

The Inclusive *Epekeina* of Anselm's *Proslogion*

Andrew Griffin

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Many are the negative theologies, at least as many as the interpretations of Plato's *epekeina*, the Good beyond thought and Being of *Republic* (509b-c). Anselm, however, is not simply a negative theologian. His *Proslogion* proves God's existence and reaches "certain truth and true certainty"¹ about the divine substance. Crucially, certain knowledge is not complete comprehension. God is also "greater than can be thought,"² "unity itself, indivisible by any intellect,"³ and "beyond all beings."⁴ In order to understand the relation of knowledge and ignorance in knowing God, we must begin with the *Proslogion's* form as *itinerarium*. The *Proslogion* is a quest, written from the perspective of a seeker, leading the human into God. The journey into vision is gradual, and includes successes, contradictions, failures, and new beginnings. No perspective is final because each is God's gift of himself according to the human's changing capacity to receive. By implication, as Eileen Sweeney shows, knowledge of the human and God go together: "Anselm's corpus, from his earliest prayer to last treatise, is a single project in which knowledge of self and God are inextricably linked."⁵

Anselm's *epekeina* governs the *Proslogion's* "single argument" (*unum argumentum*) as what transcends, originates, and restores the unity of the divided human. In the quest's beginning, human reason

1 *Proslogion*, c. XIV: "certa veritate et vera certitudine." The Latin edition I use is F.S. Schmitt, *Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946).

2 *Pros*, XV: "quiddam maius quam cogitari possit."

3 *Pros*, XVIII: "ipsa unitas, nullo intellectu divisibilis."

4 *Pros*, XX: "ultra omnia."

5 Eileen Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 7.

seeking God immediately begins dividing and separating out what is in itself one. This leads to loss of vision. God restores the human when, by the negation of negation, Anselm's famous proof leads reason to Divine illumination. The God beyond intellect restores the divided seeker to unity through illumination, a divine gift by which rational seeking becomes interior to intellect, enabling the seeker to know God with "true certainty." However, this is a complex process with interaction between the two modes of knowing and what is beyond them both. Intellect has its own quest and contradictions. Indeed, illumination is not final knowledge because God is also beyond intellect. Ultimately, the entire quest, characterized by cycles of success and failure, is included in and conforms to the giving and receiving of the infinite, diffuse and united Trinity.

I. ANSELM'S SOURCES

As a monk in the Order of St. Benedict, Anselm's daily life was centered around the Divine offices and *lectio divina*. He memorized the Psalms, which he chanted in full every week,⁶ and devoted himself to understanding the obscurities of scripture. Eadmer describes Anselm seeking "with the eye of reason those things in the Holy Scriptures which, as he felt, lay hidden in deep obscurity."⁷

Anselm names very few authorities. In his treatises he mentions by name only Aristotle and Augustine, and his correspondences include references to Gregory the Great, Bede, his teacher Lanfranc, and John Cassian.⁸ Despite Anselm's appeal to Augustine's authority in the *Monologion's Prooemium*, where he defends himself against accusations of novelty and falsehood by urging

6 See Richard W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 94.

7 Eadmer, *The Life of St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury/ Vita Sancti Anselmi archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. & trans. R. Southern (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), 12.

8 For a list of Anselm's named sources, in both his treatises and correspondences, as well as a list of texts Anselm likely had access to, see Ian Logan, *Reading Anselm's Proslogion: The History of Anselm's Argument and Its Significance Today* (Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 7-15.

a comparison between his work and Augustine's *De Trinitate*, there are striking differences between the two writers: "Both seek the *intellectus fidei*; both seek to provide formal and convincing demonstrations of what is believed; but, in terms of method, the arguments are very different."⁹ Anselm's method is *sola ratione* and, unlike Augustine, he proves God's existence to a fool. Crouse says that "the grounds of the [*Proslogion*] argument are thus present in the Augustinian tradition, but only Anselm draws out completely the implications of those presuppositions."¹⁰ Anselm's deep meditation on Augustine brought about a simplification and systematization of the teaching which, in my view, brings out the Neoplatonic elements underlying Augustine's thought.

The influence of Boethius partially accounts for what distinguishes Anselm from Augustine. Ian Logan identifies textual evidence for Anselm's access to Boethius' first *Commentary on De Interpretatione*, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, two commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagoge*, as well as to his theological tractates *De Trinitate* and *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*.¹¹ Anselm follows Boethius and not Augustine on human self-knowledge;¹² he adopts Boethius' interpretation of the Chalcedonian definition in *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* which, as Robert Crouse says, "remains standard for Latin Christendom throughout the Middle Ages;"¹³ and he adopts Boethius' ordered series of forms of apprehension.

9 Robert Crouse, "Anselm of Canterbury and Medieval Augustinianisms," *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 3 (1987): 60–68 at 62.

10 Crouse, "Anselm of Canterbury and Medieval Augustinianisms": 63.

11 Logan, *Reading Anselm's Proslogion*, 15.

12 See Kristell Trego, "Saint Anselme ou le sujet hors de soi," ed. O. Boulnois, *Généalogies du sujet: de saint Anselme à Malebranche* (Paris: Vrin, 2007), 19–42. Also see Wayne J. Hankey, "Shaped Mutually: the Human Self and the Incomprehensible God in Eriugena, Anselm, Aquinas, and Bonaventure," *Soul Matters*, ed. S.I. Ahbel-Rappe, University of Michigan Press, in press.

13 Robert Crouse, "Christology: From Chalcedon to Anselm," in *The Person and Mission of Jesus Christ: Who do you say that I am?* Papers delivered at the 1997 Atlantic Theological Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick, ed. S. Harris (Charlottetown: St. Peter Publications, 1997), 69–77 at 75.

The influence of Neoplatonism on Anselm,¹⁴ as well as apophatic elements of Anselm's thought,¹⁵ have been well established. However, the extent of these influences on Anselm, as well as their importance for understanding Anselm's work, is still a matter of debate. While there is no evidence that Anselm had access to the work of Plotinus, or that we must look beyond Augustine to account for the Neoplatonic elements of Anselm's thought, it is worth noting that the God of the *Proslogion* exhibits fundamental similarities to the One beyond being of Plotinus.

