

Arguments, Texts, and Contexts: Anselm's Argument and the Friars

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The contrast between the reception of Anselm's *Proslogion* in the work of Bonaventure and in the work of Thomas Aquinas is often held up as a classic example of their competing intellectual assumptions. Some have located the intellectual prerequisites for the acceptance or rejection of Anselm's argument in the prior acceptance of univocal or analogical accounts of being.¹ P. A. Daniels argued that the prerequisites for Bonaventure's acceptance of the argument were not his "ontological" mode of thought, or a doctrine of the innate idea of God within the soul, but in his acceptance of exemplar causality.² Half a century later, Jean Chattillon, following Étienne Gilson, affirmed the more common view of the issue, that the acceptance or rejection of Anselm's argument among the first scholastics of the thirteenth century depended upon their allegiance to Augustinian or Aristotelian traditions.³ Anton Pegis did the same when he insisted that recovery of the Anselmian argument in its original form involved

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1. In general terms, the interpretation of Bonaventure as leader of an Augustinian tradition, and of Thomas as representative of Aristotelianism, can be found in the work of E. Gilson, *A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1978). On Bonaventure's refinement of Anselm in the context of the Augustinian tradition, see H. R. Klocker, S.J. "Bonaventure's Refinement of the Ontological Argument," *Mediaevilla* 4 (1978): 209–23. On analogical and univocal accounts of being as factors determining attitudes to Anselm's argument, see H. J. Johnson, "Contra Anselm But Contra Gentiles: Aquinas's Rejection of the Ontological Argument," *Schede Medievali* 13 (1986): 18–27.

2. P. A. Daniels, *Quellenbeiträge und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Dreizehnten Jahrhundert* (Münster, 1909), pp. 131, 156.

3. Jean Chattillon, "De Guillaume d'Auxerre à Saint Thomas d'Aquin: L'Argument de Saint Anselme Chez Les Premiers Scolastiques du XIIIe Siècle," *Spicilegium Beccense* 1 (1959): 209–31.

stripping away the Aristotelian framework in terms of which the *Proslogion* has been read since Thomas.⁴

For the most part, these accounts have been concerned to work out the significance of intellectual assumptions for the interpretation of Anselm's argument, and less concerned with the question of why Anselm's argument received so much attention in the middle of the thirteenth century. Historians reacting against simple Augustinian versus Aristotelian interpretation of early scholasticism, however, have tended to make the reasons for the choice of particular philosophical sources a matter of personal philosophical preference—which is something of a truism.⁵ By placing the interpretations of Anselm's argument offered by Bonaventure and Thomas in the context of the religious interests of their wider communities, as well as alongside the interpretations of near-contemporaries within the Franciscan and Dominican orders, a more informative picture emerges. The prerequisites for the acceptance or rejection of Anselm's argument then begin to look more like the broader religious assumptions embedded in the life of the orders which Anselm's argument helped to articulate, than specific philosophical doctrines. As such, the reception of Anselm's argument is suggestive about the role of philosophical argument in the theological context of medieval scholasticism, and about the factors which conditioned textual receptivity in this period more generally.

I

The early hagiographies of Saint Francis reflect the divergent political and spiritual interests which were already threatening the unity of the Franciscan community. The early accounts did agree in one respect, however: Saint Francis was significant to the community because of his intimate, personal relationship with the divine. This was the intimacy which inspired Saint Francis's followers whether they were clerics, laypersons, literates, or illiterates.⁶ To argue that the Franciscan approach to Anselm's argument reflected

4. Anton C. Pegis, "St. Anselm and the Argument of the 'Proslogion'," *Medieval Studies* 28 (1966): 228–67.

5. For example, see J. F. Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St Bonaventure's Philosophy* (Toronto, 1973), pp. 881–82: "In selecting their sources and in gathering their materials, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure make their choices chiefly on the grounds of their personal and philosophical perspectives, which guide their individual approaches to the truth. Consequently, as St. Bonaventure's philosophy is neither fundamentally Augustinian nor essentially a Neoplatonizing Aristoteleianism, but *Bonaventurean*, so also the philosophy of St. Thomas is neither basically Aristotelian nor essentially a neoplatonizing Aristoteleianism, but *Thomist*."

6. For the sources of the life of St. Francis and their political contexts, see J. R. H. Moorman, *Sources of the Life of St. Francis* (Manchester, 1940). For the role of Franciscan hagiography in contesting the legacy of St. Francis, see Duncan Nimmo, *Reform and Division in the Franciscan Order* (Rome, 1987).

identifiably Franciscan sensibilities, therefore, is by no means controversial.⁷ Alexander of Hales's treatment of the mind's natural knowledge of God in his early *Glossa* reflects not an attempt to provide foundations for belief but an attempt to give an account of the intimate relationship between God and the human soul.⁸ Citing Augustine, Alexander argues that the soul approaches a knowledge of God by stages in which reason serves a spiritual end.

The first stage of the soul's cleansing is when the soul is removed from contemplating the senses, the second when it is removed from the contemplation of itself, and the third when it is elevated above itself.⁹

Before passing on to talk of the mind's natural knowledge of God as Trinity from the image of God within the soul, Alexander uses Anselm's argument to explain why the mind cannot even think that God does not exist.

That than which no greater can be thought is God. But greater is that which exists both in reality and in the understanding than that which exists in the understanding alone. Greater again is that which cannot be thought not to be than that which, though existing in reality, may be thought not to exist. Therefore, God is so great that God cannot even be thought not to exist. Why then do the psalms speak of the fool who says in his heart 'there is no God?' It is because it is one thing to think the exterior word, another to think the inner word, which is the meaning of the thing.¹⁰

Alexander distinguishes between thinking of the words alone and thinking about the meaning of the words—a passage which leads on to a discussion of the image of God as Trinity within the soul.

What is significant about the *Summa Fratris Alexandris*, initiated when Alexander entered the order formally in 1236 and completed after his death in 1245, is neither its claims to originality nor, as Efrem Bettoni

7. It is also the view of the Franciscan school presented by Étienne Gilson, in *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1978), and in *The Christian Philosophy of St Bonaventure* (London, 1940).

8. See Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* (Quaracchi, 1951), vol. i.

9. *Glossa*, dist. ii, art. 3: "Augustinus, libro *De Quantitate animae*: Una purgatio mentis est, cum removetur a sensibus; secunda purgatio est, cum removetur a contemplatione sui; tertia, cum elevatur supra se." Unless stated otherwise, all translations are my own.

10. *Glossa*, dist. iii, art. 12, i. "Quo maius excogitari non potest, est Deus. Sed maius est quod cogitatur esse in re et intellectu, quam quod cogitatur intellectu solum. Maius est iterum illud quod cogitari potest esse et non potest cogitari non esse, quam quod cogitari potest esse et potest cogitari non esse cum sit. Erit ergo Deus bonum quod non est tantum in intellectu et non est cogitari non esse. Quod autem dicitur in Psalmo: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo non est Deus*, nota: est dupliciter dicere: verbo exteriori, et sic verum est; vel interiori, quod est verbum rei, et sic est impossibile."

argued, that it expressed Alexander's personal synthesis.¹¹ It is significant not only because it expands upon these teachings of the *Glossa*, but also, and primarily, because in doing so it also echoes the views of other Franciscans. Four contemporary Franciscan commentaries—emanating from Odo Rigaldi and his disciples—show that, even in its early sections dealing with the knowledge of God, the *Summa* offers a synthesis of views held by others within the order. More than the *Glossa*, the *Summa* and the commentaries of the Franciscan school concern themselves with the problem of those who say, like the fool, "there is no God," and in doing so offer explanations that go beyond the *Glossa*.¹² This emphasis reflects the way in which the Franciscan account of God's relationship with the soul became an invaluable means of explaining human knowledge more generally.

