

Alter Augustinus and the Question of Moral Knowledge : Answering Philosophically as an Anselmian

A considerable question arises from the twelfth chapter of St. Anselm's *De veritate*. While the philosopher-theologian defines and refines the concept of justice as a species of truth and rectitude, he unwittingly begets an unanswered question of ethical import : How is one able to know one's moral *debitum* or that which one ought or ought not to do ?

Answering on Anselm's behalf is neither easy nor direct¹. It is, though, if one mistakenly thinks that he is purely *alter Augustinus* and then reads him as if he has no intellectual originality of his own and nothing of his own to contribute to the Augustinian tradition : In other words, one need only read Augustine in order to explain and to understand Anselm !

Answering becomes just as easy if one amazingly thinks that Anselm the ethicist centers on the traditional medieval view at large, that is, the Thomistic view ! These are typical approaches to the *doctor magnificus* : As such, they amount to a clear avoidance of the sheer difficulty of plumbing the depths and combing the intricacies of Anselmian thought. The Augustinian Master is deserving of consideration *first* in his own right and on his own turf : And so it shall be in this essay on the question of moral knowledge.

The claim is that Anselm the ethicist might very well be a proponent of innate moral knowledge or moral intuition. To substantiate this position, I shall undertake a fourfold, gradual course : Each fold builds upon the others. First, I shall offer an overview of Anselm's concepts of justice and *debitum*, including an appreciation of the unanswered question arising therefrom. Second, I shall consider several Anselmian clues for answering the question and, then, advance to the third fold where I shall construct a speculative Anselmian answer which, in view of his own juxtaposition of linguistics and ethics, will figure as a textually-sensitive translation of his verbal epistemology into a moral episte-

1. I am most grateful to Prof. Calvin G. Normore of the University of Toronto Department of Philosophy for his meticulous reading and constructive criticism of this philosophical and slightly eccentric essay.

mology. In the fourth fold, I shall justify the construction by appeal to the teleology and psychology of the rational creature who is a trinitarian image of God. All in all, the course will be philosophically Anselmian with a bit of Augustine unavoidably on the side. Unavoidable will be the result of a clearer, but partial, appreciation of the ethics that Anselm never systematically or completely defines.

I. – ETHICAL CONCEPTS OF JUSTICE AND *DEBITUM*; THE QUESTION OF MORAL KNOWLEDGE ESTABLISHED

After examining *De veritate*, one can see that Anselm does not reject the notion of logical truth as expressed in the Aristotelian-Boethian correspondence theory. For him, though, truth is not simply a logical or linguistic matter; words and statements alone are not the only signifiers of truth. Along with logical expressions, there are also the ontological and ethical². Truth can be conveyed and signified by a vast array of signs: words³ and statements indeed, but also thoughts, senses, wills, actions, as well as the beings of all things (*essentiae rerum*). These expressions and signs do not suggest that Anselm is proffering a multitude of truths, each distinct unto itself. To the contrary, there is but one truth whence the truth of anything and everything is derived and gauged⁴. That supreme truth is God, the one and eternal standard. If, in fact, anything or any

2. Cf. George S. HEYER, Jr., *Rectitudo in the Theology of St. Anselm* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1963), p. 32. Also, Edward A. SYNAN, «Truth: Augustine and Anselm», *Anselm Studies: An Occasional Journal*, 2 (1988), p. 285.

3. Anselm does not discuss the truth of words in *De veritate* (=DV). Discussion of the correctness of a linguistic term usually occurs in his discussion of its precise and oblique signification (meaning) or, respectively, its proper and improper linguistic use. In *Monologion* (=Mon.), c. 31, however, he does consider the truth of a word which is mentally spoken or thought. This truth is gauged by the degree to which the word images that thing for which it is a word. «For all such words by which we mentally speak of objects (that is, by which we think [*cogitare*] them) are», according to Anselm, «likenesses and images of those objects for which they are words. And every likeness and image is true in proportion to the exactness with which it imitates the thing whose likeness it is» (S. I, 48:18-20: *Etenim omnia huiusmodi verba quibus res quaslibet mente dicimus, id est cogitamus: similitudines et imagines sunt rerum quarum verba sunt...*). My reason for mentioning the truth of a word is relevant to the consideration which lies below in subsection 3. There I shall present, as I think Anselm would, the voluntary rational action as a type of moral word. This I shall do in an effort to reach some understanding of an Anselmian moral epistemology via Anselm's verbal epistemology. N.b.: 'S' = *Opera omnia S. Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi*, critically edited by F.S. SCHMITT (Edinburgh, 1938-1961); followed by volume, page, and line numbers. The following translations of Anselm's works were used alongside my own: Jasper HOPKINS and Herbert RICHARDSON, *Anselm of Canterbury*, Vols. 1-3 (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1976); and Walter FRÖHLICH, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, Vols. 1-3 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990-94).

4. Cf. DV, c. 10.

sign is true, it is such ultimately because of its relation or correspondence to supreme truth. Whether it be a logical, ontological, or ethical expression or sign, the truth of anything, excepting the Divine, is always relational⁵. Theocentricity even pervades Anselm's theory of truth, a theory which embraces all of reality; it too undergirds truth's correlative notion of rectitude (*rectitudo*).

According to Anselm, truth is best defined as rectitude : precisely a rightness or correctness that is perceptible to the mind alone⁶. Indeed, truth is nothing else but rectitude⁷. Every consideration of every created expression or sign of truth is linked by Anselm to the concept of rectitude. And this in turn is grounded, though not with respect to the supreme truth or rectitude, in the theocentric notion of *debitum* ⁸.

5. Cf. *DV*, c. 13. Here, Anselm emphasizes that no signification, whether it be of a statement or anything else, is true and correct in and of itself but only in virtue of participation in (cf. *DV*, c. 2) or in accordance with (cf. *DV*, c. 13) that rightness which is eternal. For development of this sense of relation in Anselm's theory of truth, cf. Helen LANG, «Anselm's Theory of Signs and His Use of Scripture», *Les mutations socio-culturelles au tournant des XI^e-XII^e siècles* (Paris : Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984), pp. 446-451 especially. Also, cf. Marcia L. COLISH, *The Mirror of Language : A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge*, revised edition (Lincoln, NE : University of Nebraska, 1983), pp. 79-81.

6. Cf. *DV*, c. 11 (S. I, 191 :19-20 : M : / *Possumus igitur, nisi fallor, definire quia veritas est rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis*). Anselm's claim that truth is perceived by the mind alone is not without agreement, at least in principle, with Augustine. In *De trinitate* (= *DT*), IX, 6.11, Augustine claims that the truth by which one judges things is «perceived... through the eye of the rational mind» (*Corpus Christianorum* [= *CC*], v. 50, 303 :56-72 : *...et illam cernimus rationalis mentis intuitu*). All people can behold the truth for it is one and same for all (*DT*, IX, 6.9). In *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* (= *DDQ*), #9, Augustine maintains that truth is not perceived by the bodily senses. His reasoning is that the bodily senses deal with things that change (a position which he softens in *Retractationum* 1. 26). If a thing is not stable, then it cannot be perceived because «that is perceived which is grasped by knowledge, but that cannot be grasped which changes without ceasing» (*CC*, v. 44a, 16 :7-8 : *...illud enim percipitur quod scientia comprehenditur; comprehendere autem non potest quod sine intermissione mutatur*). The senses can present false images of objects and may not be distinguishable from the true. Truth, for Augustine, is «grasped by the intellect and the inner mind» (*CC*, v. 44a, 17 :25-26 : *...id est veritatem quae intellectu et interiore mente capitur...*). In *DV*, c. 6, Anselm takes a different position. He argues that the truth of senses can be perceived by the mind and that the senses do not deceive. They do what they ought. In those cases in which it seems that the senses deceive, it is actually the mind's judgment that is deceiving (S. I, 184 :29-31). When it is a matter of discerning the rightness of corporeal things, that is, an issue of visible rightness which is distinct from the other forms of rectitude discussed in *De veritate*, rectitude is apprehended first by the bodily senses or sensory perception and then followed by reason's discernment. Only in respect to the rectitude of corporeal things does sensory perception precede mental perception. All other instances of rectitude are perceived solely by the mind via rational reflection. Cf. *DV*, c. 11.

