

From Illumination to Science (and Back Again): The ontological arguments of St. Anselm and Hegel

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Anselm's ontological argument will celebrate its official millennium later this century, although some such as Barnes see it as much older, stemming from Zeno (18). Oppy disagrees (4) with Barnes, but Rohls reaches further back to Zeno's master, suggesting that

The history of philosophy appears to have begun with an ontological proof. For Parmenides learned from the mouth of the goddess the conception that there is only being and that nonbeing cannot be, and opposed this doctrine in the second part of his didactic poem as the truth over against opinion of mortals (13).¹

As fascinating as the history of the ontological argument may be, I have written this paper addressing only two very determinate moments of this history, two moments, though, of incalculable impact. I of course refer to those of St. Anselm of Canterbury and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In its movement from Anselm to Hegel, the argument conceptualizes the infinite with ever increasing determinacy, which Hegel claims to have absolutized into self-determinacy. Given more space, I would gladly trace the wending of the ontological argument through modernity and show how Hegel's view is the true sublation of this history, a movement I view as a transformation from the giving to the given, from divine transcendence to radical immanence, from illumination to science. But Anselm's argument is outside of its modern cousin. I want to suggest that Anselm's use of the ontological argument keeps open a dialogue that Hegel's closes off, that a model of consciousness as projective need not be the all-consuming and reductive dialectic of Hegel, but rather could manifest itself in a freely received donative illumination.

My procedure in this paper is straightforward; after introducing the theme of light in the work of Anselm and Hegel, I investigate Anselm's argument in the light of illumination theory, and Hegel's argument in the light of self-developing science. I then suggest that Anselm's argument allows for dialogue, and in so doing, hints at an answer to the foundational problem that bedevils Hegel's project.

1. Light in St. Anselm and Hegel

This interpretative history of the ontological argument as the move from illumination to science is hardly arbitrary, as we can see through a brief consideration of how both Anselm and Hegel conceive of light. Light is the substance of Anselm's illumination theory, but merely a tool for Hegel's science. Anselm mentions light many times in *Proslogion* 1, the comparatively long prayer prefacing his famed ontological argument. He addresses God: "*habitas lucem inaccessibilem,*" and mourns: "*et ubi est lux inaccessibilis? Aut quomodo accedam ad lucem inaccessibilem?*" Anselm identifies this distance with Adam's, and our, fall, and asks "*quare sic nobis obseravit lucem / et obduxit nos tenebris?*" He further begs "*quando illuminabis oculos nostros et ostendes nobis faciem tuam?*," a question he reprises in a petition "*respice, Domine, exaudi, illumina nos, ostende nobis teipsum.*" And he concludes *P1* by petitioning "*liceat mihi suspicere lucem tuam, vel de longe, vel de profundo.*" Anselm intertwines many themes here: light, distance, and vision. His prayer sends heavenward his desire to ease the effects of the distance and the darkness that together occlude the beatific vision in this life. And how is he to overcome these effects? Anselm turns to the understanding, which he hopes can grasp some of that light that so frightened Peter, James, and John (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36). When the divine light finally shone fully upon his efforts, Anselm tells us of the joy that overcame him, and the desire that burned within his heart to share this with all. Light is thus not a moment or a tool for his argument, but rather the substance - for having had his own understanding illuminated, Anselm wishes to have this light shone onto the understanding of the fool as well.

How different from Hegel. Light needs distance, for it needs space in which to shine, the *Lichtung des Daseins* in Heidegger's here helpful language. Yet, this space has no truth in Hegel's system except as a moment of the absolute, which means that it is destined to be overcome by subsequent moments of the absolute. Light is only important to Hegel as a stage, coming upon the scene at the beginning of the Essence Logic and immediately following the Being Logic. The Being Logic develops itself from pure being whose logical opposite, and thus its logically identical moment, is pure nothingness. This negation propels a dialectic through which being develops itself more fully into the unity of quality and quantity, which Hegel calls Measure (*das Maß*). At this stage, the immediacy of being falls away, for consciousness realizes that it no longer can say what immediately appears is as it seems. Hence, the immediacy of being reveals itself as exterior appearance, which implies a reality underneath. This implicit reality is essence, which consciousness takes as the truth of being.

