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ANSELM'S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT:

WHOLE, UNIFIED, AND COMPLETE

A DISSERTATION

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

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By

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ANSELM'S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT:
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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The Proslogion has long been seen to contain Saint Anselm's Ontological Argument, although philosophers have differed in their opinions about exactly what constitutes this argument. An analysis of both the Proslogion and the multi-faceted context of Anselm reveals a more complicated and much stronger argument in the Proslogion than has previously been identified.

INTRODUCTION

St. Anselm of Canterbury is known, in the philosophical arena, mainly for his ontological argument. This work is devoted to the uncovering of Anselm's true argument. It is the author's contention that the previously identified arguments in Anselm's Proslogion is/are integral parts of a larger, more comprehensive, and more successful ontological argument.

Before we investigate the argument itself, we will need to place Anselm within the proper context historically, culturally, religiously, and academically. The first chapter will begin with a biographical sketch and enumeration of the written works of St. Anselm. We will then take a look inside the mind of the great man via arguments found in writings other than the Proslogion. Thus, we may better understand his unique style of argumentation and the human foibles that identify it.

The second chapter will be devoted to how the argument has been perceived through the centuries between its writing and the present. We will begin with Gaunilo, a monk, contemporary with Anselm, who

was the first to criticise the argument. Then we will note how, over time, the perception of the argument changed due to the analyses of writers like Karl Barth, Charles Hartshorne, and Alvin Plantinga.

The next step will be to examine criticisms and objections to Anselm's arguments, as it has been previously perceived. Due to the sheer volume of claims that some sort of 'existence is not a real predicate' criticism tells against the argument, a complete chapter will be devoted to this type of objection.

The next (fourth) chapter will be occupied with examining the other major criticisms which have been brought against Anselm's argument. These criticisms are wide-ranging in their philosophical bases, and cover several areas of philosophic inquiry. We will inquire into their validity and usefulness, as well as whether or not they indeed tell against Anselm's Ontological Argument.

It will then be time to delve into the Proslogion to uncover Anselm's true argument. This will be done by means of a combination of textual analysis, recalling what we have previously learned about Anselm the man, and ascertaining what Anselm

intended the Proslogion to accomplish. This will reveal a hitherto unseen (at least in part) argument in the Proslogion which is larger in scope and more powerful in effect than previous versions.

Finally, we will attempt to anticipate some criticisms that may be brought against this argument. These objections will be laid out and, if possible, answered in accord with the complete argument which has been uncovered. This chapter will show the true strength of the argument that we have now brought to light.

CHAPTER 1

Certainly one of the most discussed (both orally and in writing) philosophical topics over the last millennium has been, and still is, St. Anselm's Ontological Argument for the Existence of GOD. This argument has been criticised, sometimes unfairly, because of either ignorance or misunderstanding; it has been defended, both valiantly and in ways that many who value the argument wish had never been associated with it. But, more about that later, since first we need a little background about its author to better understand the argument.

R. W. Southern, arguably the leading Anselm scholar in our time, says,

> "It can scarcely be too strongly emphasized that the span of Anselm's life covered one of the most momentous periods of change in European history, comparable to the centuries of the Reformation or the Industrial Revolution. It is only against this background that his own balancing of the old and new, his mixture of political conservatism and intellectual and spiritual

> innovation,... can justly be measured. As a constellation of talent in different fields, Anselm, Gregory VII and William the Conqueror were the greatest men in Europe during this period."[1]

Southern's point here is that Anselm contributed as much in the intellectual arena during this period as these two contemporaries, who literally changed the world, did in their own spheres of influence. So who was this man who changed the world? Where did Anselm come from and how did he come to be such an important influence in this extremely crucial time in the history of western civilisation? These questions will be best answered by a fairly cursory look at his origins and early life, and by considering what a few of his writings can tell us about the nature of the man.

Anselm was born in Aosta, an ancient Roman town in the Alps in the year 1033 A.D.[2]. His parents were of moderate nobility. Being born into a noble family was extremely important, especially in that part of

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[1] Portrait, Southern, p.4

[2] Since R. W. Southern is widely accepted as one of the top scholars on Anselm, if not the leading Anselm scholar of our time, I will be using his assignment of dates throughout this work. These may be found in his work Saint Anselm : A Portrait in a Landscape pp. xxvii - xxix.

the world during the medieval period. Unless one came from a family of at least moderate worldly means, one had neither the opportunity nor the ability to have a future which might lead him to any of the roads that Anselm eventually traveled. This was more true of the academic fields, which also required some connection with the church, than of most other vocations.

Anselm's family expected him to take up the "white habit of the secular canon"[3], which position would succeed in "propping up a declining family fortune"[4]. To this end he became a clerk in the church at Aosta at an early age. However, as a small child, Anselm had seen a vision that foretold his eventual vocation.[5] In this dream Anselm went into the court of GOD and was served "the whitest of bread"[6]. This image would surely have left quite an impression on any boy who had never eaten any bread other than dark, coarse country bread. This vision, coupled with his mother's expression of her faith to Anselm,[7] led him to seek, and eventually find, his true vocation within the church.

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[3] Life and Times, Rule, p.17
[4] Portrait, Southern, p.5
[5] The Life, Eadmer, pp.4-5
[6] Ibid., p.5
[7] Ibid., p.4

Anselm first expressed a desire to become a monk when he was fourteen years old.[8] Since his attempt was not successful at this time, he followed other pursuits. His mother died in 1050, and several years later he had a falling out with his father around 1056[9]. Anselm consequently left home on a journey of some three years across the Alps, through Burgundy and through most of France, until he came to Normandy. It seems to have mattered little to Anselm whether he lived the life of relative ease to which he had been born, or the more difficult life of an indigent itinerant which, for at least a time, he had chosen. This makes it evident that Anselm was not ignorant of life in the outside world, even though he had been involved in the church as a boy and had ended up in a monastery, to which vocation he had committed himself as a teen.

In Normandy Anselm found the monastery at Bec to his liking for two reasons. Here he could live in anonymity (or so he thought); and he could also study under Lafranc, a well-known rhetorician who was teaching at the abbey. Here at Bec, Anselm finally decided to become a monk. As Anselm studied under

[8] Ibid., p.5

Lafranc at Bec, he soon proved to be the best student Lafranc had ever encountered. This resulted in Anselm taking over as prior at Bec when Lafranc left to become the abbot at Caen.[10] That this appointment came only three years after Anselm had become a monk and a scant four years after his arrival at Bec indicates that Anselm was by far the best student Lafranc had ever taught. The young man who had chosen to become a monk at Bec rather than at Cluny in order to be noticed less had, within a short time, not only been noticed, but given authority over all the other monks. Indeed, this would be a case, in a few short years, of the student becoming the master. This is not to say that Anselm would ever have let such a thing be said, much less have said it himself.

> Of this period in Anselm's life, Southern says, "Until he became abbot in 1078, Anselm's life for nearly twenty years was one of monastic peace, disturbed only by the occasional enmities inseparable from the lives of men living in close proximity in a small community."[11]

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[9] Op. Cit., Southern, p.11
[10]The Life, Eadmer, ed. Southern, p.12
[11] Portrait, Southern, p. 113

From the time he entered the monastery, Anselm had about three years with no serious responsibility before he became prior, so he had some time to situate himself before duties were thrust upon him. By all accounts, this time was well spent, not only in the academic studies previously referred to, but also in prayerfully pursuing his now permanently chosen vocation.

Now, as prior, he had responsibilities, both those of teaching and of spiritually leading the monks, young and old. It is of some note that those monks who, in the beginning, were jealous of this younger monk who was quite new to the monastery, were, by his manner of life, converted into his staunch supporters[12]. These responsibilities would in time lead to writing, because of the persistent "importunities"[13] of his pupils and his own sense of responsibility. Not satisfied with his classroom adumbrations of these subjects, students prevailed upon him to write down more detailed explanations. During this period, Prior Anselm wrote the "Prayers and Meditations", the "Monologion"(A Monologue) and the "Proslogion"(A Further Word) in response to the

[12] The Life, Eadmer, pp. 15-16

requests of his students, his peers, and his superiors in the church.

In 1078 Anselm was elected abbot of Bec, and over the next eight years he wrote "De Veritate"(On Truth), "De Libertate Arbitrii"(On Free Will) and "De Casu Diaboli"(On the Fall of the Devil). He was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093 and the next year finished his "Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi"(A letter On the Incarnation of the Word). His other major works are: in 1098 "Cur Deus Homo"(Why GOD became Man), in 1099 "De Conceptu Virginali et de Peccato Originali"(On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin) and "Meditatio de Humana Redemptione"(A Meditation On Human Redemption), in 1102 "De Processione Sancti Spiritus"(On the Procession of the Holy Spirit), and in 1108 "De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei cum Libero Arbitro"(On the Compatibility of the Foreknowledge, Predestination and Grace of GOD With Free Will).

On April 21, 1109 Archbishop Anselm died, leaving behind a legacy of writing and innovative thinking not seen theretofore in the era of the Roman Church; and rarely seen in the millennium since in

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[13] The Life and Times, Rule, p.177

the world at large. There had been no prior precedent in Europe for this level of academic and literary accomplishment.

Anselm's mind was a wonder, capable of levels of thought that few minds, then or now, can attain. This is evident to anyone who reads his works, and we will now investigate some examples from a few of his major works.

It is evident from his early writings that Anselm was Platonic in his thinking and in his argumentation. He follows similar lines of reasoning to St. Augustine, for whom he had the utmost respect, and whom he even referred to as his "mentor"[14]. St. Augustine was heavily influenced by Plotinus, the renowned neo-Platonist. Anselm certainly follows the same style, not only of argumentation but also in his subject matter, as the man he respected and referred to as mentor. The difference between the two is that, while his initial subject matter is often the same as that of Augustine, Anselm almost always takes the subject farther and deeper than his literary forbear.

Anselm uses *a priori* argumentation almost exclusively, and, as is common in *a priori*

[14] Monologion, preface, p. 36

argumentation, makes much use of the *reductio ad absurdum*. Reading his works, one finds that sometimes a reminder is needed that St. Anselm is writing a very specific kind of work. He is writing a unique kind of speculative philosophical theology, not epistemology or metaphysics. This will need to be borne in mind as his work is examined.

Now let us consider some of Anselm's writings to learn how this man's mind worked. First, let us look at the Monologion, which, although it was not Anselm's first work, is the first philosophical theology that he wrote. In Chapter I of the Monologion, Anselm argues to the existence of one supremely good thing, using an argument very much reminiscent of Plato in its use of universal qualities and of Augustine with respect to how objects are imbued with these qualities. Then Anselm writes, "But what is supremely good is also supremely great"[15].

The difficulty, which is immediately apparent, is that Anselm has not argued regarding a supremely *great* thing at all, much less proven that it exists. However, if he had argued to the existence of a

[15] Monologion Chapter 1, P.12

supremely great thing, he would have used the very same argument that he used for the supremely good thing. It seems, then, that Anselm assumed that the reader would be astute enough to put this together and conclude that, in addition to the supremely good thing, there is also a supremely great thing. Indeed, he writes in Chapter II, "in the same way we arrive at the necessary conclusion that there is something supremely great,"[16], showing that what we have above surmised is exactly what Anselm was thinking.

There is, however, a second difficulty here, i.e. that Anselm writes, 'But what is supremely good *is also* supremely great', as if he had proven not only that the supremely great thing existed, but also that it is identical with the supremely good thing. In fact, he writes in the second chapter, "since only that which is supremely good can be supremely great, it is necessary that there is something that is best and greatest"[17], thus indicating that he believes that he has shown the two to be identical.

What is it that he is assuming that the readers will understand this time? The clues are in the quote just used. First, the words 'can be' are quite

[16] Ibid. chap. 2, p. 13

telling. Since he has established that there is both a supremely good thing and a supremely great thing, by the essence of what these things are, only the supremely good thing could possibly be the supremely great thing. That is to say, there is only one candidate for the position of the supremely great thing, and that candidate is the supremely good thing. Here we have another point that Anselm expects the reader to naturally understand. It is so very obvious to him that he believes that any rational person would see it also.

So it is now clear that Anselm took the supremely good thing to be the only thing eligible to be the supremely great thing, but the question now arises: does it qualify? Here we turn to where Anselm distinguishes between the two common meanings of 'magnus', i.e. great in size and great with respect to quality: "I do not mean great in terms of size, ... but something which, the greater it is, the better or more valuable it is,"[18].