7. Cf. *DV*, c. 13 (S. I, 197 :4-5 : M : / *Constat quia in quacumque re sit veritas, non est aliud quam rectitudo*).

8. Cf. Marilyn McCORD ADAMS, «Saint Anselm's Theory of Truth», *Documenti e studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale*, I, 2 (1990), p. 366. Also, cf. Donald F. DUCLOW,

Whatever can be considered on this side of creation, whether it be a statement, thought, action, or being, *et cetera*, a certain 'oughtness' or obligation (*debitum*) prevails upon it. The obligation of anything in creation, including the rational being, is to be or to do that which it was created or divinely intended to be or to do⁹. There is one point and only one which governs the extent to which anything signifies truth – it is that thing's *debitum* before God which bespeaks the purpose for which it was created. Thus, when Anselm speaks of the truth of anything as being that thing's correctness, rightness, or proper ordering, it should be understood that he is effectively stating that the truth of anything is fundamentally its rectitude as established in the divine mind and as set forth originally in creation by the divine will¹⁰. If anything is to be considered true or right, regardless of whether that truth or rectitude be expressed logically in statements and thoughts, ontologically in the being of all creation, or ethically in actions, senses, or wills, it is true or right by virtue of its accordance with and conformity to the ordering of the Creator : Something is true because it is right and correct, it is right and correct when it signifies what it ought to be or what it ought to do according to the divine mind and will. And, so, truth in any expression or sign is therefore ultimately a matter of the fulfillment of its

«Structure and Meaning in Anselm's *De veritate*», *American Benedictine Review*, 26 (1975), p. 408 ; and E.A. SYNAN, «Truth : Augustine and Anselm», p. 286.

9. There are some salient points about *debitum* : Every sense of it is to be understood in view of God as creator and redeemer. Every creature owes to God the completion or fulfillment of that which he or it was created to be. In the case of man, as conveyed in *Cur Deus homo* (= *CDH*), I, c. 9, he was created for «the purpose of being happy in the enjoyment of God» (S. II, 61 :29-30 : A : / ...*ut deo fruendo beata esset...*). When this purpose is realized, God is duly honored and obeyed. Man owes to God all that he is, all that he has, and all that he can do (cf. *CDH*, I, c. 15). In *Meditatio redemptionis humanae* (= *MRH*) the same point is conveyed less dogmatically, but more prayerfully, with the rationale that all is owed to God because God created and redeemed. When the *debitum* of man is viewed from the perspective of the Fall and corruption of human nature, Anselm claims in *De conceptu virginali* (= *DCV*), c. 2, that there is the obligation to return to the original status : It is «an obligation to have the perfect and pure justice it had received and an obligation to make satisfaction for having deserted justice» (S. II, 141 :17-18 : *Remansit igitur in ea debitum iustitiae integrae sine omni iniustitia quam accepit, et debitum satisfaciendi, quia eam deseruit...*). And when man's *debitum* is understood from the perspective of the will, Anselm claims in *CDH*, I, c. 11 : «The will of every rational creature ought to be subordinate to the will of God» (S. II, 68 :12 : A : / *Omnis voluntas rationalis creaturae subiecta debet esse voluntati dei*). Fundamentally, the subordination and alignment of the human will with the divine will is the moral debt that every man owes to God. The same point can be said of the angels.

10. In *Mon.*, c. 80, Anselm offers a foundation for his concept of rectitude : The important elements are 1) that all of creation is directed by a rational principle, and 2) that God the Creator is the «wisest ruler of all» (*sapientissimus rector omnium*). For scholarly agreement on the view of rectitude presented in the text, see Eugene R. FAIRWEATHER, «Truth, Justice and Moral Responsibility in the Thought of St. Anselm», *L'homme et son destin d'après les penseurs du moyen âge* (Louvain : Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1960), p. 387. Also, cf. Robert D. CROUSE, «The Augustinian Background of St. Anselm's Concept of *Justitia*», *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 4 (1958), p. 114.

debitum before God – before the supreme truth and rectitude¹¹ that is the paradigmatic first “cause of all other truths and rightnesses”¹².

This sense of *debitum*, which is a cornerstone of Anselmian theology¹³, is particularly pronounced in c. 12 of *De veritate* where Anselm methodically endeavors to define and to refine a certain species of truth¹⁴: Justice (*iustitia*), being the cornerstone of Anselmian ethics, is truth and rectitude that principally involves two signs: the will and the actions of a created rational being. The *debitum* which is so central to an understanding of Anselmian justice¹⁵ is not only ethically significant, it is also epistemologically weighted: The obligation of a rational creature before God is partly a function of that person’s knowledge of that which ought to be done. It is this epistemological emphasis underlying the moral *debitum* and a person’s rectitude of the will and actions that gives rise to the unanswered question of moral knowledge. Anselm clarifies it in his twofold attempt to define justice – first, broadly, and then, specifically, as a normative ethical foundation¹⁶.

When he and his student set out in DV, c. 12, to define justice they arrive initially at a rather broad conception of it: Justice is simply truth. They reason that that which is true is also that which is right, and if something is right, then it is customarily called ‘just’. It seems though that for theological reasons Anselm must understand justice primarily as a form of rightness. He reasons that since truth and justice are considered identical in the supreme being¹⁷, and since truth

11. Cf. DV, c. 10 (S. I, 189 :31 : M : / *Summam autem veritatem non negabis rectitudinem esse*).

12. *Ibid.* (S. I, 190 :6-7).

13. Cf. G.S. HEYER, Jr., *Rectitudo in the Theology of St. Anselm*, p. 123.

14. By implication, justice is construed as a species of truth. In c. 13, Anselm considers truth as the genus of justice (S. I, 196 :29-30 : M : / *...quoniam de rectitudine mente sola perceptibili loquimur, una res significatur quae genus est iustitiae...*).

15. Cf. Imelda CHOQUETTE, «*Voluntas, Affectio and Potestas in the Liber De Voluntate of St. Anselm*», *Mediaeval Studies*, 4 (1942), p. 68.

16. Cf. M. ADAMS, «Saint Anselm’s Theory of Truth», p. 372. In view of Anselm’s claim that truth is the genus of justice and that the terms ‘truth’, ‘rectitude’, and ‘justice’ are interchangeable (cf. DV, c. 12 [S. I, 192 :3-8]), I assume and attach an ethical sense to Adams’ clear assertion that truth for Anselm is a «normative notion», a «metaphysical value theory». Also, in view of his own brief discussion of the rule-deontological character of Anselmian ethics, G. Stanley KANE in «Elements of Ethical Theory in the Thought of St. Anselm», *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 12 (1978), pp. 63-64, lends support to my view of the ethical normativity of Anselmian justice. By ‘ethical normativity’ I mean the regulatory factor, principle, or standard which grounds one’s ethical endeavor towards an ethical ideal. Ultimately, this standard or norm is God who, for Anselm, is not only supreme truth and rectitude but also supreme justice. Justice as an ethical norm is an unconditional ethical mandate. Anselm’s insistence that justice or rectitude of the will be kept for its own sake delivers the semantic force of this unconditionality. This point will be clarified when I introduce Anselm’s ‘cur’ condition in the course of an abbreviated and interpretative reading of DV, c. 12. This reading follows immediately in the text.

17. Cf. DV, c. 12 (S. I, 192 :3-5), and c. 10 (S. I, 189 :31).

and rectitude are conceptually linked and originate in the Divine, then justice must be understood as a form of rectitude. Conceivably, if such a broad understanding of justice as simply truth or rightness were left to stand without further specification, then the notion could conceivably encompass and be predicated of the being and actions of all things : Justice could be said of any and all inanimate or animate beings, with or without a rational will, provided all properly signify that which they ought to be or ought to do. The possibility is problematic : For in Anselm's view, neither a stone, nor a horse, nor their actions should be called 'just' because such an appellation would not agree with the customary use of the word. Hence, the definition of justice must be refined and narrowed.

In reconsidering the definition¹⁸, Anselm relies upon an important comparison and distinction between the actions of a stone and a horse and those of a man ; he then emphasizes the difference between the two : For a stone or horse, as in the case of all irrational beings with or without a will, actions are said to be natural or instinctual. That is, the actions are true or right by virtue of the nature of the being : They possess a necessary or natural truth : These beings cannot help but to be the way they are or to act the way they do. In the case of a rational being, some actions are indeed natural, as in the case of bodily organic functions : If the bodily organs do that which they are naturally ordained to do, then they are true or right by nature. However, as Anselm quickly suggests, sundry actions of rational beings are governed and driven not by nature but rather by a rational will. In contradistinction to the inanimate being or the animate one with an irrational will, the rational being acts freely and voluntarily : He wills and acts by reason and free choice. In view of this point, Anselm is wont to speak of a truth or rectitude of actions that is accidental, non-natural, or non-necessary. Voluntary rational actions, only if correct or right, are said to possess such an accidental or non-natural truth. These actions and the accidental truth which they are able to possess make up the important distinction that enables Anselm to refine and narrow the concept of justice¹⁹.

With the distinction between the natural and accidental truth of actions before him, Anselm is able to put the broader conception of justice aside. He is able to

18. The focus is still on *DV*, c. 12. An important complementary reading is *DV*, c. 5. For the sake of clarification : When Anselm speaks about the truth of actions, he prefers to speak of 'necessary truth' and 'non-necessary truth' instead of 'natural truth' and 'accidental truth.' My reason for using 'natural' and 'accidental' in discussing the truth of actions is to maintain a uniformity of terms. This uniformity will prove to be beneficial when I present the parallel of *DV*, c. 9, between Anselm's view of the truths of statements and the truths of actions. When speaking about the truth of statements, he uses 'natural' (*naturalis/naturaliter*) and 'accidental' (*per accidens/accidentaliter*). My preference for uniformity does not in any way distort Anselm's sense. In this case, the terms are considered semantically equivalent and interchangeable.

