more "theological" than "philosophical" but rather because its questions are less basic.

Nonetheless, there is a sense in which Anselm is pursuing rather than ignoring devotional and pedagogical goals in *De conceptu* even though the style of presentation is stark and unliterary. The pedagogical goal is to deliver a tour de force, an illustration of the compelling logic of salvation not just in the big picture sense but in the descent to details. Like book II of *Cur Deus homo*, that logic is offered at the level of fittingness, painting but on "solid truth." The end result is still stunning but in a different way than the works on the most basic questions about human nature and salvation and those taking up the existence and nature of God. Anselm's audacity is to look through the lens of reason at original sin and the sinless birth of Jesus, continuing to construct a "vertical" consideration of the horizontal story of salvation in more and more detail. He tries to understand it all from the perspective of reason, exactly as the "mechanism." The work approximates a divine perspective, outside of time, attempting to see the whole logic of the matter at once, rather than as a story unfolding, in ways that might appear contingent or *ad hoc* in time.

Searching for Necessary Reasons and Meditating on Human Redemption

According to Eadmer, Anselm wrote *De conceptu* along with *Meditation on Human Redemption* in the period right after the completion of *Cur Deus homo*.[279] The *Meditation* (appearing as Meditation 3 in Schmitt's critical edition) is a more exclusively devotional piece on the Incarnation and death of Christ as redemptive, but it quite accurately summarizes the most basic conclusions of *Cur Deus homo*. Like *Cur Deus homo*, the

279. Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury/Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, edited and translated by Richard W. Southern (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), book II, xliv, 122.

meditation rejects any "rights of the devil" over man or God and makes the same case that since man must make reparation and only God can do so, the God-man who chooses to sacrifice himself freely is the only path to salvation.[280] If we compare it to the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*, both of which Anselm presents as meditations, we observe that Anselm has divided what those earlier works combine in such a seamless and striking manner: prayerful meditation and deductive argument. It is a sign of even greater separation between academic and devotional pursuits to come that Anselm appended his meditation to his largely argumentative text rather than composed a single text in which they were interwoven. The tension between subject (the birth and death of Christ) and method (deductive reason issuing in necessary conclusions) in these argumentative works is greater than in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. The topic of the divine nature one and triune as subject of speculative study has many precedents in Augustine, Boethius, and others. By contrast, finding "necessary reasons" for the Incarnation and death of Christ (and reasoning as if there were no Christ) is a project stunning in its audacity and in the thoroughness with which it is pursued. Perhaps because of its audacity or because of the criticism Anselm received on *Proslogion* and *Monologion* combining meditation and speculative argument, he no longer attempts to completely integrate arguments with a believer's meditation on the "good news" of salvation. However, Anselm gives signs in both *Cur Deus homo* and the *Meditation on Human Redemption* of the ways in which argument serves rather than undermines meditation even as he takes rationalism to new extremes.

Anselm works truly and sincerely under the auspices of "faith seeking understanding," yet the nature and role for reason in Anselm is still a precursor to the modern model of neutral, objective reason. Our tendency is to read back from the modern notion of rationality and find in "faith seeking understanding" the attempt to enclose or restrict reason within faith. However, the project of understanding what is believed, first in Augustine and then more explicitly and self-consciously in Anselm, is in an important sense a step *toward* the modern model in a couple of ways. First, the search for necessary reasons for God's actions in the Incarnation shows a confidence in reason as Anselm is ready to open up the things of faith, in all their difficulty, detail, and concreteness, to the questions of reason. Rational insight into the divine nature, the path prescribed by "faith seeking understanding," is only possible if the human intellect can make rational sense of divine action. And since "rational" for Anselm

280. *Med. 3*, S III, 84–91.

means "available to deductive reason," "rational" means capable of being understood as necessary in some sense. Human reason has to be able to discover such reasons, and the divine nature itself must have reasons and display them in ways accessible to human reason. In the *Meditation on Human Redemption*, Anselm draws special attention to the accessibility of the truth of redemption to any who will receive it. God does not humble himself in the Incarnation to hide himself but rather to show himself, Anselm declares: "You did not assume human nature in order to conceal (*operires*) what was known about you but in order to disclose (*aperires*) what was unknown."[281] Truth neither deceives nor hides. "Though the truth does not manifest itself to everyone, to none does it deny itself."[282]

Second, Anselm moves toward a more modern notion of reason in the way in which he takes up objections originating from hostile quarters. Already in the dialogue trilogy Anselm disengages the objections from their hostile context to take them up in a more neutral fashion. Anselm extends this approach in both *Cur Deus homo* and *De incarnatione*, for these objectors are more real and specific than Jews in the Gospel of John. Boso speaks for infidels and Roscelin for heretics.

In *Cur Deus homo*, the infidel objectors are one step removed by the literary device of the text, their objections expressed by Boso, mirroring their actual status for Anselm, for whom they are a theoretical possibility rather than a living, breathing reality.[283] In Anselm's one known encounter with actual non-Christians, the Muslim troops of Count Roger in Sicily, Eadmer tells of their reverence for Anselm and willingness to convert and of Anselm's kind offerings of food to them, but makes no mention of any interest on Anselm's part in their arguments or their salvation.[284] Yet *Cur Deus homo* does try to address what Anselm understands as non-Christian objections rationally, seriously, and moderately, free of invective.[285] This does not mean that the objections posed by Boso were actually voiced by actual non-Christian objectors. Anselm presents them as such but then, as noted above, responds to them without vilifying non-belief or skepticism but rather taking up their questions on their own merits and as the same as those believers should be asking. Anselm can respond to them with a kind of disengaged reason because he has taken their objections to be rational rather than sectarian threats in the first place.

In *De incarnatione*, Anselm responds on different levels to the objections posed by Roscelin, first polemically to discredit Roscelin but then

281. *Med. 3*, S III, 85, 36–37.
282. *Med. 3*, S III, 85, 42.
283. See 277–79.
284. Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm,* book II, xxxiii, 110–12.
285. Cf. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 174–75.

more constructively, defending the orthodox formulation and, finally, offering positive ways toward understanding. That Anselm engages the unbeliever more openly and sympathetically than he does his fellow Christian, Roscelin, or his anonymous interlocutors in *De conceptu*, is not so surprising. Roscelin represents a real rather than merely conceptual threat. He is a threat on two fronts, to believers who might have their faith undermined by his arguments, and to Anselm whose own views have been implicated as supporting Roscelin's. Those against whom he argues in *De conceptu* are effectively theological rivals. Anselm does not hesitate to let deep and troubling questions come out in the *Epistola* and *De conceptu*. They are addressed, but he does not use the more daring speculative forms and formulations he was willing to in earlier work and in *Cur Deus homo*.

Anselm's opponent, whether in the form of his friend Boso, the infidels represented by Boso, his opponent (and former friend) Roscelin, or the anonymous precursor of the scholastic "*quidam*" responded to in *De conceptu*, is constructed and responded to with reason, reason Anselm shares with that opponent. Thus, the opponent, whether Christian or not, gives voice to questions which really are Anselm's as well. As Boso sets out to present objections to the Incarnation, he notes that "they" seek because they do not believe, while "we" seek because we believe; "we" because we are seeking reasons, and "they" because they are unwilling to accept without reasons. It is, he asserts, "fair (*aequum*)" that he present the arguments of unbelievers since "it is one and the same thing that we seek."[286] Significantly, he does not retain the divide into "we" and "they" as the arguments get under way but joins both together as the "we" who have a common task. The task is a task for reason and the reason that is used is the same for believer and unbeliever. That is Anselm's radical claim. When it is taken seriously, it is rationalistic in the extreme, difficult if not impossible to square with Anselm's insistence in his prayers and in the prologue to the *De incarnatione* on faith as the starting point.

However, taking this claim seriously does not mean that Anselm flirts with atheism or skepticism about Jesus' divinity. He does, however, allow questions and problems basic to Christian belief to be raised and to penetrate his defenses, so that whether they are originally his own or not, they become those for which he seeks understanding, not mere refutation. This transformation takes place in three stages. First, Anselm makes objections neutral and generic, untraceable to particular or sectarian parties but the objections of reason itself, those which a proverbial

286. CDH I, 3, S II, 50, 16–22.

"anyone" would wonder about. Second, Anselm takes the difficulty out, not of the objection but the objector. He works, in other words to turn a hostile objector into one who is open to argument. So far Anselm's method presages later rationalism.

But Anselm goes beyond mere open-mindedness and neutrality. In *Cur Deus homo* the questions Boso asks from outside the faith are transformed into *his* questions, into questions the answers to which are of vital, final importance for him as an individual. Less dramatically, *De incarnatione* goes from polemical refutation, to reasoned argument against a rational opponent, to images and attempts at substantive explanation of the admittedly impenetrable God for one who genuinely wishes to understand. In *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm leads Boso beyond neutral third-party observation; in *De incarnatione*, he leads the objector beyond questions posed as a challenge to orthodoxy. Both interlocutors, though from different directions, come to place of needing to know, hoping and, more, "panting" to understand.

This last movement is clearest in *Cur Deus homo*, the most polished literary work of the group. Anselm and his interlocutor are brought to see that the answer is not merely academic, the winning or losing of an academic joust. Rather for Boso (and through him the reader) the problem becomes not answering abstract questions from unbelievers but understanding one's own existential predicament, one's need for Christ.[287] The arguments are designed to have existential import for Anselm and for his readers, for the faithful, and cannot be meant merely to defeat an opponent with whom one shares nothing. Clearly, when Anselm thinks he has succeeded (and to the degree that he has succeeded) in the *Proslogion* or in the *Cur Deus homo* in the persona of Boso, Anselm expresses the joy of one who has discovered and understood something for himself, not one who has merely bested an opponent in debate.

Anselm takes up the most challenging questions for the believer, formulated in the most challenging way, whether by non-Christians in *Cur Deus homo*, Christian heretics in *De incarnatione*, or those being debated in schools outside the monastery in *De conceptu*. He does so in a way that serves the needs of faith *and* reason. For the challenges these interlocutors pose set a difficult task for reason, so difficult that the task for reason mirrors in structure and becomes a means toward the individual's quest for God. Faith is served both in the success and the failure of Anselm's rationalism. For insofar as reason succeeds, faith is supported and

287. As Cohen points out, Anselm makes no move to suggest that his work be used to convert Jews or others as others did for their work in this genre. See Cohen, *Living Letters*, 180.

deepened, and insofar as reason comes up against its limits, the call for faith (and continued attempts at understanding) is renewed.

Rather than allowing the kinds of questions which skeptical reason might pose to function as a kind of distraction from faith, Anselm's goal is to have them serve faith. A comparison to Peter's *De divina omnipotentia* is instructive. Damian is clearly frustrated that conundrums like whether God can restore a virgin are circulating in which both affirmative and negative answers seem to result in impious claims about the divine. He wants to put a stop to such questions, if we are to take him at his word, but does so by actually taking this one up. Whether God can restore a virgin is not a question that arises out of the content of Christian faith. As Anselm's three works on the Incarnation show, Christianity has enough difficult questions of its own to cope with without making up new and titillating puzzles. Of course, such puzzles do raise serious questions about God's freedom and power as operating in time and raise basic questions about the nature of freedom and power *per se*. Anselm wishes to raise these questions too, in all their difficulty, but in such a way that they spring from that which faith believes. While Damian attempts to put to rest idle questions posed by disembodied reason, Anselm takes up difficult questions to have the aporiae they expose serve faith.

Anselm's pursuit of paradox and necessity, of that which cannot be understood and which cannot *not* be understood, is simply the most extreme version of this strategy. It sets the highest goal for reason in seeking necessity from paradox, plumbing faith's deepest mysteries, thereby revealing more problems before delivering greater understanding. In *Cur Deus homo* it is quite literally the Pauline "absence of things hoped for" that Boso is asked to dwell within, for the task of book I of *Cur Deus homo* is to make Christ's absence more and more real to Boso. Anselm is convinced that the thorough consideration of the world and human being *remoto Christo* will lead inexorably to the necessity of the Son's incarnation. His conceit is that by making Christ disappear, he can be made to appear.

The finding of problems, even contradictions, in the divine nature in the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, the creation of aporia about the will and the fall in the dialogues, are all ways of making the thing that is sought disappear, by moving it beyond the power of reason to grasp it. In the *Proslogion* Anselm makes reason feel the losses it proposes, the loss of the word and Word. In *Cur Deus homo*, Boso must experience the absence of Christ in order to come to see his presence as necessary. Thus, rationally examining the claims of faith Anselm seeks to understand, in all their apparent impossibility, is the very way toward understanding them as necessary. In the same way, in the prayers, realization of the impos-

sibility of saving oneself leads to the possibility of salvation by the all-powerful, all-loving God. This, then, is what Anselm means when he has Boso declare that the task for the reason of unbeliever and believer is the same. For the very assumption of the nonbeliever, that there is no incarnation or no God, becomes the possibility the believer must consider which will lead him toward a glimpse of the logic of the contrary. This consideration will lead him both to greater understanding but also understanding of what he does not understand.

In the companion meditation, Anselm is clear on the role seeking understanding has in spiritual life. Extending the metaphor of monastic rumination, Anselm advises chewing, sucking and swallowing: "Chew by thinking (*cogitando*), suck by understanding (*intelligendo*), swallow by loving and rejoicing."[288] *Cur Deus homo* and other treatises clearly fit into Anselm's overall program as chewing and sucking. Chewing involves a kind of breaking down, analogous to the consideration of objections and criticisms (*cogitando*), while sucking involves pulling out all the juices to savor the taste, analogous to finding the logic, the reasons for what is believed (*intelligendo*). As in the prayers, the crucial first step is throwing off lethargy, rousing oneself to consideration of these things with mind and heart. That is achieved by letting oneself be drawn into consideration of these matters, allowing questions and problems to arise, and then moving from questions to answers, problems to reasons.

This strategy of rationalism in the service of faith has its dangers. Even if Anselm intends (and even if he succeeds) in transforming the problem from being an outsider's objection to a genuine question for believers, making it an internal problem to grapple with intellectually and emotionally, surely others did not make this transition so thoroughly or successfully. Moreover, even if Anselm succeeds for himself and his readers, the internalization of an outsider's perspective may be just as much a kind of violence to that other as externalization. The attempt to understand and dwell within another's shoes can as easily result in the re-creation of another in one's own image. The obvious danger is that one will only create another which is more self than other. The next move, though not made by Anselm, is to reject and berate the outsider for not being the other of one's own creation. This, of course, is exactly what happened in some Christian attempts to understand their Jewish contemporaries. Having only the constructed, idealized Jew based on their reading of Hebrew scripture, medieval Christians were unable to accept the reality of medieval rabbinic Judaism, an otherness not part of their

288. *Med. 3*, S III, 84, 10–11.

image. It led them, on the one hand, to burn copies of the Talmud as heretical to Judaism, and, on the other, to inveigh against the perversity of Jewish unbelief in Christianity. For how could they fail to believe when the evidence and arguments were so convincing?

Rational reflection on theological matters can become what Kierkegaard so brilliantly caricatures in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*: "Suppose a man who say that he has faith, but desires to make his faith clear to himself, so as to understand himself in his faith. Now the comedy begins again. The object of faith becomes almost probable, as good as probable, extremely and emphatically probable."[289] Kierkegaard worried that this project had produced the false and elitist confidence of the believer. The other possibility is the one enacted in the burning of the Talmuds in the Middle Ages and, of course, beyond: the disparagement of those Jews, Muslims, or heretics who were not converted by arguments like Anselm's.

If there is anything that saves Anselm from becoming Kierkegaard's caricature (or worse), it is the potent prick of desire that reminds him he does not have what he wants. Anselm always, at the beginning, middle, and end of his most indubitable arguments feels and allows himself to feel his lacks—of understanding, feeling, unity, sanctity. His unsatiated desire keeps him from self-satisfaction and security at his success over an opponent. Anselm begins his meditation describing the delight and enjoyment of the contemplation of one's salvation through Christ, and one might mistake this, as many have expressions of joy in the treatises, for the triumphant completion of Anselm's project. [290] But it is absolutely crucial to note that the meditation ends not in delight but in desire: "I beg you, Lord, make me taste by love what I taste by knowing (*cognitionem*), that I might perceive (*sentiam*) by feeling (*affectum*) what I perceive (*sentio*) by understanding (*intellectum*)."[291] God has made him seek (*quaerere*), now he asks to find (*invenire*), has taught the knocking, now, he asks, open to the knock.[292] What has been achieved is seeking, knocking, not the experience of union and presence, not the disappearance of all barriers between self and God, finite mind and Truth. As was noted earlier about the similar ending to the *Proslogion*, it is not that nothing has been achieved in the chewing and sucking of reason on the things of faith, but it is equally important to realize that for Anselm it is not yet time to swallow: not everything has been achieved.

289. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, edited and translated by Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 177.

290. *Med. 3*, S III, 84.

291. *Med. 3*, S III, 91, 196–97.

292. *Med. 3*, S III, 91, 203–4.

