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Malcolm and Hartshorne on the Anselmian Argument for the Existence of God

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MALCOLM AND HARTSHORNE ON THE ANSELMIAN ARGUMENT FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

BY

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LIFE

James Allan Meyer was born in Chicago, Illinois, on November 1, 1937. After attending St. Timothy Grade School for eight years and Campion Jesuit High School for four, he studied at Loyola University for two years and the University of Vienna, Austria, for one year. He entered the Society of Jesus at Milford, Ohio, in August, 1958. In 1962 he received a degree of Bachelor of Literatures from Xavier University. Thereupon, he studied philosophy for two years at West Baden College and one year at Bellarmine School of Theology of Loyola University, where he completed the courses required for the degree of Master of Arts in philosophy. He is currently a teacher at Loyola Academy in Wilmette, Illinois.

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since St. Anselm wrote the Proslogion, the argument for the existence of God therein contained has been commented upon and disputed by both major and minor philosophers. Some have briefly expressed their thoughts on it; others have written lengthy monographs; few completely ignore it. The many, varied opinions expressed over the centuries may be seen in such historical studies as Augustinus Daniel's Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Dreizehnten Jahrhundert,[1] Georg Grunwald's Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Mittelalter,[2] and Alvin Plantinga's recent The Ontological Argument,[3] which includes the comments of modern and contemporary philosophers. Books, articles, and pamphlets written on the subject are numerous enough to form a small library. The issues are clearly defined; the camps are set. Why, then, should more be written on the subject?

Recently, Norman Malcolm of Cornell University and Charles Hartshorne of the University of Texas have raised the new issue of how many arguments there are. They both maintain that Anselm

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[1]Augustinus Daniels, O.S.B., "Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Dreizehnten Jahrhundert," Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie der Mittelalter (VIII, 1-2; Muenster: Aschendorffsche Buchsverhandlung, 1909).

[2]Georg Grunwald, "Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Mittelalter," Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie der Mittelalter (VI, 3; Muenster, Aschendorffsche Buchsverhandlung, 1907).

[3]Alvin Plantinga, The Ontological Argument (New York: Doubleday, 1965).

has two arguments: one from contingent existence and another from necessary existence. According to them, if properly understood, the second argument does not exhibit the admitted weakness of the first. The purpose of this paper is to investigate this new issue concerning the number of arguments and to give a critique of the views of Malcolm and Hartshorne on the validity of what they consider is a second argument. In conformity with this purpose, the author, while realising the vast literature on the Anselmian argument, limits himself chiefly to the writings of Anselm, Malcolm, Hartshorne, and the current critiques of the latter men's positions. The procedure is to give an exposition of the foundations of the argument in the writings of St. Anselm, the argument itself, the argumentation of Malcolm and Hartshorne, and finally a critique of their positions.

CHAPTER I

FOUNDATIONS OF THE ANSELMIAN ARGUMENT IN ANSELM'S WRITINGS

Charles Hartshorne asks what Anselm meant by "greatness" in the famous formula, "a being, than which nothing greater can be thought," which appears in the second chapter of the Proslogion.[1] This specific question should be placed in the larger context of the meaning of the entire formula. In Anselm's Monologion the answers to the specific question and the question of the meaning of the whole formula can be found. Why Anselm formulated his idea of God the way he did is partially due to his cognitional theory. It is said that Anselm's theory of truth is the hidden nerve running through the argumentation in the Monologion and Proslogion[2] and that his cognitional theory provides a foundation for his entire thought.[3] Both Anselm's cognitional theory and Monologion, then, require investigation as propaedeutic to the argument in the Proslogion.

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[1]Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1962), p. 35.

[2]Étienne Gilson and Philotheus Boehner, Geschichte der Christlichen Philosophie (2d ed. rev.; Paderborn: Ferdinand Schoeningh, 1953), II, p. 299.

[3]Robert Miller, C.S.B., "The Ontological Argument in St. Anselm and Descartes," The Modern Schoolman, XXXII (May, 1955), p. 345.

Since Anselm did not write a comprehensive treatise on cognition, his cognitional theory must be culled from his De Veritate and from snatches of his other writings. The De Veritate is a dialogue between Anselm and one of his students on the topic of "what truth is, and of what things it is ordinarily predicated, and what justice is."[4] Anselm's student was puzzled by his statement in the Monologion that truth does not have either a beginning or an end and that "'nothing can be true without truth.'"[5] Since God is truth and every true thing is a participation in truth, the student wishes to know whether or not God is the truth of every true thing or statement. This leads to the question of what truth is.

Anselm does not answer immediately. Slowly he proceeds to formulate a suitable definition, beginning with an inquiry into the truth of statements, proceeding to the truth of opinion, the will, natural and unnatural actions, the senses, the essences of things, and finally the definition itself.

Statements are true in two ways: by nature, by both nature and an actual affirmation that something that is, is, or that something that is not, is not. Each coherent statement has its truth, its signification, regardless of whether or not the signification correctly refers to the condition of what is signi-

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[4]Anselm, "De Veritate," Selections from Medieval Philosophers, ed. and trans. Richard McKeon (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), I, 150. Further quotations are from this translation.

[5]Ibid., p. 152.

fied. Thus, the statement "it is raining" has a true meaning. As a statement it can be understood by anyone cognizant of English who has lived, is now living, or will live. Such a truth is natural. In this sense even a lie is true. Whether the statement correctly refers to the presence of rain drops actually falling at the same time the utterance is made, is another question.

Anselm's student, who holds that the thing stated is the cause of a true statement, supposes that truth is found only in statements. Anselm, however, argues to a deeper meaning of truth than natural truth. His dialectical progression is here quoted, because it introduces a key notion in Anselm's doctrine of truth and in his philosophy as a whole:

Mast. What then does truth in statement seem to you to be?
Disc. I know nothing other than that when it signifies that that which is is, then truth is in it, and it is true.
Mast. To what end is an affirmation made?
Disc. To signify that that which is is.
Mast. Then it should do that?
Disc. Certainly.
Mast. Then when it signifies that that which is is, it signifies as it should?
Disc. That is clear.
Mast. But when it signifies as it should it signifies rightly?
Disc. That is so.
Mast. However, when it signifies rightly, the signification is right?
Disc. There is no doubt of that.
Mast. Therefore, when it signifies that that which is is, the signification is right?
Disc. That follows.
Mast. Likewise when it signifies that that which is is, the signification is true?
Disc. Yes, it is both right and true, when it signifies that that which is is.

Mast. It is the same, therefore, for the affirmation to be right and true, that is, to signify that that which is is?
Disc. Yes, it is the same.
Mast. Consequently, truth, for it, is not other than rightness.
Disc. I see clearly now that truth is this rightness.[6]

Rightness or rectitude is the major criterion for the truth of a statement. In the conformity of a statement to the objective reality of the thing signified lies the truth of the statement. Though all coherent statements are naturally true, they may be both true and right if they affirm and deny what they ought to. According to nature, a statement is always true; according to use, it may be either true or false, according to whether or not it signifies what it was made to signify; namely, that what is is and what is not is not. These truths are separable and therefore different. The double rectitude may or may not be there. Yet in some instances, such as in the statements "Man is an animal" or "Man is not a stone,"[7] the double truth is always had, because they always actually signify what they are made to signify. What applies to verbal communication applies to all forms of communication which use signs "for signifying that something is or is not."[8]

Truth is also said to be in the area of thought and opinion. Anselm's argumentation is brief. The reason man has the

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[6] Ibid., pp. 153-154.

[7] Ibid., p. 155.

[8] Ibid., p. 156.

power to think is to enable him to think that what is is and what is not is not, which means to think as he ought. Again rightness is the key note. When a thought corresponds to reality and reality exists in the manner it is thought to exist, the thought is true, for "there is no other truth of thought than rightness."[9]

It is also said that the will is true. Anselm investigates the truth of the will, finding the familiar solution. In the will, truth is "nothing except rightness."[10] Both angels and men were given wills to be used for willing what they should. Satan and his followers abandoned truth and rightness only when they willed what they should not have willed.

Moreover, actions have truth. Arguing from Scripture Anselm affirms that doing good is the same as doing the true. But, according to the opinion of all men, he who does good and acts truly also does as he should. Acting as he should, he acts rightly, "wherefore nothing is more apparent than that the truth of action is rightness."[11] Actions, however, may be either determined or undetermined by nature. Those proceeding from the intellect and will are naturally undetermined, because they may or may not be done the way they should; whereas involuntary acts, such as the warming of fire, are necessarily determined by the nature of the agent.

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[9] Ibid., p. 157.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 158.

Similarly there is determined and undetermined truth in sensation. The senses seem to deceive us often. They report, for instance, that a man's face is in a mirror, even though he knows his face remains with himself, and that a straight rod is crooked when placed in water. Anselm distinguishes sense impressions from the interpretation of them, maintaining that the senses report what they are by nature made to report, do what they should, and have both truth and rightness. Error creeps in when the mind improperly judges the truth presented by the sense organs.

Anselm's treatment of sensation and the genesis of an idea as a whole require further elucidation. A man senses, because he has a body; a man has ideas partly because he has a body, partly because he has a soul.

Not restricted to any one part of the body, the soul permeates, suffuses, and enlivens the whole body, being entirely itself in the whole as well as in all of the parts. "For, if the soul were not as a whole in the separate members of the body, it would not feel as a whole in the separate members."[12] The soul has several aspects--intellect and will--which, on account of their not being coextensive with it and their having special activities, are different from it.[13] Both the intellect and will

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[12]Anselm, "Proslogion," ch. 13, St. Anselm, ed. and trans. Sidney Deane (2d ed.; Chicago: Open Court, 1935), p. 20. All further English quotations are taken from this edition, unless otherwise noted.

[13]Anselm, "De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae dei cum libero arbitrio," ch. 11, Opera Omnia S. An-

are likened to instruments; the one being used for reasoning, the other, for willing. In both cases a distinction is made between the power and its act, the instrument and its use. In the will there is also distinguished the affections for happiness and rightness, forces and inclinations by which the will spontaneously moves itself and in turn moves the other powers involved in free, voluntary acts.

A man has both sensual and cognitional knowledge of the world.[14] He is affected by particular corporeal objects in the world around him. From the reaction of his five sense organs to the impulses from the sensible object an interior corporeal image is formed in the body. Furthermore a spiritual image or word is formed in the intellect, for "to think of an object...is to express it mentally."[15] The one is not the other. The phantasm is restricted to a particular sensible object: whereas the intellectual image grasps the universal. "I express a man in one way...through the image of his body, when the mind imagines his visible form; through the reason, however, when it thinks of his universal essence, which is rational, mortal animal."[16] Whereas the mind may misinterpret the reports of the senses, the senses

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selmi, ed. Francis Schmitt, O.S.B. (6 vols.; Vol. I; Sekau: Abbey Press, 1939; Vols. II-VI; Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1946-61), II, p. 279, ll. 4-6. All Latin quotations are from this edition.

[14] Monologion, ch. 1, p. 38.

[15] Ibid., ch. 48, p. 112.

[16] Ibid., ch. 10, p. 57.

always report correctly. A mistake in the process of sensation is "not the fault of the senses, which report what they are able to, (since they were given just this potency), but it must be imputed to the judgment of the mind, which does not distinguish clearly what they can or what they ought to do."[17] Moreover, knowledge of the world is gained only through the medium of the senses and phantasm: "the artisan is wholly unable to conceive in his imagination any bodily thing, except what he has in some way learned from external objects, whether all at once, or by part."[18]

Besides knowing the world, a man can reflect upon and know himself. Just as a person can passively know many things without actually thinking about them, so too does he have an awareness, a consciousness of himself, even though he may not actually have his soul as an object of reflection. "The human mind is not always thinking of itself, though it ever remembers itself."[19] This memory of itself, moreover, is the condition for the reflexive act; for "it is clear that, when it thinks of itself, the word corresponding to it is born of memory."[20] In reflecting upon itself the soul forms within itself an image of itself by speaking itself as an interior word. Between this word

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[17] *De Veritate*, ch. 6, McKeon, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

[18] *Monologion*, ch. 11, p. 58.

[19] *Ibid.*, ch. 48, p. 112.

[20] *Ibid.*

and the soul only a rational distinction exists. "The rational mind, then, when it conceives of itself in thought, has with itself its image born of itself...although it cannot, except in thought alone, separate itself from its image, which is its word."[21]

A third source of knowledge is the light of truth, which illumines mankind and "from which shines every truth that gives light to the rational mind."[22] The light is far too bright for Anselm to see and yet he sees nothing except through it just "as the weak eye sees what it sees through the light of the sun, which in the sun itself it cannot look upon."[23] It is the splendor of the Lord which is wholly present, in which Anselm moves and has his being. This much Anselm says, but just exactly what he means is ambiguous. Domet de Vorges, for instance, maintains that the light of truth is the agent intellect;[24] whereas Fischer believes that it is a metaphorical expression for the first principles in so far as they are grasped as reflections of the divine light.[25]

Now that the sources of human knowledge have been considered, the investigation into truth may be continued. Truth is

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[21] Ibid., ch. 33, p. 97.

