

**P401/P515 Fall 2010:
History of Philosophy: Special Topics
Anselm of Canterbury**

Handouts

Paul Vincent Spade



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This is a complete set of handouts for the course *History of Philosophy: Special Topics. Anselm of Canterbury*, which I taught in the Fall semester of 2010. They should be used in conjunction with the lecture notes likewise posted here.

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Syllabus

PHIL P401 History of Philosophy: Special Topics (§ 20448)/PHIL P515 Medieval Philosophy (§ 22178), Fall, 2010: Anselm of Canterbury

Professor Spade, Sycamore Hall 122

Class meetings

MW 2:30–3:45 p.m., Ballantine Hall 208.

Office Hours

Spade: Sycamore Hall 122. W 10:15–11:30 a.m. You can try to call my office at 855-0348, but it won't do you a bit of good, since I have my telephone unhooked in self-defense. A better bet is to call the main departmental office at 855-9503 and one of the office staff can leave a note in my mailbox. But the absolutely *best* way to get in touch with me outside office hours is by e-mail: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx. I check that several times a day.

General policy on office hours: You don't need an appointment during the posted times; just come on by. If your schedule doesn't fit mine, I can generally arrange other times (within reason) on Mondays and Wednesdays, and will be happy to do so, but they do need to be arranged. (Again, e-mail is the best way to set up such an arrangement, or just speak to me after lecture to set up a time.)

Oncourse

Important parts of this course will take place on the University's Oncourse website (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx).

Note: When you first go to Oncourse, you will find that this course shows up twice in your list of course tabs across the top of your screen: one tab will say either FA10 BL PHIL P401 20488 or FA10 BL PHIL P515 22178, depending on whether you are taking this course under the P401 or the P515 number. The other will say FA10 BL PHIL P401 C16120. The latter is the tab you want. Everything will happen there. If you go to the other tab, you will be redirected to the C16120 tab. (What I've done is simply consolidate the undergraduate and graduate sections of this course into one Oncourse site.)

Note also: It is a little-known but very useful fact that you can customize the tabs you see at the top of the page on Oncourse. After logging in, click on the "My

Workspace” tab across the top, then on “Preferences” in the menubar on the left, and then on “Customize Tabs” in the horizontal menubar near the top of the page. Follow the instructions.)

On our Oncourse page, you will find:

- A copy of this Syllabus.
- Occasional announcements relevant to this course.
- A quiz-taking utility for weekly on-line quizzes. (Click on the “Original Test and Survey” tool in the menubar on the left of your screen.)
- A “Post’Em” grade-reporting utility, where you can see your running grades for this course: quiz grades, examination grades, paper grades, comments, etc. (Note: I have to upload these grades manually from my Excel spreadsheet gradebook. So there will be some lag-time between, say, taking a quiz and seeing the results posted here.) I am not using the Oncourse “Gradebook” utility, which I find too restrictive for my purposes.
- An email archive, where you can view messages from me or your classmates relevant to this course. You can send email to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx and it will be automatically forwarded to all members of this class and deposited in the email archive for later viewing. Note that this feature is to be used only for matters relevant to this class. If you abuse it and start sending random emails to everybody, I’ll have to reconfigure the utility so that only I can send mail through it.
- An “Assignments” utility, where you will submit your examinations and papers for this course in digital format.
- Other amazing and unpredictable things.

You will be expected to keep current with what is going on our Oncourse site.

Required texts

- Anselm, *Basic Writings*, Thomas Williams, ed., (Hackett). This contains not just the “basic” works, but *all* the writings, except for the letters (it even has one of those), some prayers and “meditations,” and two other short works: *De Grammatico* and *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*. We will be reading both these additional texts. They will be on reserve at the main library.
 - Brian Davies and Brian Leftow , ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (Cambridge). A collection of original articles on all aspects of Anselm’s thought.
 - Additional readings in the secondary literature, to be assigned as we go along. I will explain how to get hold of these at the appropriate time.
-

Scope of the course

This course will be devoted entirely to the thought of one important medieval thinker: Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109). Anselm was the author of the famous “ontological argument” for the existence of God, and we will certainly be discussing that. But he had interesting and novel things to say about a variety of other philosophical topics too, including philosophy of religion generally, philosophy of language and semantic theory, the theory of modality, free choice, the theory of truth, and ethics, as well as theological topics like the doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption. We will be discussing all of it from a mainly philosophical standpoint.

Plan of reading

There is a general reading assignment you should start on right away: Read *all* of the *Basic Writings* volume, cover to cover. Do this fairly quickly the first time through, just to get loosely familiar with what Anselm has to say. There will be lots that confuses you at first, or that seems just silly. But never mind, just plough through it. Our discussion of Anselm will be jumping around from work to work, so I want you to have at least a passing familiarity with *all* the works as soon as possible.

I am not yet sure just how long we will spend on individual topics. But here is at least the *order* in which I want to discuss things, along with the associated readings in *Basic Writings* and the chapters in *The Cambridge Companion*:

- Anselm’s life, “method,” and views on the relation of faith and reason. **Read:** *Companion*, Chaps. 1-2.
- A first pass at Anselm’s philosophical theology. **Read:** *Monologion*, Chaps. 1-26, and *Companion*, Chaps. 3, 6 and the first part of Chap. 11 (to p. 263).
- The “ontological argument.” **Read:** *Proslogion*, *Gaunilo’s Reply on Behalf of the Fool*, and Anselm’s own *Reply to Gaunilo*, and *Companion*, Chap. 7.
- Anselm on free choice, truth, and ethics. **Read:** *On Truth*, *On Freedom of Choice*, *On the Fall of the Devil*, and *On the Harmony of God’s Foreknowledge, Predestination, and Grace with Free Will*, and *Companion*, Chaps. 8-10.
- Anselm’s logic, philosophy of language, modal theory. **Read:** *De Grammatico*, and *The Lambeth Fragments*, and *Companion*, Chaps. 4-5.
- Anselm on the Trinity. **Read:** *Monologion*, Chaps. 27 to the end, and *On the Procession of the Holy Spirit*, and *Companion*, Chap. 11, from p. 263 to the end.
- Anselm on the Incarnation and Redemption. **Read:** *Why God Became Man*, and *On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, and *Companion*, Chap. 12.

For all of these topics, additional readings will be assigned from the secondary literature. These additional assignments will be posted on the “Announcements” section of our Oncourse site (and by email), and made available at that time.

Course requirements

Course requirements will include a series of weekly fifteen-point online quizzes over points of terminology, theory, and other details, a full-dress term paper, and a series of short “research reports” over items in the secondary literature. Undergraduates taking this course under the P401 number will be required to submit two such research reports, graduate students taking the course as P515 will do four.

Quizzes

As indicated, there will be a series of *weekly* fifteen-point quizzes in this course. They will begin the *second* week of classes, and there will be a total of *thirteen* of them. They will not be given in class, but will be made available on Oncourse. (Click on “**Original Test and Survey**” in the menubar on the left of your Oncourse screen.) You will be able to take any “active” quiz, and to view the results of your previous quizzes.

The quizzes will be available to take any time between 3:45 p.m. on Wednesday (the end of class) and the following Sunday midnight (strictly speaking, 0:00 a.m. Monday). You can take each quiz only once, but you can spend as long as you like on it. You can access the quiz and print it out, if you wish, before you actually submit it. You can use your texts, notes and any other resources at your disposal (including talking to one another) — in fact, I hope you do. In short, there is virtually no way to cheat on these quizzes, short of having someone else take them pretending to be you. Their purpose is not to be tricky or hard, but simply to verify that you have mastered the nuts and bolts of what we will be discussing.

The first quiz will start on **Wednesday, September 8, at 3:45 p.m.**, and will be available to take until **midnight, Sunday, September 12.**

Each of the quizzes will be of a quite “objective” type, over matters of terminology and details. By “objective,” I mean “multiple-choice” and “true/false,” and an occasional “short answer” that asks you to spell something or to give a name. If you ask how I can *dare* to give an “objective” quiz in a *philosophy* class, for heaven’s sake, the answer is: It’s easy! I ask the questions and you give me the answers, that’s how.

On-line submissions

Except for the quizzes, all written work for this class will be submitted in digital format to the Oncourse “Assignments” utility. There are several advantages to doing it this way:

- All submissions are time-and-date stamped, so there is absolutely no question when something was turned in.
- Materials submitted in this way can be readily submitted to **Turnitin.com**, a very effective online plagiarism-checker. I will routinely submit **all** submissions there; I will not wait until I get suspicious about something.
- I can insert comments directly into the digital files you submit and return them to you. That way, both you and I will have a copy of the original submission and the graded version.

Research reports

Your “research reports” are intended to get you to think critically about the secondary literature on Anselm. They are not meant to be mere “book reports” or summaries of some item in the secondary literature, but instead a philosophical assessment and reflection of it. Is it an accurate reading of what Anselm actually is doing? Whether it is or not, is it philosophically cogent?

For each “research report,” I will ask you to pick some item in the secondary literature to assess. Eligible items are listed on the “Bibliography, E-Reserves” page of our Oncourse site. (See the menubar on the left of your screen.) Some of the items listed there are “off limits” for a research report, either because we will be discussing them explicitly in class or else because they are purely bibliographical in nature and not really appropriate for a “philosophical” assessment. Such “off limits” items are marked with an asterisk (*).

These reports are to be brief, **no more than five double-spaced pages** in length. (Or the digital equivalent thereof — these are going to be done online, after all.) Assume I have read the item you are reporting on, and don’t waste time easing me into it. Understand: **brevity is part of the assignment**; anything over five pages will start counting **against** you!

Since students will no doubt have differing interests in various parts of Anselm’s thought, you are free to pick the topics for your research reports as you will, subject to one constraint: **at least one such research report must have to do with the “ontological argument.”** On the whole, it is probably wisest to wait until we have discussed a topic in class before you pick a research report topic on it, but that is entirely up to you. And in the case of things we will not be discussing until late in the semester, you may want to go ahead anyway.

As indicated, students taking this course under the P401 number will be required to submit **two** such research reports, while students taking it under the P515 number will be required to submit **four**. Here is a schedule of the due dates for these reports:

Monday, September, 27, 2:30 p.m.: First graduate research report.

Monday, October 18, 2:30 p.m.: Second graduate research report, first undergraduate one. (We should have finished our discussion of the “ontological argument” by this point.)

Monday, November 8, 2:30 p.m.: Third graduate research report.

Friday, December 17, 2:45 pm.: Fourth graduate research report, second undergraduate one. (Notice the odd time. This is the beginning of the final examination period for this class. I will not be giving a regular final examination, but will use that time as the due date for the last research reports.)

Term papers

Your term paper will be due at TurnItIn.com by the beginning of class on **Monday November 29, 2:30 p.m.** (This is the Monday after Thanksgiving break, but no doubt you will have the paper all but completed before the break starts.) There will be a late-penalty as described [below](#). Undergraduate papers should aim for the equivalent of approximately fifteen double-spaced pages, graduate papers at approximately twenty pages, including notes and bibliography as needed. You are free to write on any topic in Anselm, but I want you to *focus* on Anselm. (In other words, I don’t want papers of the general form “Anselm and Zen Buddhism.” Most of you will probably find Anselm rather foreign to you. But I want you to deal with him centrally, and not avoid it by writing on something else you feel more comfortable with, and then fitting Anselm in as best you can.)

Grades

Your course grade will be figured on the basis of **three** components: **(1)** your quiz grades, as described immediately below (20%), **(2)** your research reports (30% for P401, 40% for P515), and **(3)** your term paper (50% for P401, 40% for P515). In other words, each research report will count for 15% for those taking the course as undergraduates, and for 10% for those taking the course as graduates.

In figuring your regular quiz component, your **top twelve scores** will be used; your lowest score will be dropped. (This allows you to miss one quiz, or to do badly on it. **Please understand:** This is not a “freebie.” It is designed to allow you get ill, or to have something unexpected come up. If you miss your one quiz early in the semester, don’t expect to get **another** one dropped if some emergency arises.) I will add up the total points you got on your top twelve quizzes, and call the sum your **“raw quiz score.”** Then I will take all such “raw quiz scores” for the class, **average the top two of them,** and call that average the **“base score.”** The base score will count as 100%. Then I will figure your **“adjusted quiz score”** by taking your raw quiz score as a percentage of the base score.