The quality-oriented 'magnus' includes moral quality, and here it is that we find the connection between the supremely good thing and the supremely

[17] Ibid. chap. 2, p. 13

great thing. To be supremely good is indeed a moral quality; it is in fact the highest moral quality. So, to be supremely great in the manner in which Anselm is using the word is also the highest moral quality. Therefore these two 'things' must indeed necessarily be one and the same thing; that is, the supremely good thing and the supremely great thing are indeed identical.

In the first example we considered from the Monologion, we saw that Anselm expected the reader to infer an argument from a previous argument on a similar subject. This is understandable by most readers and does not require an inordinate amount of mental work. The second example, however, is more vexed in the nature of the problem. This is because there has been no exemplary argumentation preceding it that might introduce it to the reader. Further, it is difficult also because the author is expecting the reader to conceptually equate the platonic ideals of his meanings for 'bonus' and 'magnus'. He does this without any prior hint that this relationship is in his mind, and apparently once again does so because this seems so very obvious to him.

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[18] Ibid. chap. 2, p. 13

Now we will consider the Cur Deus Homo, a dialogue explaining why it was necessary for GOD to become man in order to redeem man. This work was written some twenty years after the Monologion and Proslogion were finished, and, possibly due to difficulties such as we have explored in the Monologion, is written in dialogue form.

We find the problem stated fairly early in the dialogue, as is also the conclusion. But in this treatise Anselm prolongs the argumentation, interspersing it with various related theological themes. The most succinct statement of the subject of the discussion is,

> "the human race, clearly his most precious piece of workmanship, had been completely ruined; it was not fitting that what God had planned for mankind should be utterly nullified, and the plan in question could not be brought into effect unless the human race were set free by its Creator in person."[19].

Here we see the problem, 'the human race ... had been completely ruined'; and the conclusion, that the

[19] Cur Deus Homo chapter 4, p.269

setting free must be done by 'the Creator in person'. The intermediary steps in this argument are many and varied, but there does seem to be a basic superstructure within which the other related arguments take place.

The first part of this superstructure argument contains two premises and the conclusion which follows from them:

P1: the human race is completely ruined.

P2: it is not fitting that GOD's plan be nullified.

C1: the human race needs restoration.

Both P1 and P2 are found in the passage cited above, where we find the encapsulation of Anselm's position, which he intends to prove in this dialogue. The conclusion is a readily apparent one, which Anselm assumes the reader has inferred for herself from the passage and her own rational ability.

However, we soon learn that for there to be a proper restoration, certain conditions must be met:

P3: The restorer must be able to facilitate the forgiveness of mankind's sins, which requires that he be sinless himself.

P4: The restoration must leave mankind free

from any additional obligations.

P5: The restorer must choose to act by his own free will and not due to coercion.

C: Therefore, the restorer must be divine.

These premises are stated fairly early on and argued for, with one exception, at various places throughout the dialogue. P3 is the exception, or one-half of P3, to be more accurate. The first part of P3 is stated at the end of Chapter X, "The remission of sins, therefore, is something absolutely necessary for man, so that he may arrive at blessed happiness"[20]. This comes after a good deal of sometimes rambling argumentation during the preceding two chapters. This long argument, interspersed with discussions on related theological topics, while difficult to follow, does accomplish the task as long as one acknowledges that certain scriptural points and assumptions are valid. Again, we must remember here that Anselm was writing philosophical theology, so we must expect him to use the scripture in his argumentation. It is our task rather to watch only that he live up to his stated goal, to argue

[20] Ibid. chapter 10, p.282

rationally without depending on scripture instead of intellectual argument.

The second part of P3, however, is another story. Both Anselm and Boso, the student who is antagonist in the dialogue, assume that the restorer must be sinless in order to free mankind from sin, without arguing the point at all. This is troublesome, since one can envision a perfectly good argument proving that someone who has sin could not take the sins of others away. It may well be that Anselm assumed that the reader would supply this in the same manner as we saw above regarding the Monologion.

Anselm argues for P4 quite succinctly in Chapter V with a common-sense argument. He argues that mankind would be in debt to whoever freed the human race from sin. He continues by arguing that, given that mankind should be in debt only to GOD, it must be a divine person who should free the human race. Now, it may seem as if P5 is not necessary to the argument, but as Boso says, "What man would not be judged worthy of condemnation, if he were to condemn someone innocent and release the guilty party?"[21].

[21] Ibid. chapter 8, p.275

So, as we can see, only a man without sin would be able to restore the human race, and a man without sin does not need to die. So, if a sinless man is to die in order to restore the human race, it must certainly be by his own choice, not resultant from any kind of coercion.

The argument for P5 is longer and more drawn out than the argument for P4 was, but is nonetheless effective. The discussion centers around the difference between obedience to the orders of GOD and obedience to the task of living an upright life chosen by oneself for oneself. The distinction between these two kinds of obedience is crucial to the argument, and so warrants a little time to look into it.

The first kind of obedience, it turns out, is one in name only, an action in accordance with the wishes or commands of another. This does not need to involve the mind or heart, only the actions. On the other hand the second, the true, obedience is one of personal volition, as it were, from the inside out. As Anselm writes, "absolute and true obedience is that which occurs when a rational being, not under

compulsion but voluntarily, keeps to a desire"[22]. The argument shows that indeed the Christ was following his own volition on his path to the cross, and was not driven to the cross by a blind obedience to a command from GOD. This in turn shows that the only person capable of meeting all these requirements was the Son of GOD, which is why GOD became man.

It seems very interesting that the much-later Cur Deus Homo was written in dialogue form (as were several of Anselm's later works) and has far fewer places where the argumentation is either vexed or missing than his earlier writings. It could be that Anselm realised later in life that his earlier works were being misunderstood not merely due to a lack on the part of the readers, but possibly also due to a lack of proper explication by the author.

This will be of interest and, hopefully, of use in our investigation of the arguments found in the Proslogion, which was written directly after the Monologion, being therefore only the second philosophical/theological work Anselm produced.

[22] Ibid. chapter 10, p. 280

CHAPTER 2

The Proslogion is St. Anselm's most widely recognised written work, at least in philosophy. This is because it contains what most philosophers count as the most nearly successful version of an ontological argument for the existence of GOD.

Anselm's Ontological Argument has been criticised over the last millennium by those who wanted it to work but thought it didn't and by those who thought that it was nonsense. It has also been defended by those who thought it didn't quite work, by those who thought it almost worked, and by those who thought it sort of worked (kind of, maybe). There have been very few over the past almost one thousand years who believed that the argument does indeed accomplish what Anselm intended for it. A major impediment to understanding the finer points of this conversation has been that those criticising and defending the argument are not always speaking about the same argument. Another problem is that those criticising the Ontological Argument are not always criticising **Anselm's** version of the Ontological Argument. Because of this, I will now discuss the

history of the *perception* of Anselm's Ontological Argument.

For over eight hundred-fifty years St. Anselm's Ontological Argument for the existence of GOD was questioned, but not in question. That is, there were criticisms and defenses of the argument by not a few, but it was the same argument that was being criticised and defended by various philosophers and theologians for almost nine centuries until the middle of the twentieth century.

The first critic of Anselm's argument was Gaunilo (or Wanilo, but henceforth in this work I will refer to him as Gaunilo) of Marmoutiers, a learned monk who misunderstood Anselm's argument both regarding what was said, and what the argument consisted of in its totality. In fact, Gaunilo originated the misconception, which lasted for over eight centuries, that Anselm's argument was contained in the second chapter of the Proslogion.

In this chapter Anselm argues that if the hearer understands 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived', then this exists at least in the understanding. Anselm continues by arguing that, since it is greater to exist in reality as well as in

the understanding than to exist only in the understanding, 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' must exist in reality or a greater could be conceived.

That Chapter Two, in the mind of Gaunilo, contains Anselm's whole argument is made clear in the introductory chapter of his reply to Anselm's argument: Pro Insipiente (on behalf of the fool)[23]. In this first chapter, in fact, Gaunilo outlines, quite faithfully except for one notable occurrence, the argumentation found in Proslogion II. He then makes assumptions that lead to some dubious criticism of this 'argument', but I will reply below to this, so back to the matter at hand.

Gaunilo does make reference to Proslogion III briefly, where Anselm argues that if 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' could be thought not to exist, a greater could be conceived which could not be thought not to exist. So 'that than which a greater cannot be conceived' cannot be thought not to exist. Gaunilo, however, sees this passage only as a reiteration of the material in Proslogion II, not

[23] Pro Insipiente, p. 105, Major Works

recognising it as a separate portion of a larger argument by Anselm.

The next author to whom I will attend regarding his perception of the argument is Saint Thomas Aquinas. Thomas criticised the Ontological Argument, but which argument? As Hick and McGill point out:

> "Anselm's argument was totally ignored throughout the twelfth century. When it did appear in the first half of the thirteenth century, it was extracted from its context in the Proslogion and was mixed in with a number of other isolated citations to prove the thesis that God's existence is self-evident and therefore need not--and cannot--be demonstrated. This was the only way in which Thomas knew the argument, and this was what he criticized."[24]

So the perception of the argument by Thomas was flawed by the misrepresentation of the argument in the source in which he found it. Therefore Thomas's perception of the argument can not be of use here.

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[24] The Many- Faced Argument, P. 38

In contrast to this, it seems that John Duns Scotus, who was a younger semi-contemporary of St. Thomas, did have a fairly accurate representation of at least the second chapter of the Proslogion. He appears to use it in his work on proving the infinite being, quoting Anselm, and subsequently adjusting the phraseology to suit his own purposes. It does seem that his perception of Anselm's Ontological Argument also was limited to Chapter Two of the Proslogion.

Kant's perception of the Ontological Argument was not based upon Anselm's argument, which evidently was not readily available to him. In fact, his criticisms of the argument show that he is dealing with some other version, since almost all of them include the word 'perfection'. Many, and most notably Plantinga[25], have concluded that Kant was dealing with Descartes' formulation of the Ontological Argument, while Hick and McGill hold, "Kant was occupied exclusively with the version of the argument formulated by Leibnitz."[26]

Whether it was Leibnitz's formulation of the argument or Descartes' version, it is clear that Kant was not dealing with Anselm's argument; so again, as

[25] The Ontological Argument, P. xiii

with Saint Thomas, his perception of the argument does not really apply to the work at hand. It is true, however, that many philosophers, Bertrand Russell and many since, have wielded this mace (i.e., Kant's representation of the argument) as if it destroyed any formulation of the Ontological Argument. In fact, many notable defenders of the argument have abandoned the argument in Proslogion II because of this and focused on chapter III instead, as we will see below.

In fact, it was almost eight hundred fifty years after Anselm wrote the Proslogion that the perception of the true argument that Anselm constructed began to be adjusted. In 1931 Karl Barth, the German philosopher and theologian, first published his Fides Quaerens Intellectum (Faith Seeking Understanding). In this work Barth asserts that Proslogion II can not be taken separately from the first part of Proslogion III, and that Proslogion IV is also integral to Anselm's argument. Barth shows that Anselm includes arguments found in all three of these chapters in his overall work, and that his work would not be complete without all three arguments. However, due to the

[26] The Many- Faced Argument, P. 38

socio-political arena on the continent in the 1930's, the English-speaking world at large did not become aware of this work until 1960. It was then that, after having been re-published in 1958 (in German again), Fides Quaerens Intellectum was published for the first time in English.

A scant ten years after the first printing of Barth's book, Dr. Charles Hartshorne's Man's Vision of God was published. Contained within this hallmark investigation into the "Logic of Theism"[27], near the end of the book is a chapter titled 'The Necessarily Existent'. In this chapter, Dr. Hartshorne discusses the Ontological Argument. However, for the most part he deals with Descartes' and Leibnitz's versions. He does seem to make reference to Anselm's version of the Ontological Argument in a couple of places, although he is not specific regarding to whom he is referring. Dr. Hartshorne first refers to Anselm where he asserts that the Ontological Argument does not "suffice to exclude the impossibility or meaninglessness of God, but only to exclude his mere possibility."[28] The other of these places is where

[27] This characterisation is taken from the second part of the full title of the book (MAN'S VISION OF GOD and the Logic of Theism). Title page, MAN'S VISION OF GOD.
[28] Man's Vision of God, P. 300

Dr. Hartshorne is discussing the 'perfect island'[29], but this could also be referring to Descartes' version, and, whereas he does not mention Gaunilo, I believe this is not a reference to Anselm's version. So, although Dr. Hartshorne does name Anselm as the originator of the Ontological Argument, and does certainly impact any later thinking regarding it, he does not alter the perception of Anselm's version.