II. THE UNITY OF THE *PROSLOGION* ARGUMENT

The unity of the *Proslogion* has its origin in a dissatisfaction with the form of the *Monologion*. Anselm explains:

...reflecting that [the *Monologion*] was made up of a concatenation of many arguments (*multorum concatenatione contextum argumentorum*), I began to wonder if perhaps it might be possible to find one single argument (*unum argumentum*) that required no other than itself alone for proving itself, and that by itself would suffice to prove that God truly exists, that He is the supreme good needing no other and is He whom all things have need of for their being and well-being, and also to prove whatever we believe about the Divine Being.¹⁶

The *Proslogion's* quest receives its unity from the name, or formula, for God: "that than which nothing greater (*maius*) can be thought." The single continuous explication of this formula (hereafter: *maius*)

14 See Alexandre Koyré, *L'idée de Dieu dans la philosophie de St. Anselme* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1923); Kurt Flasch, "Der philosophische Ansatz des Anselm von Canterbury im Monologion und sein Verhältnis zum augustinischen Neuplatonismus," *Analecta Anselmiana* (1970): 1-43; Katherin A. Rogers, *The Neoplatonic Metaphysics and Epistemology of Anselm of Canterbury* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997); Dermot Moran, "Neoplatonic and Negative Theological Elements in Anselm's Argument for the Existence of God in the *Proslogion*," *Pensée de l'Un Dans l'Histoire de la Philosophie*, ed. J.-M. Narbonne and A. Reckerman (Paris: Vrin/Laval, 2004), 198-229.

15 See Paul Evdokimov, "L'aspect apophatique de l'argument de saint Anselme," *Spicilegium Beccense* I, Vrin, (1959): 233-258; Jean-Luc Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological? The Argument According to Anselm and Its Metaphysical Interpretation According to Kant," *The Journal of the History of Philosophy* 30/2 (1992): 201-218.

16 *Pros, Prooemium*.

formula) begins in *Proslogion* II with the fool's denial of the existence of God and, after accomplishing its proofs and demonstrations, concludes in *Proslogion* XXIII when the *unum argumentum* arrives at the *unum necessarium*, the "one thing necessary," which is the all-inclusive Trinity. The final chapters bring us to the sensual and total enjoyment of all things in the "all, one, total and sole good."¹⁷

The *maius* formula is a name for God whose explication is the way to God.¹⁸ It teaches us about God because the particular way it functions conforms to the necessities and possibilities which knowing God imposes on or opens to the knower. This is seen in many ways: (i) What is sought is present at the beginning under a form which is not seen. (ii) Because the formula cannot all at once confer on the human the nature of what it names, seeking is essential. The seeker becomes more and less capable of knowing what he seeks as the formula gradually discloses itself in accordance with the seeker's capacity to receive. This means that knowledge is relative to the place of the seeker on the quest. (iii) The formula both makes itself intelligible and resists complete comprehension. (iv) The quest leads into vision of what includes the entire journey from the beginning. The way to God and God himself are one. At the end of the journey the seeker discovers that the human, who is other than God, through seeking becomes participant in the divine life and recognizes his inclusion in what God is "through Himself."

The necessities which knowing God imposes on the human, as well as the possible paths open to the seeker, are determined by God's nature. The principal logic of the divine nature, underlying these necessities and possibilities, is that God is both within and beyond the realm of being and knowing. Because God submits to thought and gives himself as intellectual understanding, the desperate and desiring human asks for and receives true knowledge of what is beyond intellect in accordance with his

17 *Pros*, XXIII: "omne et unum et totum et solum bonum."

18 Nicholas of Cusa, a reader of Anselm, seeks the same unity of form and content in his guided journeys into vision of God. See especially his *De Li Non Aliud* and *De Possess.*

changing capacity to receive. But the *epekeina* remains, and therefore understanding is not the end of seeking, but enables the quest to make another beginning. This gives the quest a cyclical structure, by which the human sees God, loses vision, and finds him again under a new form. It is in this way that Anselm, as Dermot Moran writes, "recognizes, and in a way enacts, the dialectical tension between the immanence and transcendence of the Divine."¹⁹

III. ANSELM'S EPEKEINA

Anselm makes God's transcendence of intellect and beings explicit: "unity itself not divisible by any intellect" and "before and beyond all things." The logic and character of this transcendence is subtle and is what concerns us. To understand its character, we must distinguish between the thought of God as a being among others and the thought of him as beyond all others as their source. The former places God within the realm of beings, and the latter places him beyond it. The realm of being and knowing is the realm of otherness, by which I mean that in it the identity of a thing and its distinction from what is other are mutually established. Concepts have limits establishing their self-identity and distinguishing them from what they are not. Since knowledge of one being depends upon distinctions separating it from what is other, a being is only known through and in relation to others.

In *Proslogion V* the seeker embarks on a path towards knowledge which treats God as one among others. He successfully achieves knowledge of God by a process of correction which distinguishes divine attributes from their lesser human forms. Divine attributes and human attributes are thus understood through the conceptual distinctions separating out what belongs to God and what to the human. After some success, the seeker gradually loses vision as he establishes distinctions forcing the conclusion that God is "greater than can be thought". This discovery is a step on the journey towards a transcendent foundation of being and knowing; it contributes to

19 Moran, "Neoplatonic and Negative Theological Elements," 214-215.

an anxiety, despair, and loss of vision which intensify until what is positive in God's unthinkability emerges. The positive emerges with the insight that God is not simply one being among others. Just as he is beyond mind as the indivisible unity on which thought and intellectual vision depends, he is beyond beings as their source and preserver. Because he is beyond all beings, God is present to all beings and in them can be seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and felt. This transcendence provides a new basis for God's intelligibility, and for understanding the inclusion of the entire quest in God. Thus, Anselm's *epekeina* has the fundamental transcendence of the Neoplatonic One, beyond the difference of thought and sense. It is not on the side of the intelligible, but as much beyond it as it is beyond the sensible, and it is the ground of them both.

The language of otherness is justified by Anselm's use of *aliud* and the emergence of God's relation to otherness as a problem. In *Proslogion* III the unthinkability of God's non-existence uniquely distinguishes him from all others, but whether he is one among others remains ambiguous: "And certainly whatever is other (*aliud*), except you alone, is able to be thought not to be...whatever is other (*aliud*) does not exist as truly [as you], and therefore has being to a lesser degree."²⁰ By *Proslogion* X & XI, the seeker's attempts to know God conceptually through the process of correction leads to incomprehensibility. *Proslogion* XII teaches that God is not known "in relation to us" and "through another" but through himself alone: "But certainly, whatever you are, you are not that through another (*per aliud*) but through your very self (*per teipsum*)."²¹ At this point, our knowing God appears impossible: God, regarded as one among others, can now only be known "in relation to himself" and "through himself." The problem is that, while intelligibility depends on relation to others, God exists only in relation to Himself. *Proslogion* XIV asks, "what

20 *Pros*, III.