Anselm notes the peculiar state in which his inquiries conclude: a grasp of the reasons supporting the things of faith, simultaneously seen as exceeding one's grasp. In both the *Epistola* and *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm refers to suffering or tolerating what one cannot understand even as he proclaims, both before and after such statements, to have found indubitable reasons.[293] Anselm is constantly drawing attention to this tension, acting it out, not just describing it. Part of the truth of faith he seeks to understand is what *cannot* be understood about it, as well as what can. Anselm expresses that tension in his meditation in a series of parallel constructions of opposites, his favorite literary trope:

> What strength [is there] in such weakness? . . . What exaltation in such humility? What [is there] to revere in such contempt? O concealed valor: a man hung *(pendentem)* from a cross suspends *(suspendere)* the weight of eternal death for the whole human race; a man nailed *(confixum)* to wood loosens *(diffigere)* the bonds *(affixum)* holding the world in perpetual death. O secret power: a man condemned with thieves saves men condemned with devils; a man stretched on a gibbet draws all to himself. O hidden strength: one soul sent into torment extracts innumerable [souls] from hell; a man submits to the death of the body and destroys the death of souls.[294]

We saw many of these types of parallel constructions in earlier works, most frequently in the prayers. For Anselm the story of Christ's life and death is a story of the way in which outcomes come from their opposites, strength from weakness, salvation from damnation, life from death. In this way he expresses both what is radically overwhelming to ordinary expectation in the effect of Christ's passion but gives to it a kind of order, the order of paradox. Life, salvation, freedom do not emerge randomly from things unrelated to them but come from their opposites. Anselm's ordered paradoxes attempt to express a kind of aesthetic coherence to salvation. The effect is to give a sense neither of disorder and irrationality, nor or their opposites, but of a kind of order and rationality beyond human reason.

Bringing oneself to inquire is for Anselm, as it was for Augustine, the meditation makes clear, a way toward self-knowledge, which is intimately tied up with knowledge of God. Anselm expresses this important Augustinian theme in his argumentative works by bringing his interlocutor to aporiae. Anselm's arguments explore what one does not understand, first about the faith and then about objections to the faith. Finding out what one does not know by identifying with heretics and infidels, see-

293. EDIV 13, S II, 31, 4; CDH II, 16, S II, 117, 7.
294. *Med.* 3, S III, 84, 19–85, 29.

ing what is compelling and worthwhile about their questions, is the first movement. It is followed by a second—understanding what it means to live *remoto Christo*, understanding oneself in one's true condition without salvation. Self-deception and the lack of self-knowledge is a theme Anselm sounds several times in this third meditation. His first mentions of it are somewhat defensive and accusatory, to the effect that those who do not grasp the truth are self deceived, which is the other side of the claim, mentioned above, that the truth does not refuse itself to anyone. Thus, Anselm concludes, anyone without the truth has only himself to blame.[295] This is the double-edged sword of rationalistic optimism and the rejection of esotericism. Insofar as truth is available to all, those who do not see the same truth can be blamed, and the more certain one feels of one's own truth, the more those who do not assent can be discounted. If Anselm ended on this note, it would be difficult to mitigate charges about the role of *Cur Deus homo* in clearing an intellectual path for religious persecution. But the ignorance for which one can be blamed is ignorance of *self*; the path toward the truth runs through the self. Anselm returns to the lack of self-knowledge as the meditation concludes. At this point he is no longer defensive but fully identifies with the state of self deception, speaking as did the opening of the *Proslogion* to that "little man (*homuncio*)": "You were without help and did not know it."[296] Turning to address Christ, he recalls, "I was in darkness for I knew nothing of myself."[297] What he does not know about himself is his own sin, according to the meditation. That sin, we know from the dialogues, at least in its original form, is lack of knowledge and acceptance of oneself as dependent creature. Thus to grasp one's need for God is to grasp oneself and to grasp God as beyond one's grasp.

295. *Med. 3*, S III, 85, 44–45.
296. *Med.* 3, S III, 89, 156.
297. *Med. 3*, S III, 90, 171–72.

7
The Later Works

From *Meditatio* to *Disputatio*

In the last two works of Anselm's corpus, *De processione Spiritus Sancti* and *De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae Dei cum libero arbitrio*, the basic themes of earlier works return: the metaphysics of God, the most specifically Christian (and most difficult) theological problems, and the "metaphysics of creaturehood." In these works we get a chance to see how Anselm's way of working with these issues developed by the end of his career. The most obvious change is that these last works are in more than one sense the most "scholastic" of his Anselm's writings. Even though *avant la lettre*, the works move further toward the scholastic model of disputation than the works on the Incarnation considered in chapter 6. The elements of dialogue in the classical, literary sense—particular interlocutors whose characters, prejudices, fears, and concerns become part of the discussion, where there is (more or less specifically laid out) a dramatic setting and some kind of dramatic transformation of the participants, especially the objector—have all been suppressed in these works.

De concordia uses the pronouns "us" (as those inquiring together), "you" (as the one posing objections), and "I" (as the one answering objections), but the "dialogue" is in indirect discourse; the "you" quickly disappears, reabsorbed into the "we" of Anselm's reply and silenced by the "I" who speaks without further interruption. Moreover, unlike *De libertate* and *De casu*, it takes as one of its main tasks the harmonization—not just of free choice with foreknowledge, predestination and free choice—but of scripture passages with Anselm's views and with each other. Thus not just in its suppression of the elements of dialogue, but in treating scripture markedly different from Anselm's dialogue trilogy, *De concordia* presages later scholastic methods.

De processione has a defined rather than disembodied objector in the

Greek church to whom the work returns for further arguments and objections. There are in addition a number of attempts to argue on the basis of other views those in the Greek church profess to share, but there is no dialogue between the Greek and Roman views. The work is virtually unbroken and unanswered argument on the topic, as befits the occasion for its writing—Anselm's presentation of the Latin view against the Greeks at the Council of Bari in 1098 at the request of Pope Urban II.[1] Like *De concordia,* a significant portion of the text is used to interpret scripture passages. Unlike, for example, the way in which the three dialogues are related to scripture, a deep consideration of only a few passages as a way of getting to the central themes in Christianity they adumbrate, these texts use scripture passages in the mode of a *sic et non*, as expressing apparent contradictions in scripture itself and in relationship to Anselm's positions.[2]

Gillian Evans argues that Anselm was pushed into this more disputational form in an attempt to write in the "new fashion" "acceptable to contemporary tastes."[3] The result is less distinctively Anselmian, less a work, she writes, that "only [Anselm] could have written."[4] It is clear that these works are different, yet they do develop out of themes and strategies we have seen in Anselm's previous work and there are important ways in which they could only have been written by Anselm. The extraordinary and relentless facility with language and argument, paradox and distinction, as well the construction and analysis of analogies and metaphors that mark Anselm's earlier work are present here as well. Moreover, we see in these works an important link between Anselm's mode of thinking and the full-blown scholasticism that was developing around

1. See Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury/Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, edited and translated by Richard W. Southern (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), book 2, xxxiv, 112–13. For an account of the council and who was present correlated with other contemporary chroniclers as well as thoughts about the relationship of the work to the terms of the actual debate, see Giles E. M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and His Theological Inheritance* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2004), 178–93.

2. Commentators have noted the greater quantity of scriptural passages in *De concordia* and *De processione* but have generally seen this as an increase in scripture's importance to Anselm in the latter works, rather than, as I do, as a change in the *way* in which scripture is integrated into these works. Cf. Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 6, and Thomas A. Losconcy, "Will in St. Anselm: An Examination of His Biblical and Augustinian Origins," in *Les Mutations socio-culturelles*, edited by Foreville, 701–8. See also, André Cantin, "Quelle Evolution? Quelle Signification historique des Méthodes d Anselme?" in *Saint Anselm—A Thinker for Yesterday and Today: Anselm's Thought Viewed by our Contemporaries*, *Proceedings of the International Anselm Conference, Centre National de Recherche Scientifique Paris*, edited by Coloman Viola and Frederick van Fleteren, Texts and Studies in Religion 90 (Lewiston, N.H.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 183–99.

3. Gillian R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 194–95.

4. Evans, *Talking about God*, 194.

and after him. Regardless of whether he is an innovator or follower of this development, these works form a window from which to see the transition toward scholasticism in a single author of remarkable talent whose work illuminates both what has come before and what follows.

De processione Spiritus Sancti: From Private Reflection to Public Debate

As was noted in chapter 6, Anselm's language to describe the Trinity underwent one shift from the *Monologion* to the *De incarnatione*. Where the *Monologion* rejected the language of persons as truly proper to the Trinity, concluding with the Trinity as "three-I-know-not-whats,"[5] *De incarnatione* took up the language of persons, though in a qualified way, in order to respond to Roscelin and, perhaps, critics of Anselm's own strategy in the *Monologion*. In *De processione* there is a second shift as Anselm concentrates on the analysis of the persons of the Trinity as constituted by their relations.

A number of scholars see Anselm's shift in language for the Trinity as a progression in some way—from Augustinian to Aristotelian language, from a psychological to relational model, from one grounded in procession to one grounded in relations of opposition. Anselm had to move to this notion of relations in an Aristotelian sense, some argue, in order to deal successfully with the questions of those trained in dialectic as well as differences with the Greek church.[6] Anselm is pushed into this controversy with the Greek church, rather than moving this way of his own accord, just as he was pushed by Roscelin to discuss the Incarnation in relation to the Trinity.[7] Nonetheless, Anselm has taken up the task given him by Pope Urban enthusiastically. What I consider here is how the occasion (the conflict with the Greek church) and the aim (decisive defense of the Latin view on the procession of the Holy Spirit) are connected not just to the shift in trinitarian terminology (based on opposing relations), but to the method, tone, and aim of theological discourse Anselm takes up in this work.

5. *Mono*. 79, S I, 85, 14.

6. Peter Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics: Developments of Latin Trinitarian Theology between c. 1075 and c. 1160," in *Trinitarian Theology in the Medieval West*, edited by Pekka Kärkkäinen (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Seura, 2007), 10–13.

7. Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics," 20, n. 34. This in contrast to Deme who suggests Anselm chose to interest himself in the controversies of the day. See Daniel Deme, *The Christology of Anselm of Canterbury* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate , 2003), 143.

Shifting Terminology

Anselm begins with what is shared with the Greek church: the names for the three persons. The Father and Son are already given as relational names and Anselm deftly fits the Holy Spirit into this same mode as the Spirit *of someone*, asserting further that "he is the spirit of God and the Spirit of the Father and the Son."[8] This is not, Anselm adds immediately, to jump to the desired conclusion but to articulate further shared ground: "For although the Greeks deny that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, they do not deny that He is the spirit of the Son."[9] Further common ground is educed from what it means to say in the creed, "God from God." God is from God in two ways, both churches hold, by being begotten and proceeding. The "cause of plurality" in the Trinity, Anselm asserts, is that the persons cannot be called by each other's names.[10] It seems odd to say that the names can *cause* plurality, but what Anselm seems to mean is that the Father is father because there is another who is son. In the same way the Spirit is spirit because the spirit of someone else. In other words, the names in so far as they have some kind of meaning are relational names requiring plurality. There cannot be a father without a son.

Anselm's strategy is in effect to box in his opponents by constructing a basic principle governing divine predication of the one and triune God: "So, therefore, the consequences of this unity and this plurality are so combined together (*contemperant*) so that neither the plurality which follows from relation transfers to those things in which the simplicity of aforementioned unity resounds (*sonat*), nor does the unity hinder plurality where this relation is signified."[11] The restatement of this principle in the sentence which follows it is the only entry by Anselm in Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum*, a compendium of what is deemed standard doctrine; Anselm's principle was also used to express the Latin view at the Council of Florence in 1438 to 1445.[12]

What Anselm articulates in this tightly constructed principle in *De processione* is not so different from what he writes in chapter 43 of the *Monologion*: "For they are so opposite in their relationship that none can assume the property of another; they are so harmonious in their nature (*concordes natura*) that one always holds the essence of the other."[13] What is common to both stylistically is the use of parallel oppositions whose tension seems to hold them in balance. What is different, besides the use

8. DPS 1, S II, 178, 6–7.
9. DPS 1, S II, 178, 10–12.
10. DPS 1, S II, 179, 12–14.
11. DPS 1, S II, 180, 30–181, 2.
12. Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics," 22.
13. *Mono.* 43, S I, 60, 5–7.

of more technical sounding language in *De processione*, is that *De processione* makes explicit the ways in which the two claims balance each other such that unity and plurality act as a check on each other: "While the unity does not even lose its consequence where it does not meet with an opposition of relation, nor does relation [lose] what is its own except when it is opposed by inseparable unity."[14] This, of course, fits the purpose of *De processione*, whose goal is to construct limits on what can be said in a more doctrinal and public way than the reflections of the *Monologion*. *De processione's* principle does not merely allow but *demands* the *filioque* while disallowing claims like "the Son exists from Father and Spirit." Given the principle that the only differences are relational, Anselm argues that it must be the case that *either* the Son exists from the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit from the Son.[15] But the former cannot be the case: the Son can neither be begotten by the Spirit (else he would be son of the Spirit) nor proceed from the Spirit (else he would be the spirit of the Spirit).[16] Therefore, the latter, that the Spirit proceeds from Son (and Father), must be true, Anselm concludes.

Anselm attempts to derive the *filioque* by considering what actually defines the Holy Spirit as distinct from the Father. Anselm insists that it is being from the Father that makes the Holy Spirit Holy Spirit. While it is true that the Holy Spirit, unlike the Father, has no Son and has no Spirit proceeding from Him, these differences are "not the *cause* (*causa*) of [Father and Son] being distinct persons."[17] What and that the Holy Spirit is is being from the Father; he has both his existing and his being other simultaneously.[18] If that were not the case, the Holy Spirit could preexist the Father, which, clearly, would destroy the whole notion of the Trinity. In the same way, the distinctness of Father and Son is the source of both alterity and being simultaneously. The Father *is* and is different from the Son because Father of the Son. In the same way, "what the Spirit is *essentially* is from the Father (*hoc ipsum quod est essentialiter, sit spiritus sanctus de patre*)," Anselm insists, contra the Greeks.[19] If not, he argues, there is no way to distinguish Father and Spirit since both are one and the same God.[20] In this Anselm is also very clearly claiming, contra the Greek church, that the persons *are* the relations.[21]

14. DPS 1, S II, 181, 2–4.
15. DPS 1, S II, 183, 15–18.
16. DPS, S II, 185, 21–22.
17. DPS 2, S II, 186, 20–187, 6.
18. DPS 2, S II, 187, 19–188, 7.
19. DPS 2, S II, 186, 5–6.
20. DPS 2, S II, 186, 8–9.
21. Gasper notes that, of course, Greek views on these topics were not monolithic and that Gregory Nazianzen not only used the same analogy we will see return later, that of spring-river-lake, but that Gregory shares with Anselm "the emphases on the Trinity representing properties not natures and on the fact that it is the names which provide distinctions rather than any distinc-

But the opposition is not just between the persons—that, for example, Father and Son define each other by their opposition (because father, not son and because son, not father)—but also between unity and plurality. God is one up to and until something requires plurality and vice versa. Anselm argues that if God exists from God it must be that the whole exists from the whole. Here the unity required by the unity of God who cannot have parts is explanatory. If whole is from whole and the persons are not separate gods, then when the Son is from God, he is from the one, whole God, hence from both Father and Holy Spirit, "if" (the crucial qualifier) "nothing opposes it."[22] The same thing can be said for the Holy Spirit: if from God, then from whole God, then from Father and Son.[23] Thus, Anselm argues, unity is what is operative: either the Son is from the Holy Spirit (and Father) or Holy Spirit from Son (and Father) *unless* something prevents it. Something does prevent the Son being from the Father and Holy Spirit. The Son cannot be from the Holy Spirit either by being begotten or processing; if begotten, the Holy Spirit would be the Father, and if proceeding, the Son would be the Spirit of the Holy Spirit.[24] All the relations, including the relation of the Holy Spirit to Father and Son, are governed *both* by unity and relation, relation in so far as Holy Spirit is distinct from both Father and Son, and unity in so far as the Holy Spirit is God from God, whole from whole. The Holy Spirit is from the whole of God, except where he cannot be. He cannot be from himself; hence, he is from Father and Son.

Anselm also argues not just that the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son but that the Spirit, like the Son, is "God from God."[25] He maintains, contra the Greeks, that the Spirit's being "God from God" is the reason for his being from the Father, rather than vice versa. If the Spirit were "God from God" *because* the Spirit is from the Father, that would mean that the Spirit is from the Father *qua* Father, in which case he would "exist not from the Father's deity but from the Father's relation," a result which is, Anselm contends, "*stultissimum*."[26]

Anselm is willing to consider the possibility of two different proces-

tion of being." Gregory too is "conscious of the need to emphasize that each individual person of the Trinity was at the same time wholly and completely God." Gasper, *Anselm's Theological Inheritance,* 141–43.

22. DPS 1, S II, 184, 10–11.

23. DPS 1, S II, 184, 11–12.

24. DPS 1, S II, 185, 20–24.

25. The Nicene Creed only describes the Son (and not the Holy Spirit) as "true God from true God, light from light" but Anselm derives this as an attribute of the Spirit, which like the *filioque* is not in the creed. DPS 2, S II, 189. He also argues that since the Greeks do not object to this corollary drawn from the premises of the creed, that the Holy Spirit is "God from God," then the objection to the *filioque* cannot just be because it is an addition to the creed.