For example, the absolute maximum number of possible points is 180 points (12 quizzes [after dropping the lowest one] x 15 points each). If your “raw score” is 150, and the two highest raw scores in the class are 175 (wow!) and 170, I will take the average of those two scores -- which comes out to 172 1/2 (I will round that to 172) -- as the “base score.” So 172 points = 100% on the quiz component, even though there were 180 possible points total. Your own “adjusted quiz score” will therefore be 150/172, or 87.21%. That will get rounded down to 87%. The purpose of taking the average of the top two raw scores in the class as the “base” score is to provide some protection in case some of the quizzes are just too hard.

Note: If I need to round off an exact .5 decimal, I’ll always round to your advantage. In figuring the “base score,” it’s to your advantage to have it rounded **down**; in figuring your own “adjusted quiz score,” it’s to your advantage to have it rounded **up**.

Your term papers and research reports will each be assigned a **letter grade**. For purposes of calculating your final course grade, these letter grades will be given numerical equivalents according to the following table:

Table 1

A+ = 100% B = 85% C- = 72% F+ = 58%*
A = 97% B- = 82% D+ = 68% F = 0%
A- = 92% C+ = 78% D = 64%
B+ = 88% C = 75% D- = 62%

Note: Don’t laugh at an “F+.” It’s worth more than half an “A+”! It’s perfectly possible to get an “F+” if, for instance, you write an otherwise “B+” paper, but turn it in three days late. See [below](#) on the penalty for late papers.

Your final course score will then be figured on the basis of one of the following formulas:

For Undergraduates (P401)

(Adjusted quiz score x 20%) + (Term paper x 50%) + (First research report x 15%) +
(Second research report x 15%)

For Graduates (P515)

(Adjusted quiz score x 20%) + (Term paper x 40%) + (First research report x 10%) +
(Second research report x 10%)
+ (Third research report x 10%) + (Fourth research report x 10%)

The score arrived at in this way will be converted to a letter grade according to the following table:

Table 2

100-94% = A	83-80% = B-	69-67% = D+
93-90% = A-	79-77% = C+	66-64% = D
89-87% = B+	76-74% = C	63-60% = D-
86-84% = B	73-70% = C-	59-0% = F

and that will be the grade you get for the course.

Please read over these procedures so that you understand them. They're not as mysterious as they perhaps look. There will be no exceptions to them.

Additional rules

Here are some further rules and regulations about the course:

In order to pass the course, you **must submit all required research reports and the term paper**. It is perfectly possible to pass the course (although not very gracefully) with a failing item, but it will **not** be possible to pass it without doing them. You don't strictly speaking have to take **any** of the quizzes, but if you don't the absolute maximum final course grade you can get is 80% = B-. (And that's assuming an A+ on everything else!)

Late penalty for papers and research reports: Late papers research reports (but see the [next regulation](#)) will be penalized **one letter grade per day**. For purposes of the "penalty clock," a "day" is defined as beginning at **2:30 p.m.** (the time our class begins on Mondays and Wednesdays).

Here's an example of how the "penalty clock" works. If you write an otherwise "A" paper, but turn it **after** the beginning of class on Monday, November 29, it will get a "B." If you wait until after 2:30 p.m. the next day, Tuesday, November 30, it's a "C." After 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 1, it's down to a "D." After 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 2, it's penalized to the point of an "F." But you do still have to turn it in. (See the [preceding regulation](#).)

Late penalty for the last research report: The final examination time reserved for this course is **Friday, December 17, 2:45–4:45 p.m.** As indicated earlier, the last research report for this course will be due at the **beginning** of that period. Late final research reports will be accepted until 4:45 p.m. (the end of the final examination period), but **not afterwards**. After that time, it's just as if you missed a final examination given in a classroom. In short, if it comes in after 2:45 p.m., it is penalized one letter. If it comes in after 4:45 p.m., it is not accepted. At 4:45 p.m. that day, all the "Assignments" on our Oncourse page will "shut off" and the

course will be over. You will not be able to submit anything further (although you will still be able to see the graded results).

There will be no “Incompletes” in this class.

I reserve the right to adjust these regulations to close any tiny loopholes I may have overlooked.

Miscellaneous policies

About missed classes. Whether or not you come to class is entirely up to you. (For that matter, whether or not you get a degree from IU is entirely up to you.) If you miss one or more classes for any reason (good or bad, it doesn't matter), please get the notes from one of your fellow students. If you don't know anyone else in the class, get acquainted; they're generally nice folks. Don't expect me to repeat the lecture for you in a private, command performance in my office, or to give you a run-down on the contents of the lecture by e-mail. And above all, **do not under any circumstances ask to borrow my lecture notes.** (You couldn't read them anyway.) I will be happy to talk with students who do not understand the material, or who just want to discuss things further. But that presupposes that you've taken the trouble to get the material first.

Finally, here is the course policy on academic dishonesty: **Anyone found guilty of academic dishonesty on examinations, quizzes or papers for this course will fail the course** and a report will be filed with Dean of Students identifying the “F” as having been given for academic misconduct. (Such “Fs” are not removable by the “FX” policy.) If I have reason to think you are guilty of academic dishonesty, I will ask you to come to my office (or to some neutral corner) and will confront you with the evidence. Academic dishonesty includes presenting, as your own, work that is **not** in fact your own, whether you take it from another student, from a library book, from the Web or wherever. (It also includes knowingly allowing your **own** work to be misrepresented in this way as some other student's work.) Cunningly rewording someone else's work, in order to disguise what you are doing, does not make any difference; it's still academic dishonesty if the thoughts behind it are not your own. When in doubt, **always** cite your sources! It's infinitely better to produce something totally unoriginal and say so outright than it is to turn in the very same thing and pretend it's your own. The former will probably earn you a mediocre grade on that piece of work; the latter will earn you a non-removable “F” in the course.

The University Faculty Council and Board of Trustees have adopted certain procedures and safeguards governing disciplinary action in cases of academic misconduct. See the *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct*, especially Part III: “Student Misconduct” and Part IV: “Student Disciplinary Procedures.” Copies of the code are available in the Office of Student Ethics and Anti-Harassment Programs (705 E. 7th St.). It is also available online at:

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If you plan to engage in this sort of behavior, I urge you to familiarize yourself with these materials; I've had lots of practical experience with them.

Bibliography, E-Reserves, and Other Resources

Items marked with an asterisk (*) are not eligible sources for your “research reports.” They may nevertheless be of relevance to your term papers.

General Bibliography


These are not on reserve, but you should be aware of them anyway. I have given you the call numbers in the Wells Library. (Some of them may be stored in the ALF and have to be delivered from there.)

- *Anselm, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, Walter Frölich, trans., 3 vols., (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1990). B765.A84 A413 1990, vols. 1–3.
- *Anselm, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, Benedicta Ward, trans., (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1973). BV245.A5 1973. Just what it says.
- Anselm, *Truth, Freedom, and Evil: Three Philosophical Dialogues*, Jasper Hopkins & Herbert Richardson, trans., (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). V765.A82 E58. We have all these works in our *Basic Writings* book for this class. The main reason for calling your attention to this volume is for the philosophical discussion in the introduction.
- *Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, R. W. Southern, ed. & trans., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962). BX4700.A58 E11 1972. A biography of Anselm, written by one of his own contemporaries and acquaintances. Interesting for lore and gossip.
- *G. R. Evans, *Anselm*, (“Outstanding Christian Thinkers”; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989). BX4700.A58 E89 1989. Of interest for Anselm’s overall approach and attitude, particularly with regard to his “Meditations” and “Prayers”. But not a lot of theory.
- *G. R. Evans, *Anselm and a New Generation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). BX4700.A58 E9. Mainly for historical background.
- *G. R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978). BT100.A57 E9.
- Desmond Paul Henry, *Commentary on De Grammatico: The Historical-Logical Dimensions of a Dialogue of St. Anselm’s*, (“Synthese Historical Library,” vol. 8;

Dordrecht: Reidel, 1974). B765.A83 D32. Fair game for research reports. But be warned: Henry seems to have had a mission to resurrect not only Anselm's *De grammatico* but also the peculiar logical theory and notation of the twentieth-century Polish logician Lesniewski. Lesniewski was a brilliant logician, but the benefits of imposing him on Anselm remain dubious. Still, you can learn a lot from this volume, even ignoring the technicalities.

- Desmond Paul Henry, ed. & trans., *The De Grammatico of St. Anselm: The Theory of Paronymy*, (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964). BR251.N9 v. 18. Ditto about the usefulness of this volume.
- Desmond Paul Henry, *The Logic of Saint Anselm*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967). B776.A84 H5. Ditto.
- John Hick, *The Many-Faced Argument: Recent Studies in the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God*, (New York: Macmillan, 1967). B765.A84 H6. If you use this volume for one of your research reports, make sure you are talking about Anselm's version of the ontological argument and not someone else's.
- Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972). BX4700.A58 H79. A little dated, but still very useful.
- D. E. Luscombe and G. R. Evans, ed., *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury: Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop, 25 September 1093*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). BX4700.A58 A5720 1996. Richard Campbell's paper "The Conceptual Roots of Anselm's Soteriology" from this volume is also on E-reserves for this class. But there may be other items from the volume that will be of use to you.
- John McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Re-Interpretation of the Cur Deus Homo*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1954). BT264.A63 M15.
- *R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). BX4700.A58 S69 1990. The definitive modern biography.
- Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm*, ("Great Medieval Thinkers," New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). B765.A84 V57 2009.

Ereserves

There are several articles on E-reserves for our course. You can go directly to our Ereserves page [here](#) . As before, items marked with an asterisk [*] are not eligible for your "research reports," although they may be relevant to your papers. I mark them as "not eligible" usually because I want to discuss them directly in class.)

- Marilyn McCord Adams, “*Fides Quaerens Intellectum*: St. Anselm’s Method of Philosophical Theology,” *Faith and Philosophy* 9 (1992), pp. 409–35.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “Ockham on Will, Nature, and Morality,” in Paul Vincent Spade, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Chap. 11, pp. 245–72. There is a discussion of Anselm and Duns Scotus, in addition to Ockham. If you choose this article for a research report, make sure you concentrate on the Anselmian parts of it.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “Romancing the Good: God and the Self according to St. Anselm of Canterbury,” in Gareth B. Matthews, ed., *The Augustinian Tradition*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), Chap. 5, pp. 91–109.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “Saint Anselm’s Theory of Truth,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 1 (1990), pp. 353–72. On the *Monologion* and *On Truth*.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “Satisfying Mercy: St. Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo* Reconsidered,” *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (January/March 1995), pp. 91–108.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “St. Anselm on Evil: *De casu diaboli*,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 3 (1993), pp. 432–51.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “St. Anselm on the Goodness of God,” *Medioevo* 13 (1978), pp. 75–102. Discusses several works of Anselm’s.
- Marilyn McCord Adams, “Was Anselm a Realist? The *Monologion*,” *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972), pp. 5–14.
- *Robert Merrihew Adams, “Has It Been Proved That All Real Existence is Contingent?,” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 8 (1971), pp. 284–91. This has to do with one of the objections frequently raised against ontological arguments, but it isn’t directly on Anselm, so I’m declaring it off-limits for a research report.
- Robert Merrihew Adams, “The Logical Structure of Anselm’s Arguments,” *The Philosophical Review* 80 (1971), pp. 28–54. On the ontological argument.
- *R. E. Allen & Eugene R. Fairweather, “Anselm, St.,” in Paul Edwards, ed., *the Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (New York: Macmillan 1967), vol. 1, pp. 128–30. Mainly for background.
- Albert Anderson, “Anselm and the Logic of Religious Belief,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 61 (1968), pp. 149–73.
- Steven P. Aspinson, “In Defense of Anselm,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 7 (1990), pp. 33–45. Anselm’s theory of atonement in the *Cur Deus Homo*.
- R. Brecher, “‘Greatness’ in Anselm’s Ontological Argument,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 24 (1974), pp. 97–105.

