

A FURTHER BEATING OF A NEARLY DEAD HORSE

Augustine's presence in Anselm's thought

I.

The influence of Augustine's speculations on Anselm and the *Proslogion* has generally been admitted. Christopher Dawson's dictum that "the spirit of Augustine continued to live and bear fruit long after Christian Africa had ceased to exist; it entered into the tradition of the Western Church and molded the thought of Western Christendom,"¹ is a safe generalization that demands to be particularized in Anselm's case. More so as to pose the question at this late date may appear to be no more than another elaboration of the obvious.² Nevertheless, as a definitive answer has not been formulated or a consensus arrived at, the question remains open. It follows that a return to the theme or, if you will, the trough, is permissible, the more so as it stands at the center of topics of major import: faith and reason, God and man, *Proslogion* interpretation, and other ports of call of Anselm and Medieval studies.

Was Anselm an 'augustinisant' or an 'augustinien', someone merely influenced by Augustine, or a conscious disciple, albeit subject to second thoughts?³ Although recent literature has served to confirm the disparity of scholarly opinion it nevertheless follows in the grooves of four major interpretations. Gilson, who, in spite of a certain ambivalence, tilted in the direction of rationalism. Leff, who favored a fideistic solution. Dom Anselme Stolz, who proposed a mystical interpretation, and Pieper, who straddled the fence by charging Anselm with a certain inconsistency.⁴

¹ "St. Augustine and His Age." *A Monument to St. Augustine* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930), pp. 38-39.

² Recently by Frederick Van Fleteren, "Augustine & Anselm: Faith and Reason." *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition*, edited by George C. Berthold (Manchester: St. Anselm's College Press, 1991), p. 57.

³ This distinction is made by Alain de Libera, "Augustin et Denis au Moyen Age: La Théologie (Rhénane)." *Saint Augustin: Dossier conçu et dirigé par Patric Ranson* (Paris: L'Age d'Homme, 1988), p. 282.

⁴ Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribners, 1966), p. 26; Gordon Leff, *Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1962), p. 99; Dom Anselm Stolz, "Anselm's Theology in the *Proslogion*,"

Others like Ranson, who charged Augustine with concocting the 'God of the philosophers' and inventing 'Christian philosophy', put serious obstacles in the way of those interpreters who contend that Anselm made a clean break from a theologically hobbled Augustine.⁵ Further variations on these themes subject both Anselm and Augustine to many surprising and often grotesque metamorphoses.

Professor Rist has indicated that the history of philosophy and theology is, from Boethius and Cassiodorus to the late mystics and scholastics, a continuing exegesis of the texts of Augustine.⁶ Anselm is a good example, especially as the best approach to this thought is to begin with the historical backdrop to then center on the *Proslogion*, the nodal point where major themes converge. It is not without importance that Anselm was considered *Augustinus minor* by his age and that three spurious works attributed to Augustine included texts taken from Anselm.⁷ Or that the *De Trinitate* was considered to be a type of *Monologion* and the *Proslogion* its continuation.⁸ Furthermore, besides Augustine, only minor influences such as Boethius and Lanfranc are found in Anselm's work.

Anselm duly acknowledged his debt to Augustine in his letter to Lanfranc concerning the *Monologion*, a work that had unsettled the Archbishop because of its novelty. By a shorter chain of argument he had proved the very same points as did Augustine in his *De Trinitate*, based on his authority.⁹ This should not be understood as implying a strict discipleship. Separated by over six hundred years, divergences are to be expected. Southern notes the ambivalence of Anselm's relation to

translated by A.C. McGill. *The Many-Faced Argument*, edited by Hick and McGill (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 183-206; Josef Pieper, *Scholasticism*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Pantheon Books, 1960), p. 64. A nice résumé is given by K.M. Staley, "Exemplum Meditandi: Anselm's model for Christian Learning." *Faith Seeking Understanding*, pp. 207-17.

⁵ Patric Ranson, "Le Lourd Sommeil Dogmatique de l'Occident," *Saint Augustin*, pp. 31-32.