26. DPS 2, S II, 189, 23–190, 7.

sions for the Holy Spirit, one as existing from the Father and another as given or sent out from God, but argues that such a distinction cannot be used to defend the orthodox view, in the claim that the Spirits exists from the Father but is sent by or through the Son. Anselm insists that if there are two different processions, the Spirit must be understood to proceed from both Father and Son in both.[27]

Anselm's way of distinguishing the persons here is sometimes described as grounded in "relations of opposition" or "opposition of relations," by which is usually meant according to a type of relation which is in its essence nonreciprocal. Thus, Father is father because of the Son and for this very reason cannot be son of his Son.

Anselm is strongly taking the position that there is *a* privileged way, an essential way of distinguishing the persons, and that the privileged way is according to these asymmetrical relations. The entire system of predication Anselm has mapped out for the Trinity is governed by an exclusive "or": A is B or C but neither both nor neither, and, moreover, being B is exactly what makes it impossible A to be C and vice versa. The logic which governs here is not just the principle of excluded middle, either something is A or not A. Anselm explicitly denies that this logic is tight enough to direct trinitarian predication: Father and Son are not distinct *because* the Son has a father but the Father does not, Father is not distinct from the Spirit *because* the Spirit has no spirit proceeding from him while the Father does.[28] Rather the notion of reciprocal limitation operates both in the relations between the persons *and* between divine unity and plurality. In this way, Daniel Deme argues, Anselm transforms God's self-relation into "a rigid formal system" that functions as a logical "trap" for his opponent.[29] Anselm's principle, as he applies it, does have something of that feel. Any escape one might make in one direction, whether it is unity or plurality, Anselm quickly points out, is cut off in the other.

There are important ways in which the argument forms and strategies in these two long opening chapters are continuous with Anselm's earlier work. His arguments are grounded in definitions and essential properties of the persons and divine nature out of which he constructs a necessary chain of inferences. The grounds of his claims are uniformly reason; he makes no reference to scripture or authority in these opening two chapters.[30] Even the common ground the Latin and Greek churches

27. DPS 2, S II, 189, 1–9.
28. DPS 2, S II, 186, 15–20.
29. Deme, *Christology of Anselm*, 145.
30. There is one quotation of scripture in chapter 2: John 3:8; DPS 2, S II, 189, 5–6.

share is articulated in terms of positions or propositions, not, scripture or even strictly creedal language. Though Anselm makes reference to the creeds (Athanasian and Nicene), they are treated as generating propositions to serve as premises rather than as texts to be interpreted. He follows the logic of the divine rather than creaturely metaphysics, in the sense that rather than distinguishing different sense of terms, mirroring the complexity of creatures, he follows the logic of simplicity as befitting the divine. The arguments he constructs using the principle of the mutual limitation of plurality and unity are often disjunctive syllogisms: either A or B; not A; therefore B. He plays out the absurd consequences of A (e.g., that Son is from the Holy Spirit) even when it is not really necessary because this is not an alternative even remotely considered by either party. The rhetorical impression created is of an intensely and completely logical advocate who methodically considers all possible options and concludes that there is one and only one that can be true. It recalls the arguments of *De incarnatione* in which Anselm systematically took up and refuted each possible configuration of his opponent's position.

De processione has an intensity and relentlessness of argument piled upon argument not matched in Anselm's earlier works. Deme complains that "the treatise proceeds through an almost unreadable speculative logical proof structure, where one proof follows the other."[31] As a result, *De processione* is, he argues, "the least spiritual and most ideologically prejudiced of all his works."[32] Gone are the reflections on the way in which all language falls short of the divine reality. Instead, Anselm's basic principle, immortalized at the Council of Florence and in Denzinger, sets up strict parameters for trinitarian language. Anselm has always been relentless in his composition of necessary arguments requiring assent, but there is a sense in which *De processione* is more about winning than previous works. Anselm's task is more about articulating the necessary principles of orthodoxy than "faith seeking understanding." While these are not necessarily opposed and *De processione* is the use of understanding to understand the things of faith, it is surely less exploratory, less interested in having its audience experience the moments of aporetic paradox than the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. Anselm is after certainty in a way that is not balanced by the articulation of intractable problems

31. Deme, *Christology of Anselm*, 144.

32. Deme, *Christology of Anselm*, 144. Gasper disagrees, however, describing the work as "entirely unpolemical." What Gasper seems to mean by this, however, is that Anselm's approach is not to "berate and insult his fellow Christians but to persuade them rationally." Gasper, *Anselm's Theological Inheritance,* 185. Anselm is surely respectful and focused on the issue not the proponents of the Greek view, but he is also focused very sharply on defeating that opponent.

and paradoxical outcomes the way we have found in earlier works. This mode of arguing without hesitation and without concession continues for the rest of the work as Anselm sets out to refute possible objections.

The Rhetoric of Refutation

Jasper Hopkins's analysis of the structure of *De processione* divides it into Anselm's basic argument for the Latin and against the Greek view (completed in the first chapter) followed by his defense of the Latin view in response to a series of possible objections from the Greeks, the task which occupies the remainder of the work.[33] There are, however, more complex divisions in the text marked by the shifts in tone and approach to the issue. A close look at the text shows that the division between Anselm's positive statement and defenses against objections is not so clear. Anselm considers objections (though unattributed) in chapter 1, and even though at the opening of chapter two Anselm names the Greeks, the alternation of the attribution of objections to the Greeks and simply to "someone" or voiced passively as "it is asked," continues throughout the work.[34] Hopkins and Richardson's translation adds "the Greeks" to the text as the source of objections in ways that are perfectly sensible because they are specific and known to be Greek views.[35] Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Anselm does not always name the Greeks as the objectors, referring explicitly to the Greeks as or more often along with the Latins where he is articulating shared views.

The second and more substantial reason for dividing the text a bit differently is to bring out the difference in the nature of the objections and Anselm's tone as he works through the arguments. The first two chapters form a unit as Anselm's basic statement of his view; the objections he articulates in these opening sections are in effect used to further his own position. So, for example, the discussion of whether the Holy Spirit is "God from God" serves as a gateway for Anselm to discuss what makes the persons both plural and distinct.[36] Similarly, the objection that the Holy Spirit's procession means being "sent by" rather than "being from" the Father allows Anselm to derive the *filioque* from both meanings of procession.[37]

Having made his argument for the *filioque*, Anselm then sets out in

33. Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), 110–11.

34. See DPS 8, S II, 199, 7; DPS 11, S II, 206, 20; 208, 1.

35. DPS 9–10. See *Anselm of Canterbury*, 4 vols., edited and translated by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), vol. 3, 209–12, 214.

36. DPS 2, S II, 185–87.

37. DPS 2, S II, 188, 15–189, 17.

the next section to confront the scriptural evidence. What is remarkable about these discussions (occupying five chapters or sections of the sixteen-chapter work) is how similar they are in their argumentative strategies to the nonscripture based arguments with which Anselm began.[38] A favored pattern is to cite the passage, propose alternatives for its interpretation and, using the same disjunctive syllogistic form, dispose of one alternative so that only the other remains (sometimes he argues that both alternatives lead to the same conclusion that Spirit proceeds from Father and Son).[39] For example, Anselm starts off with John 17:3: "But this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." "The only true God," Anselm goes on to argue, signifies either Father and Son together or Father or Son alone. But Father alone or Son alone has to be able to signify the "only true God" or each person would not be "perfect God" and God would be a composite of the persons.[40] Anselm's other favorite strategy, also recognizable from other works, is to construct a string of phrases which are equivalent and, hence, substitutable.[41] Thus Anselm argues, that when Jesus refers to the "Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name," "'the Father will send in my name' means only 'the Father will send in the name of the Son.' Hence, what does 'the Father will send in the name of the Son' mean except that the Father will send as if the Son were sending, so that when the Father sends, the Son is understood to send?"[42] What is unusual here is not Anselm's use of these argument forms but his use of them on scripture. This was not, we recall, how he worked with scripture in the three dialogues, works which are described by Anselm as concerned with scripture, nor is it how Augustine used scripture to support the *filioque*.[43]

38. According to some commentators, Anselm sets out to justify the *filioque* from scripture while Augustine does not. See Dennis K. P. Ngien, "The *Filioque* Clause in the Teaching of Anselm of Canterbury—Part 2," *Churchman* 118 (2004): 219. Cf. David Coffey, "The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son," *Theological Studies* 51 (1990): 199. The contrast stated this strongly does not hold. Augustine's position that the Holy Spirit comes from Father and Son and does quote scripture by way of introduction and explanation of this point. See Augustine, *De Trinitate* IV, 20, 29; V, 11, 12; 14, 15. Augustine cites some of the same passages Anselm does (John 14:26; 15:26). The difference is that Anselm cites many more scripture passages, relying very heavily on passages from the Gospel of John (15 of the 25 passages cited in chapters 3–7 and 11, those sections devoted exclusively to scriptural evidence, are from John; the remaining ten come from six other biblical sources).

39. DPS 7, S II, 199, 7–23.

40. DPS 3, S II, 190, 21–30.

41. On the method of argument by "equipollent propositions," see chapter 3.

42. DPS 4, S II, 191, 15–192, 5.

43. See Augustine, *De Trinitate* IV, 20, 29; V, 11, 12; 14, 15. Augustine does not attempt to analyze the reference of subject terms and pronouns as Anselm does both because his treatment is less polemical and because his approach to scripture is less narrowly grammatical and logical than Anselm's.

The context of the debate with the Greek church perhaps requires this kind of analysis since they share scripture but not its interpretation, but there is something narrow and legalistic about his approach to scripture in *De processione* that we have not seen in other works. Anselm analyzes these passages *only* in order to establish the reference of the nouns or noun phrases referring to God or the persons. His readings are intricate and precise. He argues, for example, that "the breath of his Mouth" in "the heavens were established by the word of the Lord, and by the breath of his mouth all their excellence" (Ps. 32:6) means "the Father's essence," "for His mouth is nothing other than His essence."[44] Anselm makes an argument that the reference of the pronoun *quis* in "not anyone knows the Son except the Father" is not just human persons but any person (else the passage would not have "except the Father").[45] And so on. We can almost tot up the points Anselm is amassing as he moves through passage after passage.

There is a feel to both of these opening sections of relentlessness and almost lightning round speed as Anselm sifts through arguments and objections as quickly as he can. He, for example, immediately counters scripture passages put forward for the Greek view with others supporting the Latin view.[46] The breathless quality, both in the presentation of arguments and the interpretation of scripture, only seems to abate after Anselm senses he has taken the hill and can defend from a position of strength. In the next section of the text, Anselm begins to answer more substantive and problematic objections and turns to consider the plausible rejoinders the Greeks can make to the Latin view. Thus Anselm discusses the ways in which they would defend their view against the outright absurdities into which Anselm argues it falls, and gives what he takes to be the strongest arguments and evidence they can offer in favor of their view. Thus, Anselm considers both what are the most important substantive problems with the Latin view—that it introduces gradation into the Trinity and gives the Holy Spirit *two* causes or sources—and the most substantive rejoinder for the Greek view—that they do not deny *any* role for the Son in the procession of the Spirit, but claim that the Spirit proceeds *from* the Father *through* the Son.[47]

Objectors argue that the *filioque* introduces gradation, Anselm ex-

44. DPS 5, S II, 194, 27–195, 28.

45. DPS 7, S II, 198, 2–5.

46. DPS 7, S II, 198, 6–10.

47. Gasper speculates that the notion of the Holy Spirit as *per filium* might correspond to a discussion in the original debate at Bari; Anselm writes "we are told" that the Greeks hold this view of the Son's role in the procession of the Holy Spirit. Athanasius may be the source of this formulation, Gasper notes. See Gasper, *Anselm's Theological Inheritance*, 186.

plains, because it implies that the Holy Spirit cannot exist until *after* the Son is begotten. What should be said instead, the objector continues, is that both exist equally from the Father, that the Son and Holy Spirit are to the Father as brightness and heat, and, hence, exist not from each other but equally from one sun.[48] On the one hand, in his response Anselm upholds the analogy for the way in which it mirrors that Son and Holy Spirit are neither "lesser nor later" than each other nor than the Father.[49] On the other hand, he points out the ways in which the analogy does not hold. We do not say that "the sun exists from the sun, or that the sun and what exists from the sun are the same thing, or that the three things are one sun."[50] If the sun were like the Trinity in these respects, either the heat would have to come from the brightness or vice versa because it would come from the whole (just as the Holy Spirit, who is God from God, comes from the whole God, hence from Father and Son).[51] Moreover, if the Trinity did follow the pattern for sun, brightness and heat, there is no way for the Spirit to be the Son's Spirit without the Son being the Spirit's Son. But like the Roman church, the Greek church wants to affirm the former and deny the latter.[52]

Anselm's response to the Greek view that the Holy Spirit is *through* the Son is an elaborate analysis of his own analogy for the Trinity as spring, river, and lake. He first argues that the passage from which this view derives, "all things are from Him and through Him and in Him" (Rom. 11:36), cannot be applied reflexively to the persons, else they would exist from, through, and in themselves, which is impossible.[53] But Anselm then accepts the language, not as the persons being from, through and in themselves, but of Holy Spirit as being *through* the Son just as all things are created *through* the Word: "Let us see what follows if we say this and peace be between us," Anselm declares.[54] Anselm thus marks how far he is willing to go to meet his opponent, to take their claim as a supposition by taking it back to his own analogy of Trinity. The spring-river-lake analogy seems to support a distinction between the way in which the Holy Spirit is from the Father as opposed to the Son being from the Father, for the lake is from the river in a different way than it is from the spring. Here for the only time, Anselm has his opponent address him directly in the second person, laying out most clearly the terms of their difference: "the question between us is about the word 'procession,' which you assert to be from the Son and we deny."[55]

48. DPS 8, S II, 199, 25–32.
49. DPS 8, S II, 200, 6.
50. DPS 8, S II, 200, 1–12.
51. DPS 8, S II, 200, 21–25.
52. DPS 8, S II, 201, 1–9.
53. DPS 9, S II, 201, 15–202, 8.
54. DPS 9, S II, 203, 1.
55. DPS 9, S II, 203, 26–27.

Anselm undertakes a defense of the spring-river-lake analogy as supporting the Roman rather than the Greek view of the Holy Spirit's relationship to the other persons with a kind of earnest thoroughness that is out of keeping with the relative weakness of analogical arguments but completely in line with the tone of the work as a whole.[56] He devotes several pages to the analysis of the analogy, deriving the conclusion that Holy Spirit is from Father and Son as the lake is from both river and stream with the same necessity as he derived it from the metaphysics of God and from scripture. Anselm first makes the same argument he made earlier without the mediation of the analogy, that you cannot have the Holy Spirit *through* the Son without him being *from* the Son. In the same way, then, *through* the river implies *from* the river, he argues.[57]

The most interesting argument is his attempt to distinguish the spring *qua* spring from the river *qua* river. "In the spring the water bubbles up from the depths; in the river, the spring flows down from the spring; in the lake it collects and remains."[58] One is not from the other in virtue of what *distinguishes* it from the other two but in virtue of what is one and the same: the very same water.[59] In the same way, then, Holy Spirit is from what is common to Father and Son, deity, rather than what distinguishes them.

Anselm uses the second person in direct address once more, this time in his own voice to address the Greeks at the end of a second series of interpretations of scriptural passages. "Do you see how," he asks, "in these [passages] I have proposed, that what he attributes as if to one [person] cannot be separated from the other two persons?"[60] Anselm does not interpret the passages literally but reads them as referring to the doctrine of the Trinity.[61] He cites a number of passages where Jesus refers to the Father but not the Holy Spirit; on these, Anselm argues that given the basic unity of the three persons in one God the Spirit must be inferred.[62] For example, Anselm writes, "when [the Son] says, 'Who sees me sees the Father,' the Holy Spirit is not divided off, since who sees that in which the Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one cannot see one of these without the two others."[63] In a similar way, Anselm argues, we

56. Anselm does refer once in *De processione* to the contrast between the analogy as temporal and spatial and the eternal God. See DPS 9, S II, 204.

57. DPS 9, S II, 204, 1–12.

58. DPS 9, S II, 204, 31–205, 2.

59. DPS 9, S II, 205, 2–3.

60. DPS 11, S II, 207, 21–22.

61. Nine passages are discussed, 7 from the Gospel of John, two from Matthew and only one where Jesus mentions the Spirit but not the Father (John 16:13). The passages are John 15:26, Matt. 16:17, Matt. 11:27, John 14:9, John 16:13, John 17:3, John 5:26, John 14:10–11, John 14:9.

62. DPS 11, S II, 206–9.

63. DPS 11, S II, 207, 12–15.

need to understand the Holy Spirit to proceed from Father and Son even though it is not explicitly said. Anselm knows that, both in his analysis of analogies for the Trinity and in his interpretation of scripture, his case rests on similarity. Defending himself against the claim that asserting the procession of Spirit from Father and Son is merely "to assert by our own sense what is nowhere said," Anselm proposes an alternate account of his interpretive principle: "We are taught by those things which are said to understand in a similar way in similar sayings things which are passed over in silence, especially when there is no rational contradiction in those things which are not said, where we see most clearly that a rational necessity follows."[64]

The last section of the work (chapters 14–16) is both a summary and an attempt to give an account of the relations between the persons in language that takes on the peculiarities of the divine metaphysics. The tension in these chapters is between the certainty with which Anselm declares his conclusion proved and the complications of divine metaphysics that make complete understanding impossible. On the one hand, Anselm constructs a tight box—or rather triangle—forming the boundaries of trinitarian predication on all sides. From "rational" considerations, Anselm contends, he arrives at definitions based on the set of opposed relations he began with. On the other hand, in formulations somewhat reminiscent of the language of the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, Anselm reflects on the discontinuities between personhood in the godhead and in creatures.