21 *Pros*, XII.

other (*aliud*) are you, than what [my soul] sees?"²² When the problem is set up as a matter of bridging one being and another as subject and object, then knowledge of God is impossible. God's incomprehensibility means that there is no comparative relation between the human and God, and, therefore, no matter how many corrections are made to human concepts, and how much distance is covered, can a bridge be constructed between God and an "other." *Proslogion* XVI suffers from this impossibility: "For truly there is nothing other (*aliud*) which can penetrate through [your inaccessible light] so that it might perceive you there."²³

If God can be found after *Proslogion* XII, it is by coming to know God "through Himself," which is only possible if what is "other" than God is already included in God "through Himself." After *Proslogion* XVIII's pivotal illumination of God as *ipsa unitas*, *Proslogion* XXIII reads: "out of supreme simplicity there cannot proceed another than that from which it proceeds."²⁴ Arriving at this fundamental of Anselmian logic depends upon God's transcendence of beings and intelligibility. Otherness exists through God because God transcends, originates and governs it. Anselm thus recovers the intelligibility of God and the basis on which he achieved "certain truth and true certainty" in the first half of the treatise.

We may speak of God's transcendence of otherness in terms of a double negation, a characteristic form for Anselm. The first negation is present in *Proslogion* VI-XI, where Anselm understands Divine attributes within the realm of otherness by distinguishing them from human forms of the same attributes, and the second negation comes in *Proslogion* XVIII with the discovery that God is beyond the first-order negation and all otherness, and therefore is present to it as its ground. The double negation is also operative in Anselm's famous proof for the existence of God.

22 *Pros*, XIV.

23 *Pros*, XIV: "Vere enim non est aliud quod hanc penetret, ut ibi te pervideat."

24 *Pros*, XXIII: "...nec de summa simplicitate potest procedere aliud quam quod est de quo procedit."

IV. REASON AND FAITH

The journey into vision of God depends upon distinctions between forms of apprehension: faith, reason, and intellect. These terms and their distinction are given by the *Proslogion's* alternative title, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. Faith has priority with respect to intellect, and reason, which moves the journey, is essential to questing.

Faith is both a form of apprehension, and has content, as given by the Catholic church. Anselm, citing Isaiah 7:9, sheds light on this formula: "For I do not seek to understand so that I may believe; but I believe so that I may understand (*credo ut intelligam*). For I believe this also, that unless I believe, I shall not understand."²⁵ The movement from faith to intellect is a movement from belief to understanding. The temporal priority of belief over understanding is necessary because of the inadequacy of human knowing to Divine truth. The seeker in *Proslogion* recognizes that his intellect is "in no way" (*nullatenus*) comparable to God's truth, which he desires to understand "to some extent" (*aliquatenus*).²⁶ Belief knows the indistinct whole which reason seeks to understand. Without this preliminary knowledge of the whole, there is no object to understand *aliquatenus*. Divine truth exceeds complete comprehension, but by belief the human possesses contingent and indistinct knowledge of truths which may become understood according to necessary reasons by the intellect.

Proslogion I establishes the necessity and limitations of discursive reason, or *cogitatio*. Reason separates and divides its objects, leads into contradiction, and, when it is not governed by faith or intellect, only leads to despair, anxiety, and loss of vision. This is because for Anselm reason is fallen and requires restoration by a higher form of knowing in order to lead to vision. *Proslogion* I contains a series of 26 questions which form a continuous line of investigation into 'where' (*ubi*) and 'how' (*quomodo*) to find God. Reasoning operates in a way that gradually increases the distance between the

25 *Pros*, I.

26 *Pros*, I.

seeker and his goal; the series of questions intensify the seeker's knowledge of his distance from God and expose an opposition between the intense desire and God's inaccessibility. The seeker knows neither how to approach God's "inaccessible light," who will lead him into it, nor by what sign or face (*faciem*) he may seek it.

Proslogion I introduces features of the scriptural account of the fall in order to understand this incompatibility and opposition between the heart's desire and God's inaccessibility. Anselm compares prelapsarian Adam to the universal fallen state of humans. Adam was blessed, possessed "that without which nothing is happy," ate the bread of angels (*panem angelorum*), belched with satiety (*ructabat saturitate*), was prosperous, and in his happiness had possessions. This is total and sensual satisfaction. In its place, the frustrated seeker finds misery, eats the "bread of sorrows," "sighs with hunger," goes begging, and remains empty. The garden of Eden is that from which we fall and into which we strive to return through work and prayer. The human condition in the garden is a state of both grace and nature; it is restored by work and grace. Benedictine monasteries, including Anselm's own abbey at Bec, illustrate the quest for Edenic total satisfaction in God by placing at the center of the monastery a garden representing Eden. The desire for total sensual satisfaction in God plays a crucial role in the *Proslogion*'s quest and will ultimately be satisfied when the seeker finds himself in God and sees God in all things.

Reason's intensification of its own incapacity must ultimately lead to a demand for help from outside. This demand derives from contradiction, which appears when the work of seeking is the very thing which prevents finding: "I sought goodness, and behold, confusion. I was moving into God, and I got in my own way."²⁷ The same contradiction implicates the Divine logic of the cosmos. God calls to us by desire in us, by his institution of the church catholic, and by scripture, to seek him, but the human seeking does not lead to finding. Anselm will say in

27 *Pros*, I: "Tendebam in deum, et offendi in me ipsum."

Proslogion XVIII: “We all lost that which, when we wish to look for it, we do not know; that which, when we look for it, we do not find; that which, when we find it, is not what we are looking for.”²⁸ The seeker remains at the bottom of the cave: “Lord, bowed down (*incurvatus*) as I am, I can only look downwards; raise me up that I may move upwards.”²⁹ Reason cannot bring itself out of the cave, and must receive help from the outside.

Like the *Proslogion*, Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo* teaches that the human has a place and a role to fulfill in the cosmos, and demonstrates the necessity that God restore human nature to that for which he made it:

...in the second book [of *Cur Deus Homo*]—likewise proceeding as if nothing were known of Christ—I show with equally clear reasoning and truth that human nature was created in order that the whole human, in both body and soul, would at a certain time enjoy blessed immortality. And I will show the necessity of man’s attaining this end for which he was created...³⁰

Because the human must seek God, but cannot do so alone, God must give Himself to the seeker: “You call us, so help us.”³¹ The seeker places responsibility on God, and six times asks the Lord “how long” until he will give himself.

The restoration of the human comes through the government of reason. For Anselm, following Augustine, faith is a gift which has its basis in God’s image created in us: “I acknowledge, Lord, and I give thanks that you have created your image in me, so that I may remember you, think of you, love you.”³² Humans are images of God and are capable of memory, thought, and love of him. In the *Proslogion* II-IV, this gift of faith leads to intellect: “What I formerly believed by your gift, I now so understand by you illuminating (*intelligo te illuminante*), that if I were unwilling

28 *Pros*, XVIII.