- David Brown, “‘Necessary’ and ‘Fitting’ Reasons in Christian Theology,” in William J. Abraham & Steven W. Holtzer, ed., *The Rationality of Religious Belief: Essays in Honour of Basil Mitchell*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 211–30. On the *Cur Deus Homo*.
- Frank Burch Brown, “The Beauty of Hell: Anselm on God’s Eternal Design,” *The Journal of Religion* 73 (1993), pp. 329–56. On the *Cur Deus Homo*.
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- Richard M. Gale, “Ontological Arguments,” in Richard M. Gale, *On the Nature and Existence of God*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Chap. 6, pp. 201–37.
- *Stephen Gersh, “Anselm of Canterbury,” in Peter Dronke, ed., *A History of Twelfth-Century Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Chap. 9, pp. 255–78. Mainly for background.
- Jorge J. E. Gracia and Jonathan J. Sanford, “*Ratio Qua[e]rens Beatitudinem*: Anselm on Rationality and Happiness,” in Jiyuan Yu and Jorge J. E. Gracia, ed., *Rationality and Happiness: From the Ancients to the Early Medievals*, (Rochester, N. Y.: The University of Rochester Press, 2003), Chap. 10, pp. 199–215. Discusses several works of Anselm’s. (Note: The title is misspelled on the title page. It should be ‘*quaerens*’, not ‘*quarens*’.)

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- D. P. Henry, “Saint Anselm’s *De ‘Grammatico’*,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* 10.39 (April, 1960), pp. 115–26.
- Desmond Paul Henry, “Saint Anselm’s Nonsense,” *Mind* n. s. 72.285 (Jan., 1963), pp. 51–61. On the *De grammatico*.
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- Gyula Klima, “Conceptual Closure in Anselm’s Proof: Reply to Tony Roark,” *History and Philosophy of Logic* 24 (2003), pp. 131–34. See Roark’s paper, below, and Klima’s immediately following item. On the ontological argument.
- Gyula Klima, “Saint Anselm’s Proof: A Problem of Reference, Intentional Identity and Mutual Understanding,” online at www.fordham.edu/gsas/klima/anselm.htm. On the ontological argument.
- Douglas Langston, “Did Scotus Embrace Anselm’s Notion of Freedom?,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 5 (1996), pp. 145–59. Discusses Anselm’s *On Freedom of Choice* and *On the Fall of the Devil*. If you write a research report on this, be sure you focus on Anselm and not on Scotus.
- Brian Leftow, “Anselm on the Beauty of the Incarnation,” *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (January/March, 1995), pp. 109–24. On the *Cur Deus Homo*.
- Brian Leftow, “Anselm on the Cost of Salvation,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 6 (1997), pp. 73–92. On the *Cur Deus Homo*.
- Brian Leftow, “Anselm on the Necessity of the Incarnation,” *Religious Studies* 31 (1995), pp. 167–85. On the *Cur Deus Homo*.
- Brian Leftow, “Anselm on Omnipotence,” *The New Scholasticism* 63 (1989), pp. 326–57. A reply to Edward Wierenga’s article with same title (below). On the argument in the *Monologion*, Chaps. 20–23. (Note: There is another article in the same issue of this journal that is fair game too for a research report: Thomas O’Loughlin, “Who Is Anselm’s Fool?,” pp. 313–25. I am not permitted to post

- two articles from the same issue of a journal on E-reserves. But you can find it at B1 .N5 v. 63 1989. On the “fool” in the ontological argument.)
- David Lewis, “Anselm and Actuality,” *Noûs* 4 (1970), pp. 175–88. One of the most theoretically rich and textually sensitive “analytic” discussions of the ontological argument I know of. Nevertheless, I think it’s wrong. See my own, “Anselm and Ambiguity,” below.
 - *H. Liebschütz, “Anselm of Canterbury: The Philosophical Interpretation of Faith,” in A. H. Armstrong, ed., *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), Chap. 38, pp. 611–39. Mainly for background.
 - T. A. Losoncy, “Chapter 1 of St. Anselm’s *Proslogion*: Its Preliminaries to Proving God’s Existence as Paradigmatic for Subsequent Proofs of God’s Existence,” in Josef Zúmr and Vilém Herold, ed., *The European Dimension of St. Anselm’s Thinking: Proceedings of the Conference Organized by the Anselm-Society and the Institute of Philosophy of Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Prague, April 27–30, 1992*, (Prague: Institute of Philosophy, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, 1993), pp. 95–106.
 - Thomas A. Losoncy, “Saint Anselm’s Rejection of the ‘Ontological Argument’—A Review of the Occasion and Circumstances,” *The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1990), pp. 373–85.
 - Norman Malcolm, “Anselm’s Ontological Arguments,” *The Philosophical Review* 69 (1960), pp. 41–62.
 - William E. Mann, “The Ontological Presuppositions of the Ontological Argument,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 26.2 (December, 1972), pp. 260–77.
 - William E. Mann, “The Perfect Island,” *Mind* n. s. 85 (1976), pp. 417–21. On the ontological argument.
 - Calvin G. Normore, “Goodness and Rational Choice in the Early Middle Ages,” in Henrik Lagerlund & Mikko Yrönsurri, ed., *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002), pp. 29–47. I have also included the consolidated bibliography from the volume, so you can figure out what those references are in Normore’s notes. Pages 36–37 deal with Anselm’s *Monologion*, Chap. 1, and pp. 36ff. deal with *On the Fall of the Devil*.
 - C. G. Normore, “Picking and Choosing: Anselm and Ockham on Choice,” *Vivarium* 36 (1998), pp. 23–39. Pages 27–31 are on Anselm’s *On the Fall of the Devil*. But the whole of pp. 23–31 are relevant to Anselm. The rest of the paper is excellent, as Normore always is, but not of particular relevance to Anselm.
 - Paul E. Oppenheimer & Edward N. Zalta, “On the Logic of the Ontological Argument,” *Philosophical Perspectives* 5 (1991), pp. 509–29.

- *Alvin Plantinga, “Kant’s Objection to the Ontological Argument,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966), pp. 537–46. It’s on Kant, but I may want to discuss it anyway in connection with the ontological argument.
- Tony Roark, “Conceptual Closure in Anselm’s Proof,” *History and Philosophy of Logic* 24 (2003), pp. 1–14. See Klima’s “Saint Anselm’s Proof” and his reply to Roark, above. On the ontological argument.
- Jerome Shaffer, “Existence, Predication, and the Ontological Argument,” *Mind* n.s. 71 (1962), pp. 307–325.
- John R. Sheets, “Justice in the Moral Thought of St. Anselm,” *The Modern Schoolman* 25 (1948), pp. 132–39. Deals with several of Anselm’s works.
- M. P. Smith, “A Puzzle in Anselm’s Unfinished Work,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 3 (1986), pp. 137–47. On the “Lambeth Fragments.”
- Paul Vincent Spade, “Anselm and Ambiguity,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 7 (1976), pp. 433–45. Reply to Lewis, above.
- *Paul Vincent Spade, “What Is a Proof for the Existence of God?,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 6 (1975), pp. 234–42. Off limits for a research report; we’ll probably talk about this in class.
- Douglas Walton, “St. Anselm and the Logical Syntax of Agency,” *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976), pp. 298–312. On the “Lambeth Fragments,” which Walton calls “Lambeth Manuscript 59,” because the fragments are found in a Lambeth Palace manuscript.
- Edward Wierenga, “Anselm on Omnipresence,” *The New Scholasticism* 62 (1988), pp. 30–41. On *Monologion*, Chaps. 20–23. See also the reply by Brian Leftow, above.
- George Hamilton Williams, “The Sacramental Presuppositions of Anselm’s ‘Cur Deus Homo’,” *Church History* 26 (1957), pp. 245–74.
- Henry G. Wolz, “The Empirical Basis of Anselm’s Arguments,” *The Philosophical Review* 60 (1951), pp. 341–61. On the ontological argument.

Other resources

- Anselm of Canterbury, *The Major Works*, Brian Davies and G. R. Evans, ed. trans., (“Oxford’s World Classics”; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Available online through the Library’s subscription to the “Past Masters Philosophers” database. Go to the Library site (<http://www.libraries.iub.edu/>), click on “Resource Gateway,” then on “Resources A–Z,” and then click on “P.” You will have to log in to get access to this. (Note: The first time I offered this course, in the Spring of 2006, I used this volume as one of the required textbooks. In my judgment, the translations are very inconsistently done, and I do not

recommend the volume on the whole. The Thomas Williams volume, which was not yet available in 2006, is far superior. Note, however, that this volume does contain a translation of the *De grammatico*, which is not included in the Williams volume.)

If you need to check the Latin of any passage in Anselm, let me know. I have the complete works in Latin.

- [The Catholic Encyclopedia article on Anselm](#). This is an older but still useful article.
- [Jasper Hopkins's Homepage](#). Hopkins is an older scholar who has done much work on Anselm. There are links to some of his translations here, as well as to various articles. If you want to use one of these articles for a research report, check with me first.
- Williams, Thomas, "Saint Anselm", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2008 Edition)*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/anselm/>.

Places Relevant to Anselm's Life



Aosta (Italy)



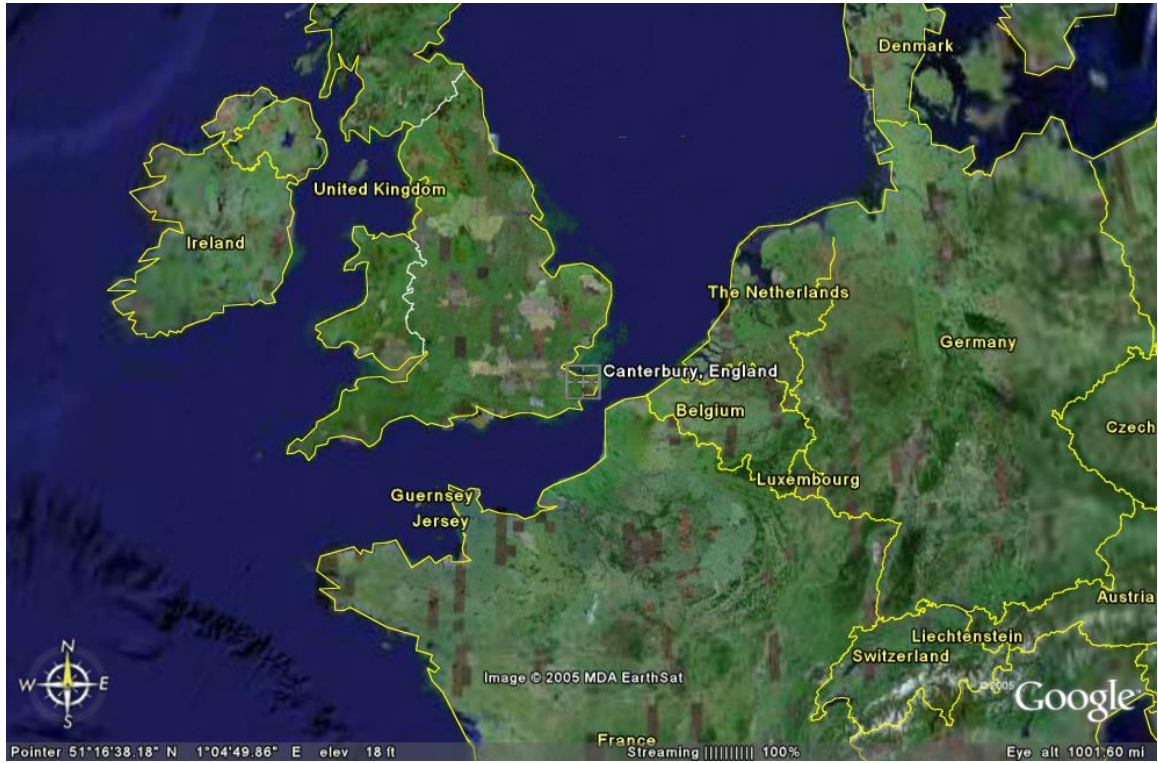
Bec (Normandy)



Bec and Caen (France)



Canterbury (England)



The *Monologion* Arguments for the Existence of God

I. The Ch. 1 Argument

The “One over Many Principle”: Whenever two or more things are like in being ϕ (fill in some adjective or noun for ϕ), there is some *single* thing “ ϕ -ness,”¹ in virtue of which they are all ϕ . (For example, human beings are all alike in virtue a single “human-ness” they all share.)