In this section for the first time in the work Anselm dwells on the difficulty of grasping how Son and Holy Spirit can exist from the Father, and Holy Spirit can be *principally* from the Father (his concession to the Greek view) without making Son less than the Father and the Holy Spirit less than both.[65] Anselm notes that procession and begottenness are just as different in God compared to creatures as is existence. Thus in God nothing is earlier or later, lesser or greater, more or less, even between the begetter and begotten, between that which proceeds and that from which it proceeds.[66] The language to describe exactly how this works is extremely fine-grained: "the whole is not so much equal to and similar to and coeternal with itself as it is identical with itself and wholly sufficient unto itself through itself."[67] Without some careful reading and knowledge of divine simplicity to see what distinction Anselm is actually making here, one might easily misread his claim as of the form "God

64. DPS 11, S II, 208, 5–11.
65. DPS 14, S II, 214, 5–10.
66. DPS 14, S II, 214, 7–20.
67. DPS 14, S II, 214, 16–19.

is not A but A." A shadow of the kind of language from the early works in which fine-grained distinctions were and were purposely only the tiniest hair away from contradiction is still discernible here: "For the Father is not one God and the Son another God, nor are they dissimilarly that which they are; but in that which this one is Father and that one Son this one is different from that one." And, he continues, "when we say God from God, and Son from Father, we do not understand one God from another God but the very same God from the very same God, even though we say the one from the other, i.e., the Son from the Father, construe this to mean not that one God exists from another God but that the same God exists from the same God—even though we say 'the one exists from the other,' i.e., that the Son exists from the Father."[68] The language is precise, not mystical or poetic, but what it works to describe is so unlike anything else that the claims have to be pondered carefully. The tempo for the reader slows noticeably in these moments and stands in contrast to the quick pile up of arguments in the early sections. The very accuracy and care of the language is the source of its beauty as Anselm cuts the facets on the diamond with extraordinary skill, to give some sense of the peculiar nature of the Christian Trinity as, according to Burcht Pranger, "unity achieved . . . without the suspension of otherness."[69] Just as the paradox of the Incarnation reappears in a sense in the structure of Anselm's arguments, there is something trinitarian captured in the reasoning itself. For there is a sense that reasoning has remained even as it has been exceeded, that claims which seem to be only synonymous restatements are nonetheless saying something different.

Anselm concludes his treatment almost triumphantly: "Behold we see from how much truth and how much necessity it follows that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son."[70] It follows so necessarily from premises that are taken from the shared faith of Greek and Latin churches, Anselm declares, that if the *filioque* is false, "the Christian faith is destroyed," and when it is taken as true, only other true things follow.[71]

The language devised to sum up the differences between the different persons following this claim of victory does not invite the same comparison to the language of the *Monologion* or *Proslogion* made above. Anselm articulates six clearly drawn distinctions, two pertaining to each person,

68. DPS 14, S II, 213, 18–24.

69. M. Burcht Pranger, "Unity and Diversity in Anselm of Canterbury," in *Saint Anselm—A Thinker for Yesterday and Today,* edited by Coloman Viola and Frederick van Fleteren, Texts and Studies in Religion 90 (Lewiston, N.H.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 324.

70. DPS 14, S II, 215, 5–6.

71. DPS 14, S II, 215, 9.

one of which is exclusive to that person, one shared with one other person but not the third. The clarity and simplicity of the language, which does not have to take account of the complexity of the simple divine nature, is a series of affirmations and negations: having and not having a father, having and not having a son, having and not having a spirit which proceeds.[72] The same negatives are evoked as Anselm throws his complete rhetorical weight onto the notions of relations of opposition. The persons are different because one exists from the other not vice versa; Son exists from the Father, not Father from Son; Holy Spirit exists from the Father, not Father from Holy Spirit.[73] Anselm's strategy from the beginning, when he defined the Holy Spirit as the spirit *of* someone, was to expand this logic of relations grounded on oppositions to the relationship between Son and Holy Spirit. So, he concludes, Holy Spirit exists from the Son, not Son from Holy Spirit.[74]

There is only a resolution of the tension between argumentative certainty and any residue of *docta ignorantia* remaining in *De processione* in a weak sense. If the opening section is marked by combativeness and extreme confidence in the coherence of the Latin view (he protests too much, perhaps), the final statements are somewhat less so. Anselm ends his reflections on a theme from *De incarnatione*: that divine and human persons are not differentiated in the same way. Anselm illustrates this point by likening the unity of three persons in the trinity to that of one point or line with another placed directly on it, and to light within light. For point, line, or light, there is no increase in quantity or plurality when one is added to another.[75] In what is perhaps a final, diplomatic move, Anselm avoids saying bluntly that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and* the Son. Instead he concludes with a characterization of each of the persons of the Trinity in terms of characteristics that are unique to them and that they share with one other of the persons and with the godhead as a unity.

When we look at the work as a whole, its progression fits classical rhetorical models. Anselm makes his argument in the strongest terms possible in the opening section, then becomes somewhat less combative by considering and then refuting the strongest claims that might be made for the opposition. He concludes by summarizing in a strong but less confrontational mode.[76] Though *De processione* is less extreme in its modulations, the work it most resembles in this regard is *De incarnatione*. *De*

72. DPS 16, S II, 216–17.
73. DPS 15, S II, 216, 14–19.
74. DPS 15, S II, 216, 19–22.
75. DPS 16, S II, 218, 10–14.
76. Cf. Cicero, *De inventione*, in *De inventione. De optimo genere oratorum. Topica*, translated by H. M. Hubbell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), book I, xlii, 78–lv, 109, 123–61. Anselm uses many of the modes of refutation described by Cicero. Refuta-

incarnatione has more pastoral aims, while *De processione* brings classical rhetoric more readily to mind because of its very public and quasi-juridical function. In a way what we learn from its rhetorical structure is how Anselm uses classical rhetorical forms to his own ends, a transformation we can read backwards through his corpus, seeing the rhetorical grounds of the pedagogical structuring of earlier texts.

As most readers of *De processione* have noted, Anselm's argument could not have done much to persuade the Greek Church and in an important way, Anselm cannot have taken that as his aim.[77] His strategy is more like that of a defense lawyer, whose task is not to win over the prosecution but the jury. But there is no one to play the role of juror. Those at Bari and any larger audience for the work are already proponents for one side or the other. It could be that *De processione* was no more constructed to convince the Greeks than *Cur Deus homo* was to convince Jews and Muslims but rather to support and defend the Christian faithful. The difference is that *De processione* is for public purposes not private devotion. We can in this way see it as a further development of an apparently pure, neutral reason in which the goal is to make the strongest possible arguments in an abstract sense to an ideal and neutral rather than real audience. It is continuous with the project of the *Proslogion,* which was to show even to one unwilling to believe they cannot *not* understand.[78] So here, Anselm's goal is to show even—in principle though not in fact—to those unwilling to grant the *filioque* that it must be true, else the whole of faith is false. But both in the *Proslogion* and in *De processione*, the point was not to actually convert those who are really unwilling but to give to the willing an argument that is convincing because not predicated on their willing belief. What is different is that in the earlier works, from the *Proslogion* to *Cur Deus homo*, Anselm constructed his arguments to convince the unbeliever who exists within every believer and aligned his project with the spiritual project of edifying that believer, through raising questions, awareness, and understanding. In *De processione* the support is institutional rather than individual and at that level tends more toward triumphalism than edification, it must be admitted. Given its use for institutional support, one can ask whether *De processione's* extension of the model of neutral reason represents progress or loss.

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tion, for Cicero, comes after the speaker has presented the basic arguments for his view and turns to consider the possible objections the opposite view can make, doing such things as presenting the most plausible grounds for the opposing view, granting it some points as a means toward a more convincing refutation.

77. See Gasper, *Anselm's Theological Inheritance*, 188, and Deme, *Christology of Anselm*, 144–45. This despite Eadmer's claims to the contrary. See Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm,* II, xxxiv, 112–13.

78. *Pros.* 4, S I, 104, 6–7.

The same question, whether *De processione* represents progress or loss, could also be asked about the terminology Anselm develops and defines here. Scholars examining the development of theology from the perspective of high and late scholasticism, classify Anselm's reflection on the Trinity in the *Monologion* as serving personal spiritual development. This project is for them somehow less important or rigorous than the kind of formulation of clear terminology and argument to solidify and support orthodox belief in *De processione*. For Gemeinhardt, Anselm's reflection on the Trinity in the *Monologion*, insofar as it followed in the path created by Augustine's psychological analogy, "was adequate to meet the needs of the monks of the abbey of Bec who did not raise critical questions about the Trinity but simply wanted to be delighted by being taught that man was able not only to believe in God but also to recognize the inner rationale of the Trinity in himself." It was not sufficient to deal with "the main question that had arisen at the end of the eleventh century: how to speak of the unity of God while maintaining the threeness of persons."[79] On this view, Anselm and theology must make a choice between "follow[ing] the grammar of everyday language and down-to-earth dialectic" (the perspective out of which Roscelin speaks) and "hav[ing] to establish linguistic usages on its own and thus detach itself from the knowledge the youth gained in the schools."[80]

However, Anselm always *both* takes the tools of grammar and dialectic into his theological works *and* works hard to show the ways in which those tools and that language are transformed by his subject matter, whether it is God or creatures as from God. *De processione* is different in being more confident and conceding less to a reader who needs to be brought along. In short, it is more professional, more the product of a distinct and independent academic discipline. While conceding that "it might not be easy to detect the mystery of the Trinity in [*De processione's*] formula," Gemeinhardt concludes that it is a "major step" beyond Augustine and "more intellectually satisfying than the mostly polemical or pastoral treatises of the Fathers."[81] From the perspective of later scholastic theology, this is a fair judgment. The question to which we shall return after a consideration of Anselm's last work is whether the blessings of this progress are unmixed.

79. Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics," 14–15.
80. Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics," 17.
81. Gemeinhardt, "Logic, Tradition, and Ecumenics," 24.

De concordia: Uniting Freedom and Grace

De concordia opens without fanfare and we have no particular account of the occasion for its genesis. Anselm notes only that there are three questions connected to free choice, difficulties in its compatibility with foreknowledge, predestination, and grace. Measured by the text as a whole, Anselm's level of interest, and mode of approach, in each of these three problems is not equal. First, Anselm devotes different amounts of the text to each controversy; only 20 percent as much space is dedicated to predestination compared to foreknowledge and almost twice as much space to grace compared to foreknowledge (so the proportions are approximately 30 percent for foreknowledge, 10 percent for predestination, and 60 percent for grace). Second, scripture is used to varying degrees in each section. In the section on foreknowledge Anselm waits until he is half finished with his analysis to consider scripture passages, weaving in a few passages between longer discussions of the meaning of necessity and free will; the short section on predestination refers only to two passages from scripture. The discussion of grace and free choice, by contrast, begins with a series of scripture passages, one set pointing to the determining factor of grace in salvation, the other set strongly implying that salvation depends on the choices one makes.[82] Part way through the discussion of grace, Anselm shifts to analogy as his mode of explanation and into hortative instead of argumentative mode, reflecting on the role of scripture and the way to interpret it. It is a mix of motifs and voices we recognize from other parts of Anselm's corpus less completely fused than in other works. Though there is no explicit statement or external evidence of it, one might easily characterize the work as incomplete not in content but in polish, in the integration of its different styles and questions.

The disproportionately long treatment of the third controversy signals Anselm's main interest, but his interest is broader than just the consistency of grace and free choice. When Anselm considered free will and the choice of evil in *De libertate* and *De casu*, he did not take up the question of what moral choice and development looks like after the fall. It is to this question he turns in *De concordia*, considering not just the effect of original sin but the complications consequent on temporality, the very temporality from which *De casu* so carefully abstracted. This leaves him with the task of trying to understand three things: moral progress (from good to better), moral decay (from bad to worse), and conversion

82. DCP III, 1, S II, 263–64.

(from bad to good). (*De casu* explored the transition from good to bad). Moral life requires free choice, Anselm has already argued, and here the question is how to live out that moral life in time in conjunction with divine foreknowledge, predestination, and grace. Seen from this perspective, the first section on free will and foreknowledge takes up the larger context of living a moral life in time—its relationship to and consistency with eternity. Anselm's approach to the second controversy, free will and predestination, is also through the analysis of temporality and eternity. Free choice and predestination are consistent because predestination, like foreknowledge, Anselm argues, is not something that happens *before* our actions but characterizes a perspective on those actions outside of time, in eternity. Grace, on the other hand, is God's interaction with free and moral beings in time, bringing up a set of issues both more complicated and requiring different approaches and evidence than foreknowledge and predestination. Hence, I turn to the first and second controversies together and then to the last and longest section of the work on grace and free choice.

Time vs. Eternity

The way Anselm takes up the problem of foreknowledge and free choice is, of the three questions, most reminiscent of his earlier work. The same fine distinctions and logically rigorous arguments we recognize from the three dialogues return. In a way that he had taken care to leave out before *De conceptu*, Anselm explicitly describes the logical form his argument will take; he will, he explains, assume the two things whose concurrence is argued to be impossible (foreknowledge and free will) and see if some impossibility follows from his assumption.[83] His use of this form on this controversy is quick and elegant. Given a contingent act foreknown by God, we can infer that that which God foreknows is necessarily going to occur and, thus, conclude that "it is necessary that something be going to occur without necessity."[84] This is not, though it sounds like it, a contradiction: "by no means to one rightly understanding is there any incompatibility between the foreknowledge from which necessity follows and the free choice from which necessity is removed, since it is necessary both that what God foreknows come to be in the future and that God foreknows something to be future without any necessity."[85] The elegance comes in the way Anselm describes the coexistence of foreknowledge with freedom in a way that sounds quite close to—with-

83. DCP I, 1, S II, 245, 9–246, 7.
84. DCP I, 1, S II, 246, 9.
85. DCP I, 1, S II, 246, 10–13.

out being—a contradiction. Anselm then uses another favorite strategy, the distinction of what we say as opposed to what is really meant. In this case, what we say and what we mean are, again, near opposites. "We often say [something] is necessarily the case which no force compels and say [something] necessarily is not the case which no prohibition prevents."[86] As we shall see, these are not just cases of speaking loosely, as when we might call something very likely necessary, but cases of real necessity. Rather Anselm is drawing attention to a deeper ambiguity in necessity and does so by describing that ambiguity as a kind of paradox.

To explain how these complex statements can be true, Anselm makes use of a distinction similar to Boethius's between antecedent and subsequent necessity.[87] However, he postpones making the distinction, instead spending several long paragraphs outlining contrasts between the ways in which one and the same thing can be both necessary and not necessary. In other words, he uses necessity in its different senses before he actually explains the different senses. For example, he writes, "it is necessary that something be going to come to be without necessity."[88] He continues in this vein, explaining that it is equally true that "something did exist and does exist and will exist but not out of necessity, and that all that was, is, and will be is necessary. For a thing to be past is not the same as for a past thing to be past" (and similarly for future and present).[89] He returns to the original problem to state in a succinct way how necessity and contingency coexist: "In this way it is true that the sinful act that a man wills to do happens by necessity, even though the man does not will it by necessity."[90] Anselm even uses the two senses to apply to human and divine willing in just the same way: "just as it is not necessary that God will what he wills, so it is not necessary in many cases that man will what he wills. And just as it is necessary that whatever God wills come to be, so that which man wills is necessary."[91] Anselm adds a qualification to this parallel between divine and human wills. What man wills necessarily takes place only in that subset of cases where God has given the human will the power to make happen what it wills (subsequent necessity), and where God has willed neither to compel nor prevent the will from willing (antecedent necessity).[92] But even the qualification repeats the contradictory appearance of the claims that have to be carefully parsed out to make sense.