⁶ Robert D. Crouse, "Anselm of Canterbury and Medieval Augustinianism." *Toronto Journal of Theology* 3 (Spring, 1987), p. 60.

⁷ These are *De vita eremitica ad sororem*, *De diligendo Deo*, and *De contritione cordis*. Eugene Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1960), pp. 74-75; 352-53.

⁸ Nineteenth century historians tended to ground the *Proslogion* 2 argument on the *Monologion* proofs. Arthur C. McGill, "Recent discussions of Anselm's Argument." *The Many-Faced Argument*, p. 103, n. 225. Note the similarity between the *Monologion* proofs and *De Trinitate*, 8, 3.

⁹ Schmitt critical edition, *S. Anselmi, Opera Omnia* (Edinburgi: Thomam Nelson et Filios, 1946-1961), 6 vols. *Epistolae*, #77 *Opera* 3, 199, 17-26.

Augustine, suggesting that compared to Augustine, he suffered from a certain philosophical naivete.¹⁰ Direct citations are sparse: only six, four taken from *De Trinitate*.¹¹

There are several divergences. Anselm's reading of the atonement rejects the rights of Satan over mankind, a theory that led to serious difficulties concerning the Incarnation. It could be construed as depriving the atonement of its concrete, historical basis. Later, the theory was adopted by Abelard and his disciples.¹² Anselm thought that freedom is instanced by deliverance from erroneous choice, a condition that Augustine believed was reserved to the elect. Moreover, if *De Similitudinibus* is accepted as authentic, he favored a tripartite division of the soul into reason, will and appetite, in place of, or along with, Augustine's favorite division into memory, reason and will. Hannah Arendt made the fine point that of Augustine's three faculties, memory - the most Roman of the three - suffered an eclipse and never again recovered the rank it once possessed.¹³ This 'eclipse' is encountered in Anselm, but only in attenuated form.

Anselm's images and metaphors are taken from the feudal world. God and man are viewed as Lord and vassal, Satan as a rebel, and so on. Language is defleshed of its richness and sensuality. Nevertheless, in spite of differences, Anselm's works carry muted echoes of a richer intellectual world. Dom Jean Leclercq has stressed the importance of the symbolical, narrative, affective, aesthetic and sound elements in the Middle Ages, noting Anselm's spiritual talks collected by Eadmer and given to the monks under the title of *Liber Similitudinum*.¹⁴ Anselm follows Augustine in using both visual and auditory images. His example of the 'workman' (*faber*) who uses words or painted figures to depict a previously unknown animal is in the tradition that runs from the *Shepherd of Hermas* to the *Parables* of St. Bernard, and provides a nice point of departure for *Proslogion* interpretation.¹⁵

But even when Anselm goes off an esoteric tangent such as the ratio of fallen angels to the elect, he does not approach the extravagance of

¹⁰ R. W. Southern, *St. Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge: CUP, 1963), pp. 31-32.

¹¹ *Opera* 6, p. 21.

¹² Southern, p. 352.

¹³ Cited by Ranson, *Saint Augustine*, p. 82.

¹⁴ "Faith Seeking Understanding Through Images." *Faith Seeking Understanding*, p. 6. This collection was attributed to Anselm. Though 12th century mss. are scarce, they begin to be common by the 13th, and by the 14th are usually included among Anselm's works. Southern, pp. 221-26.

¹⁵ Leclercq, pp. 8-9; 11-12. *Opera* 1, *Monologion*, 25, 1-3; 20-21; 26, 5-13.

Augustine, say on the properties of numbers. Again, while Augustine luxuriates in Scriptural citations and is usually prepared to substantiate his interpretations by elaborate exegeses, Anselm does most of his serious reasoning outside the boundaries of the purely exegetical. Most noteworthy is the absence, in Anselm's work, of what a contemporary scholar would consider the most important themes of Augustine's thought: theology of history, psychological insights, and metaphysical variations on the *rationes seminales*. No less than the major themes of the *Confessiones*, *De Trinitate*, and *De Civitate Dei*. These belong to a more cosmopolitan world and escaped the attention of most medieval thinkers, including Thomas Aquinas.