29 *Pros*, I.

30 Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, *Praefatio*.

31 *Pros*, I.

32 *Pros*, I.

to believe, you to be, I would not be able not to understand it."³³ As a result of the proof, what the seeker initially believes thanks to God's gift he subsequently understands by God's illumination. Once understanding is received, it no longer depends upon belief, but supplants it as the government of reason.

V. INTELLECT AND ITS GOVERNMENT

For the restoration of the human, the work of reason must take the seeker beyond reason, where the mind becomes capable of receiving intellectual vision of true realities. This is a movement from knowledge of contingent things to intellectual understanding of necessary truths.

L'intellectus désigne l'aspect de la pensée qui est orienté vers la réalité transcendante; il exerce l'extase de l'esprit en sa fonction intellectuelle; la pensée s'y conjoint à la réalité en s'y intériorisant (le mot 'intelligence' vient de *intus-legere*, lire-dedans), en s'y soumettant pour la faisant sienne; quant à la *cogitatio*, elle signifie la réflexion discursive de cette *intentio*, de sorte que l'esprit connaisse intérieurement l'étant objectif pour pouvoir en rendre compte ensuite rationnellement.³⁴

When Anselm speaks of certainty, necessary reasons, and proofs, he depends upon reason's capacity for interiority and submission to the intellect. The proof of God's existence leads reason to recognize this interiority by showing that reason's contingent objects presuppose a reality that transcends contingency.

In Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae* we find an ordered series of the forms of apprehension similar to Anselm's, where the higher forms contain the lower. These are sense, imagination, reason, and intelligence.³⁵ Lady Philosophy explains reason's relation to

33 *Pros*, IV: "quod prius credidi te donante, iam sic intelligo te illuminante, ut si te esse nolim credere, non possim non intelligere."

34 Paul Gilbert, *Le Proslogion De S. Anselme* (Roma: Editrice Pontificia Università, 1990), 63.

35 Boethius, *Consolatio*, V, pr. 4: "Ipsum quoque hominem aliter sensus, aliter imaginatio, aliter ratio, aliter intelligentia contuetur". See Wayne J. Hankey, "Placing the human: Reason as Participation in Divine Intellect for

intellect: “As ratiocination is to intellect (*ad intellectum ratiocinatio*), as what becomes is to what is, as time is to eternity, the circle to its centre, so the moving course of Fate is to the unmoving simplicity of Providence.”³⁶ As rational, humans are able to go beyond reason and “possess the judgement belonging to the divine mind:”

...just as we have judged that imagination and sense ought to give way to reason, so we should think it most just that human reason should submit to the divine mind. Let us, then, if we can, raise ourselves up to the height of that supreme intelligence; for there reason will see that which she cannot intuit in herself.³⁷

The government of reason by intellect is the elevation of the mind to intellectual intuition.

Anselm’s understanding of the relation between reason and intellect can be traced to the Chalcedonian definition of 451, whose formula “two natures, one person” remains standard for Latin Christendom in the Middle Ages generally, and Anselm’s *Cur Deus-Homo* is altogether dependent on it. Robert Crouse explains:

For Anselm, and for medieval theology generally, the definition of Chalcedon is not only about christology, narrowly conceived. It is about christology, but because that is so, it is also paradigmatic for the whole relationship of human to divine and of nature to grace in every context. The principle of unity and duality in Christ had implications worked out in many spheres, theoretical and practical, in theology and political theory, in devotional practice, in architecture and iconography, etc.³⁸

The Chalcedonian definition provides the paradigm for understanding how God does his saving work in the human through the *Logos* as subsistent intellect. The union of the divine and the human in the divine individuality of the

Boethius and Aquinas,” *Res philosophica* 93, no. 4 (October 2018): 583–615 at 596–600.

36 Boethius, *Consolatio*, IV, pr. 6.

37 Boethius, *Consolatio*, IV, pr. 6.

38 Crouse, “Christology: From Chalcedon to Anselm,” 77.

Logos enables the human to give to God what is owed. The human cannot help itself and requires restoration by the God-Man in order for frustrated questing to become finding.

The specific belief which precedes the proof of *Proslogion* II-IV and leads to illumination has its basis in the Chalcedonian definition. It is a belief that God is he who restores the human in, through, and as the activity of the seeker. Crouse explains: "Anselm's position assumes and rests firmly upon Chalcedonian Christology, serving to bring out more sharply the soteriological dimensions of that Christology."³⁹ The seeker prays for restoration through divine teaching and revelation:

Teach me to seek you, and reveal yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek You if you do not teach me how, nor find you unless you reveal yourself. Let me seek you in desiring you, let me desire you in seeking you. Let me find you in loving you, let me love you in finding you.⁴⁰

Human seeking and finding depends upon Divine teaching and revealing. This is the saving work of Christ as human. By this belief, the seeker knows God in a way that he may be found: indistinctly, not as one thing or another, but as the renewal of the seeker. Thus, at the conclusion of *Proslogion* I the seeker has discovered the necessity for the government of reason and articulated his faith in terms of the intellectual renewal which he requires.

VI. THE PROOF

Two aspects of the proof in *Proslogion* II-IV are important for the argument of this paper. Firstly, the formula which accomplishes the proof functions as a double negation. This leads the seeker to a vision of the *epekeina* which originates and is presupposed by thought. Secondly, the discovery of what thought presupposes establishes reason's proper relation to intellect.

³⁹ Crouse, "Christology: From Chalcedon to Anselm," 76.

⁴⁰ *Pros*, I.

The fool's denial of the existence of "something than which nothing greater can be thought," known initially in a preliminary, unexamined, and external form, begins the explication of the formula. When subject to reasoning, even the denial is shown to presuppose God's existence:

But surely, when this same Fool hears what I am speaking about, namely, 'something than which nothing greater can be thought', he understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his mind, even if he does not understand that it actually exists. For it is one thing for an object to exist in the mind, and another thing to understand that an object actually exists.⁴¹

By his denial, the *insipiens* exhibits foolish confidence and presumes to have an understanding which does not first require belief. This reverses the *credo ut intelligam* by beginning with understanding. When the fool denies the existence of what the formula names, he must admit of a certain understanding of what he denies. The fool has not yet employed reason to examine his assertion. Gregory Schufreider explains that, as Anselm explicitly says, the argument begins "from an understanding of the words alone" which establish a "nominal foothold."⁴² Subsequently, the formula "functions as a self-clarifying expression insofar as this complex linguistic sign itself includes a built-in criterion that will allow us, working from the verbal formula alone, to determine what pertains and what does not pertain to its conception."⁴³

The *maius* formula, functioning as a comparison between a lesser and a greater term, produces a positive result through a double negation. If there is a concept which is greater than the lesser term, the formula requires that the lesser term be denied of God and the greater term be attributed to God as that which God cannot not be. A term is greater in virtue of

41 *Pros*, II.