[22] Proslogion, ch. 14, p. 21.

[23] Ibid., ch. 16, p. 22.

[24] Domet de Vorges, Saint Anselme (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1901), p. 106.

[25] Fischer, "Die Erkenntnislehre Anselms Von Canterbury," Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, (X, 3; Muenster i. W: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1911), p. 48.

also predicated of the essences of things. Wherein does the truth of essences lie? In the conformity of what they ought to be with what they are. God is truth; there is nothing, be it in any place at any time, that is not related to this highest truth nor that is able to be anything else than what it is. "Whatsoever is, therefore, is truly, in so far as it is what it is in the supreme truth."[26] Essences are true because they correspond to the divine idea of what they should be. Anselm seems to indicate that truth is had only in the context of real existence. According to him, "that which is falsely is not."[27] Since what-is exists in accordance to the divine mind, it is as it should be. Being as it should be, it rightly is what it is. It follows, then, that truth and rightness are in the essence of things; "it is certain that the truth of things is rightness."[28]

From his investigation of where truth is said to be found, Anselm concludes that truth or rightness is primarily the supreme Truth. All other truths are true in virtue of the supreme Truth. They are what they ought to be or do what they ought to do because they are or act in accordance with divine Truth. Such is not the case for divine Truth. It is what it is solely because it is. It is completely independent, dependent upon nothing.

Exclusive of the divine Truth, some truths are causes:

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[26] *De Veritate*, ch. 7, p. 163.

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] *Ibid*., p. 164.

others, both effects and causes: effects in that they are caused by God, the cause of all truth; causes in that they in turn cause the truth of thoughts and statements. "The truth which is in the existence of things...is also cause itself of the truth which is thought and that which is in a proposition; and these two latter are the cause of no truth."[29]

Anselm has shown the rightness of statements, thoughts, actions, essences, and sensation. The only rightness not as yet considered is the rightness of corporeal things, such as the rightness or straightness of a pole. The common notion in the truth of statements, thoughts, actions, essences, sensation, and corporeal things, is rightness. Is there any way of distinguishing their rightness? The former rightnesses of statements and so forth are conceived by the mind alone; whereas the latter (the rightness of corporeal things) is perceived by both the senses and the mind. Truth, in the strict sense, Anselm limits to the former, defining it as "rightness perceptible to the mind alone."[30]

Truth has three characteristics; it is eternal, unchangeable, and one. Upon the first characteristic a proof for the existence of God can be based.[31] That truth is not eternal is a contradictory notion. If someone were to say there was a time

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[29] Ibid., p. 170.

[30] Ibid., ch. 11, p. 172.

[31] Alexandre Koyré, L'Idée de Dieu dans la Philosophie de St. Anselme (Paris: Ernst Leroux, 1923), p. 58.

when there was no truth or that there will be a time when there will be no truth, he would have to affirm the statement that truth is not eternal. But then, this statement would be true even when truth is not supposed to exist or have existed. The contradiction is obvious. Since men make true statements, truth is eternal; since God is the source of truth, He must exist and eternally exist.[32]

Since truth is eternal, it must also be unchangeable. Something is true, when it is right or has rightness. Either the rightness varies or it does not vary. If it varies, it varies according to the things themselves. One proper example is adequate for elucidating all instances. A statement is right when it says what it ought to say; namely, that what is is and what is not is not. Without this rightness, a statement cannot be right. If rightness were dependent upon the statement, rightness would vary as statements vary; and when a statement is false or not made, rightness would not exist. But, when a statement is false, it is no less right that the statement should have expressed what it ought to have expressed. Rightness is the norm according to which a statement is true or false. When a statement is not made, it is no less true that, if it were made, it should be made rightly. Therefore rightness exists, even though the statement does not exist. Even after a statement is made, the rightness by which it was right or should have been right

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[32] De Veritate, ch. 10, p. 170.

does not perish. "The rightness therefore by which signification is called right does not acquire being, or any change, through signification, however the signification itself may be changed."[33]

Since truth is both eternal and unchangeable, it is invariable, it is one. That Anselm has considered the truth in statements, thoughts, essences, and so forth, all of which are different from one another is no objection to the unity of truth; for

> truth is improperly said to be of this or that thing, since truth does not have its being in things, or out of things, or because of things in which it is said to be, but when things are according to that which is always present in those things which are as they should be, then the truth of this or that thing is spoken of...the supreme truth subsisting in itself is the truth of no thing, but when something is according to truth, then it is called the truth or the rightness of that thing. [34]

God is supreme Truth. Truth is one, immutable, eternal, and perceptible to the mind alone. It is independent of the things of which it is predicated. These same ideas run through the proofs for the existence of God in the Monologion.

All four[35] of the Monologion proofs go from the sensible world to the first cause or exemplar of the world. Men experience good things in this world with both their bodily senses and intellectual faculties. The question arises as to whether these desired goods are good through one thing or several things. All

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[33] Ibid., ch. 13, p. 182.

[34] Ibid., pp. 183-84.

[35] The number of arguments is disputed. The common count is four; e.g., P. Vignaux, "Sens et Structure du Monologion," Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, XXXI, p. 199. Koyre adds an argument from beauty, op. cit., p. 37.

goods can be compared with one another. In comparison, the goods are either equal or unequal, either they are good in the same measure or else some are better or less good than the others. But the comparison, to be valid, can depend upon only one criterion or standard for all of the compared goods. The standard cannot be different in one thing and in another. One may not decide one man is more just than another, "except through the quality of justness, which is not one thing in one substance, and another in another."[36] Though justice is a quality predicated of only some beings, goodness is not; it can be predicated in greater or lesser degree of everything. In each case, the criterion must be the same, although sometimes a thing appears to be good for different reasons. Thus a horse may be termed good, because it is swift and strong, neither of which qualities seems to be the same. But swiftness and strength cannot be the basis of goodness, because these same qualities are said to make a thief bad. The qualities themselves are good; how they are employed accounts for their being called good or bad in different circumstances. In general, things are called good because they are either useful or have some noble quality. Whatever is useful or noble, however, if it be truly good, is good through that being "through which it is necessary that everything, whatever it may be, is good."[37]

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[36] Monologion, ch. 1, p. 39.

[37] Author's translation. On account of the context he interprets "(per idipsum esse bona) per quod necesse est esse cuncta bona, quidquid illud sit," Monologion, ch. 1, Schmitt, I, p. 15, ll. 2-3, differently from Deane's translation: "through

Since it is the basis upon which everything is termed good, this being cannot but be the greatest good. Moreover, since the lesser goods do not have goodness of themselves (otherwise goodness would be one thing in one being and something else in another), they must receive or partake in the common source of goodness, which is the one, the supreme good, which alone is good through itself. Surpassing all other beings, it is both supremely good and great. Nothing surpasses nor equals it in goodness or greatness, not physical greatness but that depending upon worthiness, like wisdom. Supreme goodness and greatness imply each other. "And since there can be nothing supremely great except what is supremely good, there must be a being that is greatest and best, i.e., the highest of all beings."[38]

Anselm has argued from goodness and greatness in beings to one greatest and best being. He continues by arguing from existence and degrees of dignity in beings. Whatever exists, exists through itself or through another or through mutual causal influence. It is not logical to imagine that a being exists through the very being upon which it confers existence; so this alternative is eliminated. More than one thing cannot exist through itself, because if they were to exist through themselves, they would be equal in this respect. But to be equal it is necessary that there be one power or nature of existing "through it-

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which all goods exist, whatever that being is," p. 40. Cf. Koyré, op. cit., p. 39.

[38] Monologion, ch. 1, p. 40.

self" by which they exist. There can be, then, but one being who exists through itself and through which all other existents exist, "one being which alone exists in the greatest and highest degree of all."[39]

Furthermore, there are in the world natures of diverse dignity. A horse is better than a log and a man better than a horse. But the ladder cannot rise forever, so there must be one highest nature or one highest class. If they form a class, they are equal. If they are equal, they are so through one cause which is either themselves or something else. If it is something else, it is something of a superior nature; hence, they could not form a highest class. If it is themselves, it is their essence. But, then, they can have only one essence and one nature, nature and essence being identified here. Anselm's resounding conclusion to these arguments is that there is:

> a certain Nature, or Substance, or Essence, which is through itself good and great and through itself is what it is; and through which exists whatever is truly good, or great, or has any existence at all; and which is the supreme good being, the supreme great being, being or subsisting as supreme, that is, the highest of all existing beings. 40

Just as all things which exist exist through the supreme Being, so too do they exist from it; because the two modes of expression may be interchanged now with the same meaning, now with another. The question remains how the supreme Being exists

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[39] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 42.

[40] Ibid., ch. 4, p. 45.

through itself, since the expression "esse per" usually suggests an efficient, material, or instrumental cause. Can the supreme Being be any of these causes in regard to its existence? Certainly not, because these causes are prior to the effect, are greater in some sense than the effect, and rule out independence. Nor can the supreme Being exist through or from nothing. Existence through and from itself can be compared to a lighted light. The mutual relations of the light and the verb "to light" and the participle "lucent" are like the relations of essence, esse, and being.[41]

Baeumker[42] and Fischer[43] maintain that the above proofs exclude causality; whereas Adlhoch[44] holds that they are causal arguments and Domet de Vorges[45] compares them to the causal proofs in St. Thomas. The issue here is whether or not Anselm is merely dealing with concepts. It appears that, since he develops his notion of God from things in the world and concludes to an uncaused cause, the second opinion is the stronger.

After establishing that the Supreme Being exists through

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[41] Ibid., ch. 6, p. 49.

[42] Clemens Baeumker, "Witelo, Ein Philosoph und Naturforscher des XIII. Jahrhunderts," Beitraege zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters (III, 2; Muenster i. w.: Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1908), p. 295.

[43] Fischer, op. cit., p. 37.

[44] B. Adlhoch, "Der Gottesbeweis des heiligen Anselm," Philosophisches Jahrbuch (X.4, 1897), p. 270 f.

[45] Domet de Vorges, op. cit., pp. 233-38.

itself and all other things exist through it, Anselm investigates its properties. He proceeds by eliminating whatever it is better not to be than to be. First of all, no relative expression signifies God's essence. To say that He is the highest of all beings, or greater than those which have been created by Him is not to give an essential description of God. If no other beings existed with which He could be compared, He could not be referred to as "greater than" or "the highest." Since He is what He is through Himself and other things are what they are through Him, He is actually no less great even though there are no other creatures with which He may be compared. Whether He is termed "supreme" or not makes no difference; therefore, the name is not essential to His description. This same reasoning applies to all similar relative expressions. By themselves, they cannot describe God.

The non-relative expressions are conveniently divided into those things, which, considered separately, it is better to be than not to be, and those which it is not better to be than to be. In general, to be something is better than not be be something; but there are some perfections which are good in some circumstances and bad in others. To be gold, for example, is better than to be lead; to be an animal is better than to be a plant or a stone; to be a man is better than to be merely an animal. For a piece of lead to be turned into gold could well be a good; but for a man to be turned into gold like King Midas would certainly be a catastrophe of the first rank. Such perfections, then,

since they depend upon special circumstances for being good, cannot apply directly to God's essence.

Other perfections are good without qualification. Wherever they are, they are good; wherever they are absent, some perfection is missing. Wisdom and justness are two examples of this type. To be wise is always better than not to be wise; to be just is always better than not to be just. Other examples are truth, blessedness, power, and eternity. These names can be and should be attributed directly to God. "Hence, the Being must be living, wise, powerful, and all-powerful, true, just, blessed, eternal, and whatever, in like manner, is absolutely better than what is not it."[46]

Even these terms seem to have relative aspects. For instance, to say that God is true or just seems to imply quantity or quality, that is, accidents which are distinct from His essence; because something can be true and just only through truth and justness. The participant is what it is through another, the participated. The participated is not the participant; the participant is not the participated. But this distinction cannot apply to God. As was proved above, the supreme Being can be through nothing else than Himself. The only possible conclusion is that, in reference to God, absolute perfections, no matter whether they are predicated as adjectives or nouns, mean the same thing. He is true, He is truth; He is just, He is justice.

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[46] Monologion, ch. 15, p. 64.

"Nothing that is truly said of the supreme Being is accepted in terms of quality or quantity, but only in terms of what it is."[47]

Although many names are applied to the supreme Being, and designate His essence, He is not composed of many, different things. In Him there can be no composition. Otherwise He would depend upon something outside of Himself as an efficient and/or material cause. But, as was proved above, He exists through Himself, depending upon nothing else for His existence. God is a single, simple being described by means of a plurality of names.

Just as the divine simplicity excludes all composition, so too does it exclude any accidents, properly so-called. By definition, an accident is something which comes and goes from a being, causing some change in it. The divine being, however, does not undergo change in any form. It is eternal, immutable. If it were not eternal, it would have a beginning and/or an end. If it had a beginning, it would derive its existence from another or from nothing. Since nothing can come from nothing, it could not have had a beginning from nothing. Since it would be a contradiction to maintain that the supreme Being exists through anything but itself, it could not have had a beginning from something else. If it had an end, it would be corruptible, able to be broken into parts. Since it is simple, it cannot be broken into parts; and hence, it has no ending. Furthermore, on account of its simplicity, it cannot be the material cause of anything.[48]

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[47] Ibid., ch. 17, p. 67.