Anselm is not merely an Augustine written in small letters dedicated to faithfully transcribing the master's thought. However, there is no warrant to view him as a radical departure from the Augustinian tradition. Schufreider, for example, advances the view that Anselm renders his contemplative tradition fully radical by elaborating a new genre, the 'philosophical prayer', instancing 'a new brand of rational mysticism' which hides its philosophical nature under a religious facade.¹⁶ It is no less than a rational revelation of God in which the *Proslogion* is 'a rational icon' or 'theological iconoscope' designed to "display a specific image of the invisible God on the screen of the mind."¹⁷

Although the comparison of the *Proslogion* to a philosophical prayer or a praying in thought is hardly original,¹⁸ Schufreider's re-interpretation presents some valuable insights as, for example, his development of the 'pictor' metaphor. But this 'rational mysticism', though it holds interesting possibilities, approximates a covert Spinozism, a stunning theory not readily supported by the text. He places the cart before the horse when he liberates reason from the tutelage of faith and allows it to run unbridled. The contrary position, to my mind equally mistaken, is taken by Dom Jean Leclercq, who has Anselm, disappointed by rational argumentation, turning to prayer.¹⁹

¹⁶ Gregory Schufreider, *Confessions of a Radical Mystic: Anselm's Early Writings* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1994), pp. 8-11.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 245, 283.

¹⁸ By Gilson, for example: "Sens et nature de l'argument de saint Anselme." *Arch. d'hist. et lit. du Moyen Age* IX (1934), p. 51, and by myself, *Anselm's Proslogion: An Introduction* (Washington: Univ. Press of America, 1979). On the other hand, an authority such as Dom F.S. Schmitt finds that in the *Monologion* arguments one encounters a "systematic deplatonizing" in which Anselm tilts in the direction of Aristotle. "Anselm und der (Neu) Platonismus." *Analecta Anselmiana*, No. 1 (1969), pp. 39-71.

¹⁹ Leclercq, Vandenbroucke and Bouyer, *Spirituality of the Middle Ages*, trans. by the Benedictines of Holme Eden Abbey (London: Burns & Oates, 1968), pp. 165-66.

Yet, the rationalist interpretation holds a certain charm. Anselm himself, in the *Cur Deus Homo*, tells us he is proceeding *sola ratione*. Professor Crouse tilts in this direction. He suggests that although Anselm presupposes Scripture and Church, in terms of method he proceeds *sola ratione*,²⁰ and in the *Proslogion* Anselm simply draws out the implications of the previously formulated God-description. Properly philosophical, Crouse urges that the argument stands apart from the Plotinian/Porphyrian influence that inspired Augustine. It represents the 'summit and conclusion' of a certain line of Augustinian development but cannot be fingered as the beginning of something radically new.²¹ However, it is also possible, as Pépin suggests, that Augustine progressively disengaged himself from Plotinian metaphysics, though the influence of Porphyry perdured.²²

Doubtless, Augustine was influenced by various strands of Neoplatonism. His concept of soul is Platonic in character and Neoplatonic in origin. The notion of its twofold weight (*pondus*) was probably derived from Iamblichus and the importance of the soul's mediation between God and body is found in Plotinus, as is the notion that unconsciously held contents can be summoned to consciousness.²³ Augustine borrowed the notion of the *vita beata*, true joy, perhaps a pale forerunner of the overwhelming joy of the *Proslogion*, and emulated Plotinus in retreating with friends to the countryside "to gather the mind and hold it fast" so as to contemplate the two essentials: God and the soul.²⁴

Augustine's interest in monasticism doubtless influenced the establishment of his community at Thagaste and later at Hippo. He wished to spread the monastic life throughout Africa, in spite of its notorious abuses²⁵ and lent his authority to the conjunction of priesthood and the