Hegel spins this tale through the use of light: the object of consciousness as presented in the Essence Logic is a series of determinations each enlightened and bound by an interior light, or essence. At first, these determinations provide for mere semblance or shining (*der Schein*): the semblance is not the essence, but the essence shines forth, albeit confusedly, through the semblance. As the Essence Logic develops through its moments, semblance becomes true appearance (*die Erscheinung*), and essence is no longer hidden in its determinations, but rather is laid bare. This is not a story that I can recount here. But most importantly, the realm of essence develops as a series of oppositions (identity and difference, ground and grounded, existence and essence, etc.), and hence as a space becoming evermore dense. Hegel thus describes the dialectical process of the sphere of essence as “the shining into another” (*Enc.* § 161). But the other is simply what has not yet been fully brought under the Concept, and the co-determination of these opposites reveals them as implicitly identical and their distance as illusory. The shine is really reflection, and the one sees itself in the other (Feuerbach, for this reason, found it easy to see humanity as the essence, or reflection, of God). Hence, Hegel contrasts essence with the Concept in that the Concept subsumes essence: the Concept is “development, through which only that is posited which is already implicitly present” (§ 161). In Hegel’s helpful example, the Concept is like Plato’s doctrine of reminiscence: whatever we know we already knew and all that changes is the form of this knowledge, and the degree of explicitness with which we hold it. Like the whole tree is already in the acorn, like the slave already knows geometry, the concept is already in reality.

But since light requires distance and difference, no shining into another is possible any longer, and as a moment of the absolute, light is revealed as abstract and hence false, a mere immanent tool propelling the dialectic. Since illumination is really just reflection, it cedes to the implicit development of reason within itself. Hegel thus founds science as a strictly autonomous and absolute project, perhaps as a self-founding *lux ex tenebris*, but as a *lux* whose own progress carries the very possibility of extinguishing itself, whether structurally in the dialectic, or actually in reckless scientism.

2. The ontological argument in St. Anselm

Anselm’s argument proper begins in *P2*, where he prays that the understanding grasp what faith already holds about God: “*ergo Domine, qui das fidei intellectum, da mihi, ut quantum scis experdire, intelligam, quia es sicut credimus, et hoc es quod credimus*” (*P2*). *Unlike the modern suspicion explicit in Descartes and implicit in Hegel, Anselm holds that*

*God gives him this content. And Anselm graciously accepts this gift, for he describes it neither as caused nor as self-developing. Were it caused, God would become just another moment of efficient causality; were it to develop itself, God would become just another moment of absolute reason. But Anselm's graciousness is simply the corollary to the datum of faith in something external.*²

Since illumination is an epistemological and not strictly theological matter, it concerns itself with understanding and not with faith. As we see above, Anselm wants to understand two things: (i) that God is, which we believe, and (ii) that God is *that which we believe*. Never in the history of philosophy has the distinction between non-restrictive and restrictive clauses been more important. Anselm begins with immediate knowledge, for there is no content to this beyond mere belief in God's existence, which the fool is to deny. This denial can only be met when faith girds itself through the understanding, i.e., when faith subsumes its representation under a concept. This concept is the restrictive "that which we believe," and the key to Anselm's quest is the proper selection of this concept, since such will enrich his faith in God with universal (i.e., irrefutable) content, which then becomes the property of all beings capable of understanding.

But how? Here illumination plays its key role. The history of theology has shown the understanding to have subsumed God under many concepts. The properly illumined understanding ought to have the wisest concept at its disposal, and Anselm argues that it already has, courtesy of faith. What is this concept that faith already holds? Famously, that God is the being greater than which nothing can be thought [*"et quidem credimus te esse aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari possit"*]; using the formulation in *P3* [*"id quo maius nequit cogitari"*] I will follow Hartshorne in calling this syntagma the IQM. Schufreider (1978: 6), following Barth, argues that since the IQM is a belief with a long tradition behind it, the IQM, properly speaking, is a name of God and not a definition.³ If we follow Schufreider in this assessment, one that I find to be fair, then we see immediately that the argument begins outside of reason, for according to Aristotle, a name is external to reason in so far as a name can be neither true nor false, and is therefore outside of logic. Anselm wants God to illuminate his understanding of this belief, this IQM. Divine illumination will lead him from this simple syntagma to a complete inability to deny God's existence. Illumination will supplement the *fides quaerens intellectum* and transform it to *fides tenens intellectum*. Hence, understanding is not merely a faculty (yet, the universality Anselm claims for his proof indicates that it must be at least this), but rather a way of seeing, which is an aspect captured better in the German translations

of the *Proslogion*'s "intelligere" as "einsehen." Anselm is praying for insight.