[48] Ibid., ch. 7, p. 51.

It and it alone exists through itself, all other things exist through it by creation and conservation. Therefore, wherever and whenever anything is, there and then it is. Besides being everywhere at every time, it goes beyond the dimensions of space and time, "for place and time themselves are existing things,"[49] created by it; so that it is unlimited and eternal.

The names "life" and "eternal" are of special interest for the topic of this paper, because both life and eternity imply for Anselm necessary existence. The eternal being has no beginning, nor end, nor time, whether it be past, present, or future, considered as the transient time of men. The being who is life possesses the fullness of life. No cause either brings it about or terminates it. The supreme Being is said to be eternal or to exist forever and "since for it, it is the same to exist and to live, no better sense can be attached to this statement, than that it exists or lives eternally, that is, it possesses interminable life, as a perfect whole at once."[50]

Moreover, when he inquires into whether God can be called a substance, Anselm maintains that the term suits God in a qualified way. An ordinary substance is affected by accidents, undergoing changes for which composition of substance and accidents is

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[49] Ibid., ch. 20, p. 73.

[50] Ibid., ch. 24, p. 83. The Latin text reads: "Quoniam idem est illi esse et vivere, nihil melius intelligitur quam aeterne esse vel vivere, id est interminabilem vitam perfecte simul totam obtinere," Schmitt, I, p. 42, ll. 18-20. Compare with Boethius' definition of eternity in De Consolatione Philosophiae, V, 6.: M. L. 63, 858 A.

required. God is both simple and immutable. The only way the term can apply is if substance is used for being and so transcends all substances.[51] When distinguishing between God and everything that is not God, Anselm uses absolute, perfect existence over against highly imperfect existence. God and God alone exists simply, perfectly, and absolutely; all other things are as non-existent in comparison with Him.[52] That which exists simply and in the highest degree of all seems to have, and can have, no other existence than necessary existence.

When all the names are put together, God is described as:

> supreme Being, supreme Justness, supreme Wisdom, supreme Truth, supreme Goodness, supreme Greatness, supreme Beauty, supreme Immortality, supreme Incorruptibility, supreme Immutability, supreme Blessedness, supreme Eternity, supreme Power, supreme Unity; which is nothing else than supremely being, supremely living, etc. 53

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[51]The Latin text reads: "nisi dicatur substantia pro essentia, et sic sit extra sicut est supra omnem substantiam," Schmitt, Monologion, ch. 36, I, p. 44, ll. 10-11. Deane translates essentia as "being" (p. 86), and not without reason; for in earlier passages Anselm equates existens with subsistens and essentia with esse and ens. "Quemadmodum enim esse habent ad invicem lux et lucere et lucens, sic sunt ad se invicem essentia et esse et ens, hoc est existens sive subsistens. Ergo summa essentia et summe esse et summe ens, id est summe existens sive summe subsistens," Monologion, ch. 6 , Schmitt, I., p. 20, ll. 15-18. "Quoniam tamen ipsa non solum certissime existit, sed etiam summe omnium existit, et cuiuslibet rei essentia dici solet substantia: profecto si quid digne dici potest, non prohibetur dici substantia," Monologion, ch. 28, Schmitt, I, p. 45, ll. 13-15.

[52]Monologion, ch. 26, p. 86.

[53]The Latin text is more inclusive, reading: "Summa essentia, summa vita, summa ratio, summa iustitia...summe ens, summe vivens, et alia similiter," Monologion, ch. 16, Schmitt, I, p. 31, ll. 4-8; Deane, p. 66.

All of these names are contained in the simple formula "a being a greater than which cannot be thought." But even more is implied in it, because whatever men use to name God, they use improperly. Men have only analogical knowledge of God. The names are derived from experience of the finite world. Hence, both creatures and God share the same name; yet, in the case of God the name has a very different signification.[54] God transcends men's knowledge just as He transcends all substances. God, Anselm realizes, is actually in this sense, "a being greater than can be conceived."[55]

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[54] Monologion, ch. 26, p. 86.

[55] Proslogion, ch. 15, p. 22.

CHAPTER II

THE ANSELMIAN ARGUMENT AND THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GAUNILO AND ANSELM

The argument is found in the second and third chapters of the Proslogion, in which Anselm writes:

> And so Lord, do thou, who dost give understanding to faith, give me, so far as thou knowest it to be profitable, to understand that thou art as we believe; and that thou art that which we believe. And, indeed, we believe that thou art a being than which nothing greater can be conceived. Or is there no such nature, since the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God? (Psalms xiv. I). But, at any rate, this very fool, when he hears of this being of which I speak--a being than which nothing greater can be conceived--understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding; although he does not understand it to exist.
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> For, it is one thing for an object to be in the understanding, and another to understand that the object exists. When a painter first conceives of what he will afterwards perform, he has it in his understanding, but he does not yet understand it to be, because he has not yet performed it. But after he has made the painting, he both has it in his understanding, and he understands that it exists, because he has made it. [1]

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[1] Deane, loc. cit., p. 7. The Latin text reads: "Ergo, domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi, ut quantum scis expidire intelligam, quia es sicut credimus, et hoc es quod credimus. Et quidem credimus te esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit. An ergo non est aliqua talis natura, quia 'dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est deus'? 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. Nam cum pictor praecogitat quae facturus est, habet quidem in intellectu, sed nondum intelligit esse quod nondum fecit. Cum vero iam pinxit, et habet in intellectu et intelligit esse quod iam fecit." Vol. I, p. 101, ll. 3-13.

Hence, even the fool is convinced that something exists in the understanding, at least, than which nothing greater can be conceived. For, when he hears of this, he understands it. And whatever is understood, exists in the understanding. And assuredly that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, cannot exist in the understanding alone. For, suppose it exists in the understanding alone: then it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater.

Therefore, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, exists in the understanding alone, the very being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, is one, than which a greater can be conceived. But obviously this is impossible. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being, than which nothing greater can be conceived, and it exists both in the understanding and in reality.

CHAPTER III

And it assuredly exists so truly, that it cannot be conceived not to exist. For, it is possible to conceive of a being which cannot be conceived not to exist; and this is greater than one which can be conceived not to exist. Hence, if that, than which nothing greater can be conceived, can be conceived not to exist, it is not that, than which nothing greater can be conceived. But this is an irreconcilable contradiction. There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being thou art, O Lord, Our God. [2]

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[2] Ibid., pp. 8-9. The Latin text reads: "Convincitur ergo etiam insipiens esse vel in intellectu aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest, quia hoc cum audit intelligit, et quidquid intelligitur in intellectu est. Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest cogitari 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.

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.

Et hoc es tu, domine deus noster." Ibid., l. 13- p. 103, l. 3.

> So truly, therefore, dost thou exist, O Lord, my God, that thou canst not be conceived not to exist; and rightly. For, if a mind could conceive of a being better than thee, the creature would rise above the Creator; and this is most absurd. And, indeed, whatever else there is, except thee alone, can be conceived not to exist. To thee alone, therefore, it belongs to exist more truly than all other beings, and hence in a higher degree than all others. For, whatever else exists does not exist so truly, and hence in a less degree it belongs to it to exist. Why, then, has the fool said in his heart, "there is no God" (Psalms xiv. I), since it is so evident, to a rational mind, that thou dost exist in the highest degree of all? Why, except that he is dull and a fool. 3

This is the general structure of the argument. Further embellishment, commented upon by Anselm in his reply to Gaunilo, appears in chapter four.

> But how has the fool said in his heart what he could not conceive; or how is it that he could not conceive what he said in his heart? Since it is the same to say in the heart, and to conceive.
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> But, if really, nay, since really, he both conceived, because he said in his heart; and did not say in his heart because he could not conceive; there is more than one way in which a thing is said in the heart or conceived. For, in one sense, an object is conceived, when the word signifying it is conceived; and in another, when the very entity, which the object is, is understood. 4

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[3] Ibid., p. 9. The Latin text reads: "Sic ergo vere es, domine deus meus, ut nec cogitari possis non esse. Et merito. Si enim aliqua mens posset cogitare aliquid melius te, ascenderet creatura super creatorem, et iudicaret de creatore; quod valde est absurdum. Et quidem quidquid est aliud praeter te solum, potest cogitari non esse. Solus igitur verissime omnium, et ideo maxime omnium habes esse; quia quidquid aliud est non sic vere, et idcirco minus habet esse. Cur itaque 'dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est deus', cum tam in promptu sit rationali menti te maxime omnium esse? Cur, nisi quia stultus et insipiens." Ibid., ll. 3-11.

[4] Ibid., pp. 9-10. The Latin text reads: "Verum quomodo dixit in corde quod cogitare non potuit; aut quomodo cogitare non potuit quod dixit in corde, cum idem sit dicere in corde et cogitare? Quod si vere, immo quia vere et cogitavit quia dixit in corde, et non dixit in corde quia cogitare non potuit; non uno tantum modo dicitur aliquid in corde vel cogitatur." Ibid., ll. 13-19.

In the former sense, then , God can be conceived not to exist; but the latter, not at all. For no one who understands what fire and water are can conceive fire to be water, in accordance with the nature of the facts themselves, although this is possible according to the words. So, then, no one who understands what God is can conceive that God does not exist; although he says these words in his heart, either without any or with some foreign signification. For, God is that than which a greater cannot be conceived. And he who thoroughly understands this, assuredly understands that this being so truly exists, that not even in concept can it be non-existent. Therefore, he who understands that God so exists, cannot conceive that he does not exist.

I thank thee, gracious Lord, I thank thee; because what I formerly believed by thy bounty, I now so understand by thine illumination, that if I were unwilling to believe that thou dost exist, I should not be able not to understand this to be true. 5

The Proslogion was read by people within and without the Abbey of Bec. One of the outsiders, Gaunilo, a monk of Marmoutier near Tours, wrote a short reply to the Proslogion, in which he lauded Anselm for the ardor and spiritual wealth of his treatment of the divine essence and chided him for using weak argumentation to prove or conclude to God's existence. As far as Gaunilo was concerned, the sole method of proving God's existence was inference from empirically given data in the world. The other

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Aliter enim cogitatur res cum vox eam significans cogitatur, aliter cum id ipsum quod res est intelligitur. Illo itaque modo potest cogitari deus non esse, isto vero minime. Nullus quippe intelligens id quod deus est, potest cogitare quia deus non est." Ibid., ll. 18-21.

5Ibid., p. 10. The Latin text reads: "licet haec verba dicat in corde, aut sine ulla aut cum aliqua extranea significatione. Deus enim est id quo maius cogitari non potest. Quod qui bene intelligit, utique intelligit id ipsum sic esse, ut ne cogitatione queat non esse. Qui ergo intelligit sic esse deum, nequit eum non esse cogitare."

Gratias tibi, bone domine, gratias tibi, quia quod prius credidi te donante, iam sic intelligo te illuminante, ut si te nolim credere, non possim non intelligere." Ibid., p. 104, ll. 1-7.

two notions that formed the basis of his rebuttal were his unwillingness to equate the object of the formula "a being than which nothing greater can be thought" with God and his knowledge that some people actually deny God's existence.

He credits Anselm with making two points: the first being that the divine nature is in the intellect when the formula "a being than which nothing greater can be thought" is mentioned and understood; the second, that the divine being also exists in reality or else it would not be "a being than which nothing greater can be thought." The second point follows from the first but the first is incorrect; so both are false.

The divine nature cannot be in the intellect when the formula is heard and understood. If a man attempts to prove the existence of something in reality from a concept, this concept must have a different status in his mind from a false or doubtful concept or one of something which is known not to exist. But, in order to enjoy this superior status, the object of the concept must first be proved to exist in reality. "I cannot conceive," Gaunilo writes, "of it in any other way than by understanding it, that is, by comprehending in my knowledge its existence in reality."[6] And if this is the case, the order is changed from concept to reality to concept from reality. Since the formula as a concept has the same value as the concepts of unreal objects, it can be thought not to exist just as God can be

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[6]Deane, In Behalf of the Fool, ch. 2, p. 146.

thought not to exist. God, indeed, can be thought not to exist, for if His non-existence were impossible to conceive "what was the object of this argument against one who doubts or denies the existence of such a being."[7]

The analogy of the painter who paints a picture does not apply. Following Augustine, Gaunilo holds that the thought or imagined picture which springs up in the painter's mind is a living part of him. The picture generated in his art is nothing other than a part of his intellect which, in turn, is a part of the painter. All other truths which do not pertain to the nature of the intellect are perceived by thought or hearing. The formula would be numbered among those truths not pertaining to the nature of the intellect. Even granting that "a being a greater than which can not be thought" is heard and understood, it would still not have the same status as an interior picture.[8]

Moreover, upon hearing the formula, it is as impossible to have actual knowledge of the object of the formula according to either genus or species as it is to have actual knowledge of God. If someone were to tell Gaunilo about a man whom Gaunilo did not know, Gaunilo could imagine him as an actually existing being, even though he were a purely mental fiction that never existed and never would exist. He could conceive of him as living, because he knows by both genus and species what a man is.