Defending Anselm's argument, Odo Rigaldi explains that the fool errs not only because of a failure to think the meaning of "that than which no greater can be thought," but because the fool also looks for God in the wrong place. The fool errs by taking the absence of immediate retribution on the wicked as a sign that God is not just—and therefore less than something than which no greater can be thought.¹³ Odo de Rosny follows Rigaldi word for word in an abbreviation of Rigaldi's commentary.¹⁴ Another disciple of Rigaldi combines Anselm's argument with the doctrine of John of Damascus, that the knowledge of God is naturally impressed upon the soul, and with Hugh of St. Victor's teaching that, in reflecting upon itself, the soul traces its existence back to God. According to this commentary, the source of the fool's error lies in the sin which has obscured the book of creatures to the soul.¹⁵ Finally, another commentary ascribed to

11. Efrem Bettoni, *Il Problema della conoscibilita' di Dio nella scuola Franciscana* (Padua, 1950), pp. 8, 22. See also the discussion concerning the authorship in V. Doucet, Prolegomena, in *Doctoris Irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales, Summa Theologica*, ed. by PP. Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 5 vols. (Quaracchi; Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924–1979), p. v.

12. Alexander, *Summa*, intro. q. ii. m. iii, c. iv, respondeo: "Tertia ratio est revocatio infidelium ad fidem: sicut enim dicit Ioannes Damascenus, I libro, "quamvis cognitio existendi Deum naturaliter nobis inserta sit, tamen in tantum praevaluit perniciose malitia hominum naturae, aut dicant non esse Deum, secundum quod dicit David: 'Dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus.'" Propterea, ad tales revocandos necessariae sunt rationes."

13. Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 14910, fol. 7r. "Sic (Deus) potest putari non esse iustus ratione alicuius occulti effectis . . . sic dixit insipiens in corde suo Deum non esse."

14. Troyes, ms. lat. 1245 (Clairvaux), fols 4v–5r.

15. Paris, BN. ms. lat. 3424, fols. 12r–12v. "Cognitio uero in actu duplex est. Una est cum movetur anima est superiore parte rationis et habitus similitudinis primae veritatis superiori parti rationis impressa. Eo modo quo recolit suum principium et per hoc videt se non esse a se. Et hoc est modo non potest ignorare deum esse . . . Alia est cum movetur anima inferiore partem rationis qui est ad contemplandas creaturas et hoc modo potest non cognoscere deum esse. Omnia scilicet peccatum in errorem auersa a deo obtenebantur et hoc modo dicit insipiens in corde suo non est deus."

one of Rigaldi's disciples, although not concerned to resolve the problem of the fool directly, explains the differences between the knowledge of creatures and the knowledge of God. In the experience of the senses, creatures are more known to the soul than God is, since God is not an object of sensual knowledge. In the experience of the understanding, however, the knowledge of God is more certain since God is the highest intelligible and is innate within the rational spirit.¹⁶ Although there is not enough room here to examine the ways in which tensions between the texts are taken up in the *Summa*, we can see it working through the same positions.

The critical point being made in this discussion is that natural knowledge must begin with God, not with the senses: it is nature that is understood through God and not God through nature. It is the inversion of this order that leads to the error of the fool. Hence, the very argument that so neatly encapsulates the central conviction of Franciscan spirituality also provides an invaluable tool for explaining the divergences of Aristotelian science from Christian truth. According to the *Summa*, and at least one commentary of the school, the soul's natural potential for knowing God can be actualized in two ways. The first way is by means of introspection: the superior part of reason reflects upon itself and sees that it does not have its existence from itself. In this way it is not able to ignore the existence of God. When the soul seeks knowledge beyond itself through contemplation of creatures, however, it can remain ignorant of God's existence. The part of the soul that is designed for the contemplation of creatures is the part corrupted by sin and turned from God.¹⁷ Without faith, the soul does not see the world in its true light.

This move is critical because according to Franciscan teaching, the soul knows all that it knows through God, and the knowledge of God is impressed upon the soul as its knowledge of truth.¹⁸ It is the nature of the

16. Paris, BN. ms. lat. 10640, fol. 5r. "Queritur utrum cognitio de deo sit certior quam de creatura vel easdem. . . . Si per experientiam sensus sic cognitio de creatura certior eo quia Creator est non obiectum sensus. Si vero sit cognitio per experientia intellectus sic cognitio de deo certior eo quia ipse est summe intelligibilis . . . Si uero sit cognitio actualis quae est per causam . . . cognitio dei est certior eo quia innata sit animae rationali."

17. Alexander, *Summa*, lib. I, q.i, c. ii, art. ii, Solutio: "Cognitio vero in actu duplex est. Una est, cum movetur anima secundum partem superiorem rationis et habitum similitudinis primae veritatis superiori parti rationis impressum, eo modo quo recolit suum principium per hoc quod videt se non esse a se. Et hoc etiam modo non potest ignorare Deum esse in ratione sui principii. Alia est, cum movetur anima secundum partem inferiorem rationis, quae est ad contemplandas creaturas. Et hoc modo potest non cognoscere Deum esse, cum scilicet per peccatum et errorem aversa a Deo obtenebratur." Compare the commentary of Odo Rigaldi's disciple in Paris, BN, ms. lat. 3424, fols 12r-12v, quoted above.

18. For example, Paris, BN, ms. lat. 3424, fols 12r-12v: "Ad illud quod ultimus queritur utrum anima possit ignorare deum. Dicendum quia cognitio de deo habitu naturaliter est impressa nobis. . . . quia naturaliter impressa in intellectum est similitudo primae veritatis qui potest cognoscere deum esse. Et non potest ignorari ab anima rationali."

relationship between God and soul which explains both the unthinkability of God's not existing, and the error of the fool's confession: the soul falls into error when it is distracted from the inner, spiritual truth by the material, sensual realm. The use of Anselm's argument in the *Summa* articulates a doctrine of God which encapsulates a particular approach to natural knowledge. In this account, the knowledge of God is prior to the knowledge of all else, and the attainment of divine knowledge is dependent upon spiritual progress. Ignorance is inextricably bound with sin.