As Schufreider notes (1978: 27), *P2* does not complete this task (for this we must wait until *P3*); rather, it merely proves that the IQM cannot but be thought to exist both in reality and in the understanding. Key to Anselm's argument in *P2* is his own bafflement: not regarding whether or not God exists, but rather why the fool "*dixit ... in corde suo: non est Deus*" (*P1*). Let us pause here for a moment: Anselm is dedicated to having his understanding lead to God directly from within thought itself and, as Seifert notes, "not indirectly by means of causality or similar principles resting on the presupposed existence of the world [*nicht indirekt aus der angenommenen Existenz der Welt mittels des Kausalitätsprinzips oder ähnlicher Prinzipien*]" (157). This dedication allows him to find his way to God through the thoughts of a fool. As we will see, the proper understanding of the fool's negation of God leads inexorably to the conclusion that God cannot be conceived not to exist. Anselm thus calls the fool *insipiens* because he is simply removed from the *fons sapientiae*. The fool is no *stultus*, i.e., *stolidus*.⁴ Neither stubborn nor immovable, the fool can be led to the truth through his own thinking. In his own gloss on Anselm, a gloss happily preserving the language of light, illumination and distance, Bonaventura tells us that "*ipse enim intellectus intra se habet lumen sufficiens ex propria conditione, per quod posset dubitationem istam longius propulsare et se ab insipientia eripere*" (I.I. ad 1); the fool's intellect contains sufficient light, proper to his own being, that will cast his doubt far away and thus snatch him from his foolishness and propel him into the truth. How startling is Anselm's originality! In showing that the putative denial of the being of God in fact leads to the affirmation of our thought of God, Anselm is implicitly showing that any thought has the power to lead the understanding to grasp the ultimate inability of the mind to think that God is not, a position with which Hartshorne agrees: "the assertion of His existence must be knowable from any fact whatever, or the denial of any fact" (46).

Let us return to Anselm's argument. Since the fool says in his heart that there is no God, the *Proslogion* does not properly revolve around the distinction between what does and what does not exist, but rather what it means to exist "*et in re et in intellectu*" and what it means to exist "*in solo intellectu*." For, since he says in his heart that there is no God, the fool must at least have an understanding of what he has said. Thus, he understands what the IQM means, which indicates that it is in his understanding. Now, it is different for a thing to be understood, than to be understood to exist; that is, it is different for a thing to be understood to be both in the understanding and reality, than in the understanding alone. And according to

the very name IQM, the fool may not think of the IQM as existing in the understanding alone. Why? Well, IQM means that it is greater than any other thought. A thought whose ideatum may be thought to exist “*et in re et in intellectu*” is greater than a thought whose ideatum is thought to exist “*in solo intellectu*”; if it is thought to exist only in the mind, it may be thought to exist in reality also, “*quod maius est*” (P2). In other words, since the IQM implies that the intentional correlate cannot simply be mental, its actual existence is also co-implied: “what exists not only *in intellectu*,” writes Rohls, “exists *eo ipso in re*” (40).⁵

The issue of the *maius* is very complicated, and I cannot here expand greatly upon it. Anselm tells us that it is greater for a being to exist in the mind and in reality than it is for a being to exist only in the mind. Hence, extramental being is greater. Thus, if a being is truly that greater than which cannot be thought, it must exist in reality. Why? Because existence in reality is greater. Why? Well ... Anselm does not tell us in the *Proslogion*, so we are forced to look for answers. Since Anselm here investigates a kind of fullness of one mode of being in relation to another, we can deduce that *maius* means “more being.” Using Augustinian language, we can restate this as more participation in being, or less privation of being, which is how I will take the ontological meaning of *maius*. The extramental being is thus greater than the mental being because the extramental being that is thought is both extramental and mental, whereas the merely mental being is merely mental. The extramental being that is thought is thus ontologically more full, or greater, and the merely mental being lacks this ontological fullness. Hence, ontologically, *maius* means simply existence in reality, or existence beyond the mind in that there is demonstratively more being. Although this strikes one as a merely mathematical appropriation of the *maius*, as the argument progresses, and with it the mind’s grasp of the necessity of God, the *maius* will also develop in richness. There is truth, however, in mathematics, a truth that still awaits its full illumination.

Ppicks up the argument at this point; remember that Anselm still has not had his prayer, that the understanding grasp the propriety of the name of God, fulfilled. Schufreider is thus correct to emphasise the dialectical unity of P2 and P3, and to argue against the views of those, such as Hartshorne’s, who would impute two separate arguments. For, Anselm has shown the IQM to exist *in re* because it exists *in intellectu*, but he leaves implicit the mode of the mind’s relationship to the IQM. Anselm teases this out in P3. A being that *non possit cogitari non esse* is greater than a being *non esse cogitari potest*. Why is it greater? It is important first to note that the term *maius* undergoes not a shift in meaning, but in application: *maius* still indicates more participation in being, but what it is to participate in being has