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., ch. 3, p. 147.

Since he can be deceived about things of which he has knowledge, the possibility of deception greatly increases in regard to things of which he does not have such knowledge. God and "a being than which nothing greater can be thought" are conceived "as by a man who does not know the object, and conceives of it only in accordance with the movement of his mind produced by hearing the word."[9] Neither the concept of God nor of "a being than which nothing greater can be thought" are already in the mind.

The second point, namely, that existence in the intellect of "a being than which nothing greater can be thought" implies its real existence or else it would not be greater than everything else, Gaunilo rejects on the grounds that, since the idea has the same status as any doubtful or false notion has in the intellect, any actually existing being would be greater than it. In order to show that this being is greater than anything else "it should be proved first that this being itself really exists somewhere."[10] Existence is proved on the basis of an empirically given existent. Otherwise, Gaunilo would have to admit that an island having no owner or inhabitants and possessing the greatest abundance of riches exists merely because he understands what is meant when he hears a description of the perfect island, a procedure he deems absurd.[11]

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[9] Ibid., p. 149.

[10] Ibid., ch. 5, p. 150.

[11] Ibid., ch. 6, pp. 150-51.

The statement itself that a being which could be thought not to exist is a lesser being than that which cannot be thought not to exist Gaunilo maintains does not prove the actual existence of the object of the formula. The proper procedure would be to cogently prove the being's real existence and then compare it with other beings to ascertain if it really is greater than all others.

Instead of stating that the non-existence of the greatest being cannot be thought, it would be better to state that the possibility of its non-existence is impossible to understand. In this way the greatest being would be distinguished from the many thoughts in the human mind which do not and are known not to conform to reality. Gaunilo does not know if he could think of his own non-existence when he knows beyond doubt that he does exist. It makes no difference to his argumentation. In either case there is no reason for thinking of the necessary existence of the object of the formula or of God. For, if Gaunilo can think of his own non-existence while being absolutely certain he exists, it follows that he can think of the non-existence of anything else, including God whom he knows and believes to exist. And, if he cannot, it follows that the impossibility of being thought not to exist is by no means a property of God.[12]

Anselm begins his rebuttal with his strongest argument, the one from faith. Gaunilo has maintained that the formula is

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[12] Ibid., ch. 7, p. 152.

in the mind in the same way as a concept whose exemplification in reality is impossible or unthinkable and that its mere presence in the intellect is no basis for claiming that it is exemplified in reality. From these statements Anselm reasons that either God is not "a being than which nothing greater can be thought" or else he is not understood and in the intellect. But, both of the statements are false. By faith and conscience all Christians know that there is a God and hence He is in their understanding. By faith and conscience they also know that He is the Supreme Being and hence He is the being than which nothing greater can be thought.[13]

After arguing from faith, Anselm procedes to argue from reason. If "a being a greater than which cannot be thought" can even be thought to exist it must exist, "for that than which a greater is inconceivable cannot be conceived except as without beginning."[14] In order to fulfill the requirements of the formula, the being must be eternal and eternity implies necessary existence. Moreover, it must exist as a whole everywhere and always; for, if it did not, its non-existence at some time or some place could be thought, which is contrary to the formula. Furthermore, suppose that the greatest being does not exist, even though it can be conceived to exist, or that it cannot be conceived to exist even though it exists. In both cases a contra-

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[13] Deane, Anselm's Apologetic, ch. 1, pp. 153-54.

[14] Ibid., p. 154.

diction arises. Neither alternative satisfies the requirements for "a being a greater than which cannot be thought."[15] Anselm has just made statements about the greatest being, statements which both he and Gaunilo understand not by faith alone but by reason. Since they both understand what they are saying, "assuredly a being than which a greater cannot be conceived exists, and is in the understanding, at least to this extent--that these statements regarding it are understood."[16] To say that something is not in the intellect because it is not thoroughly understood is as absurd as to say a man cannot see daylight because he cannot face the pure, direct rays of the sun. And if the fool does not understand the formula when he hears it spoken in his own language, he is either very stupid or else he has no mind at all. What is understood is in the intellect just as what is thought is in thought.[17]

Gaunilo's example of inferring the actual existence of this island from the fact that when it is described the description is understood is not to the point. Anselm's argumentation deals only with a being a greater than which cannot be thought. Even the perfect island described has parts, but the being than which a greater cannot be thought is simple. Gaunilo suggests that he can easily think of the non-existence of the perfect is-

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[15] Ibid., p. 155.

[16] Ibid., p. 156.

[17] Ibid.

land. With this Anselm agrees. He does not agree, however, that the non-existence of the perfect being can be thought; because as soon as someone thinks the perfect being does not exist, he is thinking of something other than the perfect being.[18]

Whereas Gaunilo suggests it is better to state that the possibility of the perfect being's non-existence is impossible to understand rather than to be thought or conceived, Anselm maintains that the proper expression is impossibility to be thought. It is impossible to understand that a being which is known beyond the shadow of a doubt to exist does not exist. In this sense God is not the only being whose non-existence cannot be understood. The impossibility of non-existence being thought, however, is applied only to God. Men imagine many non-existent things as existing and many existing things as non-existent. A distinction is to be made between thinking and understanding, because no existent can be understood as non-existent, while all creatures, which have a beginning or an end or are composite, can be thought not to exist. "That being alone, on the other hand, cannot be conceived not to exist, in which any conception discovers neither beginning nor end nor composition of parts, and which any conception finds always and everywhere as a whole."[19]

Anselm agrees that some people deny God's existence. How is this denial possible when God cannot even be conceived not to

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[18] Ibid., ch. 3, pp. 158-59.

[19] Ibid., ch. 4, p. 160.

exist? To this query Anselm answers that there is a difference between understanding a thing and thinking about the word which signifies the thing. "In one sense, an object is conceived, when the word signifying it is conceived; and in another, when the very entity, which the object is, is understood. In the former sense, then, God can be conceived not to exist; but in the latter not at all."[20] A person may say that fire is water so long as he precinds from the actual meaning of the words "fire" and "water" when he joins them into thought. But if he knows what fire and water really are, he cannot truthfully join the words into a meaningful sentence. The same applies to God. No one who really understands what God is can truly and meaningfully think he does not exist. If a person thoroughly understands what is meant by the formula "a being than which a greater cannot be thought," he "assuredly understands that this being so truly exists, that not even in concept can it be non-existent."[21] By thorough understanding Anselm does not mean an adequate or proper concept of God. Like Gaunilo, he realizes that such an understanding is beyond the power of man. In the introduction to the Proslogion he writes: "I do not endeavor, O Lord, to penetrate thy sublimity, for in no wise do I compare my understanding with that; but I long to understand in some degree thy truth, which my heart believes and loves."[22] Indeed, God is more than a being

[20] Deane, Proslogion, ch. 4, pp. 9-10.

[21] Ibid., p. 10.

[22] Ibid., ch. 1, pp. 6-7.

than which nothing greater can be thought. He is a being greater than that which can be thought.

According to Anselm, part of Gaunilo's difficulty arose from a misconception. Gaunilo wrote that "what is greater than all other beings is in the understanding; and if it is in the understanding, it exists also in reality, for otherwise the being which is greater than all would not be greater than all."[23] Anselm, however, argued from the presence of a "being greater than which cannot be conceived."[24] The two statements are not the same. It is easy to prove that a being than which a greater cannot be conceived exists in reality, that its non-existence is impossible, and that the possibility of its non-existence is inconceivable. Anything which does not exist is certainly able not to exist. But whatever can be thought not to exist, whether it actually exists or not, does not fulfill the hypothesis of a being than which a greater cannot be conceived. A man can conceive of an absolutely perfect being that so necessarily exists that it cannot even be thought not to exist.[25]

On the other hand, the argument from a being greater than all others does not readily exclude possible non-existence or multiplicity of greatest beings nor include identification with the being than which nothing greater can be thought. In order to

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[23] Anselm's Apologetic, ch. 5, p. 161.

[24] Ibid., p. 163.

[25] Ibid., pp. 162-163.

prove God's existence, Gaunilo's version "requires another premise than the predication, greater than all other beings,"[26] whereas in Anselm's version "there is no need of any other than this very predication, a being than which a greater cannot be conceived."[27]

Gaunilo claimed that the formula is understood in the same manner that unreal objects are understood and are in the understanding. This is all that Anselm was trying to establish. Gaunilo strengthened his argument with the example of a painter painting a picture. Before he paints the picture, the painter has the image of the painting in his mind. Before the picture is actually painted, it is an unreal object. Anselm shows that this example is not to the point. Anselm was trying to demonstrate that "what is not understood to exist can be in the understanding,"[28] not that the notion of a being than which nothing greater can be thought is the same as the conceptual image according to which a painter paints. If unreal beings can be in the understanding when heard and understood, certainly the formula is similarly understood when heard. The next step is to discover whether the object of the formula is solely in the understanding as are unreal objects or whether it also exists in reality.[29]

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[26] Ibid., p. 163.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., ch. 8, p. 167.

[29] Ibid., ch. 6, pp. 164-65.

Gaunilo, moreover, claimed that he could understand the formula when he heard it. He also claimed that he could deny God's existence, because he did not understand God. But the formula expresses an object and that object is God. Therefore, Anselm cannot fathom how Gaunilo would be able to deny the existence of what he understands on the grounds that he does not understand it. To Anselm, this is a ridiculous contradiction. "It is incredible, I say, that any man denies the existence of this being because he denies the existence of God, the sensory perception of whom he in no wise conceives of."[30]

According to Anselm, it is obviously not true that Gaunilo is unable to understand the formula in terms of any real object, genus, or species. The notion of a being than which nothing greater can be thought arises from an analysis of the world which is known in terms of genus, species, and actual individuals. Goods are compared, for instance, in accordance with the manner in which they approach one another in goodness. That which is less good is like that which is better, because it too is good, although not in the same degree. "It is therefore evident to any rational mind, that by ascending from the lesser good to the greater, we can form a considerable notion of a being than which a greater is inconceivable."[31] A lesser good can begin to be and cease to be, but it would be greater if it did not cease to be,

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[30] Ibid., ch. 7, p. 166.

[31] Ibid.

and still greater if it never began to be nor will ever cease to be. A good, then, a greater than which cannot be thought will have to be a necessarily existent, eternal being. The notion is formed from the notion of actually existing objects than which a greater can be thought. In this way, the fool who "denies that a notion may be formed from other objects of a being than which a greater is inconceivable"[32] can be easily refuted; and the Catholic should need no further proof than St. Paul's famous passage wherein he maintains the invisible things of God can be seen in his vestiges in creation.[33]

Even if Gaunilo's contention were true that the being than which nothing greater can be thought could not be conceived or understood, it would still be true that this being would be both conceivable and intelligible. "Inconceivable is conceivable although that to which the word inconceivable can be applied is not conceivable."[34] The formula would be both conceivable and intelligible even though the being itself to which it refers were neither conceived nor understood. Any one who denies that a being a greater than which cannot be thought exists must conceive and understand his negative judgment. "But this denial he cannot understand or conceive of without its component terms; and a term of this statement is a being than which a greater cannot

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[32] Ibid., p. 168.

[33] Romans I, 19-21.

[34] Anselm's Apologetic, ch. 9, p. 168.

be conceived."[35] This being is conceived and understood and what is conceived and understood is in the concept and understanding. Moreover, this being cannot be conceived of and understood as possibly not existing; for then it would not be conceived of and understood for what it is, a being than which a greater cannot be thought. "When a being than which a greater is inconceivable is conceived, if it is a being whose non-existence is possible that is conceived; it is not a being than which a greater cannot be conceived."[36] According to the law of non-contradiction, a person cannot think of two opposite thoughts at the same time. It follows, then, that "what he conceives of must exist; for anything whose non-existence is possible, is not that of which he conceives."[37]

With this refutation Anselm believed that he had shown what he had previously proved in the opening of the Proslogion had really been proved; namely, that the being of the formula "is of necessity, from the very fact that it is understood and conceived, proved also to exist in reality, and to be whatever we should believe of the divine substance."[38]

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[35] Ibid., p. 169.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., ch. 10, p. 170.

CHAPTER III

MALCOLM'S AND HARTSHORNE'S UNDERSTANDING OF ANSELM'S ARGUMENT

Malcolm indicates that "in Anselm's Proslogion and Responsio editoris there are two different pieces of reasoning which he did not distinguish from one another,"[1] but which should be distinguished in order to shed light upon the problem of the ontological argument. The first argument, an argument from contingent existence, is in chapter two; the second, an argument from necessary existence, is in chapter three. In the first argument, Anselm states that a being is greater if it exists in both the intellect and in reality than if it exists merely in the intellect. From the wording of the text in both Latin and English versions it is hard to decide whether Anselm also meant that existence in reality is by itself greater than existence in the mind alone or that intentional existence is inferior to real existence. At any rate, the implication in the argument is that "if I conceive of something which does not exist then it is possible for it to exist, and it will be greater if it exists than if it does not exist."[2] Anselm, in other words, treats existence as a per-

[1]Norman Malcolm, "Anselm's Ontological Arguments," The Philosophical Review, LXIX (January, 1960), p. 41.