19. These remarks on natural and accidental truth, and natural (necessary) and accidental (non-necessary) actions, are not based on a reading of *DV*, c. 12, but rather on a reading of cc. 2 and 5 in light of c. 12. In anticipation of my concluding point on the prominence of Anselm's theory of language in *DV*, I should note that Anselm draws a parallel between the natural and accidental truths of actions and those of a statement.

narrow the notion and compass of justice to the point where it embraces only a certain category of actions that can be praised as just. Effectively, he circumscribes justice exclusively to the realm of voluntary or accidental or non-necessary actions of rational beings. Those actions that are natural or instinctual to a being are undoubtedly just in the broad sense of the term if, in fact, they signify that which ought to be or that which ought to be done. Anselm does not deny or dispute the point. However, such actions are not to be praised for being just.

Praiseworthy justice pertains to and is said only of those actions which are driven by the ability of free choice in the rational will of a created being who is mentally able to perceive rectitude²⁰ and is able to act upon it and will it for its own sake²¹. Note the psychological and epistemological dimensions of this refined sense of justice : in the justice that counts morally. Praiseworthy justice is rectitude or truth of a moral dimension : Definitively, this justice is a "rectitude of the will kept for its own sake"²². It is a rectitude which translates into or is signified by one's voluntary actions. And, as is the case with all forms of rectitude or truth, praiseworthy justice is not without its own sense of *debitum*. In particular, the rational being's moral obligation is emphasized in two of four necessary conditions for the attainment of justice or rectitude in the will. Both convey and confirm the important, but unexplicated, point that the fulfillment of one's *debitum* before God and of willing and acting justly is partly a function of having moral knowledge or knowing that which one ought to do.

If one's actions are to be called praiseworthy, the 'quid' and 'cur' conditions for willing justly must obtain : That is, satisfaction must be made with respect to that which one ought to will and with respect to the motive or reason for why one ought to will it²³. As Anselm clearly states :

Even as every will wills something, so it wills for the sake of something. And just as we must consider what it wills, so we must also notice why it wills. For a will ought to be upright in willing what it ought and, no less, in willing for the

20. *DV*, c. 12 : «if a thing which does what it ought does not will what it does, then it is not just» (S. I, 192 :20-21 : M : / ...*quia non est iustus qui facit quod debet, si non vult quod facit*). And also, «I said that whatever does not do willingly what it ought is not just» (S. I, 192 :24-25 : M : / ...*sed dixi non esse iustum qui non facit volens quod debet*). Furthermore, in *DV*, c. 12 : «Therefore, the rightness which brings praise to a thing which has rightness is present only in a rational nature, which alone perceives the rightness we are talking about» (S. I, 193 :1-2 : M : / *Rectitudo igitur quae tenenti se laudem acquirit, non est nisi in rationali natura, quae sola rectitudinem de qua loquimur percipit*). Also, cf. *DCV*, c. 3 (S. II, 143 :7-10).

21. This sense of praiseworthy justice is also applicable to angelic beings. Cf. *De casu diaboli* (= *DCD*), cc. 14 and 16.

22. S. I, 194 :26 : M : / *Iustitia igitur est rectitudo voluntatis propter se servata*.

23. The other two necessary conditions are not treated in *DV*. They are 1) the operative presence of free choice of the will and 2) the prevenient and subsequent grace of God. Anselm considers the first in detail throughout *De libertate arbitrii* (= *DLA*) and partly in *DCD*. He treats the second in *De concordia* (= *DC*), III. These conditions will not be considered in this essay.

reason it ought. Therefore, every will has both a what and a why. Indeed, whatsoever we will, we will for a reason²⁴.

That which one should will ('quid') is precisely and simply rectitude ; the reason ('cur') for willing it is simply for the sake of rectitude alone, which basically means for the sake of supreme rectitude or God. In order for one to will rectitude or to will a just action, that is, to meet the requirement of the 'quid' condition, one must clearly know rectitude or, basically, know one's moral *debitum*. On these points Anselm is perfectly clear and concise²⁵ : Justice does not inhere in the will unless one knows rectitude or that which one ought to do²⁶. If one does not know rectitude or one's *debitum*, then one cannot will it and hence translate it into actions. If one cannot will rectitude, then one's actions cannot be called 'just' or be praised as just : An action is just only when it is performed by the just will of one who possesses a foundational knowledge of what is true and right.

In sum, based on this view of *De veritate*, it seems virtually impossible for anyone's rational will or actions to signify truth and rectitude if one cannot or does not satisfy the 'quid' condition. From Anselm's perspective on justice, being ethical and acting ethically is virtually impossible unless one satisfies the necessary requirement of knowing the moral rectitude which must undergird one's voluntary actions in fulfillment of one's obligation before God²⁷. Given this emphasis, the question of moral knowledge unequivocally arises : How does any rational being at the age of understanding²⁸ become cognitively aware of the moral *debitum* so as to preserve uprightness (rectitude) or justice (truth) in the will and to manifest it truly in actions that are correctly motivated ? Simply put, how does one arrive at moral knowledge ?

II. – ANSELMIAN CLUES FOR AN ANSELMIAN ANSWER

Subtle clues present themselves and suggest how an Anselmian answer might best be formulated and delivered.

24. *DV*, c. 12 (S. I, 193 :33 ; 194 :4 : M : / *Omnis voluntas sicut vult aliquid, ita vult propter aliquid. Nam quemadmodum considerandum est quid velit, sic videndum est cur velit. Quippe non magis recta debet esse volendo quod debet, quam volendo propter quod debet. Quapropter omnis voluntas habet quid et cur. Omnino namque nihil volumus, nisi sit cur velimus*).

25. Cf. *DV*, c. 12 (S. I, 192 :30-33 ; 194 :31-32).

26. *Ibid.* (S. I, 192 :30-33).

27. Cf. *DCD*, C. 22 (S. I, 269 :14-20).

28. In *DC*, I, c. 6, Anselm makes it clear that discussion of a just and unjust will either in oneself or in another is relevant only if the possessor of such a will has reached the age of understanding or reason (the age is not specified). At this stage of life, knowledge and understanding can be obtained. This point marks Anselm's emphasis on the importance of knowledge in securing justice of the will and in satisfying one's moral *debitum*.

Anselm's emphasis on three interchangeable abstract terms – 'truth,' 'rectitude,' and 'justice' – gives the first clue. Knowledge of one term can be inferred from knowledge of the other. Truth is rectitude, rectitude is justice, justice is truth : If one knows one, then one knows the other two²⁹. One point seems to presuppose this reasoning : If one's knowledge of truth, justice, or rectitude singly yields knowledge of the other two, and if such notions individually bespeak the supreme and simple divine essence whence they originate, as Anselm contends, then one's ethical life, founded upon an inhering justice of the will, would seem to rest ultimately upon one's knowledge of God. The implication is that knowledge of one's moral *debitum* could conceivably be obtained from the complex interplay of revelation, evangelical ministry, belief, and the grace of God in an individual's faith-oriented life. Indeed, it is. Pursuit of God within the support system of an ecclesiastical Faith will yield knowledge of God, if only knowledge of God's will. This is clearly Anselm's point in *De concordia*³⁰.

The second clue, which bears the same theocentric emphasis lies in Anselm's 'cur' condition for the attainment of an inhering justice of the will. As conveyed in *De veritate* and corroborated elsewhere in the Anselmian corpus³¹, the sense

29. Cf. *DV*, c. 10 (S. I, 192 :6-10 : M :/ *Habes igitur definitionem iustitiae, se iustitia non est aliud quam rectitudo. Et quoniam de rectitudine mente sola perceptibili loquimur, invicem sese definiunt veritas et rectitudo et iustitia. Ut qui unam earum noverit et alias nescierit, per notam ad ignotarum scientiam pertinere possit ; immo qui noverit unam, alias nescire non possit*). Other references have been made to *DV* with respect to this claim.

30. In *DC*, III, c. 6, Anselm nearly offers a moral epistemology. His perspective, though, is more theological than philosophical. What might suffice as a fledgling epistemological process more properly figures as a process leading to faith or perhaps a theological epistemology of faith. The second point in this process allows for philosophical exploration : Anselm holds that the Word of God, which one hears, must be conceptualized in the mind. What one hears, one must come to understand ; in understanding, one grapples with the meaning or signification of the words. This second point must obtain before the third point when one wills to believe that which one conceptualizes. My speculative construction of Anselm's moral epistemology will be an edification of this second point. Also, in light of *DC*, III, c. 6, it should be noted that Anselm holds to an epistemic basis of belief and faith. The fideist is an intellectualist too. One does not simply will to believe or believe whatever without first thinking about or conceptualizing the content of belief or that to which one will assent (cf. S. II, 270 :28-30 ; 271 :6-8). This point proves to be beneficial in the face of questions which seem to undermine the effort of answering the unanswered question about moral knowledge : Why is it that one must know that which one ought to do or know that which is true and correct ? Why is it not simply enough that one believes something to be the correct thing to do or believes that it is one's obligation to do ? Anselm would reply that it is enough (cf. aforementioned citations alongside *DC*, III, c. 2 [S. II, 265 :5-12] : Willing rightly can be based on believing rightly or understanding rightly ; either one must obtain). But, he would be thinking all the while that belief is not rooted in intellectual inactivity or emotionalism. Belief is epistemic : It is knowledge with assent. When the grace of rectitude is added to that which is conceptualized with assent, faith (*fides*) is produced (cf. S. II, 271 :8-9).