The “Self-Predication Principle”: ϕ -ness is itself ϕ . (For example, “circle-ness” [= circularity] is itself circular. Goodness is itself good.)

The “Third-Man Argument” in Plato’s *Parmenides*: Plato assumes, in his version of the “One over Many Principle,” that the one “ ϕ -ness” common to all the ϕ s is *distinct* from all the ϕ . (Anselm doesn’t assume this, and so he is saved from the “Third Man Argument.”) Suppose we have two men, Socrates and Plato. By (Plato’s version of) the “One over Many Principle,” they are both men in virtue of some *third* thing “man-ness” (or “humanity”), which is distinct from both Socrates and Plato. But, by the “Self-Predication Principle,” this “man-ness” (“humanity”) is itself a man, so now we have *three* men. By the “One over Many Principle” again, this means that there is yet a *fourth* thing (I don’t know what you’d call it) in virtue of which Socrates, Plato and “man-ness” are all men. By the “Self-Predication Principle” again, this fourth thing is likewise a man. And so on. The result is an infinite regress. Anselm avoids the Third Man problem by *not* requiring that ϕ -ness be distinct from the things that are ϕ .

II. The Ch. 3 Argument

Background: (Anselm doesn’t define the following notion, but let’s do so in order to try to see what he means by “exists through.”)

\underline{x} requires \underline{y} =_{df.} \underline{x} can’t exist unless \underline{y} exists
(i.e., the existence of \underline{x} entails the existence of \underline{y})

The “requirement” relation, defined in this way, is:

- (a) Reflexive: Everything requires itself. (This doesn’t mean everything requires *only* itself; things may require themselves and *other* things as well.)
- (b) Transitive: If \underline{x} requires \underline{y} and \underline{y} requires \underline{z} , then \underline{x} also requires \underline{z} .

Notice that there’s nothing especially problematic or dubious about the “requires” relationship; it’s perfectly straightforward.

Now let’s define Anselm’s “exists through” relation in terms of the “requirement” relation like this:

\underline{x} exists through \underline{y} =_{df.} \underline{x} requires \underline{y} & $(\underline{x}=\underline{y} \leftrightarrow (\underline{z})(\underline{x} \neq \underline{z} \rightarrow \sim \underline{x}$ requires $\underline{z}))$

¹ Many philosophers make abstract nouns by simply suffixing ‘-ness’ to a common noun or adjective: “circleness,” “tableness,” “goodness.” This is just sloppy English. In normal English (as distinct from philosophical “broken English”), the ‘-ness’ suffix only goes with *adjectives*. Nouns form abstract forms by other suffixes: ‘-ity’, ‘-dom’, ‘-hood’, ‘-ship’, etc.: ‘circularity’, not ‘circleness’; ‘kingdom’ or ‘kingship’ (which mean different things, of course), not ‘kingness’; ‘Godhead’ (a variation of the ‘-hood’ suffix), not ‘Godness’. Some words in English (particularly color-words) function as both nouns and adjectives (‘Blue is a pleasing color’, ‘The sky is blue’). This is *not* true in Latin, which has separate words. This misuse of suffixes is one of my favorite pet peeves. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity, I’ll formulate the “One over Many” Principle using the ‘-ness’ suffix, with the understanding that the correct abstract noun may be formed differently.

That is, \underline{x} exists through \underline{y} iff **(i)** \underline{x} requires \underline{y} , and **(ii)** \underline{x} just is \underline{y} (i.e., they are *identical*, so that we're saying that \underline{x} exists through *itself*) if and only if \underline{x} *doesn't* require anything else.

The relation of “existing through” is:

- (c) Not reflexive: Not everything exists through itself. Some things require for their existence the existence of something else too.²
- (d) Transitive: Like the “requires” relation, if \underline{x} exists through \underline{y} and \underline{y} exists through \underline{z} , then \underline{x} also exists through \underline{z} .³
- (e) Antisymmetric: No “loops” with two or more steps in them. If \underline{x} exists through \underline{y} , then \underline{y} *doesn't* exist through \underline{x} — unless $\underline{x} = \underline{y}$.⁴

Here then is Anselm's argument:

Nothing exists through nothing. (That is, *everything* exists through *something*.)

Everything \underline{x} either exists *through itself* or it doesn't. If it does, then it exists through *something*. If it doesn't, then (look back to our definition of “exists through” above) *either* **(i)** \underline{x} does not require itself (which is false, since “requirement” is reflexive), *or else* **(ii)** the biconditional after the ‘&’ on the right of our definition is false when $\underline{x} = \underline{y}$. But in that case the biconditional is false only if its right half is false—that is, only if \underline{x} *does* require something \underline{z} other than itself. And in that case, \underline{x} exists through \underline{z} , as you can verify by looking at the definition. In either case, therefore, \underline{x} exists through *something*.

∴ There are two cases: **(i)** There is some *one* thing through which everything exists, or **(ii)** there is some group of *several* things through which everything exists.⁵

We can guarantee that at least **(ii)** will hold if we just make our group big enough: take *everything* that exists.

Case **(ii)**: Suppose there is such a *group* of

² Note that this is not merely a point of logic but a substantive claim. Nevertheless, it seems uncontroversial enough. Some things, for example, are the effects of other causes.

³ If \underline{x} exists through itself, then \underline{x} doesn't require and so *doesn't* exist through anything else (from the definition), so that transitivity in that case holds trivially. If \underline{x} exists through something \underline{y} *other than* itself, then the left half biconditional on the right of our definition is false, and so is the right half of that biconditional (since \underline{x} does require something other than itself). In that case, the right conjunct on the right of the definition is true, and the “exists through” relation just reduces to the left conjunct, the “requires” relation, which, as we saw, is transitive.

⁴ If \underline{x} exists through \underline{y} and \underline{y} exists through \underline{x} , then by the transitivity of “exists through,” \underline{x} exists through \underline{x} . But then, in virtue of our definition of “exists through,” \underline{x} *doesn't* exist through anything other than itself. For the logicians among you, “antisymmetry” is not the same as “asymmetry.” Asymmetry is what we would have if we struck out the words ‘unless $\underline{x} = \underline{y}$ ’ in the above statement. A relation is “asymmetrical” if *nothing* can bear that relation to itself. Antisymmetry, on the other hand, is a slightly weaker notion, as you can see from the definition above.

⁵ I don't mean everything exists through *all* the things in the group, but only that everything that exists exists through *something* in the group.

things.

Then there are three subcases:

(α) All the things in the group exist through some one thing outside the group. But this is impossible.

This would mean case **(i)** above was the correct one, not case **(ii)**.

(β) All the things in the group exist each through itself only. But this is impossible too.

By the “One over Many Principle,” they would all exist through “self-existence.” So case **(β)** reduces back to case **(α)**.

(γ) The things in the group exist mutually, through one another. But this is impossible as well.

By the antisymmetry of “exists through.”

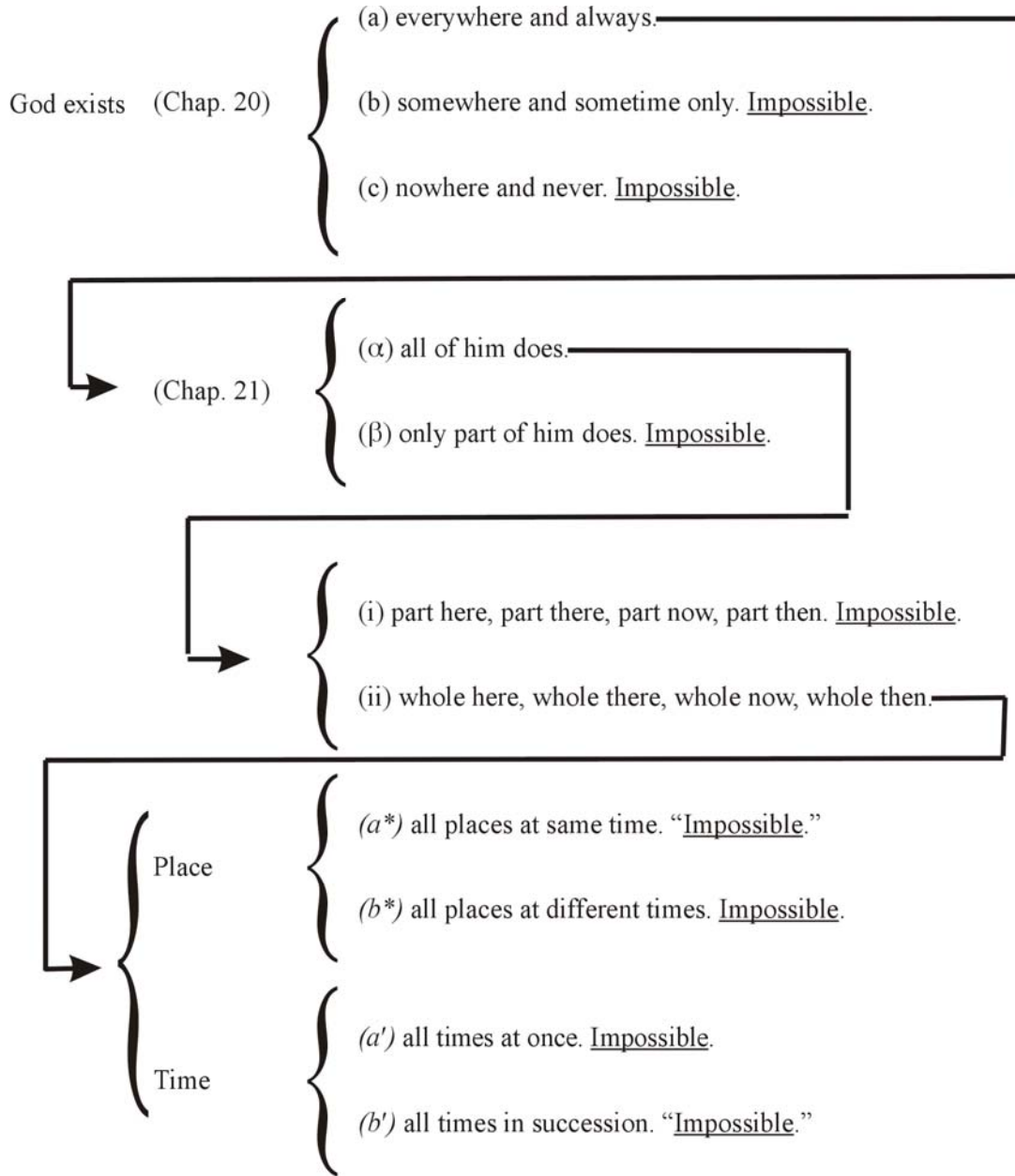
\therefore Case **(ii)** above is impossible, and so we are left with case **(i)**: There must exist some *one* thing through which everything exists. (And that’s God.)

Process of elimination.⁶

⁶ For you logicians again: This is called “constructive dilemma” or “disjunction elimination.”

Diagram of the argument in Chaps. 20–21

Here is a little diagram that may be helpful in keeping track of the argument in *Monologion* Chaps. 20–21. At the last stage, I have marked (*a**) and (*b'*) as “impossible,” in quotation marks, to suggest that they are not *really* impossible. In fact, as I read Anselm, these are the alternatives he ends up adopting in Chap. 22.



Marmoutier (Gaunilo's monastery)



Descartes's Version of the Ontological Argument

In connection with this discussion, see *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, ed., 2 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911): from vol. 1, *Meditation* v, pp. 180–82; vol. 2, the first set of *Objections* (by Caterus), pp. 7–8; and vol. 2, Descartes's *Reply* to the first set of *Objections*, p. 20. The passages are readily available in other translations as well.