Several years later, in 1949, Hugh Smart of Duke University published an article that argues that Anselm's argument is not truly rational. Arguing from differences between the Monologion and the Proslogion, and using Anselm's neo-Platonic background from Augustine, he argues that Anselm's purpose was not to produce a rational argument. He asserts that Anselm is arguing from his idea of GOD, not arguing from a conception of GOD. So, he argues, Anselm's argument is not truly a rational argument. Instead, Professor Smart maintains that the argument is an apologetic or religious endeavor, rather than a rational one.

This religious tone to the argument, which Barth had pointed out, was also acknowledged by Norman

[29] Ibid., P. 303

Malcolm in his 1960 article in The Philosophical Review.[30] In this article, Dr. Malcolm examines what he sees as Anselm's two arguments in the Proslogion. He finds that Anselm supplemented both of these arguments in the Responsio editoris with steps for each argument which were not in the Proslogion. The first argument, contained in Chapter Two, Malcolm concludes to be invalid, "because it rests on the false doctrine that existence is a perfection (and therefore that "existence" is a "real predicate")"[31]. Malcolm does, however, find the argument in Chapter Three to be valid. But, possibly more importantly, Malcolm discusses the aspect of religious belief as germane to understanding this argument. He says,

> "I suspect that the argument can be thoroughly understood only by one who . . . views it from the *inside* not just from the outside and who has, therefore, at least some inclination to *partake* in that religious form of life"[32]

This, echoing Barth, along with the inclusion of the Responsio editoris (A Response to the Editor), may

[30] "Anselm's Ontological Arguments" in The Philosophical Review, January 1960, pp. 41-62
[31] Ibid., p. 44
[32] Ibid., P. 62

well prove to be important pieces of the puzzle which is Anselm's true argument.

Alvin Plantinga has also done much to shape the contemporary perception of Anselm's Ontological Argument. In a 1961 article in The Philosophical Review[33], he answers Malcolm's reformulation of Anselm's argument. In this article he shows that at best Malcolm's reformulation fares no better than Anselm's original argument; and that it is likely that Malcolm's reformulation is a weaker version, subject to criticisms which do not tell against the original. A few years later, in 1965, he published a history of the Ontological Argument[34], in which he includes Anselm's argument (as it is commonly perceived), other important formulations of the argument, all of the important criticisms to date, and replies to those objections. The following year Plantinga published a telling refutation of Kant's famous criticism[35], thus becoming one of the foremost defenders of the argument.

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[33] "A Valid Ontological Argument?" in The Philosophical Review, January 1961, pp. 93-101

[34] The Ontological Argument : from St. Anselm to Contemporary Philosophers, 1965

[35] "Kant's Objection to the Ontological Argument" in The journal of Philosophy, October 1966, pp.537-546

Also in 1966, Patricia Crawford published an article dealing with Anselm's Ontological Argument.[36] Notable for our discussion here is that she puts forth a claim that chapter XV of the Proslogion is integral to Anselm's argument. In addition, Crawford offers an explanation of Anselm's theory of meaning that would support his argument. She also, in this explication, draws attention to the importance of faith or the religious aspect in Anselm's argument. She draws the conclusion,

> "The argument, for one who is not in faith, merely silences him. It cannot (at least of itself) give him faith; . . . But for Anselm, or another in faith, the argument can have a further dimension. . . . The argument *clarifies* certain elements of faith, but the argument can have this dimension only when faith is there to be clarified"[37]

In 1973, Bernardino Bonansea published "The Ontological Argument: Proponents and Opponents"[38]. This piece is a fairly comprehensive treatment of

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[36] "Existence, Predication, and Anselm", in The Monist, January 1966, pp. 109-124

[37] Ibid. P. 123

Anselm's version, though it makes mere reference to the other major versions of the Ontological Argument. Bonansea seems to exaggerate the peculiarities of other authors to the point of caricaturing the positions of these philosophers. This, naturally enough, leads to easier criticism than would in actuality be available, as well as misreading and underestimating Anselm's argument itself. It is notable that Bonansea does not even mention Alvin Plantinga, who by 1973 had become generally recognised as an expert on Anselm's argument at the same level as Dr. Hartshorne (who receives much attention). He does make the point that Anselm's argument needs to be evaluated within the context of the author and according to "the real intention of its author"[39], which will reveal that "many of the attacks upon it are either unjustified or groundless"[40]. So, in some ways at least, Bonansea, in a period during which many were attacking other arguments and claiming to discredit Anselm's, helped to bring focus back to Anselm's own argument.

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[38] In Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 1973, vol. 6, chap. 6, pp. 135-192
[39] Ibid. P. 135
[40] Ibid. P. 135

R. Brecher was another writer who helped to divert attention away from misrepresentations of Anselm's argument and back toward what he really said. In his 1974 piece[41] he makes two points which are important to our purposes here. First he shows from the text of the Proslogion that 'greater', better' and 'more perfect' are not completely interchangeable terms in Anselm's works. Brecher demonstrates from the meaning of the Latin words Anselm uses and from Anselm's usage in the text of the Proslogion that 'maius' greater, which occurs fifteen times in Proslogion chapters II, III, and IV, is not to be conflated with 'melius' better, which occurs once in the same span.[42] He then also draws sharp attention to Anselm's Neo-Platonic background, offering explanations from Anselm's history as well as from his writings. Brecher also answers the 'Lost Island' objection quite nicely, but the foregoing two points are by far the most useful in his enterprise.

Another contribution to the perception of Anselm's argument was begun when Charles Hartshorne published The Logic of Perfection.[43] Chapter Two of

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[41] "Greatness in Anselm's Ontological Argument" in The Philosophical Quarterly, April 1974, pp. 97-105
[42] Ibid., P. 97
[43] The Logic of Perfection, 1962

this book is entitled 'The Irreducibly Modal Structure of the Argument', referring of course to Anselm's argument. This began a long and probably not yet complete string of publications dealing with Anselm's argument by means of modern modal logic. Plantinga[44] and David Lewis[45] are probably the most notable names on this ever-lengthening list, but several authors have entered this engaging if not altogether transparent fray. We will see more on this subject below, but at this point suffice it to say that there are so many different modal systems in circulation at present that one might prove and disprove the same thing on the same day via two different modal systems.

William L. Rowe, in a chapter in Reason and Responsibility[46], discusses Anselm's argument in an extremely clear manner. He represents the argument quite fairly and shows how 'existence is not a predicate' is not a telling criticism of Anselm's argument. Rowe does find the premise, as he words it, "God might have existed in reality (God is a possible

[44] God and Other Minds, 1967
[45] "Anselm and Actuality", Nous, 4, 1970, pp. 175-188
[46] "The Ontological Argument" in Reason and Responsibility, Joel Feinberg Ed., eighth ed., 1993, pp. 8-17

being)"[47] objectionable. (This objection will be discussed below in the appropriate section.) This article re-ignited interest in Anselm's argument and brought forth more publications attacking and defending his position.

As has been discussed above, many philosophers have accepted that the 'existence is not a predicate' criticism does indeed discredit the argument in Proslogion II.[48] There were, during the 1960's and the early 1970's, attempts made to remove this objection from the arena. But, until Philip Devine's article in 1977[49], real progress had not been made. In this article, however, Devine makes some astute observations about the grammatical usage of 'exists' such as,

> "On the face of it, "exists" *is* a predicate. . . . The burden is on the objector to show that appearances are deceiving, . . . Or to put the matter in the material mode, he must show that

[47] Ibid., P. 10
[48] Plantinga, Malcolm, and Hartshorne are probably the most notable defenders of Anselm to take this position.
[49] "Exists and St. Anselm's Argument" in Grazer Philosophische Studien, vol. 3, 1977, pp. 59-70

> existence only appears to be a property, that it is not one in truth"[50]

He also draws some common-sense conclusions; e.g.,

> "if non-existence is a defect in an object of worship, it would seem that it [existence] would belong to the concept of a perfectly adequate object of such worship"[51]

Devine opens (or re-opens) this subject for more discussion with this intriguing and inventive paper.

The foregoing traces the perception of Anselm's Ontological Argument from shortly after it was written through to the present. This argument has prompted much discussion in all of its perceived forms, and has found unexpected defenders in unlikely places. In the next two chapters we will examine the criticisms and objections, as well as the defenses that have been put forth both by Anselm and those who speak in his behalf.

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[50] Ibid., P. 60

[51] Ibid., P. 70

CHAPTER 3

There have been many criticisms of Anselm's Ontological Argument over the more than 900 years since it was written. This argument has been called a charming joke by Schopenhauer, and so much labor and effort lost by Kant. Findlay has claimed, falsely, that such enterprises are universally regarded as fallacious. But of the actual philosophic criticisms, there is one that has been wielded more times and in more variations by more philosophers than all of the others put together. Of course, the criticism referred to is the 'existence is not a real predicate' objection. The other objections and criticisms will be dealt with below but, given the sheer volume of writing on this single objection, it will occupy its own chapter here.

It is interesting to note that most philosophers and theologians quote Kant on this subject, although he did not state the position the most accurately or eloquently. In fact, David Hume, in 1739 (more than forty years before the publication of The Critique of Pure Reason in 1781), published anonymously A Treatise of Human Nature. In Book I, Section VI of

this work Hume writes,

> "The idea of existence, then, is the very same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent. To reflect on any thing simply, and to reflect on it as existent, are nothing different from each other. That idea, when conjoin'd with the idea of any object, makes no addition to it. Whatever we conceive, we conceive to be existent. Any idea we please to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form."[52]

This is a well-written and understandable account of Hume's position. What Hume does not distinguish between, however, is possible and actual existence. It may well be true that when we conceive of a possible being, possible existence is necessarily attached to it. On the other hand, when we conceive of such a being, whether or not actual existence applies to this being is yet to be determined. At least Hume is not unnecessarily verbose in discussing the matter.

[52] A treatise of Human Nature, P. 67

In contrast, Kant takes some five pages to express roughly the same opinion, using his usual obtuse and convoluted style. To avoid prolixity, it will be best here to summarise Kant, using only a few short quotes. It is clear from early in the passage that Kant is referring to Descartes' version of the Ontological Argument, using the term 'ens realissimum'. He then discusses whether the proposition that something exists is analytic or synthetic, saying:

> "If it is analytic, the assertion of the existence of the thing adds nothing to the thought of the thing . . . But if, on the other hand, we admit, as every reasonable person must, that all existential propositions are synthetic, how can we profess to maintain that the predicate of existence cannot be rejected without contradiction?"[53]

Kant continues his discussion,

> "'*Being*' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a

[53] Critique of Pure Reason, P. 504

> thing. It is merely the positing of a thing, or of certain determinations, as existing in themselves"[54],

and further,

> "By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing--even if we completely determine it--we do not make the least addition to the thing when we further declare that this thing *is*. Otherwise, it would not be exactly the same thing that exists, but something more than we had thought in the concept; and we could not, therefore, say that the exact object of my concept exists."[55]

Now, regarding the first quote above, this distinction that Kant makes can be made only from inside his system of thought; and, therefore, can easily be dismissed by merely not following the Kantian system. Since this part of what Kant wrote on the subject is not what has been applied by others to Anselm's version, and we know, from Kant himself, that he was criticising Descartes' or Leibnitz's version, we will let that suffice.

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[54] Ibid., P. 504

Now let us move on to those things which, although Kant most likely had not even read Anselm's argument, have been applied to this argument by more recent philosophers. In the second quote above Kant says that *being* 'obviously' is not a real predicate, which brings up two readily apparent questions. First, how is it obvious that one cannot add existence to the concept of a thing in order to end up with a concept of an existent thing? And secondly, what is a 'real' predicate.

The first of these questions is not answered or explained by Kant; he merely assumes that it is the case. Does not every craftsman who envisions a thing and then brings the object of his imagination into the real world add existence to his concept in a meaningful way? True this is not adding existence mentally or through argumentation, but the fact that this has been done physically does not seem to make it the less applicable. In light of this and in the absence of philosophical argumentation for this statement by Kant, it should be treated as an undefended assumption and not be counted against the argument.

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[55] Ibid., P. 505

Regarding the second question, Kant represents a 'real' predicate as one that adds to a concept, but this seems to be a less-than-accurate way of saying 'a predicate that limits description'. If this is correct, then can existence not be used to limit a concept? An example would be the conception of a unicorn. It seems that if one formed the conception of 'unicorn' without involving existence in the mix, one would not properly conceive 'unicorn'. Part of a proper conception of 'unicorn' that needs to be included for it to be an accurate conception is that a 'unicorn' is a fictional animal, i.e. it does not exist. In light of this, might not existence then be a quasi-predicate, one that limits the concept at least in some small way, if it is not quite a real predicate?