²⁰ Crouse, p. 62; "The Neoplatonism of St. Augustine." *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, edited by John J. O'Meara (Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1982), pp. 38-39f.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

²² Jean Pépin, "Ex Platonicorum Persona," *Etudes sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1977), pp. xx, xxxiii. He suggests that Augustine tilted in the direction of a Christian Neoplatonism due to St. Ambrose's sermons paraphrasing entire pages of the *Enneads* (pp. 263-64). Patric Ranson suggests that Augustine brought about a Platonic "devaluation" of the sensible, the ontological inferiority of the visible, and other doctrines in frank opposition to that of the Fathers of the Church. "Le lourd sommeil dogmatique de l'Occident." *Saint Augustin*, pp. 28-29.

²³ Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (London: Duckworth, 1987), pp. 8-10, 38, 189; E.W. Warren, "Consciousness in Plotinus." *Phronesis* 9 (1964), pp. 83-97.

²⁴ *De Ordine*, 1.1.3; *Solil.* 1.27. Adolar Zumkeller OSA, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, trans. by E. Colledge OSA (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986).

²⁵ Zumkeller, pp. 28, 83; *De Opere Monachorum*, 28. 36.

monastic life which became normative in later monasticism. Augustine's *Confessiones* influenced the understanding of sin and the development of a spirituality oriented toward the luminous face of God, which reaches its acme in an "instantaneous, total, evident, immediate knowledge with nothing discursive or speculative."²⁶ Moreover, if as Rist has indicated, Plotinus held that some kind of superadded grace is required for attaining union with the One, a grace bestowed on the most fortunate, Plotinus may be closer to Christian spirituality than is usually believed.²⁷ That Augustine was able to fuse the 'flights' of Neoplatonism and the 'good news' of the Gospel is a tribute to his genius.²⁸ Although this genre of spirituality did not reach Anselm in its full force, it is nevertheless present in his work, particularly chapters 14-26 of the *Proslogion*, which Evdokimov has called the apophatic aspect of the argument.²⁹

If Augustine prodded Anselm in the direction of spirituality, he also provided a stimulus to his rationalism. The Manichaean lure of *sola ratione* was instrumental in attracting Augustine to the sect. O'Meara believes it was the 'traditional gnosticism' of the Christian Church of Africa that checked his burgeoning rationalism and transformed it from an imperative to a chastened disposition.³⁰ Moreover, the two key notions that Augustine garnered from his eventful life, the saving grace of Christ and the divine illumination that enlightens the mind, hindered any movement toward a defecated rationalism.³¹ Perhaps because of this, Augustine initiated a new era in human thought. While the classical philosopher was concerned with the flux within the cosmos, Augustine was captivated by the mystery of the intrinsic non-being of the cosmos itself. While classic philosophy thinks from the vantage point of being, Augustine paradoxically takes his point of departure from non-being.³² Moreover, if the truth will make you free, it will first free you from the cosmos, the *mundus*. Augustine urges a withdrawal from the *mundus* as "*in interiori homine habitat veritas*."³³ Moreover, as God is eternal truth, to

²⁶ Pépin, pp. 19; 45-46. *Confessiones* 11 (11, 12, 14-17); 12 (9, 7-8).

²⁷ J. M. Rist, "The One of Plotinus and the God of Aristotle." *Platonism and Its Christian Heritage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985), pp. 215, 224-25.

²⁸ My "Augustine: Spiritual Centaur?" *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, edited by Schnaubelt, Van Fleteren & Reino (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).

²⁹ Paul Evdokimov, "L'aspect apophatique de l'argument de saint Anselme." *Spicilegium Beccense* (Paris: Vrin, 1959), pp. 234-258.

³⁰ John J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine* (London: Longman, 1954, 1980), p. 63.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

³² Refer to Xavier Zubiri, "Sobre el problema de la filosofía." *Revista de Occidente*, No. 118 (April, 1933), p. 91.

