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One Truth or Many Truths? Two Medieval Accounts of Truth:
Anselm of Canterbury and Robert Grosseteste

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One Truth or Many Truths? Two Medieval Accounts of Truth:
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This dissertation analyzes two medieval Augustinian accounts of truth, viz., those of Anselm of Canterbury and Robert Grosseteste. Despite their common acknowledgement of the authority of Augustine and fundamental reliance upon Augustinian principles, Anselm and Grosseteste disagree about whether there is only one Truth or there are many truths. The purpose of this dissertation is to determine the reasons for this disagreement.

Chapter One examines the primary texts of Augustine on truth. Despite the unsystematic and oftentimes ambiguous character of these texts, Augustine's thought converges on the conclusion that, ultimately, there is but one Truth, through Which all true things are true.

Chapter Two analyzes Anselm's account of truth. Like Augustine before him, Anselm leans heavily on the eternal and immutable character of truth in his argument that there is only one Truth. But it is Anselm's "metaphysics of creation," especially his dyadic

understanding of participation, that ultimately explains his concluding to the unicity of Truth despite the theretofore general progression of his argument toward the multiplicity of truth.

Lastly, Chapter Three, in investigating Grosseteste's writings on truth, shows that his conclusion that there are many truths is the result of not only metaphysical but also epistemological and logical arguments and principles. Grosseteste's understanding of the relationship between the Supreme Truth and the true thing, his account of our knowledge of true things (with its concern to avoid ontologism), and his commitment to the legitimacy of our speaking of "truths" impel him to the conclusion that there are many truths, while also preserving the central Augustinian commitment to the transcendence of the Supreme Truth as That in virtue of which all true things are true. Furthermore, having a different understanding of participation from Anselm (i.e., a triadic understanding), and being able to explain the eternal and immutable character of truth without identifying truth with Truth, Grosseteste eradicates the Anselmian motives for concluding to the unicity of truth.

Ultimately, Grosseteste's great contribution is to overcome the tension in Anselm's account by showing that the transcendence of the Supreme Truth, far from negating created truths, rather makes them possible at all.

This dissertation by Travis James Cooper fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in philosophy approved by Timothy Noone, Ph.D., as Director, and by Kevin White, Ph.D., and Michael Gorman, Ph.D., as Readers.

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whose erudition and teaching were the inspiration for this dissertation
and for whose direction of this dissertation I am grateful,

To my boys – Alexander, Damian, and Gerard –
who are the lights of my life, and

Above all, to my wife, Briena,
whose unflagging love, dedication, and support leave me entirely and eternally in her debt

*Nam et illi, quia “breves dies hominis sunt,” non omnia quae possent, si diutius vixissent,
dicere potuerunt; et veritatis ratio tam ampla tamque profunda est,
ut a mortalibus nequeat exauriri*

– Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Cur deus homo*, “Commendatio”

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INTRODUCTION

Anselm of Canterbury, as a theologian in eleventh-century Europe, considered Augustine of Hippo as the pre-eminent human authority in matters theological, so much so that Anselm intended his writings to be consistent with the writings of Augustine.¹ Robert Grosseteste, writing in the first quarter of the thirteenth century and therefore the beneficiary of the re-introduction of many of Aristotle's texts into the West, likewise acknowledged the "great authority of the great Augustine."²

One of the lesser-known subjects in which both Anselm's and Grosseteste's indebtedness to Augustine is clear is the question of truth. In his *De veritate*, Anselm utilizes Augustinian terminology and Augustinian principles to arrive at a definition of truth on the way to his conclusion that there is only one Truth in all true things. Grosseteste, in his own *De veritate*, explicitly relies on Augustine as well as on Anselm in his inquiry: Augustinian principles and concerns dominate Grosseteste's treatment, and especially his conclusion, and Grosseteste accepts wholeheartedly Anselm's definition of truth.

The question that both Anselm and Grosseteste set before themselves, in their separate treatments of truth, is the question of the number of truth: Is there one Truth alone in

¹ See Anselm's preface to his *Monologion*: "Quam ego saepe retractans nihil potui invenire me in ea dixisse, quod non catholicorum patrum et maxime beati Augustini scriptis cohaereat. Quapropter si cui videbitur, quod in eodem opusculo aliquid protulerim, quod aut nimis novum sit aut a veritate dissentiat: rogo, ne statim me aut praesumptorem novitatum aut falsitatis assertorem exclamet, sed prius libros praefati doctoris Augustini *De trinitate* diligenter perspiciat, deinde secundum eos opusculum meum diiudicet" (in vol. 1 of *Sancti Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. F.S. Schmitt [Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946; repr., Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag – Günther Holzboog, 1968], p. 8, lines 8-14).

² From Grosseteste's *De unica forma omnium*: "Si autem quaeras, quid me moveat ad sentiendum Deum esse formam et formam omnium, respondeo: magna magni Augustini auctoritas" (in *Die Philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, ed. Ludwig Baur, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters: Texte und Untersuchungen 9 [Münster: Aschendorff, 1912], p. 107, lines 4-6).

all true things, or are there many truths of things? For both Anselm and Grosseteste, the question of the unicity or multiplicity of truth is the fundamental question that drives and structures their respective treatises on truth, this despite the fact that this concern with the number of truth appears almost nowhere in the Augustinian corpus and plays no significant role in any of Augustine's major discussions of truth.

But, despite their common recourse to the language and the principles of Augustine, their common definition of truth, and their identical purposes, Anselm and Grosseteste arrive at opposite conclusions about the number of truth: for Anselm, there is only one Truth in all true things, whereas for Grosseteste there are many truths of things. At first glance, this divergence may not seem surprising: one could appeal to different Scriptural passages in defense of either conclusion, and one could likewise utilize different passages of Augustine to arrive at either conclusion. However, neither Anselm nor Grosseteste appeal to a set of Scriptural passages that seem to defend their conclusion without recognizing and even affirming other passages that seem to defend the opposite conclusion. In addition, in no way can it be said that Grosseteste relies on those passages in Augustine that seem to affirm the multiplicity of truth whereas Anselm relies on those passages in Augustine that seem to affirm the unicity of truth, for Grosseteste makes constant and explicit use of passages from Augustine, addressing even those passages that seem to affirm the unicity of truth, whereas Anselm uses Augustine only implicitly (and less comprehensively than Grosseteste does), so that he does not marshal Augustinian texts in defense of his conclusion that there is but one Truth.

Much needs to be accounted for, then, to determine why Anselm and Grosseteste affirm opposite conclusions about the number of truth, especially in light of the fact that

Grosseteste relies explicitly on Anselm's definition of truth. But despite this need for explanation, there is no detailed monograph on truth devoted to both Anselm and Grosseteste. In fact, there is only one scholarly work of any kind that compares Anselm's and Grosseteste's accounts of truth, and that work is a very recent, and quite short, article; but even this article is not primarily interested in the divergence between Anselm and Grosseteste on the number of truth. Therefore, there is a real lacuna in medieval scholarship with regard to this question.

Furthermore, the significance of this question warrants removing this lacuna. First, a detailed examination of Anselm's and Grosseteste's accounts of truth, with particular regard to their conclusions regarding the number of truth, would bring needed clarity to the notion of truth in the Augustinian tradition, since Anselm and Grosseteste are two of the most significant representatives of that tradition in the years A.D. 1000-1250. Second, it is to be hoped that such an investigation will provide significant insight into the metaphysics of both Anselm and Grosseteste: this is especially desirable in the case of Grosseteste, about whose metaphysics very few substantial works have been written. Third, a better understanding of the reception of Augustine by Anselm and Grosseteste, who each have an acknowledged influence on 13th-century medieval thinkers, will clarify and give perspective to the reception of Augustine by medieval thinkers in the years 1250-1300, perhaps the greatest and most active period of medieval theology and philosophy.

For these reasons, at least, it is desirable that Anselm's and Grosseteste's accounts of truth be examined and compared to each other so as to ascertain the respective principles on the basis of which they arrive at divergent conclusions about the number of truth and, in so doing, to determine why, despite their common reliance on Scripture and Augustine, Anselm

and Grosseteste provide opposing answers to the question of whether there is any truth apart from God. We propose to undertake this inquiry and accomplish this purpose in the present work. In order to do this, we will need, first, to examine Augustine's understanding of truth insofar as it bears upon the question of the number of truth, with special attention to those passages in Augustine that constitute *loci classici* for later medieval accounts of truth (especially those of Anselm and Grosseteste). We will undertake this examination in Chapter One.

In Chapter Two, we will present and analyze Anselm's account of the unicity of truth. Focusing on his *Monologion* and, above all, on his *De veritate* – since those are the only works of Anselm in which he discusses truth at any length – we will seek to identify the principles that motivate Anselm to argue that there is but one Truth.

Chapter Three will be devoted to a close reading of Grosseteste's *De veritate*, in which work alone Grosseteste addresses the question of the number of truth. Because several other works of Grosseteste bear immediately upon the argument of *De veritate*, we will, in presenting and examining the *De veritate*, make use of these other works. In order to justify this methodology against the objections of the foremost scholar on truth in Grosseteste (Steven Marrone), we will open Chapter Three with a consideration of the chronology of Grosseteste's writings.

One final point is in order here. Because there is no scholarly work that addresses the question that we have set ourselves in this investigation (as we have said), but there is some scholarship on the accounts of truth of Augustine, Anselm, and Grosseteste individually, we will address and utilize the secondary literature only in the individual chapters and not at the outset of the current work.

CHAPTER ONE

AUGUSTINE'S ACCOUNT OF TRUTH

The acknowledged authority for both Anselm's and Robert Grosseteste's accounts of truth is, after Sacred Scripture, St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.¹ Not to present the teaching of Augustine on truth is thus to ignore Anselm's and Grosseteste's reliance on Augustine and thereby to run the risk of seriously mischaracterizing the accounts of truth of these students of Augustine. For this reason, in this first chapter Augustine's account of truth will be presented, to the extent that this is vital for a proper understanding of Anselm and Grosseteste, i.e., insofar as it bears upon the question of the number of truth.

Any attempt to understand and present Augustine's account of truth faces two major difficulties. First, even a cursory glance at the numerous passages in the Augustinian corpus in which Augustine discusses the nature of truth reveals that his discussions about truth are scattered throughout his corpus and nowhere synthesized into a complete account. One might expect this fact to explain (partially, to be sure) the divergent ways in which texts from Augustine are used by medieval thinkers – for our purposes, Anselm and Grosseteste – in their own accounts of truth. Therefore, in our presentation of Augustine's account of truth, we must keep an eye on this point by recognizing the emphases, the nuances, and the ambiguities in the relevant passages from Augustine.

Second, while one who wished to show that Augustine affirmed the existence of many truths could refer to many passages as evidence for his position, at the same time, one who wished to show that Augustine affirmed the unicity of Truth could quite easily refer to

¹ See above, 1n1-2.

many other (and sometimes even the same!) passages in defense of his position. Discerning the teaching of Augustine on this question, therefore, is a more difficult task than it might appear: it will require as synthetic an account of Augustine's understanding of truth as the texts will allow. In undertaking this synthetic account, we will to a great extent follow the scholarly interpretations of Etienne Gilson (*The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*) and Charles Boyer (*L'idée de vérité dans la philosophie de Saint Augustin*), the former work because of its pre-eminent status in Augustine scholarship and the latter work because of its uniqueness as a book-length treatment of Augustine's account of truth.

A. The Plurality of Truths in Augustine

In many passages, Augustine speaks of true propositions and seems to affirm that they are truths known by us ("truth," in these passages, meaning "the affirmation of that which is,"² as we shall see). This would seem to constitute a recognition of the existence of many truths. In his *De libero arbitrio*, for example, Augustine lists various true statements to Evodius, his interlocutor – we ought to live justly, what is worse should be subjected to what is better, like should be compared with like, everyone should be given what is his – and asks, "Don't you agree that these are most true and that they are present in common to me and to you and to all who see them?"³ In chapter 12 of *De magistro*, Augustine professes ignorance

² In this and in what follows, I am following, for the most part, Charles Boyer's division of the meanings of truth according to Augustine (*L'idée de vérité dans la philosophie de Saint Augustin*, 2d ed. [Paris: Beauchesne et Ses Fils, 1940], Introduction, 10-12).

³ Bk. II, ch. 10: "Item iuste esse videndum, deteriora melioribus esse subdenda et paria paribus comparanda et propria suis quibusque tribuenda nonne fateberis esse verissimum et tam mihi quam tibi atque omnibus id videntibus praesto esse communiter?" (*Aurelii Augustini Opera*, vol. 29, *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* [Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1970], 256, 22-26; hereafter, *CCSL* 29, 256.22-26).

of “how we say true things” while looking upon false images.⁴ These “most true” propositions and these “true things” seem as so many truths held in common by all beings who know them. That Augustine is, in these passages (and others like them), affirming that there are many truths finds support in his definition of truth in chapter thirty-six of *De vera religione*: “truth is that which shows what is.”⁵ Surely true propositions, the “true things” that we say, “show what is,” in which case they are truths and thus there is a multitude of truths. Therefore, it seems justifiable to conclude, from these passages (many others like them could be elicited), that any thought or statement that shows what is, is (a) truth. On this reading, Augustine does indeed recognize the existence of many truths.

Another indication that Augustine recognizes the existence of many truths is his identification of truth with being, which constitutes another meaning of truth. According to this meaning of truth, a being is true to the degree that it exists. In Book One, chapter fifteen of his *Soliloquiorum*, Augustine states that anything which is is true, and he gives an example: a tree, if it is a tree, must be true.⁶ Likewise, in the *Confessiones* Augustine affirms that all things are true insofar as they have being.⁷ In Book Two, chapter five of the

⁴ #39: “Cum vero non de his, quae coram sentimus, sed de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, sed imagines ab eis impressas memoriaeque mandatas loquimur, quae omnino quomodo vera dicamus, cum falsa intueamur, ignoro, . . .” (CCSL 29, 197.17-21).

⁵ “Sed cui saltem illud manifestum est falsitatem esse, qua id putatur esse, quod non est, intellegit eam esse veritatem, quae ostendit id quod est” (*Aurelii Augustini Opera*, vol. 32, *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* [Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1962], 230, 1-3; hereafter, CCSL 32, 230.1-3).

⁶ #27-28: “Aug.: . . . ita etiam, si quid verum est, veritate utique verum est. Ratio: . . . Quamvis enim non credas sensibus, possisque respondere, ignorare te prorsus utrum arbor sit; tamen illud non negabis, ut opinor, veram esse arborem, si arbor est: . . .” (*Sancti Aurelii Augustini, Hipponensis Episcopi, Opera Omnia*, vol. 32, *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne [Paris: Garnier Bros., 1877], 883-84; hereafter, PL 32, 883-84).

⁷ Book VII, ch. 15, #21: “. . . , omnia vera sunt, in quantum sunt, . . .” (*Aurelii Augustini Opera*, vol. 27, *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* [Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1981], 106, 3; hereafter, CCSL 27, 106.3).

Soliloquiorum, Augustine says that the true is that which is.⁸ From all of this it appears that for Augustine the truth of the thing is its being, and so there must be as many truths as there are existing things.⁹

Furthermore, in his treatise *De mendacio* Augustine distinguishes between the truth of contemplation and the truth of true statements. This implicit affirmation of the multiplicity of truth is made more explicit by Augustine's situating these two truths in the order of things: he seems to place the truth of contemplation above the soul and the truth of true statements beneath the soul.¹⁰ On this reading, the truth of contemplation, being above the soul, is God; the truth of true statements, being beneath the soul, cannot be God. Augustine, then, distinguishes between two different truths and indicates that there is truth that is not God.¹¹

The preliminary conclusion we have drawn from consideration of these texts – that there are many truths – would seem to be established by the mere fact that, in his *Confessiones*, Augustine speaks of “truths” in the plural: he laments that he sought

⁸ #8: “*Aug.*: Ergo illud dico et sic definitio, nec vereor ne definitio mea ob hoc improbetur, quod nimis brevis est: nam verum mihi videtur esse id quod est. *Ratio*: Nihil ergo erit falsum, quia quidquid est, verum est” (PL 32, 889).

⁹ This is precisely how Robert Grosseteste will later interpret this and other texts of Augustine (see below, 153). See also Thomas Aquinas’ *De veritate*, Q. 1, a. 4, obj. 1.

¹⁰ See ch. 7: “Ut autem animus corpori, ita etiam veritas ipsi animo praeponenda est, ut eam non solum magis quam corpus, sed etiam magis quam se ipsum appetat animus” (PL 40, 496). See also ch. 20: “Et tamen si quisquam proponeret sibi sic amandam veritatem non tantum quae in contemplando est, sed etiam in vero enuntiando, quod in suo quoque rerum genere verum est; et non aliter proferendam ore corporis sententiam, quam in animo concepta atque conspecta est; ut fidei veridicam pulchritudinem non solum auro, et argento, et gemmis, et amoenis, praediis, sed et ipsi universae temporali vitae omnique corporis bono praeponeret; nescio utrum sapienter a quoquam errare diceretur” (PL 40, 515).

¹¹ Once again, Robert Grosseteste will enlist this text as support for the view that Augustine holds that there is some truth other than the Highest Truth (see below, 153-54 and 189 for discussion of Grosseteste’s use of this text).