shifted. In *P2*, Anselm contrasts mental being to extramental being, and finds the extramental being to be greater. But now, he compares two extramental beings. The distinction lies in that one of them cannot be thought not to be, and this is greater. Again, *maius* means “more participation in being,” in that the better extramental being is that which so participates in being that it may never be thought outside of this participation. Hence, *P3* supercedes the mathematical interpretation of *maius*; *maius* becomes qualitative - not ‘how much being,’ but simply ‘how being (how it is).’ Thus, the IQM, as the IQM, must be that extramental being that cannot be thought not to be, for if it could be thought not to be, then that being would not be the IQM. Nothing is better than the IQM because the IQM cannot be thought to exist but with necessity. At this point Anselm praise his discovery: “*et hoc es tu, Domine Deus noster.*” Praise is intimate and thus does not admit of universality; Anselm does not treat the IQM as a universal term, for instead of saying that God is an IQM, he says to God: “*et hoc es tu*” — “and you are hoc — this.” Says Jaspers: “This connection of thinkability and being applies only in relation to God (728).”⁶ Yet, as this is an praise and not yet a proof, the understanding is still not able to affirm that the IQM is a name of God, and so *P3* carries on with a famous *reductio ad absurdum*. Simply, if anyone could think a thought greater than God, the thinker (a creation) would pass beyond the creator and a thought that is greater than the thought of God would exist. But this to Anselm is absurd. Hence God the creator can alone be named the IQM.

In *P4*, Anselm wraps up his argument; in its course, the understanding finally grasps that which was originally only held by faith. How is it possible, asks Anselm, that the fool could say in his heart that there is no God? Well, says Anselm, a word may be used in two ways. One way follows the word *qua* word, and the other follows that which the word actually signifies. Thus, if God is understood as just a word, the fool is as free to say that God does not exist as he is to say that he himself does not exist. For, the word God then is simply a word, and as a mere word, has no content beyond its immediate self-sameness. But if God is understood as that being greater than which may not be thought, then the word is no longer merely a self-related unit whose existence is as indifferent as a term in a syllogism, but rather points to the necessary existence of that which it signifies. Thus, the understanding cannot both understand what it says when it says God, and, in saying it, understand God not to exist. Thus, it must be the case that the fool does not truly understand the name of God; the fool is a nominalist *par excellence*, but “for Anselm, nominalism does not count as proper thinking” (Jaspers, 747).⁷ And Anselm concludes *P4*: “*quod prius credidi te donante, iam sic intelligo*

te illuminante, ut, si te esse nolim credere, non possim non intelligere.”

Here, at the end of the argument, we do not have Anselm proving the existence of God. Rather, we have Anselm praising God for bringing his understanding to the same level as his faith. His understanding now has the Pauline freedom of his faith - he is freer in no longer being able to err. He is brought here, certainly through reason, yet against the backdrop of divine illumination. Hence, the activity is solely of God, which Anselm’s very grammar mirrors: he expresses this in an active participle declined in the ablative of personal agency: *te donante ... te illuminante*: “that which I believed *on account of your giving*,” says Anselm, “I now understand *on account of your illuminating*.” Anselm thus has the generosity proper to a true recipient. “The receiver must have generosity to receive the generosity of the giver,” writes Desmond, “otherwise the gift is perverted into thankless grabbing” (2001: 168), such as we perhaps catch of glimpse of in Descartes’ attempted ontological argument as a grounding of the innate idea, or Leibniz’s further attempt to show the possibility of this ground, or Hegel’s attempt to make this possibilized ground a self-grounding ground, or Feuerbach’s attempt to claim the IQM for humanity (to sketch quickly the dialectical history that I alluded to in my introduction). This very generosity distinguishes Anselm’s arguments from his modern appropriators. At least, his generosity allows him to see the gift as good in itself - this alone opens his eyes, and his soul, to a logical dynamism that does not spring from the subject, but rather from the transcendent.

Anselm’s ontological argument is usually billed as an attempt to prove that God exists. Hence, the history of objections to which it has been subjected tend to fault the putative connection Anselm draws between a subjective concept of God, and the real being of this concept. And if this is what is meant by proof of the existence of God, then I do not think that Anselm’s point in his ontological argument is to prove that God exists. Obviously, the objective existence of God is bound up with his argument, but I think the foregoing has shown that Anselm has a different motive. For, he is dynamized not by the question whether God exists or (after all, as a prayer, the *Proslogion* is talking to God), but how it is possible that the fool can say in his heart that there is no God. Although I believe that Anselm’s modern intellectual biographer, Richard Southern, overstates his case when he says “it is only in a careless way that Anselm’s proof can be called a proof that God exists” [132] — after all, Anselm does claim that the *Prosl.* is an argument to prove that God is — , I sympathise with Southern’s intentions. Southern is in the camp of thinkers like Schufreider, but also like Hegel and the early Feuerbach. Despite their each having a highly personal understanding of

Anselm, none believes that Anselm's ontological argument brings together such disparate elements as a concept of God and God's existence. Anselm's proof is not at all synthetic, which implies that the objections against Anselm inspired by Gaunilo and Kant miss the mark.