42 Gregory Schufreider, *Confessions of a Rational Mystic* (Indiana, Purdue University Press, 1994), 120.

43 Schufreider, *Confessions of a Rational Mystic*, 125.

not possessing certain conceptual limitations belonging to the lesser term. *Proslogion* II's demonstration begins with the fool's acceptance of the lesser term (existence *in solo intellectu*). Because the lesser term limits its object to intellectual existence, what exists both *in intellect* and *in re* is greater. Since "something than which nothing greater can be thought" cannot be less than the greatest conceivable thing, the greater term is attributed negatively: God cannot not exist both *in intellect* and *in re*.

Proslogion III, following the same pattern, demonstrates that God's non-existence is unthinkable. Here, reason encounters governing necessities:

For something can be thought to exist that cannot be thought not to exist, and this is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Hence, if 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' can be thought not to exist, then 'that than which a greater cannot be thought' is not the same as 'that than which a greater cannot be thought', which is absurd. Something than which a greater cannot be thought exists so truly then, that it cannot be even thought not to exist.⁴⁴

Following Gilbert, let us consider the reflexive movement in *Proslogion* III between the thought of God as "that which can be thought not to be" (lesser term) and "that which cannot be thought not to be" (greater term), where the former implies possible existence and the latter necessary existence. Gilbert distinguishes:

deux niveaux de pensées objectives: d'une part la pensée d'une chose qu'on ne saurait concevoir non-existante et qu'on doit donc concevoir existante, et d'autre part la pensée d'une chose dont la conception de l'existence n'est pas nécessaire; on dit que la première pensée est plus 'grande' que la seconde.⁴⁵

Knowledge of what the formula names escapes the contingency of reasoning because the intellect gathers from the movement of reason an intuition of something which is not subject to the contingency of reason because its nonexistence is unthinkable. Gilbert writes,

44 *Pros*, III.

45 Gilbert, *Le Proslogion*, 87.

“la preuve dégage en effet un type de nécessité incontournable: la pensée doit acquiescer à sa capacité de penser ce qui n’est pas à la mesure de son immanence.”⁴⁶ When the seeker encounters necessity, he finds not an object of reason, but an object of the intellect.

Reason must recognize that it is limited to the realm of contingency and contradiction, and, at the same time, that it has crossed these limits when it sees something that is not contingent. Intellectual vision is the form of apprehension reached when reason crosses its limits. Intellect sees that what is possible cannot be the cause of what is necessary, but that the reverse must be true. When reason recognizes its principle in the intellect, it accomplishes that for which it is made. Gilbert writes: “Il en va ainsi parce que la pensée, acquiesçant à ce que l’intellect voit nécessaire, accomplit ce pour quoi elle est faite.”⁴⁷

The *intelligo te illuminante* recognizes the gift of intellectual understanding which has its source in the Divine *Logos*. The work of reason prepares the seeker for intellectual vision but is not the cause of that divine vision and government. By the negation of negation, the seeker glimpses a necessity which reason presupposes. The *epekeina* restores the divided human to unity through illumination and governs as subsistent intellect. At the conclusion of the proof, God is known indistinctly, as the restoration of the human in, through, and as the activity of the seeker.

VII. THE PATH TOWARDS INTELLIGIBILITY

Anselm’s *epekeina* is present yet unseen at the beginning as “that than which nothing greater can be thought.” By the power of the *epekeina*, both the intelligibility and incomprehensibility of the divine being emerges. Because the formula names what is both within and beyond the realm of beings, there is both an intelligibility and a transcendence of intellect. Without divine intelligibility, there would be no proof, and what the formula signifies could not

46 Gilbert, *Le Proslogion*, 86.

47 Gilbert, *Le Proslogion*, 90.

be thought. If this were the case, Gilbert says, we risk even our capacity to speak of God as beyond thought, and we are lead into an atheism: "Cette règle [the *maius* formula] aboutirait à l'apophatisme ou à l'athéisme si elle ne pouvait intégrer une nécessité positive, que manifeste l'exigence dialectique du *summum*."⁴⁸

The transitional *Proslogion* V begins a new stage of the single continuous explication of the *maius* formula when it makes explicit God's intelligibility. It places God within the realm of otherness and makes knowledge of him conceptual. The attempt to conceptually grasp God ultimately leads to God's incomprehensibility and transcendence of otherness. Because the quest has not yet established the distinction between God as within and beyond the realm of otherness, *Proslogion* V is ambiguous about how the intelligibility of God emerges:

What then are you, Lord God, than whom nothing greater can be thought? But what are you except supreme of all, existing through yourself alone, who made all other things from nothing? For whatever is not this is less than can be thought. But this cannot be thought of you. What goodness, then, could be wanting to the supreme good, through which every good exists? Thus you are just, truthful, happy, and whatever it is better to be than not to be—for it is better to be just rather than unjust, and happy rather than unhappy.⁴⁹

Anselm makes God intelligible as *summum omnium* on the basis that "whatever is not this is less than can be thought". Like the demonstrations of *Proslogion* II-IV, the *maius* formula here makes God intelligible by the negation of a negation. Because *summum omnium* is, by definition, the greatest conceivable being, if God is not greatest, then he is less than he can be thought to be. He therefore cannot not be supreme of all. The explication of what belongs to the supreme being makes God known under many names, including a new formula, "whatever it is better (*melius*) to be than not to be" (hereafter: *melius* formula).

48 Gilbert, *Le Proslogion*, 145.

49 *Pros*, V.

Examining this argument more closely, we find that it may function in two ways, depending on whether we treat the *maius* formula as naming the supreme being or naming what is beyond otherness. According to the first way, God is supreme because he is a being “than which nothing greater can be thought,” which is, by definition, the supreme being. According to the second way, God is supreme because he is beyond otherness: the basis of his intelligibility as supreme is his transcendence of otherness. While this distinction is not yet operative, the subsequent discovery that the supreme being is in fact *ipsa unitas* beyond otherness means that in *Proslogion* V it is the *epekeina* which gives rise to intelligibility. While Anselm attributes to God names traditionally associated with the divine being, the form of the argument itself does not prevent God from being known under any name.