“pleasures, sublimities, and truths [*veritates*]” in creatures rather than in God.¹² Admittedly, in other passages in which Augustine speaks of “truths” in the plural he qualifies the sense in which such “truths” are many.¹³ However, in this passage from his *Confessiones* Augustine makes no such qualification, and so it seems justifiable to consider this passage as a confirmation of what we have concluded from other passages of Augustine, viz., that there are many truths.

It would seem, then, that Augustine affirms the existence of many truths. Nevertheless, this conclusion faces several interpretive difficulties. In the passages heretofore considered, and in other passages dealing with the same topic, Augustine almost always speaks of true things (*vera*) rather than truths (*veritates*). This, combined with the fact that Augustine affirms the unicity of Truth in many other passages (and quite often even in the selfsame passages!), indicates that whether Augustine recognizes the existence of many truths, and if so to what extent, must be determined only after we come to discuss passages in which he affirms the unicity of Truth, passages which will illuminate those we have already considered.

A further examination of the passages in which Augustine seems to speak of many truths (or, at least, of many true things), especially of those passages that are *loci classici*, reveals another crucial fact: in nearly every such passage Augustine begins with this seeming recognition of the existence of truths but concludes from this to the existence of Truth, affirming that the recognition of these true things demands recognition of the existence of

¹² Bk. I, ch. 20, #31: “Hoc enim peccabam, quod non in ipso, sed in creaturis eius me atque ceteris voluptates, sublimitates, veritates quaerebam, . . .” (CCSL 27, 17.13-15).

¹³ See, for example, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, #11, discussed below, 16-17.

one Truth. It is in looking at these passages from this overarching perspective that we can begin to reconcile and synthesize the seemingly contradictory positions regarding the number of truth. We turn, then, to the many passages in which Augustine concludes (or merely affirms) that there is but one Truth.

B. The Unicity of Truth in Augustine

We begin with the lengthy treatment of knowledge, truth, and illumination found in Augustine's *De libero arbitrio*.¹⁴ The question to which Evodius seeks an answer in Book Two of this work is the following: Why did God give free choice of the will to man, without which we would be unable to sin? In seeking the answer, Augustine formulates an order of inquiry, according to which the first question requiring an answer is how it is manifest that God exists. It is in answering this question that Augustine and Evodius discuss, at some length, thought and its objects, truth, and the conditions of knowledge.

Augustine takes, as the starting point of the inquiry, indubitable truths: I exist, I am alive (I have bodily senses and an interior sense), I understand (I have reason).¹⁵ As the discussion unfolds, a hierarchy of existents is laid out: in ascending order, that which exists, that which is alive, and that which understands. The beings higher in this hierarchy judge the

¹⁴ The passages in which Augustine affirms the unicity of Truth are so numerous that we will present in detail only those that are *loci classici*, while employing "lesser" passages merely as confirming our findings with regard to the *loci classici*.

¹⁵ Ch. 3. "Aug. . . . Quare prius abs te quaero, ut de manifestissimis capiamus exordium, utrum tu ipse sis. An fortasse tu metuis ne in hac interrogatione fallaris? Cum utique si non esses falli omnino non posses. Evod. Perge potius ad cetera. A. Ergo quoniam manifestum est esse te nec tibi aliter manifestum esset nisi viveres, id quoque manifestum est, vivere te. Intellegisne duo ista esse verissima? E. Prorsus intellego. A. Ergo etiam hoc tertium manifestum est, hoc est intellegere te. E. Manifestum" (CCSL 29, 239-40.6-17).

lower; beings with reason are, at this point, highest in the hierarchy, so that nothing judges them, but rather they judge everything else. In order to manifest the existence of God, it is necessary therefore to show that there is a being that is higher than reason but also that has no superior: an eternal, unchangeable being.¹⁶ Augustine shows the existence of such a being by appealing to the fact that the objects of our faculties, unlike the faculties themselves, are common to all, most especially the objects of thought. Now among these objects of thought are included the rules of number and the rules of wisdom, which are common to all and unchangeably true.¹⁷ Augustine concludes from this that there is an “unchangeable truth” (*incommutabilis veritas*), containing “everything that is unchangeably true” (*omnia quae incommutabiliter vera sunt*), and that this truth is present to all who discern what is unchangeably true.¹⁸ This truth is neither inferior nor equal to our minds: we do not judge this truth but rather we judge by it (according to it); furthermore, it is immutable, whereas our minds are mutable. Therefore, this truth is higher than our minds. It is wisdom, since in it the highest good is known and acquired. It is, in fact, God Himself.¹⁹ This Truth is eternally

¹⁶ Ch. 6. “*Aug.* . . . Quae si nullo adhibito corporis instrumento neque per tactum neque per gustatum neque per olfactum neque per aures neque per oculos neque per ullum sensum se inferiorem, sed per se ipsam cernit aeternum aliquid et incommutabile, simul et se ipsam inferiorem et illum oportet deum suum esse fateatur. *E.* Hunc plane fatebor deum quo nihil superius esse constiterit. *A.* Bene habet. Nam mihi satis erit ostendere esse aliquid huius modi quod aut fateberis deum esse, aut si aliquid supra est, eum ipsum deum esse concedes. Quare sive supra sit aliquid sive non sit, manifestum erit deum esse, cum ego, quod promisi, esse supra rationem eodem ipso adiuvante monstravero” (*CCSL* 29, 246-47.42-55).

¹⁷ Ch. 11. “*Aug.* . . . Tantum illud adtende, quod et quaestioni quam suscepimus satis est et humilioribus etiam mentibus quales sumus sese manifestat, quia, etsi clarum nobis esse non potest utrum in sapientia vel ex sapientia numerus an ipsa sapientia ex numero an in numero sit an utrumque nomen unius rei possit ostendi, illud certe manifestum est utrumque verum esse et incommutabiliter verum” (*CCSL* 29, 259.70-76).

¹⁸ Ch. 12. “*Aug.* . . . Quapropter nullo modo negaveris esse incommutabilem veritatem, haec omnia quae incommutabiliter vera sunt continentem, quam non possis dicere tuam vel meam vel cuiusquam hominis, sed omnibus incommutabilia vera cernentibus tamquam miris modis secretum et publicum lumen praesto esse ac se praebere communiter” (*CCSL* 29, 259-60.1-6).

¹⁹ Ch. 13. “*Aug.* . . . Immo vero quoniam in veritate cognoscitur et tenetur summum bonum eaque veritas sapientia est, cernamus in ea teneamusque summum bonum eoque perfruamur. Beatus est quippe qui fruatur

present to all who turn toward It: It is the inner Teacher, Which no one judges and apart from Which no one judges rightly.²⁰ For Augustine, then, the truth of these rules of number and of wisdom, far from being a mere quality of these rules, is a subsisting truth, or rather, the subsisting Truth.

Augustine's argument begins with something we know to be true (our own existence), moves to the existence of unchangeably true rules or laws (mathematical and moral), and argues from these to the existence of an unchangeable Truth containing everything true. One of the fundamental principles driving the argument is only implicit here, though it is explicit in several other passages in the Augustinian corpus,²¹ viz., everything that is true is true by truth. For Augustine, the fact that something is true demands, as its sufficient cause, the existence of truth, by which that thing is true. Augustine is, indeed, careful to distinguish a true thing (*verum*) from truth (*veritas*): in the passage we have just presented (*De libero arbitrio* II), for example, Augustine refers to the rules/laws of number and of wisdom as "*vera*," never as "*veritates*." It is by truth (*veritas*) that all true things (*vera*) are true. Therefore, the existence of true things demands the existence of truth, through which, by participation, true things are true and true things are (all things being true insofar as they have being). In this sense, true propositions and true things are not truths, strictly speaking, but are rather, by virtue of their participating in truth, true things. This is

summo bono. . . . Haec est libertas nostra, cum isti subdimur veritati; et ipse est deus noster qui nos liberat a morte, id est a condicione peccati" (*CCSL* 29, 261-62.32-35 and 262.48-50).

²⁰ Ch. 14. "Aug. . . . De toto mundo ad se conversis qui diligunt eam omnibus proxima est, omnibus sempiterna, nullo loco est nusquam deest, foris admonet intus docet, cernentes se commutat omnes in melius, a nullo in deterius commutatur, nullus de illa iudicat nullus sine illa iudicat bene" (*CCSL* 29, 263.46-51).

²¹ See *Soliloquiorum* 1.1, 1.15, and 2.10; *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, #1; *De vera religione* 36.66-68.

because, as the aforementioned Augustinian principle implies (and in some passages Augustine states this explicitly), truth is a reality, not merely a mental construct or a relation of correspondence between two realities: it is a subsisting reality and, in fact, the subsisting Reality. Truth, in the proper sense of that word, is ontological. This is why Charles Boyer understands Augustine to be identifying truth with the intelligibles, with the intelligible world, i.e., that which truly exists, which as such must exist in itself and thus must hold the highest place in its own order, and which Augustine discovers, at the end of his reasonings, is the highest reality, God Himself.²² This “intelligible world” is, in the final analysis, the divine Ideas, which are identified with God, or, more specifically, with the Word of the Father.²³

The way in which the argument in *De libero arbitrio* II arrives at God as Truth (rather than just arriving at the existence of a subsisting truth) depends upon a certain understanding of truth, and this constitutes a second fundamental principle of the argument. Truth has three characteristics: necessity, immutability, and eternity.²⁴ The laws of mathematics and the rules of wisdom are incorruptible: they are eternally and unchangeably true.²⁵ As such, and as that in accordance with which our mind judges things, the truth of these laws and rules is higher than our minds, since our minds are variable whereas this truth is unchangeable. It is the immutability of truth, as well as its necessity and eternity (which flow from

²² *L'idée de vérité*, 66-86.

²³ *Ibid.*, 87-97.

²⁴ Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, trans. L.E.M. Lynch (New York: Random House: 1967), 16.

²⁵ *De libero arbitrio*, II.10.29. “Aug. . . . Quam ergo verae atque incommutabiles sunt regulae numerorum, quorum rationem atque veritatem incommutabiliter atque communiter omnibus eam cernentibus praesto esse dixisti, tam sunt verae atque incommutabiles regulae sapientiae, . . .” (CCSL 29, 257.83-87).

immutability²⁶), that compel Augustine to identify truth with God, for God alone is immutable, necessary, and eternal.

Founded upon these two principles – that everything true is true by truth and that truth is necessary, immutable, and eternal – the argument Augustine puts forward in *De libero arbitrio* II constitutes a movement towards unity, from the diversity of the senses and their objects to the diversity of minds to the community of objects of thought (true things) to the one Truth “containing all things that are unchangeably true.”²⁷ In short, here as in other passages, Augustine moves from the diversity of true things to the unity of Truth.

Another passage in which Augustine’s line of thought progresses from the diversity of true things to the unity of Truth can be found in his *De vera religione*. In chapter thirty of this work, Augustine begins with the multiplicity and imperfection of sensible objects, as falling short of true equality, similarity, and unity. Our knowledge of these imperfections of sensible things – our judgment that these things, while sharing in these qualities, do so in a very limited way and therefore are imperfect – indicates that our minds do indeed see perfect equality, similarity, and unity.²⁸ Furthermore, it is in accordance with perfect equality, similarity, and unity that we judge of the beauty of sensible objects: therefore, since this law of all the arts is altogether unchangeable while our minds are subject to error, this law of all

²⁶ Boyer, *L’idée de vérité*, 114-17.

²⁷ Ch. 12, #33 (see above, 11n18).

²⁸ #55. “. . . , quis est, qui summam aequalitatem vel similitudinem in corporibus inveniatur audeatque dicere, cum diligenter consideraverit, quodlibet corpus vere ac simpliciter unum esse, . . . ? Porro ipsa vera aequalitas ac similitudo atque ipsa vera et prima unitas non oculis carnis neque ullo tali sensu, sed mente intellecta conspicitur. Unde enim qualiscumque in corporibus appetitur aequalitas aut unde convinceretur longe plurimum differre a perfecta, nisi ea quae perfecta est mente videretur? Si tamen, quae facta non est, perfecta dicenda est” (CCSL 32, 223.33-36 and 39-45).

the arts – i.e., truth – is above our minds.²⁹ Augustine immediately identifies this unchangeable law – truth – with God, Whom we cannot judge but by Whom alone we judge lower things.³⁰ Further on in this discussion, Augustine specifies that this Truth is Christ the Word, Who is, as Truth, the form of all true things because it is by Truth that everything true is true.³¹ Once again, we see the progression of Augustine’s thought, from the diversity of true things – imperfect, sensible objects sharing in but falling short of equality, similarity, and unity – to the unity of the Truth whereby these things are true – God Himself as the law of all the arts.

Equally explicit identifications of truth with God are found in the *Soliloquiorum* and in the *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*. In his *Soliloquiorum*, Book One, chapter one, Augustine affirms that God is the Truth in, by, and through Whom all true things are true.³² Later in this same work, Augustine, in the context of a discussion of true and false, characterizes the true Truth as that from which everything true receives its name, i.e., that by

²⁹ #56. “. . . , illa aequalitas et unitas menti tantummodo cognita, secundum quam de corporea pulchritudine sensu internuntio iudicatur, nec loco tumida est nec instabilis tempore. . . . Haec autem lex omnium artium cum sit omnino incommutabilis, mens vero humana, cui talem legem videre concessum est, mutabilitatem pati possit erroris, satis apparet supra mentem nostram esse legem, quae veritas dicitur” (*CCSL* 32, 223.48-51 and 224.73-77).

³⁰ Ch. 31, #57. “Nec iam illud ambigendum est incommutabilem naturam, quae supra rationalem animam sit, deum esse . . . Itaque cum se anima sentiat nec corporum speciem motumque iudicare secundum se ipsam, simul oportet agnoscat praestare suam naturam ei naturae de qua iudicat, praestare autem sibi eam naturam, secundum quam iudicat et de qua iudicare nullo modo potest” (*CCSL* 32, 224.1-2 and 6-10).

³¹ Ch. 36, #66. “Et haec est veritas et verbum in principio et verbum deus apud deum. . . . Haec autem ipsa eius similitudo et ideo veritas. Ut enim veritate sunt vera quae vera sunt, ita similitudine similia sunt quaecumque similia. Ut ergo veritas forma verorum est, . . .” (*CCSL* 32, 230.11-12 and 231.18-21). This is also clearly stated in Augustine’s *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: “Sola veritas facit beatos, ex qua vera sunt omnia” (*Aurelii Augustini Opera*, vol. 38, *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* [Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1956], Psalm 4, p. 15, #3, 6-7; hereafter, *CCSL* 38, #4.15.3.6-7). See also *De immortalitate animae*, chs. 11-12.

³² #3: “Aug.: . . . Te invoco, Deus veritas, in quo et a quo et per quem vera sunt, quae vera sunt omnia” (*PL* 32, 870).

which all things are true.³³ In *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Questions One, Nine, Fourteen, and Fifty-Four, Augustine identifies God as Truth.³⁴

A final illustration of our point here can be found in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Augustine comments on these words of Psalm Eleven, verse two: "For truths are decayed from among the sons of men." Interpreting this verse in light of the preceding one – in which the psalmist laments the lack of holy men – Augustine understands "truths" here in a theological context: "That Truth is one, by which holy souls are illuminated; but since there are many souls, many truths can be said to be in them, just as from one face many images appear in mirrors."³⁵ Truth, then, is fundamentally one – God alone is Truth – but it is many by participation, because Truth illuminates souls in such a way as to make it possible to speak of many truths. This is the qualification, spoken of above,³⁶ which Augustine attaches to his use of the word "truth" in the plural ("*veritates*"). It is a significant qualification: forced to interpret the words of the Psalmist, Augustine goes so far as to affirm that truth is one and can be said to be many, and this only in a qualified sense. This qualification is significant in a further sense, for of the very, very few instances in his

³³ #18: "*Ratio: . . . veritatem, a qua denominatur omne quod verum quoquo modo nominatur?*" (PL 32, 893). #21: "*Ratio: . . . Quisquamne igitur mirum putabit, si ea qua vera sunt omnia, per se ipsa et in seipsa vera sit veritas?*" (PL 32, 895).

³⁴ Question 1: "Est autem veritas deus" (*Aurelii Augustini Opera*, vol. 44A, *Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina* [Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 1975], I, 11, 8; hereafter, *CCSL* 44A, I.11.8). Question 9: "Quamobrem saluberrime admonemur averti ab hoc mundo, qui profecto corporeus est et sensibilis, et ad deum, id est veritatem quae intellectu et interiore mente capitur, . . . tota alacritate converti" (*CCSL* 44A, IX.17.24-26 and 28). Question 14: ". . . ; est autem veritas Christus" (*CCSL* 44A, XIV.20.2). Question 54: "Nec quidquam est melius rationali anima nisi deus. Cum igitur intellegit aliquid quod semper eodem modo sese habet, ipsum sine dubio intellegit. Haec autem est ipsa veritas. Cui quia intellegendo rationalis anima iungitur, et hoc bonum est animae, recte accipitur id esse quod dictum est: *Mihi autem adhaerere deo bonum est*" (*CCSL* 44A, LIV.93.34-40).

³⁵ "Veritas una est, qua illustrantur animae sanctae; sed quoniam multae sunt animae, in ipsis multae veritates dici possunt, sicut ab una facie multae in speculis imagines apparent" (*CCSL* 38, #11.82.2.4-7).