³³ *De Vera Religione*, 39, 72.

live in truth is both to live in God and in reason. Augustine does not hesitate to describe man's knowledge of God as His existence in us, and the growth of this knowledge as the growth of God in us.³⁴

II.

Augustine did not bequeath to Anselm, nor could he, except larded with Biblical accretions, the heritage of the ancient pagan world. As Bréhier indicated, this world could neither accept nor understand notions such as the monotheism of a Creator-God, creation, the Incarnation, or a redemption that involves the transformation of all things.³⁵ Though Augustine lauds the 'Platonists' for their philosophical acuity and adumbration of Christian belief, he faults them for their pride. It kept them from accepting Christ, the only medium of access to mankind's ultimate goal.³⁶ The very first sentence of *De Trinitate* criticizes those men who hold erroneous opinions about God having been led astray by a 'perverse' and 'immature' attachment to reason.³⁷ To think about God requires purification by faith, which in this life disposes the soul for knowledge and in the next for the vision of God.³⁸

To think about God as God should be thought about hinges on the will: truth must be sought piously, diligently, and chastely.³⁹ Anselm concurs. The necessary propedeutic to right reasoning about God is the restoration of the rectitude of the will lost by the Fall. This generates a disposition that clears away the residue of sin that constitutes the barrier to truth: The 'work' of doing what is right precedes the 'delight' of knowing what is true.⁴⁰ Put bluntly: belief conditions understanding. In Augustine's words, "we believe that we may know, we do not know that we may believe."⁴¹ This statement must be placed in the proper context. Both Augustine and Anselm affirm there is a knowing prior to the knowledge generated by faith. Though faith precedes reason insofar as 'deeper truths' are concerned, reason precedes faith in supposing that faith

³⁴ *De Moribus*, 1, 17, 31; *Confessiones*, 12, 25, 34; *In Joh. Ev.*, 3, 16.

³⁵ Emile Bréhier, "Logos stoïcien, Verbe chrétien, Raison cartésienne." *Études de philosophie antique* (Paris: PUF, 1955), p. 166.

³⁶ *Confessiones*, 7, 9. *De Civ. Dei*, 10, 29.

³⁷ *De Trinitate*, 1, 1, 1.

³⁸ *De Trinitate*, 1, 3; 8, 4, 6.

³⁹ *De Quantitate Animae*, 14, 24. *De Vera Religione*, 10, 20. *De Moribus Ecclesiae*, 1, 1, 1. *De Ordine*, 2, 19, 61, et al.

⁴⁰ *Contra Faustum*, 12. *Solil.*, 1, 1, 3.

⁴¹ *In Ioannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*, 40, 89. *De Trinitate*, 8, 5, 8; 9, 1, 1.

is itself reasonable. Citing a favorite text (*Isaiah* 7:9), Augustine indicates that "although no one can believe in God unless he understands something, nevertheless he is enabled to understand more by the very faith which he believes."⁴²

Bréhier indicates that Augustine was attacking Hellenic rationalism in his polemic against the Pelagians because they appeared to rule out prayer and the spiritual life.⁴³ The intimate, nearly symbiotic relation between faith and reason presented in the *Contra Academicos* became a constant theme. Wisdom invariably inclines to union with God. This was appropriated by Anselm. Augustine adumbrates Anselm's attack on 'the heretics of dialectic', affirming that the soul can be so glutted with material images that it loses itself in them and is able to discover its true self only by breaking through those layers of sensation that hinder knowledge.⁴⁴ Augustine's method of interiority, which culminates in remembering God - bringing Him to consciousness- is most likely the predecessor of the monastic *peregrinatio in stabilitate*, in which the soul takes on the contours of truth as, propelled by love, it ascends to God.