31. In *DV*, c. 4 (S. I, 181 :4-6), Anselm alludes to that which one ought to will. The implicit reference is to keeping (*servare*) rectitude of will : Rectitude of the will is preserved, if one wills that which one ought to will, that is, if one wills the end which God has set aside

of this condition includes a certain concentration : Anselm's insistence that rectitude of the will be kept for its own sake anticipates, in my view, the Kierkegaardian emphasis on a single-minded concentration which alone should found one's purity of heart or will³². It is a theological, faith-imbued emphasis. For Anselm, like Kierkegaard, the single-minded focus of one's life and the solely acceptable and governing motivation underlying one's will and actions is God³³ ; one's single-minded deference to the supreme source of rectitude should alone goad one's will to act. There should be no other principal focus, reason, or motivation but to uphold and to conform willingly to the divine ordering or rectitude of all things as willed in the divine mind. Justice inheres in the will when one wills that which God wills one to will. On these points it is clear that Anselm's 'cur' condition elucidates the matter of his 'quid' condition : It becomes clear that that which a just will wills is precisely that which is the will of God. One's awareness of God and knowledge of the divine will could effect one's knowledge of one's *debitum* before God.

In view of the preceding clues, one could easily settle upon the basic argument of DC, III, c. 6, and offer a simple and definitive response to the question of moral knowledge : Knowledge of one's moral *debitum* can be obtained simply by turning to, hearing, and then discerning the meaning of the Word of God in sacred scripture³⁴. After all, scripture "invites a man to will rightly"³⁵. It is the wherewithal that enables one to conceive thoughts and to effect volitions which are conducive to one's spiritual salvation³⁶. But this response would be a bit hasty for scripture does not constitute the only "seed" of willing rightly. Alongside the Word of God, one must also discern the sense or understanding of rectitude (*sensus vel intellectus rectitudinis*). Such a necessary discernment can be attained or conceived (*concipere*) via many modes : either 1) through hearing the Word, or 2) through reading the Word, or 3) through reasoning (*per rationem*), or 4) through unspecified other ways (*quolibet alio modo*)³⁷.

Modes three and four provide leeway for considering a more philosophical and less faith-oriented response to the question of moral knowledge. The third mode is of central importance : Reason holds a preeminent epistemological position in Anselmian ethical thought. Its ability for discerning truth and

for man, or if one wills the end for which reason alone man has received a will. The moral end of man is the supreme truth, namely, God. Also, see *DLA*, c. 8 ; *CDH*, I, c. 11 (S. II, 68 :12-16) ; *DC*, I, c. 6 (S. II, 256 :26-27).

32. Cf. *DCD*, c. 23 (S. I, 271 :1-12). Søren Kierkegaard meticulously develops this point in *Purity of Heart is to Will one Thing*, trans. by D.V. STEERE (New York : Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956) : cf. especially pp. 31-38, 177-219.

33. Cf. *Epistola* (= *Ep.*) 63 (S. III, 178 :21 - 179 :39).

34. Cf. *Ep.* 420 (S. V, 365 :6-7) : Scripture *in toto* teaches how one ought to be and what one ought to do. Also, see *Ep.* 112.

35. *DC*, III, c. 6 (S. II, 270 :12-13 : ...*quaeritur cur hominem invitat ad recte volendum...*).

36. Cf. *ibid.* (S. II, 270 :18-19).

37. *Ibid.* (S. II, 270 :23-28).

rectitude is nearly equal, but subordinate, to sacred scripture's expression of it³⁸. And the unspecified fourth mode might very well be specified : Along with reason, innate moral knowledge or moral intuition could very well constitute the combined means for discerning the rectitude or justice that is essential to willing and acting rightly. Modes three and four, together, could very well be the means by which one is able to know one's moral *debitum* or that which one ought or ought not to do in order to maintain justice of the will. This is my claim.

Corroboration of this claim lies in a third and final clue. Obscure and tenuous though it may be, its obscurity is not so pervasive that it excludes any possible interpretation³⁹. It lies in DV, c. 9, which has conceptual links to cc. 2, 5, 12, and 13.

My interpretation marks the link which Anselm forges between linguistics and ethics. Discussion of the natural and accidental truths of an action in DV, cc. 5 and 12, parallels his discussion of the natural and accidental truths of a statement in c. 2. There, the natural truth of a statement is considered that which is always present and fixed by virtue of the statement's syntactic and semantic coherence or, in other words, its proper formation. Such a coherence sets up, so to speak, or poises or readies the statement for signifying something ; that is, it establishes the statement's capability for signifying. The natural truth and capability of a statement is not in any way effected or diminished by the statement's actual signification of something. In other words, the statement can in fact be used to signify something either correctly or incorrectly, but either way its natural truth and capability remain uneffected and inviolate. When the statement happens to signify correctly that which it is designed to signify or ought to signify, then it is said to possess an accidental truth along with its natural truth. The accidentally true statement signifies that 'that-which-is' is and 'that-which-is-not' is not. In a certain sense, this notion of accidental truth, which suffices as a reality check of some sort, simply reflects Anselm's acknowledgment of the traditional correspondence theory. Only when the statement possesses accidental truth can it be said to have the truth of signification : It then possesses the rectitude of signification because it signifies that which it ought to signify and it does so correctly.

In DV, c. 9, Anselm resumes this discussion of the truth of signification but the focus shifts from linguistics to ethics : from statements to actions. Here, he draws a parallel between the truth of signification in a statement and that same truth in an action : in other words, a parallel between the natural and accidental truths of a statement and those of an action.

Clearly, the context of this chapter dictates that Anselm is concerned only with accidental actions of the voluntary sort. That is, he is concerned with non-necessary or non-natural actions of rational beings : actions with a moral

38. *Ibid.* (S. II, 271 :28 - 272 :7). Also, cf. P. MICHAUD-QUANTIN, «Notes sur le vocabulaire psychologique de Saint Anselme» in *Spicilegium Beccense I* (Paris : Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1959), pp. 26-27.

39. Desmond P. Henry recognizes Anselm's parallel between statements and actions. Unlike him, I have chosen to ignore Anselm's obscurity and to venture a claim. Cf. *idem*, *The Logic of St. Anselm* (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1967), sect. 8, pp. 230-239.

dimension : voluntary actions judicable or not as praiseworthy and just. One of Anselm's two parallels is expressed thus :

Let us see, then, how extensive the truth of signification is. For there is a true or a false signification not only in those things which we ordinarily call signs [i.e., statements], but also in all the other things which we have discussed. For since someone should do only what he ought to do, then [Point 1] by the very fact that someone does something, he says and signifies that he ought to do it. Now [Point 2], if [morally speaking] he ought to do what he does, he speaks the truth. But if [morally speaking] he ought not [to do what he does], he speaks a lie⁴⁰.

What is most noteworthy here is this : In order to expound on the truth of the signification of actions and to maintain the parallel between actions and statements, Anselm must classify voluntary actions according to the very same categories of natural and accidental truths under which he classifies statements. He indeed renders this classification, if only implicitly and not very clearly.

In short, what is happening in DV, c. 9, is this : Anselm wants to claim that voluntary rational actions have natural and accidental truths just like statements. At 'point one', he presumably wants to see every voluntary action from a conceptual standpoint as that which is set up, so to speak, or poised or readied to signify something. The action is capable of signifying what ought or ought not to be done. Insofar as 'being capable', or simply being a 'being', the action possesses a natural truth like that of a statement. At 'point two', when the action has presumably been effected so that it signifies that which it was designed or intended to signify, the action is said to possess an accidental truth, provided it signifies correctly. When the action possesses such, it has the truth of signification : It possesses rectitude of signification because it signifies that which ought to be.

Anselm's aim in paralleling statements and actions is best summarized in one point⁴¹ : He wants to think of an action as a form of speaking. When one acts, one speaks morally. One's voluntary action is a moral statement or word of some sort. An action itself can speak just as clearly, if not more clearly and instructively, than any vocalized word or statement. His example of the poisonous herbs is suggestive of the point⁴². Like every word and statement, an action is meant to signify something, and it does – either correctly or incorrectly. Here, at least, is the first indication of an Anselmian link between linguistics and ethics.