³⁶ See above, 9.

writings in which Augustine uses the word “truths” (“*veritates*,” in whatever case in the plural), all save one must be understood to fall under this qualification, for all save one are either quotations from or references to this passage from Psalm Eleven. The sole instance in his entire corpus in which Augustine uses the word “truths,” outside (ostensibly) the scope of this qualification, is the passage from the *Confessiones* discussed above. Thus, only once in all his writings does Augustine of his own accord (i.e., apart from qualifying the words of another) use the word “*veritas*” in the plural. This fact, coupled with Augustine’s consistent identification of God with Truth, leads us to interpret this solitary passage from the *Confessiones* in such a way that it does not undermine what Augustine says consistently and explicitly throughout his writings. It is possible that Augustine is speaking loosely in this passage, but this is a rather unsatisfactory interpretation. It is more likely that Augustine understands even this passage as subject to the qualification he makes in his discussion of Psalm Eleven, verse two, according to the following reasoning. In this passage from the *Confessiones*, Augustine is reprimanding himself for having sought “pleasures, sublimities, and truths” in created things rather than in God, the implication being that God is the source and summit of such things as pleasure, sublimity, and truth. This dovetails nicely with the qualification Augustine made with regard to the words of Psalm Eleven: God is Truth itself, and Truth is one, properly speaking, but insofar as It illuminates souls It can be said to be many. One can seek truths in creatures, then, but only insofar as creatures, reflecting the one Truth, can be said to have truths within them: properly speaking, however, there is only one Truth. In this way, we can conclude that, in those extremely rare cases in which Augustine uses the word “*veritas*” in the plural, he means it in a qualified sense only.

Given, then, Augustine's explicit and constant identification of God with Truth and his consistent reference to true things as "*vera*" rather than "*veritates*," we must inquire into the relationship between Truth and true things. Such an inquiry requires delving into Augustine's theory of illumination, for this relationship between Truth and true things is central to and inseparable from Augustine's theory of illumination. Therefore, we must lay out Augustine's account of illumination so far as it clarifies for us his understanding of truth or, more specifically, the relationship between Truth and true things. In order to accomplish this, we will examine and discuss only the most important of those texts in which Augustine affirms and discusses divine illumination, for it would be superfluous, particularly for our present purposes, to treat of all the many texts on this subject.³⁷

We have already seen the argument of Augustine in *De libero arbitrio* II that leads to his identification of God as Truth. Present in this discussion is an account of illumination that, while more developed in other texts, provides some insight into the relationship between Truth and those things that are unchangeably true. Upon concluding that there is an unchangeable Truth, Augustine states that this Truth contains everything that is unchangeably true and that It is present to all who discern what is unchangeably true, present as a kind of light at once public and secret.³⁸ A little later, Augustine speaks of the Truth "in which we behold many things."³⁹ Accordingly, it is "in" this Truth, i.e., in God, as in an intelligible light, that we see what is unchangeably true (i.e., true things). At this point,

³⁷ To name but a few of these texts: *De vera religione* 31.57-58 (discussed above, 14-15); *Soliloquiorum* I.6 and I.8; *Confessiones* XII.25.34-35; *De Trinitate* XII.15.24; *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, #54; *Retractationes* I.4.4.

³⁸ Ch. 12. See above, 11n18.

³⁹ Ch. 12. "*Aug.* Hanc ergo veritatem de qua iam diu loquimur et in qua tam multa conspiciamus, . . ." (CCSL 29, 260.21-22).

Augustine draws upon Plato's cave allegory to illustrate his meaning: "When the mind has looked upon many true and unchangeable things with firm reason, it turns to that Truth itself by which all those true and unchangeable things are made known, . . . [the Truth] in which it enjoys all at once all these things."⁴⁰ Augustine is not merely saying here that the Truth illuminates all true things, making them intelligible to the mind; he is also saying that these true things are somehow contained within the Truth. This is, in a nutshell, Augustine's theory of the Divine Ideas, which he discusses at greater length elsewhere and which we will address shortly.

Augustine's treatment of illumination in *De magistro* is a little more specific than that in *De libero arbitrio* II. The immediate context for his discussion of illumination is the thesis, argued for at some length, that learning does not take place by words (even those of a "teacher"), since words, as signs, follow upon rather than cause experience of the thing signified.⁴¹ Instead, learning – i.e., coming to understand things – comes about through consulting the inner Truth presiding within and ruling over our minds; words perhaps serve to stir us to consult this Truth, but they do no more than this.⁴² This Truth presiding within our minds is Christ, who teaches us interiorly: just as we consult light, the material elements, bodies, and our senses as regards sensible things, so we consult the Truth, through reason, to know intelligible things.⁴³ Augustine uses the language of illumination to describe this

⁴⁰ Ch. 13. "Aug. . . . , cum multa vera et incommutabilia certa ratione conspexerit, diriget in ipsam veritatem qua cuncta monstrantur, . . . in illa simul omnibus fruitur" (CCSL 29, 262.43-46).

⁴¹ See Chapter 10, section #33 (10.33) ff.

⁴² 11.38: "De universis autem, quae intellegimus, non loquentem, qui personat foris, sed intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus veritatem, verbis fortasse ut consulamus admoniti" (CCSL 29, 195-96.44-46).

⁴³ 11.38 – 12.39: "Ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus, id est incommutabilis dei virtus atque sempiterna sapientia, quam quidem omnis rationalis anima consulit, . . . Quod

“consultation”: those things that we understand, that we know, we “behold immediately in that inner light of Truth by which the inner man is enlightened,” for those true things are made manifest by God disclosing them interiorly.⁴⁴ Now, despite the predominance of metaphor and the lack of clarification regarding this “consultation” or “illumination,” we can draw out from the text the elements involved, which will provide the groundwork for determining the relationship between Truth and true things. First, Augustine asserts the role of reason and intellect in learning: it is through reason that we consult the Truth, and it is by intellectual contemplation (Augustine uses the very word: *contemplatione*) that we know true things (*vera*).⁴⁵ Second, the things known themselves are, of course, central to Augustine’s account. The things known are made manifest interiorly when revealed by God, i.e., when illuminated by the inner light of Truth. The third element in the account is God (Christ) as Truth. Christ – the inner Truth, common and present to all – teaches interiorly by making manifest the things to be known: it is this which, as Augustine says in *De libero arbitrio* II, explains the common understanding of truths that is a fact of human existence.⁴⁶ These last two elements of Augustine’s account of illumination – the true things known and God the

si et de coloribus lucem et de ceteris, quae per corpus sentimus, elementa huius mundi eademque corpora quae sentimus sensusque ipsos, quibus tamquam interpretibus ad talia noscenda mens utitur, de his autem, quae intelleguntur, interiorem veritatem ratione consulimus, . . .” (*CCSL* 29, 195-96.46-50 and 1-5).

⁴⁴ 12.40: “Cum vero de his agitur, quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur, quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce veritatis, qua ipse, qui dicitur homo interior, illustratur et fruitur; . . . Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo vera dicens vera intuentem; docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis; . . .” (*CCSL* 29, 197.30-33 and 198.35-37).

⁴⁵ This point is of great importance in arriving at a correct understanding of Augustine’s epistemology. Though this subject is only indirectly related to our present purposes, one comment here is fitting: whether or not we take this consultation of Truth and this intellectual contemplation as descriptions of one and the same mental event (and it seems that we must), nevertheless Augustine is giving no mere lip-service to man’s intellectual faculties.

⁴⁶ See Gilson, *Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 73-77.

Truth illuminating us – are, of course, most important for our present purposes, for we have been attempting to ascertain the relationship between true things and Truth.

One final facet of Augustine’s thought that clarifies his understanding of how these two elements – true things and Truth – are related is his account of the divine Ideas. We must therefore briefly examine Augustine’s theory of the divine Ideas, without, however, becoming entangled in the controversy surrounding the role of the divine Ideas in Augustine’s epistemology, which, although philosophically intriguing, falls outside the scope of the present inquiry.

Question 46 of Augustine’s *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* is entitled “On Ideas,” and it both explains in summary fashion the nature of the divine Ideas and argues for their existence. The divine Ideas, Augustine says, are “certain stable and unchanging forms or reasons of things,” contained in the divine Mind and therefore unformed and eternal.⁴⁷ Now because these Ideas are eternal and remain the same and unchanging, they are also true.⁴⁸ But what does it mean for these Ideas to be the forms or reasons of things? Augustine states that all corruptible things are formed by God according to these Ideas.⁴⁹ But this does not merely posit in things a similarity to the Ideas, for Augustine affirms that whatever exists, in whatever manner it exists, does so by participation in the Ideas.⁵⁰ Given this, and given

⁴⁷ #2: “Sunt namque ideae principales quaedam formae vel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae ipsae formatae non sunt ac per hoc aeternae ac semper eodem modo sese habentes, quae divina intellegentia continentur” (CCSL 44A, XLVI.71.26-30).

⁴⁸ Ibid.: “Quod si hae rerum omnium creandarum creaturarumve rationes divina mente continentur, neque in divina mente quidquam nisi aeternum atque incommutabile potest esse, atque has rationes rerum principales appellat ideas Plato, non solum sunt ideae, sed ipsae verae sunt, quia aeternae sunt et eiusdem modi atque incommutabiles manent” (CCSL 44A, XLVI.72-73.57-62).

⁴⁹ Ibid.: “Et cum ipsae [viz., ideae] neque oriantur neque intereant, secundum eas tamen formari dicitur omne quod oriri et interire potest et omne quod oritur et interit” (CCSL 44A, XLVI.71.30-32).

⁵⁰ Ibid.: “Quarum participatione fit ut sit quidquid est, quoquo modo est” (CCSL 44A, XLVI.73.63-64).

Augustine's identification of truth and being,⁵¹ all things not only are, but also are true, by participation in the Ideas. We have seen already that, according to Augustine, things are true insofar as they participate in truth, and that God is truth.⁵² Therefore, this account of the Ideas requires, and thereby supports, what we have said above, viz., that the truth in which all true things participate in order to be true is God, assuming, of course, that the Ideas are to be identified with God. And in fact Augustine does identify the Ideas with God: the Ideas form one reality, viz., the divine Mind, and the divine Mind is the Word, the Wisdom, the Truth of the Father – the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.⁵³ This is the ultimate meaning of Augustine's unclear formulation, in *De libero arbitrio* II, that somehow true things are contained within ("in") the Truth. True things, because they are true by virtue of participating in the divine Ideas (i.e., by virtue of Truth), are, therefore, qua true, contained within the divine Mind. We must, therefore, consult this Truth, the divine Mind, in order to know true things.

Augustine's theory of the divine Ideas, then, specifies and thereby clarifies the relationship between true things and Truth: there is one Truth (*veritas*), and it is by participation in this one Truth – i.e., by participation in the divine Ideas that are identified with this Truth – that all true things (*vera*) are true. To the degree that things correspond to the divine Ideas they are true. Therefore, in order for the human mind to know that which is

⁵¹ See above, 7-8 and nn. 6-8.

⁵² In this regard, note in particular Question One of Augustine's *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, (referenced above, 16n34): "Omne verum a veritate verum est; . . . Non igitur, cum a veritate anima est, a se ipsa est. Est autem veritas deus" (CCSL 44A, I.11.1,7-8).

⁵³ For a discussion of this and for references to many passages in Augustine on this topic, see Boyer, *L'idée de vérité*, 89-97.

true, divine illumination is required, whereby we can ascertain the correspondence of the thing known to the standard of Truth, i.e., to its divine Idea.

C. Conclusion

Our investigation of the major, as well as some of the minor, texts of Augustine on truth leads us to conclude that, for Augustine, truth is one – God is Truth – and true things are true by participation in Truth Itself. Augustine’s constant reference to all true things other than God as *vera* rather than as *veritates*; his explicit identification, throughout his writings, of God with truth; his quite restrictive qualification of the way in which we can speak of many truths (*veritates*); his consistent *reductio* of true things (including mathematical and moral “truths”) into one Truth – all of these elements lead to the conclusion that truth is one, because they form an account of truth whose central thesis is that truth is a subsisting Reality that, unlike all other things, exists of and in itself.

In the next two chapters, we will examine the accounts of truth given by Anselm and Grosseteste. In this examination, we will find occasion to recall Augustine’s teaching on truth, since Augustine is the recognized authority for both Anselm and Grosseteste.

Having investigated and clarified Augustine’s position on the question of whether truth is one or many, we are now in a position to understand, appreciate, and evaluate the relative dependence of Anselm and Grosseteste on the teaching of their common master, the saintly Bishop of Hippo.

CHAPTER TWO

ANSELM'S ACCOUNT OF TRUTH AS ONE

Establishing an account of Anselm's understanding of truth is simpler than doing so with Augustine, for several reasons. First, Anselm's body of work is substantially smaller than Augustine's, so that there are fewer passages from which to cull. Second, Anselm is more systematic than Augustine: he addresses the question of truth in a work devoted entirely to that subject – *De veritate* – and his other treatments of the question of truth, arising organically within the context of systematic treatments of some philosophical or theological point, are more directly relatable to that point and more fully developed in themselves than Augustine's many passages on the topic of truth.

Given this, the primary focus of our current investigation will be Anselm's sole work devoted entirely to developing an account of truth – his *De veritate*. Those passages in other works that are pertinent to Anselm's understanding of truth will be considered, but under the methodological principle that the *De veritate* represents Anselm's governing, because most developed, account of truth. More concretely, this means that the relevant passages outside *De veritate* will be read in light of the treatment of truth in *De veritate*, and that any apparent incongruity between the two will be deemed a true conflict only after serious and exhaustive attempts to reconcile the two have failed.

The present explication of Anselm's account of truth is, of course, governed by the question we have set for ourselves, i.e., why Anselm concludes to the unicity of Truth whereas Grosseteste concludes to the multiplicity of truths. Thus, we are concerned ultimately not with explicating Anselm's account of truth in general (although such an

explication will have to be given) but with delineating the reasons for his concluding to Truth's unicity.

But before moving on to our investigation of Anselm's texts, we must first give an account of the secondary literature dealing with Anselm's account of truth. Here, as before, it must be pointed out that our immediate concern – the reasons/principles that lead Anselm to conclude that Truth is one – governs our review of the secondary literature. This means that those works of scholarship that deal, or deal more fully, with this thesis of Anselm, with which we are immediately concerned, will take pride of place, even if this means relegating to lesser roles larger or more widely-acclaimed scholarly works that deal with Anselm's notion of truth in general but deal only briefly or inadequately with Anselm's thesis that Truth is one.

A. Overview of the Secondary Literature

Anselm's writings dealing with truth, above all his *De veritate*, have occasioned a moderate amount of scholarship. However, only a small portion of this scholarship deals at any length with the question of the unicity of Truth, and even less of it elaborates upon Anselm's understanding of Truth as one with reference to Grosseteste. In the former group – scholarly works that treat at any length of the unicity of Truth in Anselm – belong four book-length works written by German scholars within the last fifty years,¹ one major article,² and a

¹ J. H. Maurer, "Wahrheit ist Richtigkeit und sonst – nichts?" (Ph.D. diss., University of Basel, 1966); Heinz Külling, *Wahrheit als Richtigkeit: Eine Untersuchung zur Schrift "De veritate" von Anselm von Canterbury*, vol. 50, *Basler und Berner Studien zur historischen und systematischen Theologie* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1984); Markus Enders, *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit: Die Theorie der Wahrheit bei Anselm von Canterbury*, vol. 64, *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte de Mittelalters* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1999); Bernd Goebel, *Rectitudo –*

few chapters that appear in books devoted to more general themes.³ In the latter group – scholarly works that expound upon Anselm’s understanding of the unicity of truth with reference to Grosseteste – only one work is to be found, and this an article, only recently published, in which the discussion of Anselm and Grosseteste is only part of a larger topic to which the article is devoted.⁴

The earliest of the book-length treatments of truth in Anselm – Johannes Huldrych Maurer’s *Wahrheit ist Richtigkeit und sonst – nichts?* (1966) – has as its central concern Anselm’s definition of truth as rectitude and the historico-logical sources of this definition. In his presentation of Anselm’s argument that Truth is one, Maurer identifies two extreme interpretations of Anselm’s conclusion, and suggests a way to overcome both extremes. In doing so, he lays down the principles that guide Anselm to his conclusion.⁵ Fundamentally, Maurer identifies the following governing principles: (1) the being-true, and thus “truth,” of a creature does not belong to it any more than its existence does and for the very reason that its existence does not; (2) truth in the created realm cannot be God Himself, for this would be pantheism. Given these principles, Anselm is led to conclude that truth, properly speaking, is identified with God, and is not to be located in the created realm but in the Rectitude (“ought-

Wahrheit und Freiheit bei Anselm von Canterbury: Eine philosophische Untersuchungen seines Denkansatzes, vol. 56, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001).

² Kurt Flasch, “Zum Begriff der Wahrheit bei Anselm von Canterbury,” *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 72 (1965): 322-52.

³ Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), Ch. 5; Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 204-21.

⁴ Timothy Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure,” in *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*, ed. Kurt Pritzl, O.P., Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 51 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 102-26.