[2]Ibid., p. 43.

fection, as a real predicate.

Immanuel Kant claimed to have demolished this notion of existence being a real predicate in The Critique of Pure Reason. According to Kant, no matter how many predicates are attached to a subject, even if it be completely determined, nothing is added to it by attributing existence to it. If that were the case, the exact objects of concepts would not exist. Malcolm agrees with Kant, maintaining that Anselm's first argument is invalid on account of its basis in "the false doctrine that existence is a perfection."[3] Existence is rather that by which perfection is possible.

The argument in chapter three is different in that it rests upon the notion that necessary existence is a property rather than that mere existence is a property. Whereas the first argument stresses contingent existence over nonexistence, the second emphasizes necessary existence over non-necessary or contingent existence. Malcolm points out that Anselm says two things in the second argument: "

> first, that a being whose non-existence is logically impossible is "greater" than a being whose nonexistence is logically possible (and therefore that a being a greater than which cannot be conceived must be one whose nonexistence is logically impossible); second, that God is a being than which a greater cannot be conceived. [4]

There is a common meaning for the word "God" according to which the statement: "God is a being a greater than which cannot

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[3] Ibid., p. 44.

[4] Ibid., p. 45.

be conceived" is a logically necessary truth. Anselm's use of the word "greater" in this formula is puzzling enough to require some explanation. Malcolm amplifies the meaning by explaining what is commonly meant by the notion of superior and inferior, dependent and independent, limited and unlimited, all of which are interconnected.[5] With this explanation he supports his notion of God.

In ordinary language the words "superior" and "inferior" may refer to quantities. For instance, Joey Brown's knowledge of algebra is designated as superior to Billy Black's, if Joey knows more algebra than Billy. God is also said to be superior because He has more knowledge, to mention only one perfection, than any other being.

Moreover, the word "dependent" is used to signify a causal relationship. A house, for instance, depends upon an architect and builders for its constitution and upon a whole series of causes such as painting and repair work and upon conditions such as no serious storm or fire for its preservation. The house does not exist by itself either initially or consequently. It is dependent. God, on the other hand, as one reads in common prayers and the Nicene Creed does not depend upon others for his existence or continued existence. He is the Supreme Maker not the made nor the made-maker. Independence is one of the notable characteristics which distinguish Him from other beings. "To

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[5] Ibid., pp. 46-48.

conceive of anything as dependent upon something else for its existence is to conceive of it as a lesser being than God."[6] The notions of dependence and inferiority and of independence and superiority are linked. If something depends upon something else, it is said to be inferior to another something which, in all other respects is the same, does not.

Closely allied to the notion of dependence is that of limitedness. An engine that would not require fuel would be said to be superior to one that is limited by or dependent upon a fuel supply for effective service. The only being that is not commonly conceived of as limited is God. He is conceived of as an absolutely unlimited being. No limits are placed upon either his existence or his operation. Nothing makes Him dependent. Nothing, not even Himself, prevents or could prevent Him from existing or operating without bound.

This unlimitedness also excludes any chance or contingent existence in God. If it were possible that God could not-exist and should happen to exist, He would not be the eternal being that He is commonly conceived to be; because, if He could not-exist and does exist, it would be possible that He could go out of existence just as He came into existence. This implies duration, a notion which is so alien to that of eternity. Duration implies a beginning, a continuing, and an ending; hence, a cause for each. None of these comport with the notion of eternity.

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[6] Ibid., p. 47.

In short, contingency in regard to either existence or nonexistence has no application to God. God's existence is necessary existence. The only alternative is that His existence is logically impossible. But an affirmation of the logical impossibility of God's existence is tantamount to maintaining there is a contradiction in Anselm's formula for God.[7] Malcolm assumes that the formula is not self-contradictory. He cannot give a demonstrable proof of its self-consistency nor does he believe that one can be legitimately demanded.[8]

Necessity in God extends to all of His properties. He is a necessary being; everything in Him is necessary. His necessity, however, is not something one proves through empirical data or test criteria. That He necessarily exists, that He is necessarily omniscient, all-good, and omnipotent are requirements of our a priori conception of Him. "The a priori proposition 'God necessarily exists' entails the proposition 'God exists,' if and only if the latter also is understood as an a priori proposition: in which case the two propositions are equivalent."[9] For Malcolm, therein lies the validity of Anselm's proof for the existence of God.

Many philosophers, attesting that existence is not a property of God, claim to have destroyed this ontological argument.

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[7] Ibid., p. 50.

[8] Ibid., p. 60.

[9] Ibid., p. 50.

Certainly, contingently existing things do not have existence as a property, but this is not true of a necessary being. The ontological inference is not a jump from the abstract intentional order to the concrete realm of contingent existents. "What Anselm did was to give a demonstration that the proposition 'God necessarily exists' is entailed by the proposition 'God is a being a greater than which cannot be conceived' (which is equivalent to 'God is an absolutely unlimited being')."[10] The absolutely unlimited being is the necessary being.

According to modern logic all existential statements are contingent and the necessity in propositions is based upon the manner in which words are used. One modern critic, J. N. Findlay, argues that the religious needs of people require that God be the supreme excellence manifested by such properties as omniscience, complete independence, superiority in rank as well as in degree, and necessary existence. The contingency dogma of existential propositions, on the other hand, shows that the religiously adequate concept of God cannot be satisfied. As a result, God's existence is impossible. The Anselmian argument proves the exact opposite of what Anselm intended to prove.[11]

Malcolm maintains that Findlay and others misuse aspects of their thought. The logical law that necessity in propositions is based upon the manner in which words are used "cannot possibly

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[10] Ibid.

[11] N. Findlay, "Can God's Existence Be Disproved?," Mind, LVII (April, 1948), pp. 176-183.

have the implication that every existential proposition must be contingent."[12] Both the Christians and the Jews speak in a meaningful way of the necessary existence of God. And their statements are not to be understood as hypothetical. A statement like "God is eternal" is not to be understood to signify "if God exists then he is eternal," which would be the same as saying "it is possible that God may not exist, therefore he may not be eternal." Eternity by definition excludes any contingency whatsoever. Kant, Caterus, and others contradict themselves when they link the a priori truth of the proposition of God's necessary existence with the possibility of His nonexistence.[13] The two concepts in no way mesh.

Malcolm's proof, then, is based upon the commonly accepted conception of God and the rejection of the law of logic concerning the contingency of all existential propositions. In summary form his proof is:

> If God, a being a greater than which cannot be conceived, does not exist then He cannot come into existence. For if He would either have been caused to come into existence or have happened to come into existence, in either case He would be a limited being, which by our conception of Him He is not. Since He cannot come into existence, if He does not exist His existence is impossible. If He does exist He cannot have come into existence...nor can He cease to exist, for nothing could cause Him to cease to exist nor could it just happen that He ceased to exist. So if God exists His existence is necessary. Thus God's existence is either impossible or necessary. It can be the former only if the concept of such a being is self-contradictory

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[12] Ibid., p. 55.

[13] Ibid., p. 57.

> or in some way logically absurd. Assuming that this is not so, it follows that He necessarily exists. 14

Hartshorne agrees with Malcolm that there are two arguments in Anselm's work, one from contingent existence and one from necessary existence, and he also rejects the law of logic concerning the contingency of all existential statements. He contends that:

> the theory of the modality of existential judgments (their uniform contingency) upon which rejection of the argument chiefly rests has little to commend it, being supported solely by an exceedingly loose form of analogy, assimilating to ordinary contingent judgments (those which nearly all philosophers agree are such) two forms which are radically distinct from them and from each other, and whose contingency is by no means non-controversial. 15

"Anselm's intuition was that God exists in a superior manner, the ordinary way of existing being a defect."[16] The critics have overlooked this insight, Hartshorne claims. They content themselves, often superficially, with refuting the proposition that contingent existence adds nothing to a concept. "That Anselm argues also from this more dubious premise does not justify the critics."[17] The ways of the critics Hartshorne finds strange. "Here is a man everyone thinks worthy of refuting, but almost no one thinks worth studying."[18] Hartshorne has studied Anselm and

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[14] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[15] Charles Hartshorne, The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, pp. 30-31.

[16] Ibid., p. 58.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., p. 32.

the controversy over his argument as well. The list he gives of twenty objections[19] to the argument is the longest, to the best of his knowledge, that has appeared in print. Of these twenty, which he refutes in his book The Logic of Perfection, he has singled out three for special consideration: Kant's argument that existence is not a perfection or, to put it another way, non-existence is not a defect; the positivist argument that there is only emotive meaning, not cognitional, in the assertion that God exists; and the crucial logical-type objection that, since existence is concrete, it cannot be on the same logical level as an abstract predicate, and therefore cannot be contained in it. Since these three objections are the major ones and since their refutation involves Hartshorne's theory on the argument, they will suffice as a framework for stating his position.

His position on the Anselmian argument is midway between that of Malcolm and Findlay. One reason for this is his approach. He approaches the subject from a rationalistic position[20] within neoclassical metaphysics.[21] Instead of employing emotionally persuasive arguments, he strives to argue from the basis of cool, detached reason. Instead of holding the being, absoluteness, necessity, and substance of classical metaphysics as primary philosophical conceptions, he opts for creative becoming, event, pos-

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[19] Ibid., pp. 45-47.

[20] Ibid., p. 4.

[21] Ibid., p. ix.

sibility, and relativity. Hence, he conceives of God as a changing God and clings to an a priori proof of His existence.[22]

Findlay argued that Anselm had proved that the idea of God could prove His existence only if God is a necessary existent. But modern logic shows that it is impossible to have a necessary existent. Therefore, instead of proving the existence of God, Anselm laid the basis for the proof of His non-existence. Thus Findlay forced the issue of choosing "between the view that theism is logically invalid or impossible and the rejection of the doctrine of 'modern logic' that necessary existence is an absurdity."[23] Malcolm believes that existence is not a perfection and that necessary existence is not logically impossible, thereby contending the ontological argument in the second form definitely proves God's existence rather than His non-existence. Claiming the proof is atheistic as well as theistic, Hartshorne is in qualified agreement with both Malcolm and Findlay.[24] Such a position is only seemingly illogical, because it depends upon two different interpretations of perfection and its existence. If the argument is understood in terms of the classical definition of divine perfection, then Hartshorne would agree that Findlay's insight is sound; if the argument is understood in terms of the neoclassical definition of divine perfection, then Malcolm's ar-

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[22] Ibid., p. 35.

[23] Ibid., p. 25.

[24] Ibid., p. 26.

gumentation is valid. It is only according to the neoclassical definition, Hartshorne maintains, that God's existence can be proved by ontological inference.

The definitions of perfection, then, play important roles in the argumentation. Anselm gave all the elements of the classical definition. In the Monologion, he showed that God is everything it is good to be by essence. God is the Unlimited, the Infinite, the All-knowing, All-powerful, Unchanging Completeness of being. In Him there can be no change and therefore no potency. In Him there is no beginning, nor end, nor process of development. He is pure act.

Such a definition, by excluding any admixture of potentiality with God's actuality and any progressive development in perfection, Hartshorne says, involves logical difficulties. These impasses become apparent in reference to God's operations, knowledge, and love. According to the classical view God could have made other worlds, yet He is still conceived of as being without any unactualized potentialities. God is all-knowing, yet His knowledge would have undergone no change if He had created any one of a multitude of possible worlds instead of the one He has created. But surely, Hartshorne argues, "if it be denied that there are unactualized potentialities in God, it is contradictory to say that He could have produced other worlds, and that He is sure in any case to know the truth."[25] According to the

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[25] Ibid., p. 37.

classical view God loves His creatures, yet He would still remain in the same state no matter what world He created. "By definition, to 'love' is to care about differences, and to respond to them differently."[26] The intensity with which God loves would remain the same, but not His state or else His love would be general, undifferentiated by the particular objects of His love. As each new person comes into the world God's love becomes greater, His knowledge more extensive, His operation more inclusive. Each increment in the divine being also indicates unactualized possibilities, because after having made a person in a particular way the divine possibility for making the same person at the same time in a different way remains forever unactualized.

The root of the difficulties inherent in the classical idea of perfection is the consideration of God as pure act. The inclusion of potentiality in the notion of God is not a defect. Men in general agree that a man is better or more perfect than an amoeba and that God is better than both a man and an amoeba. An amoeba has little actuality and potentiality for actions; an ardvark, which can walk and run as well as digest food, has more of both; a man, who can reason and choose from innumerable possibilities, has far more; God, then who can do all things, should be considered as having infinite potentiality.[27] God's perfection may be called the "coincidence with possibility as such."[28] In

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[26] Ibid., p. 36.

[27] Ibid., p. 35.

[28] Ibid., p. 38.

terms of God's knowledge, a possible is something that may be an object of God's intellection, and an actual, an actually existing object of the divine intellection. His actuality extends to each and every actuality; His potentiality, to each and every possibility. His perfection is the modal coincidence of actuality and possibility.