The third quote contains an appreciably greater problem, however, in that Kant seems to claim that if existence were even a quasi-predicate, the problem would still remain that the existent thing would not be identical with the conceptual thing. It is not a surprise that existent things are not identical with their concepts; **they actually exist.** It would surely seem that the mere fact of actual existence is enough

to distinguish between two things, one existing and the other not. For example let us look at Kant's famous hundred thalers. Kant himself admits that there is at least some difference between the conceptual and the actual thalers, "My financial position is, however, affected very differently by a hundred *real* thalers than it is by the mere concept of them"[56](italics mine). And although Kant explains this difference via the analytic/synthetic distinction, which is in accordance with his system, the plain fact remains that there is an appreciable difference between the conceptual and the actual, which even Kant felt a need to explain. His explanation, moreover, falls short of anything that jibes meaningfully with our commonsense view of the world. We do not think of our conceptual constructs as identical with their real-world counterparts. We do think of existence as the difference between conceptual and actual. So this distinction depends on Kant's theoretical system for its meaning. And, as Bonansea has said, "few of the argument's opponents would be willing to subscribe to those very fundamental positions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*

[56] Ibid., P. 505

which have determined its author's rejection of the argument."[57] In spite of this, many critics have used Kant as a springboard for attacks on Anselm's argument.

Charles Hartshorne put forth a straightforward answer to this objection, "But if existence is not a predicate, yet the *mode* of a thing's existence- its contingency or necessity of existence- is included in every predicate whatsoever."[58] He continues, after explaining the nature of contingent existence, "'Self-existence' is a predicate which necessarily and uniquely belongs to God, for it is part of the predicate divinity."[59] Hartshorne explains that, since this unique 'self-existence' could not possibly be contingent, "either God is actual, or there is nothing which could be meant by his possible existence."[60] So, for Hartshorne, either 'GOD' is nonsense or there is an actual, necessarily existing being to which we give that name, and Kant's criticism has been mistakenly applied to the Ontological Argument.

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[57] "The Ontological Argument: Proponents And Opponents" in Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, P. 161
[58] Man's Vision of God, P. 306
[59] Ibid., P. 306
[60] Ibid., P. 307

Norman Malcolm registers a different and somewhat mixed reaction to Kant's criticism. He asserts: "Anselm's ontological proof of *Proslogion* 2 is fallacious because it rests on the false doctrine that existence is a perfection (and therefore that existence is a "real predicate")."[61] There seems to be a problem here in that nowhere in Proslogion II does Anselm use the word 'perfection', nor does he argue in such a way that he might reasonably be thought to have this idea in the background. He does use this kind of terminology in the Monologion, but his stated task is very different in that work. In fact it was Anselm's frustration with the arguments in the Monologion that led him to write the Proslogion.

However, Malcolm seems to believe that, since Anselm argues that it is greater for a thing to exist both conceptually and in reality than to exist only conceptually, Anselm holds that existence is a perfection. At the very least, more argumentation is needed to show this alleged relationship, and at worst Malcolm arrives at a wrong conclusion. Whether justified or not, Malcolm abandons Proslogion II

[61] "Anselm's Ontological Arguments" in The Philosophical Review,

because of this, and moves on to Proslogion III, where he sees a separate, though related, and stronger argument.

Here he finds an argument to which Kant's criticism is not applicable because *"necessary existence* is a perfection"[62]. Malcolm continues by analysing Kant's assertion that he can reject both subject and predicate regarding the proposition 'God exists', thereby classifying it as either false or meaningless. "To these remarks the reply is that when the concept of God is correctly understood one sees that one cannot 'reject the subject'. 'There is no God' is seen to be a necessarily false statement."[63] Malcolm, therefore, concludes that 'existence is not a real predicate' is not a telling criticism against the argument in Proslogion III.

The one contemporary philosopher who has spent the most time and effort on the Ontological Argument (Anselm's version as well as quite a few other versions) is Alvin Plantinga. After critiquing Malcolm's reformulation of Anselm's argument[64], Plantinga, a few years later, examined objections to

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P 44
[62] Ibid., P. 46
[63] Ibid., P. 51
[64] "A Valid Ontological Argument?" in The Philosophical Review

Anselm's argument in another paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Division of the APA. In this paper he attempts to answer the questions left hanging by Kant's criticism.

He attempts to ascertain what actual relevance Kant's criticism has to Anselm's argument. After graciously granting (more than once) that Kant might have meant more than he said and not finding the criticism applicable to Anselm's argument, Plantinga investigates the 'maximal whole concept' application of Kant's criticism.

A whole concept is a concept containing all of the properties applicable to the concept and nothing that is not applicable. A maximal-whole concept is a little more difficult to explain. Given all the properties that exist, a maximal whole concept will either have a property or will have the corresponding not-property. For example, a maximal-whole concept will either contain the property redness or the property not-redness. Another way of putting this is that the maximal-whole concept is by definition completely determined; that is, there are no gaps in the concept--no qualities that might or might not apply to the concept in question. We certainly might

not know whether or not the quality or its complement applies to the concept; but, if the concept is whole and maximal, either one or the other does surely apply. On the contrary, a non-maximal whole concept is undetermined with respect to at least one property.

Now, quite understandably, any existent is maximal in the sense being employed here, but consistent non-existing concepts may be, and according to Plantinga's representation are, non-maximal because at least one property is left undetermined. So, according to this representation, the whole concepts of all existents are maximal, and the whole concepts of non-existents cannot be maximal. This brings Plantinga to the following, "the whole concept of an existing object will be *maximal* ... ; since this is false for any whole concept of a nonexistent being, a whole concept of an existent is larger than any whole concept of a non-existent"[65]. It is surprising that Plantinga does not make the point here that, under this representation, one could easily claim that existence surely can be seen to add something to any non-maximal whole concept (as long

as the concept in question is logically consistent), whereas Kant asserted that existence added nothing to a concept.

However, this representation does certainly categorically differentiate existence from all other predicates; and this differentiation might be used to claim that 'existence is not a real predicate'. Plantinga does note that Anselm could admit existence not to be a 'real predicate' without affecting his argument: "Anselm argues that the proposition *God exists* is necessarily true; but neither this claim nor his argument for it entails or presupposes that existence is a predicate in the sense just explained"[66]. Patricia Crawford agrees that if existence is not a 'real predicate' this does not damage Anselm's argument. In fact, she asserts that Anselm's argument couldn't work if existence were a 'real predicate'. Crawford points out that Anselm's Augustinian background tells us that Anselm would have held that we cannot make positive theological statements about GOD, and that, therefore, "the implication of his position is that real determining

[65] "Kant's Objection to the Ontological Argument" in The Journal of Philosophy, P. 542
[66] Ibid., P. 543

predicates can't really be asserted of God and if existence were a real predicate it could not be predicated of God."[67]

So, not only was Kant not criticising Anselm's argument; according to Crawford, Kant cannot be used to criticise it. She writes, "Now if Kant is wrong in his thesis about existence, i.e., if existence is a real predicate, Anselm could never say that it is really true that that, than which no greater can be conceived, exists,... Hence, if Anselm had wished to hold that existence can be literally asserted of God, he would have had to presuppose the correctness of Kant's position with regard to existence."[68] Here we see that Kant's criticism can even be interpreted in such a way as to assist Anselm's argument.

Jerome Shaffer offers an interesting analysis of Kant's criticism in his chapter in Hick and McGill's The Many-Faced Argument. He finds serious fault with Kant's definition of a 'real' predicate. As stated above, Kant required that a 'real' predicate add to and enlarge a concept. Shaffer claims that this "leads to a contradiction with another important doctrine of his, that *existential propositions are*

[67] "Existence, Predication, and Anselm" in The Monist, P. 111

always synthetic"[69]. He explains that, given Kant's definition of synthetic judgements (they add something previously not thought of to a concept), "if existential judgments are always synthetic, then "exists" must be a predicate which adds to the concept of the subject"[70]. Shaffer makes a second point, this one regarding Kant's assertion that, assuming existence to be a 'real' predicate, in saying that something existed one would, in effect, produce a new concept, so that the object of one's concept would not be what existed. Shaffer comments,

> "It is astonishing that this argument has stood up for so long and is still commended by philosophers, ... For the argument, if sound, shows that nothing could be a real predicate... The argument which shows that "exists" is not a "real" predicate also shows that nothing could be one."[71]

If Shaffer is correct, and this does seem to make sense on the face of it, then Kant ends up defeating himself, without the necessity of anyone else arguing against him. At the very least, this

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[68] Ibid., P. 111
[69] "Existence, Predication and the Ontological Argument" in The Many-Faced Argument, P. 228
[70] Ibid., P. 228

shows some grave difficulties which require answers before one accepts this kind of criticism against Anselm's argument.

In an essay which deals with the 'existence is not a real predicate' as well as other related criticisms of the Ontological Argument, Philip Devine brings a good solid commonsense approach to the subject. He discusses several variations of this objection on his way to concluding that this criticism does not pose any real difficulty to Anselm's argument. His point salient to the discussion at hand is quite straightforward,

> "On the face of it, "exists" *is* a predicate. "God exists" and "Sally exists" have the same surface grammatical structure. The burden is on the objector to show that appearances are deceiving, and that what is significant is that "exists" is, though a "logical", not a "real" predicate, ... It is to be presumed that things *are* what they seem, that what is a

[71] Ibid., P. 229

predicate in surface grammar is one all the way down,"[72].

This observation, in light of the way many simply assume that alleging a criticism makes it valid, is as appropriate as it is well stated. It surely applies to Kant himself, and would seem also to apply to many who have wielded it since Kant.

We have seen in this section that Kant's objection, and therefore any objections that proceed from it, are exceedingly problematic. Answers are needed before any critic of the argument should be allowed to assume that this criticism brings any weight to bear on Anselm's argument. There have been several objections to the Ontological Argument which find their genesis in this criticism, but are, nonetheless, separate and distinct from it; these will be discussed below.

[72] "Exists and St. Anselm's Argument", P. 60

CHAPTER 4

Even though the 'existence is not a real predicate' criticism has been shown above to be at the least deeply problematic, and at worst to turn on itself like the legendary snake, consuming itself from behind, there are some other criticisms that must be investigated. However, before we consider these other objections, a word appears to be called for on proper criticism. Probably the most common kind of criticism, not only in everyday life but also, unfortunately, in philosophical discussions, is the 'straw man' argument. In this type of criticism, the objector, intentionally or unintentionally, misrepresents or misconstrues the position that she is attacking. This usually has the effect of making the position in question much easier to attack, and almost always results in the attack not being truly effective, but merely appearing to have impact. As we shall see below, quite a number of criticisms of Anselm's argument commit this fallacy, whether by claiming that Anselm said something he did not say or by leaving step(s) out in their representations of his argument or by adding things to his argument.

None of these methods can be legitimately used to criticise an argument. This is certainly *not* to say that all or even most of the criticisms of Anselm's argument are 'straw man' arguments, but to proleptically explain exactly to what we will be referring when we use the term. Having said this, let us proceed to the other criticisms of Anselm's argument.

One of the interesting objections to Anselm's Ontological Argument that is closely related to the criticism we have spent much time on is the objection that one cannot argue from essence to existence. Stated in its basic terms, this argument maintains that it is a logical error to argue that anything must exist because of some essential nature belonging to the thing. This objection was somewhat foreshadowed by Aquinas, although he did not state it per se. R.G. Collingwood, in An Essay on Philosophical Method 1932, was the first in our time to bring this consequence of Anselm's argument to the fore. He writes of Anselm's argument, "What it does prove is that essence involves existence, not

always, but in one special case, the case of God in the metaphysical sense"[73].

> In response to this, Gilbert Ryle says:
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> "what is the cash value of this slogan 'essence involves existence'? ... 'essence' is only used in relation; we speak of 'the essence of...' or so and so is 'essential to...' What sort of correlate is appropriate?"[74].

He then suggests three possible uses of 'involves' in Collingwood's text. The first use is equivalent to 'entails'; the second is a formulation of natural laws; and the third is equivalent to 'includes' or 'contains'.

Ryle claims that 'entails' could not be applied to the Ontological Argument because then "its champions would then have had to allow that the same argument would prove the existence of other things than God."[75] He says this because this use is the same as "being green entails or "involves" being colored, and being square entails or "involves" being

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[73] An Essay on Philosophical Method, P. 127
[74] "Mr. Collingwood and the Ontological Argument" in Mind, P. 143
[75] Ibid., P. 144

shaped."[76] And surely, if this were the only way something could entail another thing, it would not be of use in an ontological argument.

However, this is not the only type of entailment available. We could say that being President of the United States *entails* having been born a United States citizen, because the laws that define who may be President specify that one must be a citizen by birth. This type of entailment would be appropriate to an ontological argument. In fact, it could be argued that this type of entailment is just what Anselm had in mind.