⁵ Maurer, *Wahrheit ist Richtigkeit und sonst – nichts?*, 96-98.

claim”) that ontologically and temporally pre-exists and determines every true thing as such. According to Maurer, Anselm accomplishes this by examining the created realm and tracing each thing back to its “ought.”

In his *Wahrheit als Richtigkeit: Eine Untersuchung zur Schrift “De veritate” von Anselm von Canterbury* (1984), Heinz Külling, like J. H. Maurer, identifies the origin of all things in the Highest Truth (with regard both to their being and their function) as the reason impelling Anselm to conclude that Truth is one. In other words, the one Truth in all things is that fundamental Rectitude that determines the being and functions of all things and to which all things, therefore, correspond. Nevertheless, at the end of his discussion of the unicity of Truth, Külling still speaks of the truth of individual things, which truth consists in the orientation of the thing to the Highest Rectitude, so that the unicity of Truth consists in the grounding of the truths of individual things in the Highest Truth by way of a relationship of orientation and participation.⁶

Among the book-length works on Anselm’s theory of truth, Markus Enders’s 1999 *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit: Die Theorie der Wahrheit bei Anselm von Canterbury* is the most complete account of Anselm’s argument for the unicity of Truth. Enders argues that Anselm’s argument for the unicity of Truth begs the question, because he transfers the requirements of the Absolute Rectitude onto the rectitudes of individual beings, thereby assuming that the rectitude of individual things (rectitude of adequation) is identical with the Absolute Rectitude (rectitude of identity). According to Enders, Anselm makes this assumption on the basis of both his definition of truth and the Boethian axiom that things whose definitions are the same are substantially identical, with the following train of thought:

⁶ Külling, *Wahrheit als Richtigkeit*, 274-80.

if all “truths” (the truth of every truth-bearer or locus of truth) are “rectitudes perceptible to the mind alone,” and if God is the Highest Truth, and if all truths are substantially identical, then the “truths” of individual truth-bearers are identical with the Highest Truth.⁷ On Enders’s reading of Anselm, then, God is both the Pure Ought (Rectitude) and the fulfillment of the ought on the part of finite truth-bearers (finite true beings) and their actions.⁸ This is certainly a radical interpretation, one that will have to be visited at more length later in this chapter.

Bernd Goebel’s *Rectitudo: Wahrheit und Freiheit bei Anselm von Canterbury*, the most recently published book to address Anselm’s understanding of truth, understands Anselm’s project as one of returning to the traditional, Augustinian notion of ontological truth by confronting the Aristotelian notion of logical truth from the Augustinian perspective, i.e., the perspective of ontological truth. It is this perspective that enables Anselm to avoid a purely “realist” understanding of truth, all the while maintaining the “realist concern,” in his fundamentally “theologico-idealist” account.⁹ Anselm, says Goebel, fashions an account of truth based on a connection of exemplar causality that obtains both in the order of being and in the order of knowledge: the Highest Truth grounds, via exemplar causality, ontological truth, which itself is the cause of logical truth; and it is through participation in the Highest Truth that the mind has a conceptual apriori, which allows it to reach an objective reality.¹⁰ Most importantly for our purposes, however, Goebel spends very little time explicating

⁷ Enders, *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 546-50.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 551.

⁹ Goebel, *Wahrheit und Freiheit*, 189-90.

¹⁰ See especially 192-97, 200-04, and 207.

Anselm's argument for the unicity of Truth; therefore, although in our discussions of Chapters 2 and 10 of *De veritate* we will address aspects of Gobel's interpretation, for reasons which will become apparent, in our elaboration of the Chapter 13 argument for the unicity of truth we will not find much occasion to attend to Goebel's presentation of Anselm.

The scholarship that addresses, at some length, the question of the unicity of Truth in Anselm (but without reference to Grosseteste's account) includes – beyond the four book-length treatments just discussed – Kurt Flasch's influential 1965 article on Anselm's concept of truth. Flasch's interpretation, reprised in many of its aspects by Goebel, is that Anselm's theory of truth is "idealist-transcendental" (or, as he also says, "transcendental-subjective"): according to Flasch, Anselm transcends and ultimately abandons the Aristotelian/Boethian understanding of (logical) truth in identifying one "eidetic-teleological-ethical" rectitude as the condition of "logical truth."¹¹ Flasch claims that it is Anselm's rejection of a realist understanding of truth, and his embracing of an idealist understanding, that requires him to reject the multiplicity of truth (because this follows from a realist understanding) and to embrace the unicity of Truth (as a necessary element in his idealist account of truth).¹² But, according to Flasch, the ultimate ground for this rejection of the realist understanding of truth and embracing of an idealist-transcendental understanding of truth is Anselm's metaphysics of participation. Because it is a powerful and influential account of truth in Anselm, and because we will agree with several of its major claims and disagree with others, Flasch's interpretation of Anselm will be examined at some length in our presentation, examination, and interpretation of *De veritate*.

¹¹ Flasch, "Zum Begriff," 328-29 and 344.

¹² *Ibid.*, 337-40.

More succinct in their treatment are two pieces that constitute chapters of books devoted to Anselm: Jasper Hopkins's discussion of Anselm's understanding of truth, found in his *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, and Sandra Visser's and Thomas Williams's co-authored article "Anselm on Truth." Hopkins states that it is Anselm's definition of truth as something immaterial that makes possible his conclusion that Truth is one.¹³ Visser and Williams likewise point to Anselm's definition as the crucial step in his argument for the unicity of Truth. However, Visser and Williams identify the genus – "rectitude" – rather than the specific difference, as Hopkins did – "perceptible to the mind alone" – as the decisive factor. They describe Anselm's project as one of assimilating "all the various manifestations of truth . . . to each other and, in the end, to the supreme Truth."¹⁴ This "assimilation" culminates, for Anselm, in affirming the strict numerical identity of Truth, rather than merely affirming the Supreme Truth as the highest degree of truth.¹⁵

The only work that examines Anselm's thesis of the unicity of Truth with reference to Grosseteste is Timothy Noone's recently published article: "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure." Noone's thesis is that the accounts of truth of Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure are indebted to, and are meant to incorporate, both the biblical doctrine of creation (especially as it is understood and developed by Augustine) and the ancient pagan understanding of truth. Anselm's conclusion that Truth is one is indebted to Augustine's insistence that the only necessary and eternal being is God, so that if truth is necessary and eternal (and Anselm shows it to be), truth must

¹³ Hopkins, *A Companion*, 137.

¹⁴ Visser and Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 205.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 218.

be identified with God.¹⁶ Noone points out the difficulties in Anselm's account: early in *De veritate* Anselm emphasized that the truth of a true thing belongs to that thing and that the truth of the essences of things causes (albeit as a secondary cause) the truth of speech and thought, whereas at the end of *De veritate* Anselm has made the truth of true things a mere "placeholder" for the one, Highest Truth. According to Noone, it is this inherent tension, present in Anselm's account, that Grosseteste is trying to resolve in his own *De veritate*.¹⁷ So, despite the brevity of Noone's treatment of Anselm, his essay has the singular merit, relative to our present purpose, of examining Anselm's position in light of Grosseteste's own, later treatment of the same issue.

B. Truth in Anselm's *Monologion*

Having reviewed the relevant secondary literature, we must now examine the texts of Anselm in which he develops his account of truth. Pre-eminent in this regard, of course, is Anselm's *De veritate*: it is his only work devoted to the question of truth. But as the *De veritate* itself indicates, Anselm's earlier *Monologion* contains passages that are significant for Anselm's account of truth. Therefore, prior to our treatment of *De veritate*, we will examine the relevant passages from the *Monologion*. Now, although the question of truth does, indeed, arise in writings of Anselm other than these two, such passages are either very brief or oblique in nature or they merely repeat what Anselm says in the *Monologion* or in *De veritate*. Therefore, while we will, when appropriate, address such passages from other

¹⁶ Noone, "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility," 102-04.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 112-14.

works of Anselm, this will be incorporated into our examination of the two above-mentioned works.

Famous as a meditation on the divine essence that makes no recourse to Scripture but rather relies on reason alone, Anselm's *Monologion* (1075-1076)¹⁸ includes a discussion of the eternity of truth and also contains several passages vitally important for understanding his later *De veritate*, for they provide a detailed explication of the metaphysical framework within which important passages of the *De veritate* operate.

Having shown in the opening chapters of the *Monologion* that there is a Supreme Being who alone exists through Himself, and that all other beings exist through Him and from Him, Anselm proceeds to explain the relationship that obtains between this Supreme Being and all other, created beings. In Chapter 7, Anselm distinguishes two possible meanings of the following statement: "All things exist through (*per*) the Supreme Nature."¹⁹ Rejecting the meaning according to which things exist through the Supreme Nature as through their matter, Anselm embraces that which remains: all things exist through the Supreme Nature as having been made by Him.²⁰ Here, Anselm understands the existence of all things through the Supreme Nature as equatable with the fact that He made them. But the mere fact of being made by the Supreme Nature does not exhaust the nature of the relationship between the Supreme Nature and all other beings: Anselm shows, in Chapter 9 and in Chapters 13 and 14, that there are two other elements in this relationship. First, since

¹⁸ *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), "Chronology," xii.

¹⁹ "[O]mnia alia sint per illam" (*S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, ed. F.S. Schmitt [Stuttgart –Bad Cannstatt: Verlag, 1968], p. 20, line 21; hereafter, Schmitt I, 20.21).

²⁰ "Restat nunc de rerum earum universitate, quae per aliud sunt, discutere, quomodo sint per summam substantiam: utrum quia ipsa fecit universa, aut quia materia fuit universorum" (Schmitt I, 20.22-24).

creation (for this “making” on the part of the Supreme Nature is *ex nihilo*, and thus “creation”) by an intelligent being pre-supposes the existence of a form or model in the mind of the creator, there are in the mind of the creator models of all created things (“divine ideas”),²¹ so that all created things are whatever they are only through their model in the mind of the creator.²² Second, by the same argument that showed all things other than the Supreme Nature to exist through Him, Anselm shows that “nothing persists except through His conserving presence”²³ and that, therefore, the Supreme Nature is everywhere, existing through and in all things, supporting while transcending them, encompassing while penetrating them.²⁴ For Anselm, then, all things other than the Supreme Nature exist through Him, from Him, and in Him;²⁵ more precisely, all things are created by Him, are what they are only through the model pre-existing in His mind, and are preserved in their existence through His conserving presence (so that, by His conserving presence, He is everywhere).

Later in the *Monologion*, after his famous discussion of the eternity of truth, Anselm elaborates further upon this relationship between the Supreme Nature and all other – i.e., created – beings. In Chapter 31, Anselm examines the relationship that obtains between the Word of the Supreme Truth and created things. Words, Anselm says, are likenesses of the things they name and are true insofar as they imitate those things. But if the Word is a true

²¹ “Nullo namque pacto fieri potest aliquid rationabiliter ab aliquo, nisi in facientis ratione praecedat aliquod rei faciendae quasi exemplum, sive aptius dicitur forma, vel similitudo, aut regula” (Schmitt I, 24.12-14).

²² “Quapropter ea quae per illam creata sunt, omnino non sunt aliquid quod non sunt per illam; quae vero fiunt per istam, penitus non essent, nisi essent aliquid quod non sunt per ipsam” (Schmitt I, 26.20-23).

²³ “. . . , ita nihil vigeat nisi per eiusdem servatricem praesentiam” (Schmitt I, 27.14-15).

²⁴ “. . . : liquet quoniam ipsa est, quae cuncta alia portat et superat, claudit et penetrat” (Schmitt I, 27.23-24).

²⁵ See *Proslogion*, ch. 14: “Quanta namque est lux illa, de qua micat omne verum quod rationali menti lucet! Quam ampla est illa veritas, in qua est omne quod verum est, et extra quam non nisi nihil et falsum est!” (Schmitt I, 112.5-8).

likeness of the things made through Him (i.e., of mutable things) then He cannot be consubstantial with the Supreme, Immutable Nature, whereas if He is not a likeness of created things, it would seem both that He is not true and that things are not modeled after Him.²⁶ Anselm's solution to this problem is to invert the relationship that normally obtains between words and that of which they are words; i.e., rather than the Word being a likeness of created things, created things are likenesses of the Word. Things are like the Word, not He like them. Anselm's ontological explanation of this thesis is significant: just as the truth of a human being exists in a living human being whereas a painting contains a likeness of this truth, so the truth of existing exists in the Word whereas created things contain a likeness of this truth. Therefore, all things other than the Supreme Nature do not truly exist, understood in a certain sense – i.e., they are imitations of true Existence.²⁷ Creatures, then, are said to be more or less according as they more or less imitate the Word, Who supremely exists: the Divine Word determines created things, whereas human words are determined by created things. Therefore, the true essence of a created thing exists in the Word, whereas in things there is scarcely an imitation of that true essence.²⁸ For Anselm, then, created things

²⁶ “Etenim omnia huiusmodi verba quibus res quaslibet mente dicimus, id est cogitamus: similitudines et imagines sunt rerum quarum verba sunt; et omnis similitudo vel imago tanto magis vel minus est vera, quanto magis vel minus imitatur rem cuius est similitudo. Quid igitur tenendum est de verbo, quo dicuntur et per quod facta sunt omnia? Erit aut non erit similitudo eorum, quae per ipsum facta sunt? Si enim ipsum est vera mutabilium similitudo, non est consubstantiale summae incommutabilitati; quod falsum est. Si autem non omnino vera sed qualiscumque similitudo mutabilium est, non est verbum summae veritatis omnino verum; quod absurdum est” (Schmitt I, 48.18-27).

²⁷ “Verum forsitan nihil huius remanebit ambiguitatis, si quemadmodum in vivo homine veritas hominis esse dicitur, in picto vero similitudo sive imago illius veritatis: sic existendi veritas intelligatur in verbo cuius essentia sic summe est, *ut quodam modo illa sola sit*; in iis vero quae in eius comparatione quodam modo non sunt, et tamen per illud et secundum illud facta sunt aliquid, imitatio aliqua summae illius essentiae perpendatur [*italics mine*]” (Schmitt I, 49.1-6).

²⁸ “Non est itaque dubium quod omnis essentia eo ipso magis est et praestantior est, quo similior est illi essentiae, quae summe est et summe praestat. Satis itaque manifestum est in verbo, per quod facta sunt omnia,

do not have true existence (and, by extension, true goodness, true truth, etc.); rather, they are imitations of existence, goodness, and truth, greater or lesser imitations according as they approach more or less the Supreme Nature, Who not merely contains but also is identified with these perfections. God alone, then, is truth *simpliciter*: all true things are imitations of this Truth.²⁹

Anselm spends several of the next chapters drawing out the conclusions from this understanding of the relationship between the Word (Supreme Nature) and the things He created. Created things are eternally in the Supreme Nature; but as existing in the Supreme Nature, they are not what they are in themselves (i.e., mutable essences) but rather what He Himself is (the first Essence).³⁰ Therefore, created things exist more truly in the Word than in themselves, since as they exist in themselves they are mere likenesses of the true essences of things, which essences are present in the Word.³¹

non esse ipsorum similitudinem, sed veram simplicemque essentiam; in factis vero non esse simplicem absolutamque essentiam, sed verae illius essentiae vix aliquam imitationem” (Schmitt I, 50.5-10).

²⁹ Ch. 32: “. . . : quomodo illud *quod simplex est veritas* [italics mine], potest esse verbum eorum quorum non est similitudo, . . .” (Schmitt I, 50.16-17). See also: *Proslogion*, ch. 18: “Certe vita es, sapientia es, veritas es, bonitas es, beatitudo es, aeternitas es, et omne verum bonum es” (Schmitt I, 114.14-16); *Letters*, #21: “Ad hoc solum, dilectissimi, discite, ut veritatis, quae Christus est, possitis esse capaces; et sic vivite, ut Christi, qui veritas est, probetis vos esse velle sequaces” (Schmitt III, 128.19-21). The echoes of Augustine here are unmistakable.

³⁰ Ch. 34: “Nam et antequam fierent, et cum iam facta sunt, et cum corrumpuntur seu aliquo modo variantur: semper in ipso sunt, non quod sunt in seipsis, sed quod est idem ipse. Etenim in seipsis sunt essentia mutabilis secundum immutabilem rationem creata; in ipso vero sunt ipsa prima essentia et prima existendi veritas, . . .” (Schmitt I, 53.22-26).

³¹ Ch. 36: “Nam nulli dubium creatas substantias multo aliter esse in seipsis quam in nostra scientia. In seipsis namque sunt per ipsam suam essentiam; in nostra vero scientia non sunt earum essentiae, sed earum similitudines. Restat igitur ut tanto verius sint in seipsis quam in nostra scientia, quanto verius alicubi sunt per suam essentiam quam per suam similitudinem. Cum ergo et hoc constet, quia omnis creata substantia tanto verius est in verbo, id est in intelligentia creatoris, quam in seipsa, quanto verius existit creatrix quam creata essentia: . . .” (Schmitt I, 54.18-19 and 55.1-6).