God is the God of religion, the object of worship.[29] As such He must be worthy of the honor, love, and veneration He commands. Through the Bible He has told us that we should love Him with our whole heart, mind, and strength, and that we should love one another as we love ourselves. Observing this imperative is worshipping. Yet, how can we give all our love to God and still love ourselves and our neighbor? The two commands would be contradictory unless the actualities of creatures be included in God so that nothing outside of Him is loved. The created values in creatures must evoke a corresponding interest in God or else they become "a bare nothing, or something external, and genuinely additional, to God."[30] Either alternative is both irreligious and illogical. The God of pure act cannot be the God of religion. Although always remaining the supreme being, far above any creature no matter how exalted, the God worshipped by men must rise above Himself in successive states. "All actuality must be included in His actuality, and all possibility in His potential ac-

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[29] Ibid., p. 40.

[30] Ibid., p. 41.

tuality."[31]

Like the classical definition of divine perfection, the neoclassical is a priori and tolerant of only necessary existence. Unlike the classical definition, it includes some contingent properties, is unaffected by the inherent logical impasses, and reinforces the argumentation for the necessary existence of God from His logical possibility.

Some people are biased against the Anselmian argument because they feel that religion is basically an emotional affair, and therefore subrational; others are biased against it because they believe religion is a matter of faith, and therefore suprarational. Neither group deems a critical inquiry into the theistic proof necessary or rewarding. Perhaps the largest group of philosophers who reject the argument, do so, because they think Kant has settled the problem forever. All they have to do is repeat what Kant has written or else give his solution a slightly different slant.[32]

But did Kant, great thinker that he was, really solve the problem? He argued that a hundred real dollars are no better than a hundred imaginary dollars. Simple existence is not a perfection nor its lack a defect. As far as it goes his reasoning is sound. The only difficulty with it is that it does not go far enough. "This whole line of criticism has nothing to do with the

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

case."[33] Hartshorne emphasizes again and again that Kant's chief criticism, which has echoed and reechoed throughout the years, is just as empty as the echoes. Nor does Hume escape the censure. "Kant and Hume refuted, not the theistic arguments, but their own admittedly weak, versions of some arguments for a substitute for theism."[34]

Kant's mistake was to keep the argument on the level of contingent existence, instead of raising it to the level of necessary existence. Anselm was concerned with necessity, not contingency. His insight was that perfection necessarily exists. "There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being thou art, O Lord, our God."[35] Contingency and necessity no more mix than oil and water. Contingency means that the subject of a property may or may not exist. In regard to existence, it is neutral. Necessity, on the other hand, is by no means neutral. Either the subject necessarily exists or it necessarily does not exist. There is no middle ground. The argument has the irrevisable modal structure of necessity. By necessity, Hartshorne means analytic necessity, that is, necessity following upon an understanding of the terms of the proposition.[36]

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[33] Ibid., p. 59.

[34] Ibid., p. 117.

[35] Deane, op. cit., Pros., 2, pp. 8-9.

[36] Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 53.

Upon understanding the terms, it is contradictory to speak of a perfect being, which exists contingently, just as it is to speak of a perfect being, which does not exist. Barring the exclusion of contingency leaves but one alternative--necessary existence. By Becker's Postulate, the statement "it is false that it is necessarily untrue that perfection necessarily exists" strictly implies that perfection necessarily exists.[37] In the case of contingent existence there can be no inference of either existent or non-existent subject; but in the case of necessary existence, there can be no inference other than necessarily existent subject unless the proposition "a perfect being necessarily exists" is meaningless or inconsistent. The property-instance distinction rules out both inconsistency and meaninglessness.[38]

Far more powerful than Kant's criticism is the logical-type objection, according to which existence, being more concrete than a predicate, is on a different logical level. Existence is not contained in a predicate, rather it is added to it. The universal perfection Anselm defines, therefore, cannot contain an individual which exemplifies it.[39] Hence, no inference can be made from the predicate to the existence of its subject. Hartshorne meets this difficulty on three counts: the uniqueness of the perfect being, the necessity of some instance of the perfect,

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[37] Ibid., p. 51.

[38] Ibid., p. 93.

[39] Ibid., p. 46.

and the contingency of the particular exemplification of the general instance of the perfect.

To speak of God is not to speak of a man or a fortiori of anything else in the universe. A man is in process from birth to death, changing continually into different states yet remaining at the same time his individual self. This means that, though he is his individuality, only his states exemplify it. Moreover, he is concretized through no proliferation of specifying predicates. There has to be an experiential relation, some "this" or "that" indication, before a man can be identified as this particular individual. Being a member of a class his individuality cannot be specified in the order of concepts. God, on the other hand, is not, as an individual, a member of a class. He is unique; He is absolute perfection, a perfection exemplified in consecutive, contingent states. The property-instance distinction, to be sure, applies to God, but He alone is defined and designated solely in abstract terms. The predicates properly applying to Him cannot apply to any other individual. Coincidence of actuality with all actuality and of possibility with all possibility is an attribute of God alone.[40]

The property-instance distinction requires further explanation. Men and blue jays may exist. This particular man and this particular blue jay may exist. This particular man may be seeing and hearing this particular blue jay singing. The senten-

[40] Ibid., 66.

ces show at least three levels of existence: the occurrence of certain actual states of individuals; the existence of certain individuals; and the existence of certain kinds of individuals or of certain class properties. A natural necessity exists here; because, given the kinds, they have to exist in individuals who are in states; and at the same time there is contingency, because the kinds may or may not exist, the exemplifying individual may be in this or that state. This conjunction of necessity and contingency in the world of everyday experience provides the ground for accepting necessity and contingency or property and instance in God.[41]

By defining God as modal coincidence Hartshorne has a distinction "between an individual (a) in its abstract identity and (b) in its concrete actual states."[42] Like man, God is in process; unlike man, He must exist throughout a process, which has no beginning nor end. He is His individual self. He is perfection yet He has perfect states. The necessity in God is the necessary existence of some instance, some perfect state. What this state will be is correlated to the ongoing state of the universe and therefore contingent. To use but one example, God's actual knowledge includes whatever exists and has existed in the universe. As more things come into the world, God's knowledge increases in a corresponding manner. He attains a state of greater actualization. God, as modal coincidence, necessarily knows

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[41] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[42] Ibid., p. 65.

whatever is actual as actual and whatever is possible as possible. The content of this necessary knowledge is contingent. In God:

> perfection has two aspects, the absolute aspect, A, which cannot be surpassed in any way whatever, and the transcendentally relative aspect, or the aspect of transcendent relativity, R, which is surpassable only by the perfect itself, not by any other individual. Or better, and positively: as A, God surpasses all things save only Himself; as R, he surpasses all things, including Himself. 43

God coincides with the property "perfection." That a perfect individual exists is necessary. The property and its existence are both on the same logical level of necessity. Which particular state of the individual exists is contingent. The property-instance distinction is kept intact; the logical-type objection is overcome.[44] Though kept intact, the distinction applies to individual and state, not individual and class property. God's perfection is "a class of similar and genetically related states of one individual."[45]

The classical definition of perfection allows for actuality alone. It provides for no distinction between property and instance. Hence, it cannot withstand the logical-type objection proposed by Carnap and others. Only the neoclassical definition with its admission of potentiality as well as actuality in God can bear the onslaught of the powerful objection. If the Anselmian argument is to prove the existence of God, the classical defi-

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[43] Ibid., p. 67.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

nition of perfection must cede to the neoclassical. "Anselm was right...except...that he had no remedy, and could have none, for the Logical-type difficulty and other antinomies in the classical idea. Here was his sole essential mistake."[46] Since the solution of the logical-type objection involves a necessary existent, a full refutation of this objection also includes the refutation of the law of modern logic that all existential statements are contingent. The law will be refuted, if it can be shown that at least one proposition does not come under it. This can be done by establishing the criteria for contingency and seeing if contingency applies to the proposition "perfection exists." Hartshorne proposes, as the foundation of his major proof, ten marks of contingency. The contingent individual is such that it:

(1) By existing prevents some other things (otherwise possible) from existing;
(2) Depends causally for its existence upon some, but not all other individuals (thus upon those coming before but not after it in time);
(3) Could conceivably be known to exist by some imperfect minds and by Perfect Mind (if this be itself conceivable), and it could also conceivably be known not to exist;
(4) Depends, for the details of its actual qualities, upon some other existing things (this qualitative dependence not being limited to thing[as in (2)] without which it could not exist);
(5) Is itself a cause required for the existence of some other things;
(6) Includes in it as actuality the actuality of some other things as parts or constituents (in a very general sense), and its potential states include some of the unrealized possibilities of the universe;
(7) Falls within some quantitative and qualitative limits essential to its individual identity, including limits as to number and kind of parts.

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[46] Ibid., p. 83.

(8) Has, or can be conceived to have, a beginning at some time and an ending at some time;
(9) Can be defined or identified as an individual only empirically, and only by some other individuals (not, for instance, by those entirely before it in time), rather than universally or by mere universal concepts;
(10) Is "good" for some legitimate purposes only. 47

None of the above criteria of contingency apply to the proposition "perfection exists."

Though God in the concrete exemplification of his abstract essence does have contingency, He by no means is contingent in His individual self. Contingency entails arbitrariness and exclusiveness. The contingent being may either be or not be; it may have these qualities or those; but, granted that it exists its concept and existence exclude the existence of incompatible beings and demands the existence of compatible ones. The existence of men demands the existence of air, sufficient warmth, and nourishment. The proposition "a man exists" is not compatible with the proposition "nitrogen is the only gas in the universe." Both propositions are contingent and mutually exclusive. Necessary propositions stand with any consistent, positive statement. The proposition "perfection exists" is one such statement. As Hartshorne puts it:

> I hold that the existence of perfection is compatible with any other sort of existence whatever. The perfect shows its superiority precisely in this, that it can maintain itself regardless of what else does, or does not, maintain itself. It can tolerate or endure any state of affairs whatsoever. 48

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[47] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[48] Ibid., p. 68.

God may, of course, by His own free action exclude innumerable things. By itself, however, His existence cannot be prevented nor can it prevent anything else from existing, because it does not depend upon any other state of affairs or conflict with any. God's creative nature precludes His solitary existence, to be sure; but His mere existence remains independent of outside influences. In regard to the first criterion, the major one of exclusiveness, it may be said that each contingent concept specifies, excludes, or restricts some positive possibility. But the concept of perfection does not. Therefore it is either necessarily exemplified or impossible. Since it is not self-contradictory, it must be exemplified. The only question remaining is whether men have rational knowledge or just feel that God exists. Thus runs the argument from universal existential tolerance.[49]

A common way of discovering the truth or falsity of a statement is to conceive or to find a state of affairs that would contradict the statement. A statement that cannot be conceived to have a contradiction will not be impossible. The proposition "perfection exists" is such a statement. By definition, God has perfect knowledge. Only nothing escapes it. There is only one "thing" God does not and cannot know--His own non-existence. Since the perfect mind cannot know its own non-existence much less can the imperfect human mind know it. Humans could know it

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[49] Ibid., p. 70.

only by knowing something that would make its existence impossible. But there is no state of affairs that humans could thus know, because there is no state of affairs incompatible with God's existence.[50] God cannot be conceived not to exist.

Furthermore, the possibility of His existence can be conceived. The perfect mind would certainly know its own existence. The human mind implicitly knows the existence of the divine being. To know is to know something. But everything depends upon God for existence. Whereas it is possible to know the truth of the proposition "perfection exists", it is impossible to know its falsity. Perfection can have only necessary existence or no sense at all. In the latter case no judgment can be made, so the former must be true.[51] "A thousand scholars, relying on their predecessors or contemporaries to have looked into the matter with due care may say otherwise; but the logical relations of concepts are what they are, not what they are said to be."[52] Thus the third criterion does not apply. The epistemic proof rules it out.

Every being, both actual and past, becomes part of God's knowledge and valuations. In order to know these beings which continually spring from the divine creativity, God must come after each of these beings--a condition that necessarily requires God to be everlasting, thus making His non-existence impossible.[53]

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[50] Ibid., p. 71.

[51] Ibid., p. 72.

[52] Ibid., p. 73.

[53] Ibid., p. 80.

In neoclassical metaphysics the ideal of perpetual creation is never realized, "since the possibilities open to divine and non-divine creativity are absolutely infinite, and their exhaustive actualization is self-contradictory."[54] Both God and the universe continue to develop. The fourth criterion, then, does not apply. Beings can ultimately result only from God's creative action. Therefore, all things, not merely some arbitrary number have Him as their cause. Without Him nothing would exist. Thus, the fifth criterion does not apply. By definition God's actuality is coextensive with the actuality of all things and His possibility with the possibility of all things. Thus the sixth criterion fails to apply. The only limit on God's knowledge and valuations is the present state of the world. There is no cap or top put upon His creativity. His individual identity is absolutely illimited. Thus the seventh criterion fails to apply. God cannot be conceived to have either a beginning or an end, otherwise He would not be the modal coincidence of actuality and possibility. Thus the eighth criterion fails to apply. God is the sole individual who can be recognized as an individual through the collection of universal terms. He is unique, not a member of a class. No epistemic relation is required for His individuation. Thus the ninth criterion fails to apply. God is good for all legitimate purposes. To think of His non-existence serves no purpose at all; hence, it is unthinkable. Thus the tenth criterion

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[54] Ibid., p. 91.

fails to apply.[55] The convergence of all the criteria present a most powerful argument on behalf of the Anselmian principle.