Ryle dismisses the second use of 'involved' because:

> "this sort of "involving"...is established only by induction. There is no contradiction in the negating of a natural law; whereas the Ontological Argument says that there is a contradiction in denying the existence of God"[77].

Ryle here asserts that the Argument claims that denying the existence of God or of perfection is contradictory. This may mean that he is not really

[76] Ibid., P. 144

dealing with Anselm's argument, but rather Descartes'. Anselm's argument does not use 'perfection' whereas it is integral to Descartes' version.

This 'contradiction' point is also the crux of Ryle's argumentation regarding the third use of involves, as meaning 'includes' or 'contains'. He asserts that this interpretation of 'involves' does not lead to a contradiction because it is then an analytic statement, rather than synthetic. This is a bit confusing because he does not explain why, if this is an analytic statement, that fact precludes the contradiction to which Anselm is referring. There is a more important point to be made here, however. This third possibility of what 'involves' means could not have been what Anselm intended in his argument. Whether Mr. Collingwood has misinterpreted Anselm or, more likely, Dr. Ryle has misinterpreted Mr. Collingwood; at some level a misinterpretation has happened. For Anselm, a neo-Platonic Augustinian, the essence of GOD does not merely *contain* existence, in some important way it *is* existence in the same way

[77] Ibid., P.145

that GOD *is* love on the Augustinian view of exemplification.

E. E. Harris, in an article responding to Ryle's writings on the Ontological Argument, points out some major flaws in both Ryle's perception and reasoning. Having noted that Ryle's argument against the argument heavily echoes Kant, Harris goes on to discuss Ryle's position at length. He pays special attention within Ryle's argumentation against the claim that 'essence involves existence' to Ryle's objection that existence is a 'matter of fact'. Ryle claims that this means that existence cannot be argued for using a priori propositions. Harris, after some discussion on how empirical observations should be (and in the real world actually are) verified, points out,

> "The establishment of a fact, then, depends first on a body of evidence, and secondly on the ordered system of the experienced world. To prove the existence of a thing, we must show on sufficient evidence that the thing is a part of the system of things in space and time. The evidence is sufficient when to deny the conclusion to

which it leads would disorganize the system."[78]

Using this schema, Harris explains that the importance should be laid on the nature of the evidence within the system, rather than upon whether or not the premises are 'empirical', a term for which definition is problematic. He then ties this in with the Ontological Argument, asserting that what the argument shows is that the system, which *is* reality, would be violated if there indeed were not a Supreme Being: "How much less, then, is it possible to deny the existence of that on which the intelligible reality of the whole world of finite existence depends."[79] The point here is the same point that Collingwood made. GOD is in a different category from all things or beings that are finite in any way; hence the essence of GOD does assure GOD's existence. The argument Ryle made against Collingwood is shown by Harris not to have addressed Collingwood's point, but rather only to have stated an alternative and deeply problematic point of view.

Hartshorne also has something to say about this 'essence involves existence' subject. In his book

[78] "Mr. Ryle and the Ontological Argument", in Mind, P. 476

Man's Vision of God there is a chapter called "The Necessarily Existent", which deals largely with the nature of GOD as necessary--i.e., GOD either must exist or cannot exist. GOD can not be a merely contingent being and still be the kind of being that is required to be GOD. In this chapter Hartshorne also speaks about essence, "that God's essence should imply his existential status (as contingent or necessary) is not an exception to the rule, but an example of it, since the rule is that contingency or non-contingency of existence follows from the kind of thing in question."[80] He continues in explanation,

> "The argument is not that God's individual nature implies his existence while other individual natures do not. It may reasonably be held that every individual nature implies existence, and indeed is an existence. ... But if every individual quality implies existence, must not all individuals exist necessarily? The answer is that contingency is not a relation of existence to a thing, but of a thing to existence. To say a thing might not exist

[79] Ibid., P. 265

> is not to say there might be the thing without existence. It is rather to say there might be existence without the thing."[81]

This is an extremely fine explanation not only of necessity and contingency, but also of how the essence of any thing or being 'involves' its existence whether necessary or contingent. Hartshorne concludes, "The necessary being is, then, that individual which existence implies, and which itself implies, not simply existence, but implies ... that ... there is in its case no separation between possibility and actuality"[82]. Hence, in every case, essence 'involves' existence, and it is according to this essence that the kind of existence an individual enjoys is determined. To be GOD is to be 'necessarily existent'.

J. N. Findlay worded this objection slightly differently and in a manner intended to encompass all arguments of an ontological nature. He writes, "The proofs based on the necessities of thought are universally regarded as fallacious: it is not thought

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[80] Man's Vision of God, P. 307
[81] Ibid., pp. 307-308
[82] Ibid., pp. 308-309

possible to build bridges between mere abstractions and concrete existence."[83] In response to this, let us first note that, at the very least, Findlay has overstated his case. He certainly is not in a position to make such a 'universal' claim. Second, an argument is not fallacious because it is regarded so to be; an argument is fallacious because it is not valid. Also, many things in the history of philosophic endeavor have been thought not possible, only to be accomplished at a later date. With these basic observations out of the way, we now turn to Norman Malcolm's response to this statement.[84] He draws attention to the ambiguity of the term 'concrete existence'. Malcolm inquires whether this might mean contingent existence and observes, "to build bridges between concrete existence and mere abstractions would be like inferring the existence of an island from the concept of a perfect island, which both Anselm and Descartes regarded as absurd."[85] Also, this certainly would not be applicable to Anselm's argument, since Anselm is writing about a necessarily existing being.

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[83] "Can God's Existence Be Disproved?" in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, P. 47

[84] "Anselm's Ontological Arguments", in The Philosophical Review, pp. 41-62

The examples listed above are the best of the 'essence does not involve existence' criticisms, and it is evident from the comments here that a much better argument is needed from these critics before we are compelled to further answer this objection.

We now proceed to the other criticisms of Anselm's argument. Most of these are easily dealt with because they are 'straw man' criticisms, which we discussed briefly above. However, there are some which will require a closer examination.

William L. Rowe has provided a very interesting chapter in Reason and Responsibility [86], in which he raises two criticisms previously not dealt with in the present work.

The first is that there is no way for us to know that GOD is really possible, so the assumption that GOD is possible at the least taints Anselm's argument. As we will see below, that Anselm does indeed assume the possibility of GOD is, at best, doubtful. But, without looking forward, let us deal here with the objection Rowe raises. Rowe states that we have no way of knowing whether GOD is like an

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[85] Ibid., P. 52

[86] "The Ontological Argument" in Reason and Responsibility, pp. 8-17

angle, which series *is* finite, or like an integer, which is an infinite series. He states:

> "Therefore, the positive integer than which none larger is possible is an impossible object. Perhaps this is also true of the being than which none greater is possible. That is, perhaps no matter how great a being may be, it is possible for there to be a being greater than it. If this were so, then, like the integer than which none larger is possible, Anselm's God would not be a possible object."[87]

In answer to this, there seems to be one salient point which need to be considered. Even though Rowe couches this position in the subjunctive mood (may, might, etc.), it is still being asserted that there is good reason to think that there is no being than which a greater cannot be conceived. He does not offer any argumentation supporting this theory, but rather merely depends on the analogy to carry the day. This analogy is not, at least as presented, at all compelling. Even Rowe does not himself find this point to be telling: "Some philosophers have argued

[87] Ibid., P. 13

that Anselm's God is impossible, but the arguments for this conclusion are not very compelling."[88]

Rowe himself later calls into question Anselm's assumption that GOD is possible. He in effect claims that Anselm tricks us into building GOD's existence into the argument by assuming that GOD is possible in such a way that will ensure the conclusion that GOD exists. "Therefore, in granting that Anselm's God is a possible thing we are conceding far more than that his idea of God isn't incoherent or contradictory."[89] There are some problems with this characterisation of Anselm. First, it is true that Anselm, if he assumes the possibility of GOD, does have an unstated implicit premise to the effect that GOD is possible. This, however, does not equate to a kind of logical equivocation (as Rowe claims) because what Anselm intended *is* that his idea is not incoherent or contradictory, as can be seen by reading Proslogion II. Also, as we will discuss below, a coherent (non-contradictory) idea is one that refers to a possible being. Rowe is here clearly using 'is possible' in a different way than Anselm does, and most likely in a different manner than most of us use the term.

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[88] Ibid., P. 13

As Georges Dicker points out in his article responding to Rowe[90], Rowe misrepresents Anselm's argument in his 'simplification' of it, partially by this expansion of what it means for GOD to be possible. Dicker points out that Rowe first changes Anselm's characterisation of GOD as 'a being than which none greater can be conceived' to 'The being than which none greater is possible'. He also notes how Rowe substitutes 'nonexisting thing' for 'what exists in the mind'. Now, certainly for Rowe, if something exists only in the mind then it does not really exist. However, this oversimplification leads to a misrepresentation of Anselm, for Anselm does not ever hold that the being exists *only* in the mind. Therefore Anselm's 'being' is not 'nonexisting', but existing at least in the mind. Rowe does recognise this, Dicker says, but "Nevertheless, Rowe does not believe that this difficulty defeats his critique"[91]. Dicker shows how Rowe's

> "last argument is still not equivalent to Anselm's. For *it omits Anselm's premiss that God exists in the understanding*. But

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[89] Ibid., P. 16
[90] "A Refutation of Rowe's Critique of Anselm's Ontological Argument" in Faith and Philosophy, pp. 193-202
[91] Ibid., P. 196

this premiss -the very first one in Rowe's own reconstruction- is essential to Anselm's argument!...The argument that results when the premiss is omitted is just not Anselm's"[92]

Dicker then concludes that Rowe's criticism of the argument, having this fatal flaw, does not and cannot stand.

Peter Lopston further elucidates this point in a response to Rowe's chapter that stresses that Rowe is assuming a Meinongian theory of objects. Referring to Rowe's discussion of the possibility of GOD, Lopston points out, "All of this will work only if we agree with Rowe in accepting a class comprised of *the possible beings* (some of them actual, the rest non-actual)"[93]. This is a fair statement of the Meinongian view of possibility, which Rowe does seem to be espousing. Lopston continues:

"If we ... insist rather that the claim that God is a possible being can be otherwise interpreted--e.g., as the claim that it is possible (*de re* or *de dicto*) for

[92] Ibid., P. 198
[93] "Anselm, Meinong, and the Ontological Argument" in International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, P. 190

there to be a greatest possible being--we can and will reject Rowe's first premise, in the last paragraph. That is the Meinongian premise"[94]

The premise referred to here by Lopston is Rowe's interpretation and rephrasing of Anselm's implicit premise stating that GOD is possible to include actual and non-actual possible beings. Now Anselm certainly could not have been a follower of Meinong, since he predated Meinong by more than eight hundred years. Also, like most of us he did not believe in *impossible objects* (objects that violate the law of contradiction) and *incomplete objects* (objects that violate the law of the excluded middle). Therefore this criticism has little, if any, real impact on Anselm's argument, although it may well prevent Rowe, or any other philosopher who uses a Meinongian notion of possibility, from formulating an ontological argument that is without serious problems.

Lopston himself, in this same article, criticises Anselm's argument, but makes much the same error as did Rowe. In his reformulation of the argument he includes steps that are neither in

[94] Ibid., P. 190

Anselm's version nor necessary for Anselm's version to make sense. Hence, it is no surprise that two of these steps (#4 & #6)[95] are used to make a genuinely 'straw man' (as explained at the very beginning of this chapter) criticism of Anselm's argument. We now move on to the other such criticisms of Anselm's argument.

One of the most productive methods of this type of criticism involves 'simplifying' the argument in such a way that the argument ends up being much easier to attack. This does not mean that the author of such an attack is cognisant of misrepresenting the argument, only that the argument ends up misrepresented.

Michael Roth's article[96] is an example of this, because he tries to represent a complex *reductio ad absurdum* argument with a three-step syllogism, which goes as follows:

1 God is that than which nothing greater can be conceived.

2 The concept of God as non-existent entails the concept of a being greater than

[95] Ibid., P. 192
[96] "A Note on St. Anselm's Ontological Argument" in Mind, pp. 270-271

God, namely a being with all of God's properties which also exists, and such a concept is impossible.

T/: God exists[97]

We can see that the first step misrepresents Anselm's argument, because Anselm does not undertake to define the term 'GOD'. Instead Anselm decides how to, for the purposes of the argument, represent 'GOD'. In addition to this, Roth also claims that 'GOD is that than which nothing greater can be conceived' can be replaced by 'there exists an entity such ...'. This appears to be a blatant case of rewriting the argument to make it attackable, since he then accuses the argument of being 'question begging' because existence is now contained in the first premise. No more needs to be said about this criticism.