"Why is it strange (*quid mirum*)," Anselm asks rhetorically after in-

86. DCP I, 2, S II, 247, 6–7.
87. DCP I, 3, S II, 250, 13–24.
88. DCP I, 1, S II, 246, 9.
89. DCP I, 2, S II, 249, 10–14.
90. DCP I, 3, S II, 251, 3–5.
91. DCP I, 3, S II, 251, 5–10.
92. DCP I, 3, S II, 3, 251.

undating the reader with these kinds of statements, "if in this way something is both from liberty and necessity?"[93] Coming and going are opposites but are the same movement in different respects, he adds, as in the case of the sun, "we see that it is the same point from which it recedes and to which it approaches."[94] Anselm does spend some time trying to present an account of the difference between time and eternity in order to make some sense of these apparent contradictions; for example, he makes the analogy that just as in the present, all places are encompassed, so in eternity all times are present.[95] Scripture uses the past tense, describing human outcomes as "established" and "predestined," as a way of signifying eternity or the "eternal present," in which everything is simultaneously present. Nonetheless, time and eternity are so different that "something is not in time which is present in eternity and something was in time which is not past in eternity."[96]

Anselm *uses* the two senses of necessity and the contrasts between time and eternity over and over again, far more often than he *explains* the two senses to decipher his apparent contradictions. Many more could have been cited, and a complete survey would require transcribing most of these chapters. Why this disproportion? Understanding these statements forces the reader to bring the different senses of necessity to bear on the apparent contradictions Anselm constructs. Anselm's point seems to be to get us over the sense that there is something "strange (*mirum*)" about the same thing occurring both freely and necessarily, the same thing having radically different attributes in time and in eternity. It is as if we have to have this repeated in as many different ways as possible to begin to process the shift in perspective required to see how the same thing is, in different ways, free and necessary, and in time and eternity.[97] But this does not quite explain the degree to which Anselm obviously courts contradiction in his terse and surprising formulations. He clearly enjoys the paradoxical aspect of his formulations, and the op-

93. DCP I, 4, S II, 253, 1–2.
94. DCP I, 4, S II, 253, 5–8.
95. DCP I, 5, S II, 254, 13–15.
96. DCP I, 5, S II, 254, 16–18; 255, 6–10.
97. Rogers argues that Anselm's view of eternity and God as eternal is what she calls a "genuine four dimensionalism" distinct from the views of both Boethius and Augustine, who also argue it is God's eternity which prevents his knowledge of our future actions from being determinative but who only hold this view inconsistently or unclearly. Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 176–77, 180–84. For Anselm, she explains, there are two different perspectives, our temporal one, from which only the present exists and the future is not yet, and God's eternity, from which "everything is simply 'there'" (181). Anselm is certainly more thorough in his analysis of this distinction between time and eternity and more determined to make the contrast clear. What is important in addition, however, is the way in which that thorough analysis serves, as this kind of analysis has before, both to make the concept clearer *and* to make clear the degree to which the divine life in this aspect as in all others is far beyond anything we can grasp clearly.

posing pairs of propositions serve as much to "make strange" the coexistence of freedom and necessity and time and eternity as to inure us to it.[98] Anselm seems to be attempting, as he has from his earliest works, to induce wonder both at the degree to which what seems unintelligible in the faith can be made sense of *and* the degree to which that very sense can intimate that full understanding lies far beyond human capacity.

All this leads, Anselm argues, to the somewhat surprising conclusion that the necessity that is found in the will and its actions is not inconsistent with free will but that necessity is actually *caused* by freedom. The acts of the will are necessary in two ways. They are necessary because "compelled by the will to be done" and because "what is being done cannot at the same time not be done." However, Anselm continues, "free will causes (*facit*) these two necessities, which it can avoid before they occur."[99] Thus, elements that seemed inconsistent are not just compatible but require each other for consistency. Anselm, as he often does, proves *more* than he has to. In this way, he emphasizes, again, the superintelligibility of that which is believed—that it makes even more sense than we might imagine and that we have not begun to probe its depths.

The problem that remains, however, is whether God's foreknowledge or knowledge "is from things or whether things have their existence from his knowledge."[100] Both answers are problematic. If the former, their existence does not derive from God, and if the latter, "God is the maker and author of evil works and hence does not punish the evil justly."[101] Anselm refers readers to *De casu* and *De conceptu*, repeating that injustice is nothing and, hence, not caused by God. He adds a distinction not found in earlier works. God causes injustice in a certain sense: he causes *what* it is, but not *that* it is.[102] That is, God causes all actions and movements "because he causes the things by which, from which, through which, and in which they are made."[103] The will, like a sword or tongue, is what it is as created by God, whether used for good or ill. Though the will is "that in virtue of which a substance or action is called just or unjust," the will itself is not anything more or less essentially whether it acts justly or not. [104] Thus God causes what the acts are which follow from the will in terms of their essence, but causes the goodness of good act, not the evil of evil acts.

Anselm also makes reference to the distinction between the good of

98. The phrase "make strange" from Russian formalism is used advisedly to describe Anselm's strategy here. His aim, like that of the formalists, that is, is to undermine any uncritical and passive acceptance of notions without thinking them through.

99. DCP I, 3, S II, 251, 23–28.

100. DCP 1, 7, S II, 257, 29–30.

101. DCP I, 7, S II, 257, 31–258, 4.

102. DCP I, 7, S II, 259, 6–10.

103. DCP I, 7, S II, 259, 2–4.

104. DCP I, 7, S II, 259, 5–6; 12–14.

justice and the good of benefit from *De casu*. The evil of disadvantage or harm, is in some cases (like pain) *something*, and in some cases, *nothing* (like blindness). However, in *De concordia*, Anselm adds that God causes harms that are something. Anselm first quotes Isaiah on God "who causes peace and creates evil" (Is. 45:7). He then explains, God "creates harms by means of which he disciplines and purifies the just and punishes the unjust."[105] This seems at first to be a different view of evil than that expressed in *De casu*, where Anselm claimed that the evils which are nothing (injustice, blindness) "are followed by" many disadvantages which are evil and which are something.[106]

The contexts of the two sets of remarks are a bit different. In *De casu*, Anselm was attempting to explain why we fear evil if it is nothing. He notes that there is some basis for those fears by conceding that there is a sense in which some evils are something. There his focus was that there are real things that people suffer from. Blindness may be nothing, an absence, but its consequences for the blind person are not nothing; similarly for injustice. In *De concordia*, by contrast, Anselm is concerned with God as cause of everything and God's care as providential, purifying, and punishing. In both places Anselm asserts a three-part division of evil: the evil of injustice (opposed to the good of justice), which is nothing; the evil of disadvantage (opposed to the good of benefit), which is subdivided into evils that are nothing (e.g., blindness) and evils that are something (e.g., pain).[107] What is unclear is how or whether to put this division of evil together with Anselm's claim that God causes the evil that is something. Anselm says only, "when this evil is something, we do not deny that God causes it."[108] I think this requires more clarification than Anselm provides. Does he mean that God causes blindness in a different way than he causes pain, as punishing or purifying? If we group together things which are something (whether things like good deeds or evils that are something, like pain) as opposed to things that are nothing (like evil deeds and blindness), then we could read Anselm as claiming that God causes only *what* blindness is but both *what* and *that* pain is. He might be able to make metaphysical sense out of such a distinction but it would be difficult to make moral sense out of it. If one is part of God's providential plan, then both are.

However, it is clear from the context that Anselm's real interest in *De concordia* is saving God's moral goodness along with his omnipotence. Anselm is willing to say that God causes natural evil and the subsequent suffering from it as part of his providential plan, just as Augustine, Bo-

105. DCP I, 7, S II, 258, 25–27.
106. DCD 26, S I, 274, 13–15.
107. DCD 26, S I, 274, 8–15.
108. DCP I, 7, S II, 258, 24–26.

ethius and others argued. Hence, God's moral goodness is consistent with God causing (even if only in the sense of allowing) suffering (the evils of disadvantage). Anselm does not add further clarification for God's role in evils like blindness or pain, but turns to the more problematic case, his role in the evils of injustice. Only for the evils of injustice does Anselm distinguish between God's causal role in *what* vs. *that* they are.

The view that God causes only *what* but not *that* there are evil deeds but causes both *what* and *that* there are good deeds itself raises difficult questions, Anselm notes. How does God cause good things only by his goodness and cause evil things only through the fault of man or devil? "What [role] does God have in evil things without having blame and man have in good works that is praiseworthy, so that the good deeds of men are clearly seen to be imputed to God and the evil ones to man?"[109] These questions remain outstanding from the three dialogues. They were not really answered at the Council of Orange in the rejection of Semi-Pelagianism. The council asserted that human beings do their own will when they act wrongly but that it is by God's grace that they are able to perform good actions.[110] This is a troubling asymmetry and Anselm gives only cursory treatment to the second controversy (between free choice and predestination) in order to get to it.

In the disproportionately short second section, Anselm uses the same arguments for foreknowledge he did for predestination. Like *fore*knowledge, Anselm argues, it is not really *pre*destination since everything is present to God at once, not earlier or later.[111] And just as free will and foreknowledge go together with God foreknowing that a *free* act will take place, so nothing is predestined "except as it is in foreknowledge," occurring only with the "necessity which succeeds" not that which "precedes" a thing.[112]

Reusing these arguments *mutatis mutandis* for predestination masks some of the differences between the challenges predestination as opposed to foreknowledge poses for free choice. For saying that God predestines is active, that God *causes* things to be or not, while saying that God foreknows seems, at least, more passive. Anselm puts off until the last section the deeper difficulty in this problem. All he says at this point is that when God predestines, he causes "not by constraining or restraining the will but by leaving the will to its own power." "Although,

109. DCP I, 7, S II, 259.

110. The Council of Orange, canons 15, 20, 23, in vol. 8 of *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, edited by Joannes Dominicus Mansi (Paris: H. Welter, 1901; repr. Venetiis: Apud Antonium Zatta, 1762), 715–16. See the next section for Anselm's answer to these questions and its relationship both to Pelagianism and Augustine. Cf. Augustine's similar language, *Opus imperfecta contra Julianum*, 5, 57.

111. DCP II, 3, S II, 262, 10–11.

112. DCP II, 3, S II, 262, 9–12.

however, the will uses its own power," he continues, "it does nothing which God does not cause in good works by his grace, in evil works not through his but through the will's own fault."[113]

Free Choice and Grace: God's Role in Human Action in and over Time

The third controversy (grace and free will) opens with a *sic et non* of competing scripture passages, one set asserting the need for and complete reliance on grace, another set declaring human free choice in the exhortation to choose rightly and in the scolding when one does not. "Since in sacred scripture we find certain [passages] which seem to favor grace alone and certain [passages] which are thought to establish free choice alone, without grace," Anselm explains, some "arrogant (*superbi*)" people have opted for free choice alone, others giving up on the idea of freedom in order to make room for grace.[114] His task will be, then to show that free will and grace coexist and cooperate. Anselm's path to this conclusion is to show, first, that salvation requires righteousness. If, further, righteousness requires grace as well as free choice, he will have shown not just the compatibility but mutual dependence of grace and free choice for salvation. Thus, his argument is a kind of triangle; he joins two sides, free choice and justice, and then forms the third side of the triangle, joining justice and grace. If justice requires both grace and free choice, then grace and free choice require each other.

Anselm makes this connection by arguing that right willing, acting justly, is a result of having a just will, not the other way around.[115] The move here is significant, first, because it allows Anselm to argue that justice cannot be acquired by our own acts and so must be a gift that can only come from God.[116] Thus, Anselm concludes, free will requires grace because righteousness cannot be had unless, first, it is given by God (and so, is grace) and, second, is kept by free choice.[117] This, of course, is exactly the account Anselm gave in *De casu diaboli* and he follows it with a repetition of the same Pauline passage so important to Augustine and around which *De casu's* account was built: "What do you have that you have not received?" (1 Cor. 4:7).[118] Here for the first time, Anselm adds the ending of the verse: "And if you received it, why do you glory in it as if you have not received it?"[119] It is fitting that he adds it here, as it describes the already fallen state, which is the work's topic.

113. DCP II, 3, S II, 262, 4–7.
114. DCP III, 1, S II, 264, 6–10.
115. DCP III, 3, S II, 265, 26–266, 7.
116. DCP III, 3, S II, 266, 13–16.
117. DCP III, 3, S II, 266.
118. For a discussion of this passage and its importance for Augustine and Anselm, see chapter 5, 180, 211–13.
119. DCP III, 3, S II, 267, 4–5.

The substance of the claim that one can only will justice if one has justice touches on two important issues. First, there is the chicken and egg problem of moral development: which comes first, just acts or justice? Does performing just acts make you just or do you perform just acts because you are just? Anselm's answer is decisive and is the same answer he gave in *De casu*: just acts flow from already having justice; you can only will justly if you have justice.[120] For Anselm this is a question about grace, about not being able to give oneself what one does not already have. We cannot, he concludes with Augustine against Pelagius, give yourself virtue or in any way acquire it by your own power. Or, to put it another way, any power by which you acquire it is received. Second, there is the question of the relationship of justice and just *willing*. Having justice *is* for Anselm willing rightly, willing justice for its own sake. No one has justice unless they will it and no one wills it unless they have it. This is Anselm's point in *De veritate* when he writes, "We have righteousness only by willing it; and by the very act of willing it we have it."[121] This is not a contradiction to the claim in *De concordia* that one can only will justice if one already has justice. Rather, *De veritate* argues that even though having and willing justice are simultaneous and, in a way, logically entail one another, "receiving this righteousness is by nature prior to having it or willing it—since having it or willing it is not the cause of receiving it but receiving causes (*facit*) both having and willing it."[122] In *De casu diaboli*, we recall, Anselm argued that had the angels willed to keep righteousness only out of fear, instead of willing righteousness for its own sake, their act would have been without merit.[123] Thus doing the right thing but for the wrong reason is without moral value for Anselm, as it was for Augustine.[124]

That one cannot give oneself justice, that it must be given as a gift reveals that Anselm and Augustine have a truly different morality than that of the pre-Christian philosophers. Anselm seems aware of this, chiding both those who, as a consequence of biblical teachings on grace, abandon free will, and those (whom he describes as "arrogant") who simply think virtue is a matter of choice. On the arrogance of those who credit themselves with their virtue, Anselm is echoing Augustine. In the *Confessions*, Augustine complains of the Platonists' pride and lack of recognition of whatever virtue they have as *received*, citing again first Cor-

120. DCP III, 3, S II, 266.

121. DV 12, S I, 194, 26; 195, 8–9.

122. DV 12, S I, 195, 18–20.

123. DCD 23, S I, 270, 6–13. See chapter 5, section c, for my discussion of this passage.

124. For Augustine on this point see his analogy between the person who acts for the wrong reason as like the runner running hard but on the wrong track. *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 31, 2, 4. I am grateful to Sarah Byers for this reference.

inthians' question, "What do you have that you have not received?"[125] In a sermon dedicated to the discussion of the Epicurean and Stoic views of happiness and virtue, Augustine asks the Stoic sage, where did you get the virtue you admire so much and see as the source of happiness? The true source of happiness is not one's own virtue, Augustine replies, but the source is "the one who has given you virtue, who has inspired you to desire it, and granted you the capacity for it."[126]

Nonetheless, even given this important solidarity with Augustine's sense of the arrogance and falsehood of the claim that human beings are the authors of their own moral excellence and agreement with the strongly intension based character of moral action, Anselm has mapped out a different way of avoiding Pelagianism than Augustine. Much ink has been spilled on the relationship between grace and free will in Augustine, and this issue cannot be explored in depth here. Nonetheless, most scholars of Augustine agree that for Augustine grace is irresistible.[127] However, Anselm argues, as we saw in *De casu* and as is repeated in *De concordia*, that God gives the gift of righteousness but that human beings can choose to abandon it. Thus for Anselm though *freedom per se*

125. Augustine, *Confessions* VII, 9 and 21.

126. Augustine, *Sermo* 150, 348. 3. I am grateful to Paul Kolbet for this reference.

127. Carol Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 111–12. Harrison notes that in some contexts Augustine "seems to allow room for man's response to God's acts of grace, in acceptance, co-operation, or love" Nonetheless, she concludes, "these arguments do nothing to mitigate Augustine's insistence on what we might call the seemingly 'irresistible' nature of the operation of divine grace. There are indeed passages which clearly state that it is God who effects in men's hearts the movements of their wills so that He can bring about through them what he wanted to accomplish Himself (*Gr. et lib. arb.*, 42) and that the will is powerless to stop God doing what he wants (*Corrept*. 45); that divine grace works *'indeclinabiliter et insuperabiliter'* (*Corrept*. 38)." Cf. James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 8. Wetzel, like Harrison, but more extensively, defends Augustine and rejects the Pelagian libertarian position as incoherent, while O'Daly and Rist are more critical of Augustine. See James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue,* 216, 220–22, Gerard O'Daly, "Predestination and Freedom in Augustine's Ethics," in *The Philosophy of Christianity*, edited by Godfrey Vesey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 85–97, and John M. Rist, "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," in *Augustine: A Collections of Critical Essays*, edited by R. A. Markus (New York: Anchor Books, 1972), 218–52, esp. 229–34 (reprint, *Journal of Theological Studies* 20 [1969]: 429–35). Rist seems to hold the same view of Augustine's position in his more recent *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) but his discussion is less pointed and criticism more diffuse. See Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, translated by Ralph J. Bastran (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), 196–98, 223–29, for an attempt to defend both free choice in a libertarian sense and necessarily efficacious grace in Augustine. Cf. Eleanore Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124–47; Stump tries to give an account based in Augustine which preserves a kind of autonomy for the will, but even if this were a plausible account of Augustine (and there is reason to be skeptical), it surely does not seem to be the path taken by Anselm. See also the attempt to apply Stump's view to Anselm in Stan Tyvoll, "An Anselmian-Quiescence Approach to the Problem of Grace and Merit," *Budhi* 3 (2004): 35–58.

does not involve the choice between alternatives, for creatures, in order that an action be *a se* (which is required for moral responsibility), it must involve the choice to keep or abandon righteousness. Thus for Anselm that choice cannot be engineered by God to its inevitable outcome.[128] In this Anselm is like those Wetzel characterizes as Augustine's more "philosophically minded" interpreters who are bothered by the notion of irresistible grace because it annuls any human contribution and, therefore, makes moral responsibility impossible.[129]

What is surprising about *De concordia* is how little it adds to *De casu*. What one expects in *De concordia* is an account of how choice and the need for grace are qualitatively different after the fall. But Anselm does not describe the grace required for fallen man any differently than he described the grace given to Adam and to Satan; the gift of righteousness and the choice, to keep or to fail to keep righteousness, is the same situation with which they were confronted. While, again, Augustine's view of the precise differences between prelapsarian and fallen humanity are much debated, it is perhaps uncontroversial to say that Augustine asserts that there is a profound change in fallen man, a corruption and weakness which afflict him which did not afflict Adam.[130] After the fall, because of the corruption brought about by original sin, God's grace operates through the direct gift of grace, preparation of the will to accept it, and in the construction of the circumstances of choice.[131]

Anselm certainly takes account of the consequences of the fall, arguing, as he did in *Cur Deus homo*, that lacking justice as well as the abil-

128. Cf. Kane, *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom and the Will*, 181–88, and Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 30–54; 77–78, who contrast Anselm with Augustine on this point in similar terms.

129. Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 8–9.

130. See Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 79–82, Rist, *Augustine*, 128–32, and "Augustine on Free Will and Predestination," 229–34, on the different moral positions of Adam vs. fallen humanity. Rogers argues, however, that these distinctions do not mean that Augustine holds libertarian freedom for Adam in contrast to fallen man; he is, she argues, consistently compatibilist before and after the fall. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 43–52.

131. See, for example, Augustine, *De spiritu et littera,* 34, 60. However, besides describing the way in which God prepares the will internally and externally, the same passage also proposes that assenting or dissenting to God's invitation is a matter of free choice and that the receiving and having in some sense come from the one who receives. This, of course, is exactly the path taken by Anselm, as noted in chapter 5. Augustine reverts unambiguously to his more standard view that assent or consent is a gift given by God that cannot be rejected. Augustine, *De praedestinatione sanctorum* 13. Stump, "Augustine on Free Will," 137–38. See also Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* 201–2, 206–7, 216–18, and Harrison, *Augustine: Christian Truth*, 112. Wetzel and Harrison argue that this does not mean that God is manipulating circumstances in such a way as to make puppets of human beings but freeing human beings from the bondage of the distortions of affect and intellect consequent to the fall. Rist, even though he describes human beings as "puppets" in an early essay quite critical of Augustine, defends to some degree divine intervention as making freedom once again possible. See Rist, *Augustine*, 134–35, and the earlier essay, Rist, "Augustine on Free Will," 229, 235.

ity to acquire and even to understand justice are the results of sin and, hence, do not excuse the lack of justice but are themselves "reckoned as sin."[132] Moreover, he adds, the appetites and impulses toward concupiscence and anger, which are the consequences of sin, are also "reckoned as sin."[133] However, Anselm explains the role and need for grace in fallen man without ever moving, as Augustine does, to revise his account of free choice as fundamentally changed or damaged after the fall.[134] Anselm notes that grace assists in so many ways after the giving of righteousness he cannot even name them; however, when he attempts to expand on this, he returns to the same narrative: one can only keep righteousness by willing it, but one can only will it if one has it and cannot have it except by grace. Hence, he concludes, "no one keeps [uprightness] except by this same grace following . . . for free choice has and keeps [uprightness] only by prevenient and subsequent grace."[135] There is no further account of the role of subsequent grace than this account of receiving, willing, and keeping righteousness, thus his claim seems to be that grace *follows* in the sense that were it not for grace, there would be no righteousness to be kept. He does describe a bit later a somewhat expanded role to grace as strengthening the affection for justice and lessening the appeal of vice, assisting "free choice to receive or keep uprightness," but he does so in a context which reasserts the possibility of refusal of grace.[136] Grace fails to follow grace, fails to bestow more gifts beyond the gift of righteousness, *only* when free choice "by willing something else deserts the uprightness it has received."[137] Thus Anselm does not in any way imply the irresistibility of grace, as Augustine sometimes does.

Anselm's analogies for explaining the coexistence and cooperation of free will and grace soften the edges but not the substance of his differences with Augustine. Anselm describes the situation of fallen human kind as like a naked man who is unable by himself to obtain clothing: if he remains naked or if he were to throw away clothes given to him, he would be responsible for his nakedness. But if he is given clothes, his being clothed is due to the one who gave it. Thus Anselm can support the formulation of Augustine and the Council of Orange, that good deeds are attributed to God and evil ones to man. God does not just give the clothing but also provides "the ability to keep and to use it." Nonetheless, Anselm maintains unambiguously (unlike Augustine) that the

132. DCP III, 7, S II, 273, 17–23. Cf. CDH I, 24, S II, 92, 9–93, 2.
133. DCP III, 7, S II, 274, 3–9.
134. Augustine, *Contra Julianum opus imperfectum*, VI, 11, 12, and 14.
135. DCP III, 4, S II, 267, 15–16.
136. DCP III, 4, S II, 268, 1–12.
137. DCP III, 4, 268, 2–3.

naked person "has the ability to use or not to use the clothing he has received," leaving to human choice the possibility of rejection.[138] Anselm concludes that when scripture speaks of grace alone, free choice is not ruled out and, conversely, when it attributes salvation to free will alone, grace must not be understood as excluded. Just as "no understanding can exclude either mother or father from the generation of offspring," he argues, so salvation is impossible without both grace and free will.[139]

The same view is supported by a longer analogy of the development of faith and righteousness to the growth of seeds. Without the right seeds and cultivation, the human heart does not make progress toward salvation, Anselm begins by saying. That seed is the word of God, which makes willing rightly possible because one must know *what* to will to will rightly. The conception of what to will is not, however, a sufficient but a necessary condition of faith and requires in addition right willing.[140] The sending, preaching, hearing, and understanding of the word of God are all grace, Anselm explains, but "are nothing unless the will wills what the mind understands," and the will can will rightly only if it has received righteousness, "willing rightly when it wills what it ought."[141] Righteousness (*rectitudo*) is the "growth" of the seed of preaching, without which the planting and watering have no issue. In other words, knowledge of *what* to will is not enough; the will must receive *and do* righteousness. One expects the analogy to work the other way, with the grace of received rectitude as the seed coaxed into growth by the word and its preachers, but it is clear why Anselm draws it the other way. First, it makes more sense on scriptural grounds. Anselm is alluding to the parable of the seeds being scattered on dry, rocky, or shallow vs. fertile soil and he refers to Paul's use of the same metaphor (1 Cor. 3:6–9), describing his own work as planter but God's as giving growth.[142] Second, it makes logical sense. The growth of the seed is where the significant agency is, and Anselm wants to stress both that having an upright will is key, not mere knowledge, not just knowledge of the mind but the heart—this is what makes the fertile soil for the seed of the gospel. And the fertile soil is the coproduct of God's gift of righteousness and the receiving and accepting of that gift.

138. DCP III, 5, S II, 269, 15–18.

139. DCP III, 5, S II, 270, 5–9. Anselm says that offspring are not produced "unless through" the mother (*nisi per*) and "not without" a father (*non . . . sine*) (DCP III, 5, S II, 270, 6) and the distinction seems to imply unequal—though equally necessary—roles. He does not elaborate further, but the most obvious way of taking it is that the mother is a means while the father is active cause; hence, analogously, free choice is the means through which salvation takes place but grace its active cause. This way of talking allows him to put the emphasis on grace as more significant but leaves in tact the notion of free choice as able to reject and accept *a se*.

140. DCP III, 6, S II, 271, 5–8.

141. DCP III, 6, S II, 271, 11–16.

142. DCP III, 6, S II, 270, 21–24.

In this passage Anselm strikes another important Augustinian chord: the relationship between grace and freedom in the genesis of faith. Does God cause belief or is there some action on the part of the believer to accept the invitation to believe? Augustine writes that he erred in thinking that "the gospel having been preached to us that we might consent is proper to us and be judged to come to us from ourselves."[143] That some believe and others do not, he made clear in later writings, is not due to their merit in believing (or vice versa) but rather to the fact that God has prepared the will of some but not others.

Anselm takes up this problematic and one of its most important scriptural touchstones, Paul's notion that "faith comes by hearing" but interprets it according to his own account of the harmony of grace and freedom. While Augustine emphasizes God's setting into motion on every level the movement toward belief, Anselm carefully lays out God's role in giving the word and sending its preachers but comes back to the notion that none of this means anything without willing rightly. Willing rightly requires righteousness, which must be *accepta*, meaning both *offered* by God and *accepted* by the human being, as Anselm made clear in *De casu diaboli*. "Hence," Anselm concludes, "we have shown, I think, how it is not superfluous to invite men to faith in Christ and to what faith demands even though not all will accept (*suscipiant*) this invitation."[144] On the one hand, like Augustine, Anselm argues that faith in what is preached in the scriptures is not an autonomous human response to that which is heard and the will must be ready to receive this truth, a readiness which is itself a gift of grace. On the other hand, the gift on which faith depends, righteousness, human beings must freely decide to keep or reject.

This elaborate analogy of seeds and their cultivation to grace and free will is an answer to the question of why scripture "invites free choice to right willing and acting" and "blames disobedience" when "no one can have or receive (*accipere*) righteousness unless grace gives it."[145] Having just concluded that scripture never means to exclude either grace or free choice as necessary for salvation, Anselm offers the analogy as a way

143. Augustine, *De praedestinatione sanctorum*, 3 (7). Augustine quotes in this context the same error described in the *Retractationes* (1, 22, 2–4). It is the same discussion in the text quoted in chapter 5, discussing Augustine's reflections on "what do you have that you have not received?" In this passage, Augustine credits the Pauline question with showing him the error of thinking that belief somehow arises *before* God's grace and that grace is given to those who first meritoriously believe. Cf. Augustine, *De spiritu and littera*, 34, 60. In this passage Augustine describes God as bringing about faith through the exhortations of the gospel, among the other ways God creates the conditions for faith. The ambiguity of the passage is that Augustine, even as he asserts God's role in making us will and want what we will and want, also refers to the assent or acceptance of God's gift as accruing to the believer.

144. DCP III, 6, S II, 273, 4–6.

145. DCP III, 6, S II, 270, 11–14.

to begin answering how scripture can exhort human beings to do something they do not have in their power.[146] This is a question about both whether preachers should bother to preach and whether scripture unfairly blames human beings for not having what God failed to give. When Anselm turns, then, to interpret scripture on the basis of his analysis of the seed and its growth, it is to show that the passages imply (even if it is not stated explicitly) that the seed of preaching will not germinate without God turning the will and that righteousness is not given unless by these seeds.[147] He understands as necessarily implied by these texts what he has just argued for logically, the requirement of both grace and freedom, both the proposing of faith in the gospel as well as the gift of righteousness.

Anselm has already noted that God gives righteousness neither to all nor on the basis of "antecedent merit."[148] In this, Anselm follows the Augustinian and orthodox position. Anselm could, however, have rejected the notion of antecedent merit without holding that God did not give grace to all.[149] For since Anselm holds that faith or keeping righteousness for its own sake is a *response* to grace already given (the gift of righteousness) that one freely chooses to keep or not, he could explain the lack of universal conversion and salvation as the rejection on the part of some of that grace without lapsing into Pelagianism and making salvation depend on nature without grace. One could go even further and make the case that Anselm does not completely reject the view that God offers salvation to all. In *De casu* Anselm argued painstakingly that the devil did not receive *not because God did not give*, but that God did not give *because the devil did not receive*. Thus Anselm could assent to the claim that God does not give grace to all but hold that this is because he does not give to those who do not accept or receive.[150] There is even a passage in *De concor-*

146. In this context, Anselm offers what seems to be an aside on how to interpret scripture more generally. Anselm argues that scripture contains all that is necessary for salvation but that if something is obtained "by reasoning (*ratione*)" which is not contradicted by scripture, then it is "accepted by its authority." Since scripture "opposes no truth and favors no falsity," its nondenial of a claim is effectively support, Anselm argues (DCP III, 6, S II, 271, 28–272, 7).

147. DCP III, 6, S II, 272, 8–27. The passage Anselm is interpreting is from Isaiah (1:19): "if you are willing and hearken unto me." What must be supplied that is not explicitly stated is that willing in question is *upright* willing—words alone will not bear fruit without righteousness and righteousness is impossible without the words of scripture, which reveal what uprightness is (DCP III, 6, S II, 272, 9).

148. DCP III, 3, S II, 266, 24–26.

149. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 141–45.

150. Augustine flirts with but then rejects a similar move. In Letter 102, 14–15, Augustine argues that perhaps Christ willed to reveal himself (directly or through preaching of his word) to those he foreknew would believe and did not reveal himself to those he foreknew would not believe. He rejects this suggestion in the *Retractationes* (2, 31, 57), contending that his claim then, that salvation was never lacking to anyone who was worthy of it, did not mean "worthy" in the sense of meriting salvation but in the sense of being part of God's plan and receiving God's grace. Anselm

dia that seems to suggest this: "Grace so follows its own gift that it never fails in its giving . . . unless free choice by willing something else deserts the uprightness it has received."[151] This is a view, then, not just consistent with Anselm's view on grace and freedom, but in a way is its logical conclusion. Why Anselm did not make draw this conclusion is unclear. It likely represented a bigger break with Augustine and tradition than he was able to make at the time. Abelard, who later did suggest that God offers grace to everyone, still did so in such a way as to leave to human beings before receiving grace the choice to accept or reject. In other words, Abelard makes grace universal by taking what at least appears to be a Pelagian position.[152] This Anselm is not willing to do or even appear to do.

Though the bulk of Anselm's discussion focuses on the basic choice to keep (or fail to keep) righteousness, there are a number of passages that in different ways consider moral development over time. Anselm asserts the possibility of moral growth, an increase of righteousness as a result of choice and action, first, as a kind of concession in the midst of his argument that one must have righteousness to will righteously. He writes somewhat cryptically, "I do not deny that an upright will wills an uprightness which it does not yet have when it wills more uprightness than it has."[153] The claim seems to be that once in possession of an upright will, having chosen to keep the righteousness given by God, one can by more righteous choices increase the uprightness of one's will. If, subsequently, the will chooses to keep righteousness, then it "merits" an additional increment of received justice or "the power of good will." These are what Anselm calls the "fruits of the first grace."[154] Anselm seems to mean that the choice to keep righteousness is maintained only because of this subsequent grace given as a result of the first choice that strengthens perseverance against future temptations and assaults.[155] Anselm also observes that having an upright will, willing to keep justice for its own sake, makes one just but that eternal life requires more. It requires

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can argue for the universal availability of grace and still avoid Pelagianism, as Augustine seems to think he cannot, by maintaining that grace *precedes* belief but that since grace is not irresistible, one can avoid both the conclusion that salvation is merited and that it is (contrary to revelation and experience) universal.

151. DCP III, 4, S II, 268, 1–3.

152. See Rogers, 142–43, for her speculation on why Anselm did not take the position that grace is offered to all. She takes Abelard's position to be Pelagian, which is a matter of some debate. What is not debated is that Abelard was *taken* as holding a Pelagian postion. In the list of Abelard's heresies is the view "that free choice alone (*per se*) suffices for some good." See John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 326, n. 4, and Constant Mews, "The List of Heresies Imputed to Abelard," *Revue bénédictine* 95 (1985): 109.

153. DCP III, 3, S II, 266, 4–5.

154. DCP III, 3, S II, 266, 26–267, 1.

155. DCP III, 4, S II, 268, 7–12.

being just "without any injustice." The example he gives of someone who is just but lacks *complete* justice is someone who is chaste but envious.[156] In *Cur Deus homo* Anselm also makes the claim that happiness "befit[s] no one except him in whom justice is so pure that there is no injustice in him."[157] However, in *Cur Deus homo*, he is discussing the necessity for the Incarnation, not, as he is in *De concordia*, the necessity of coming to possess all the virtues in order to be unqualifiedly just and, therefore, worthy of happiness. Anselm shelves more discussion of how to become "free of any injustice," noting only that "it is possible only through holy pursuits [*studia*] and the grace of God."[158]

The picture we get of the path of moral development for Anselm from these passages is of slow, halting progress. Tiny steps forward are made possible only with strong support, and only move one asymptotically toward complete or pure justice. Though justice strengthens over time, it does so mostly through increased support.