From the above, the refutation of the positivists readily follows. The positivists have the dilemma: "God cannot exist contingently, for contingency of existence is an imperfection; but also God cannot exist necessarily, for the necessary is abstract and inactual, the mere common factor of possibility."[56] They are unable to solve the dilemma, and hence, decide that the idea of God can have no cognitive meaning. Men might feel in their hearts that God exists but they cannot prove His existence through rational argumentation. An immediate argument against the positivists is that millions of people in the past and present believe the idea of God is significant. Yet this will not suffice. Hartshorne resolves the problem by distinguishing between classical and neoclassical views of God. The classical view is so fraught with logical antinomies that it cannot be used to solve the dilemma. The neoclassical view, however, with its distinction between the divine individuality and its concrete embodiment in genetically related, contingent states can be admirably used in eliminating the crucial second horn of the dilemma.[57]

Necessity is often spoken of as pertaining to the relationship between concepts, and not between concepts and a particu-

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[55] Ibid., pp. 80-81.

[56] Ibid., p. 114.

[57] Ibid.

lar individual. The statements so far made about God, however, are abstract. The relations are solely between concepts; hence, a necessary connection between them can be made. "Necessity can perfectly well relate the concept 'perfection' to the concept 'necessarily exemplified property.' And this is exactly Anselm's Principle."[58] God is not an ordinary, limited, particular individual; He is the unique, absolutely unlimited individual. There is a distinction between His individual abstract essence and its necessary exemplification in concrete, particular, genetically related states. "That He exists is non-particular; only how He exists, or in what state, is exclusive or particular."[59] The truth of the necessary relations is consequent upon the very definition of neoclassical perfection. "The necessity of the existence of perfection is simply that a 'predicate so general that any possible state of affairs would embody it' is necessarily embodied, and this is analytic."[60] On two accounts the positivists are defeated. The necessity of God's existence is rendered logical and the meaning of the concept is rendered significant. The existence of God or perfection is neither meaningless nor inconsistent.

These, then, are the theories of Malcolm and Hartshorne on Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God. It only remains to evaluate them.

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[58] Ibid., p. 92.

[59] Ibid., p. 93.

[60] Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

A CRITIQUE OF MALCOLM'S AND HARTSHORNE'S POSITIONS

Both Malcolm and Hartshorne maintain that Anselm has two arguments in the Proslogion; one from contingent existence and one from necessary existence. In both arguments the starting point is "a being a greater than which cannot be thought." If it can be shown that Anselm never attributes anything but necessary existence to this being, Malcolm and Hartshorne will be proven wrong. The discussion, then, centers around the meaning of the phrase "a being a greater than which cannot be thought."

The common note in the various equivalents to the most frequent formulation and in the formula itself is the comparative form of the adjective "great." Coupled with the words "nothing ...than" the comparative "greater" has superlative force. Indeed, this is Anselm's intention; for, when he speaks of God whom, contrary to Gaunilo's view, he identifies as the "being a greater than which cannot be thought," he refers to Him only with superlatives. In arguing to the existence of God from an analysis of good things in the world, Anselm concludes to a good that exists and is good through itself and through which all other goods are good. A good preeminent over all others is a supreme good. "But that which is supremely good is also supremely great."[1] "And

[1]Monologion, ch. 2, p. 40. The pertinent Latin reference

since there can be nothing supremely great except what is supremely good, there must be a being that is greatest and best, i.e., the highest of all existing beings."[2] Whatever is great is great through this being "which is great through itself."[3] This being exists through itself while all other beings exist through it; consequently, a comparison can be made between the beings. Anselm makes the comparison saying:

> whatever exists through another is less than that, through which all things are and which alone exists through itself. Therefore, that which exists through itself exists in the greatest degree of all things.
>
> There is, then, some one being which alone exists in the greatest and highest degree of all. 4

Furthermore, "that which is greatest of all...must be supremely good, and supremely great, and the highest of all existing beings."[5] At this point is added in the Schmitt edition but not in the Deane translation: "Therefore, there is something which, whether it be called as essence or a substance or a nature, is the best and greatest and highest being of all."[6] This being more-

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for this and the following quotations is given to highlight the cogency of the argumentation. This reference is: "summe magnum," I, p. 15, l. 11.

[2]Ibid., pp. 40-41; "...summe magnum...maximum...id est summe omnium," I, p. 15, ll. 21-22.

[3]Ibid., p. 40; "quod magnum est per seipsum," I, p. 15, ll. 18-19.

[4]Ibid., ch. 3, p. 42; "...minus...maxime omnium est.... solum maxime et summe omnium est," I, p. 16, ll. 20-23.

[5]Ibid., pp. 42-43; "...maxime omnium est...summe bonum et summe magnum, et summum omnium quae sunt," I, p. 16, ll. 23-26.

[6]Ibid.; "Quare est aliquid, quod, sive essentia sive substantia sive natura dicatur, optimum et maximum est et summum omnium quae sunt;" I, p. 16, ll. 26-28.

over, is "the supreme good being, the supreme great being, being or subsisting as supreme, that is, the highest of all existing beings."[7] How has Anselm used the word "great" thus far? He has used it as an ordinary adjective, as an ordinary adjective modified by the superlative adverb "supremely," as a superlative adjective, and as a superlative adverb modifying the verb "is." That being which is supremely great is said to be the one and only being which is the greatest being, the being which exists in the greatest degree of existence. In all cases "great" refers to absolute excellence. By "great," Anselm does not "mean physically great, as a material object is great, but that which, the greater it is, is the better or the more worthy--wisdom, for instance."[8]

The being which exists in the highest degree is that being which has existence through itself. It is not caused, either efficiently, materially, or formally. It is the uncaused being, which causes all that is. Such a being cannot come into existence; for it has no beginning. Such a being is not composite. "Everything which is composite requires for its subsistence the things of which it is compounded, and, indeed, owes to them the fact of its existence, because, whatever it is, it is through these things."[9] This being has no causes; it is simple. Being simple,

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[7] Ibid., ch. 4, p. 45; "summum bonum, summum magnum, summum ens sive subsistens, id est summum omnium quae sunt," I, p. 18, ll. 3-4.

[8] Ibid., ch. 2, p. 40.

[9] Ibid., ch. 17, p. 67.

it cannot corrupt; being incorruptible, it cannot go out of existence. Such a being has no end. A being which is and can have neither beginning nor end is a necessary being.

When assigning names to God Anselm makes it very clear that "nothing that is truly said of the supreme Being is accepted in terms of quality or quantity, but only in terms of what it is."[10] The simple perfections Anselm lists such as truth, power, wisdom, life, being, and justice, in naming God refer only to His essence, and in two special ways. First, if any name is applied to both the supreme Being and creatures "doubtless a very different signification of that name is to be understood in its case."[11] Secondly, "whatever it is essentially in any way, this is all of what it is,"[12] so that "this Essence is always, in every way, substantially identical with itself."[13] The identification of itself with itself means that all of the names refer to one and the same thing, although the intelligibilities of the names are different. To refer to a supremely great being is to refer to the same being Anselm calls eternal and supremely living. Life as an attribute of the supremely great being means eternal life, life in which there is no beginning, no end, not even a present as understood in human terms. It is totally itself all at once. Wherefore,

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., ch. 26, p. 86.

[12] Ibid., ch. 17, p. 67.

[13] Ibid., ch. 25, p. 85.

since for the supreme Being, "it is the same to exist and to live no better sense can be attached to this statement, than that it exists or lives eternally, that is, it possesses interminable life, as a perfect whole at once."[14] Such a being, indeed, is a necessary being.

Thus far the argumentation has been restricted to the Monologion; but the same conclusion applies to the Proslogion and Anselm's Apologetic as well. In the Proslogion God, the "being a greater than which cannot be thought," is still that being which "alone exists through itself and creates all other things from nothing,"[15] which "alone among all beings not only does not cease to be, but also does not begin to be,"[16] which alone "is, as a whole, at the same time everywhere,"[17] which is the life whereby it lives, the wisdom whereby it is wise, the goodness whereby it is good.[18] And in Anselm's Apologetic, Anselm makes it clear that he has deliberately chosen the formula "a being a greater than which cannot be thought" rather than the formula "a being a greater than which cannot be understood."[19] This being is that being which has all the perfections it is better to have than not to have. "Hence, when a being than which a greater is inconceivable

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[14] Ibid., ch. 24, p. 83.

[15] Proslogion, ch. 5, p. 10.

[16] Ibid., ch. 13, p. 20.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., ch. 12, p. 19.

[19] Anselm's Apologetic, ch. 5, p. 162.

is conceived, if it is a being whose non-existence is possible that is conceived, it is not a being than which a greater cannot be conceived."[20] Nowhere does Anselm argue from any existence other than necessary existence. This is Anselm's point. The person who really understands that "God is that being than which a greater cannot be conceived...assuredly understands that this being so truly exists, that not even in concept can it be non-existent."[21] By means of his formula Anselm has presented a structure in which all the conceptual content applicable to God can be placed.

After Malcolm and Hartshorne pointed out two arguments for the existence of God in the Proslogion, critics W. J. Huggett,[22] Raziel Abelson,[23] and Terence Penelhum[24] also mentioned them. In pointing out the arguments, Malcolm said that they are arguments which Anselm "did not distinguish from one another"[25] and for which "there is no evidence that he thought of himself as offering two different proofs."[26] It is surprising, then, that

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[20] Ibid., ch. 9, p. 169.

[21] Proslogion, ch. 5, p. 10.

[22] W. J. Huggett, "The Nonexistence of Ontological Arguments," Philosophical Review, LXXI (June, 1962), p. 377.

[23] Raziel Abelson, "Not Necessarily," Philosophical Review, LXX (January, 1961), pp. 67-68.

[24] Terence Penelhum, "On the Second Ontological Argument," Philosophical Review, LXX (January, 1961), pp. 85-86.

[25] Malcolm, op. cit., p. 41.

[26] Ibid., p. 45.

Malcolm still maintains that there are two distinct arguments. One may naturally ask why Malcolm does this. The reason Malcolm, Hartshorne, and the others distinguish the arguments is that they do not understand Anselm's thought on this point. On the basis of the evidence presented above showing that Anselm only thought of God as necessarily existing, it is here submitted that the reason why Anselm did not distinguish two different proofs for the existence of God and why he did not think of himself as distinguishing them is the fact that the "arguments" are the same.

Regarding the second part of their argumentation it must be said that in so far as both Malcolm and Hartshorne argue from a concept of a perfect being to the real existence of this being their arguments are similar and can be refuted with the same objection. But, since they develop in somewhat different manners their argument for the validity of the second form of the Anselmian argument, each man will be treated separately.

Malcolm's basic principle is that necessary existence is a property of God, that the proposition "God necessarily exists" by no means signifies "that it follows necessarily from something that God exists contingently."[27] He also describes God as being unlimited, independent, necessarily omniscient and omnipotent. All these statements Anselm would endorse. Malcolm, however, has failed to clear the ambiguity in the propositions "God necessarily exists" and "It is necessary that God exists." Whereas the

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[27] Ibid., p. 50.

former modality is predicated de re, the latter is predicated de dicto. The two propositions are not intrinsically related by logical ties, because existence is not a real predicate. Existence is a logical or formal predicate, a second-level predicate, which can only be predicated of predicates not things.[28] Nor can making the concept of God a unique concept bridge the gap. "To proffer the uniqueness of the concept of God as an intuitive ground for the ontological argument is to abandon rules of logic for the eye of faith,"[29] a faith which has far more foundation than the argument. The de dicto proposition may well be analytically true. A logically necessary truth, however, is not necessarily an ontological truth. Both Malcolm and Hartshorne maintain that "God necessarily exists" is an analytic proposition. The critics agree. That an analytic proposition automatically applies to the real world, however, is something Allen,[30] Penelhum,[31] Plantinga,[32] and Pike[33] deny. According to Penelhum and Plantinga, the proposition "God necessarily exists" springs from

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[28]Abelson, op. cit., p. 70.

[29]R. E. Allen, "The Ontological Argument," Philosophical Review, LXX (January, 1961), p. 59.

[30]Ibid., p. 57.

[31]Penelhum, op. cit., p. 91.

[32]Alvin Plantigna, "A Valid Ontological Argument," The Philosophical Review, LXX (January, 1961), p. 101.

[33]Nelson Pike, Review of The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics, by Charles Hartshorne, The Philosophical Review, LXXII (April, 1963), p. 268.

religious sentiment, not from experiential evidence; according to Allen, existence is not a predicate; according to Pike, the jump from statements to beings is illicit.