Corman and Lehrer, in their book Philosophical Problems[98], raise an objection to Anselm's argument which also qualifies as a 'straw man' objection. They reformulate the argument using variables, which, in itself, does not bring the difficulty to light. However, they first represent 'the being a greater

[97] Ibid. ,P. 270

[98] "the problem of Justifying Belief in God", Chap. 5 in Philosophical Problems

than which cannot be conceived' as the greatest being. This violates Anselm's intent, because, in true Augustinian fashion, Anselm does not believe that we are able to speak of GOD in positive terms, which is why he worded the argument the way we find it. This alone sets up a 'straw man' criticism, but Corman and Lehrer compound the problem. They also separate 'greatness' from the 'being' exemplifying it. Anselm was not using a 'greatness relation' here; he was talking about a being which exemplified greatness to the utmost greatest extent. The argument is also, as we have seen previously, represented as a syllogism, rather than the *reductio ad absurdum* which it actually is; so we have a third compounding factor, rendering this criticism without any merit whatsoever.

There are other criticisms of Anselm's argument which represent the argument as a syllogism and use either set theory[99] or quantificational logic[100] to, perhaps unwittingly, misrepresent Anselm's argument, thus opening it up to criticisms that would not

[99] An Example is "St. Anselm's Ontological Argument Succumbs to Russell's Paradox" in International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, pp. 123-128

[100] An example is "St. Anselm's Ontological Argument and Russell's Theory of Descriptions" in New Scholasticism, pp. 319-330

prevail against Anselm's argument, as it has been perceived. Below we will investigate whether this perception is accurate, or if Anselm may have had something else in mind.

CHAPTER 5

Anselm's Ontological Argument, as we saw in Chapter Two, has been perceived quite differently over the last several decades than it had been before the twentieth century. It is my belief that his true argument, remaining obscured, has yet to be truly discovered and laid open to view. If we are to see what Anselm himself perceived as the argument, we will need to keep a few things in mind. We need to keep in mind who Anselm was, we need to look carefully at the structure of the Proslogion, and we need to pay attention to things said by Anselm early (and later) in the Proslogion. These three things should send us well on our way to finding Anselm's 'true' Ontological Argument.

It is first important that we not view Anselm as some historical cardboard cut-out, but rather that we recognise the complex, whole man with his several aspects. We must remember who Anselm was as a philosopher-theologian, who he was as an historic figure and, possibly most importantly as it will turn out, who he was as a man before his GOD.

As noted above, Anselm's philosophic outlook

was very much neo-Platonic. This is not surprising since he studied Augustine comprehensively and steadily his whole life. But this is only the first view we get of this aspect of Anselm. He does part company from Augustine in various ways throughout his life, the most notable being his deep conviction that reason was absolutely necessary to keep one's faith informed. For Anselm, faith could not be fully developed without the assistance of reason. Faith could be genuine, but not properly built up unless reason were applied to it on a regular basis.

One outworking of this is that Anselm thought one might strengthen one's faith by using reason to explore doubt; consequently the resulting faith would be much stronger than before. Reason was therefore in his view indispensable for any kind of competent theology, and for any other kind of learning as well. This, of course, is why Anselm is quite accurately referred to as the founder and father of Scholasticism.

Anselm's position as Archbishop naturally brought recognition that he was an important historical figure, even within Anselm's own lifetime. His biographer Eadmer recognised this at least to

some appreciable extent. This is why he made notes throughout his adult life, having devoted his life to being Anselm's biographer. We learn from him that Anselm was surprisingly meek and gentle for an Archbishop of Canterbury, who had the entire British Isles under his religious authority. He could, however, be quite steadfast in holding to beliefs. This was shown when, on more than one occasion, he vacated England and took up temporary residence in France because the reigning king of England was trying to force Anselm to betray his beliefs.

However, the most important aspect of Anselm the historical figure is his intellectual contribution. Anselm is the first truly original thinker since the fall of Rome. It is as if, after centuries of overcast days in the intellectual arena, because of Anselm the sun finally shone, and so very brightly. This Father of Scholasticism quite effectively jump-started the pursuit of things intellectual after the period of literary and academic darkness.

We come now to Anselm, the man before his GOD. In spite of holding one or another position of power for most of his adult life, Anselm was an extraordinarily humble man. Throughout his life, he

was consistently a man who did **not** seek out positions of authority. In fact, he actually tried, not once but on several occasions, to refuse positions of higher authority. Indeed he balked at almost every single 'promotion' he received before eventually accepting the wisdom of those above him.

This humility was nothing other than a direct result of his devoutness before GOD, which did not allow him to think himself to be above any other person. Because of this, he did not believe that he deserved a position of high authority. Also and more pertinent to what is to follow, he did not believe that he was gifted with mental abilities beyond those given to other people. This resulted, as we saw in Chapter One, in what at times appears to be a kind of carelessness in his argumentation. He leaves out steps from several of his arguments which may seem to many to be important, even quite necessary to one's proper understanding of the argument.

Understanding the reason for this is crucial not only for reaching any understanding of Anselm's arguments, but also for coming to an understanding of the purposes to which he set them. We can understand why such an intelligent and talented man would argue

in such an apparently careless fashion only if we remember Anselm's other attributes of character. His meekness, gentleness, and humility, born of true devotion to GOD, insured that he was incapable of realising how truly exceptional his intellectual gifts were. With the foregoing in clear view, it becomes apparent that these steps are left out because Anselm feels that they are so obvious that they need not be stated explicitly. That is, Anselm seems to feel that any normal, rational person could follow what he has written without any additional clarification.

Let us now consider what we might learn from the structure of the Proslogion. An important point that is rarely, if ever, raised is that the arguments in the Proslogion occupy, by most accounts, Chapters II and III of twenty-six total chapters. Nor is it the case that these two chapters make up most of the substance of the Proslogion; for, in Charlesworth's translation[101], for example, these two chapters do not take up even two pages out of the more than forty-one pages of text. In the opinions of a few others, the ontological argument section of the work might

[101] St. Anselm's Proslogion, trans. M. J. Charlesworth, 1965

include as much as Chapters I through V, which still leaves the vast majority of the work (some twenty-one chapters) outside the scope of the Ontological Argument. In fact, these few chapters could easily be seen as the introductory portion of the Proslogion. If read carefully, this section of the work does in fact lay the foundation for all of the work that follows.

In Chapter I, Anselm repeatedly refers to 'seeing' GOD, using different visual/visage words[102]. "I seek Your countenance, O Lord, Your countenance I seek"[103] is the first example, in only the ninth line of the chapter. Immediately following this is "teach my heart where and how to seek You,...where...shall I look for You?"[104], and "why then,...do I not see You?"[105] and "that I may see You..."[106].

During the preceding discussion, we have not only been investigating the structure of the Proslogion, but we have also begun to edge into our analysis of what Anselm says. This will help to enlighten our search for his 'real' argument. At

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[102] All references to the Proslogion are from Charlesworth's translation, 1965.
[103] Page 111, line 9
[104] Page 111, lines 10-13
[105] Page 111, lines 13-14
[106] Page 111, line 17

lines 17 and 18 we see the beginning of a slight change of perspective from Anselm as he begins to move from the visual 'seeing' to the mental/conceptual envisaging through character and characteristics, "by what signs, under what aspect, shall I seek You? Never have I seen You,..., I do not know Your face."[107] He continues, speaking of himself as a pilgrim and an exile:

> "He yearns to see You...He desires to come close to You,...; he longs to find You and does not know where You are; he is eager to seek You out and he does not know Your countenance. ...never have I seen You. ...I was made in order to see You, and I have not yet accomplished what I was made for."[108]

Then almost 40 lines later, after a lengthy discussion of the wretchedness of man in his fallen state, Anselm continues, but with less physical reference and more conceptual language. He no longer uses any of the visual language of 'seeing'; but rather uses terms like 'looking for' and 'seeking', mental/conceptual terms. Anselm writes, "I set out

[107] Page 111, lines 18-19

hungry to look for You;"[109] and farther down, "bowed down as I am, I can only look downwards; raise me up that I may look upwards."[110] Shortly thereafter, and in the same vein he writes, again using the conceptual language:

> "Let me discern Your light ... Teach me to seek You, and reveal Yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek You if You do not teach me how, nor find You unless You reveal Yourself. Let me seek You in desiring You; let me desire You in seeking You"[111].

Anselm then finishes Chapter I with a discussion of 'seeing' GOD through the *imago dei*, acknowledging also the problematic nature of such a task.

So, since the first chapter is an introduction of sorts to the Proslogion, we can see that the purpose of the work is to 'see' GOD after some fashion or other, probably in a conceptual or metaphorical manner. By reading the whole Proslogion we can see that Anselm does indeed show GOD to the reader through GOD's character and attributes. Thus

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[108] Page 111, lines 23-32
[109] Page115, line 11
[110] Page 115, lines 17-18
[111] Page 115, lines 21-26

it seems certain that this is what he was adumbrating in the first chapter.

Therefore the main purpose of the Proslogion was **not** to provide one compelling argument for the existence of GOD, but rather to assist the reader in 'seeing' GOD via the showing forth of GOD's character and attributes. The reason the Ontological Argument appears in the work is that Anselm needed it as a starting point to eventually argue to GOD's character and attributes.

Anselm could not have proven the things about GOD's character and attributes that he proved in the later sections of the work if he had not been able to argue from the statement at the end of Chapter V; namely, that GOD is "whatever it is better to be than not to be"[112]. Also, in order to argue to the foregoing, he needed first to establish both that 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' does truly exist (Chapter II) and that this being can not be thought not to exist Chapter III.

It is now evident that the Ontological Argument establishes the bases for discovering through rational argumentation the character and attributes

[112] Page 121, Chapter V, line 8

of GOD. This was the first of the two major purposes Anselm had in mind for the argument, along with showing that GOD's existence could be established without recourse to empirical premises.

Having shown that, for Anselm, the Ontological Argument is not the major purpose of the Proslogion and that, in fact, the argument is only the opening move of Anselm's proof of the character and attributes of GOD, we now need to return our minds to Anselm himself. We have seen above evidence that Anselm may have had reason to hurry through the Ontological Argument in order to proceed to the more important and primary task for which he had purposed the Proslogion. Also, as shown earlier, Anselm was devoutly humble, which explains why he left out seemingly important steps from several arguments in different works. What is now needed is to show what steps Anselm left out of the Ontological Argument, and how that may change our view of the argument.

To perceive Anselm's true argument, we will need to look at all of its pieces together as a whole, which are found in various parts of the Proslogion. Even with all of these pieces included, we will find that a few parts are still missing. These missing

steps will be supplied in a manner consistent with Anselm and evidently applicable to his argument. Contrary to the common practice of our day, Anselm did not make a thesis statement at the beginning of his argument. This would have settled once and for all the question here being addressed, but, alas, the question is still open. I will now give what I believe Anselm's thesis statement would have been like, thus outlining what I believe are the constituent parts of his true, single argument.

"Since it is not proper to characterise GOD in positive terms, because the true nature of such a being would of course be beyond our ken, we will refer to 'That than which a greater can not be conceived'. We will investigate first whether such a being is possible, and then show that this being is not merely possible but also exists in reality. We will then demonstrate that such a being exists necessarily. Finally, later on, when it is appropriate to the larger issue, we will demonstrate that this being has a kind of necessity unique to Himself."

It is evident from the structure of the Proslogion that the foregoing does indeed represent

the order of argument as Anselm presents it. Regarding Anselm's statement of 'That-than-which-no-greater-can-be-thought' in negative terms, we may consult his reply to Gaunilo. "For 'that which is greater than everything' and 'that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought' are not identical for proving that the thing spoken of exists in reality."[113] A discussion follows which makes clear that Anselm chose this wording very carefully for not only its ability to represent GOD faithfully, but also for its logical capabilities.

In the beginning of Chapter II Anselm talks about speaking the term 'that-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-conceived' to someone; "[he] understands what he hears, and what he understands exists in his mind, even if he does not understand that it exists."[114] We see here an audience grasping a coherent concept and holding it in mind. This clearly establishes that the being in question is at least possible, because in order to hold a concept in one's mind the thought of it must be neither contradictory nor self-inconsistent. This point is very important

[113] "The Author's Reply to Gaunilo", Section V, Page 178, lines 9-11, author's translation.
[114] Chapter II, Page 116, lines 10-12, author's translation.

because, as we saw above, Anselm has been believed by most, if not all, to *assume* that GOD is possible. This passage shows that he did nothing of the kind, but that this was indeed the first important task accomplished in the argument.