40. DV, c. 9 (S. I, 189 :2-7 : M : / *Videamus ergo quam lata sit veritas significationis. Namque non solum in iis quae signa solemus dicere, sed et in aliis omnibus quae diximus est significatio vera vel falsa. Quoniam namque non est ab aliquo faciendum nisi quod quis debet facere, eo ipso quod aliquis aliquid facit, dicit et significat hoc se debere facere. Quod si debet facere quod facit, verum dicit. Si autem non debet, mentitur*). Emphasis has been added to the translation.

41. Cf. DV, c. 9.

42. Cf. *ibid.* (S. I, 189 :10-14).

This conceptual link, forged between statements and actions, between linguistics and ethics, can be viewed from two other standpoints. Both pave the way for the third fold of seeing how Anselm's verbal epistemology translates into a moral epistemology.

III. – TRANSLATION OF ANSELMIAN THOUGHT : FROM VERBAL TO MORAL EPISTEMOLOGY

First standpoint : According to Anselm, the truth of each and every sign in creation is ontologically grounded. This is the expressed view of DV, c. 13. His conception of the truth of signification figures as a very broad category or conceptual umbrella under which he places every conceivable sign whether it be of the logical, ontological, or ethical expressions of truth : It is the conceptual means by which he is able to link everything that is capable of signifying truth, basically all of creation, to the supreme truth. The truth of anything and everything is ultimately derived from and 'participates' in this one and eternal source : Every sign is naturally capable of signifying something, but the rightness or correctness of that sign's signification is only established "in accordance with rightness which always exists"⁴³. The common ground and standard of all true and right signs, including words, statements, and actions, is God. The logical/linguistic truth of a word or statement and the ethical truth of an action are identical inasmuch as proceeding from the same ontological and transcendent source of truth.

Second standpoint : By stepping away from *De veritate* and turning to Anselm's linguistic theory in the *Monologion*⁴⁴, it becomes clear that the ontological connection between words and God is firmly established and pronounced. But now the pronouncement receives a very clear epistemological accent⁴⁵. The foundation of all natural languages, the basis of all words and

43. DV, c. 13 (S. I, 198 :13-14 : M : / ...sed quia significatio tunc fit secundum rectitudinem quae semper est...). In the same chapter, Anselm states : «the rightness in terms of which the signification is called correct, or right, neither exists through nor changes with the signification, regardless of how the signification changes» (S. I, 198 :18-20 : M : / Rectitudo igitur qua significatio recta dicitur, non habet esse aut aliquem motum per significationem, quomodocumque ipsa moveatur significatio).

44. Cf. *Mon.*, cc. 9-12, *ex toto*.

45. This accent can be seen in a parallel that Anselm probably intended to make. There is a corresponding epistemological process to each of the three levels of speaking with their corresponding types of words. On the first level of speaking, one externally speaks words (*verba*) which are perceptible and perceptibly employed. The corresponding epistemological level is sensory perception. On the second level of speaking, one silently and mentally speaks or thinks about the first-level word or perceptible sign and its signification or meaning. The corresponding level is cognition and reasoning. On the third level of speaking, one is not dealing with perceptible words as on the first and second levels. Rather, on this highest level, one is imagining or beholding (mentally seeing) things in themselves, that is, viewing with the keenness of the intellect the reality or essence of things. This is the level of natural words.

hence of all statements comprising them, is what Anselm calls “natural words” (*verba naturalia*).

Being universal and recognizable to the minds of all rational language-users, natural words are related to and identified with the conceptual expression (*rationis locutio*) eternally and immutably existing in the divine mind⁴⁶. This expression, being nothing but the understanding (*intelligentia*) of the one and simple God by which all things are understood⁴⁷, is the idea or form, the standard or principle, according to which God creates all things. It exists in the divine mind before creation and, as Anselm claims, it exists presently in the rational creature’s mind as natural words implanted by God⁴⁸. These words, as I want to understand them for Anselm, bear the sense of an innate knowledge or an Augustinian sense of innate ideas or truths⁴⁹.

All rational beings possess natural words ; they suffice as the foundation not only of all languages but also of the knowledge of all things⁵⁰. Alone they necessarily suffice for recognizing (*cognoscere*) an object⁵¹ ; they alone are the proper and principal words for objects : They are the definitive expressions of an object⁵². Yet, neither natural words nor the divine conceptual expression whence they derive are “words which are significative of things”⁵³. They do,

The corresponding epistemological process is intuition and probably contemplation/understanding. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10, *passim*. Cf. Augustine, *DT*, IX, 10.15 (CC, v. 50, 306 :6-9).

46. Cf. *Mon.*, cc. 9-11, *passim*.

47. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 29 (S. I, 47 :19-21), and c. 33 (S. I, 51 :24 - 52 :1).

48. Perchance they are implanted via divine illumination. Anselm does not explicitly address the point. Cf. *Proslogion* (= *Pros.*), cc. 1-4, 14, 16, and 18 for hints of Anselm’s espousal of a theory of divine illumination. Hints outside the *Proslogion* are few and not very informative : Cf. especially, *Ep.* 198 (S. IV, 89 :50-52).

49. Anselm does not use the Latin verb ‘innascor’ or the adjective ‘innatus’. Instead, he prefers to use the Latin adjective ‘naturalis’ and adverb ‘naturaliter’. He does so in sixty-five instances. Cf. *A Concordance to the Works of St. Anselm*, v. 2, edited by G.R. EVANS (Millwood, NY : Kraus International Publications, 1984), pp. 908-909. There is no explanation and only one conjecture for his preference : See note #53.

50. Cf. *Mon.*, 10 ; and Gillian R. EVANS, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford : The Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 28.

51. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10 (S. I, 25 :13-14).

52. Cf. *ibid.* (S. I, 25 :22-25).

53. Cf. *ibid.* (S. I, 24 :27-18 : ...*non cum voces rerum significativae cogitantur*...). Natural words are not images or likenesses of objects in the strict sense which applies to words as alphabetic signs, thoughts, or sundry perceptible signs. Anselm could have very easily made the distinction between natural words and words in the ordinary sense clearer, if he had chosen to call natural words ‘innate ideas’ or ‘innate knowledge’. His reason for not doing so is that his theory of language and verbal epistemology proceed from and are discussed within the context of his trinitarian theology and *logos* theology. It is important to call them natural words because Anselm links the creature’s soul to the Trinity insofar as being an image of this Trinity of memory, understanding, and love/will. Natural words in the soul are an expression of the divine understanding, of the Word eternally begotten from the paternal

however, bear a similarity or resemblance to those objects for which they are natural words⁵⁴. This is so inasmuch as being at once the ontological, meta-physical, and epistemological foundation of the ordinary and customary words of Anselm's linguistic theory.

Now, if Anselm wants to consider moral actions as a form of speaking, then he must agree that moral speaking shares the same foundation in natural words as do all other forms of speaking. By juxtaposing the truth of signification of statements and actions, by considering actions as a form of speaking, and by introducing his core ethical concepts – justice and *debitum* – into a treatise replete with linguistic significance, Anselm implicitly suggests consideration of the question of moral knowledge within the parameters of his verbal epistemology.

If the implied suggestion is correct, then two minor points must be reckoned.

First minor point : A small problem arises at the center of Anselm's verbal epistemology : It concerns his notion of 'word' (*verbum*) and the referent of a word. In the *Monologion*, Anselm is almost exclusively focused on words that signify a concrete reality or material object⁵⁵. Aside from those words corresponding to the first and second levels of speaking, even natural words on the third level are emphasized as referring to material things : When one inwardly and mentally speaks a thing on the third level of speaking, one beholds (*intueri*) that thing by means of an image of its corporeal nature or by means of understanding its definition or essence⁵⁶. If Anselm's claim that moral actions are a form of speaking is to be taken seriously, and I think it should be, then his notion of 'verbum' needs to be considered closely in order to determine if actions can be classified thereunder.

In this regard, it should be noted that for Anselm every word (*verbum*) is a sign⁵⁷. It signifies something ; thus, the word has meaning (*significatio*). Words, though, are not simply words as we generally and commonly understand them in

memory. Cf. *Mon.*, cc. 29-69 ; also, cf. with respect to points on the trinitarian soul presented in subsection 4.

54. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10. With reference to natural words, Anselm remarks : «(N)o other word seems so similar to the object for which it is a word, and no other word so expresses that object, as does that likeness which is expressed in the acuteness of the mind as it conceives the object itself» (S. I, 25 :19-21 : *...his nullum aliud verbum sic videtur rei simile cuius est verbum, aut sic eam exprimit, quomodo illa similitudo, quae in acie mentis rem ipsam cogitantis exprimitur*).

55. Cf. G.R. EVANS, *Anselm and Talking about God*, p. 89.

56. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10 (S. I, 25 :6-9).