Raziel Abelson goes a step further. Malcolm attests that the propositions "'God is the greatest of all beings,' 'God is the most perfect being,' 'God is the 'supreme being',' are logically necessary truths, in the same sense that the statement 'A square has four sides' is a logically necessary truth."[34] When Malcolm equates the two types of propositions, Abelson claims he also equates the verbs in each of the propositions. Existence, however, as it is used in mathematical equations is such that its elimination only leads to inconvenient notation. The content remains unchanged. The elimination of existence in Malcolm's formulation, on the other hand, is far from trivial.[35] Malcolm also seems to view both theology and mathematics as deductive systems. Certainly mathematics is a deductive system; yet its deductions are based upon postulates, one of which must be existential in order to avoid a vacuous system and a system in which existence is never solely based upon a definition. Postulating the existence of God in any meaningful sense is begging the question.[36] Malcolm merely concludes to what he has already assumed. His formulations would apply to any necessary being or beings what-

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[34]Malcolm, op. cit., p. 45.

[35]Abelson, op. cit., p. 71.

[36]Ibid., p. 72.

ever. A necessary being necessarily exists, is necessarily omnipotent, necessarily independent, necessarily unlimited--all of these statements and any others that may be made about a necessary being are by definition admittedly true; but none of this by itself proves the real existence of any necessary being. "It merely describes any that may exist."[37] The only reason for believing in the existence of the necessary being is the use of the proper noun "God." 'Since proper names usually or always imply or presuppose existence, it is easy to slide into the belief that what has been named exists, and this is particularly easy when the entity in question is described in terms of existence."[38] The use of a proper name, however, proves nothing.[39]

Hartshorne has four main points: that God is a unique, absolutely unlimited individual, that He is defined as the modal coincidence of all actuality and possibility, that the argument has an irreducible modal structure, that the notion of God's necessary existence has not only emotional but also cognitional foundation. His system stands or falls with his definition of God, because it is on the basis of the abstract-concrete distinction that he handles the logical-type objection, the most powerful objection in his opinion to his argumentation. But his definition is as fraught with antinomies as he claims the classical

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[37]Paul Henle, "Uses of the Ontological Argument," The Philosophical Review, LXX (January, 1961), p. 106.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Allen, op. cit., p. 61.

idea to be. For instance, he maintains that to love is to care for individuals;[40] yet how could God care for, provide for individuals in a meaningful way without foreknowledge? He maintains that God cannot depend upon anything for His existence; yet he also says God cannot exist alone.[41] Further investigation of this matter is unnecessary; because, even granting his definition of God, his position can be refuted.

Hartshorne is correct in claiming that Kant missed the significance of Anselm's argumentation. God is a necessary being with necessary not contingent existence. The structure of Anselm's argument is undeniably modal. The necessary existence of something eliminates any possibility of its non-existence, should it exist, and any possibility of its existence should it not exist. Modality, in other words, is tolerant of only one alternative. Hartshorne's use of the modal argument, however, has a fatal weakness. The crucial steps in his ten-step, partial formulation of the mature form of the argument are six, seven, and eight.[42] In six, he states that a perfect Being is either necessarily existent or necessarily non-existent; in seven, that it is not necessarily non-existent; and therefore, in eight, that it is necessarily existent. The proposition that it is not necessarily non-existent is equivalent to the proposition that God's exis-

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[40]Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 36.

[41]Ibid., p. 80.

[42]Murel R. Vogel, S.J., Review of The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics, by Charles Hartshorne, The New Scholasticism, XXXVIII, 3 (July, 1964), p. 411.

tence is not impossible. In saying that God's existence is not impossible, Hartshorne can mean that the notion of God's existence contains no contradiction or else that whether it does or not is uncertain. If he means that it is uncertain, the argument as a whole cannot conclude with certainty that God exists in reality with necessary existence. He cannot mean that the notion of God's existence contains no contradiction, because he has insufficient knowledge of it.[43] The seventh step follows as an intuition from the conclusions of arguments ex aliunde. "But (7) is neither an intuition or knowable until we have already proved that God exists."[44] The mere concept of a perfect being is no proof for the possibility or impossibility of the real existence of its content. Not knowing whether or not the notion of God's existence is self-contradictory, Hartshorne cannot reach a positive conclusion about God's real existence. This line of criticism applies to Malcolm as well as to Hartshorne. Whereas Hartshorne does not present a proof that the notion of God's necessary existence is not self-contradictory, Malcolm not only assumes the notion is not self-contradictory he also maintains that he cannot prove his contention and that furthermore a proof is not required.[45] In defense he draws an analogy. He does not

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[43]John O. Nelson, "Modal Logic and the Ontological Proof for God's Existence," The Review of Metaphysics, XVII, 2 (December, 1963), p. 236.

[44]Vogel, op. cit.

[45]Malcolm, op. cit., p. 60.

know how to demonstrate the self-consistency of the concept of a material being nor of seeing a material being. Some philosophers argue that these concepts are self-contradictory, while others maintain that they are not. No demonstration, acceptable to all, exists; yet, these concepts, like the concept of God, play an important role in human life.

Hartshorne's lengthy inquiry into the criteria for contingency is both interesting and enlightening. Unfortunately, his application of the criteria of contingent beings to contingent statements and by contrast to necessary statements and the concept of God does not prove the real existence of the object of the concept. "The switch from talking about contingent beings (which are, for example, dependent beings), to talking about contingent judgments or statements, renders the central theme obscure to the point of being opaque,"[46] and invalidating the argument. But, even if the statement "perfection exists" is one of the existential judgments not exhibiting any of the ten contingency criteria listed by Hartshorne, still the statement would not conclusively prove the real existence of such a being. For "the concept of a Perfect Being would not prove its real existence unless its non-existence were inconceivable."[47] God, the Perfect Being even as described by Hartshorne, can be thought of as non-existent. Moreover, even granted that a Perfect Being does exist and necessarily exists, men would not know this fact

[46]Pike, op. cit., p. 268.

[47]Vogel, op. cit., p. 410.

as self-evident. "No analysis of the concept of Perfect Being will ever yield knowledge of any actual existence except the existence of the concept in our mind."[48]

The idea of God, as Hartshorne asserts against the positivists, has a cognitional and not merely an emotional content and foundation. Hartshorne uses his abstract-concrete distinction to overcome the positivists. The difficulty with doing this is that ontological possibility is given priority over actuality. As Blackwell notes, possibility is consequent upon actuality.[49] God is the repository of all possibilities because He is in act and has infinite power for action. Whether the classical or the neo-classical concept of God be used, its automatic application to the real order is invalid. Statements made about God may be necessary statements. "Propositions have their own 'being,' whether they are necessary or contingent notwithstanding; but this is not the being of actual entities."[50] Necessity in human knowledge does not necessarily impose necessity upon God. In other words, real existence must be proved from other sources than the concept. The proposition "God exists" is, indeed, self-evident to God, but not to humans who see Him only through an "unclear glass."

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[48] Ibid., p. 411.

[49] Richard J. Blackwell, Review of The Logic of Perfection and Other Essays in Neoclassical Metaphysics, by Charles Hartshorne, The Modern Schoolman, XLI, 4 (May, 1964), 388.

[50] Julian Hartt, "The Logic of Perfection," The Review of Metaphysics, XVI, 4 (June, 1963), p. 755.

The source of the cognitional element in the concept of God must be clarified, if Anselm's argumentation is to be understood. Hartshorne maintains that this definition of God, like Anselm's, is entirely a priori;[51] and consequently his inference from it is a priori. Is this so? "Upon the existence of the Perfect," he says, "all other things must depend...hence its nonexistence would mean that nothing was even possible, which is absurd."[52] How does he know about this dependence? The answer seems to be found in an analysis of experience. An analysis of experience even yields a knowledge of God's existence; for "implicitly everyone knows (or at least feels) the divine existence."[53] Malcolm holds that Anselm's proof is valid provided both the propositions "God necessarily exists" and "God exists" are understood as a priori propositions so that the former entails the latter, thus making the two statements equivalent.[54] Even though he considers these propositions and Anselm's formulation a priori, he is convinced that "there cannot be a deep understanding of that concept without an understanding of the phenomenon of human life that gave rise to it."[55] He refrains from explicating the origin at length, suggesting only the phenomenon

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[51] Hartshorne, op. cit., p. 35.

[52] Ibid., p. 80.

[53] Ibid., p. 110.

[54] Malcolm, op. cit., p. 50.

[55] Ibid., p. 60.

of guilt. Men are weighed down under the pressure of a tremendous guilt, while at the same time desiring with all their might that this weight be removed. The guilt is boundless; so boundless must be the mercy that moves it away. The merciful, unlimited God, therefore, must be postulated.[56] In other words, the argument has an experiential basis. The concept of God is formed through an examination and development of the meaning of empirical data.

Henry Wolz argues that the whole first chapter of the Proslogion, the introductory prayer, provides the empirical basis of the argument for the existence of God. When Anselm says, "I sought calm in privacy, and I found tribulation and grief, in my inmost thoughts. I wished to smile in the joy of my mind, and I am compelled to frown by the sorrow of my heart,"[57] he gives utterance to the fate of men. They glory in their intellect, in the power of this tremendous faculty; yet this same intellect forces them to know that their desires will remain unfulfilled, that their life is doomed to frustration unless a loving God satisfies their cravings. Prayer itself is a recognition of imperfection and dependence. And a recognition of imperfection is simultaneously a recognition of perfection; because the imperfect is only known as such in the light of the perfect, the finite, in the light of the infinite. The proofs in the Monologion are all

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[56] Ibid., pp. 60-61.

[57] Proslogion, ch. 1, p. 5.

the same in the sense that they posit a unity before all multiplicity, the existence of one being which is through itself and through which everything that is is what it is. Beings possessing an attribute in a greater or less degree have it through a being which has it in a perfect degree. The idea of a perfect being is a necessary condition of knowledge, whereby men know contingent reality. Without it men could not judge.[58] Yet men do judge. They judge that they are imperfect, an overwhelmingly undeniable fact. If they could be wrong in this judgment, they could not know anything. Everything would be unintelligible. But men have knowledge, so the world is intelligible; since the world is intelligible, there must be a being giving it intelligibility. Such a theory is in accordance with Anselm's theory of truth. Wolz, furthermore, asserts that the idea is vague. "It is true we cannot say what that perfect being is, but we know how it functions in human knowledge."[59] For this reason it is best expressed in negative terms such as "a being a greater than which cannot be thought."

This writer does not entirely agree with Wolz's position. I hold that Anselm develops his notion of God from a causal analysis of himself and other things in the world, and that his formulation of God as "a being a greater than which cannot be thought" is a positive statement summarizing all of the attributes he

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[58]Henry G. Wolz, "The Empirical Basis of Anselm's Arguments," The Philosophical Review, LX (July, 1951), p. 348.

[59]Ibid., p. 354.

lists in the Monologion and in the Proslogion. Anselm explicitly states in the last chapter of his reply to Gaunilo:

> I believe that I have shown by an argument which is not weak, but sufficiently cogent, that in my former book [Proslogion] I proved the real existence of a being than which a greater cannot be conceived; and I believe that his argument cannot be invalidated by the validity of any objection. For so great force does the signification of this reasoning contain in itself, that this being which is the subject of discussion, is of necessity, from the very fact that it is understood or conceived, proved also to exist in reality, and to be whatever we should believe of the divine substance. 60 (Emphasis mine.)

The underlined sections of the passage just quoted show that the formula "a being than which a greater cannot be conceived" expresses in capsule form "whatever we should believe of the divine substance." Anselm treats "whatever we should believe of the divine substance" in shortened form in the Proslogion and at length in his earlier work, the Monologion. Once the formula has been well understood several things are known: God's existence and the attributes that can be applied to Him. Anselm stresses a "sound understanding" of those things which a human can know about God. In the fourth chapter of the Proslogion, he distinguishes between conceiving of something according to the word signifying it and according to an understanding of the thing itself. Only the latter mode of conceiving God is acceptable in a proof of His existence. "God is that than which a greater cannot be conceived. And he who thoroughly understands this, assuredly understands that this being so truly exists, that not even in concept can it

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[60] Anselm's Apologetic, ch. 10, pp. 169-70.

be nonexistent."[61] The concept of a being"a greater than which cannot be thought" is not amorphous. It is worked out in some detail from an analysis of the world. Anselm says that "nothing can be ascertained concerning this Nature in terms of its own peculiar character, but only in terms of something else"[62] and that it is "evident to any rational mind, that by ascending from the lesser good to the greater, we can form a considerable notion of a being than which a greater is inconceivable."[63] The line of reasoning stated in the second chapter of the Proslogion is simple, because it assumes much that was done before. And this is consonant with Anselm's method; "for his writings are related to one another in this way that the conclusion of one work is carried forward to become one of the premises of a later work."[64] Only when the empirical basis of the concept is kept in view can the concept be applied to reality; but, then, the inference is not an ontological inference from a purely a priori concept. Malcolm and Hartshorne would do well to follow even more closely Anselm's lead.

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[61] Proslogion, ch. 4, p. 10.

[62] Monologion, ch. 66, p. 131.

[63] Anselm's Apologetic, ch. 8, p. 167.

[64] John McIntyre, "Premises and Conclusion in the System of St. Anselm's Theology," Spicilegium Beccense (Paris: Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin, 1959), p. 98.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Mr. J. Allan Meyer, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 23, 1966
Date

W. P. Vogel
Signature of Advisor