Gilson suggested that Augustine's method of interiority could be viewed as an example of God's omnipotence.⁴⁵ If so, it would be closely related to the *Proslogion* argument, if it is understood as the presence of divine omnipotence within the noetic realm. Augustine's generous use of the image/metaphor of light - larded with Biblical and Neoplatonic nuances - moves in the same direction. God is the light of the soul, the inner teacher, the '*pater intelligibilis lucis*', the principle of intelligibility, the cause of knowledge, and a being greater than which cannot be thought.⁴⁶ As image of the Trinity, the human mind remembers, understands, and loves itself. However, it is only a faint image. A turning of the soul to God, a '*conversio*', is required before it becomes a true image, which remembers, understands, and loves God.⁴⁷ The soul is the 'eye' which sees truth by means of the 'light' of the 'sun' (God) analogous to physical sight.⁴⁸ The distinction between walking in the light - the work of reason

⁴² *Sermo*, 43, 7, 9. *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 118, 18, 3. *Epistola*, 120, 3.

⁴³ Emile Bréhier, *The Hellenistic & Roman Age*, trans. by W. Baskin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 244.

⁴⁴ *De Trinitate*, 10, 5, 7; 10, 8, 11; 10, 9, 12.

⁴⁵ Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine* (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 104. *De Trinitate*, 14, 15, 21ff.

⁴⁶ *Confessiones*, 7, 4, 6; *Solil.*, 1, 1, 2; *De Moribus Ecclesiae*, 1, 17, 32. For Plotinus refer to *De Civ. Dei*, 10, 2. The Scriptural basis is probably *John* 1, 6-9; 16.

⁴⁷ *De Trinitate*, 14, 8, 11; 14, 12, 15.

⁴⁸ *Sermo*, 298, 5, 5; 23, 2, 2; *De Ordine*, 2, 3, 10; *Solil.*, 1, 6, 12; *De Trinitate*, 12, 15, 24.

- and ascending to the source of light is a watershed in the development of the *Proslogion* argument.

III.

Anselm inherited from Augustine a universe of discourse covering the drama of God, creation, the Fall and redemption. Augustine anticipated the *Proslogion* description of God, the '*credo ut intelligam*', the fool's denial of God's existence, the soul as *vestigia trinitatis*, and the '*fides quaerens intellectum*'.⁴⁹ Anselm continues Augustine's thought by insisting that wisdom begins with faith and that the human mind, because of its exalted status, is the privileged locus for relating to God. The pursuit of wisdom is, for Anselm, ultimately an *itinerarium mentis in Deum*, and reasoning a praying in thought.

The unusual meld of rational argument and religious meditation found in the *Proslogion* has often perplexed interpreters and acted as the point of departure for some of the most interesting variations on the theme. John Smith studied the argument from his own experiential point of view, noting that in the *Proslogion* "the most rationalistic argument on record" for the existence of God is subject to a 'dramatic reversal' in *Proslogion* 13:⁵⁰ the intrusion of an experiential concern. In spite of its strong rationalism "there is a clear realization of the failure of even this degree of rational penetration to furnish a concrete realization in experience," one that transcends the force of all argument. The fundamental question is nicely posed by Professor Smith: why is a reality that so supremely 'must be' from a logical standpoint not made manifest in experience?⁵¹

Smith's solution centers on the possibility of finding the 'in' within the 'must be', which is to say, experience within reason. Anselm, he remarks, should have realized, in tune with his own dialectics, that the 'must be' of argument is developed as the 'is' or presence of God.⁵² In other words, the validating experience is encountered in the certainty of the argument. This hypothesis is insightful but falters as a solution. If God is considered solely as the ground of intelligibility, Smith's solution might be workable, but in stressing the demand for experience he is faced by a

⁴⁹ *Confessiones*, 1, 7, 4; *In Ioannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV*, 40, 9; *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 5, 2, 2, et al.