57. This point is stressed in the *Monologion* and most clearly in c. 32 : «Without doubt, every word [or image] is a word [or image] of something ; accordingly, had there never been a creature, there would have been no word [or image] of a creature» (S. I, 50 :20-21 : *Nempe omne verbum alicuius rei verbum est. Denique, si numquam creatura esset, nullum eius esset verbum*). Also, cf. *Mon.*, c. 63, where Anselm claims again that every *verbum* is a word, thought, image, or likeness of something. Every word is a sign, and every sign has a reference. If there is no referent, then there is no sign or word. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10 (S. I, 24 :27-28). Also, cf. *De 'grammatico'*, s. 17 (S. I, 162 :25-26), and *Pros.*, c. 4 (S. I, 103 :19-19).

our linguistic sense. Anselm's use and understanding of the term 'verbum' in the *Monologion* is rather varied. A *verbum* can be an alphabetic symbol ; it can also be a thought, a mental or sensory image (*imago*), or a likeness (*similitudo*) of something⁵⁸. Yet, the question before us is whether an action can be understood as a *verbum* without erring from the linguistic theory of the *Monologion*. Anselm's delineation of three levels of speaking with three corresponding types of words (*verba*) and epistemological processes suggests the affirmative⁵⁹. Unfortunately though, he only clearly explains one word-type, namely, natural words on the third level of speaking (*intueri*). Words on the second level of speaking (*cogitare*) are simply noted as thoughts and mental or sensory images of things silently spoken in the mind. On the first level of speaking (*sentire/dicere*), the class of words is rather broad and open so as, presumably, to encompass a vast range of perceptible signs, perceptibly employed or vocally uttered⁶⁰. If an action is to be considered a *verbum*, it would seem that, for two reasons, it would have to be categorized under the first level of speaking : First, actions are sensibly perceived (a point which does not deny that they can be intellectually perceived or thought) ; and second, in *De veritate*, Anselm clearly considers an action to be a sign, whether it be natural or accidental. Given the *Monologion* claim that every *verbum* is a sign, and the assumption that a sign is a *verbum*, an action must figure as such.

Second minor point : Every sign signifies something : Every sign has a referent. Actions as words or signs, however, do not seem to square with the *Monologion*'s preoccupation with words having concrete or material referents. It is generally difficult to think of the referent of a voluntary action as being concrete. Indeed, it is easier to think of the action itself as being concrete, rather than its referent or that which the voluntary action signifies. If it can be assumed for the sake of argument that an action signifies first and foremost the reason, motivation, or purpose that impels a creature to act in some manner in the first place, then it can be maintained that the referent of an action as *verbum* or sign is immaterial.

Assuredly, immaterial referents of words are not altogether excluded from the *Monologion*'s consideration. Indeed, *De veritate* implicitly confirms that which the *Monologion* seemingly overlooks : that words in any Anselmian sense need not always have concrete referents. In both treatises, Anselm's discussion of qualities and abstract concepts such as truth, rectitude, and justice evidence the point. Furthermore, given that some *verba* do have immaterial referents, if natural words figure as the foundation of all languages, then natural words are not merely the ontological-metaphysical-epistemological foundation for knowing concrete things. For voluntary rational actions, particularly those possessing the truth of signification, the referent is not extra-mental or concrete, but rather intra-mental and ultimately, in the fullest Anselmian sense, trans-mental. That

58. These various senses of 'verbum' are conveyed either explicitly or implicitly in *Mon.*, cc. 31-33, 48, 63.

59. See note #45. Also, cf. *Mon.*, c. 10 (S. I, 24 :29 - 25 :4, 10).

60. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10 (S. I, 24 :30 - 25 :1 : *Aut enim res loquimur signis sensibilibus, id est quae sensibus corporeis sentiri possunt sensibiliter utendo...*).

is, the immaterial referent of a true and right voluntary action as *verbum*, of an action that enjoys the truth of signification, is ultimately due to the truth and rectitude of the transcendent God. Such is the case by way of natural words in an epistemological process – the verbal emphasis of which is to be thus translated into a moral emphasis. Though speculative⁶¹, the translation provides one way of answering philosophically the question of moral knowledge.

The first point to consider is this : In Anselm's verbal epistemology the *verbum* or action at the first-level of speaking does not in itself beget or effect knowledge. This is so because the action itself is not within the "mental vision" (*intuitu cognitionis*)⁶². Thus, the action has no immediate and autonomous cognitive value⁶³. In order for the mind to know any first-level *verbum*, an epistemological advance must be made from the first level of speaking, that of *sentire/dicere*, to the second level, that of *cogitare*. In other words, the mind must advance from sensory perception to reasoning.

The cognitive link between the voluntary action as a *verbum* and its referent is established through a distinct mental process : First, the mind (*mens*⁶⁴) must form a mental or sensory image or likeness, or thought, of the action it desires to know or to think (*cogitare*) morally. The image of the perceptible action can be formed either through sensory imagination (*imaginatio corporis*), provided there is an actual perceptible action, or it can be formed through reason (*ratio*) itself insofar as retrieving from memory a stored mental or sensory image of the action under consideration⁶⁵. At this point, the mind has advanced the action

61. The following interpretation is based on *Mon.*, cc. 33, 48, and 62 ; respectively, S. I, 52 :15-23 ; I, 63 :20-22 ; and I, 72 :12-18. For agreement on reading Anselm as a Christian Platonist in the Augustinian tradition, cf. Katherin A. ROGERS, *St. Anselm of Canterbury on Divine and Human Ideas* (Ann Arbor, MI : University Microfilms International, 1982), pp. 140-180.

62. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 62.

63. M.L. COLISH, *The Mirror of Language : A Study in Medieval Theory of Knowledge*, p. 79.

64. 'Mens' is the equivalent of 'ratio'. Cf. *DC*, III, c. 13 (S. II, 286 :10). Also, cf. P. MICHAUD-QUANTIN, pp. 25 and 27.

65. Anselm conveys the possibility of retrieving from memory a sensory image formed in the past and using it in the present to think about that which the image signifies. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 33 (S. I, 52 :20-23). Agreement lies in Augustine : cf. *De magistro* (= *DM*), 12.39-40 (*CC*, v. 29, 196 :1 - 199 :72) : The mind is a store of sense images which can be recalled and employed in the mind's rational reflection. For Anselm, retrieval of an image from memory is considered a type of mental speaking. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 48 (S. I., 63 :20-21). At this point it should be noted that the epistemological process need not always involve a concrete, sensibly perceived object. *Mon.*, c. 62, suggests that there is space for considering an intellectual knowledge, that is, a cognitive pursuit without employment of the senses. Such would be the case, for example, if one were to think of absolute qualities or abstract concepts such as justice. In this case, the epistemological process would seem to involve reason and memory alone. Anselm can be read as asserting that one's thought of an immaterial object would be delivered from an image or likeness of the object retrieved from memory. But this could not be a sensory image stored in memory. The only remaining possibilities are that the mind has formed a mental image, or that Anselm has placed the natural words in the memory, and that

from a first-level word, a perceptible sign, to a second-level word where the action is being thought. The word is now engaged in a process of cognition. Presumably, that which is happening at this point when the mind attempts to think (*cogitare*) about the perceptible sign is something seemingly akin to a process of discursive reasoning. The rational mind analyzes and evaluates, synthesizes, and then renders a judgment on the action under its consideration : Essentially, it renders a judgment on the action's moral rectitude and arrives at knowledge of the truth of signification obtaining between the action as word or sign and its intention or motivation as referent⁶⁶. Even though the mind reasons to a judgment based on a sensory or mental image which it has formed directly from sensory perception or has retrieved from memory, the correctness or incorrectness of the judgment does not stem directly from this imaged information. As Anselm notes in DV, c. 5, the senses are always true ; they do not deceive. Errors in judgment are on the side of reasoning and, therefore, so are the instances of correctness and incorrectness⁶⁷. Just how the mind secures its judgments and knowledge of moral rectitude is a query that brings me to the next and, indeed, an important stage in Anselm's verbal-moral epistemological process : It is memory⁶⁸.

Whether the rational mind begins to think about an action by means of sensory imagination or by reason tapping memory for a stored image, the cognitive process which ends in judgment and knowledge of truth and rectitude always includes an appeal to and employment of the mnemonic ability : Every

these in fact are what is tapped. Anselm allows for examples of the mind forming a mental image or thought of something immaterial or intra-mental. The first is purely theological and not located in any one place in the *Monologion* : The Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, is the perfect mental image (thought or understanding) of the First Person. The second example can be found in *Mon.*, c. 33 (particularly at S. I, 52 :12-20) : The mind, reason itself, is capable of forming a mental image or thought of itself not via the senses or anything extra-mental but solely «from an impression of the mind» (*ex eius impressione formatam*). This interpretation is based exclusively on what I see as another subtle parallel in which Anselm juxtaposes words or thoughts centering on extra-mental and intra-mental objects. This construction occurs precisely at S. I, 72 :12-15. It must be read in consideration of *Mon.*, c. 62, in its entirety.