VIII. COMPARATIVE RELATION

Michael Fournier demonstrates that Anselm arranged *Proslogion* VI-XIII according to a ring structure. In *Proslogion* VI-IX God’s sensibility, omnipotence, mercy, and justice are supreme forms of attributes which share a continuum with human attributes, whereas in *Proslogion* X-XIII, the “attributes which belong to God differ no longer in degree but in kind from their human forms.”⁵⁰ The difference between “degree” and “kind” is a difference between what is understood in relation to human forms of the attributes, and what cannot be known by comparative relation to the human. *Proslogion* VI-IX thus constitute the path towards intelligibility, where God is treated conceptually and as one among others, and *Proslogion* X-XIII begin the path towards God’s transcendence of otherness. We shall consider these paths in turn.

Knowledge of God in accordance with the *melius* formula becomes the measure and goal of *Proslogion* VI-IX. The seeker has a preliminary concept of each attribute based on how

50 Michael Fournier, “Ring Structure in Chapters Six to Thirteen of Anselm’s *Proslogion*,” *Dionysius* 27 (2009): 127–44 at 129.

it applies to humans. Each concept includes an assumption about how the attributes function which cannot be true of the Supreme being and therefore must be corrected. This requires the seeker to separate out the conceptual parts belonging to the preliminary idea and combine them again to produce a new idea which may be attributed to God without contradicting his supremacy. The attributes remain true names for God only insofar as they are understood as supreme forms of the attributes they name. Through this process of correction *Proslogion* VI-VIII resolve what turn out to be apparent contradictions, and thus successfully achieve true knowledge of God as sensible (c. VI), omnipotent (c. VII), merciful (c. VIII), and just (c. IX).

I use the term 'comparative relation' for knowledge of the divine substance and its operations that is relative to and discovered through comparison with generally accepted notions of the attributes and their operations in humans. The successfully achieved knowledge of God in *Proslogion* VI-IX, based in comparative relation, is conceptual, and thus places God within the realm of otherness. We will find that for Anselm it is crucial that comparative relation provides true knowledge of God.

IX. THE PATH TOWARDS INCOMPREHENSIBILITY

Proslogion IX & X, both treating Divine justice, are the center of the ring structure, where knowledge of Divine justice passes beyond what is known through comparative relation because it no longer differs in degree but in kind from its human form. The difference in kind means that God's attributes do not share a continuum with their human forms and are unknowable in comparative terms. In *Proslogion* X, the operation of God's justice falls beyond human knowing when the seeker can no longer understand Divine justice on the basis of comparative relation. Moran describes this failure to grasp God's essence:

The definition, *id quo maius nihil cogitari potest* (and its variants), is in the form of a comparison, not just a comparison with anything that exists but with anything that could or might exist. Eriugena of course sees God as beyond all things that are and are not. For Anselm, God

is beyond all existing things and all things that can be thought of as good or perfect. Anselm recognizes the failure of comparative terms to reach the essence.⁵¹

The seeker ultimately discovers that God is beyond the realm of otherness when, in his attempts to conceptually grasp the operation of divine justice, he establishes distinctions placing God beyond comparative relation. *Proslogion* IX wants to know how God is both supremely merciful and supremely just. There appears to be a contradiction because the seeker understands justice as retribution owed to the wicked and mercy as a supervening of the just punishment. *Proslogion* IX resolves the problem by introducing a more fundamental notion of justice:

The essential content of the term for him (as, indeed, for other Patristic and Medieval authors) is rectitude of order, which has its source in God Himself, and embraces the whole order of creation, regulating the relation of man to God, of man to man, and mutual relations within the interior being of man.⁵²

Justice and mercy are not opposed because God's justice as "rectitude of order," the principle in accordance with which God is what he ought to be, requires Divine mercy. Justice and mercy both flow from God's proper being.

This result does not satisfy the new demands of *Proslogion* X, where the seeker pushes for a comprehensive account of the principle in accordance with which God punishes some and spares others. He concludes that God's punishment is just because it befits the merits of the wicked and his pardon is just because it befits God's goodness and proper being. This establishes a distinction between God's operation 'in relation to us' and 'in relation to himself,' where the former is understood on the basis of comparative relation, and the latter is understood as what flows from God's

51 Moran, "Neoplatonic and Negative Theological Elements," 212-213.

52 Crouse, "St. Anselm's Concept of *Justitia*": 114.

proper being: "For in sparing the wicked you are just in relation to yourself (*secundum te*) and not in relation to us (*secundum nos*)."⁵³

Proslogion XI further complicates the matter when it judges that divine punishment must also be in relation to God's proper nature because God would not be supremely just if he "only returned good to the good and did not return bad to the bad."⁵⁴ As a result, the principle according to which God punishes some and spares others is not 'in relation to us' and based in comparative relation, but is 'in relation to God' and beyond human conception. The seeker encounters incomprehensibility: "...it certainly cannot be comprehended by any reason (*certe nulla ratione comprehendendi*) why from those who are alike in wickedness you save these rather than those through your supreme goodness..."⁵⁵

The attempts to conceptually comprehend God culminate in the divine substance passing beyond comparative relation. The failure to reach knowledge of God by the process of correction teaches that God cannot be known by another as one being among others. God is neither "in relation to us" nor "through another" than Himself. Because Divine justice falls outside of comparative relation, and nothing of God is apart from his just "rectitude of order," the Divine substance falls outside of human knowing:

But certainly, whatever (*quidquid*) you are, you are not that through another (*per aliud*) but through your very self (*per teipsum*). You are therefore the very life by which you live, the wisdom by which you are wise, the very goodness by which you are good to both good men and wicked, and the same holds for like attributes.⁵⁶

The distinction between God 'in relation to himself' and 'in relation to us' becomes a distinction between God "through Himself" (*per se*) and "through another" (*per aliud*). This is a

53 *Pros*, X.

54 *Pros*, XI.

55 *Pros*, X.

56 *Pros*, XII.

distinction between two perspectives: one which knows God by comparison with and in relation to human experience and the other which knows God as He who acts in accordance with the necessity that belongs to His proper nature. Insofar as knowledge of God and his operations is possible, it must be knowledge of God 'in relation to himself' and 'through himself.'