⁵⁰ John E. Smith, "In What Sense Can We Speak of Experiencing God?" *Challenge of Religion: Contemporary Readings in the Philosophy of Religion*, edited by Ferre, Kockelmans and Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1982), pp. 234-35.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-36.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 241, 244.

worrying dilemma. He is forced to affirm either that Anselm was unaware of the experience quotient that resides in the argument, or ignore the text beginning with *Pros.* 14. This section builds up to the identification of overwhelming joy as the privileged experience, an experience which is possessed in this world only in hopeful anticipation.⁵³

One line of interpretation maintains that Anselm, while ensconced at Bec, followed Augustine faithfully; but on leaving the community and the grip of monastic culture, he suffered a metamorphosis into a pure rationalist. Another views him as evolving into a full-fledged mystic. It would be difficult to support either of these hypotheses. That the polyphonic richness of Augustine has, in Anselm, been muted into something of the nature of Gregorian chant, does produce an impression of fundamental divergence. However, when all factors are taken into consideration, there is little doubt that Anselm remains within the boundaries established by Augustine and that this includes an unsettling symbiosis between faith and reason.

The transition from argument to the demand for experience is, in the *Proslogion*, a movement from the level of reasoning verified by the Divine Light, to an ascent toward the source of this Light, God. Its success is verified by the privileged experience of overwhelming (supernatural) joy.⁵⁴ If this is taken into consideration both the rationalist and the mystic hypotheses must be rejected. The latter fails because of the *Proslogion's* stated aspiration to understanding; the former because of the demand for experience even though, at the end of the treatise, it remains a mere hope. As it stands, the treatise, even the most rationalistic sections, does possess a quantum of spirituality and mystical experience is a future possibility. Neither is the *Proslogion* an essay in a historically developed 'rational mysticism.' Its ultimate goal is an atemporal experience. Nor does Anselm straddle the fence. Faith and reason are not isolated stands but complementary threads of one fabric. It is a reflection of a pervading theme in Anselm's works, that of the '*humana restauratio*', also reflected in the *Cur Deus Homo* and *Epistola de Incarnatione Dei*.

Once faith has done its work and restored justice, reason is obliged to strive for a more profound understanding of the reality presented by faith. This involves a progressive conversion into discursive language, necessarily fragmentary and incomplete, of an inexhaustible reality. While further advances in understanding are possible, even probable, the

⁵³ *Proslogion, Opera I*, 120, 25-121, 1; 121, 14-18.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14, 3, 13-15; 17, 113, 12-15; 18, 114, 11-13; 16, 112, 21-27; 24, 118, 2-3.

plenitude of this reality remains hidden.⁵⁵ In some ways this would resemble the laborious decoding of a *noesis* (insight) into terms of *dianoia* (discursive reason) if the notable differences between the Hellenic world of Plato and the Christian, biblically-grounded, world, are taken into account. This decoding or translation betrays the original insight because of its insufficiency, yet retains its value on a lower level because of its fidelity to its source.

The exit of the Fool in the *Proslogion* points in this direction. After a brief appearance in the second chapter he simply disappears. Is this because he has accomplished the task of displacing the movement of the *Proslogion* from meditation to argument, or has he perished in the face of Anselm's dialectical onslaught? A good case can be made that the Fool's exit is Anselm's tribute to the mystery of grace at work in the soul of the Fool. *Pros.* 2-3 presents a 'seed' of meaning which only grace can germinate and carry him toward the *intellectus* which proceeds from *fides*. This suggests that the Fool is stalled at *intellege ut credas* and cannot, under his own power, move to *crede ut intellegas*. As in Augustine's *De Utilitate Credendi*, in Anselm's *Proslogion*, human wisdom stands between foolishness and Divine Truth. The Fool is mired on the level of mere words and cannot by his own power advance to the reality signified by them.⁵⁶

IV.

Philosophically speaking, one of the most significant aspects of the *Proslogion* is that Anselm discovered a way in which existence can be attributed to God by a finite mind without completely distorting either God or existence. Beginning with the 'is' proper to mental existence he discovers a privileged description (*aliquid quo ...*) which, when unpacked, moves beyond the level of 'what there is' to the unique 'is' proper to God, necessary existence, and then moves even further toward that ineffable reality that surpasses thought. It is tempting to see in this procedure an adumbration of Duns Scotus' speculations on God and the univocal status of being.