66. There is agreement with Augustine that all knowledge is attained via judgment : cf. *De libero arbitrio* (= *DeLA*), II, 5.43 ; also, *Confessionum libri XIII*, VII, 17.23. Also, see *DM*, 13.41 (*CC*, v. 29, 199 :1-13) : Here, recognition is given to the senses, but it is emphasized that they do not give way to learning or knowing. Knowledge rests on a judgment and the judgment is effected in tandem with the mind's reference to an internal standard, an inner truth, which resides in all rational beings.

67. This point has been confirmed in Anselm's definition of truth as being that which is perceptible to the mind alone. Reason moves one to a knowledge of rectitude.

68. Cf. K.A. ROGERS, *St. Anselm of Canterbury on Divine and Human Ideas*, pp. 165-167 in particular. She also emphasizes the importance of memory for Anselm ; rightly, she garners support from Augustine. Cf. P. MICHAUD-QUANTIN, p. 27 : He opposes its importance without giving any edifying explanation.

word is brought forth from memory⁶⁹. The senses do play a role in the epistemological process, but they alone do not constitute a sufficient condition or an essential criterion for knowledge⁷⁰. The mind can obtain knowledge of something without necessarily employing the senses : The fact that the mind can form an mental image or thought of an immaterial object, as for example the mind's own image of itself, illustrates the point.

Epistemological priority is given to memory over and above sensory perception : Knowledge is secured on the side of memory with the accompaniment of reason. Yet, in spite of memory's importance, Anselm fails to express much about it. Brief remarks in *Mon.*, c. 48, and in his treatment of the First Person of the Trinity as eternal memory exhaust his consideration. A more complete understanding of his position might be secured indirectly ; indeed, it must be if the moral emphasis of his verbal epistemology is to be realized. To this end, it is beneficial to consider Augustine. Justification for such an approach lies in Anselm's self-proclaimed and orthodox alignment with his forerunner's *De trinitate*⁷¹.

For Augustine, the memory is not simply the mnemonic ability of the soul. It too is a storehouse of innate knowledge : It houses the principal ideas, forms, reasons, or truths which are perceived by the soul's highest faculty⁷². These ideas are beheld by the mind's eye : They are like a word in the mind, perceived by the mind, and begotten from the mind when internally spoken, but always remaining in the mind ; they precede every thought or action that is brought forth from a rational being⁷³. Indeed, these ideas or truths are present and common to all who are willing to meditate upon them⁷⁴, and are the material, so to speak, by which the reason is able to judge and to distinguish truly : The

69. This point is based on my interpretation of *Mon.*, cc. 48 and 62. Interpretation of *Mon.*, c. 48, is not direct : It rests on my juxtaposition (to be presented shortly) of that which Anselm is saying about the First and Second Persons of the Trinity and his claim that the soul and its abilities are an image of that Trinity – an image of memory, understanding, and love or will. Anselm's claim is that whatever the Second Person understands or comprehends (*intellegere/sapere*) it does so by remembering the eternal knowledge and truth of the First Person. With the soul being an imperfect image of the Trinity (clearly presented by Anselm from a psychological standpoint) it stands to reason that the understanding of the soul is achieved in every instance with reference to its own memory. This point is put forward by Anselm when he claims that every word (or thought) is born from memory : The image of a thing under consideration is somehow brought forth from memory. The implication here is that there is no direct link between sensation and reason : Sensory images proceed to and from memory before entering the reason. As will be indicated shortly, when the mind turns to its own recesses, it is not only tapping images of sensible or immaterial things, but it is also tapping the natural words – those innate images in the mind which are likenesses of the idea, standard, and principle in the divine mind.

70. See note #68.

71. Cf. *Mon.*, preface (S. I, 8 :11-14).

72. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DDQ*, #46, *ex toto*, and s. 2 especially.

73. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DT*, IX, 7.12.

74. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DeLA*, II, 10.111-118.

immutable truth, Augustine claims, is «present and shows itself as a kind of miraculously secret, yet public, light for all who see what is immutably true»⁷⁵. In sum, they constitute for Augustine true knowledge of all things⁷⁶. In moral terms, innate ideas and truths are the foundation which enables the mind to know and understand such things as justice and injustice⁷⁷. They are the immutable standards, the “inner rules of truth”, for judging and distinguishing correctly⁷⁸ and, thus, for arriving at knowledge ; they are the standards by which all things exist and by which the rational being acts according to truth and right reason⁷⁹. Augustine held firmly to an understanding of an inner truth which each and every person bears in the soul’s memory : This very truth is the highest teacher of all ; it teaches one and all⁸⁰.

In view of Augustine’s perspective and by sheer dint of interpretative reasoning, that which is happening for Anselm with respect to memory on the second level of speaking (*cogitare*) is this :

In the rational mind’s attempt to arrive at judgment and to secure knowledge of the rectitude of an action, the mind shifts discursively from the second level of speaking, *cogitare*, to the third level of speaking, *intueri*. In doing so, reason shifts to what the mind beholds in memory, the content of which presumably includes more than just mental and sensory images⁸¹. It includes the natural words : the foundation of Anselm’s verbal epistemology, the word-type corresponding to his third level of speaking. Now, if Anselm’s own regard for Augustine should be fully esteemed, then it is probably the case that his natural words should be thought to approximate Augustine’s innate ideas and truths in memory. And, although Anselm does not explicitly state anything to this effect, he would also probably side with Augustine in separating that which is innate in the memory from the sensory and mental images that are acquired and stored in it⁸². Natural words, inasmuch as being the images of the conceptual expression of the divine mind, are the innate images (*verba*/words) of eternal and immutable knowledge of the God who is truth, rectitude, and justice *per se*. By virtue of the mind’s ability to behold (*intueri*)⁸³ or intuit these innate images, the rational mind has ready access to morally-significant words. The mind’s eye

75. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DeLA*, II, 12.130 (CC, v. 29, 260 :4-6 : ...*sed omnibus incommutabilia uera cernentibus tamquam miris modis secretum et publicum lumen praesto esse ac se praeberere communiter*).

76. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DT*, IX, 7.9, 12.

77. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DeLA*, II, 8.20, 14.38 ; and *DT*, X, 1.1 (CC, v. 50, 311 :12-14).

78. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DeLA*, II, 12.134 (CC, v. 29, 260 :34 : ...*interiores regulas ueritatis*...).

79. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DT*, IX, 7.12.

80. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DeLA*, II, 2.9. This point is conveyed and developed throughout book two.

81. Cf. *DC*, III, c. 11 (S. II, 279 :17-22), for two references to memory (*memoria*) which suggest, though barely, its epistemological function.

82. Cf. AUGUSTINE, *DT*, IX, 6.10 (CC, v. 50, 301 :19 302 :25), and 12.18. See Anselm in *Mon.*, c. 48 (S. I, 64 :4-5).

83. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 10 (S. I, 25 :7).

intuitively beholds images of eternal and immutable knowledge which are employed in the mind's own discursive attempt to reason to a judgment on the rectitude⁸⁴ of an action, on the truth of the signification of a voluntary action. Natural words of truth, rectitude, and justice effectively suffice as the inner standards and measures by which reason is able to judge an action in terms of its moral rectitude.

Thus, the question of one's moral knowledge or of knowing one's moral *debitum* is answered. Alongside justice as the normative foundation of an Anselmian ethics, there is foundationally an innate moral knowledge or sense of what is morally right and wrong. It aids and abets the actualization of the norm in one's being and in the affairs of one's existence.

IV. – JUSTIFICATION : THE TELEOLOGY OF THE RATIONAL CREATURE AS A TRINITARIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL IMAGE

That natural words suffice for the mind's moral discernment, and *that* the rational being enjoys an innate moral knowledge or moral intuition : *Both points* are corroborated in consideration of the purpose for which the rational being was created. Anselm's position elucidates the ethical role of reason and seemingly necessitates his espousal of an innate moral knowledge that is universal and common to all. This claim gains strength in view of his stance on the trinitarian image of the created rational soul.

Like Augustine before him, Anselm affords a preeminent position to reason as a cornerstone, as the master of the ethical life : Reason "ought to be", he claims, "the ruler and judge of all that is man"⁸⁵. Aside from being the means by which rectitude of the will and actions is understood⁸⁶, reason also teaches rectitude. It teaches not only justice, but also that justice ought to be maintained for its own sake, and that it ought to be preferred to anything that is contrary to it⁸⁷.

Hence, it is generally inconceivable for either the human or angelic mind to understand that which ought to be done, or for the human or angelic reason to teach rectitude, unless the rational mind of both beings is privy to a foundational knowledge, natural and innate, from which it can proceed to an understanding and to which it can refer when teaching ! It must be that reason works towards a discernment of truth, rectitude, and justice : It must be that reason is able to

84. Cf. P. MICHAUD-QUANTIN, p. 26 : Concerning the 'ratio' he notes : «...sa valeur particulière est alors d'ordre dialectique ou logique, elle juge et garantit la vérité des connaissances acquises et engendre la conviction chez celui qui en fait usage».