> "Sed certe ipse idem insipiens, cum audit hoc ipsum quod dico: 'aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest', intelligit quod audit; et quod intelligit in intellectu eius est, etiam si non intelligat illud esse. Aliud enim est rem esse in intellectu, aliud intelligere rem esse. ... Convincitur ergo etiam insipiens esse vel in intellectu aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest, quia hoc cum audit intelligit, et quidquid untelligitur in intellectu est."[115]
>
> "But certainly this same fool, when he hears the very thing I am saying: 'Something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought', understands what he hears; and what he understands exists in his mind, even if he does not understand

[115] Chapter II, lines 5-9, 13-15, P. 116

> that it exists. For it is one thing for something to exist in the mind, and another thing to understand that the thing actually exists. ... It is therefore demonstrated, then, for even the fool that Something-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought exists in the mind, since he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood exists in the mind."[116]

We will see here the first instances where Anselm didn't feel he needed to state certain steps explicitly. These steps will be identified by placing brackets '[ ]' around them. So, to this point, the argument is as follows:

> Premise 1: 'That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought' is understood by a rational audience.
>
> Premise 2: If a concept is understood rationally, it then exists in the mind.

[116] Chapter II, lines 5-9, 13-15, P. 116, author's translation.

Premise 3: [If a concept is rationally coherent conceivable, then the referent of the concept is a possible thing].

Conclusion 1: (P1, P2) T/: This being exists in the mind.

Conclusion 2: (P1, P3) T/: [The being so represented is possible].

This shows that the first task, i.e. that of demonstrating possibility, has been accomplished. In the piece of the argument directly above Premise 3 is merely a restatement of Premise 2 and Conclusion 2 a restatement of Conclusion 1. This is done to assist the reader in making the transition between the way Anselm spoke and the way we phrase things. For Anselm, any thing that could be 'in the mind' was a thing capable of existence also in reality (i.e., possible).

We will add to the preceding representation of the argument as we go along. One thing bears mention here, before we proceed farther. It is important that we keep in mind that Anselm views this as one single argument, and therefore does not restate things already proven. He assumes, and justifiably so, that

something proven early in the argument is available as groundwork for succeeding sections of the argument. Now on to the second section of the argument.

Anselm did not stop, though, with showing that this being *is* a possible entity. He carries through the remainder of the second chapter with his next appointed task. This leads into the third chapter by showing how, since this being is possible, it indeed exists in reality. This part of the argument has been previously identified by some scholars as Anselm's non-modal argument. Indeed, this section of the argument is not specifically modal per se, but it provides a very important bridge between the possibility section and the necessity section of Anselm's true argument. In this section, Anselm proceeds from the being existing in the mind to the being existing in actuality via a reductio argument. This piece of the argument assumes that the being exists only in the mind, and proves, by the nature of the being, that this can not be the case.

> "Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest

cogitari esse et in re, quod maius est. Si ergo id quo maius cogitari non potest, est in solo intellectu: id ipsum quo maius cogitari non potest, est quo maius cogitari potest. Sed certe hoc esse non potest. Existit ergo procul dubio aliquid quo maius cogitari non valet, et in intellectu et in re."[117]

"And certainly That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought cannot exist solely in the mind. For if, in fact, it exists solely in the mind, it can be thought to also exist in reality—which is greater. If, therefore, That-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists solely in the mind, this very That-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is that-than-which-a-greater-can-be-thought. But certainly this cannot be. Therefore, quite indubitably, Something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists, both in the mind and in reality. For it is one thing for a thing to be in the mind, and

[117] Chapter II, lines 15-21, P. 116

another to understand that the thing actually exists." [118]

Again, one of the steps is not explicitly stated by Anselm, but it is readily apparent what the missing step is and where it belongs.

Assumption 1 (to be disproved): That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought exists solely in the mind.

Premise 4: This being can be thought to exist both in the mind and in reality.

Premise 5: It is greater to exist both in the mind and in reality than to exist in the mind alone.

Conclusion 3:(P4, P5) T/: [This being would be greater were it to exist both in the mind and in reality].

Conclusion 4:(A, C3) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is that-than-which-a-greater-**can**-be-thought,

which is a contradiction, thus disproving the assumption.

[118] Chapter II, lines 15-21, P. 116, author's translation.

Conclusion 5: (C4, A1) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought must exist both in the mind and in reality.

Thus Anselm's bridge is accomplished by establishing that the being exists in reality as well as in the mind.

Following this, in Chapter III, Anselm addresses the next task in the argument: that this being does indeed exist necessarily. He phrases it in a slightly different manner than we may be used to, but the essence of the concept is still necessity. Anselm speaks about something which "cannot even be thought not to exist."[119] That which one cannot even conceive as not existing is certainly a necessarily existing being. For, if one can conceive of something as not existing, then that being might *possibly* not have existed.

In this chapter Anselm once again uses his favorite type of argument, the *reductio ad absurdum*. The assumption here to be disproved is that the being in question can be thought of as not existing, which,

[119] Chapter III, Page 118, lines 1-2, translated into English.

when disproved, shows that this being can not even be thought of as not existing.

> "Quod utique sic vere est, ut nec cogitari possit non esse. Nam potest cogitari esse aliquid, quod non possit cogitari non esse; quod maius est quam quod non esse cogitari potest. Quare si id quo maius nequit cogitari, potest cogitari non esse: id ipsum quo maius cogitari nequit, non est id quo maius cogitari nequit; quod convenire non potest. Sic ergo vere est aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest, ut nec cogitari possit non esse."[120]
>
> "Certainly this being so truly exists that it cannot even be thought not to exist. For something can be thought to exist which cannot be thought not to exist; which is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Wherefore, if That-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought *can* be thought not to exist, this very That-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-

[120] Chapter III, lines 1-7, P. 118

thought is *not* That-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought; which cannot be coherent. Thus, Something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought so truly exists, then, that it cannot even be thought not to exist."[121]

Here also the missing steps are easily identified and supplied. Anselm's argument is as follows:

Premise 6: Something can be thought to exist which cannot be thought not to exist.

Premise 7: A thing is greater if it *cannot* be thought not to exist than if it *can* be thought not to exist.

Assumption 2 (to be disproved): That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought can be thought not to exist.

Conclusion 6 (P3, P6) T/: [There can be something which cannot be thought not to exist.]

Conclusion 7 (P7, A2) T/: [There can be a greater being than That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought.]

[121] Chapter III, lines 1-7, author's translation.

Conclusion 8 (C6, P6) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is not That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought,

which is a contradiction, thus disproving the assumption.

Conclusion 9 (C7, A2) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought

cannot be thought not to exist.

This concludes what is commonly viewed as the arguments of Anselm.

However, Anselm does take this argument one step farther in Chapter XV. In this chapter Anselm goes past necessity to what we might call 'incomparable necessity' or 'super necessity'. He argues that this being surpasses our ability to conceive.

"Ergo domine, non solum es quo maius cogitari nequit, sed es quiddam maius quam cogitari possit. Quoniam namque valet cogitari esse aliquid huiusmodi: si tu non es hoc ipsum, potest cogitari aliquid maius te; quod fieri nequit."[122]

[122] Chapter XV lines 1-4, P. 136

> "Therefore, Lord, not only are You That-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, but You are also that being (which is) greater than can be thought. For, since it is possible to think something such as this exists, if You are not this very being, something greater than You could be thought—which cannot be."[123]

Anselm is exploring the idea that our ability to conceive is not adequate to the task of fully envisaging a being of such great magnitude. While we are able to *conceive of* this being, we can not, in any accurate or complete manner, *conceive* this being.

Here again we find Anselm using his favorite argument, the reductio. That this is a reductio is not quite as apparent as in other places, but, with proper examination it is clear that this too is a *reductio ad absurdum* argument. To be disproved this time is the assumption that the being in question is not greater than can be conceived. Once this assumption is disproved, Anselm has shown this being to be incomparably necessary. Once again he does not

[123] Chapter XV, lines 1-4, author's translation.

explicitly state all of the steps in this section of his argument, which is as follows:

> Premise 8: It is possible to think of something greater than can be thought.
>
> Premise 9: [It is greater to be greater than can be thought than not to be greater than can be thought.]
>
> Assumption 3 (to be disproved): That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is not greater than can be thought.
>
> Conclusion 10 (P8, P9) T/: [Something is possible which is greater than anything not greater than can be thought.]
>
> Conclusion 11 (A3, C9) T/: Something is possible which is greater than That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought, which is a contradiction, thus disproving the assumption.
>
> Conclusion 12 (C10, A3) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is also greater than can be thought.

This final section of Anselm's Ontological Argument is a direct result of Anselm's overall purpose for

the Proslogion, the showing forth of GOD through character and attributes. For Anselm, this final section of his argument is necessary because it sets up what he wants to reveal in the final eleven chapters of the Proslogion by showing the utter incomparability of GOD. In the following chapters he uses this final section of his argument to elucidate the attributes of GOD that are simply not comparable to human or other attributes.

It has been shown above that Anselm's Ontological Argument is not several or fractured, but one and whole. The author of the argument was human enough to hurry but inspired enough to accomplish a thing of beauty. He was flawed enough to leave out some steps, but brilliant enough to invent[124] the Ontological Argument. In so doing, he has put forth the most complete and compelling argument for the existence of GOD to date, a millennium after it was written.

[124] It has been shown, e.g., J. Prescott Johnson's "The Ontological Argument in Plato" in The Personalist, that most of the elements for the Ontological argument do occur somewhere in

the works of Plato. However, Plato does not form an Ontological argument as such.

CHAPTER 6

Since Anselm's complete argument has now been laid out, there is only one thing remaining for this work to be complete. This is an anticipation of some of the criticisms of or objections to the argument that might be brought forth. The one criticism made by the greatest number of objectors will be saved for last, namely the 'conceivability does not imply possibility' criticism. Before we deal with this objection, also referred to as the 'standard objection' by many who raise it, there are others that will probably not be as popular, but need to be examined. The first criticism has to do with the structure of one section of the argument as it is presented above. After this we will examine an objection arising from an apparent confusion about conceiving. The third criticism alleges that the argument could also be used to prove that the 'Dirtiest Being Possible' exists. But we will begin with a piece of housekeeping, as it were, regarding the presentation of the argument above.

Some have contended that Conclusion 6 in Anselm's argument as presented above does not follow

from Premise 7 and Assumption 2, but needs further support. The proper support, it is maintained, would be provided by Premise 6. The pertinent passage is as follows:

> Premise 6: Something can be thought to exist which cannot be thought not to exist.
>
> Premise 7: A thing is greater if it *cannot* be thought not to exist than if it *can* be thought not to exist.
>
> Assumption 2 (to be disproved): That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought can be thought not to exist.
>
> Conclusion 6 (P7, A2) T/: There can be a greater being than That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought.
>
> Conclusion 7 (C6, P6) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is not That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought. Which is a contradiction, thus disproving the assumption.
>
> Conclusion 8 (C7, A2) T/: That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought can*not* be thought not to exist.

Now Premise 6 refers to the possible existence of

something which can be conceived to have necessary existence. On the other hand, Premise 7 speaks about a 'greater than' relation between two things. Following this, Conclusion 6 is a statement regarding the 'greater than' relation and not the possible existence of any thing. Therefore, only Premise 7 and Assumption 2 are needed to justify Conclusion 6. Conclusion 7, however, *is* making a statement about the possible existence of something. Therefore, Premise 6 is needed to justify Conclusion 7, along with Conclusion 6.

Another criticism of the argument goes something like this: 'If That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is greater than can be conceived, then how can we conceive it in the rest of the argument?'

At first blush, this might seem to make sense and even be a telling criticism. However, there is a kind of equivocation of terms going on involving the uses of 'conceive'. First, while Anselm is commonly translated as using the word 'thought', 'conceive' is an acceptable alternate translation. In the first occurrence, in the context of Anselm's argument and substituting 'conceive' for 'thought', 'conceive' stands for 'conceive in full' or 'completely

conceive'. While Anselm does, indeed, in the fourth and final section of the argument, prove that That-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought is greater than can be conceived, it is clear from the passage that in this place he means 'conceive in full'.

In contrast to this, in the earlier sections of the argument Anselm is using a different sense of 'conceive'. The sense found in all of the argument except the final section is the sense 'conceive of', which does not necessarily include the sense 'conceive in full'. In fact, when we use 'conceive' to mean 'conceive of', we very rarely if ever mean any kind of full conception. What we rather intend is a mental imaging which is representative, but may lack several details or aspects of the thing of which we are conceiving. Anselm is employing this sense of 'conceive' throughout the argument, with the exception of the case noted above in the fourth section of the argument. At this point it is readily apparent that not distinguishing between these two uses of 'conceive' could lead to some significant confusion. However, it also seems clear that the pertinent sections of the Proslogion do not in themselves lead to such a conflation.