Not all Franciscans of the period accepted the teaching of the Parisian school, however. At Oxford, opinions were divided. Although following the Parisian school's methods, Richard Rufus of Cornwall represented a different approach to natural science. As Peter Raedts has argued, Rufus eschews a theological approach to creation in favour of a naturalistic interpretation that emphasised the mundane laws of physics.¹⁹ Unlike his Parisian contemporaries, he was critical of Anselm's argument, arguing that it did not show that God's existence was indubitable. Anticipating Aquinas, Rufus distinguished between the realm of thought and of reality. While in definition "something than which no greater can be thought" cannot be thought not to be, it is always possible to think that this "something" does not refer to anything in actual existence.²⁰

However, another Franciscan master at Oxford, Thomas of York, appears to present his account of Anselm's argument against this kind of criticism.²¹ The *Sapientiale* shifts the emphasis back from proof about the existence of something external to the self (where Rufus placed it) to what can or cannot actually be thought about God—the knowledge of whose existence being already implanted within the soul. According to Thomas, those who think it possible to deny God thereby confess that they are not thinking about God at all.²² While Rufus provides an example of an Oxford master who differed from the Parisian school over the soul's natural knowl-

19. Peter Raedts, *Richard Rufus of Cornwall and the Oxford Tradition of Theology* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 181ff.

20. Gedeon Gál, "Viae ad Exsistentiam Dei Probandam in Doctrina Richardi Rufi O.F.M.," *Franciscan Studies* 38 (1970): 177–202 (193). "Sed ego illam secundam darem hypothesim, scilicet: aliquis cogitat nihil entium esse quo maius cogitari non potest."

21. See Ephrem Longpré, "Fr. Thomas d'York, O.F.M. La Première Somme Métaphysique du XIIIe Siècle," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 19 (1926): 875–930.

22. Thomas of York, *Sapientiale*, consulted in Vatican ms. lat. 4301, fols 8r–8v and Vatican ms. lat. 6771, fol. 23v.: "Sed forte hoc argumento respondebat aliis et dicit quia non est tale aliquid quo maius excogitari non potest in effectu sed tantum in intellectu nam quamvis non habet suppositum in res significatum tum potest esse in intellectu vel cogitatione. Prout dicit anselmus in eodem quia aliter res cum vox ea significata cogitur et cum ea ipsa quod res intelligitur . . . Contra igitur hanc respensionem insipientis interest anselmus declarare . . . quia tanta vis est significationis huius quo maius excogitari non potest ut si cogitat sequitur necessitate quia

edge of God, Thomas of York is an example of one who, contemporaneously and independently of the Parisian school as a whole, arrived at a similar position. Significantly, perhaps, although Richard Rufus went to Paris during the 1250s to study the work of Bonaventure, it was Thomas of York who was to represent the order beside Bonaventure in defense of Franciscan interests against secular attacks during this period.²³

In the light of these differences within the Franciscan community, Bonaventure's declaration at the beginning of his second book of sentences has an added significance. There he declared that just as he had adhered in the first book to the common opinions of the masters and especially to "our master and father" Alexander, so in the remainder he would not turn back "from their footsteps."²⁴ While Rufus studied Bonaventure's teachings in Paris, he continued to maintain an independent approach that was not appreciated by all within his order.²⁵ The significance of Bonaventure's contribution appears to lie not in its originality or uniqueness, but in the extent to which it gave expression to a wider body of opinion—but a body of opinion that still needed defending within the context of the order itself.

Like the Franciscan *Summa*, Bonaventure's treatment of the natural knowledge of God is concerned with explaining how God is such that God cannot be thought not to exist.²⁶ His fullest treatment is found in the questions disputed in 1253–1254, after he had completed his lectures on

sit in effectu." Thomas concludes later: "Hiis ergo sunt modis quibus sapientes devenerunt in cognitionem dei. Superior quod occurrit questio non praecedens evidētia (quoniam dixit insipiens in corde suo non est deus) maxime cum divinitatis nominatio omnibus impressa sit . . . Nam qui dicit deum in corde suo non esse dicit deum non esse deum et tunc actione modo fatetur esse deum."

23. Opinion over Rufus among the English Franciscans was certainly divided: Roger Bacon reserved some of his severest criticisms for Rufus, while Thomas of Eccleston praised him and stated that in Paris he was regarded as a great and admirable philosopher. See Peter Raedts, *Richard Rufus of Cornwall and the Tradition of Oxford Theology* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 5, 7–9. Thomas of York took part with Bonaventure in a disputation against the secular critic, William of St. Amour. See J. G. Bougerol *Introduction to the Works of St Bonaventure* (New Jersey, 1963), p. 118.

24. Bonaventure, *Opera Theologica Selecta* (Quaracchi, 1934), *In II sententiarum*, proemii, i: "Ad quemadmodum in primo libro sententiis adhaesi et communibus opinionibus magistrorum, et potissime magistri et patris nostri bonae memoriae fratris Alexandri, sic in consequentibus libris ad eorum vestigiis non recedam." Proemii, ii, "Et licet fortassis aliquis eum in aliquibus harum opinionum sustineat, verumtamen pater et magister noster bonae memoriae frater Alexander in nulla harum ipsum sustinuit, sed potius contrarium sensit, cuius vestigiis praecipue inhaerere propono."

25. That Rufus's continued independence was disliked by at least one contemporary is shown by Gedeon Gál, "Opiniones Richardi Rufi Cornubiensis a Censore Reprobatae," *Franciscan Studies* 34 (1975): 136–93, which discusses Rufus's dissent from Bonaventure's doctrines and the remarks of a censor on the manuscript of Rufus's abbreviation of Bonaventure's commentary.

26. Bonaventure, *In I sententiarum*, dist. viii, art. i, q. ii, concl.

the *Sentences*, entitled *On the Mystery of the Trinity*.²⁷ Bonaventure introduces the work with a preamble which is divided into two questions, the first concerning “the foundation of all knowledge” (the indubitability of God’s existence) and the second, “the foundation of all faith” (the doctrine of the Trinity). In the first question, Bonaventure adduces no less than twenty-nine separate reasons from authority and argument to show that God’s existence is an indubitable truth. Following the early *Glossa* of Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure divides these into three stages of the soul’s cleansing as it journeys within, outside, and above itself (*intra se, extra se, supra se*), and stresses the relationship of knowledge to love and desire.²⁸ The first way stresses the knowledge of God implanted within the soul; the second, that creation itself infers the necessity of God’s being; and the third way, led by Anselm’s argument, that God cannot be thought not to exist. All three ways show that God’s existence is indubitable.

Once again, however, this account brings to the fore the fool who says in his heart “there is no god.” The conclusion of Anselm’s argument is not merely that God exists both in the mind and in reality, but that God exists so truly that God cannot be thought not to exist. It is this which makes the fool a problem. For the Franciscans, however, the fool does not show that God’s existence is dubitable, but that the weakness of the human mind makes error possible with respect to the most indubitable of all truths: the cause of doubt lies with us, not with God.

There are three sources of error, according to Bonaventure: in conception, reasoning, and conclusion.²⁹ The mind errs in conception when it does not rightly receive the significance of the name ‘God’, and this is true of the Fool who says in his heart “there is no God,” and of idolaters who call mundane things ‘God’.³⁰ Following the commentary of Odo Rigaldi, and reversing the emphasis of his Dominican contemporaries, Bonaventure argues that reason errs when it concludes from the absence of immediate retribution upon the impious that there is no rule within the universe, and therefore that there is no first and highest governor of the universe.³¹ Finally, like his Parisian predecessors, Bonaventure affirms the priority of spiritual over sensual knowledge: the error of conclusion occurs when the

27. P. Glorieux, *Répertoire des maîtres au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris; repr. Vrin, 1971), pp. 2:305c.

28. Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia* (Quarracchi, 1882–1902), *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. i, art. i, conclusio: “Deum esse est verum indubitabile, quia sive intellectus ingrediatur intra se, sive egrediatur extra se, sive aspiciat supra se; si rationabiliter decurrit, certitudinaliter et indubitanter Deum esse cognoscit.” See also *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. i, concl. 10.

29. *De Mysterio*, q. i, art. i, conclusio.

30. *De Mysterio*, q. i, art. i, solutio, 1, 2, 3.

31. *De Mysterio*, q. i, art. i, conclusio. cf. Paris, BN ms. lat. 14910, fol. 7v: “Sed prout videmus et cognoscemus eum in creaturis et in effectibus suis sic [Deus] potest putari non esse iustus ratione alicuius occulti effectes . . . sic dixit insipiens in corde suo Deum non esse.”

carnal intellect, so tied to the realm of the senses, is unable to raise itself to the incorporeal substance that is the first principle of things.³² Once again, reason is subordinate to the orientation of the will, and the soul must orientate itself toward the inner light. Its not that Anselm's argument helps justify the view that understanding depends upon faith (how would it be possible to justify such a view outside of faith?). Rather, it contributes to an account of the God that such an approach to knowledge presupposes.

The implications for natural knowledge in the Franciscan doctrine are illustrated by the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, composed by Bonaventure in part to win over that section of the Franciscan community most critical of learning within the order; but partly also to reinforce the Franciscan identity of a community that could not be described as *idiota et subditus omnibus*.³³ The work represents an articulation of natural knowledge properly orientated toward God. At the beginning Bonaventure insists "no one is in any way disposed for divine contemplation that leads to mystical ecstasy unless like Daniel he is a *man of desires*" (Dan. 9:23).³⁴ The creatures contemplated at the beginning of the journey are contemplated as images, shadows, and vestiges of the Trinity.³⁵ God is implied by all beings and in all thought, such that all things are understood through God.

In the course of the journey itself, Anselm's argument is employed after the soul has contemplated creatures and has been inwardly reformed and illuminated by the grace of God. Turning above itself, the soul contemplates God according to the two names that signify God as beginning and end and as unity and trinity: being and the good. In the fifth stage the wayfarer contemplates God as Being and unity, drawing upon the dictum that "God cannot be thought not to be." That which underpins all being underpins all knowledge:

He . . . who wishes to contemplate the invisible things of God in relation to the unity of His essence should fix the attention of his soul on Being Itself and see that Being Itself is so absolutely certain that it cannot be thought not to be . . . Being, however, does not come to us by means of something else, because everything that is grasped by the intellect is

32. *De Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. i, art. i, concl.

33. The quotation comes from the Testament of St. Francis, cit. in Moorman, *Sources*, 54. For an account of the ways in which Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* represents an attempt to reconcile the diverse interests of the Franciscan order during a turbulent period in its early history, see Ewart Cousins, "Francis of Assisi: Christian Mysticism at the Crossroads," in S. Katz, *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 163–90. See also Cousins's introduction to his translation of the *Itinerarium* in Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God and the Tree of Life* (New York, 1978), pp. 1–48.

34. Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia* (Quarracchi, 1882–1902), vol. v, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, prol. 3: "Non enim dispositus est aliquo modo ad contemplationes divinas, quae ad mentales ducunt excessus, nisi cum Daniele sit vir desideriorum."

35. *Itinerarium*, i–ii.

grasped either as non-being, or as being in potency, or as being in act. If therefore, non-being cannot be grasped except through being, and if being in potency cannot be understood except through being in actuality, and if being designates the pure actuality of being, then being is that which first comes into the intellect, and this being is that which is pure act. But this being is not particular being, which is a limited being, since it is mixed with potentiality; nor is it analogous being, for that has the least of act because it least exists. It remains, therefore, that the being which we are considering is the Divine Being.³⁶

In this stage Anselm's argument helps reveal the foundation or beginning of knowledge in Being Itself. In the sixth stage it helps also to reveal its end. Here Bonaventure considers God as the Trinity in its name which is 'the Good'. This time Bonaventure begins his discussion with the other dictum of Anselm's argument, that God is "that than which no greater can be thought":

Behold, therefore, and observe that the highest good is unqualifiedly that in comparison with which a greater cannot be thought. And this good is such that it cannot rightly be thought of as non-existing, since to be is absolutely better than not to be. And this good exists in such a way that it cannot rightly be thought of as triune and one.³⁷

The Anselmian argument is here tied to the pseudo-Dionysian theology of self-diffusive goodness; a goodness that is only satisfied in three-fold diffusion. The seventh and final stage of the journey is a contemplation of the second person of this trinity; it is here that the soul attains perfect illumination, for here it contemplates the perfect image of God that is the model for humanity. Moreover, it is in contemplation that the soul imitates Christ, since Christ is the *Logos* or contemplation of the Father. Hence, contemplation has become as much part of the imitation of Christ as poverty and humility. Yet it is a contemplation which has reached beyond the intellectual capacity of the soul. Francis reappears, for the first time since the beginning of the journey, this time "as an example of perfect contemplation, just as previously he had been of action." Having considered God as that than which no greater can be thought, the soul passes over its own intellectual capacities and reclaims the ignorance of Saint Francis:

And thus, through him, more by example than by word, God would invite all truly spiritual men to this passing over in this transport of the soul . . . In this passing over, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual activities ought to be relinquished and the most profound affection transported to God, and transformed into Him.³⁸

36. *Itinerarium*, v.

37. *Itinerarium*, vi.

38. *Itinerarium*, vii.

The approach to knowledge that dominated the early works of the Franciscans carried their tradition forward by reconciling the religious life with inquiry in a way which explained the errors of its opponents. When we realize that Franciscans were being trained to articulate and defend their doctrinal assumptions against potentially sophisticated unbelievers, then the attraction of this approach to knowledge and to Anselm's role within it becomes clearer. The fool's denial of that which was the most indubitable truth of the human mind was a symptom of the spiritual character of knowledge. Error flows from spiritual distance from God, just as knowledge directed by God leads to a transformation of the soul. In the *Itinerarium* contemplation itself transforms the soul into the image of that which it contemplates: the divine exemplar which is the truth of all things and is the source of truth within the soul. All science will go astray unless it begins and ends in the God of Christian truth. Moreover, faith allows the believer to understand that which transcends unaided reason. The resolution of intellectual problems through the application of doctrines of the faith was the life work of Saint Bonaventure.