For Anselm, then – as for Augustine before him³² – created things are imitations of the Supreme Nature. Created through the model existing in the mind of the Supreme Nature, created things are determined by this model (identified with the Word of the Supreme Nature), such that in the Word alone are found the true essences of things, of which essences created things are imitations. Created things, therefore, exist more truly in the Word than they do in themselves: in the Word alone can be found true Existence. It is for this reason that created things require the conserving presence of the Supreme Nature: they are, as imitations, completely dependent upon their original – the divine ideas, i.e., the Word. Only the Being Who truly exists, Who has within Himself the truth of existing, can exist independently, i.e. (for Anselm), exist *simpliciter*.

It now remains for us to examine the way in which Anselm's *Monologion* contributes more specifically to his account of truth. Having just presented Anselm's understanding, so far as it is expressed in the *Monologion*, of the relationship that obtains between created things and the Supreme Nature, we are now in a position to take up Anselm's famous argument, in Chapter 18, for the eternity of truth. After showing, in Chapter 16, that the Supreme Nature is Supreme Truth (and Supreme Justice, Supreme Wisdom, and so on), Anselm turns in Chapter 18 to a consideration of the eternity of this Supreme Truth. Here, Anselm presents several arguments for the eternity of truth, and thus for the eternity of the Supreme Truth, but it is his final two arguments that are of interest for our purposes. In these arguments, Anselm argues from the truth of true statements to the eternity of truth. In the first of these, Anselm points out that it was always true that something was going to exist, and that it will always be true that something existed in the past. But a statement cannot be

³² See our discussion of Augustine's teaching on the divine ideas, in Chapter One above, 21-23.

true without truth. So the always-having-been-true and always-being-true of these statements requires an always-having-been and always-being truth, i.e., an eternal truth.³³ Anselm's second and final argument is *modus tollens*. If truth had a beginning or will have an end, before it began to be it was then true that there was no truth and after it ceased to be it will then be true that there is no truth. But the consequent is impossible, as Anselm shows via a *reductio ad absurdum*: there can be nothing true without truth, so that before truth existed there was truth (because there was something true) and after truth passes out of existence there will be truth (because there will be something true) – but this is absurd, and so the original consequent is false. Therefore the antecedent of the hypothetical is also false, i.e., truth neither had a beginning nor will have an end. This means that the Supreme Nature, because it is Supreme Truth, is likewise beginningless and endless, i.e., eternal.³⁴

At this point, the reader may be led to conclude that truth is one (though there are many true things: e.g., statements), since Anselm has shown that there is only one Supreme Nature, that He is Supreme Truth, and that truth is eternal. And yet, Anselm's words at the end of Chapter 18 seem to indicate a hesitation to identify the Supreme Truth with truth in general: having shown that truth is eternal, that it cannot be bounded by a beginning or end, Anselm proceeds to say: "Therefore, the same follows for the supreme Nature, since He

³³ "Deinde cogitet qui potest, quando incepit aut quando non fuit hoc verum: scilicet quia futurum erat aliquid; aut quando desinet et non erit hoc verum: videlicet quia praeteritum erit aliquid. Quodsi neutrum horum cogitari potest, et utrumque hoc verum sine veritate esse non potest: impossibile est vel cogitare, quod veritas principium aut finem habeat" (Schmitt I, 33.10-15).

³⁴ "Denique si veritas habuit principium vel habebit finem: antequam ipsa inciperet, verum erat tunc quia non erat veritas; et postquam finita erit, verum erit tunc quia non erit veritas. Atqui verum non potest esse sine veritate. Erat igitur veritas, antequam esset veritas; et erit veritas, postquam finita erit veritas; quod inconvenientissimum est. Sive igitur dicatur veritas habere, sive intelligatur non habere principium vel finem: nullo claudi potest veritas principio vel fine. Quare idem sequitur de summa natura, quia ipsa summa veritas est" (Schmitt I, 33.15-23).

Himself is the Supreme Truth.”³⁵ It seems that, had Anselm already been identifying or intending to identify the Supreme Truth with truth in general, he would not have said this; rather, he would merely have said: “Therefore, the Supreme Truth is eternal.” That Anselm is being careful here, not hastily making this identification, is borne out by one very significant fact: Anselm himself says in his later *De veritate* that his argument here in *Monologion* 18 did not purport to identify the truth of statements with the Supreme Truth.³⁶ This of course leaves us, in Chapter 18 of the *Monologion*, with the problem of how Anselm understands the truth of statements to be related to the Supreme Truth. And although Anselm does not address this problem here, nor does he address the larger question of the later *De veritate*, viz., whether God is to be identified with every truth,³⁷ nevertheless, the elements of Anselm’s answer to this larger question are present already in the *Monologion*. We now turn to a consideration of those elements.

The fundamental principle underlying Anselm’s arguments in Chapter 18 is the principle that has informed the *Monologion* up to this point: nothing is “x” (e.g., true) apart from (without) “x-ness” (e.g., truth).³⁸ This “participational principle,” borrowed from

³⁵ See the immediately prior footnote.

³⁶ “*M. Bene consideras. Unde iam intelligere potes quomodo summam veritatem in meo Monologio probavi non habere principium vel finem per veritatem orationis. Cum enim dixi ‘quando non fuit verum quia futurum erat aliquid’, non ita dixi, ac si absque principio ista oratio fuisset quae assereret futurum esse aliquid, aut ista veritas esset deus; . . .*” (Schmitt I, 190.13-17).

³⁷ See the opening sentence of *De veritate*: “*D. Quoniam deum veritatem esse credimus, et veritatem in multis aliis dicimus esse, vellem scire an ubicumque veritas dicitur, deum eam esse fateri debeamus*” (Schmitt I, 176.4-6).

³⁸ This principle is expressed, in Chapter 18, in terms of truth: nothing can be true without truth. On the role that this principle plays as a fundamental premise in the Chapter 18 argument for the eternity of truth, see Enders, *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 24-51.

Augustine,³⁹ is in fact the fundamental principle underlying the main argument of the entire work. For Anselm begins the *Monologion*, in Chapter 1, by stating his purpose: using reason alone to show, in the first place, that there is one Supreme Nature, Who alone exists *per se* and through Whom all else exists.⁴⁰ To that end, Anselm begins the inquiry proper by asking whether we ought to believe that there is only one thing through which all good things are good, or whether we ought to believe that there are several such things. (From this starting-point, Anselm will proceed to show that there exists a Supreme Nature Who alone exists *per se* and through Whom all else exists.) What is important for our present concern is the fact that this starting-point of the argument of the entire work presupposes, as its ground, the participational principle. That this is so is evident. Without this principle, Anselm's starting-point makes no sense: why ought we to believe that good things are good through anything at all, unless we already accept the principle that all good things are good through goodness? That is, Anselm can only ask if we should believe all good things to be good through one thing or through several things, if we already accept that good things are good through something in the first place! Clearly, then, Anselm assumes this participational principle. And he does, here and there in the *Monologion*, express this principle in various ways: in Chapter 1 he says that “whatever things are said to be just . . . cannot be understood

³⁹ See, *inter alia*: *Soliloquiorum* 1.1, 1.15, and 2.10; *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, #1; *De vera religione* 36.66-68.

⁴⁰ “Si quis unam naturam, summam omnium quae sunt, solam sibi in aeterna sua beatitudine sufficientem, omnibusque rebus aliis hoc ipsum quod aliquid sunt aut quod aliquomodo bene sunt, per omnipotentem bonitatem suam dantem et facientem, aliaque perplura quae de deo sive de eius creatura necessarie credimus, aut non audiendo aut non credendo ignorat: puto quia ea ipsa ex magna parte, si vel mediocris ingenii est, potest ipse sibi saltem sola ratione persuadere. Quod cum multis modis facere possit, unum ponam, quem illi aestimo esse promptissimum” (Schmitt I, 13.5-12).

as just except through justice,”⁴¹ and in Chapter 18, as we have seen, he stated that “there cannot be a true thing without truth.”⁴²

On the basis of the participational principle and the starting-point founded upon it – the disjunct “all good things are good through some one thing or through several things” – Anselm proceeds to show that there is, in fact, only one thing through which all good things are good, and this one thing is the same in all good things. The same applies to other categories of things: just things, too, are all just through some one thing that is the same in all of them.⁴³ Now, this one thing, through which all good things are good, is good through itself;⁴⁴ likewise that through which all just things are just is just through itself. This ultimately, in Chapter 16, leads Anselm to the following identification: that which is “x” through itself = “x-ness” = the Supreme “X.”⁴⁵ Anselm’s argumentation here, which constitutes a development of the participational principle that grounds the entire argument,

⁴¹ “Nam quaecumque iusta dicuntur ad invicem sive pariter sive magis vel minus, non possunt intelligi iusta nisi per iustitiam, . . .” (Schmitt I, 14.13-14).

⁴² “Atqui verum non potest esse sine veritate” (Schmitt I, 33.18).

⁴³ “Cum tam innumerabilia bona sint, quorum tam multam diversitatem et sensibus corporeis experimur et ratione mentis discernimus: estne credendum esse unum aliquid, per quod unum sint bona quaecumque bona sunt, an sunt bona alia per aliud? Certissimum quidem et omnibus est volentibus advertere perspicuum quia, quaecumque dicuntur aliquid ita, ut ad invicem magis vel minus aut aequaliter dicantur: per aliquid dicuntur, quod non aliud et aliud sed idem intelligitur in diversis, sive in illis aequaliter sive inaequaliter consideretur. Nam quaecumque iusta dicuntur ad invicem sive pariter sive magis vel minus, non possunt intelligi iusta nisi per iustitiam, quae non est aliud et aliud in diversis. Ergo cum certum sit quod omnia bona, si ad invicem conferantur, aut aequaliter aut inaequaliter sint bona, necesse est, ut omnia sint per aliquid bona, quod intelligitur idem in diversis bonis, licet aliquando videantur bona dici alia per aliud” (Schmitt I, 14.5-18).

⁴⁴ “Quis autem dubitet illud ipsum, per quod cuncta sunt bona, esse magnum bonum? Illud igitur est bonum per seipsum, quoniam omne bonum est per ipsum. Ergo consequitur, ut omnia alia bona sint per aliud quam quod ipsa sunt, et ipsum solum per seipsum” (Schmitt I, 15.4-7).

⁴⁵ “Quoniam igitur summa natura non proprie dicitur quia habet iustitiam, sed existit iustitia: cum dicitur iusta, proprie intelligitur existens iustitia, non autem habens iustitiam. . . . Quod vero in exemplo iustitiae ratum esse conspicitur, hoc de omnibus quae similiter de ipsa summa natura dicuntur, intellectus sentire per rationem constringitur. . . . Illa igitur est summa essentia, summa vita, summa ratio, summa salus, summa iustitia, summa sapientia, summa veritas, summa bonitas, summa magnitudo, . . .” (Schmitt I, 30.22-24; 30.32-33 and 31.1; 31.3-5).

leads us to a general statement of Anselm’s “metaphysics of participation”: all “x” things are “x” through “x-ness,” i.e., through the source of “x,” the “Supreme X.”⁴⁶

This understanding of participation, when applied to the category of true things, yields a significant conclusion. We have already seen that Anselm concludes that there is something that is one and the selfsame thing through which all good things are good, which is the same in all good things (this despite the fact, which Anselm notes and examines in Chapter 1, that we seem to speak of the many good things as being good through different things, such as strength, speed, utility, beauty, etc.). Now, given Anselm’s ultimate identification of the Supreme Good (Supreme Nature) as this one selfsame thing through which all good things are good (i.e., as goodness itself, that which alone is good through itself), it follows that the goodness that is the same in every good thing, through which all good things are good, is the Supreme Good. That is, there is only one goodness, through which all good things are good: the Supreme Good. The same applies, as is clear from Chapter 16, to “all the things that are said in like manner of the Supreme Nature,” things like justice, truth, beauty, etc.⁴⁷ Applying, therefore, this conclusion about good things to the category of true things, it is the case that all true things are true through one truth – the Supreme Truth – that is the same in all true things.

Therefore, the conclusion reached in the *De veritate* – that there is but one Truth in all true things – is likewise present (albeit implicitly) in the earlier *Monologion*. For the argument of the opening chapters of the *Monologion* leads to the identification of truth, existence, goodness, justice, etc. with the Supreme Nature. And the consequences of this

⁴⁶ Enders, *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 44.

⁴⁷ See 40n45 above.

identification are laid out in the later chapters of the *Monologion*. For, as we have seen, all created things are imitations of the Supreme Nature, so that only in a qualified sense can we say of them that they exist, that they are good, that they are true. That is to say, the existence, goodness, truth, etc. of created things is not their own: it is one and the same existence, goodness, and truth in all existing, good, and true beings, i.e., it is one and the same Supreme Nature Who is present in and through all things. He is their existence, their goodness, their truth. And indeed, all this is confirmed by Anselm's rather off-hand description, in Chapter 32 (noted above), of God as truth *simpliciter*.⁴⁸

But what is most important for our present purpose is to note the ground, the fundamental principle, that underlies this entire argument of the *Monologion*: the participational principle. It is on the basis of this principle that Anselm concludes that there is one and the same goodness in good things, justice in just things, and truth in true things; that this one goodness, this one justice, and this one truth are good, just, and true through themselves; and that these are to be identified with the Supreme Nature, so that He is goodness itself, justice itself, truth itself, through which all good things are good, just things are just, and true things are true. Therefore, in the *Monologion* the principle, on the basis of which Anselm arrives at the conclusion that the Supreme Truth is the one truth through which all true things are true, is the participational principle. We will need to keep this fact in mind when we seek the reasons (principles) motivating Anselm's conclusion in the *De veritate* that there is but one Truth in all true things: as we shall see, this participational principle will indeed play a crucial role in the argument there for the unicity of truth.

⁴⁸ In all of this, of course, Anselm is following the line of thought of Augustine, for whom (as we have seen) God alone is truth, and created beings are true by participating in Him (see especially *Soliloquiorum* I.1.3).

One could ask why Anselm composes his *De veritate* to address a question whose answer is already present in his earlier *Monologion*. Two points can be made in this regard. First, the unicity of truth is not explicitly affirmed in the *Monologion*, and this because Anselm is concerned there neither with the number of truth nor even with the theme of truth in general. Anselm will be concerned with these two questions in the later *De veritate*. Second, although the proposition that there is but one Truth is indeed implicit in the *Monologion*, absent there is the crucial concept of “rectitude,” which acts as the middle term, in *De veritate*, of the demonstration of the unicity of Truth. This will become apparent in our presentation and examination of Anselm’s *De veritate*, to which we now turn.

C. Truth in Anselm’s *De veritate*

Anselm’s *De veritate* constitutes his only systematic exposition of the nature of truth. Written in the period 1080-1086,⁴⁹ several years after the *Monologion*, *De veritate* is the first in a series of three dialogues that Anselm intended to be taken as a whole: *De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii*, *De casu diaboli*. Anselm’s “Preface” to this series of works states and briefly explains the reasons for treating these three works as a trilogy. For our present purposes, however, what is of great moment is that at the very beginning of this preface, and in Chapter 1 of *De veritate*, Anselm presents, albeit in incomplete fashion, the starting-points, methodology, and purpose of *De veritate*. Because Anselm’s presentation here is brief and incomplete, and because of the nature of Anselm’s argument for the unicity of truth, articulating satisfactorily the starting-points, purpose, and methodology of *De veritate*

⁴⁹ *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, “Chronology,” xii.

is impossible until we have completed our examination of the dialogue as a whole. But we must, nevertheless, begin our treatment of *De veritate* by presenting and examining preliminarily these brief prefatory remarks of Anselm, and because these remarks are primarily to be found in Chapter 1, we will begin our treatment of *De veritate* with an examination of Chapter 1, within which we will address the relevant passages of the “Preface.”

Chapter One

De veritate is a dialogue between a student and his teacher (explicitly identified as Anselm himself). The dialogue begins, in Chapter 1, with a question, which arises in the student from his belief that God is truth and his recognition that we speak of truth as being in many other things: given these two affirmations, must we say that wherever there is truth, that truth is God?⁵⁰ Contributing, in the student’s mind, to this conclusion is the argument in Anselm’s *Monologion* that proves, through the truth of a statement, that truth in general, and the Supreme Truth in particular, is eternal.⁵¹ The student, however, seems loath to admit this conclusion that he has suggested, viz., that God is indeed to be identified with truth, wherever truth is found. Therefore, he asks the teacher for a definition of truth,⁵² on the basis of which they are to determine whether it is indeed true that God is identified with truth wherever truth is found. The teacher claims to have no ready definition of truth and therefore proposes an inquiry. He also proposes a method for this inquiry: examination of those things

⁵⁰ Ch. 1: “*Discipulus*. [hereafter, *D.*] Quoniam deum veritatem esse credimus, et veritatem in multis aliis dicimus esse, vellem scire an ubicumque veritas dicitur, deum eam esse fateri debeamus” (Schmitt I, 176.4-6).

⁵¹ “*D.* . . . Nam tu quoque in *Monologio* tuo per veritatem orationis probas summam veritatem non habere principium vel finem, . . .” (Schmitt I, 176.6-7).

⁵² “*D.* . . . Quapropter veritatis definitionem a te discere exspecto” (Schmitt I, 176.19-20).

in which we generally say truth exists.⁵³ Having accomplished that, they will be in a position to address and answer the original question.