The third objection to the argument covered here is the 'Dirtiest-Being-Possible' objection. This criticism is raised in an anthology by James W. Cornman and Keith Lehrer. In the section of this book devoted to St. Anselm's Ontological Argument, the authors dismiss some criticisms to the argument, but raise their own objection. This objection claims that, while Anselm's argument cannot be used to prove that the greatest island exists, it can be used to prove that the greatest of any kind of being exists. The example they use is the 'Dirtiest-Being-Possible'. Cornman and Lehrer maintain that Gaunilo's 'Greatest Island'(as they call it) criticism does not work because it uses an island in the argument, rather than a being. They then show, from their reformulation of Anselm's argument, that the argument can be used to prove that the greatest of any kind of being, even the 'Dirtiest Being Possible', indeed exists.

The major flaw in their argument is the 'reformulation' of Anselm's argument. It is as follows:

1. If the greatest being possible does not exist, then it is possible that there

exists a being greater than the greatest being possible.

2. It is not possible that there exists a being greater than the greatest being possible.

Therefore

3. The greatest being possible exists.[125]

This 'reformulation' bears scarcely any resemblance to Anselm's argument. As we have seen above, Anselm intentionally did *not* argue about the greatest being, as he himself pointed out to Gaunilo. This misrepresentation causes the argument to become open to several criticisms that do not tell against Anselm's true version, as explained above in the sections answering such criticisms.

Also, Cornman and Lehrer simplify multiple steps in the original argument into the first step in their reformulation. Examined carefully, not only is the first step in their reformulation of the argument a gross oversimplification, it also ensures the desired conclusion. We have seen above some other 'reformulations' of Anselm's argument which have had similar effects, and noted that these are really

'Straw Man' arguments. So it is with this reformulation; it misrepresents the argument and brings a weakness into the argument that was not originally in Anselm's argument. Truly this reformulation will yield a positive result, as Cornman and Lehrer maintain, in arguing for any kind of 'greatest' being. But the problem remains that it simply is not Anselm's argument any more. Since the 'reformulation' is not the same as Anselm's argument in any significant way, it is of no assistance in understanding Anselm's argument. Therefore, it would be of no use to further examine this argument because it is genuinely a different argument from any ontological argument, let alone Anselm's.

Now let us move on to the last objection with which we will be concerned here. This is, of course, the 'conceivability does not lead to possibility' criticism that was mentioned above, or as some have referred to it in recent writings, the 'standard objection'.

Historically speaking, this is an extremely recent objection. From ancient times through most of the twentieth century, this criticism would not even

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[125] Philosophical Problems & Arguments: An Introduction, P.329

have been considered. The great metaphysicians throughout history have held that clearly conceiving was the best guide to possibility. Leibniz clearly believed that conceivability was an accurate indicator of possibility. This can be ascertained without any doubt by a thorough reading of his Monadology. Spinoza also, as can easily be seen by reading his Ethics, viewed as a fundamental principle that conceivability implies possibility. Kant also believed that conceivability implied possibility. It is also apparent that he viewed this as a fundamental metaphysical principle. As he puts it,

> "A concept is always possible if it is not self-contradictory. This is the logical criterion of possibility, and by it the object of the concept is distinguishable from the *nihil negativum*."[126]

Hume is another good example of a noted philosopher who held that 'conceivability implies possibility' was a basic principle of metaphysics. He writes:

> "'Tis an establish'd maxim in metaphysics, *That whatever the mind clearly conceives*

> *includes the idea of possible existence,* or in other words, *that nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible.*"[127]

Hume also held that the mind could not have an 'idea' of a contradictory thing, as seen in the last clause in the above quote. So, whatever we can conceive must be possible, since it cannot be contradictory.

In fact the 'conceivability implies possibility' principle was not to be genuinely challenged until the late twentieth century. Although others had an impact on this conversation, Saul Kripke opened the way for the current discussion. As Gendler and Hawthorne put it:

> "While there are numerous important moments in the discussion of conceivability-possibility arguments from Hume to the present—to mention but three, consider Kant's Copernican turn, positivism's conventionalist approach to modality, and Quine's scepticism about the coherence of modal discourse—it is Kripke's *Naming and*

[126] Critique of Pure Reason, P. 503, note 'a' at the bottom of the page
[127] A Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part II, P. 32

Necessity that sets the stage for most contemporary discussions of our topic.[128]

In 1980 Kripke published Naming and Necessity, in which he challenged some long-standing fundamental concepts of metaphysics. He questioned the close relationships between necessity and apriority on the one hand, and contingency and aposteriority on the other. Two distinctions important to this discussion that Kripke introduced are the ones between rigid and non-rigid designators and between reference-fixers and definitions.

According to Kripke, a rigid designator identifies the same thing in any possible world where it identifies anything (e.g., proper names and natural titles like 'water'). On the other hand, a non-rigid designator can identify different things in different possible worlds (it may also identify the same thing). A reference-fixer is a substitute, in the Kripkean system, for a definition. This is necessary because a problem develops if one uses a normal definition for a rigid designator in this system. Kripke states:

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[128] Conceivability and Possibility,, note on P. 26

> "suppose we say, 'Aristotle is the greatest man who studied with Plato'. If we used that as a *definition*, the name 'Aristotle' is to mean 'the greatest man who studied with Plato'. Then of course in some other possible world that man might not have studied with Plato and some other man would have been Aristotle. If, on the other hand, we merely use the description to *fix the referent* then that man will be the referent of 'Aristotle' in all possible worlds. The only use of the description will have been to pick out to which man we mean to refer."[129]

Here we see that Kripke solves a problem encountered while talking about 'possible worlds' by establishing the 'reference-fixer' to ultimately limit the scope of a rigid designator. The 'reference-fixer' is needed in his system because a description, since it is a non-rigid designator, cannot be used to define a name or other rigid designator. These reference-fixers apply not only to proper names, but also to

[129] Naming and Necessity, P. 57

natural titles (called 'natural kinds' by Kripke) such as 'water'.

Let us consider an example of how Kripke's system provides for contingent a priori statements. For instance, take the sentence 'The Standard Meter Stick is one meter long'. This statement is a priori because a 'meter' is defined as 'the length of the Standard Meter Stick'. However, the statement is contingent because (under different conditions) the Standard Meter Stick--i.e. that very stick in France--might well have been a different length than it in fact is. In other words, in different possible worlds, the Standard Meter Stick might be longer or shorter than one meter, which makes the statement (asserting that it is one meter long) contingent. So, in the Kripkean system there are contingent a priori statements.

Not only does Kripke's system provide us with contingent a priori statements, but it also gives us necessary a posteriori statements. For example, the sentence 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' is a necessary statement because 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' are rigid designators that refer to the same thing in the actual world (and therefore in all possible worlds

for Kripke) and are joined by a copula. However, because we know that the 'morning star' and the 'evening star' are both Venus only by observation, the sentence is a posteriori.

We see here that Kripke's system has, in a non-trivial way, defined these two types of statements into existence. More importantly, there is no obvious way that this process has challenged the belief that 'conceivability implies possibility' is a proper principle of metaphysics. In fact, Kripke himself uses this principle in one of his more well-known arguments. I am referring to his argument against physical reductionism, where he claims that one might have pain without the physical cause, i.e. the firing of the appropriate C-fibers. In this example, Kripke seems to mean that he can *conceive* of pain existing without the firing of the C-fibers. Thus, it seems that he is here using the principle 'conceivability implies possibility'.

Some who write from within the Kripkean framework allege that the intricacies of the system define the 'necessary a posteriori' and the 'contingent a priori' into existence by making 'necessary' not co-referent with 'a priori' and

'contingent' not co-referent with 'a posteriori'. However, Kripke correctly observed that, while the contingency or necessity of a proposition is a metaphysical question, the apriority or aposteriority of a proposition is an epistemic one. This being said, his system of designation and reference-fixing does open the door for contingent a priori and necessary a posteriori propositions. Therefore, if indeed these waters have been muddied, it is only from within the system itself.

Also, even though many have acted as if Naming and Necessity introduced a 'Kuhnian shift', there is no compelling evidence that this is the case. For a true 'Kuhnian shift' to take place, the pre-existing system needs at least to be shown to be inadequate. This may be done from within the pre-existing system itself or by comparison with the new system. Kripke did neither of these, but merely introduced an alternate way of looking at some of the principles about possible worlds (I believe that Kripke would agree). In fact, a review of the pertinent literature will reveal that most of the authors who use the Kripkean system to attack the principle that conceivability implies possibility, are doing so in

order to attack dualism. And, while this principle may well be integral to dualism, this certainly is not the only available use of it.

There are also those writing within the Kripkean framework who defend the principle of conceivability implying possibility. For example, Chalmers[130] discusses and examines eight different species of conception and whether or not they lead to possibility. He concludes that there are some types of conception that do reliably lead to, and in some cases even entail, possibility. Some other philosophers writing within the Kripkean framework agree that at least some kinds of conceivability imply possibility. This list includes Worley, Sidelle, Yablo, Geirsson, and, as we saw above, Kripke himself. Thus, it is evidently not necessary, by any means, to eschew 'conceivability implies possibility' to have a speaking part in the Kripkean conversation.

Now that it has been established that there are differences of opinion regarding conceivability implying possibility even within the Kripkean arena, it is time to step out of that arena and examine the

principle on its own merits. It certainly seems as if we humans are doing something significant when we conceive things as possible beings. As Hume puts it,

> "To form a clear idea of anything, is an undeniable argument for its possibility, and is alone a refutation of any pretended demonstration against it."[131]

This principle is apparent even in our common use of language. We have the subjunctive and optative moods to represent how things might have been or might yet be. We intend something quite specific when we say, for example, 'if I had not been late, I would not have been involved in that auto accident'. We are conceiving how things might have been, but (sadly) were not. We are referring to the *possibility* that things might have been different (and less painful). When I imagine a regular tridecagon (thirteen-sided figure), before I put pencil to paper and before I divide 13 into 360 (to ascertain the measure of the interior angles), I know that it is a *possible* geometric figure. I know this because I can conceive

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[130] "Does Conceivability Entail Possibility?", Chapter 3 in Conceivability and Possibility

[131] A Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part iii, Section 6, P. 89

(or imagine) it without any logical difficulties, such as inconsistency or contradiction.

There is a very strong intuition in humans that what we conceive is therefore possible. Whether we are imagining a geometric figure, supposing how an alternate scenario might have happened, or conceiving of a Being-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought; we think of these things as *possible*. We conceive and recognise that our conception, since we cannot conceive of things impossible, is of a possible being. We all imagine and, with the exception possibly of some philosophers, we all view our non - contradictory imaginings as possible. While this is not hard proof that conceivability implies possibility, it certainly results in a strong presumption in favor of its being the case. If we can conceive of this Being-than-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought; if this conception is coherent, consistent and not contradictory; that Being GOD is indeed possible.

CONCLUSION

In the many pages above, we have examined not only the substance of Anselm's Ontological Argument, but we have also inquired into the setting of the argument. We have looked at Anselm in his various functions, as well as investigated the purpose and details of the Proslogion.

Early on, we looked at who Anselm was, as a man, in light of his religious offices, and as a thinker. His cultural background, as well as his vocation in the church were found to be important to the understanding of his writings. We saw how the influence of Augustine and the Neo-Platonists played a part in the construction of this argument. The importance of his human frailties, along with his perspicacity, has been shown to be integral to uncovering his true argument.

We traced the perception of the argument through the centuries and examined objections that have been brought against it. Many of the extant criticisms, especially the important or popular ones, were answered. It was surprising to note how many philosophers from different areas of study within

philosophy have commented on Anselm's Ontological Argument.

We saw how Anselm's main purpose in the Proslogion was not to put forth an argument supporting the existence of GOD, but rather to enlighten the reader regarding the attributes and character of GOD. It became clear that the argument was merely an instrument for the clarification of the character and attributes of GOD.

The knowledge we gained studying Anselm and the Proslogion was put to use in bringing his true argument to light. This argument is more comprehensive and more compelling than previous perceptions of the argument have acknowledged. We examined some criticisms that might be brought against this more comprehensive argument, and answered them.

We have shown that Anselm, in spite of leaving some steps out, has constructed a unique and powerful version of the Ontological Argument. This argument does not assume that GOD is possible, but argues the point. In fact, this is not merely an argument for the existence of GOD; this is indeed a proof of GOD's existence.

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