Instead, we can conclude that the *Proslogion* is the diary of Anselm's search for the true meaning of this datum of faith. Meaning, of course, is not immediate, a fact proven whenever we see an unfamiliar object. Nor is meaning analytic, like logic - as Aristotle tells us, we can never deduce the individual. Heidegger suggests that meaning is the upon-which of a projection, the *Woraufhin des Entwurfs*, and this is apt even for a discussion of Anselm since illumination is a divine projection. Anselm knows now what it means for God to be: it means that it is not possible to deny God, *even if Anselm wanted to do so*, an insight whose truth God first projects as a divine gift through illumination upon Anselm's understanding.

3. The ontological argument in Hegel

We have seen that Anselm seeks insight into his faith through divine illumination. Hegel, on the other hand, seeks not insight into his genuine Lutheran faith in God, but rather conceptual rationalization through science. God is essentially the self-developing structure upon which the Logic is hung, and hence God is conceptually consummated in the absolute idea. Indeed, Hegel famously refers to the Logic as "the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind" (*Science of Logic*, 50), a quotation that works in his theory of the trinity as well for good measure. For Hegel, any other concept of God than the absolute idea is deficient, and false, because it is partial, i.e., not scientific. Thus, Hegel's explanation of the ontological argument attempts to show how it fits into his system of science. I make no pretence that this is an exhaustive list, but we can find discussions in the *Encyclopaedia Logic*, in the *Science of Logic*, in the *History of Philosophy*, and in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.

In his 1825-26 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel finds the dynamism of Anselm's argument in the antithesis between thinking and being. He praises Anselm for being the first thinker to raise these two determinations to such mutual opposition: "bringing the highest antithesis to consciousness is the greatest depth of profundity" (54), a reference to the ancient Parmenidean connection between thinking and being ("for the same things can thought and can be" (Diels-Krantz fragment B 3), and again "what is for being and for thinking must be; for it can be, and nothing cannot be" (B 6.1-2)). This connection abstracts

the differences in determinations between thinking and being, and only the Golgotha of their complete opposition allows them to be reunited in their truth. That is, Anselm does not give us a merely immediate, and hence presupposed, identity of thought and being uttered by a goddess. Rather, Anselm puts us on the path of a unity that is indeed immediate, but whose immediacy is the result of the negation of the mediation from which it results. Anselm is thus of crucial importance in the development of spirit.

This, then, is Hegel's account of Anselm's ontological argument in *P2* as he provides in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (*BSH*, 54-55): When I have a thought, its being qua thought is merely subjective. It cannot bring itself to objectivity, which means that, lacking "the significance of the In-itself," it does not exist outside of my thinking it (*Enc.* § 41 A 2). But its content qua thought is universal (thought is the universal). The disjunction here is then simply one between being and thinking; when we think something, there is no guarantee that the thing is. Thus in relation to finite thoughts, no unity obtains between thinking and being, and they remain opposite determinations. However, what is most perfect is not only thought but also is; for, as Hegel tells us in his similar treatment of Descartes, the definition of the most perfect being is that "existence and representation are bound together in it" (*BSH*, 142). Now, God is such a perfect being, and he would be imperfect if he only existed in my thought of him. Hence, my thought of God must ascribe being to God.⁸

Showing that he has Descartes rather than Anselm in mind, as the editors of the *History* point out (*BSH*, 55 note 94), Hegel immediately, but obliquely, mentions Kant. For Hegel, Kant was correct to see that the proof involved presupposition, although Hegel does not share with us what this presupposition may be. Clearly he has in mind Kant's trenchant critique of the ontological argument: that the ontological argument mistakenly believes that being may be plucked from the concept, a nostrum that Hegel entertains only much later in the book (*BSH*, 239), and that merits repeat discussions by Hegel throughout his career. We can describe this "plucking out" as a presupposition in the following manner. Since none of the perfections is analytically contained within the concept of the greatest perfection, the selection of any perfection is a presupposition, and thus being is presupposed along with any other of the perfections contained within the *thesaurus*. Although Descartes presupposes this content, Kant finds his presupposition to be unfounded because being, as position, is not found analytically within a concept. In response, Hegel criticizes Kant in the *Science of Logic* in three places. First, Kant applies the determinations of finite beings (the categories of

understanding) to the infinite being, and thus violates his own critical philosophy, which we see most clearly in his example of the 100 thalers (86 ff.). Second, Kant confuses the existence of determinate being with the determinations of determinate being; existence is not a determination, but rather the result of the negation of essence as ground. (481-483). Third, Kant's doctrine of position (i.e., being is found only in a "context of outer experience", i.e., as being for another) blinds philosophy to the truth that being *per se* is simple self-relation (705-707). But in the *History*, Hegel instead sees Kant's critique as an imminent critique that can lead to a stronger ontological argument: Hegel points out that Kant's exposition of Descartes' presupposition destroys the a priori nature of the ontological argument, for above all else, the argument may not depend on anything. Hegel then presents the ontological argument anew in to answer Kant. By exposing the perfections in their necessity, Hegel sketches a radically different ontological argument than that of St. Anselm:

The authentic proof would be the demonstration that thinking by itself, thinking taken by itself, is something untrue, that thinking negates itself and by that negation determines itself as that which is. Just as on the other side it must be shown, in regard to being, that the dialectic proper to being is its self-sublation, its self-positing as the universal and *eo ipso* as thought (*BSH*, 55).

To anyone familiar with ontological arguments, the above must sound odd, if not oracular. However, Hegel is simply attempting to carry out at the a priori level what he sees as the task of Anselm's argument. Hegel is simply trying to connect being and thinking, or rather, to show that being is thinking and vice versa, or again, to show that taking either in isolation from the other leads to contradictions that resolve themselves in the actual unity of the two. Thus rather than connect, Hegel wants to reveal that they are inseparable. Although I find it difficult to render the above quotation into clear non-Hegelian speech, perhaps a typically Hegelian double negation will suffice: Thinking taken in itself is nothing, pure abstraction, pure negation. However, thinking is able to think about itself. Since thinking is a negation, thinking about thinking is a negation of a negation, which in turn is an affirmation. Hence, thinking affirms or determines itself, which is to say, thinking is. Whether or not this is a shell game is beyond the scope of this present paper. Rather, we ought to marvel that without leaving the concept of thinking, Hegel has shown a priori that thinking "contains" (in Kant's language) being. We can apply a similar hermeneutic to the second half of the quotation: In sublating itself, being comes to pure identity. Pure identity is the universal, and

the universal is synonymous with thinking. Hence, without leaving the concept of being, Hegel putatively demonstrates how it contains thinking.

Hegel revisits Anselm's ontological argument in the 1827 *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. There, he criticizes this "representation," and hence this premise, that God is "absolutely perfect," for a representation is always deficient and thus never equal to the perfection that it putatively claims for God (182-183); we see here again Hegel mistakenly ascribing perfection to Anselm's argument. For Hegel, we may not think of God through limited, and hence finite representations, but rather must grasp the concept of God, for the concept is what is infinite, most concrete, most real. Thus Kant is wrong, Hegel says, to see this idea of God as a mere representation and not as a concept (184); for a representation is always something finite, and a concept is always infinite. Representations cannot grasp the infinite. One hundred thalers is indeed a representation, because "its being-there is diverse from its concept" (*Enc.* § 51), which is precisely what makes anything finite. But in contrast to finite beings, which by definition only represent their genus, the infinite is its universal (*1831 Religion*, 353-354). Thus, representative language can never satisfactorily capture the infinite God; after all, God is the "absolute concept," the "concept in and for itself" (*1827 Religion*, 184). Hegel's whole System is geared to showing that the concept is the true reality; being must be one of its determinations.

The concept thus gives Hegel another complaint against Anselm. Anselm begins his proof with a presupposition, which as we know is the kiss of death in the System. And this presupposition, simply put, is the concept of God (187), which we find at the beginning of *P2*. This God is a mere concept (if this is not too strong a word) or position of faith, and thus the concept does not develop itself, but rather depends on an external fillip to set it in motion. Since something stands external to the concept, the concept is not the unification of its opposites (i.e., it is not the totality of relationality), and hence the being that is supposed to accrue to the concept due to its very immediate self-relation does in fact not accrue: rather, "the unity of the concept and being is a presupposition ... the defective feature is the fact that this is a presupposition and therefore something immediate, and so one does not recognize the necessity of this unity" (187-188).

Hegel sees Descartes as an improvement on Anselm because Descartes gives God determinate content of an infinite nature: "in the subsequent and more extensive elaboration

of Anselm's thought by understanding, it was said that the concept of God is that God is the quintessence of all reality, the most real essence" (183). That is, Descartes tells us what God is (reality), and this content is unbounded (all reality). The System differs from Descartes's *ens realissimum* in that it does not simply find being among the *thesaurus* of realities supposedly constituting the concept; being, in the System, is instead the necessary, but abstract, relation to self of the concept. We cannot replay this story here: simply put, for Hegel, being is immediate self-relation. When we say something is, we mean no more than it is, that it is equal to itself (185). Thus is every being equal in being. This, famously, is the being that opens up the *Logic* - the being in which all distinction is wiped away. The absolute concept, God, is sublation of all distinction, as Hegel says in the *1831 Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* (355). The sublation of all distinction is, of course, the same thing as pure identity. And pure identity is the same thing as immediate being. Thus being is contained within the concept. We can put this another way. The sublation of all distinction means that the relation between every distinction is contained within God. Thus God is the entirety of relationality, but this entirety of relationality is also God's substance, God's own self-relation. Therefore God is with necessity, since being is simply self-relation. Thus being is contained within the concept. This, in shorthand, is an other version of Hegel's ontological argument to complement the one we saw in the *History*.