Chapter 1 of *De veritate*, thus, presents in succinct form the purpose, starting-points, and methodology of *De veritate*. The purpose of the dialogue is to answer the original question of the student, viz., whether God is to be identified with truth, wherever truth exists. Now the student states that this central question of the dialogue springs from his and the teacher's (1) believing that God is truth, (2) speaking of truth as existing in many things other than God, and (3) affirming the teacher's conclusion, in the *Monologion*, that truth is eternal. These three propositions, then, constitute the starting-points of *De veritate*, but clearly the way in which the student and the teacher affirm these three propositions differs in the case of each. For the student clearly indicates that they maintain the first proposition – that God is truth – as a matter of belief: “Because we believe that God is truth . . . [my emphasis].”⁵⁴ This point is underscored by the very first lines of the preface to the three dialogues, in which Anselm refers to *De veritate* and to the other two dialogues in the series as treatises “pertaining to the study of Sacred Scripture.”⁵⁵ But the student puts forward the second proposition – that there is truth in many things other than God – as a matter of language: “Because . . . we say that there is truth in many other things . . . [my emphasis].”⁵⁶ Here the

⁵³ Ch. 1: “*Magister*. [hereafter, *M.*] Non memini me invenisse definitionem veritatis; sed si vis quaeramus per rerum diversitates in quibus veritatem dicimus esse, quid sit veritas” (Schmitt I, 176.21 and 177.1-2). See also the preface: “Unus horum trium est *De veritate*: quid scilicet sit veritas, et in quibus rebus solet dici; . . .” (Schmitt I, 173.9-10).

⁵⁴ See 44n50 above.

⁵⁵ Preface: “Tres tractatus pertinentes ad studium sacrae scripturae” (Schmitt I, 173.2). See Fr. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, “Introduction,” in *Anselm von Canterbury: De veritate / Über die Wahrheit*, trans. Fr. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag – Günther Holzboog, 1966), 22-23; Robert Pouchet, *La rectitudo chez saint Anselme* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1964), 57.

⁵⁶ See 44n50 above.

student is identifying a general empirical fact,⁵⁷ viz., that we speak of truth as being in many things other than God and, thus, we speak of the truth of this or that thing. This proposition, then, is a common opinion indicated by language. The third proposition – that truth is eternal – is, in contrast to the first two, a conclusion proven by argumentation from premises available to natural reason: “For you [the teacher], too, prove in the *Monologion*, by means of the truth of speech, that the Highest Truth has neither beginning nor end.”⁵⁸ Therefore, these three propositions – the determining of whose inter-relationship and consequences constitutes the basic project of *De veritate* – are held by the student and the teacher in three different ways: the first as a tenet of faith, the second as a common opinion embedded in our way of speaking, and the third as a philosophical truth. And since the question that drives the dialogue springs from these three propositions, this question itself also has both theological and philosophical elements.⁵⁹

This juxtaposition of theological and philosophical elements in the purpose of *De veritate*, and thus also in its starting-points, is reflected in the methodology Anselm employs in the dialogue: he uses an inductive procedure, grounded upon common opinion, and arrives at conclusions by means of dialectic, but he also appeals to Scripture. As is clear from the suggestion made by the teacher at the end of Chapter 1, the inquiry assumes the reliability of

⁵⁷ Jan A. Aertsen, “Fröhliche Wissenschaft: Wahrheit im Mittelalter,” in *Ende und Vollendung: Eschatologische Perspektiven im Mittelalter*, ed. J.A. Aertsen and Martin Pickave, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 29 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), 54.

⁵⁸ See 44n51 above. As we saw above, Anselm limits himself in the *Monologion* to argumentation based on reason alone, without recourse to Scripture. Therefore, in his proof of the eternity of truth in Chapter 18 of the *Monologion*, Anselm understands himself to have used reason alone.

⁵⁹ For a helpful explanation of the way in which *De veritate* and the other two dialogues in this set are both theological and philosophical, see Thomas Williams, “Introduction,” in *Anselm: Three Philosophical Dialogues*, trans. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., Inc., 2002).

ordinary language and common opinion as guides in investigating reality, for it is through examination of the many things in which we say there is truth that the student and teacher will attempt to define truth,⁶⁰ and, thereupon, determine whether truth is one or many. It is in light of this consideration that some characterize Anselm's method in *De veritate* as *sola ratione*.⁶¹ However, in the investigation of these many *loci* of truth (truth-bearers), although the teacher often appeals to ordinary language and common opinion, he sometimes appeals to Scripture.⁶²

What is important for our present purposes is to note the role that common opinion, and ordinary language as expressing it, plays in both the starting-points and the method of *De veritate*. We will return to this theme later in our investigation.

Chapter Two

The inquiry into the nature of truth begins with the teacher's identification of statements as truth-bearers, i.e., as being true or false and therefore having (or lacking) truth. To determine what precisely is the truth of a statement, the teacher first asks the student when a statement is true, and the student gives the by-now commonplace Aristotelian answer (albeit in laconic fashion): when what it states is how things are.⁶³ Since the being-so-in-reality of what it states is the condition for a statement's being true, the teacher asks whether the thing stated (*res enuntiata*) is to be identified as the truth of a statement. The student

⁶⁰ See 45n53 above.

⁶¹ Aertsen, "Fröhliche Wissenschaft," 54. See also F. Schmitt, "Introduction," (1966), 8.

⁶² See, *inter alia*, the opening lines of Chapters 4 and 5.

⁶³ "M. Quando est enuntiatio vera? D. Quando est quod enuntiat, sive affirmando sive negando" (Schmitt I, 177.9-10).

replies in the negative: the old Augustinian principle that nothing is true except by participating in truth entails that the truth of a true thing be in the true thing.⁶⁴ The student's reasoning is not made explicit, but it seems to be as follows. Participation requires three things: (1) the participant or thing that partakes, (2) the participated or that in which the participant partakes, and (3) the new reality constituted by such participation and inhering in the participant. In the case of the truth of a statement, the statement is the participant, truth the participated, and the truth of a statement (in virtue of which it is called a "true" statement) the new reality inhering in the statement.⁶⁵ So, the truth of a statement is in the statement, whereas the thing stated is not in the statement. Therefore the truth of a statement cannot be the thing stated (although it is the case that the thing stated is the cause of the truth of a statement).⁶⁶

The teacher then asks whether a statement itself, or its signification, or anything in the definition of a statement could be identified as the truth of a statement. The student again replies in the negative: were the truth of the statement identified with any of these, the

⁶⁴ "M. An ergo tibi videtur quod res enuntiata sit veritas enuntiationis? D. Non. M. Quare? D. Quia nihil est verum nisi participando veritatem; et ideo veri veritas in ipso vero est, res vero enuntiata non est in enuntiatione vera" (Schmitt I, 177.13-17).

⁶⁵ This line of thought will ultimately be determined as unacceptable. The teacher and student will conclude, at the end of *De veritate*, that the truth of the true thing is Truth itself, so that there are not three, but only two, elements in a thing's participation in truth: the created thing that is true, and the Truth that is one in all true things. But this does not affect the current purpose of the student's line of thought: either way, the truth of a statement cannot be identified with the thing stated.

⁶⁶ "D. Quia nihil est verum nisi participando veritatem; et ideo veri veritas in ipso vero est, res vero enuntiata non est in enuntiatione vera. Unde non eius veritas, sed causa veritatis eius dicenda est. Quapropter non nisi in ipsa oratione quaerenda mihi videtur eius veritas" (Schmitt I, 177.16-19).

statement would always be true, since the statement always is itself, always has its signification, and always has whatever belongs to it by definition.⁶⁷

At this point, the teacher ceases presenting the student with candidates to identify (or reject) as the truth of a statement, for the student admits that he cannot discern what the truth of a statement is, but only the condition for this truth.⁶⁸ So the teacher tries another tack: he asks the student for the reason why one makes an affirmation. The lack of transition to this question, the switch from passive to active questioning on the part of the teacher, and the conversation that follows – all these elements indicate that the teacher (Anselm) has a goal in mind, to which he is directing the student. In other words, the teacher knows the answer to the original question – What is the truth of a statement? – and he guides the student to this answer. The student says that one makes an affirmation in order to signify that what is, is; he agrees with the teacher that an affirmation, therefore, ought to do this. But when an affirmation signifies that what is, is – i.e., when it signifies what it ought to signify – it signifies correctly; that is to say, its signification is correct. So when an affirmation signifies that what is, is, its signification is correct, and, in fact, its signification is true. Therefore, to be correct and to be true are, for the affirmation, the same thing, viz., signifying that what is, is. And so the truth of an affirmation is its rectitude (correctness).⁶⁹

⁶⁷ “*M. Vide ergo an ipsa oratio aut eius significatio aut aliquid eorum quae sunt in definitione enuntiationis, sit quod quaeris. D. Non puto. M. Quare? D. Quia si hoc esset, semper esset vera, quoniam eadem manent omnia quae sunt in enuntiationis definitione, et cum est quod enuntiat, et cum non est. Eadem enim est oratio et eadem significatio et cetera similiter*” (Schmitt I, 177.20-23 and 178.1-4).

⁶⁸ “*M. Quid igitur tibi videtur ibi veritas? D. Nihil aliud scio nisi quia cum significat esse quod est, tunc est in ea veritas et est vera*” (Schmitt I, 178.5-7).

⁶⁹ “*M. Ad quid facta est affirmatio? D. Ad significandum esse quod est. M. Hoc ergo debet. D. Certum est. M. Cum ergo significat esse quod est, significat quod debet. D. Palam est. M. At cum significat quod debet, recte significat. D. Ita est. M. Cum autem recte significat, recta est significatio. D. Non est dubium. M. Cum ergo significat esse quod est, recta est significatio. D. Ita sequitur. M. Item cum significat esse quod est, vera est significatio. D. Vere et recta et vera est, cum significat esse quod est. M. Idem igitur est illi et rectam et veram*

The nature of this argument for rectitude as the truth of a statement is significant, for Anselm introduces here concepts and premises that he will use throughout the rest of the argument of *De veritate*. In the argument presented here for the truth of a statement as its rectitude, the middle term – that which connects “signifying that what is, is” and “signifying correctly” – is “signifying what it ought to signify.” For Anselm, a statement correctly signifies when it signifies what it ought to signify. But as the student points out, a statement signifies what it ought to signify even when it signifies falsely, because even in such cases the statement is signifying something that it was given the power to signify. Now, of course, a statement ought not to signify falsely, but it ought to (and must) first signify (apart from its truth-value) before it can signify correctly. Thus, the mere signification of a statement (which obtains in both true and false statements) is itself the fulfillment of an “ought,” and it is only when it fulfills such an ought that it can go on to fulfill a further ought, viz., the purpose for which the statement has been made, which is to signify that what is, is.⁷⁰ Put another way, the first actuality (and first ought) of a statement is to signify; the second actuality (and second ought) of a statement is to signify that what is, is.⁷¹

Statements are, according to this argument, capable of two truths or rectitudes, because they can (and should) fulfill two “oughts”: the truth or rectitude of mere signification (which truth immutably belongs to any statement since, *qua* statement, it always has such

esse, id est significare esse quod est. *D.* Vere idem. *M.* Ergo non est illi aliud veritas quam rectitudo. *D.* Aperte nunc video veritatem hanc esse rectitudinem” (Schmitt I, 178.8-26).

⁷⁰ “*D.* . . . Pariter namque accepit significare esse, et quod est et quod non est. Nam si non accepisset significare esse etiam quod non est, non id significaret. Quare etiam cum significat esse quod non est, significat quod debet. . . . *M.* . . . Sed cum significat esse quod est, dupliciter facit quod debet; quoniam significat et quod accepit significare, et ad quod facta est” (Schmitt I, 178.30-33 and 179.2-4).

⁷¹ Grosseteste makes the same distinction; see our discussion in Chapter Three below, 159-62.

signification), and the truth or rectitude of signifying according to the purpose for which it was made, viz., to signify that what is, is (which truth belongs to a statement only mutably, since a statement need not and does not always have such truth).⁷² Anselm concedes that we are not accustomed to speak of a statement as true, as having truth, when it merely signifies, but only when it signifies correctly; nevertheless, precisely because truth consists in doing what one ought to do, a statement has truth in merely signifying.⁷³

Fundamentally, then, the two truths of a statement are founded upon the objective, universal purpose of a statement: to signify that what is, is. The truth of a statement is not simply its corresponding with reality: the truth of a statement consists in its fulfilling its purpose, which fulfillment the statement ought to achieve and which fulfillment, therefore, constitutes its rectitude. Truth is rectitude because truth is fulfilling one's purpose, which fulfilling is right (*recta*) because it is what one ought to do. Now, assuredly, Anselm identifies the purpose of the statement with signifying that what is, is (i.e., corresponding with reality), so it is not as if Anselm separates the truth of a statement from its correspondence with reality. Rather, Anselm sees that the truth of a statement is something deeper than its correspondence with reality, for he locates the fundamental, ontological

⁷² “*M. . . . Alia igitur est rectitudo et veritas enuntiationis, quia significat ad quod significandum facta est; alia vero, quia significat quod acceptit significare. Quippe ista immutabilis est ipsi orationi, illa vero mutabilis. Hanc namque semper habet, illam vero non semper*” (Schmitt I, 179.10-14). A statement, therefore, has two significations, and thus has two truth-values: formal/necessary and intentional/unnecessary (Paul Gilbert, “*Veritas orationis* selon le *De veritate*,” in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury: Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop, 25 September 1093*, ed. D.E. Luscombe and G.R. Evans [Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 72).

⁷³ “*M. Vera quidem non solet dici cum significat esse quod non est; veritatem tamen et rectitudinem habet, quia facit quod debet*” (Schmitt I, 179.1-2).

ground that underlies truth as correspondence: truth as rectitude, as doing what one ought to do, i.e., fulfilling one's purpose.⁷⁴

Some interpreters have, on the other hand, asserted such a separation between (1) truth as correspondence of the statement (or mind) with things (the "Boethian-Aristotelian" understanding) and (2) truth as rectitude, i.e., as fulfilling what one ought to do. Kurt Flasch (and, less explicitly, Bernd Goebel) emphasize this separation, claiming that Anselm begins with a "naïve-realist" understanding of truth (as correspondence of the statement with reality) but recognizes such an understanding must fail and elaborates an "idealist-transcendental" account of truth as fulfilling what one ought to.⁷⁵ Flasch denies that there is a decisive role for exterior objects/things in Anselm's account of truth in Chapter 2: truth is the fulfillment of an inner standard/norm, not the resemblance to an exterior object. Flasch's reason for claiming this is that truth, as determined in Chapter 2 of *De veritate*, is not a function of that which is but rather a standard that defines what ought and ought not to be. Flasch goes so far as to say that a statement is not true inasmuch as it adapts itself to the thing but rather inasmuch as it fulfills what it ought to do, the thing (*res enuntiata*) being only the material in which the statement realizes its own rectitude.

But this is surely to overstate the case. Most certainly truth is not merely the correspondence of things with reality, and Anselm has discovered that truth runs deeper than that, but at the same time it is precisely in corresponding with reality that a statement has

⁷⁴ Visser and Williams ("Anselm on Truth," 205) state that Anselm's account of the truth of statements is, so to speak, a kind of "double-correspondence" theory, since a statement "is true when it corresponds *both* to the way things are *and* to the purpose of making statements." But this is misleading: to correspond to the way things are is to correspond to the purpose of making statements. So it is not as if there are two correspondences. Rather, Anselm has uncovered the ontological ground for "truth as correspondence with reality": truth as doing what one ought.

⁷⁵ Flasch, "Zum Begriff," 328-30, 344; Goebel, *Wahrheit und Freiheit*, 187-93.

truth (over and above the natural truth it always has as a mere statement). In other words, it is in corresponding with reality that a statement fulfills its purpose (i.e., does what it ought to do), so that this fulfillment is dependent upon the statement adapting itself to the thing, *contra* Flasch; for, as the student has noted, and as the teacher will affirm emphatically and clarify in Chapter 10, the *res enuntiata* is the cause of the truth of a statement (so it is not merely, as Flasch says, the “material” in which the statement realizes its own rectitude).⁷⁶ Furthermore, Anselm’s example (near the end of Chapter 2) of “It is day,” and his distinction between statements that always have both truths/rectitudes inseparably (necessary statements) and statements in which these truths/rectitudes are separable according as the state of affairs in question is real or not (contingent statements), serve to point to the at-least-sometimes contingent nature of truth in a statement, which requires admitting a decisive role for exterior things in Anselm’s account of the truth of statements. To sum up, Anselm is not (as Flasch believes) presenting and then transcending and abandoning a realist conception of truth as *adequatio*; rather, he is starting with such a realist conception and locating, by analysis, its ontological ground, which in fact constitutes truth. This point is an important one, as it will have consequences for our understanding both of Anselm’s general account of truth in *De veritate* and of his conclusion that truth is one, so we will revisit Flasch’s interpretation later in our investigation.

⁷⁶ While Flasch does recognize that the student concludes that the *res enuntiata* is the cause of the truth of the statement, he attributes this to the influence and authority of Boethius: Boethius, he says, pushes Anselm in this direction, but Anselm will abandon this “naïve-realist” notion of truth as a failed account of truth, having accepted and used it only as a starting-point (“Zum Begriff,” 324-26). And while Flasch does state that Anselm accepts the Boethian notion of truth while giving it a “philosophically sound meaning” (326) this is undermined, or at least severely minimized and colored, by statements like “thought does not have its rectitude from the thing” (330) and by the fact that he cites Kant as a parallel in the history of philosophy (325-26).