For a community that emphasized preaching by example over preaching by word of mouth, the dependence of understanding upon faith was an acceptable, even desirable, conclusion. The transformation of the soul was the goal of contemplation—a transformation which had outward results. To become Christ-like was a product of familiarity with the divine—but it was also the key to converting others by example. As a basis for rational discourse, however, this approach would appear to have serious limitations. If understanding depends upon faith then reason becomes redundant in dialogues between believer and unbeliever. What about a community whose whole vocation was orientated toward verbal persuasion? Saint Dominic had invested the interests of his order in just such an account of the religious life when he took the radical step of sending his friars to be trained at the universities.³⁹

II

Chattillon, Pegis, and others have remarked that, in approaching Anselm's argument, Aquinas was reacting to his contemporaries rather than to Anselm himself.⁴⁰ Aquinas approached Anselm by reframing the question of the knowledge of God's existence, and asking "whether God's existence is

39. See W. A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Intellectual and Cultural Life to 1500*, vol. ii (New York, 1973) chap. 1 "The Dominican order and learning." "Study," wrote Humber of Romans, "is not the purpose of the Order but is exceedingly needful for the ends we have mentioned, namely, preaching and working for the salvation of souls, for without study we can achieve neither" cit. in *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

40. Jean Chattillon, "De Guillaume," p. 210.

self-evident.” Those who follow Anselm and John of Damascus in claiming that the knowledge of God is naturally inserted in the soul and that God’s existence cannot be denied are claiming, according to Aquinas, that God’s existence is self-evident. God’s being is identical with God’s existence, Aquinas argues, and is therefore self-evident in itself. That we cannot conceive what God is, however, shows that God’s being is known to us neither by implanted knowledge nor by direct experience. God’s existence, therefore, is not self-evident to us.⁴¹ It is knowledge that must be inferred from creatures.

Is Aquinas’s discussion of Anselm’s argument reflective of a wider Dominican account of the relationship between God and the Soul? Though historians have been willing to see Bonaventure and his Franciscan contemporaries as expressing a Franciscan spirituality through their philosophy, historians have been less inclined to view Aquinas and the Dominican order in quite this way. As Simon Tugwell has written, “the early Dominicans were not particularly concerned, either for themselves or for others, with what has come to be called the ‘interior life’.”⁴² The lack of concern with an interior spirituality has often been understood to mean that the early Dominicans did not really possess a spirituality at all. As Simon Tugwell makes clear, however, it was precisely in their rejection of ‘interiority’ that the key to Dominican spirituality is to be found.⁴³

By contrast with Saint Francis, Saint Dominic rarely, if ever, made appeal to personal revelation, whether visual, auditory, or otherwise, to authenticate his teaching, or to supplement the authority of his wishes for his order. Nor did he ever claim exposure to direct auditory or visual experience of Christ. Instead of insisting, as Francis had, that his order have a rule of its own dictated by the Holy Spirit, Dominic adopted the constitutions of the Augustinian canons of Premontr . The modifications introduced by the Dominican General Chapter (and not by Dominic personally) illustrate that whereas Francis considered preaching to depend upon the apostolic life, the Dominicans believed preaching to be the apostolic life. It was enshrined within the Dominican constitutions that the Dominican order was founded for “the sake of preaching and salvation of souls”

and all our concern should be primarily and passionately directed to this all-important goal, that we should be able to be useful to the souls of our neighbors.⁴⁴

41. Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum in primum librum sententiarum*, ed. P. Mandonnet and M. Moos, (Paris, 1929), d. iii, q. i, art. ii, 1–3, respondeo 1.

42. Simon Tugwell, *Early Dominicans* (New York), p. 3.

43. Tugwell, *Early Dominicans*, p. 5.

44. Cited in Tugwell, *Early Dominicans*, p. 457. Tugwell’s introduction to the translated documents collected here offers a fascinating account of Dominican spirituality which he has also elaborated elsewhere—most notably in *Ways of Imperfection: An Exploration of Christian Spirituality* (London, 1984) and in his entry “The Dominicans” in Cheslyn Jones et al., *The Study of Spirituality* (London, 1984), pp. 296–300.

As Tugwell again writes, personal spiritual growth was never a legitimate goal in its own right for the early Dominicans, but was rather a kind of "spin-off" from their service of others.⁴⁵

However, there is more to the absence of interiority in early Dominican spirituality than merely a difference of emphasis. It should be remembered that Dominic's idea of "helping the souls of others" was to return them to the Mother Church from which they had strayed. The Franciscans represented the thin end of the cultural wedge. Popular religion, whether orthodox or not (and authorities had difficulty in knowing where to draw the line), was representative of what some historians have described as the "discovery of the individual."⁴⁶ A spirituality which emphasized personal experience and which encouraged the emergence of more localized bearers of revelation was at least perceived (often rightly) as threatening toward central doctrinal authorities. If the differences between Saint Francis and Saint Dominic can be put into a nutshell, then it would be to say that whereas Francis was representative of the new popular spirituality, Dominic was representative of the suspicion and fear which that spirituality engendered within the establishment.

Aquinas's rejection of Anselm's argument is integral to an approach to the knowledge of God which eschews interiority more generally. In the early sentence commentary Aquinas argues that the knowledge of God may be inserted within the soul, insofar as it has its knowledge as a reflection of the first truth, but this is not a knowledge of what God is in God's self. Nor does the mind know God when it knows truth. It may know a reflection of the first truth, but not the first truth in itself. God is not the continual and immediate cause of the intellect's knowing. Although present to the soul, God is not present as an object of knowledge—a view that is contrary not only to reason, but also to faith. The intellect is unable to come to 'pure intelligibles', or beings that are beyond the reach of the senses except by means of argument based upon sensory knowledge. According to Aquinas, even the soul itself cannot be known without inference from knowledge derived from the senses: a view that seems to rule out the very possibility of direct interior knowledge altogether.⁴⁷

Was Aquinas here contributing to a wider picture of God which reflected Dominican experience? Although there are counter-examples, there is evidence to suggest that once again the significance of the key thinker lay in representivity rather than originality. Aquinas's arguments were formed within, and on behalf of, a community of interpretation.

45. Tugwell, *Early Dominicans*, p. 4.

46. See Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (London, 1972). See also Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 31 (1980): 1–18; and C. Morris, "Individualism in Twelfth Century Religion: Some Further Reflections," in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31 (1980): 195–206.

47. Aquinas, *Scriptum in primum librum*, d. iii, q. i, art. ii, respondeo 2–3.

Aquinas's teacher, Albertus Magnus, had, in contrast to his Franciscan contemporaries, already emphasized a distinction between the instruments of theology intended for edifying the faithful, and those intended for defending the faith against its detractors. Whereas the Scriptures belonged to the former and to the latter category, the arguments of the sentence commentary belonged entirely to the latter.⁴⁸ Although Anselm's argument was known to the early Dominican school, Albert's commentary ignores it; rather, he is interested in a different set of issues.⁴⁹ While the Franciscans were concerned with the question of whether God's existence was naturally inserted within the soul and incapable of being denied, Albert was concerned with the extent to which the ancient philosophers were able to attain a natural knowledge of God without faith: a position which already marked out a different approach to Aristotle.⁵⁰ Even before Aquinas, Albert was concerned with arguments *a posteriori*—that is, arguments for God's existence and nature derived from sources of knowledge shared by believer and unbeliever alike.