As I've discussed in lecture, Descartes's version of the ontological argument is importantly different from Anselm's, but it has interesting features of its own.

For this version, we need the notion of a perfection. As I've observed in class, the term 'perfection' nowhere occurs in Anselm's version of the argument, and no essential use is made of the notion, explicitly or implicitly. Still, the basic idea is a traditional one; it is by no means something new with Descartes. Anselm, for instance, spoke in terms of one thing's being "greater than" another. And it is not inappropriate to think of Descartes's notion of a "perfection" as being the notion of a "great-making" property.

The notion of a perfection is historically—but perhaps not necessarily—tied up with a basically Platonic/Augustinian way of looking at the world as arranged in a hierarchy. The details of the hierarchy are not important to us now, but the idea goes something like this:

First of all, the hierarchy is a hierarchy of values (moral values or "ontological" rankings), but—equivalently, in this tradition—a hierarchy of powers. That is, higher things on the hierarchy are regarded as more valuable than lower things because they can do more.

Some things, for example, just exist. They just sit there and don't do much else. For example, rocks. They are relatively low on the hierarchy. Other things, however, not only *exist* but are also alive. They can do more; they can grow and reproduce, for instance. Everything alive exists, but not *vice versa*. Living things, then, are higher on the hierarchy than non-living ones.¹ Again, some things not only exist and are alive, they are also intelligent. And they can do still more; they can understand and know, for example.² Everything intelligent is alive and exists, but not vice versa.

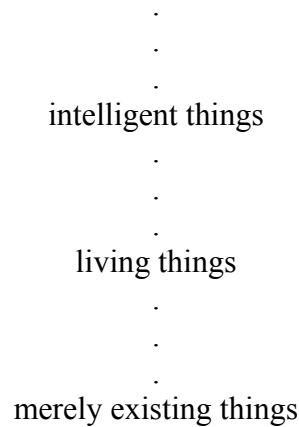
Now you may have an objection. I just said that intelligence implies life. But is that so? Couldn't there be an immaterial being that is intelligent but not alive—because it has no

¹ Note that to say living things are "higher" in this way than non-living ones is not to say that living things cannot in some way be reduced to non-living ones. It is not to say, for instance, that life is anything more than fancy chemistry. That is an entirely different question. The point is simply that, reducible to chemistry or not, living things can do more than non-living things can, and so are regarded as better in value and higher on the hierarchy.

² Again, this has nothing to do with whether intelligence can somehow be explained in terms of biochemistry; that is an entirely different question.

organic body? For instance, an angel? You may not believe in angels, but that isn't the point here. We're not talking about whether there are any such things, but only about whether there could be such things.

But this objection doesn't hold. People who held—or hold—this traditional kind of hierarchy also have a notion of “life” that is not tied up with the notion of the organic in such a way. For them, not everything that is alive is material. You may find such a theory not very appealing, but that doesn't make any difference. For now, I'm only giving you illustrations of how the kind of hierarchy we're talking about might go. Our example then would look like this:



Each higher class is included in (is narrower) than lower classes.

The idea then is this: Higher things on this hierarchy have perfections the lower ones don't have; in our example the “perfections” would be called (in descending order): intelligence, life, existence.

Note that there's no reason in principle to think this hierarchy stops with intelligent things. There might be yet higher perfections. In fact, there is perhaps no reason to think the hierarchy ever stops. Perhaps there is an infinity of ever higher perfections without end.

Just how we're supposed to decide which properties count as perfections and which don't is delicate matter, and is perhaps not altogether well-worked out historically. But we don't have to stop over the question now. We're just sketching out the general structure.

It *is* clear however that perfections are traditionally supposed to be arranged in a hierarchy like this, with some perfections higher than others. This is the “Platonic” legacy of the theory. Everything that has a higher perfection has all the lower ones too, but not vice versa.

If this is so, then it follows that:

All perfections are compossible (jointly compatible).

Proof of this:

To say x has a perfection P does not rule out its having any of the other perfections as well. Why not?

- (a) It will automatically have all lower perfections (since everything that has a higher perfection will have all the lower ones too).
- (b) Therefore, it cannot rule out any higher perfection either. For suppose it ruled out a certain higher perfection P*. That is, nothing could have both P and P*. In that case, anything that had P* would both have P (since P* is higher than P, and higher perfections entail all the lower ones) and also not have P (since by hypothesis P rules out P*). But this is a contradiction. Therefore (by *reductio*) P does not rule out P* after all.

In short, all perfections are compatible. But since that is so, it is possible—not contradictory—for something to have all perfections. (Recall my claim in class that Anselm's version of the ontological argument does not presuppose this kind consistency or possibility of God.)

The fact that it is possible for something to have all perfections is important for our present purpose, because it is this conclusion that Descartes needs for his ontological argument to work—whether he gets this conclusion from a “Platonic” picture of the world or not. (In fact, Descartes by and large did accept such a picture. The point is that his argument does not rest on such a picture; it does however rest on this conclusion.)

The reason this is crucial for Descartes’s argument is that his definition of God is effectively: a being that combines all perfections. We are guaranteed, in virtue of what a perfection is, that such a being is at least possible. (See the text of Descartes, where the notion of God is the notion of a “supremely perfect being”—that is, a being that has all perfections.)

Furthermore, from Descartes’s discussion (see paragraph 2 of his text in the Haldane and Ross version), it becomes clear that he takes our notion of God to be a notion of a being that essentially combines all perfections.

What is this “essence” talk? Well, whatever it means for Anselm (it probably isn’t this), for Descartes a property P is “essential” to something x if and only if x cannot exist without having P. (And of course, conversely: it can’t have P without existing.)

The opposite of “essential” is “accidental.” (Again, the precise way of drawing this distinction depends on the particular author. But these typically are the terms that are distinguished.) For example, it is accidental to me that I have teeth. I could lose all my teeth and still exist, and still exist as me—that is, as the same entity I am now. On the other hand, perhaps it is essential to me to have a mind. Perhaps I couldn’t lose my mind (in the sense of ceasing to have one, not in the other sense) and yet remain me. (The conditions for saying we have the “same entity” are precisely why the distinction between essence and accident can get to be a very messy distinction.) The notion of “essence” is rather difficult to make out in this way if you push it, but this is OK for our purposes.

In any event, for Descartes the notion of God is the notion of a being that essentially has all perfections. And we know now that such a being is at least possible—since all perfections are compatible.

Note that this conclusion does not depend on something you might expect. It does not depend on there being a finite number of perfections. You might think this isn't right. If the number of perfections is infinite, after all, then (you might think) there is no God, since God is supposed to be the being with the highest perfection. But if there is an infinite number of perfections, there need not be a highest one. There might be, of course; you might think there is a highest perfection, with an infinite number of perfections below it. For example, assign the highest perfection the numerical value 0, and the lower perfections numerical values -1, -2, ... In that case there would be no lowest perfection. For that matter, you might have a theory according to which there is a highest perfection, and what mathematicians call a dense ordering of perfections below it. It gets rather fun to play with the alternatives here. But no matter; none of this affects the conclusion that God is at least possible. For Descartes doesn't define God as having the highest perfection, but as having all perfections. And you can have all perfections even if there isn't a highest one. That would just mean you have an infinite number of perfection! This really isn't any harder to understand than the fact that the class of all positive integers is a perfectly acceptable and possible class even though there is no highest integer.

Of course if there is a highest perfection, then God will have it and all lower ones too—since higher perfections entail lower ones.

We are now in a position to look at Descartes's actual argument. In effect, it goes like this:

- (1) I have a concept of God as a being combining in its essence all perfections.

Note: Just as for Anselm's argument, the appeal to the facts of what's going on in our minds is misleading and unnecessary. The psychological facts are strictly irrelevant to the argument. We can put this first step more simply like this:

God =_{def.} being combining in its essence all perfections

- (2) Existence is a perfection. (Premise)

Note that this step is not automatic, even though it's true for the sample hierarchy of perfections I gave earlier. The claim depends on the details of your theory of perfections. Nevertheless, it's an innocuous assumption. Any theory of perfections, if it does not already list existence as a perfection, can plausibly be extended to include existence as the weakest or lowest perfection—insofar as you can't have any properties (perfections or

otherwise) unless you exist. (Yes, I know. There are ontologies that lack this feature. Let's just ignore them for now.)

- (3) Therefore, existence is contained in the essence of God. (From steps 1–2.)
- (4) Whatever belongs to the essence of a thing cannot be separated from that essence—or that thing—without contradiction. (See above on “essence,” and Descartes’s own text with his example of the triangle.) (Premise)
- (5) Therefore, existence cannot be separated from the essence of God—that is, from God himself. (From 3–4.)
- (6) That is, God exists.

Objection and Reply

I grant everything—at least for the sake of argument—up to the last step. That is, (6) just doesn't follow from (5); it is not just another way of saying (5). Why not?

To say that property P cannot be separated from the essence of x—that is, that P is essential to x—is to say only that you can't have x without P. It is not to say that you really do have x—that x really exists. So the proper conclusion from (5) is only

- (6a) God cannot exist without having the property existence.

And that, far from proving the existence of God, is utterly trivial. In fact, no matter what x is, x cannot exist without having the property existence—and vice versa.

Therefore, existence belongs not only to the essence of God, but to anything's essence, whether it is real or not. So if Descartes's argument works for God, it will work for anything that can be defined! Hence, we get the result that anything definable exists. And that is way too strong. It's a stronger result than even Anselm's argument yields if Gaunilo's “Lost Island” objection is correct.

Before Descartes published his *Meditations*, he circulated them privately among certain learned men of his day, and asked for their comments and objections. He collected their objections and published them, together with his own replies, when he published the *Meditations* themselves. One of the sets of objections was by a certain priest named Caterus. He raises an objection similar to the one I just raised. (See the first set of Objections.) The objection is also similar to one raised by Kant later on.

Caterus in effect says this: Consider the concept “existent lion.” That is,

x =_{def.} existent lion.

Here x essentially has the property existence. It is built into the very definition of x. Therefore, Caterus argues, if the kind of move Descartes is making will work, then so too it ought to work in this case. And then I (Caterus) could prove the existence of this lion

purely by logic. And so too, of course, I could prove the existence of anything else this way.

Descartes's reply is in two parts. The first part is the most interesting. The second part we will skip.

The first part of Descartes's reply amounts to a correction or revision of the original argument. Descartes says he wasn't talking about just plain old existence (although he most certainly was). In the case of God, he says, we are talking about necessary existence. God isn't supposed to happen to exist, but to exist necessarily. Other things exist, if at all, only "contingently"—that is, they exist, but not necessarily.

And Now Things Get Interesting

What difference does this move make to the argument. A lot! Let's rewrite the argument making this revision. It would go like this:

- (1*) God =_{def.} being combining in its essence all perfections
- (2*) Necessary existence is a perfection. (Premise)
- (3*)–(4*) Fill in the intervening steps as before.
- (5*) Therefore, necessary existence cannot be separated from the essence of God—that is, from God himself. (From steps (3*)–(4*.)

This is where we stopped earlier. We could not conclude further that God actually does exist. We could only conclude that

If God exists, he has existence (and vice versa).

That is, we could only conclude

If God exists, he exists.

And that, we noted is trivial.

So too here. We cannot conclude—at least not right away—that God exists. But we can conclude:

- (6*) If God exists, he has necessary existence (and vice versa).

And that, far from being trivial, is a very powerful result. In order to see why, we need to talk about necessity and possibility for a moment.

Consider the notion of a "possible world" or "possible situation." (Those of you familiar with modern modal logic will have met the notion of a possible world already.)

Whenever I tell a story—provided my story is internally coherent and consistent—I am describing a (possible) situation.³ If I told a more elaborate story, I would be describing a more complex or “complete” possible situation.