85. Cf. *De incarnatione verbi*, c. 1 (S. II, 10 :1-2 : ...*ratio, quae et princeps et iudex debet omnium esse quae sunt in homine...*). Also, cf. AUGUSTINE, *De LA*, I, 8.61, 65, and II, 18.190.

86. Cf. *DCD*, c. 23 ; also, *DC*, I, c. 6.

87. Cf. *DC*, I, c. 6. Also, cf. *Mon.*, c. 66.

teach, because it has access to a foundational knowledge of truth, rectitude, and justice, such as that imaged by natural words and stored in memory.

Moreover, the link between reason and innate moral knowledge or natural words is suggested, if not necessitated, by Anselm's position on the *raison d'être* of the rational being with a trinitarian soul.

As Anselm sees it, the underlying purpose of God's creation of rational beings is basically that they should «love above all other goods the supreme being, which is the supreme good»⁸⁸. Towards fulfilling this ethical end, reason serves by virtue of its ability «to distinguish what is just from what is unjust, what is true from what is not true, what is good from what is not good, what is better from what is worse»⁸⁹. Rational beings have been endowed with such an ability in order that they should desire and opt for the supreme good over any and all lesser goods. Clearly, it is an endowment with an ethical purpose : The rational mind of man or angel is most rational when it makes moral distinctions⁹⁰. But one cannot desire and love or will that supreme good which one is supposed to desire and to love if one is not equipped to understand or simply does not remember and understand that which ought to be distinguished⁹¹.

Like Augustine before him, Anselm holds that the creature's rational soul is an image of the Trinity, of the Triune God of memory, understanding, and love/will⁹². In possessing natural abilities to remember (*reminisci*), to understand (*intelligere*), and to love (*amare*), the soul realizes them maximally when it endeavors towards the supreme good over and above all other goods :

...there cannot at all be thought to have been naturally bestowed upon the rational creature anything as excellent and as similar to the supreme wisdom as is

88. *Mon.*, c. 68 (S. I, 79 :1-3 : *Nihil igitur apertius quam rationalem creaturam ad hoc esse factam, ut summam essentiam amet super omnia bona, sicut ipsa est summum bonum...*). In *Mon.*, cc. 74-75 and 77, Anselm presents more fully his view of the moral end of man. In sum, man should believe in the Triune God and strive towards the supreme being in every thought and deed. He makes it quite clear that in believing and striving one is driven by a love to understand and to remember God.

89. *Mon.*, c. 68 (S. I, 78 :21-23 : *Denique rationale naturae non est aliud esse rationalem, quam posse discernere iustum a non iusto, verum a non vero, bonum a non bono, magis bonum a minus bono*). Cf. P. MICHAUD-QUANTIN, p. 26, for the moral importance of reason.

90. Cf. *CDH*, I, c. 1 ; also *Mon.*, c. 68.

91. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 68. The following point is relevant not only to the textual point accompanying this note but also to the following development on the trinitarian soul : If the mind does not have at least a modicum of understanding of the truth, justice, and goodness of God, then the soul would not have the wherewithal or the basis for employing its ability to distinguish morally between the true and false, the just and unjust, the good and bad, and the better and worse. Hence, the soul would not be able to attain to the end for which it was created by God.

92. Cf. *Mon.*, cc. 66-67 ; also, cf. AUGUSTINE, *DT*, IX, 12.17-19, and XI, 3.6.

the ability to remember, to understand, and to love that which is the greatest and best of all⁹³.

By virtue of this imaging of divine abilities, the soul is able to strive towards knowledge of the supreme good and supreme wisdom⁹⁴. Indeed, the rational being is obliged to do so, according to both Anselm and Augustine⁹⁵. One can only arrive at the moral end if one strives towards the fullest and most harmonious employment of these abilities : That is, one must strive to remember and to understand in addition to loving and willing⁹⁶. In sum, this is the *raison d'être* of the rational being.

Full appreciation of Anselm's vision of the soul as an image of divine memory, understanding, and love demands consideration of his trinitarian theology. Only then does it become certain that he had to subscribe to innate moral knowledge or moral intuition – indeed, to 'something' that could be remembered and understood so as to enable the rational being, as an image of the Triune God, to employ his God-given natural abilities towards realizing his divinely-intended moral end.

Inasmuch as imaging the First Person as memory, the Second Person as understanding, and the Third Person as love/will, the created rational soul of natural abilities images the eternal relation of Divine Persons. If the soul's ability to understand and to reason is to be an image of the Second Person who is the perfect image and understanding of the truth and knowledge of the First Person who is eternal memory, then the creature's imaging of divine understanding in his natural, but imperfect, ability to understand should include a relation to his own memory and should likewise include an imaging of that which is understood by the Second Person in his imaging of the First. A rational creature's understanding and reason must enter into a relation with memory. Something must be retrievable from memory if his memory itself is to be an image of the First Person. Such is seen to obtain in view of Anselm's verbal-moral epistemology.

Natural words in memory suffice in establishing and securing the relation between the creature's understanding (reason) and memory : In the created rational mind, natural words are required as the images (words) of the First Person's eternal and immutable truth and knowledge which is perfectly understood by the Second Person, and which must be understood to some degree by the creature if he is to image, though imperfectly, the Second Person in relation to the First Person. With natural words themselves stored in memory, the ability images the First Person with respect to that Person's being eternal

93. *Mon.*, c. 67 (S. I, 78 :7-10 : *Omnino autem cogitari non potest rationali creaturae naturaliter esse datum aliquid tam praecipuum tamque simile summae sapientiae, quam hoc quia potest reminisci et intelligere et amare id, quod optimum et maximum est omnium*).

94. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 66.

95. Cf. *Mon.*, cc. 68-69 ; also, cf. AUGUSTINE, *DT*, XIV, 12.15

96. Cf. *Mon.*, c. 68.

remembrance of truth and knowledge. In the harmonization of natural abilities, the creature is truly an image of God⁹⁷.

The natural words of Anselm's verbal epistemology are required for the rational being because of his trinitarian theology and his vision of the creature as an image of the Triune God. If such a requirement is not satisfied, then his view of the soul as a trinitarian image, his vision of the soul (itself of relational powers/abilities [*vis*]) in relation to the Divine Triune Relation, is compromised. Otherwise put : The harmonization of the creature's natural abilities, a concord which bespeaks the creature's truly being an image of God, is unrealizable. And thwarted is the moral end for which the rational being was created and is obliged before God to will and to love.

CONCLUSION

When the question of moral knowledge arises from Anselm's *De veritate* : when asked how Anselm reckons the rational being's attainment to knowledge of moral *debitum* before God, an Anselmian response might very well be delivered on the basis of a speculative construction and translation of his scant verbal epistemology into an even scantier moral epistemology. When the natural abilities of the creature's trinitarian soul discursively deliberate on a voluntary action or significant instance of moral speaking, it analyzes and evaluates that action's moral standing. It seeks to measure the truth or rectitude of its signification : In doing so, it weighs the action against eternal and immutable standards and principles set innately in memory and intuitively beheld by the mind's eye. Memory, together with understanding and reason, enters into an epistemological relationship of natural abilities which images the relationship of the Trinity of memory, understanding, and love/will. Inasmuch as being and doing so, the course is set for the rational being's attainment of moral knowledge of the truth and rectitude of the signification of voluntary, accidental actions. The rational being knows that which he ought or ought not to do, because he innately knows and reasons with the conceptual expression of supreme wisdom – a perfect wisdom that is at once the truth, rectitude, and justice of the one and simple God.

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97. This harmony and relation also includes the soul's natural ability to love and to will. This ability is the most important factor, that is, the most ethically significant factor, in the relation.

ABSTRACT : This essay considers the question of moral knowledge and attempts to answer it *philosophically* on behalf of Saint Anselm of Canterbury. Analysis and synthesis break ground in Anselmian scholarship with the claim that Anselm, *alter Augustinus*, most probably held to innate moral knowledge. The assertion is established first in an appreciation of his concepts of *debitum* and justice ; second, in a speculative, but textually-sensitive, translation of his verbal epistemology into a moral epistemology ; and, third, in a justificatory reflection on the human soul as a trinitarian psychological image.

RÉSUMÉ : Dans cet article, on examine la question de la connaissance morale et on essaye de lui donner une réponse philosophique, en adoptant le point de vue d'Anselme de Canterbury. L'analyse permet d'avancer l'hypothèse – nouvelle dans le domaine de l'érudition anselmienne –, selon laquelle cet *alter Augustinus* est très probablement le tenant de l'innéité de la connaissance morale. Pour asseoir cette thèse, on procède d'abord à l'examen des notions de *debitum* et de *iustitia* ; puis, on traduit son épistémologie verbale en une épistémologie morale, en extrapolant, certes, mais à partir d'une lecture précise et attentive des textes ; enfin, la thèse est corroborée par une réflexion sur l'âme humaine en tant qu'image psychologique de la Trinité.