Hegel's achievement is significant, for he has explicitly not sought to couple being and the concept together; he does not see the ontological argument as anything synthetic: "through being, however, nothing is added to the content of the concept" (183), *pace* Kant. Hegel, in 1831, expands this: "we are not supposed to be adding anything to the concept. Rather, we are removing from it the shortcoming that it is only something subjective" (*1831 Religion*, 354). Hegel's ontological argument has overcome the perceived immediacy of Anselm, and the *thesaurus* of Descartes' representations. Yet, this defence of the ontological argument comes at quite a cost. Hegel, in destroying the claims for the synthetic nature of the proof, reduces it to something analytic. God's being, that is, follows from the meaning of terms in which it is expressed. As analytic, Hegel represents being as a moment of the concept, but its "poorest" (*1831 Religion*, 356), "most meagre" (*1827 Religion*, 185), least interesting moment, for the least we can say about the concept is that it is. More seems lost in this victory of the ontological argument than is won.

4. Conclusion: Meaning and Illumination

As we have seen, Hegel criticises Anselm's argument for having a presupposition, for denying the absorbing nature of reason and thus for not allowing reason its full autonomous self-development, which, in effect, ought with right to reduce God to itself. Against Hegel, William Desmond has well argued how Hegel's hubristic reduction of God to the absolute idea results not in God, but rather in an absorbing god no different from "inactive inertia," i.e., an immediate identification of God with reason that leaves nothing external to reason and that thus removes motion by removing differences (1987: 28 ff.). Anselm's argument, to the contrary, depends on a distance between reason and God, and thus on motion: as his own preface to the *Proslogion* tells us, Anselm wrote for the person wanting "*erigere mentem suam ad contemplandum Deum.*" Anselm's prayer begins from a distance and thus outside of reason, and this is not a defect, *pace* Hegel, but in fact its glory because it recognizes a much richer sense of what being ought to mean.

The great unsaid in Hegel is his belief that science must be an a priori system, to which we must ask: Why? Certainly, German idealism, with its stress upon the autonomy of reason, unfolded in a way that would suggest the pure a priori nature of science as it develops in Hegel. But such a genetic approach at best merely postpones the question, and at worst it obscures it. The genetic approach obscures the question because it is but another expression of Hegel's faith in the necessity of reductive reason; if we can account for Hegel through the genesis of German idealism, then he too is but an a priori moment of the larger whole, and we continue to assume as true the a priori. We may not assume this, and thus the genetic approach also postpones the question, for we want to know the meaning of a priori knowledge: if necessity is the key, where do we find the warrant that guarantees the necessity of a priori knowledge, or systematic science? Meaning is tied to this "where," this upon-which. We certainly cannot look upon any successes to which science has led, for then we would be grounding the a priori on the a posteriori - a clear absurdity. Can science then give itself to itself and reduce all places to scientific univocity, as Hegel suggests? But more importantly: How can we be certain that the key to reality - and thus God - is science? Read the *Logic* and tell me if you find the answer.

Illumination provides an answer to the certainty of any a priori concepts, for illumina-

tion theory holds that the absolute certainty of our axioms depends on a kind of participation with the divine (neither the nature of this participation nor the axioms are univocal, and thus themselves require careful investigation). As we have seen above, Anselm's conversation with God, which he himself calls an "*alloquium*" (*P* Prooem.), can only be understood against this backdrop. And moreover, his conversation ought to be at least as acceptable to contemporary ears as is Hegel's claim to speak *for God*. For Hegel can only speak as such a proxy if, as Hegel himself claims, the objective is nothing more than the outward expression or projection of the subjective, and vice versa. If this objectivity of projective subjectivity is the case, then I must agree that Feuerbach is the fate of Hegel and God is nothing else but humanity. In its dialectic, which removes all distance and hence space, the system takes the place of God.