In any case, once reason is given an autonomous status, the

⁵⁵ *Cur Deus Homo, Opera II, Commendatio*, 40, 4-5; 1, 2, 50, 12-13; 2, 16, 117, 8-22 *et al.*

⁵⁶ Refer to my article "The Foolish of the *De Utilitate Credendi*: A Parallel to Anselm's *Inspiciens*?" *Académie St. Anselme* (Aoste-Turin, 1973), pp. 133-140.

Proslogion limps even from a philosophical point of view. However, once reason is integrated into Anselm's *fides-intellectus-visio* schema, the situation changes. The search for truth - rectitude perceptible to the mind - is dependent on justice, rectitude of the will.⁵⁷ Because of this, the cognitive order, if taken in isolation, is sterile. It cannot generate love. But placed within Anselm's schema, faith leads to understanding, understanding generates love and ultimately leads to the vision of God. Anselm follows Augustine in modifying Hellenic *theoria* by displacing it from the speculative order to the practical and making the *visio Dei* the goal of human existence.

As indicated in *Proslogion* 14, a 'true seeing' must transcend the sphere of necessary reasons and arrive at the "*gaudium plenum, et plus quam plenum*" of the beatific vision.⁵⁸ Knowledge restricted to the sphere of intellect would conflict with the purpose of creation; rational natures destined to enjoy God.⁵⁹ As previously stated, Anselm's praying-in-thought is not mysticism proper but the result of his idiosyncratic fusion of monastic and scholastic cultures.⁶⁰ In the interim the Hellenic philosophic tradition suffered a radical metamorphosis. *Theoria*, translated as *contemplatio* by the Romans, was detached from its meaning as docility to reality - knowledge for the sake of knowledge - and came to mean in the early Middle Ages, a participation or anticipation of celestial contemplation, the *visio Dei*.⁶¹ *Theoriae studia* often referred to the love of prayer, *christiana philosophia* to the monastic life, and 'the philosopher' was not Aristotle but Christ - "*ipsa philosophia Christus*."⁶²

To summarize: Anselm can best be described as an eleventh century monastic disciple of Augustine, an "augustinien," interpreting Augustine's thought through the prism of his own age, culture, and personal idiosyncrasies. Though deviating from Augustine on several points, and bypassing some of his most important themes, Anselm moved within an intellectual world generated principally by Augustine. He could not have emulated an eighteenth century rationalist or a sixth or sixteenth

⁵⁷ *De Veritate*, *Opera* I, 11, 191, 19-20; 12, 194, 26.

⁵⁸ *Proslogion* 26, 120, 25-121, 1; refer to Henri de Lubac, "Sur le Chapitre XIVe du *Proslogion*". *Specilegium*, pp. 295-325.

⁵⁹ *Cur Deus Homo*, 2, 1; 97, 4-7; 97, 7-98. 5.

⁶⁰ Dom Jacques Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God* (New York: Mentor, 1962). Leclercq distinguishes between 'something like' two Middle Ages, the first a continuation of Patristic culture in another age, the second generated by the Carolingian renaissance, the town and cathedral schools. Also Sofia Vanni Rovighi, "Questo mirabile secolo XII." *Stadium* 54 (1958).

⁶¹ Leclercq, p. 106.

⁶² H. Rochais, "*Ipsa philosophia Christus*." *Medieval Studies* (1951), pp. 244-47.

century mystic. He was a man of his age (an age scarcely as primitive as has often been affirmed), who, as he noted in the *Proslogion*, aspired both to contemplate God and understand what he believed. To transform Anselm into a mystic or pure rationalist is to view him according to criteria alien to his epoch, falling victim to an imperative for compartmentalization that became a habit of mind only in modernity. In the present study an attempt has been made to clear away some of the rubble that might have prevented contemporary interpreters from viewing this particular enclave of history with objectivity. If successful, we rest content. If not, we will withdraw to our assigned niche in the dustbin of miscellany.

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