Now let’s go an extreme, where what I describe in my story is a complete (possible) universe, in all its detail. Nothing is left out of account. (Such a story would have to be infinitely long, but never mind) That is, to a pretty good approximation, the notion of a possible world. Note that the actual world is a possible world in this sense; it’s the world whose story is the true story. The other worlds aren’t “actual” in this way; they are just consistent (but false) stories.⁴

There is nothing especially mysterious about this notion of a possible world, once you get used to it. The point of talking this way is simply to give us a convenient device to handle talk about possibility and necessity. They are, after all, relatively obscure notions. And the notion of a possible “world” allows us to translate talk of possibility and necessity into the more familiar logical notions of “all” and “some,” which we know how to handle. (They are treated in ordinary quantification theory.) Thus:

P is necessarily so =_{def.} P is so in all possible worlds.

P is possibly so =_{def.} P is so in at least one possible world.

(Don’t be misled. This isn’t circular. You might think we haven’t gained anything, since we’re defining possibility in terms of possible world, which begs the question. After all, we don’t know what the possible worlds are until we know what’s possible! But that’s not right. We’re not defining possibility and necessity at all; we’re only giving ourselves some tools for dealing with those notions.)

OK, now let’s use this machinery in our (revised) argument. So far we have (see step (6*) of our revised argument above):

If God exists, he has necessary existence (and vice versa).

That is,

If God exists, he exists in all possible worlds.

(That is, if he exists then he really exists in the actual world, the world with the true story, and he exists in the story in all other possible worlds, the ones with false stories.)

Now this itself is supposed to be a truth based on the essence of God, and so is a necessary truth. That is, it’s not just a contingent fact that if God exists he exists necessarily. It is a fact that follows from God’s definition. In short, at this point we can go back and re-write step (4*) of our argument like this:

³ Note that by “possible” here, I mean “logically possible,” not just “possible for all I know.”

⁴ If you’ve encountered David Lewis’s odd theory of “actuality,” make the appropriate adjustments.

- (4*) For all possible worlds w, if God exists there (in w), then he exists in all possible worlds.

In other words, pick any possible world w. If God exists in w, then he exists in all possible worlds.

In short, this amounts to:

- (5*) If God exists in even a single possible world w, he exists in all possible worlds.

(The move from (4*) to (5*) is based on simple quantification theory.)

But of course the actual world, we said, is a possible world too (the world with the true story). Therefore, from (5*) we get:

- (6*) If God exists in even a single possible world, he exists in the actual world.

That is—translating back now out of the possible world talk, which has done its work for us:

- (7*) If God is even possible, then he *actually exists*.

This is a *very* strong claim, and we have succeeded in getting it validly.⁵ There is nothing wrong with the argument above. If you're unfamiliar with this kind of modal talk, please look it over carefully; it isn't really all that hard, once you get the hang of it.)

Note that it follows from (7*) that if God doesn't exist, then he's impossible. And we already know, from (4*) (or, equivalently, (5*)), that if he does exist, he's necessary. Together, these two results imply that the existence of God is not a matter of contingency. Whichever way it turns out, it has to be that way. In this respect, the question of the existence of God is perhaps a little like a question in mathematics, where theorems don't just "happen" to be true.

But now for the final touch. We know, since God is defined as a being combining in its essence all perfections, and since all perfections are compatible, that God *is* a possible being. Thus, from (7*) it follows that:

- (8*) God actually exists.

This completes the proof.

⁵ Look ahead to the supplementary material at the end of this handout, where things get really interesting.

But ...

Can this be right? Do we really have a successful proof for the existence of God? Not so fast. Look at what the proof depends on:

- (a) Talk about “possible worlds” and the manipulation of them. This is perhaps not entirely uncontroversial, but it is not an especially strong assumption either.
- (b) It also depends on our definition of God. And that ought to be OK. We can’t argue with definitions, after all. Besides, it seems to be a pretty *good* definition.
- (c) It also depends on the claim that necessary existence is a perfection. (See step (2*).)

And that is the crucial step.

As long as Descartes was talking about plain old existence, we said the claim that existence is a perfection is uncontroversial and OK, even if it’s not automatic. But that was because we knew that if a thing has any properties at all, it must exist—so that adding existence to a set of properties won’t make the set inconsistent.

But how can we be so sure about necessary existence? Can we count it as a perfection?

To some extent, one’s choice of a list of perfections, we said, is just a matter of your particular theory. But there is one constraint: all the things we pick as perfections have to be jointly compatible. This is especially important in our argument, since that is how we know that the definition of God is consistent, and therefore that God is possible.

But how do we know that necessary existence, when added to the other properties we want to call perfections and attribute to God, won’t make the whole combination inconsistent? For that matter, it isn’t just a question of whether necessary existence is inconsistent with the other things we want to call perfections. How do we know it isn’t inconsistent with itself? That is, how do we know it is even possible to have a necessary being of any kind—God or otherwise?

It is not clear how you would answer these questions. They go to the heart of the philosophy of logic, metaphysics and epistemology. How can we tell whether the notion of necessary existence is a coherent notion or not? And if it is a coherent notion, how can we tell what other notions it is consistent with?

I don’t know how to answer that, or even where to begin. And so we don’t really have a conclusive proof for the existence of God after all. What we do have falls just short of that. If the notion of necessary existence is coherent, and if it is compatible with the other things we want to say about God, then God is real! But that is as far as we can go.

Note that Anselm’s version of the ontological argument does not, I claimed, depend on whether the notion of God is consistent. But then his argument, I also claimed, failed on other grounds.

Supplementary Remarks for Modal Experts

For those of you with some modal logic, let's use the familiar notation:

$$\Box p = \text{Necessarily } p$$

$$\Diamond p = \text{Possibly } p$$

I claimed above that our argument was at least uncontroversially deductively valid, whatever turns out to be the case with the consistency of the notion of God. But in fact matters aren't quite that simple. I was arguing from the point of view of what logicians call **S5** modality.⁶ The characteristic axiom of **S5** is:

$$\Diamond p \rightarrow \Box \Diamond p.^7$$

That is, if p is possible, then it doesn't just happen to be possible; it's necessarily possible.

But **S5** is a fairly strong modal system, fine for certain purposes but not altogether uncontroversial when it comes to talking about the metaphysics of modality. There are weaker systems that don't assume so much. One of the weakest is called **T**,⁸ first proposed by Robert Feys in 1937.⁹ We'll use what we need of **T** as we go along.

There is another axiom, the so called "Brouwerian Axiom," which does not hold in **T**. It holds in **S5** but is weaker. (That is, you can have the Brouwerian Axiom without having **S5**, although you can't have **S5** without also having the Brouwerian Axiom as a theorem.) It says:

$$p \rightarrow \Box \Diamond p.$$

Think about that axiom. It's not the same as $\Box(p \rightarrow \Diamond p)$, which holds even in **T**. The weaker claim says only that the conditional "if p , then possibly p " is a necessary one—which borders on being trivial. If something's true, it got to be possible—and more. But the Brouwerian Axiom says something stronger, roughly that if something's true, then the claim that it's possible is not just a truth but a necessary truth.

The Brouwerian Axiom is equivalent to:

$$\Diamond \Box \sim p \rightarrow \sim p$$

(Simply transpose the Axiom, and then manipulate the modal operators and the negation in the familiar ways—"drive the negation in.")

⁶ See G. E. Hughes and M. J. Cresswell, *An Introduction to Modal Logic*, (London: Methuen, 1968), Chap. 3. The modal system **S5** was originally discussed by C. I. Lewis.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49. Hughes and Cresswell use different notation for their modal operators, but I am translating into what I take are the more familiar ones. See *ibid.*, p. 24 n. 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*, Chap. 2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Now, let $s =_{\text{def.}}$ “God exists.” Substitute $\sim s$ for p in the (transposed) Brouwerian Axiom, and we get: $\diamond \Box s \rightarrow s$. That is, if it is possibly necessary that God exists, then he does. Call this claim G.

OK, now let’s start a new argument using our new notation:

- (1) $\Box(s \rightarrow \Box s)$ (Rewriting (4*) from part of this “Discussion” before these “Supplementary Remarks.”)
- (2) $\diamond s \rightarrow \diamond \Box s$ (This is a theorem even of the very weak modal system **T**.¹⁰ In short, if its possible that God exists, then it’s possible that he necessarily exists.)
- (3) $\diamond \Box s \rightarrow s$ (Claim G, as above, which comes ultimately from the Brouwerian Axiom.)
- (4) $\diamond s \rightarrow s$ (From 2–3, by transitivity.)

In short, we’ve got the same result we got before, in (7*), but this time without adopting the point of view of **S5**. All we really need is the weak modal system **T**, plus a particular application of the Brouwerian Axiom.

We can easily go a little further:

- (5) $s \rightarrow \Box s$ (From (1), since $\Box p \rightarrow p$ in even the weakest modal systems. Substitute $s \rightarrow \Box s$ for p .)
- (6) $\diamond s \rightarrow \Box s$ (From 4–5.)

In short, not only do we have the result that if God is even possible, he exists; we also have the further result that if he is even possible, he is necessary.

R. M. Adams presents what amounts to the proof (1)–(4) in his “The Logical Structure of Anselm’s Arguments,” *The Philosophical Review* 80 (1971), pp. 28–54, at pp. 42ff., and claims to find it plausibly present in Anselm’s *Reply* to Gaunilo, Chap. 1. I think it’s a very interesting argument, but I don’t agree that it’s present in Anselm’s *Reply*. Adams proposes that this argument doesn’t require the metaphysical assumptions of the argument in *Proslogion* 2 (which include, he thinks, the claim that the concept of “that than which nothing greater can be thought” is consistent—I disagree that this is an assumption of the *Proslogion* argument), and is therefore a stronger argument in the sense that it doesn’t assume as much.

But before we start feeling too complacent about the matter, let’s notice something else. (Adams doesn’t go on to make this observation.) Let’s start a new argument:

- (1′) $\Box(s \rightarrow \Box s)$ (As in step (1) of the argument immediately above.)
- (2′) $s \rightarrow \Box s$ (From (1′), since $\Box p \rightarrow p$ in even the weakest modal systems. Compare step (5) of the argument immediately above.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 37. See also pp. 26–27.

- (3') $\sim\Box s \rightarrow \sim s$ (From (2') by transposition.)
 (4') $\Diamond\sim s \rightarrow \sim s$ (From (3') by familiar manipulation of the modal operators and the negation—"drive the negation in.")

In short, if it's even possible that God doesn't exist, then he doesn't. But notice that this time, we don't need to appeal to the Brouwerian Axiom or any particular application of it. In short, from the proof (1)–(6), if it's even possible that God exists, then he does, but we need an application of the Brouwerian Axiom to get this result. And from the proof (1')–(4'), if it's even possible that he doesn't exist, then he doesn't, and this time we don't need anything like the Brouwerian Axiom. Now, given that—as I argued above—we don't know whether the notion of God is consistent or not, and therefore whether God is possible or not, which one would you bet on, the argument that requires the stronger and more controversial modal assumption or the one that doesn't require it? It seems to me that that argument for the existence of God is at a decided disadvantage here.

Why the asymmetry? Why do we require the stronger modal assumption to go the one way when we don't require it to go the other? Well, let's continue our argument (1')–(4'):

- (5') $\Diamond s \rightarrow \Diamond\Box s$ (As for step (2) of the argument (1)–(6) above. Once again, This is a theorem even of the very weak modal system **T**.)
 (6') $\sim\Diamond\Box s \rightarrow \sim\Diamond s$ (From step (5'), by transposition.)
 (7') $\Diamond\Box s \rightarrow s$ (Claim G, as above, which comes ultimately from the Brouwerian Axiom.)
 (8') $\sim s \rightarrow \sim\Diamond\Box s$ (From step (7'), by transposition.)
 (9') $\sim s \rightarrow \sim\Diamond s$ (From steps (8')–(6'), by transitivity.)

In short, in the argument for the existence of God, we need an application of the Brouwerian Axiom to show that if God is possible then he exists, but in the further argument that if God exists then he necessariy, we need only the very weakest modal principles. It works just the other way if we're arguing for the non-existence of God. In the argument that if it is possible for God not to exist then he doesn't, we need only the very weakest modal principles, but in the further argument that if God doesn't exist then he's impossible, we need an application of something like the Brouwerian Axiom. Logical "duality" is preserved, but it's still the case that the argument for God's non-existence (but not for his impossibility) requires less.