In a commentary which appears to have been widely distributed throughout the order, Thomas's direct contemporary at Paris, Peter of Tarentaise, shared the same emphasis upon argument as a means of defending the faith rather than edifying the faithful.⁵¹ He also shared Thomas's views on the soul's dependence on the senses for knowledge of spiritual

48. Albertus Magnus, *Opera Omnia* (Paris, 1890–1899), t. 25, *Commentarii in sententiarum*, lib. I, dist. i, art. v: “Quod concedimus, dicentes quod habitus eius lumen fidei est: instrumentum autem duplex secundum duplicem finem doctrinae artis, qui duplex promissus finis est in auctoritate Apostoli, scilicet, exhortari in doctrina sana, et contradicentes revincere . . . In quantum autem finis est, scilicet contradicentes revincere, habet . . . (hoc) modum. Contradicens enim non revincitur nisi duobus, scilicet probatione veritatis, et manifestatione erroris. Hoc autem non fit nisi per argumentationem congruam ea ratione auctoritatis, vel naturalis rationis, vel similitudinis congrue sumptam: et sic hoc modo argumentatio talis erit instrumentum eius, et (ut patet in proemio) iste modus est scientiae istius libri, alii autem modi sunt observati in Biblia.”

49. John of Treviso—a Dominican who studied at Paris, but who never held the master's chair—cited Anselm's argument in a cursory treatment of God's existence at the beginning of his *Compendium Theologiae* (Vatican ms. lat. 1187, fols 1r–1v) composed at Paris between 1235 and 1244. The contemporary sentence commentary of Hugh of St. Cher (consulted at Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 3073), on the other hand, considers the natural knowledge of God in distinction iii (fols 8r–9r), but only briefly mentions the arguments employed by the Lombard himself. The glosses of Hugh's disciples on the commentary (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale ms. lat. 3423, and Assisi ms. lat. 131) barely mention the natural knowledge of God's existence let alone Anselm's *Proslogion*. Only fragments remain of the Dominican commentaries of John Pointlasne and Stephan of Venizy (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. lat. 15652, fols 81–88 and lat. 3073, fol. 8r).

50. Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii*, dist. iii, art. I, “An philosophi cognoverunt unum esse Deum.”

51. For a list of the manuscripts, see Glorieux, *Répertoire des Maîtres*, i, n. 17.

beings—including its knowledge of itself.⁵² In addition, Peter identified Lombard's original arguments with Aristotle's four causes and cited the problem of evil to show how God's existence could not be self-evident—both of which were to form sources of Thomas's discussion in the *Summa Theologiae*.⁵³ Thomas's bachelor, Annibald d'Annibaldi, followed Aquinas in stressing that the object of arguments in theology was to defend the faith against detractors, and followed Thomas's emphasis that the soul's knowledge both of God and of itself was inferential.⁵⁴ In addition, and in stark contrast to his Franciscan contemporaries, Annibald argued explicitly that, in natural knowledge, the will should follow reason and never the reverse.⁵⁵ Finally, between 1259 and 1265, Bombolgnous of Bologna composed a sentence commentary which rejected the self-evidence of God's existence, and affirmed the dependence of the soul upon the senses for knowledge of spiritual beings and even of its very self. At the very least, this suggests that ideas circulating within the Parisian school attracted adherents within the order from further afield.⁵⁶ Only in the next life, Bombolgnous argued, would the soul know God's existence as a self-evident truth.⁵⁷

In other parts of the Dominican world, however, Thomas's views were not so welcome. Ulrich of Strassbourg's *Summa de Bono* illustrates that Aquinas's differences with his former classmates in Cologne were more than just linguistic. Perhaps in direct opposition to Thomas, Bombolgnous, Annibald, Peter, and others, Ulrich argued that God's existence was self-evident to the soul, naturally inserted, the source of its knowledge, and

52. Innocent V, *In IV Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*, ed. T. Turci and J. B. de Marinis (Toulouse, 1652), Prol. art. i, ad obi. 3; arts. v–vi; lib I, dist. iii, quest. i–ii.

53. Innocent V, lib. I, dist. iii, qu. i.

54. Annibald d'Annibaldi, *Scriptum super libris magistri sententiarum*, pub. in Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia* (Parma, 1852–1873), 22, lib. I, prologus and dist. iii.

55. Annibald, lib I, prologus, q. iii. art. iv, respondeo.

56. According to both F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium Commentariorum In Sententias Petri Lombardi* (Wurzburg, 1947), p. 108 and T. Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum medii Aevi* (Rome, 1970–1993), v, i, pp. 246–47, Bombolgnous composed his commentary on the *Sentences* sometime between 1256 and 1265. Bologna Universitaria ms. 753 (1506), fol. 6r: "Laudabile est fide defendere contra adversaria quos non potest fieri auctoribus quia non recipiuntur. Ergo ordinata quod fiat rationibus." Fol. 13v, dist. iii, art. ii, respondeo: "quia quiditas dei non est nobis per se nota propter eius elongacionem ab sensu nostro divinitas est sensibile non et non percipere vero dicitur potest . . . ideo deum esse . . . ad nos non est per se nota sed indiget demonstratione." Fol. 13v, art. iii, ad obj. 3: "Ad sic didicitur quod ratio procedit quia intellectus noster se cognoscet enim non per se dum est in corpore; non cogit sed per accidens, videlicet per objecta actus suus. Philosophus de anima dicit quia intellectus est intelligibile sicut alia intelligibilia quia exposito communis dicit quia intellectus se intellegit per intentionem sicut alia intelligibilia."

57. Bombolgnous, fol. 13v, d. iii, art. ii, respondeo: "In autem Patria . . . deum esse videbitur multo amplius et nobis notum quam nunc sit per se notum quia affirmatio et negatio non sint similem."

incapable of being thought not to be.⁵⁸ In Oxford, Richard Fishacre had argued that the knowledge of God's existence was naturally inserted within the soul, a view that was shared by his successor, Robert Kilwardby.⁵⁹ It may well have been against these early Oxford Dominicans that Aquinas directed his arguments, even if later on the debate was fought more with contemporary Franciscans than with other Dominicans. However, even beyond the 1270s there continued to be Dominican masters who were not content to defend an entirely Thomistic doctrine—Meister Eckhart and Durand of St. Pourçain, in particular, fell foul of the Dominican authorities. Although there remained counter-traditions within the Dominican order beyond the thirteenth century, however, none came to hold the influence within the community that was soon acquired by Thomas.⁶⁰ By 1278, the Dominican leadership was sending representatives to Oxford to rebuke those Dominicans who, *in scandalum ordinis*, had shown disrespect to the venerable Thomas.⁶¹

That Thomas's approach succeeded over its rivals in Dominican order was due not merely to the fact that it encapsulated a Dominican approach to the spiritual life, but that it also encapsulated an approach to natural knowledge that such an approach demanded. To the Dominican insistence upon the exterior sources of revealed authority, Aquinas adds an insistence upon the exterior sources of intellectual knowledge—available to believers and unbelievers alike. It is because everyone has equal access to natural knowledge that the preacher can appeal to it in conversing with the unbeliever.

It would be natural at this point to assume that Aquinas (followed by the Dominicans) used arguments for apologetic ends while the Franciscans used them for contemplative ends. However, it is a mistake to draw the contrast in quite those terms. It is more that argument occupied different roles in the two orders. The fact of God's existence was not in question for either of them, but the question of whether God's existence was the subject of rational proof had implications for the nature of theological discourse. In this context neither Aquinas nor the Franciscans used arguments to establish the existence of God within a shared rationality, but rather to contribute to a wider debate about the kind of shared rationality that was

58. Ulrich of Strassbourg, *Summa de Bono*, ed. J. Daguillon, *Bibliothèque Thomiste* 12 (1930): lib. I, cap. iii–viii.

59. For Richard Fishacre, see P. A. Daniels, *Quellenbeiträge und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Gottesbeweise im Dreizehnten Jahrhundert*, (Münster, 1909), pp. 21–24. Compare Robert Kilwardby, *De ortu scientiarum*, Auctores Britannici medii Aevi, iv, ed. A. G. Judy (Toronto, 1976), cap. xxvii. See also James A. Weisheipl, *Thomas d'Aquino and Albert His Teacher* (Toronto, 1980); 14.