X. THE CAPACITY TO SENSE GOD

When the quest seems to have reached an impasse with incomprehensibility and learned ignorance, the seeker's incapacity to sense God provides evidence that the quest must not be complete. *Proslogion* X-XII have discovered God's inconceivability by creating distinctions preventing knowledge of God on the basis of comparative relation. This establishes the problematic of *Proslogion* XIV-XVII, where the seeker treats God as one among others and therefore is not prepared to see God in a way that he may be found. The result is that he does not know how to proceed. *Proslogion* XIII avoids facing this blindness by reintroducing the original *maius* formula, thus enabling knowledge of God which has its basis "in relation to God." The chapter concludes that God is unconfined by all temporal and spatial limits, and thus exists "everywhere and always."⁵⁷ This omnipresence, put together with God's sensibility and the human capacity for incorporeal perception, establishes the expectation of sensing God, which serves as a measure of the quest's success. Because the quest must continue, but the seeker does not know God in a way that progress can be made, anxiety and despair radically intensify until their climax in *Proslogion* XVIII when God relieves the seeker of himself.

In *Proslogion* XIV, the supreme being becomes unthinkable by an excess of intelligibility and there appears to be no way forward. The seeker encounters the limits of his own vision when his soul "sees itself not able to see more."⁵⁸ However, he refuses to accept

57 *Pros*, XIII.

58 *Pros*, XIV: "videt se non plus posse videre."

God's unthinkability as final: "Why, O Lord God, does my soul not sense You if it has found You?"⁵⁹ God's sensibility, as well as the human capacity for incorporeal sense, comes from *Proslogion* VI: "although you are not a body, you are truly supremely sensible."⁶⁰ One who knows God should sense him because "whatever in any way knows (*cognoscit*) also in some way perceives (*sentire*)."⁶¹ Fournier explains how, for Anselm, human knowing includes incorporeal perception: "God is merely the summit of incorporeal perception, with the human as an expression of a lower degree of, but not a different kind of, incorporeal perception."⁶²

It is important for my argument that the seeker's demand to sense God provides a measure of the quest's success. Despite the conclusion that God is not knowable "in relation to us," what Anselm previously established on the basis of comparative relation he does not now reject. Even though God is "certainly more than can be understood by a creature"⁶³ and "something greater than can be thought,"⁶⁴ the conclusions *Proslogion* VI-IX arrived at remain true. This distinguishes my argument from that of Jean-Luc Marion, who rejects God's intelligibility, and prioritizes the conclusion that God is "greater than can be thought:" "God remains beyond the power of thought, i.e., is transcendent to it, surpasses it, and, in sum, is not in our understanding. To think about God does not mean only to admit that he exists, but to admit precisely that he remains beyond and outside our understanding."⁶⁵ Anselm is not, however, simply a negative theologian because he insists that we are able to think, and to some extent (*aliquatenus*) understand, the incomprehensible God beyond otherness.

59 *Pros*, XIV.

60 *Pros*, VI.

61 *Pros*, VI.

62 Fournier, "Ring Structure": 136.

63 *Pros*, XIV: "Certe plus quam a creatura valeat intelligi."

64 *Pros*, XV.

65 Marion, "Is the Ontological Argument Ontological?": 212.

The problem characterizing the oppositions of *Proslogion* XVI & XVII is the relation between God and what is other. God is the source of all otherness, through which everything exists, and yet “no other can penetrate” through God’s inaccessible light. The seeker finds himself desperately close to a distant God: “How distant you are from my sight while I am so present to Your sight! you are wholly present everywhere and I do not see you. In you I move and in you I have my being and I cannot come near to you. You are within me and around me and I do not sense you.”⁶⁶ Anxiety builds to climax because the seeker’s soul “still dwells in its darkness and misery:” “For it looks all about and does not see your beauty. It listens and does not hear your harmony. It smells and does not sense your fragrance. It tastes and does not recognize your savour. It feels and does not sense your softness.”⁶⁷ Once again the quest itself has frustrated its own efforts. The seeker does not know the way forward, and like *Proslogion* I, he places the responsibility on God to help him.

XI. THE INCLUSIVE *EPEKEINA*

The seeker must be relieved of the mode of seeking determining how he expects to find God. He prays to be saved from himself and illumined by God: “Raise me up from myself to You. Purify, heal, make sharp, illumine the eye of my mind so that it may intuit you.”⁶⁸ The prayer is answered:

For whatever is made up of parts is not absolutely one, but in a sense many and other than itself, and it can be broken up either actually or by the mind (*vel actu vel intellectu dissolvi potest*)—all of which things are foreign to you, than whom nothing better can be thought. Therefore, there are no parts in you, Lord; neither are you many, but you are so much one and the same with Yourself (*es unum quiddam*

66 *Pros*, XVI.

67 *Pros*, XVII.

68 *Pros*, XVIII: “Releva me de me ad te. Munda, sana, acue, ‘illumina’ oculum mentis meæ, “ut intueatur te”. Recolligat vires suas anima mea, et toto intellectu iterum intendat in te, domine. Quid es, domine, quid es, quid te intelliget cor meum?”

et idem tibi ipsi) that in nothing are you dissimilar with yourself. Indeed, you are unity itself (*ipsa unitas*) not divisible by any mind (*nullo intellectu divisibilis*).⁶⁹

To understand how intellectual vision of God's indivisible unity provides a new basis for God's relation to otherness, we must turn to *Proslogion* XIX-XXI, which attempt to represent what most closely approximates God's indivisible unity in terms of the relation of eternity and time.

Proslogion XIX & XX teach that God is "absolutely outside all time" (*extra omne tempus*) and conclude that he fills and embraces all things (*implet et complecteris omnia*) which he is before (*ante*) and beyond (*ultra*). In *Proslogion* XXI God's unity contains all otherness as an interminable immensity: "For just as an age of time contains all temporal things, so your eternity contains also the very ages of time. Indeed this [eternity] is an 'age' because of its indivisible unity, but 'ages' because of its interminable immensity."⁷⁰ Gilbert explains: "Anselme suggère un rythme immanent à Dieu, à la fois unité et immensité; son unité signifie l'indivisibilité ou la simplicité radicale de son *intensio* ('siècle' au singulier); par contre, son immensité accueille les siècles (pluriel) dans la *dispersio*."⁷¹ God's eternity is both an indivisible unity (*indivisibilem unitatem*) and an interminable immensity (*interminabilem immensitatem*), where the former is God's simple *intensio* and the latter is the dispersed multiplicity, *dispersio*, which God contains. God contains all finite and divided things in the rhythm of his "indivisible unity" and "unlimited immensity." He also infinitely exceeds all that he unites and contains, including in himself even a multiplicity of infinities.

The rhythm of God's unity and immensity is the basis on which *Proslogion* XXII establishes the identity of the indivisible unity and the supreme good. God is "nothing except one (*unum*) and the

69 *Pros*, XVIII.

70 *Pros*, XXII.