The path of moral corruption has a radically different shape: that of a straight and swift plunge into the abyss. After one "freely (*sponte*) falls in voluntary sin," Anselm writes, "one can in no way rise again unless lifted up by grace but is submerged by one's own merit from sin to sin into the bottomless abyss of sin, a depth without measure, unless held back by mercy."[159] A bit further on in the text when he has shifted back to more technical analysis of the two inclinations (*affectiones*), the will for happiness (*beatitudinem*) and for justice, Anselm's describes the psychological mechanisms leading to this descent. After the desertion of justice, the will for what is beneficial remains while true happiness (*beautitudinem*) is lost. The result is the inability to achieve what one desires and a turn to false benefits—those things that are true benefits for animals but not human beings. This condition of the will "fervent with desire for benefits (*commodorum*) which it is not able not to will" but unable to achieve is a recipe for the most complete and insurmountable unhappiness.[160] In *Cur Deus homo* Anselm likened this condition to that of falling into a pit one is unable to climb out of. Here he makes clear that fallen, sinful human beings live in the frustration of never getting what they want; they keep pursuing more and more of that which is a woefully inadequate substitute for the true good they truly want. It is a psychologically sophisticated picture of the path of sin, a similar structure to repression in Freud—turning with an ever greater appetite to an unsatisfying substitute for what one truly desires—but with an inverted genesis. For Anselm the

156. DCP III, 4, S II 268, 18–19.
157. CDH I, 24, S II, 93, 7–9.
158. DCP III, 4, S II, 268, 23–25.
159. DCP III, 8, S II, 275, 11–14.
160. DCP III, 13, S II, 286, 9–27.

path of sensuality is a repression of the desire for God rather than vice versa. It is clear, then, that there is no path out of this hole without grace restoring the will for righteousness and taking away the sin of the consequences of the fall (though not the consequences themselves).[161] But it is also clear that Anselm maintains his position that human beings abandon righteousness (given by grace) not because they lack the ability to keep it but because they fail to will it.[162] The onus but also in some sense the merit remains with human beings.

Anselm inserts a brief and counterfactual account of an alternative narrative for the path of moral progress that comes closer to mirroring that of moral corruption. It comes as part of the explanation for why the "penalty for sin" remains in this life, even though the sin itself is blotted out by baptism. If those choosing justice for its own sake were immediately transformed, there would be no room for faith and hope, Anselm argues. For if "human beings were to see those who were converted to Christ pass immediately into incorruptibility, none would be able to so much as will to take himself away from such beatitude as he would see."[163] Then the path to righteousness would have the same shape as the path toward corruption, an immediate and complete ascent. The problem is that seeing clearly and immediately the effects of conversion would take away the merit of those who saw it because they would know of this beatitude by "experience (*experimentum*)" rather than "faith," Anselm argues.[164] The point is not that merit comes because of a kind of ignorance—from not knowing that the path to beatitude lies in willing justice over benefit, but rather that to will justice *in order to get benefit* is not a meritorious choice. The faith rather than experience of beatitude Anselm speaks of in *De concordia* is a reference to the faith that in choosing justice over benefit, death over lying, one *believes* and *hopes* for beatitude but that this is not the reason for that choice. What one chooses, justice for its own sake, is also the reward in which one believes and for which one hopes: the coming of the kingdom of God.

It is interesting that in this last work Anselm uses the term "kingdom of God" several times, a term used fairly infrequently in his speculative writings and more commonly in the letters.[165] The context in the letters

161. DCP III, 8, S II, 274, 22–275, 2. 162. DCP III, 10, S II, 278, 22–24.

163. DCP III, 9, S II, 276, 13–15; cf. DLA 9, S I, 221, 26–29.

164. DCP III, 9, S II, 277, 3–5.

165. DCP III, 9, S II, 276, 12–277, 2, 8. A computerized search of Anselm's writings shows only nine uses of *regnum dei* (and grammatical variants) in the treatises as opposed to forty-nine in the letters. Conversely, even given the greater number of pages of the letters, *beatitudo* and its variants is much more frequent in the treatises, occurring sixty-six times in them, as opposed to twenty-six times in the letters.

is specifically eschatological—contrasting Eden with hell or the kingdom of God to come—language not common in treatises. The more common term in the treatises, *beatitudo*, is less specifically temporal. The notion of the kingdom of God (and the related term that is also used in the same chapter of *De concordia*, "the heavenly kingdom") makes an allusion not just to the end times but also to justice, to the just reign of God.[166] The emphasis is on deserving happiness, as Anselm refers several times to the need to *merit* the promised happiness.[167] Like in the *Gorgias* myth of the afterlife, the point of reward after death is that the choice of justice *should* be recognized in a just universe, that there should be a world in which justice reigns, not that justice itself needs or must have a reward other than itself. And, as Anselm has made clear several times, justice *must* be chosen for its own sake in order for it to be meritorious.

Anselm, then, places the life in which human beings now find themselves as different from these two precipitous narratives, straight up to incorruptibility or down into inextricable depravity. Human beings are neither consigned to the torments of hell but also are not simply delivered into the kingdom of God. This alternative is presented as merciful, for God delays the transformation of the blessed so that more may be born and more may merit beatitude. But it is also just, for human being is like the servant flogged before someone else paid his debt. Though he is freed from the "graver torments" he would otherwise have suffered, his scars quite justly remain.[168] The promise of beatitude can still be fulfilled, on condition that "while lying in the affliction of his flogging until such time as it passes away, [he] vow in heart and in word fidelity to his master and correction for himself."[169]

As Anselm concludes he brings the discussion back around to the terms in which he had posed questions at the end of the first section, on free choice and foreknowledge, terms which were also those of the Council of Orange. Anselm had asked,

> How does God do good things only through his goodness and evil things only by the fault of human beings or the devil, and how does human being do good by free choice being led by *(praesulante)* grace and evil things only

166. DCP III, 9, S II, 276, 20.

167. DCP III, 9, S II, 276, 277.

168. DCP III, 9, S II, 277, 11–29.

169. DCP III, 9, S II, 277, 27–29. In the midst of this analogy, Anselm explains the difference between the fate of human beings and angels faced with the same choice and the same fall. Had the servant when he sinned already been given some great honor, he would both receive punishment and be disinherited of this honor. However, if reconciliation happens before an honor promised but not yet given, then after reconciliation, the disinheritance can be avoided. The angels, already-enjoying heaven, lose it irrevocably, while human beings, not yet enjoying heaven, do not. DCP III, 9, S II, 277, 22–29.

> by the operation of his own *(propria)* will, and what [part] does God have in evil without being at fault and human being in good things which is to his credit, such that the good deeds of men are clearly seen to be imputed to God and the bad things to man?[170]

Anselm's answer, summing up the fruits of his reasoning thus far, is that a) God causes good acts that they are good both through their being (*per essentiam*) and through their justice (*per iustitiam*), but b) in evil acts, God causes only their goodness *per essentiam*, by giving the will, free choice and justice, while c) it is human beings who causes their injustice by acting "by their own (*propria*), that is, unjust will."[171] Human beings d) cause good acts in the sense that they "cause the fact that they are not evil," because, he explains, although *able* to desert justice, keep it "by free choice, [justice] being given and followed by grace."[172] Anselm formulates carefully, here, nesting in this one sentence his delicately balanced set of claims on the roles of freedom and grace. Justice is grace given, grace both preceding and following any human act; nevertheless, free choice acts not out of a neutral state to accept or reject grace proffered but to keep or walk away from grace already given. Its range of action is narrow, in one sense, as we saw in *De casu*, limited to the negative of *not* rejecting grace; hence, Anselm's formulation here of human agency as not simply and wholly causing the goodness of their own acts, but only causing *that they are not evil*.

Anselm's closing reenacts the delicate balance he has attempted to find between divine and human agency reflexively, on his own work. He closes with the obligatory humble, pious, and orthodox claim for his own work: anything which "suffices" for any inquirer he does not attribute to himself but to God's grace in him. However, he adds, had anyone given such answers to him, "I would have given thanks (*gratias*) since he would have satisfied me." "I wanted," he concludes, "to give out *gratis* what I received (*accepi*) by grace (*gratis*)."[173] One cannot be sure why Anselm uses the language of "satisfies" and "suffices" for his own answers, which he has always characterized in previous works as only helpful and provisional. We have no sign he puts these reflections forward in any more certain spirit of their completeness than he has other writings. But with such a closing Anselm mirrors for his own agency in the work his view of human agency in the light of sin and grace. There is a little bit of self assertion in this closing which is less about Anselm personally or about his own work than about the human condition. Yes, any scant good human beings do is down

170. DCP I, 7, S II, 259, 23–28.
171. DCP III, 14, S II, 287, 25–288, 7.
172. DCP III, 14, S II, 288, 7–9.
173. DCP III, 14, S II, 288, 12–19.

to God's grace, yet they accept those gifts and can in turn function as genuine agents with them, giving what they have received. In other words, though only with what he has been given, Anselm has done something.

What, then, does Anselm add to the account of free choice and the fall in *De concordia* not found in the dialogues? He adds the distinction between the will as instrument and the will as inclination (which is in turn subdivided into the will for benefit and the will for justice as in *De casu*). He has also brought the discussion more into the public debate, out of his own idiom and much more clearly in dialogue with Augustine and the canons of the Council of Orange. It is also in dialogue with scripture, but scripture conceived more as a series of propositions capable of contradicting each other. In this he continues to move away from treating scripture as a kind of meditative treasure trove in which each verse has the possibility of yielding the whole, as he did in the three dialogues. The work is, as Anselm himself tells us, his attempt to respond to "three difficult *quaestiones*,"[174] questions for debate pro and con in this newer, more public style.

What is most striking, however, is that even given Anselm's engagement in a new style with the problems of freedom with foreknowledge, predestination, and grace, topics which he had not explicitly taken up in *De libertate* or *De casu*, is how little the substance of his view shifts in *De concordia*. He sees his task, clearly, as taking the *De libertate* and *De casu* view on free choice and the fall and placing it in an account of foreknowledge, predestination, and grace. Unlike Augustine at the end of his career taking up the same issues, Anselm does not shift, even rhetorically, his libertarian position. Of course, Anselm is not, as Augustine was, in the midst of a highly fraught battle with Pelagius for what Augustine clearly saw as the soul of Christianity. Still Anselm places his discussion of these issues as *quaestiones*, matters of debate, recognizing in the form the history and ongoing public controversy over them. He anticipates that others will ask how his account of the will and the fall would mesh with an Augustinian account of grace and predestination.

Though Anselm commentators have argued rightly that Anselm maps out a different position on free choice than Augustine, there is a deep and important sense in which this difference is less significant than it might seem at first. For that difference is located within a much deeper and broader agreement on what is more significant to both Anselm and Augustine than the mechanics of free choice. They share what is at the root of both *De concordia* and the three dialogues: the grounding of human being in the condition of creaturehood, those for whom everything they

174. DCP III, 14, S II, 288, 11–12.

have is received. In this is a rejection of metaphysical or moral sufficiency, what Augustine and Anselm both reject about classical and secular models of what it is to be human and to live well. As Paul Kolbet writes, "the anti-perfectionism of [Augustine's] critique of pagan virtue is a piece of his fundamental conviction that receptivity to divine love (mediated in all sorts of ways) is the core human self." Sin, then, as Wetzel points out, is for Augustine the desire to "create ourselves out of nothing," a kind of pure autonomy. Augustine's emphasis on sin, Wetzel implies, is a way of correcting the self-understanding based on the illusion of pure autonomy and moving to a truer sense of human finitude and dependence now freed to seek what it desires in God, not self.[175] To these claims Anselm could and did say only, "amen." The difference is that Augustine, perhaps, did not think he could preserve this vision without doing away with independent human agency for fear of granting possession of something "not received" to human being. Anselm sets as his task the preservation of the principle that everything is received, including the possibility for agency in the free affirmation of one's insufficiency and creaturehood.

The End of Anselm's Authorship

What, then, are we to make of the Anselmian project, at the end of his oeuvre? These two works remain a pair for the ways in which they presage later forms, *quaestiones* and *disputationes*. This is true in terms of the questions they take up, the literary form in which their arguments are placed, and the way in which they take up scripture as party to those debates. Scripture is used as source for authoritative statements and starting place for debate as we see Anselm putting into practice the same strategies for the posing and answering of questions we saw in the school of Laon texts collected by Lottin.[176] Just as scholars like Gemeinhardt applaud Anselm's taking up of and competence with the terminology of persons and relations of the Trinity, philosophers have praised the greater technical clarity of *De concordia* with its distinction, as mentioned above, between the will as instrument and will as inclination.

Though both of these late works reflect clear changes in Anselm's style and method, *De processione* remains the outlier. There are still moments in *De concordia* and its thrust as a whole which display Anselm's argumentative flair for linguistic analysis combined with a taste for complexity and paradox. *De concordia* is faithful to Anselm's vision of the

175. Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, 235.

176. See chapter 6 for some examples of points of comparison between Anselm and the school of Laon.

human condition as defined by its relationship to God, the creator. Even the analogies Anselm elaborates, of the naked man, God's husbandry, and the servant, though not as frequent in his early treatises, evoke Anselm's pastoral ministry, letters and prayers; analogies seem to have been a frequent part of his conversation with fellow monks, it seems clear from the collection of similitudes associated with Anselm.[177] While *De processione* has its analogies as well, their force along with its more formal arguments is to establish a claim and disprove its contrary.

There is a level on which, despite the admiration of scholars of later scholasticism and contemporary philosophical commentators, the changes that culminate in these works do not represent an unambiguous improvement. Anselm's clearer distinctions and technical language are a response to critics who are not Anselm's fellow monks engaged in prayerful meditation on the things of faith, seeking for greater insight and depth, but opponents fighting more to be right than to be edified. This may be an unfair characterization, and from his earliest writings Anselm was never the enemy of clarity. But his genius, more in evidence in the earlier works, lies in his ability to combine clarity and rigor with a sense of the deeply inaccessible character of what he seeks to understand. Clarity was originally pursued not just for its own sake but in the service of being more deeply aware of infinite depths still to be contemplated.

The dominant mode of Anselm's earlier works is of reason not so much in the service of orthodoxy but more in the service of an ongoing call to deeper reflection, less as an end point than a part of a longer journey. The diminished emphasis on the pastoral and pedagogical is not just the absence of a literary flourish or of affective impact but an *intellectual* loss because a loss of reflection on *who* the knower is and their relationship to what is known. Writer and reader, speaker and audience have been disembodied, their position and limitations bracketed in the attempt to construct neutral arguments designed to be effective for anyone. The lack of any embedded human standpoint (as distinct from shared premises or institutional identity) in *De processione* is for Anselm more likely a product of the occasion for this piece, rather than a broader position on rational theological, method. It is, paradoxically, Anselm's most occasional work, composed for a very definite time and purpose, and the most neutral and disembodied. Yet it is also present in *De concordia* and, more importantly, is an intensification of an element in Anselm's thought that has been there from the beginning, now brought to serve a public and institutional rather than private and individual purpose.

177. Anselm, *De humanis moribus per similitudines*, in *Mem*. 39–104.



Conclusion

Reason, Desire, and Prayer

There are, broadly speaking, two kinds of objections to Anselm's project, one to its speculative expression—that it is too thoroughly rationalistic, and the other to its spiritual vision—that it is based on a distortedly negative view of the human person as sinful and of God as vengefully demanding payment. Though there are some signs of fraying over time in Anselm's work, the argument of this book is that the rational and spiritual projects are elements of an integral whole: reason serving spirituality and spirituality giving value to reason. The final question for reflection, then, is whether attempting to see Anselm's work whole makes it possible to respond to these objections.

Reason and the Monastic Life

Anselm's commitment to reason is bold and uncompromising. He keeps a vow to unleash reason, giving it leeway to ask the hardest questions, to lead believers down the darkest paths. We might say that the results, judged by the standards of reason, the very reason Anselm sets in motion, are mixed. Anselm's analysis of ordinary language leads to conclusions that require the embrace of contradictories and the multiplication of senses and distinctions. Gaunilo speaks for many when he objects that Anselm has not managed to present necessary, indubitable conclusions to convince unwilling or ignorant unbelievers. And even to the degree that Anselm succeeds, he does not do so without exposing deep difficulties for reason in the faith he wants to understand. As Bencivenga notes, "the practice of questioning the system *in order to establish it* is, after all, a practice of *questioning the system*."[1] Richard Southern comments

1. Ermanno Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense: The Case of Anselm and his God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 89.

on the double-edged sword of Anselm's thought: "Although [Anselm] was the most lucid and decisive of writers . . . he casts over every subject an iridescence filled with contradictory possibilities."[2]

If, as seems clear, reason does not conclude its journey with clear and complete understanding, and Anselm is neither unaware of nor surprised by this outcome, the question is why Anselm has engaged in this project. As Bencivenga puts it so engagingly, "this stuff is too serious to be a game, it raises too many questions to be a way of enforcing power, it's too much in earnest to be the devil's work, however indirectly."[3] Anselm cannot, in other words, be simply playing with language and reason. He hopes for and wrings from them some real results. On the other hand, the results are too nuanced and complex to serve unambiguously to shore up the faithful and the institution of the Church (on this, *De processione* might be the exception), and it would be perverse to see Anselm as intentionally aiming to destroy by subversion the faith he sets out to understand.

Bencivenga answers his question about why Anselm engages in this project of reason by noting the combination in Anselm of two contradictory impulses, "the one for novelty, surprise and change, and the one for stability and order."[4] While these impulses are separated in modernity, he argues, Anselm pursues both and holds them together with reason. Anselm is both more committed to the constructive powers of reason than his earlier medieval predecessors and more cognizant of the limits of reason, arguably, than many who were to follow him.

It is important to note that Anselm's embrace of reason is paired with a rejection of esotericism. Though they differ on much else, two of Anselm's important twentieth-century commentators, one a theologian, Karl Barth, the other a philosopher, Richard Campbell, agree on Anselm's stance against esotericism, noting that Anselm grounds his reflections in the shared language of available public discourse.[5] "An-

2. Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 436.

3. Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*, 84.

4. Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense*, 108.

5. Richard Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding: A Study of Anselm's* Proslogion *Argument on the Existence of God* (Canberra, Australia: The Australian National University, 1976), 196–97; Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, translated by Ian W. Robertson, (London: SCM Press, 1960), 69. Campbell with some justification takes this as his point of difference with Barth, arguing that nonetheless, Barth takes Anselm's project to be internal to theology, to be in an important way only intelligible from within the faith. Richard Campbell, "*Fides quaerens intellectum—Deo remote,*" in *Saint Anselm—A Thinker for Yesterday and Today—Anselm's Thought Viewed by Our Contemporaries*, *Proceedings of the International Anselm Conference*, *Centre National de Recherche Scientifique Paris*, edited by Coloman Viola and Frederick van Fleteren, Texts and Studies in Religion 90 (Lewiston,

selm," Barth writes, "is not in a position to treat Christian knowledge as an esoteric mystery, as a phenomenon that would have to shun the cold light of secular thinking. . . . Anselm knows just one question, one language and one task of theology." "Proving" in this context, according to Barth, "means wishing to make the Faith comprehensible to everyone, not only to himself, not only to the little flock but to everyone."[6] Truth, Anselm claimed in the *Meditation on Human Redemption*, denies itself to no one.[7] Anselm begins his speculative work with this tremendous openness, a combination of optimism and humility. What Anselm believes in rejecting esotericism is that there is no claim or argument he wants to protect from outsiders and that as inquirer he is no better or worse than any objector, real or imagined. This is the positive side of rationalism, the seeking of reasons that are accessible to all, and Anselm is arguably the medieval thinker whose commitment to reason in this sense is most audacious and complete. But Anselm's rationalism does not end here; Anselm also attempts to make reason recognize and be responsible for what it produces.

Thus, second, Anselm's difficult formulations and his tight logical arguments serve not just the conclusions he seeks to establish but are valued as process; they are, in other words, part of a pedagogy. As we saw throughout Anselm's dialogues, whether the topic was grammar, free choice, or the Incarnation, the student was required to pay close attention to follow Anselm's logical moves and substitutions. Anselm's arguments and distinctions are too dense and too fine to understand without engaging the whole of one's intellect and attention, and Anselm takes pains to point out the consequences of lapses of attention not just to each step but to the arc of argument. One can imagine such a style being a way of attracting young monks, fresh from their own dialectical and grammatical studies, fascinated by the conundrums of logic and reason. But Anselm does not allow the participants' examination of language and argument to remain external to their existential condition; they must take responsibility and take the consequences of being the one who says and argues as they do. As Anselm makes explicit in dialogues from *De grammatico* to *Cur Deus homo*, participants cannot remain disinterested; rather the teacher redirects the consequences of the positions of his interlocutors back on them. Gaunilo is deprived of the ability to either accept or

N.H.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 169–70. For Campbell, what believer and unbeliever have in common is language. See also the similar critique of Barth by M. Burcht Pranger, "Unity and Diversity in Anselm of Canterbury," in the same collection, 317–41.

6. Barth, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*, 68–69.

7. *Med. 3*, S III, 85, 42.

reject the existence of that than which none greater can be conceived and Boso is made to experience his condition *remoto Christo* not as a mere intellectual supposition but as an existential disaster. These are, of course, the famous instances but there are, as we saw, smaller, somewhat less dramatic moments of the same kind throughout Anselm's corpus, like the student's recognition that the consequences of his claims make him neither human nor rational in *De grammatico*. Anselm gives Gaunilo, Roscelin, and his followers a dressing down before he takes up their objections, forcing them to accept the consequences of their claims on their other beliefs, commitments, and practices.

This pedagogy is another aspect of Anselm's rejection of esotericism. His openness to the questions and objections of reason turns back on the objector who is called on to reason. He cannot be disembodied and disinterested but must make himself vulnerable to the consequences of his own reasoning. In the *Proslogion* argument, Anselm finds a way to do this elegantly and simply in a *redarguitio elenchica* where the fool's very uttering of his claim assumes what is contradicted by its content.[8] In this sense, too, then, the *Proslogion* is *unum argumentum*, because Anselm does not have to appeal to *other* assumptions and positions of his opponent to show how they are inconsistent with his objection, but uses the objection against itself.

Anselm does not distinguish the subject matters of two different pursuits: philosophy and theology, nor two different stances: faith and reason. He does not separate rational reflection into an academic realm separate from what Pierre Hadot would call spiritual exercise. Anselm brings the full force of his reasoning down on God's existence, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the procession of the Holy Spirit in much the same way as he examines free choice and logical problems. At the same time, however, he allows the full force of the existential impact of the responses to these questions to wash over him, find expression in his text, and, ultimately, work to transform his reader. Thus, these exercises of reason are monastic spiritual practices for Anselm, the "chewing" and "sucking" portions of rumination, as he wrote in the *Meditation on Human Redemption*.[9]

Third, as we saw time and again, Anselm is willing to take reason to the brink and even beyond its own limits. In this way, Anselm's speculation defies later categorizations. His reflection on the divine nature leads down roads that bring to mind later scholastic developments and mysti-

8. See chapter 4 and Louis H. Mackey, *Peregrinations of the Word: Essays in Medieval Philosophy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 91.

9. *Med. 3*, S III, 84, 9–10; see also chapter 6.

cal theology. The structure of reasons pro and con, of objections and responses, presage scholastic *disputatio* but also are like attempts to get beyond reason and language, to move toward their breakdown as a way of more closely representing the unrepresentable.

What is most striking is that Anselm takes both projects to be the same. Following the logic of the divine being in the *Proslogion* and *Monologion* leads him to conclusions that are indubitable, founded on the identity of word and thing, subject and predicate, and yet, he asserts with equal vehemence, paradoxical, signifying the gap between words and God. Anselm does not just use reason to expose, explore, and enjoy the paradoxes of the divine; he carries it forward from Creator to the creature. Reflecting the shift of the topic from God, whose simplicity and integrity are mirrored in the simple formulations of the *Proslogion*, the language in the three dialogues devolves into complicated, scholastic distinctions, mirroring the complex and fragmented metaphysics of angels and humans. Though Anselm projects a unity of truth in *De veritate* and will in *De libertate* and *De casu diaboli*, retrieving that unity takes a path through a series of paradoxes and apparent contradictions—truths that are not true, freedom mastered by sin, abilities that are inabilities, doing that is passivity, possibilities that are impossible, and evil that both is and is not something. In the pursuit of the reasons for the Incarnation the formal structural pattern alternating paradox and necessity finds its original home in Anselm's account of the logic of the Incarnation as the impossible but necessary solution to the absolute paradox of the human predicament.

Anselm's steps toward neutral rationality, toward clarity and precision of expression are not, then, in the service of simply solving puzzles (either as a game or once and for all) but in the service of depth to be explored. If the rejection of esotericism and championing of reasoning in the service of pedagogy are about the middle of Anselm's arguments in the search for middle terms, the beginning and the end of his rational pursuits are tied to spiritual practice. For those arguments begin with as close to nothing as Anselm can manage and then struggle from nothing to everything, experiencing both the success of those endeavors and their fragility, finding, as the *Monologion* puts it, that "nothing" easily demolishes all efforts.[10] In this the arguments mirror the prayers, which are marked no less by a kind of relentless logic, as they explore the problem of salvation starkly, exposing it in all its difficulty. In both genres—prayer and argument—Anselm takes up the problem of nothing,

10. *Mono.* 19, S I, 34, 8–9.

that there is nothing we have which is not received. Reason emerges from nothing and the problems of nothing to move toward being, but, if the aim is truth and certainty, Anselm overshoots. He plays out the consequences of reason to certainty and beyond, toward paradox and opacity. We arrive at the God who is *greater* than can be conceived at one end, and the act of deserting justice equally beyond understanding at the other.

There is a recurrent and significant motif in Anselm not just of exposure but the pursuit of difficulty and paradox. Most commentators have assumed that Anselm pursues answers in order to offer reassurance that faith is tenable and supportable. Anselm never allows his conclusions to congeal into certainty, avoiding any smug self-satisfaction as well as any aggression toward others not similarly convinced.[11] But, even more, such rest, stability, and satisfaction are the complete opposite of the goal of the spiritual life designed by the Benedictine rule as Anselm understands it. The project of Benedictine spiritual life is not assured certainty, not a completed conversion but *continual* conversion. Anselm's describes this life in the starkest possible terms in the unfinished *De humanis moribus*. The discipline of the rule requires that one "stay awake when he wants to sleep, fast when he wants to eat, thirst when he wants to drink, remain quiet when he wants to talk, read or stand or walk when he wants to sit, endure many injuries, desert wholly one's own will [*propria voluntate*]."[12] This is a not a picture of rest or self-satisfaction but a practice of making oneself uncomfortable, never at home, never at rest. "No one comes to perfection," Anselm said, "unless he strives to arrive at more than he can reach."[13] Anselm seems to have taken to heart the portion of the Benedictine rule in which a monk who is asked to do the impossible is advised to accept the command meekly and obediently.[14] The exercise is continual and unending, the *impossibility* of completion an integral part of the task itself.

One might conclude as even some of Anselm's admirers have, that Anselm's arguments are not arguments at all but prayers. But there is another possibility, which is that Anselm's arguments—perhaps all arguments—are more like prayers than we might think. Prayer and argument share the same desire: union, of word with thing, of self with God. Both begin with alienation, of word from thing and self from God; else there

11. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, edited and translated by Alastair Hannay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 177; and chapter 6, 325.

12. *Mem*. 68.

13. *Mem*. 168.

14. *Rule of St. Benedict*, translated by Anthony C. Meisel and M. L. del Mastro (New York: Doubleday, 1975), chapter 68, 103.

would be no need for prayer or argument. Anselm brings out this parallel because he is more extreme in the union he seeks—his arguments are not to be just valid but indubitable—and more honest about the distance to be traversed from which he begins and which remains once he has done all that can be done. Anselm realizes that the incompleteness of his attempt is not something that might be overcome by someone else or in his own next assay. It is structural and permanent, both because of the ultimate unknowability of God and because of the nature of language itself. In the *Monologion*, Anselm takes pains to argue for the identity of God with his Word, the Second Person of the Trinity, by analogy to the model of human language. But he notes the paradox at the root of such a unity. Even though he argues for the identity of God and his Word, he also notes that they must be distinct for reasons just as necessary as the reasons why they must be the same: "For the word, in that it is a word or image, is related to the other, only because it is the word and image of something."[15] What Anselm reveals is the paradox at the heart of language, that words must capture their objects *and* be distinct from those objects. Thus the project of reason, uniting word and thing, is destined to fail, leaving a gap between word and thing for faith to stretch across toward closure.

The task of reason is so closely tied to Anselm's spirituality that the path of reason itself mirrors Anselm's spiritual path toward but never quite reaching God. We have seen that not only are Anselm's arguments, analogies, and poetic use of language compelling individually in their own right but the way in which the patterns of argument, models of friendship, and modes of prayer mirror each other, makes the Anselmian corpus even more richly rewarding. We see across it common passions and longing, relentlessness, and striving and have to admire his ability to craft the expression of the same spiritual project in so many different contexts.

There is, then, a link between the narrative line of desire and argument Anselm constructs in his different works and the strong emotions of ecstasy and despair that are expressed throughout: because Anselm seeks such heights, he falls so low, or almost does. This single arc toward God created by language and desire traversing the infinite distance between the lowly sinner and the inaccessible God is only the idealized shape of the rhetorical and existential direction of Anselm's work, for God as *terminus* is never reached. The devotional and the more speculative writings portray the inevitable failure to complete this line as a fall, a return to ground zero. At times Anselm seems to experience his situa-

15. *Mono.* 38, S I, 56, 24–26.

tion as an intense either/or: one either makes it all the way to God or falls into the depths of despair at his total absence.

Anselm does not end his speculative works in this despair nor, as many have thought, in the triumph of reason fully capturing its object, any more than the prayers end in ecstatic union or the letters in perfect community. In both it is, rather, an orientation toward that end in increased longing and desire. What he gains through emotional and intellectual introspection is a greater understanding of the incompleteness of his knowledge and the impossibility of reaching his heart's desire; the result is that he feels his separation more painfully and is propelled more urgently toward union.

"Religion of the Sick Soul"

If we can conclude that Anselm's use of speculative reason mirrors and serves the spiritual end of bringing the individual closer to God in and through a realization of the remaining distance, we cannot escape the necessity of examining another set of objections to Anselm's vision. The moments that gave pause working through these different expressions were places in the letters, the prayers, and the atonement theory. No matter how far we go toward understanding these through nuanced interpretation and developed sense of context, the sublimation of particularity and physicality into the general and the spiritual and the replacement of love of another human being for the other's sake for love of them for God's sake in the letters are very different than contemporary intuitions about human relationships. In the same way, the extreme expressions of self-loathing in the prayers, the feudal-sounding appeal to honor, and the requirement of payment and suffering in *Cur Deus homo* seem profoundly wrong to modern sensibilities.

When we focus on these problematic aspects, we can describe Anselm's vision as falling under William James's descriptor from *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, "religion of the sick soul." This notion, though not the specific content and assumptions of James's analysis, is a vivid way of capturing with one expression the elements in Anselm that seem most foreign to modern sensibilities. For James the "religion of the sick soul" focuses on evil as "something ineradicably ingrained in our natural subjectivity" that "requires a supernatural remedy."[16] He describes "their manufacture of fears, and preoccupation with every unwholesome kind

16. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study of Human Nature*, edited by Eugene Taylor and Jeremy Carrette (New York: Routledge, 2002), 108.

of misery" "based on the persuasion that the evil aspects of our life are of its very essence, and that the world's meaning most comes home to us when we lay them most to heart."[17] "To the healthy-minded way," James continues, "the way of the sick soul seems unmanly and diseased."[18]

The depiction of the sinful self, of human friendship and community only within the monastic life, of divine honor to be assuaged—these are all aspects of Anselm's thought that seem to fit James's notion. Sin, for Anselm, requires the utter debasement of the self before God, before a God who is infinite plenitude, who requires everything his creation is and more, which they can never repay. The result seems to be not so much the fostering of community but the evacuation of their community for the community of vassals with an absent God. Whether we begin with the God of the *Proslogion* or *Cur Deus homo*, we still end up in largely the same place, with the God who is everything to our nothing. This is, of course, a gross caricature and much of the effort of this study has been to present a more nuanced Anselm. And yet, there is something to the caricature that cannot quite be explained away, and if we admit that there is something problematic that remains after the work of interpretation has been done, the question is what to say about these aspects of Anselm's thought and their role in an evaluation of Anselm today.

After depicting the "sick" as opposed to the "healthy-minded" approach to belief in the divine, and just as the reader (like the original enlightened Harvard audience) begins to congratulate herself for superior healthy-mindedness, James reverses direction quickly and elegantly: "Systematic healthy-mindedness, failing as it does to accord to sorrow, pain, and death any positive and active attention whatever" leaves out of its account all that is most troubling in human life.[19] Thus, it can "hardly be regarded by any thinking man as a serious solution" but is a "mere syllabub [a frothy English dessert] and flattery and sponge-cake in comparison."[20] "Phrases of neatness, cosiness, and comfort can never be an answer to the sphinx's riddle."[21]

James faults the "healthy-minded" approach for papering over the limitations and vulnerability that mark human existence, limits that are experienced in the sorrow, loss, and death no human life can escape. Human limitations and the desire—and inability—to overcome them is, we have seen, Anselm's main theme. He expounds this theme, on the one

17. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 130, 106.
18. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 129.
19. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 131.
20. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 283.
21. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, 282.

hand, in linking reason with the project of seeking the God who ever exceeds our grasp and, on the other hand, in the deep analysis of the "metaphysics of creaturehood," which is the condition of finitude, desire, and vulnerability combined with freedom. In the first, Anselm uses the tools of dialectic to attempt to comprehend, and recognize his failure in comprehending, the *Deus absconditus*. In the second, Anselm adumbrates an account of human being and moral and spiritual life different from but as compelling as Plato, Aristotle, or the Stoics. Anselm exhorts human beings to live into rather than attempt to escape the conditions of finitude in desire, dependence, and vulnerability. For Anselm God become human in the Incarnation is a mirror of and response to this condition, while sin is the attempt to reject it.

In James's terms, then, we can say, Anselm has not offered a "syllabub" and, though he has not answered the sphinx's riddle, he has worked long and hard both to try to solve it and display its irresolvability, neither declining to take up the challenge nor pretending to have succeeded. As his understanding of the Benedictine rule prescribes, Anselm has not aimed at comfort but recommends and hopes to produce in his readers, as Augustine did, restlessness, the opposite of smug self-satisfaction, keeping the mind and heart ever in motion toward an ever more desired but still distant goal.

For James, the "religion of the sick soul" is deep though flawed, and at some level it is hard to escape the same conclusion for Anselm. This study has attempted to go some way toward exploring the depth—the weight and seriousness of the moral and metaphysical outlook in Anselm's corpus. We also have seen in the flaws their intimate connection to depth. And though there are other deep reflections on matters human and divine that have been woven without such flaws (though perhaps possessing others), Anselm deserves a place among deep thinkers as a potent alternative to frothier mixtures.

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