The Ontological Argument

There exists in the understanding (or “mind”—*in intellectu*) that than which no greater can be thought. (Let’s just agree to abbreviate that whole phrase by \underline{z} , for short.)

2. Suppose, as a hypothesis for *reductio*, \underline{z} doesn’t exist in reality.
 3. Nevertheless, \underline{z} can be thought to exist in reality, and that would be greater.
 4. Hence \underline{z} —i.e., a being than which no greater can be thought—is not after all a being than which no greater can be thought. (I just thought of a greater one, in step 3.) Thus, $\underline{z} \neq \underline{z}$, which is a contradiction.
5. Since the hypothesis in step 2 leads to a contradiction in steps 3–4, it must be false. Thus (by *reductio*), \underline{z} does exist in reality after all.

Four senses of ‘greater than’

- (a) \underline{x} is really greater than \underline{y} really is.
- (b) \underline{x} is really greater than \underline{y} is conceptually.
- (c) \underline{x} is conceptually greater than \underline{y} really is.
- (d) \underline{x} is conceptually greater than \underline{y} is conceptually.

Anselm's Argument in *Proslogion*, Chap. 3

Let's continue to use 'z' to abbreviate 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', as we did for Chapter 2. Then:

1. What *cannot* be thought not to exist is greater than what *can* be thought not to exist.
2. I can think of something that can't be thought not to exist. For convenience, let's call it a.
3. Suppose (as hypothesis for a *reductio*) that z—the same z as in Anselm's Chap. 2—can be thought not to exist.
4. Therefore, a is greater than z. (From steps 2–3.)
5. But step 4 is a contradiction, since z is that than which *nothing* greater can be thought.
6. Therefore, by *reductio*, z cannot be thought not to exist.

Two forms of premise 2:

- 2a. I can think of: something-(call-it-a)-that-can't-be-thought-not-to-exist.
- 2b. I can think of something (call it a), such that a can't be thought not to exist.

Three Claims Relating Time and Modality

(I'll explain the notation in class):

1. If it will be the case that p , then it was the case that it will be the case that p :

$$Fp \rightarrow PFp$$

2. Necessarily, if it was the case that it will be the case that p , then it will be the case that p . That is:

$$\Box(PFp \rightarrow Fp)$$

3. If it was the case that p , then necessarily it was the case that p :

$$Pp \rightarrow \Box Pp$$

An Argument that Divine Foreknowledge is Incompatible with Human Free Choice

1. What must be the case is not subject to our free choice.
2. What God knows must be the case.
3. God knows our future actions (since he's omniscient).
4. Therefore, our future actions are not subject to our free choice.

From Anselm's Cur deus homo II, Chap. 17 (Basic Writings, pp. 317–18.)

You see, there is antecedent necessity, which is the cause of something's being; and there is subsequent necessity, which the thing itself brings about. It is a case of antecedent and [= that is] efficient necessity when it is said that the heavens revolve because it is necessary that they revolve, whereas it is a case of subsequent necessity—and [= that is] necessity that bring nothing about but rather is brought about—when I say that you are speaking of necessity because you are speaking. For when I say this, I signify that nothing can make it the case that while you are speaking you are not speaking, but not anything is compelling you to speak. For the violence of their natural condition compels the heavens to revolve, whereas no necessity brings it about that you speak. Now wherever there is antecedent necessity there is also subsequent necessity; but it is not the case that where there is subsequent necessity there is automatically also antecedent necessity. For we can say, "It is necessary that the heavens revolve, because they revolve"; but it is not similarly true that you are speaking because it is necessary that you speak.

Passages Relevant to Anselm's *De grammatico*

(All translations are my own.)

(1) Aristotle, *Categories* 1, 1^a12–15: Whatever get from something the names by which they are called, but differ in ending, are called “paronyms.” For example, a grammarian [is so called] from grammar, and a brave [person is so called] from bravery.

(2) Augustine, *On the Customs of the Catholic Church* 1.4, 6¹: Therefore, let us ask what is better than man. That of course will be hard to find out, unless we first consider and discuss what man himself is. I do not think a *definition* of man is now demanded of me. What seems to be asked of me at this point is rather the following: since there is almost universal consensus — or at least it is agreed on between me and those I am now dealing with, and that suffices — that we are put together out of soul and body, what [then] is the man himself? Is he both of the things I [just] mentioned, or the body alone, or the soul alone?

For although soul and body are two things, and neither would be called a “man” if the other did not exist (for neither would the body be a man if the soul did not exist, nor in turn would the soul be a man if a body were not animated by it), nevertheless it can happen that one of these should be regarded as the “man” and called [such].

Therefore, what do we call the “man”? [Is he] soul *and* body, like a “team” [of horses] or a centaur²? [Is he] the body alone, which is being *used* by a soul that rules it, like a “lantern,” [which is] not the flame and the container together but only the container, although we *call* it [a lantern] because of the flame? [Or] do we call nothing but the soul the “man,” but *on account of* the body it rules, just as we call a “rider” not the horse and the man together but only the man, yet [only] insofar as he is suited to governing the horse?

It is hard to decide this issue. Or if it is easy to figure out, [in any case] it requires a long explanation. We do not have to accept and take on that job and delay [here]. For whether both, or only the soul, takes the name ‘man’, the best thing for the man is not what is best for the body. Rather what is best for the soul and body together, or for the soul alone, that is best for the man.

(3) Augustine, *On the City of God* XIX.3³: Now [Varro] tries to convince [us] which of these three is true and ought to be followed, as follows: First, since in philosophy the highest good, not of a tree, not of cattle, not of God, but of man is sought for, he thinks one must ask *what is man himself*. He feels there are two [factors] in [man’s] nature: body and soul. And he does not doubt at all that of these two the soul is the better and

¹ Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 1.4.6, in Migne, PL 32, col. 1313.

² The point seems to depend on the rather odd view that a centaur is not half horse and half man, but rather a combination of a complete horse and a complete man.

³ Augustine, *De civitate dei* XIX.3.1–24.

much the more preeminent. Rather [what he doubts is] whether (1) the soul alone is the man, in such a way that the body is to him as the horse to the rider.⁴ For the rider is not the man *and* the horse, but is only the man. Nevertheless, he is *called* a “rider” because he is somehow related to the horse. Or (2) is the man the body alone, somehow related to the soul, like the cup to the drink? For the chalice *and* the drink the chalice contains are not together called the “cup,” but only the chalice, yet [only] because it is adapted to containing the drink.⁵ Or finally (3) is neither the soul alone nor the body alone the man, but both together, [in such a way that] the soul or the body is one part of him, but he as a whole consists of *both* in order to be a man? Thus we call two conjoined horses a “team.” Either the right one of them or the left one is a part of the team. But we do not call [either] one of them [alone] the “team,” no matter how it is related to the other, but [only] both together. [Varro] chooses the third of these three [alternatives] and supposes that man is neither the soul alone nor the body alone, but the soul and the body together. Hence the highest good of man, by which he is made happy, he says consists of the goods of *both* things, that is, of the soul and of the body.

(4) Anselm, *De grammatico*, §§ 4.231–4.234¹⁶: Surely the name ‘man’ signifies *per se* and as one the [things] of which the whole man consists. Among these, substance stands in the first place, because it is the cause of the others and has them, not as needing them but [them] as needing it. For there is no difference⁷ of substance [such that] substance cannot be found without it, [but] none of its differences can exist without [substance]. Hence, even though all these [things] together, as a single whole, are called⁸ “man” by one name under one signification, nevertheless [this occurs] in such a way that the name is principally significative and appellative of substance. As a result, although it is correct to say a substance is a man, and man is a substance, yet no one says rationality is a man, or man is rationality. Rather [we say man] *has* rationality.

But ‘*grammaticus*’ does not signify man and grammar⁹ as one. Rather it signifies grammar *per se* and man *per aliud*. The name [‘*grammaticus*’], even though it is appellative of man, nevertheless cannot properly be called significative of him; and although it is significative of grammar, nevertheless it is not appellative of it. I am now calling an “appellative name” of any thing [that] by which the thing itself is appellated [= called] in common usage. For [there is] no common usage by which it is said that

⁴ ‘rider’ = ‘*eques*’ = ‘horseman’. In Latin, ‘*eques*’ is etymologically related to ‘horse’ = ‘*equus*’, but does not have the word ‘man’ built into it as ‘horseman’ does in English. Hence I prefer to translate it as ‘rider’ for the sake of the point the passage is making.

⁵ Like ‘horse’ = ‘*equus*’ and ‘rider’ = ‘*eques*’, ‘cup’ = ‘*poculus*’ and ‘drink’ = ‘*potio*’ are etymologically related in Latin.

⁶ Henry, *The De Grammatico of St. Anselm*, pp. 36–37. The “Master” in the dialogue is speaking.

⁷ The reference is to the traditional method of definition by genus + difference. Here the genus is substance.

⁸ called = “*appellentur*.”

⁹ Correcting Henry’s ‘*grammaticum*’ to ‘*grammaticam*’ in accordance with the Schmitt edition of Anselm’s *Opera omnia*, vol. 1, p. 157.2.

grammar is *grammaticus*, or a *grammaticus* is grammar. Rather, a *man* is *grammaticus*, and a *grammaticus* a man.

(5) Anselm, *De grammatico*, § 4.2413¹⁰: **M** If *man* is [contained] in *grammaticus*, it is not predicated together with [*grammaticus*] of anything, just as *animal* is not predicated [together] with *man* because it is contained in *man*. For it is not correct to say Socrates is a man-animal.

D That cannot be contradicted.

M But it is well-formed to say Socrates is a *grammaticus* man.¹¹

D [Yes, that is] well-formed.

M Therefore, *man* is not in *grammaticus*.

D I see that that follows.

(6) Anselm, *De grammatico*, §§ 4.4210–4.4234¹²: **M** If there is a white horse confined in some house without your knowledge, and someone asks you “Is there is a white¹³ in that house?,” do you thereby know there is a horse there?

D No. For whether ‘white’ means whiteness or what whiteness is in, I do not conceive in my mind the being of any definite thing but this color.

M Even if you do understand something besides this color, nevertheless it is certain that you do not understand *through this name* the being of what the color itself is in.

D Certainly. For even if a body or a surface occurs to the mind, which only happens because I have experienced that whiteness is likely to be in [bodies and surfaces], nevertheless the name ‘white’ itself does not signify any of these [things], as was shown for ‘*grammaticus*’. But I am still waiting for you to show [how¹⁴] it does signify.

M What if you see a white horse and a black ox standing next to one another, and someone says of the horse “Strike it!,” without showing by any sign which one he is talking about? Do you know he is talking about the horse?

D No.

M But if he replies to you “The white”¹⁵ when you do not know and ask “Which one?,” do you understand which he is talking about?

¹⁰ Henry, *The De Grammatico of St. Anselm*, p. 38. **M** = the “Master” in the dialogue; **D** = the “Disciple.”

¹¹ ‘*Grammaticus*’ is here used as an adjective, a perfectly normal usage.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41. Again, **M** = the “Master” in the dialogue; **D** = the “Disciple.”

¹³ white = “*albus sive album*.” Anselm gives both the masculine and neuter forms to lend a certain additional ambiguity to the question.

¹⁴ how: The Latin is ‘*quia*’, which in Anselm’s Latin would normally be translated in such a context “to show *that* it signifies.” But that is not in fact what is going on.

¹⁵ English virtually requires one to say “the white *one*” here, but Latin does not require a noun. And since that is the whole point of Anselm’s discussion here, I have translated with a bare adjective.

D I understand the horse by the name ‘white’.

M So the name ‘white’ signifies the horse to you.

D It does [so] signify.

M Do you not see that [it does this] in a way other than the name ‘horse’ [does]?