60. See M. Burbach, "Early Dominican and Franciscan Legislation Regarding St. Thomas" *Mediaeval Studies* 4 (1942): 139–58.

61. Cited in D. Callus, *The Condemnation of St. Thomas Aquinas at Oxford* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 33–34.

possible in a monotheistic universe—was it a rationality which depended upon faith or not? If understanding depended upon faith, then arguments were less important than preaching by example—as Saint Francis had insisted all along. Aquinas's God carried very different implications for natural knowledge than the God of Franciscan thought: it did not prejudice natural knowledge in favor of the believer. For that reason natural knowledge could provide a useful tool for the Friars Preachers whose whole vocation was defined in terms of oral persuasion.

Just as Bonaventure had given the Franciscan project its most detailed articulation to date in the *Itinerarium*, Thomas gave the Dominican strategy its most detailed expression in the *Summa contra gentiles*. Historians have roundly rejected the traditional view that this work was composed at the request of Raymond of Pennyafort for the conversion of Muslims in Spain.⁶² While the historical basis of this legend has been torn apart, however, it is wrong to conclude that the *Summa contra gentiles* could not have been written with any practical missionary intent. Such an argument rests on the assumption that natural theology could not have had an apologetic role in this period and that the job of apologetics is always to attack and refute the errors of unbelievers. If that were the case then the conspicuous absence of such concerns in the *Summa contra gentiles* would entail that it could not have been intended for this purpose.⁶³ Norman Kretzmann also puts forward the additional argument that books I through III of the *Summa* are concerned with theism rather than with specific teachings of Christianity, and as such contain little or nothing that Muslims would object to. If Aquinas had intended the work for a Muslim audience, therefore, he was waisting his time until he got to book IV, which contains probable arguments relating to the doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation.⁶⁴

This is to prescribe the roles both of natural theology and of apologetics, however, without considering how missionaries actually function. Clearly neither Aquinas nor any of his contemporaries would have felt any need to convince Muslims that God exists. As John Clayton has written, however, it would seem more likely that by rehearsing such proofs Aquinas was defending an account of God's unity so cherished by his Muslim contemporaries, but which was nonetheless compatible with the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.⁶⁵ Indeed, Thomas deliberately presented his arguments not in their original Aristotelian form, but in the form they took after they had passed through the hands of near-contemporary Arab commentators.⁶⁶

62. See the magisterial refutation of this view by René-Antoine Gauthier O.P., *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, 'Somme contre Les Gentils': Introduction* (1993).

63. See Gauthier, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 109–42, and Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theis: Aquinas's Natural Theology in "Summa contra gentiles" I* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 43–51.

64. Kretzmann, *Metaphysics*, p. 50

65. John Clayton, "Religions, Reasons and Gods," *Religious Studies* 23 (1987): 12.

66. Clayton "Religions," p. 3

Had such arguments been directed toward Muslims in newly-conquered Christian territories, they would have been reassured that becoming Christian did not involve giving up beliefs that they already held, or committing the sin of polytheism.⁶⁷ The very act of setting out the truth of Christian faith in this way serves also to set aside errors contrary to Christian belief—that Christianity involves compromising the unity of God. Thomas reserves discussion of the most disputed doctrines between Christians and Muslims—the incarnation and Trinity—until the last book after expressing the doctrine of God in a way acceptable to both traditions.

This is not an argument for singling out the *Summa contra gentiles* as a missionary work, but rather for seeing the *Summa* as an articulation of the approach to the unbeliever embedded in the Dominican vocation generally, and particularly as it was formulated in the natural theology of Aquinas and his contemporaries. One merit of this view is that it makes sense of Aquinas's explicit references to the conviction of Muslims by means of reason. If his project in the *Summa contra gentiles* was not intended to carry any implications for missionary activity, it is difficult to see why he would have mentioned unbelievers at all, not merely in passing, but as a justification for the whole approach he was adopting. Natural theology in Thomas's writing, and in the writings of his near contemporaries at Paris and Bologna, is intrinsically concerned with edifying the souls of others.

The discussion of the existence of God in the *Summa* again begins with the refutation of the view that God's existence is self-evident and with it, of course, the argument of Anselm. As a result, God is not the first object of the human mind, but is an inference from nature that is known equally to believers and unbelievers. While faith may temporally precede knowledge, it does not contribute to that knowledge epistemically or logically. Natural theology becomes a discourse capable of transcending religious boundaries, while making religious difference available for rational debate.

Having eliminated the view that God's existence is self-evident, the arguments employed to establish the existence of God in the *Summa contra gentiles* reflect a set of religious priorities different from those of Aquinas's Franciscan contemporaries. Whereas the Franciscans stressed the priority of the soul's direct relationship with God over its knowledge of all else, Aquinas, following Albertus Magnus, emphasized a different way of 'seeing' God. The natural knowledge of God is attained, for Aquinas, not by means

67. The unity of God or *Tawhid*, expressed as "God is one, there is no God but God," is central to the Islamic tradition and to the social consciousness of Islamic culture. The root of the word Islam, *slm* in Arabic means "to be in peace, to be an integral whole," just as God is one. The root of all error according to Islam is *shirk*—the sin of polytheism broadly interpreted as the association of anything with the Divine: "God forgives not that anything should associated with him" (Quran, 4.116). See for example, Fazlur Rahman, "Islam: An Overview," in M. Eliade, *Encyclopaedia of Religions*; Dominique Sordel, *Medieval Islam* (London and New York, 1979).

of an introspection that transcends the body, but by inference from nature for which the soul is dependent upon the bodily senses. Moreover, the God inferred from the knowledge of the senses is a God of government and causation:

Contrary and discordant things cannot, always or for the most part, be parts of one order except under someone's government, which enables all and each to tend to a definite end. But in the world we find that things of diverse natures come together under one order, and this not rarely or by chance, but always or for the most part. There must therefore be some being by whose providence the world is governed. This we call God.⁶⁸

The third book of the *Summa contra gentiles*, states that our supreme glory is to be helpers of God by means of the causality which we exercise. Following the pseudo-Dionysius, Aquinas argues, "the most divine thing of all is to become a co-operator with God."⁶⁹ It is no coincidence that within Dominican tradition "God's co-worker" was already becoming an epithet for the preacher.⁷⁰ Hence, Aquinas's rejection of Anselm's argument was integral to an account of God encapsulating a very different form of spiritual life and an approach to natural knowledge which that form of life entailed. To adopt the office of the wise, as Aquinas does in the *Summa contra gentiles*, is in fact to conform to the image of the intellectual agent that governs the world, and to co-operate with God in the act of ruling and ordering things toward their proper end in God.