71 Gilbert, *Le Proslogion*, 190.

supreme good (*summum bonum*)".⁷² The one and supreme good, inclusive of otherness, is the only thing which exists absolutely. The otherness which God originates, contains, and surpasses "does not exist strictly and absolutely" (*id non est proprie et absolute*).

God is the prior unity which transcends, originates, and preserves through himself all otherness. What is "through another" and "in relation to us" is God "through himself". This explains why God was found to be presupposed by all thought (*Pros.* IV), intelligible (*Pros.* V-IX), as well as incomprehensible and unthinkable (*Pros.* XI & XV). What is positive in God's unthinkability emerges as God's transcendence of otherness. Insofar as the otherness of creation exists, it remains in its origin as it proceeds from it. The distance which questing establishes between the seeker and God is included in God. Because reason is interior to intellect, and intellect has its origin in the *epekeina*, God unites what is divided and returns the seeker to his source.

XI. THE TRINITY

The "indivisible unity" and "interminable immensity" of the "one and supreme good" provide the basis for understanding the Trinity, the principle in which God's relation to otherness receives its highest formulation. Anselm's Augustinian Trinity is a unity of multiple equal infinities, which includes otherness through its infinite giving and receiving of itself to itself. There is both identity and otherness. The first distinction is between Father and Son: "You are this good, O God the Father; this is your word, that is to say, your Son. For there cannot be any other (*aliud*) than what you are, or anything greater or lesser than you, in the word by which you utter your very self."⁷³ The second distinction is the shared love: "And You are so simple that there cannot be born of you any other than what You are. This itself is the love, one and common to you and to Your Son, that is the Holy Spirit proceeding

⁷² *Pros.*, XXII: "non es nisi unum et summum bonum."

⁷³ *Pros.*, XXIII.

from both."⁷⁴ Anselm explains that "each singly is not other (*aliud*) than the supremely simple unity (*summe simplex unitas*) and the supremely unified simplicity (*summe una simplicitas*) which can be neither multiplied nor be one and another (*aliud et aliud*)."⁷⁵

Through the Trinitarian and Incarnational exchange, the fallen human receives the immortality which belongs to Christ's divinity. The *Cur Deus Homo* teaches that Christ deserves a reward for his death which he gives away:

It would be both just and necessary that the gift should be given by the Father to whomsoever the Son wished... Upon whom would he more properly bestow the reward accruing from his death, than upon those for whose salvation, as right reason teaches, he became man...⁷⁶

Christ gives his reward to those who seek Him, and they become partakers of the reward by seeking. Through this gift, the human is included in the infinite giving and receiving of the Trinity, and so becomes Divine: "Indeed, they will be called sons of God and gods and will in fact be so; and where the Son will be there also they will be, heirs indeed of God and co-heirs of Christ."⁷⁷ In this exchange, the human, by imitating Christ, receives divinity.

Proslogion XXIII concludes the *unum argumentum* by bringing us to our beginning in the Trinity as the basis of our seeking, finding, and enjoyment of God in all things. The *unum argumentum* meets up with the *unum necessarium*: "This is, moreover, that one thing necessary in which is all good, or rather, which is all (*omne*) and one (*unum*) and totally (*totum*) and solely (*solum*) good."⁷⁸ The treatise concludes with a meditation on the goodness and greatness of the one and supreme good which the seeker contemplates in its unity (c. XXIV) and dispersion (c. XXV).

74 *Pros*, XXIII.

75 *Pros*, XXIII.

76 *CDH*, 2, xix.

77 *Pros*, XXV.

78 *Pros*, XXIII.

The new formulation of God's relation to otherness is also a solution with respect to the seeker's capacity to sense God. God transcends, originates, and preserves all otherness, which, insofar as it has being, exists through God. This means that God is present to all things which he fills and contains: "all things are filled with You and are in you."⁷⁹ The seeker no longer expects to find God as one being among others, but finds him present everywhere and always. The seeker develops a capacity for incorporeal perception, by which he experiences total satisfaction of all desire (including sensual) in God. Any good enjoyed through the one simple good becomes a Divine good.⁸⁰ The enjoyment of strength becomes the enjoyment of a spiritual body; the enjoyment of wisdom becomes vision of "the very wisdom of God;" the enjoyment of a long and healthy life becomes "healthy eternity and eternal health." The seeker is completely filled with joy and there remains joy beyond measure (*supra modum*): "For I have discovered a joy that is complete and more than complete."⁸¹

XI. CONCLUSION

Anselm's *epekeina* pushes the *Proslogion* to this incomprehensible conclusion. The *maius* formula, naming what is both within and beyond otherness, gives unity to the *Proslogion*'s structure and conforms to the necessities and possibilities for knowing God. In virtue of this, the movement through and into God includes various and contradictory perspectives. God's existence is demonstrable, "certain truth" about God is achievable, and yet God, existing through himself alone, is also incomprehensible and greater than can be thought. The *Proslogion*'s quest is the elevation of the seeker to a vision of how these many perspectives, including elements characteristic of both positive and negative theology, are united in God as *ipsa unitas*. The

79 *Pros*, XXI.

80 *Pros*, XXV.

81 *Pros*, XXVI.

uniting vision is of Anselm's *epekeina* inclusive of otherness, our basis for understanding the Trinity in *Proslogion* XXIII.

Human reason seeking God departs from, but also remains within, its origin in unity. When the human recognizes the contradiction that his seeking has itself prevented finding, he gives himself to God in a petition and demand for help. In return, God gives himself, as intellect, for the restoration of the human, and in accordance with the seeker's capacity to receive. However, the *epekeina* means that what is received, while true, is not final and complete knowledge. When intellect unites what is divided, it enables further seeking, and increases the capacity for understanding. Ultimately, the human must be elevated to vision of this departure and return within the divine exchange. In this vision lies the unity of the quest's many perspectives, as well as the unity of otherness and the *epekeina* beyond it.

In *Proslogion* XXV, there reappears *homuncio*, the "diminished man," last seen in *Proslogion* I, where he represents the seeker in a state of distension and distraction, lost in external things: "Why, then, do you wander about so much, O diminished man (*homuncio*), seeking the goods of your soul and body?"⁸² This suggests, as *Proslogion* XXVI says explicitly, that the cycle of seeking and finding God will not end during this life (*in hac vita*). Even in the seeker's elevated vision of himself within God and as a god, the *epekeina* remains and seeking continues. According to the logic I have explicated, seeking takes the form of an infinite cyclical departure and return. While seeking, on this understanding, never ends in this life or the next, there is true finding. As with knowledge of the incomprehensible God, the enjoyment of God is never complete, for "joy beyond measure will remain."⁸³

82 *Pros*, XXV.

83 *Pros*, XXVI.