D I do see. Surely the name ‘horse’, even before I know the horse is white, signifies to me by itself (*per se*), and not through [anything] else (*per aliud*), the substance of the horse. But the name ‘white’ does not signify [it] by itself (*per se*), but rather through [something] else (*per aliud*) — that is, through the fact that I know the horse is white. For since the name ‘white’ does not signify anything else than does the expression ‘having whiteness’, [therefore] just as the expression by itself (*per se*) establishes an understanding¹⁶ of whiteness for me, and not of the thing that has whiteness, so does the name. But because I know whiteness is in the horse, and [I know this] through [something] other (*per aliud*) than through the name ‘white’ — say, by [the sense of] sight) — [therefore] I understand the horse through the fact that I know whiteness is in the horse, that is, through [something] other (*per aliud*) than through the name ‘white’. Yet the horse is called (*appellatur*) by that [name].

M So do you see how ‘white’ is *not* significative of what it does somehow signify, and how it is appellative of what it is not significative of?

D I see that too. For it [both] signifies and does not signify the horse. For it does not by itself (*per se*) signify it, but through [something] else (*per aliud*). And yet the horse is called (*appellatur*) white.

(7) Augustine, *On the Customs of the Catholic Church* 1.27, 52¹⁷: “Therefore man, as he appears to man,¹⁸ is a rational, mortal and earthly soul¹⁹ using a body.”

(8) Anselm, *On the Fall of the Devil*, Chap. 11 (compare *Basic Writings*, pp. 186–87): You see, the form of an expression often doesn’t match the way things are in reality. For example, ‘to fear’ is active according to the form [it’s an active infinitive] of the word

¹⁶ establishes an understanding: *constituit ... intellectum*. This was the standard medieval notion of “signification.” The classic source-text for this definition is Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* 3, 16^b19–21: “Indeed verbs, when uttered by themselves, are names and signify something. For he who says [a verb] establishes an understanding, and he who hears it rests.” (I am translating from Boethius’s Latin version here, rather than directly from the Greek, since it was Boethius’s translation that Anselm knew. See Boethius, *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri ēquivalence*, Meiser ed., I, p. 5.5–7.) The part about the hearer’s “resting” is rather obscure. Presumably it means roughly that the hearer’s mind stops and fixes on something when he hears a verb. But in any case, that’s not the important part of the passage. The important part is the phrase ‘establishes an understanding’. Someone who utters a verb *establishes an understanding* = *constituit intellectum*.

¹⁷ Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* 1.27.52, in Migne, PL 32, col. 1332.

¹⁸ I have no idea what the “as he appears to man” does in this sentence.

¹⁹ That’s what it says, an “earthly soul.” I suspect there is a textual problem here, as there often is with Migne’s texts.

even though fearing is passive in reality. And in the same way, blindness is something according to the form of the expression, even though it is not something in reality. For we say that someone has blindness and that there is blindness in him in just the way that we say someone has vision and that there is vision in him, even though blindness is not something, but instead not-something, and to have blindness is not to have something but rather to lack that which is something. After all, blindness is nothing other than non-vision or the absence of vision where there ought to be vision; and non-vision or the absence of vision is not something in cases where there ought to be vision any more than it is in cases where there ought not to be vision. Therefore, blindness is not something in the eye, just because there ought to be vision in the eye, any more than non-vision or the absence of vision is something in a stone, where there ought not to be vision. And there are many other similar cases in which things that are not something are called something according to the form of the expression, in that we speak of them as we speak of things that really exist.

(9) Aristotle, *Categories* 4, 1^b25–29: Each of what are said without any composition either signifies substance, or quantity, or quality, or relation, or where, or when, or situation, or having, or acting or being acted on. [That’s just a list of the ten categories.] Substance is, to give an example, like a man, a horse; quantity, like two cubits, three cubits; quality, like white, γραμματικὸν ...

(10) Priscian, *Institutionum grammaticarum* II.58.20.24: Adjectives are so called because they are usually adjoined to other appellatives [*i.e.*, common nouns] that signify a substance, or to proper names as well, in order to make manifest their qualities or quantities, which can grow or diminish without the destruction of the substance. For example, ‘good animal’, ‘big man’, ‘wise *grammaticus*’, ‘great Homer’.

(11) *Ibid.* II.58.14.15: This is the difference between a proper and an appellative [name], that an appellative is naturally common to many.

Passages from Augustine on the Trinity

(1) From Augustine, *De trinitate*, x.11.18 (PL 42, col. 983). Quoted from Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), p. 93:

Memory, understanding, and will are not three lives or three minds but one life and one mind. Hence, they are not three substances but only one. Insofar as memory is called life and mind and substance, it is being spoken of with respect to itself. Insofar as it is called simply memory, it is spoken of in relation to something else. The same thing holds for understanding and will—both of which may be spoken of relatively. But with respect to itself, each is life, mind, and essence. Thus, these three are one insofar as each is one life, one mind, one essence... But they are three insofar as they are spoken of in relation to one another. If they were not equal—each to the other and each to all—they would not comprehend one another. For not only is each one comprehended by each one but all are comprehended by each. I remember that I have memory, understanding and will; I understand that I understand and will and remember; I will that I will and remember and understand; and at one and the same time I remember my entire memory, understanding, and will.

(2) From Augustine, *Faith and the Creed*, 9. 17 (PL 40, col. 189). Quoted from Hopkins, *Companion*, p. 107 n. 29:

For although we cannot say of a spring that it is the river, nor of the river that it is the spring, nor of a draught taken from either of these that it is either the river or the spring—nevertheless we call all three water, both individually and collectively.

Compiègne



Three Letters concerning Roscelin of Compiègne

A. *Letter 128: From John the Monk, to Anselm*

Schmitt, ed., vol. III, pp. 270–71. Written c. 1090.

To his lord and father Anselm, brother John his servant and son — with respect to the lord a servant, with respect to the father a son.

We surely know, reverend father, we truly know that your keenness [of mind] is of use in untying even those knots of Scripture where many other
5 people are found wanting. Hence, for the common advantage of catholics, let your diligence not disdain to write to me and certain others what the faith and simple prudence, and your prudent simplicity, thinks¹ about the three [persons] of the deity.

For Roscelin of Compiègne raises the following problem: If the three
10 persons are only one thing and not three things on their own, like three angels or three souls, in such a way that nevertheless they are the same in will and power, therefore the Father and Holy Spirit were incarnated along with the Son. He says that the lord Archbishop Lanfranc had granted this statement and that you grant it in arguing the point with him. But Saint
15 Augustine's simile of trinity and unity in the case of the sun, which is one and the same thing and contains heat and brightness inseparably within itself, is altogether opposed to the simile of trinity and identity in the case of three angels and three souls.

20 May your integrity be preserved safe and sound [both] now and in the future by the three-in-one God who is our topic. Amen.

¹ It's singular in the Latin.

B. Letter 129: Anselm's Reply

Schmitt ed., vol. III, pp. 271–72. Written c. 1090-1092, in reply to Letter 128.

To [his] lord and dear brother John, brother Anselm [sends the wish that you] always advance to better things.

I have delayed so long in replying to the letter Your Amiability sent me, about the [man] who says that the three persons in God are three things, or
5 else the Father and the Holy Spirit were incarnated together with the Son, because I wanted to speak about this matter more fully. But because many engagements have prevented me since I got your letter, I have been unable [to do so]. In the meantime, therefore, I am replying briefly. But I plan to
10 treat this topic at greater length in the future if God deigns to grant me the opportunity.

Now when he calls the three persons “things,” he means [that] to be understood either with respect to three relations — that is, insofar as God is called Father and Son and the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son — or else with respect to the fact that he is called God.

15 But if [it is] the three relations he says are three “things,” there is no point in [his] saying this. For no one denies that the three persons are three “things” in that sense. Nevertheless, [this must be taken] in such a way that it be carefully understood how these relations are called “things” and what kind of “things,” and whether or not [these] same relations make
20 some [difference] in the substance, as many accidents do.

Even so, it seems he does not understand the three “things” he mentions in this sense, because he adds [the claim] that there is [only] one will and power for [all] three persons. For these three persons do not have [their] will and power insofar as [they are] relations but insofar as each person is
25 God.

But if he says the three persons are three “things” insofar as each person is God, [then] either he means to set up three gods or else he does not understand what he is saying.

For the present, let these things suffice to indicate to Your Amiability
30 what I think about the view mentioned. Stay well always.

[P. S.] As for your request to visit me before you start out for Rome, rest assured that I would wish [for that] with pleasure, as far as [my] love for Your Grace is concerned. But, as far as I can see, it would be of little use

35 to you — and in fact an obstacle for you — because of my many
engagements. For I feel quite strongly that unless you stay with the bishop
until you start out, he will be of little or no help in what you must do. And
I cannot do anything to assist [you] in making [your] trip.

C. Letter 136: To Fulco, Bishop of Beauvais

Schmitt ed., vol. III, pp. 279–81. Written after Letter 129, but before the Council
of Soissons in 1092, in which Roscelin’s views were condemned.

My very dear lord and friend, the reverend Bishop Fulco of Beauvais,
brother Anselm, called the abbot of Bec, [sends his] greeting.

I hear, although I cannot believe it without [some] doubt, that Roscelin the
cleric is saying that in God the three persons are three things, separated
5 from one another like three angels, but in such a way that [their] will and
power is one [for all], or else the Father and the Holy Spirit were
incarnated [too]. If [common] usage permitted it, [he goes on,] we could
truly say there are three gods. He claims that Archbishop Lanfranc, of
venerable memory, held this view, and that I do [now].

10 Because of this, I was told, a council is to be gathered together soon by
reverend Rainaldus, Archbishop of Rheims. So, because I suppose Your
Reverence will be in attendance there, I want you to be prepared for what
should be replied in my defense, if the occasion should demand [it].

15 His life, known to many religious and wise men, is enough to acquit
Archbishop Lanfranc from this accusation. And his absence and death
denies [the opportunity for] any new charge against him. But as for me, I
want all men to have [my] true opinion, as follows.

I hold the things we confess in the Creed, when we say, “I believe in God,
the Father almighty, creator,”² and “I believe in one God, the Father
20 almighty, maker,”³ and “Whosoever wants to be saved, above all he must
hold the catholic faith,”⁴ along with the [words] that follow [these opening
lines]. These three principles of the Christian confession, which I have
here set out, I so believe them (I say) with my heart and confess with my
mouth, that I am certain anyone who wants to deny any of these things,
25 whether he is a man or an angel — and anyone specifically who asserts as

² Anselm is quoting the Apostle’s Creed. This creed survives in several versions.
See Denzinger-Schönmetzer, *Enchiridion symbolorum*, § 30.

³ The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. See *ibid.*, § 150.

⁴ The Pseudo-Athanasian “Quicumque.” See *ibid.*, § 75.

the truth the blasphemy that I maintained above I have heard [to be] said by Roscelin — is anathema.

30 In support of this, let me say: Let him be anathema as long as he keeps up this stubbornness. For he is not a Christian at all. If he was baptized and raised among Christians, he is not to be listened to in any way. No explanation of his error is to be required from him, or [from us] to him of our [own] truth. Rather, as soon as his treachery comes to be known beyond doubt, either let him anathematize the venom he vomits forth in his utterances, or else let him be anathematized by all catholics if he does
35 not come to his senses.

It is completely senseless and stupid to call back again into the doubt of shaky questions, because of every single [person] who fails to understand, what has been most solidly founded on a firm rock. For our faith is to be defended by reason against the impious, but not against those who
40 acknowledge that they rejoice in the honor of the name 'Christian'. From the latter it is rightly to be demanded that they unshakably maintain the commitment they made in [their] baptism; but to the former it is to be shown in a reasonable way how unreasonably they scorn us.

45 For a Christian ought to progress through faith to understanding, not to approach faith through understanding, or if he cannot understand, to depart from the faith. But when he can reach understanding, he is delighted; when he cannot [do this], he venerates what he cannot grasp.

I insist that this letter of mine be taken by Your Holiness to the aforesaid council. Or, if perhaps you will not be going, I insist that it be sent through
50 one of your literate [associates]. Let it be read in the hearing of the whole convention if the matter of my name should require [it]. But if not, there is no need [for it] to be shown.