The conception of truth Anselm has elaborated in Chapter 2 drives the entire argument of *De veritate*,⁷⁷ as we will see, for Anselm is aware that an account of truth as “correspondence with reality” (signifying that what is, is), while true at some level, is insufficient to account for all instances of truth and is thus not the final word. This being so, there must be a deeper, more universal, grounding essence of truth – which Anselm identifies as “doing what one ought to do” – that, in the case of statements, is achieved when they signify that what is, is.

Chapter Three

The line of reasoning employed in Chapter 2 regarding the truth of a statement is applied, in Chapter 3, to the truth of thought. With the student now giving the exposition, Anselm once again identifies “thinking what one ought” as the link between “thinking that what is, is” and “thinking truly/correctly.”⁷⁸ In thinking that what is, is, one thinks what one ought to think, and fulfilling this ought makes one’s thought correct and true. This ought is, once again, founded upon the purpose for which the thing exists: thought is affirmed to exist in order that we might think that what is, is, and that what is not, is not, and so we ought to think accordingly.

Chapter Four

The third locus of truth, or “truth-bearer,” that is identified in *De veritate* is the will. Statements (Chapter 2) and thoughts (Chapter 3) are two of the most obvious loci of truth. In introducing them, at the beginning of their respective chapters, Anselm does not seek to

⁷⁷ As Noone says, it is the idea of measuring, associated with the functionality of a thing, that is central to Anselm’s notion of truth (“Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 109).

⁷⁸ “*D. . . . Quapropter qui putat esse quod est, putat quod debet, atque ideo recta est cogitatio. Si ergo vera est et recta cogitatio non ob aliud quam quia putamus esse quod est, aut non esse quod non est: non est aliud eius veritas quam rectitudo*” (Schmitt I, 180.14-17).

justify their being truth-bearers: he merely states that we speak of them as having truth (i.e., we call them “true”), and this is sufficient for him. But it is not nearly so obvious with the will (Chapter 4). This would explain why, at the beginning of Chapter 4, Anselm refers to Christ’s words, rather than to ours, as affirming that there is truth also in the will.⁷⁹ This first, overt appeal to Scripture is significant not only as a supra-rational appeal: it also establishes a truth-bearer whose truth very clearly does not consist in willing that what is, is, and that what is not, is not. Therefore, this third truth-bearer, established as such by appeal to Scripture, makes it impossible that truth be adequately defined as “correspondence with reality,” thereby supporting Anselm’s position that the essence of truth must be something deeper than, because undergirding, “correspondence with reality.”⁸⁰

The words of Christ to which Anselm appeals are those of John 8:44, where Christ says that the devil did not remain in the truth. Anselm explains that it could only be in the devil’s will that he was at first in the truth and then abandoned it: as an angelic being, the devil could never cease knowing the truth and thus could not abandon the truth in his intellect, but only in his will, i.e., only by sinning.⁸¹ Therefore, basing himself on Scripture, Anselm identifies the will as a truth-bearer (in addition to the intellect).

⁷⁹ “*M. . . . Sed et in voluntate dicit veritas ipsa veritatem esse, cum dicit diabolum non stetisse ‘in veritate’*” (Schmitt I, 180.21-22).

⁸⁰ As noted above, Anselm assumes from the beginning of *De veritate* that there is a Supreme Truth, and that this is God. So it can be said that, from the very beginning of the dialogue, the inadequacy of a general account of truth as *adequatio* of the mind and reality (the Boethian-Aristotelian understanding of truth) is indicated (although, as has also been noted, Anselm incorporates this understanding, rather than abandoning it). But within the sub-inquiry begun in Chapter 2 – the search for what truth is – the will as truth-bearer is the first obvious counter-example to the “truth as correspondence” theory.

⁸¹ “*M. . . . Non enim erat in veritate neque deseruit veritatem nisi in voluntate. D. Ita credo. Si enim semper voluisset quod debuit, numquam peccasset qui non nisi peccando veritatem deseruit*” (Schmitt I, 180.22-23 and 181.1-2).

The teacher in the dialogue asks the student to explain what the truth of the will is. In so doing, the student never identifies the purpose for which the will exists, in contrast to the prior two chapters, in which the student and teacher identify the purpose of the statement and the purpose of thought.⁸² Nevertheless, the student follows the basic argumentation of the previous chapters: the truth of the will is its rectitude, because one is in the truth for as long as one wills what one ought (which is rectitude of will), and one abandons truth when one wills what one ought not (which is to abandon rectitude of will). Therefore, willing what one ought to will constitutes both the truth and rectitude of the will.⁸³

Chapter Five

Scripture further witnesses to the fact that there is truth in action. The teacher quotes John's Gospel once again (3:20-21), thereby establishing action as yet another truth-bearer. As reported by the teacher, Christ says that "he who does evil hates the light" and "he who does the truth comes to the light."⁸⁴ The teacher proceeds to unfold the meaning of the Scriptural passages, once again along the same line of thought as was employed in the prior chapters. Clearly, says the teacher, Christ sets up "doing evil" and "doing the truth" as contraries. And since doing evil and doing good are contraries, we must understand "doing the truth" to be the same as "doing good." Now, we would all agree that doing what one

⁸² This question is taken up later in *De veritate*, in Chapter 12, when the student and teacher seek a definition of justice.

⁸³ "*M.* Dic ergo quid ibi intelligas veritatem. *D.* Non nisi rectitudinem. Nam si quamdiu voluit quod debuit, ad quod scilicet voluntatem acceperat, in rectitudine et in veritate fuit, et cum voluit quod non debuit, rectitudinem et veritatem deseruit: non aliud ibi potest intelligi veritas quam rectitudo, quoniam sive veritas sive rectitudo non aliud in eius voluntate fuit quam velle quod debuit. *M.* Bene intelligis" (Schmitt I, 181.3-9).

⁸⁴ "*M.* . . . Verum in actione quoque nihilominus veritas credenda est, sicut dominus dicit quia 'qui male agit, odit lucem'; et 'qui facit veritatem, venit ad lucem'" (Schmitt I, 181.12-14).

ought is doing good and doing rightly (literally, “doing rectitude”). Therefore, “doing the truth” means to do rightly, so that the truth of action (“doing the truth”) is its rectitude.⁸⁵

Here, Anselm arrives at truth as rectitude by this chain of thought: doing truth = doing good; doing good = doing what we ought; doing what we ought = doing rightly; thus, doing truth = doing rightly. Once again, then, truth is identified with rectitude by way of “doing what one ought.” And just as “doing what one ought” has two meanings in the case of statements, so also does it in the case of all actions. On the one hand, purely natural (irrational) actions, which are necessary actions (qua non-voluntary), are always instances of “doing what one ought” insofar as they consist merely in the doing of what they were given the power to do, and in this sense they always have truth. On the other hand, non-natural (rational) actions, which are voluntary and thus non-necessary, are indeed instances of “doing what one ought” insofar as they consist merely in the doing of what the rational agent was given the power to do (and in this sense they, too, have truth), but in addition to this they may be, but need not be, instances of “doing what one ought” insofar as such actions are fulfilling the purpose for which the rational being was given such power, and in this further sense rational actions sometimes have truth.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ “*M. . . . Nam si male agere et veritatem facere opposita sunt, sicut ostendit dominus cum dicit: ‘qui male agit, odit lucem’; et: ‘qui facit veritatem, venit ad lucem’; idem est veritatem facere quod est bene facere. Bene namque facere ad male facere contrarium est. Quapropter si veritatem facere et bene facere idem sunt in oppositione, non sunt diversa in significatione. Sed sententia est omnium quia qui facit quod debet, bene facit et rectitudinem facit. Unde sequitur quia rectitudinem facere est facere veritatem. Constat namque facere veritatem esse bene facere, et bene facere esse rectitudinem facere. Quare nihil apertius quam veritatem actionis esse rectitudinem*” (Schmitt I, 181.19-28).

⁸⁶ “*M. . . . Unde animadverti potest rectitudinem seu veritatem actionis aliam esse necessariam, aliam non necessariam. Ex necessitate namque ignis facit rectitudinem et veritatem, cum calefacit; et non ex necessitate facit homo rectitudinem et veritatem, cum bene facit. . . . Cum ergo constet actionis veritatem aliam esse naturalem, aliam non naturalem, . . .*” (Schmitt I, 182.6-10 and 183.1-2).

There is, however, more than an analogy present here between actions and statements: the teacher and student understand “action” in a broad sense, so as to include statements, thoughts, willing, etc.⁸⁷ So the two-fold truth of a statement is its particular specification of the two-fold truth of action:⁸⁸ insofar as a statement is merely signifying, it is doing what it ought and cannot do otherwise without ceasing to be a statement, so it has rectitude necessarily (natural truth); but insofar as a statement is fulfilling or not fulfilling the purpose for which it was given this power of signification, the statement might or might not do what it ought, and so might or might not have rectitude (non-natural truth).⁸⁹

This conception of truth as present in actions – “actions” being understood to include statements, thoughts, willing, etc. – has, in some sense, been present all along in *De veritate*. We have seen in our examination of Chapters 2-4 that truth is not only signifying as one ought (rectitude for statements), but also thinking as one ought (rectitude for thoughts) and willing as one ought (rectitude for the will). This is encapsulated in the conclusion of Chapter 5: truth in action is acting (or doing) as one ought, which includes the acts of stating, thinking, and willing. For Anselm, then, at least up to this point in the dialogue, truth is an act, a doing, whence Anselm’s constant use of *facere* in this context (*facere veritatem, facere*

⁸⁷ See Ubaldo R. Perez-Paoli, “Truth and Justice in Anselm of Canterbury,” trans. Dirk Effertz and Marcus Brainard, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 17, no. 1 (1994): 133.

⁸⁸ “*M. Cum ergo constet actionis veritatem aliam esse naturalem, aliam non naturalem: sub naturali ponenda est illa veritas orationis, quam supra vidimus ab illa non posse separari. Sicut enim ignis cum calefacit veritatem facit, quia ab eo accepit a quo habet esse: ita et haec oratio, scilicet ‘dies est’, veritatem facit, cum significat diem esse, sive dies sit sive non sit; quoniam hoc naturaliter accepit facere*” (Schmitt I, 183.1-6).

⁸⁹ It seems that one should conclude from this discussion in Chapter 5 that all actions are susceptible of, and indeed always exhibit, one kind of truth – natural – whereas only rational actions (statements, thoughts, willing, etc.) are susceptible of, although they do not always exhibit, another kind of truth – non-natural. But this conclusion is subject to serious objections: e.g., do no irrational agents have purposes over and above the powers they were given, purposes that are not always fulfilled? Furthermore, neither the student nor teacher explicitly draws this conclusion. This is a knotty issue, but one that we cannot take up here, as it has no direct bearing on our current investigation.

rectitudinem, etc.). As Donald Duclow notes, truth for Anselm is not merely a “formal property of linguistic constructs” but rather “an event, a deed: . . . an act of existence.”⁹⁰

*Chapter Seven*⁹¹

The teacher and student continue their examination of truth by identifying another truth-bearer: the essence of any existing thing. Rather than drawing upon Scripture, the teacher presents a philosophical argument that there is truth in the essence of every existing thing. This argument, which draws implicitly (but quite clearly) on the *Monologion* passages we discussed above, begins with the statement that everything that exists is in the Supreme Truth and receives its being from the Supreme Truth and is and can be only what it is in the Supreme Truth.⁹² This being so, “whatever exists truly exists, insofar as it is what it is in the Supreme Truth . . . thus there is truth in the essence of all things that exist, because they are what they are in the Supreme Truth.”⁹³ Granting that every existing thing exists in and because of and in accordance with what it is in the Supreme Truth, every existing thing truly is and, thus, has truth in its essence. Put another way: for a thing to be what it is in the Supreme Truth is for it truly to be, and since all things are what they are in the Supreme Truth, all things truly are.

⁹⁰ “Structure and Meaning in Anselm’s *De veritate*,” *American Benedictine Review* 26 (1975): 409-10. Along these lines, Aertsen speaks of Anselm’s “remarkable” and “integral” understanding of truth as “determined by the biblical, especially Johannine, concept of truth” (“Fröhliche Wissenschaft,” 55).

⁹¹ I have skipped Chapter 6 because for our present purposes it need not be examined. The most important point made in Chapter 6 is the teacher’s remark that the senses, by their mere reporting, are doing what they ought to do and thus acting rightly (doing the truth), so that the truth of the senses is included in the truth of action – but it seems unnecessary to elaborate upon this.

⁹² “*M. An putas aliquid esse aliquando aut alicubi quod non sit in summa veritate, et quod inde non acceperit quod est inquantum est, aut quod possit aliud esse quam quod ibi est? D. Non est putandum*” (Schmitt I, 185.11-14).

⁹³ “*M. Quidquid igitur est, vere est, inquantum est hoc quod ibi est. . . M. Est igitur veritas in omnium quae sunt essentia, quia hoc sunt quod in summa veritate sunt*” (Schmitt I, 185.15 and 185.18-19).

The teacher then brings in “oughtness” and rectitude, completing the argument in the following manner. All existing things are what they ought to be insofar as they are what they are in the Supreme Truth. But that which is as it ought to be exists rightly. Therefore all existing things exist rightly, precisely in virtue of their being what they are in the Supreme Truth. And because a thing both exists truly and exists rightly in virtue of its being what it is in the Supreme Truth, the truth of the essence of a thing is its rectitude.⁹⁴ Again, the connecting link – the middle term – between truth and rectitude is oughtness. Merely to be what one is, is to be true, precisely because “merely” to be what one is means to be in, and in accordance with, the Supreme Truth, which is to be truly; but this is to be as one ought to be, which is to be right, and so to be truly is to be right: truth is rectitude.

Once again, then, Anselm arrives at the insight of the previous chapters that a thing’s merely being what it is constitutes a truth (a statement’s merely existing as a statement and an action’s merely existing as an action are a fulfillment of a basic ought and therefore constitute a truth). The advance made in this chapter is to extend this insight beyond actions (statements, thoughts, etc.) to the very essence⁹⁵ of a thing. This extension of the insight – and the argument of Chapter 7 as a whole – requires affirming that (1) things are in, are from,

⁹⁴ “*M. Si ergo omnia hoc sunt quod ibi sunt, sine dubio hoc sunt quod debent. D. Vere hoc sunt, quod debent. M. Quidquid vero est quod debet esse, recte est. D. Aliter non potest. M. Igitur omne quod est, recte est. D. Nihil consequentius. M. Si ergo et veritas et rectitudo idcirco sunt in rerum essentia, quia hoc sunt quod sunt in summa veritate: certum est veritatem rerum esse rectitudinem*” (Schmitt I, 185.25-31 and 186.1-3).

⁹⁵ Some translators – e.g., Thomas Williams – render “*essentia*” here as “being” rather than “essence.” Williams argues (“Glossary,” 107) that since Anselm uses the term here to refer both to the sheer existence of a thing and to its existing in a certain way, and since “being” includes both meanings whereas “essence” does not, we should therefore translate “*essentia*” as “being.” Now Anselm also speaks of the “*quod est*” (Ch. 7) and the “*existentia*” (Ch. 9) of a thing. Surprisingly, Williams translates both of these as “being.” Surely this is to obscure distinctions (at least logical, if not real) that Anselm himself makes: Anselm refers to a thing’s “*essentia*” or “*quod est*” when discussing its being what it is in the Supreme Truth (Ch. 7), but he refers to a thing’s “*existentia*” when affirming that by the very fact that something is, it signifies that it ought to be (Ch. 9). So there seems to me to be no reason not to translate “*essentia*” as “essence.”

and have corresponding divine ideas in the Supreme Truth, and that (2) insofar as they exist all things are in accordance with these divine ideas in the Supreme Truth, and that (3) to exist in accordance with these ideas is to exist truly.⁹⁶ Anselm has argued for these propositions already in the *Monologion*, and, in addition, the entire line of thought from Chapter 2 onward has shown us that a thing's being what it is constitutes one level of truth. For these reasons, the conclusion of Chapter 7 – that the mere being-what-it-is of a thing constitutes a truth, present in its essence – should come as no surprise.⁹⁷

Chapter Eight

Having concluded that every existing thing is what it ought to be, in virtue of the fact that it exists and, thus, is in accordance with the Supreme Truth, the teacher proceeds, in Chapter 8, to address an objection raised by the student: there seem to be some things that ought not exist, e.g., evil deeds.⁹⁸ By raising this objection, the student is taking the discussion back to a consideration of actions, rather than (the essences of) things: it is much easier to argue that there are actions that ought not to be than to argue that there are beings that ought not to be.

⁹⁶ Goebel points out that Anselm's position here in Chapter 7 must be understood in light of the metaphysics of creation present in the *Monologion*, with emphasis on the role of the Word (*Wahrheit und Freiheit*, 191). See also Hopkins, *A Companion*, 20: “. . . when God creates something, He implicitly confers on it a kind of truth. For when He creates, He creates in accordance with a model, or exemplar, in His mind. Insofar as all beings correspond to a pattern in the Divine Mind, they may be said to be true. And since all created things necessarily so accord, there is truth in the essence of all things.”