Anselm's ontological argument is superior to Hegel's because it finds certainty for its datum of faith through illumination, whereas Hegel destroys the very idea of the datum and replaces it with the certainty of progressive self-determination. Anselm keeps difference alive, and in so doing, also keeps identity alive. But Hegel, in removing difference, obscures the importance of identity. Hegel would respond that he keeps alive a concrete difference by offering an identity in difference, but again I reply: if difference is just a moment of the identical, then how in truth is this difference? Desmond suggests such a response is symptomatic of Hegel's "virtuosity with abstractions he fondly calls concrete" (2003, 234). Yet, Hegel's reply is right in sensing that we may not understand difference abstractly, even if he ultimately fails in giving difference its due. Here, Anselm succeeds: his prayer for illumination treats God as a difference, but a difference with a relation, which is precisely what marks this difference as a difference and not indifference. God can only be close (*intimior intimo meo*, says Augustine) because he is distant, a distance that in turn allows for illumination, which is but a manifestation of God's closeness. There is a circle here, and not vicious; a loving embrace, and not a smothering return to self of the absorbing god.

Within the context of Anselm's argument, meaning remains projective, for, as I've claimed above, illumination is a divine projection. The upon-which of this projection remains immanent (our understanding), but the source of the throw becomes transcendent. The meaning of the divine is simply this: we must be open to its projection upon us. Prayerful *P1* proclaims this openness, which the rest of the book keeps open. Hence, a fundamental imbalance or asymmetry constitutes this divine projection illumination: we stand naked and ex-

posed in this divine light. We could think of Levinas here, but with the caveat that this relationship does not resign me merely to absolute responsibility. This illumination certainly calls me to responsibility, just as it calls the fool to cease his foolishness. But it also shows that I too may make an appeal, and that God may respond, as he did for Anselm.

I have just said that illumination provides an answer to the question regarding the certainty, and hence true meaning, of a priori knowledge. Yet, we know that this answer is roundly criticized for being an easy answer: God plugs the holes in our theories. Imagine, however, that it is not the easy answer, but rather the hard answer - in a world so interested in scientific monism, in a world so held in thrall by the hedonistic egoism concomitant with our current regime of enterprise capitalism, perhaps maintaining true dialogue, perhaps maintaining difference, is hard. But perhaps this is essential, and precisely the value of Anselm's ontological argument. For without distance, the question of meaning becomes nothing more than the projection of a self-grounding a priori system. If human consciousness is both the source and the target of such projection, then dialogue with any postulated other becomes highly questionable, if not impossible. But if human consciousness is not always the source of projection, then some sort of dialogue with an ultimate other is possible. Long ago has Anselm's prayer led us to the place wherein this ascension is possible.

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1. "Die Geschichte der Philosophie scheint mit einem ontologischen Beweis zu beginnen. Denn was Parmenides aus dem Munde der Göttin erfährt und im zweiten Teil seines Lehrgedichts als die Wahrheit der Meinung der Sterblichen gegenüberstellt, ist die Auffassung, daß nur das Seiende ist und das Nichtseiende nicht sein kann."

2. When we consider the future development of the ontological argument, this has great but completely different implications with regard to Descartes and Hegel: Descartes lacks faith (i.e., trust), and Hegel lacks the external (i.e., givenness).

3. Schufreider does not spend much time on this point. He simply argues that the IQM is not a stipulative definition but rather the expression of a long tradition that has named God in that fashion (1978: 6).

4. Although Anselm indeed ends P3 saying: "Cur, nisi quia stultus et insipiens? [emph. added]," this is the only occurrence of *stultus* in either the *Proslogion* or in his *Liber Apologeticus Contra Gaunilonem*. On the matter of the move from *insipiens* to *sapiens*, I am reminded that Karl Barth asks if Anselm, who, since he so clearly posits the viewpoint of the fool, is "himself in some way and at some point an *insipiens* too?" (157).

5. "Was nicht nur in intellectu existiert, existiert eo ipso in re."

6. Allow me here to provide a bit more of Jaspers than I have quoted above: "Daher läßt sich der Gedanke nicht loslösen von seinem Gehalt zu einer allgemeinen syllogistischen Form mit dem Obersatz: Jedes Ding, das in seiner Art als das vollkommenste gedacht wird, hat auch Existenz. Dieser Zusammenhang von Gedachtsein und Sein gilt nur Gott gegenüber."

7. "Die nominalistische Denkungsart gilt Anselm als kein eigentliches Denken."

8. Clearly, this recounting of Anselm's argument is fanciful. First, as the even the editors of this volume point out (55), Anselm nowhere mentions the most perfect being. Second, Hegel's re-creation is a syllogism, complete with a universal term (that which is most perfect is), a particular term (God is a most perfect being), and an individual term (therefore God is). Anselm nowhere in P2 or P3 employs a syllogism - but as is well known, Descartes does. And

instead of considering God to be a particularization of the most perfect being, Anselm gives us the IQM as a name of God (we have seen this argument above in note on page). For Anselm, the argument regards God in his individuality from the very beginning.