The interiority of the Franciscan account of God was incompatible with

68. Thomas Aquinas, *Liber de Veritate Catholicae Fidei Contra Errores Infidelium Qui Dicitur Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3 vols., ed. P. Marc, C. Pera and P. Caramello (Turin-Paris, 1967), pp. I:539-54. Quotations are from this edition. Lib I, cap. 13, 115: "Impossibile est aliqua contraria et dissonantia in unum ordinem concordare semper vel pluries nisi alicuius gubernatione, ex qua omnibus et singulis tribuitur ut ad certum finem tendant. Sed in mundo videmus res diversarum naturarum in unum ordinem concordare, non ut raro et a casu, sed ut semper vel in maiori parte. Oportet ergo esse aliquem cuius providentia mundus gubernetur." See also Albertus Magnus, *In sententiarum*, lib. I, dist. iii, art. ii: "Nec est simile de fabro lignorum et domo, et Deo: quia faber lignorum separatur a domo, et opus eius similiter, et transit. Unde etiam sequitur: si domus est, faber lignarius est, vel fuit. Sed in Deo opus universaliter non separatur a creatura: quia postquam creata est, adhuc in nihilum caderet nisi contineretur ab ipso: et ordo eius in universo corrumpereetur, nisi ab ipso gubernaretur. Non tamen dico, quod sequatur, quod Deus fuit: sed sequatur, quod ipse est propter rationem aeternitatis quae est tota simul et perfecta."

69. *Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. III, cap. 2023: "Unde Dionysius dicit III Cap. *Caelestis Hierarchiae*, quod *omnium divinius est Dei cooperatorem fieri*: secundum quod Apostolus dicit, I Corinth. 3, 9: *Dei adiutores sumus*."

70. See Humbert of Romans' "The Formation of a Preacher," in Tugwell, *Early Dominicans*, pp. 181-325.

the priorities of the Dominican order. By criticizing Anselm's argument as it had been used by his contemporaries, Aquinas was questioning the consistency of a particular view of God—both with Christian teaching and with human knowledge more generally. On both counts, Aquinas found the Franciscan arguments to be deficient. God is not self-evident to the soul, since—as the Scriptures teach—we have no vision of God in this life. Moreover, God's existence is not a self-evident truth since it is capable of being denied and of being the conclusion of a demonstration. If Aquinas was right, however, not only the Franciscan account of the natural knowledge of God, but a key assumption of Franciscan spirituality would be undermined. Before long, Franciscan defenders of Anselm had to respond to these criticisms—this time emanating from outwith their order.

III

Franciscan and Dominican masters in the late thirteenth century engaged in polemics over Thomas's teaching not merely because he became a focus for intellectual rivalries, but because their intellectual differences were essentially religious. It was in the course of scholastic debate—through the teachings of such masters as Thomas Aquinas, Peter of Tarentaise, Bonaventure, and John Peckham—that those religious differences received expression and were brought into consciousness. For that reason, debate contributed to the development of traditions. In the 1280s the Franciscan John Peckham talked about Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure expressing “the doctrine of the sons of Saint Francis” in opposition to the teachings of the Dominican order, while Franciscan and Dominican legislation regarding the status of Saint Thomas ran in opposing directions.⁷¹

The role of Anselm's argument in these debates is illustrated by John Peckham's attempt to defend Anselm's argument against Thomas Aquinas's criticism. Although Peckham affirmed that the knowledge of truth within the human mind is sourced in the infallible light of God, he agreed with Aquinas that the divine light *by* which we know things should not be confused with *what* we know by it. To say that we know by God's light, therefore, is not to say that we know God. Peckham stresses that our inserted knowledge of God is not a knowledge of what God is, and this is precisely what Anselm shows in the *Proslogion*. Neither the Franciscans nor Anselm himself claim to derive God's existence from a knowledge of God's nature. The mind's knowledge of God is apophatic. It knows only what God is not: it knows that God is not something than which a greater can be

71. *Iohannis Peckham Registrum Epistolarum*, iii, ed. C. T. Martin, in *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London, 1885), lxxvii, pp. 896–902. For legislation see Burbach, “Early Dominican and Franciscan Legislation.”

thought and, therefore, that God cannot be thought not to be. Like Aquinas, Peckham was able to affirm that it is precisely because we do not know God's quiddity that God's existence is denied by some. It is because some mistake God for something other than God—as the Franciscan school had consistently argued—that they conclude God does not exist.⁷² Hence, according to Peckham, Anselm's argument was consistent both with Christian truth and with reason.

For the time being, then, the Franciscans resisted the Dominican critique using the arguments of Alexander and the earliest Franciscan masters. In the long run, however, the approach to knowledge which dominated Franciscan scholasticism in the mid-thirteenth century could not be sustained against the broader critique of Dominican and other masters. The treatment of Anselm's argument in the work of Duns Scotus represents an important change of strategy in the defense of Franciscan interests—interests that continued to be represented in the work of William of Ockham.⁷³ Even within the period that has been covered here there is much more that could be said relating to the context and content of debates concerning the natural knowledge of God. Philosophical enquiry opened up the space within the context of orthodox teaching where real differences of interpretation were already being lived out. The rivalry between the Franciscans and the Dominicans was so intense precisely because they both claimed to represent the same God, and yet understood God in mutually incompatible ways. Their accounts of God were significant precisely because they represented the expression in theory of the very forms of life that the Franciscans and the Dominicans lived. In disputation, the orders defended and contested the coherence of their religious selves—selves formed within communities of interest.

It seems fair to describe the role of philosophy in this context in Richard Rorty's terms, as conversational rather than as foundational.⁷⁴ This is partly because the arguments were rehearsed in "oral" texts—in this case notes for lectures to an audience being trained in oral disputation. The techniques of disputation were important for religious vocations in which

72. The section of John Peckham's sentence commentary dealing with the existence of God is found in Daniels, *Quellenbeiträge*, pp. 41–50: "[I sententiarum, d. ii, q. 2, ad secundo respondeo] . . . quamvis sit naturaliter notum Deum esse, non tamen quid sit Deus est notum: et ideo plures existimantes de Dei quidditate intra concludunt Deum non esse." (pp. 49–50).

73. Unfortunately, these are issues that will have to await another article.

74. A historical comparison of the use of theistic argument by John Locke and Thomas Aquinas illustrating the shift in the use of theistic arguments more generally between the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment, is presented by Nicholas Wolterstorff, "The Migration of the Theistic Arguments: From Natural Theology to Evidentialist Apologetics," in R. Audi and W. J. Wainwright, *Rationality, Religious Belief, and Moral Commitment: New Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (Cornell, 1986), pp. 38–81. For Richard Rorty's account of philosophy as "edifying conversation," see *The Mirror of Nature* (Blackwell, 1982).

“conversation” with the Other was central. In one sense, the friars’ central disagreement was over how that conversation should be conducted. Did the natural knowledge of God somehow depend (paradoxically) upon the prior acceptance of faith? The role of philosophy was also conversational, however, in another sense. Arguments were used to defend and contest difference, and in the case of both the *Itinerarium* and the *Summa contra gentiles*, to help overcome it as well. Anselm’s argument did not function in these texts to provide foundations for religious belief—medieval people were hardly in need of rational foundations for what they believed—but to articulate and make available for public inquiry the rationality implicit within religious practice.