⁹⁷ In the background here, of course, is Augustine. In his *Soliloquiorum* (Bk. 1, ch. 15) and *Confessiones* (Bk. 7, ch. 15) Augustine says that whatever is, is true. In Question 46, #2, of his *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Augustine affirms that whatever exists does so by participating in the divine ideas. See our discussion in Chapter One above, 21-23.

⁹⁸ “*D. Sed secundum rei veritatem quomodo possumus dicere, quia quidquid est debet esse, cum sint multa opera mala, quae certum est esse non debere?*” (Schmitt I, 186.7-9).

The teacher's fundamental response to this objection is that even evil actions ought to be, in some sense: at bottom, they ought to be in the sense that the all-knowing and all-wise God allows such actions to be, i.e., God's permitting them shows that they ought to be.⁹⁹ Over and above this, however, one can say that many actions ought not to be in one sense, but ought to be in another sense, because of the diverse ways in which one can consider actions: e.g., a sinner ought to be punished, but he ought not to be punished by one who lacks the authority to punish.¹⁰⁰

According to Anselm, then, every existing thing is what it ought to be,¹⁰¹ and the actions of any existing thing ought to be, at least insofar as all actions are permitted by God. The ubiquity of truth – its universal extension or presence – is further developed in Chapter 9, to which we now turn.

Chapter Nine

Anselm now turns back to the truth of signification, with which the inquiry began in Chapter 2. There is signification, claims the teacher, not only in those things that we generally call "signs" (statements, thoughts, etc.) but also in every other truth-bearer that has been discussed to this point in the dialogue: the will, actions, and the essences of things. In

⁹⁹ "*M.* Idem igitur debet esse et non esse. Debet enim esse, quia bene et sapienter ab eo, quo non permittente fieri non posset permittitur; . . ." (Schmitt I, 186.29-30).

¹⁰⁰ "*M.* . . . Multis enim modis eadem res suscipit diversis considerationibus contraria. Quod in actione saepe contingit, ut in percussione. . . . Cum vero peccans ab eo ad quem non pertinet percutitur: quoniam et iste debet percuti et ille non debet percutere, debet et non debet esse percussio; et ideo recta et non recta negari non potest" (Schmitt I, 187.2-4 and 187.25-27).

¹⁰¹ Furthermore, all existing things ought to be. This is addressed by Anselm in Chapter 9.

other words, everything has signification, everything is a sign.¹⁰² Substantiating this claim is the burden of Chapter 9.

The teacher and student have already discovered, in Chapter 5, that there is natural truth in all action: the action of all agents, rational and irrational, insofar as it consists in the mere doing of what the agent has been given naturally the power to do (and what, therefore, the agent ought to do), is the fulfillment of a basic “ought.” Over and above this, however, rational agents act such that, when they are doing what they have naturally been given the power to do, they are acting either in accordance with or contrary to the purpose for which they were given such power. In such cases, rational agents, while fulfilling the ought of mere doing, are either fulfilling (thereby doing good) or failing to fulfill (thereby doing evil) a second ought, that of acting in accordance with the purpose for which that power was given to the rational agent.

Anselm’s first point in Chapter 9 is that even when acting contrary to such purposes (i.e., even when doing evil), rational agents are nevertheless signifying that they ought to do what they are doing. Anselm’s somewhat cryptic reason for this is that a rational agent must (ought to) do nothing other than what he ought to do.¹⁰³ The “ought” built-in to the powers of all agents, rational and irrational, governs the actions of even rational agents to such a degree that all rational actions – good and evil – are expressions of that ought: either acknowledgement and fulfillment of the “ought,” or rejection of it in favor of a different

¹⁰² “*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*” (Schmitt I, 189.2-4). On the significance of this point as it relates to Bonaventure’s metaphysics, see: Christopher M. Cullen, *The Semiotic Metaphysics of Saint Bonaventure* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000); Cullen, *Bonaventure, Great Medieval Thinkers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 76-77.

¹⁰³ “*M. . . . 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*” (Schmitt I, 189.4-6).

“ought.” The teleological structure of things is the ontological ground of “the symbolic value of actions”: God’s creation of beings with natural ends and with the powers required to achieve those ends means that creatures’ actions are “under obligation” and are thereby significative.¹⁰⁴

So, whenever the rational agent does something, he signifies that he ought to do it. When what he does is in fact what he ought to do (good action), the rational agent signifies truly; when what he does is in fact what he ought not to do (evil action), the rational agent lies because he signifies as what he ought to do something that, in fact, he ought not to do.¹⁰⁵ The teacher presents to the student three hypothetical situations to illustrate this false signification (“lying”). What is clear through examination of these three situations is the following: (1) a person’s actions (interior and exterior) signify something, viz., what one takes to be true or right; and (2) a person’s actions speak louder than his words, i.e., his actions signify more genuinely than his words what he takes to be true or right.

But such signification is not limited to actions: “Similarly there is also true or false signification in the [very] existence of things, because by the very fact that something is, it says that it ought to exist.”¹⁰⁶ True and false signification belong not only to actions – statements, thoughts, willing, and external actions – but also to the very existence of the things that perform those actions. Now when Anselm says that there is true or false signification in the existence of things, he means that because the very essences of things are

¹⁰⁴ Marilyn McCord Adams, “Saint Anselm’s Theory of Truth,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 1, no. 2 (1990): 367. Adams also points out another consequence of this: all creatures and their actions are signs of the Supreme Truth, their Creator (367-68).

¹⁰⁵ “*M. . . . Quod si debet facere quod facit, verum dicit. Si autem non debet, mentitur*” (Schmitt I, 189.6-7).

¹⁰⁶ “*M. . . . In rerum quoque existentia est similiter vera vel falsa significatio, quoniam eo ipso quia est, dicit se debere esse*” (Schmitt I, 189.24-25).

what they ought to be, in virtue of their being what they are in the Supreme Truth (Chapter 7), their sheer existing – the fact that they exist – signifies that they ought to exist. For if the sheer existence of an action – whether rational or irrational – signifies that the action ought to be done, then analogously the sheer existence of a being signifies that it ought to be. This is the ultimate working-out, within the horizon of truth in the creaturely realm, of the line of thought developed from Chapters 2 to 8. If truth is doing or being what one ought,¹⁰⁷ and if the actions of all creatures have signification precisely in virtue of being governed by an ought, then the very existence of all creatures also has signification, since their being is also governed by an ought (Chapter 7).

For Anselm, then, truth is not merely right signification (for it is much broader than that, as we have seen), but where there is truth there is also right signification, although right signification at a much deeper level than that of signs in the usual sense – i.e., not the mere signification of what is, but the signification of what ought to be.

Anselm's three approaches to truth – via the truth of signs (Chapters 2-3), via the truth of actions (Chapters 4-5), and via the truth of essences (Chapters 7-8) – converge in the final analysis: all signs are actions (Chapter 5), and all actions (and essences) are themselves signs.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the Supreme Truth is the “constitutive and focal integration of [the] modes of truth,”¹⁰⁹ insofar as this Supreme Truth gives to all creatures the various “oughts”

¹⁰⁷ “*M. Considera quia, cum omnes supradictae rectitudines ideo sint rectitudines, quia illa in quibus sunt aut sunt aut faciunt quod debent: . . .*” (Schmitt I, 190.1-2).

¹⁰⁸ Adams, “Saint Anselm’s Theory of Truth,” 368. Adams also argues (366) that being what one ought to be (truth in the essence of a thing) is action in the broad sense. At this point in the dialogue, then, truth is, in all its instances, an act/event/deed, whether of existence or of operation (see also Duclow, “Structure and Meaning,” 409-10).

¹⁰⁹ Duclow, “Structure and Meaning,” 411.

(whether of stating, thinking, willing, acting, or, most fundamentally, being), in the fulfillment of which all truth consists. This Supreme Truth remains as the final truth-bearer for the teacher and student to examine; this examination takes place in the next chapter.

Chapter Ten

The teacher opens Chapter 10 not by asking whether there is a Supreme Truth, nor even by asking whether the Supreme Truth is rectitude. Rather, he states: “Now, you will not deny that the Supreme Truth is rectitude.”¹¹⁰ For the teacher and student assume, on the basis of faith and as one of the starting-points of the entire investigation, the existence of the Supreme Truth, as we saw in our discussion of Chapter 1.¹¹¹ And granting the existence of a Supreme Truth, the teacher and student see no need to argue for the thesis that such a Supreme Truth is rectitude; their discussion in this regard serves rather to clarify the way in which the Supreme Truth is rectitude.

The teacher, immediately upon the student’s assenting to the thesis that the Supreme Truth is rectitude, distinguishes between the Supreme Truth as rectitude and all other truths as rectitudes: the latter are rectitudes in virtue of the fact that the beings in which these rectitudes exist either are or do what they ought, whereas the former is not a rectitude in this way. For all things other than the Supreme Truth have an ought relative to that Supreme Truth, in the fulfillment of which ought they have truth, whereas the Supreme Truth has no

¹¹⁰ “*M. Summam autem veritatem non negabis rectitudinem esse*” (Schmitt I, 189.31).

¹¹¹ See above, 44-46.

ought – neither an ought-to-be nor an ought-to-do – relative to anyone. In fact, the Supreme Truth has no ought: it just is what it is.¹¹²

For Anselm, an “ought” is something owed, and this “owing” bespeaks, because it presupposes, another, i.e., a someone or something to which one owes what is owed. And whereas creatures can and do have “oughts,” the Supreme Truth cannot. The ontological ground for this position is a “metaphysics of creation,”¹¹³ which Anselm has been happy to assume up to this point in the *De veritate*,¹¹⁴ since (1) he considers himself to have proven the essential elements of this metaphysics in his *Monologion* (many of which elements we have examined in Section B of this chapter), and (2) he believes it on faith anyway, and *De veritate* is explicitly drawing upon not only reason but also faith. The teacher and student utilize this metaphysics of creation in the immediately following passage: the Supreme Truth causes all other truths and rectitudes, itself having no cause.¹¹⁵

From this discussion, it appears that the Supreme Truth is rectitude both (1) *qua* object of rectitude, and (2) *qua* cause of rectitude. Insofar as the Supreme Truth establishes all other beings in their essences, with certain powers and purposes (thereby establishing “oughts” within them), He is the object to which these “oughts” are directed: “all other

¹¹² “*M. Considera quia, cum omnes supradictae rectitudines ideo sint rectitudines, quia illa in quibus sunt aut sunt aut faciunt quod debent: summa veritas non ideo est rectitudo quia debet aliquid. Omnia enim illi debent, ipsa vero nulli quicquam debet; nec ulla ratione est quod est, nisi quia est*” (Schmitt I, 190.1-4).

¹¹³ I have borrowed this term from Noone (“Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 125).

¹¹⁴ That Anselm is assuming a metaphysics of creation up to this point in *De veritate* is quite clear from the various passages in which he refers to the purposes given to created things and to the powers given them to fulfill those purposes: the power of thought “*nobis datum est*” (Ch. 3: Schmitt I, 180.12-13); the devil’s willing what he ought was that “*ad quod scilicet voluntatem acceperat*” (Ch. 4: Schmitt I, 181.4-5); all things have their being from, and are in, the Supreme Truth, and they can be only what they are in the Supreme Truth (Ch. 7). Such passages are ubiquitous.

¹¹⁵ “*M. Vides etiam quomodo ista rectitudo causa sit omnium aliarum veritatum et rectitudinum, et nihil sit causa illius?*” (Schmitt I, 190.6-7).

beings owe Him,”¹¹⁶ whence it is with regard to Him that any being has rectitude. And again, insofar as the Supreme Truth establishes all other beings in their essences, He is the direct cause of the most fundamental rectitude a being has – the rectitude (truth) in the existence of things, according to which a being is what it is in the Supreme Truth; and since this rectitude is itself the cause of the truth of statements, thoughts, etc., the Supreme Truth is, in the final analysis, the cause of all truths/rectitudes other than Himself.¹¹⁷

The teacher uses this understanding of the relationship between the various kinds of truth to comment on and clarify the argument he (Anselm) presented in the *Monologion* (Chapter 18) to demonstrate the eternity of the Supreme Truth. To recap, according to this argument, the statements “something was going to exist” and “something existed in the past” cannot, if ever they were stated, have lacked truth, and the first statement therefore being beginninglessly true and the second statement therefore being endlessly true, and nothing being true except by truth, truth is beginningless and endless (and the Supreme Nature being Supreme Truth, He, too, is beginningless and endless).

Now it was precisely this argument from the *Monologion* that the student brought forward at the beginning of *De veritate* as contributing to the conclusion that every truth is God. As the student noted, since we believe that God is truth, and since this argument from the *Monologion* serves to prove that truth in general, and the Supreme Truth in particular, is

¹¹⁶ “*M. . . . Omnia enim illi debent, . . .*” (Schmitt I, 190.3).

¹¹⁷ “*D. Video et animadverto in aliis quasdam esse tantum effecta, quasdam vero esse causas et effecta. Ut cum veritas quae est in rerum existentia sit effectum summae veritatis, ipsa quoque causa est veritatis quae cogitationis est, et eius quae est in propositione; et istae duae veritates nullius sunt causa veritatis*” (Schmitt I, 190.8-12). See J. Rassam, “Existence et vérité chez saint Anselme,” *Archives de philosophie* 24 (1961): 334; Visser and Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” 215.

beginningless and endless, it would seem that the argument is identifying truth in general with God.

Up to this point in the dialogue, the teacher and student have not addressed this argument. Determining whether this argument requires concluding that God is identifiable with every truth requires examining truth in all truth-bearers and determining the relationship between the truth of the statement (with which the *Monologion* argument begins) and the Supreme Truth (which the *Monologion* argument brings in at the end). As we have seen, in *Monologion* 18 Anselm did not explain, or even mention, this relationship between the truth of the statement and the Supreme Truth. It is only now, in Chapter 10 of *De veritate*, having developed the elements of an understanding of this relationship in the first ten chapters by examining truth wherever it is found, that the full meaning and import of the *Monologion* 18 argument can begin to be unpacked. The first stage of this “unpacking” of the argument occurs here in Chapter 10, in which the teacher applies to the argument the student’s new-found understanding of the relationship between the truth of the statement, the truth in the existence of things, and the Supreme Truth. The second stage of this fuller elaboration occurs in the final chapters, especially in Chapter 13, in which final determination is made of the import of this argument for the question of whether God is identifiable with every truth.

The first stage of this “unpacking” of the *Monologion* argument begins with the teacher’s statement, in the middle of Chapter 10, that by this argument he did not mean that the truth of this statement is identifiable with God.¹¹⁸ This negative clarification is followed

¹¹⁸ “*M. Bene consideras. Unde iam intelligere potes quomodo summam veritatem in meo Monologio probavi non habere principium vel finem per veritatem orationis. Cum enim dixi ‘quando non fuit verum quia futurum erat aliquid’, non ita dixi, ac si absque principio ista oratio fuisset quae assereret futurum esse aliquid, aut ista veritas esset deus; sed quoniam non potest intelligi quando, si oratio ista esset, veritas illi deesset” (Schmitt I, 190.13-18).*

by the positive account of the true nature of the argument. In the *Monologion* argument, according to this account, the truth of the statement in question (“something was going to exist” or “something did exist”) is to be linked to the Supreme Truth via the truth of the existence of the thing stated.

The teacher links the truth of the first statement to the Supreme Truth, when he points out that the truth of the statement could not be beginningless (which it is) unless its cause – the Supreme Truth – were beginningless, the effect not being able to be greater than the cause.¹¹⁹ The teacher then augments the *Monologion* argument by explaining this causal relationship: the statement that something will exist is not true unless indeed something will exist, and nothing will exist unless it exists in the Supreme Truth.¹²⁰ The truth of the statement relies on and presupposes the existence of the thing, which itself relies on and presupposes the existence of the thing in the Supreme Truth, which presupposes the Supreme Truth. The Supreme Truth is thus the first cause of the truth of this statement through the mediating causality of the truth of the existence of the thing named in the statement (*res enuntiata*), so that the truth of this statement has its beginninglessness ultimately from the Supreme Truth as its cause and ground.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ “*M. . . . Ut per hoc quia non intelligitur, quando ista veritas esse non potuerit, si esset oratio in qua esse posset, intelligatur illa veritas sine principio fuisse, quae prima causa est huius veritatis. Quippe veritas orationis non semper posset esse, si eius causa non semper esset*” (Schmitt I, 190.18-22). Here, the teacher states explicitly, for the first time, that the truth of the statement “something was going to exist” is beginningless, whereas before, in *Monologion* 18, he referred to truth generically, rather than to the truth of this statement, as beginningless (see above, 37n33-34).

¹²⁰ “*M. . . . Etenim non est vera oratio quae dicit futurum esse aliquid, nisi reipsa sit aliquid futurum; neque aliquid est futurum, si non est in summa veritate*” (Schmitt I, 190.22-24).

¹²¹ Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 112.

This line of thought applies likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, to the statement that something existed in the past: the endlessness of the truth of this statement relies on and presupposes the prior real existence of something, which itself relies on and presupposes that things are such in the Supreme Truth. The Supreme Truth, then, is beginningless and endless. But this is so not merely because there always was going to be something and always will have been something, but because it was impossible for it to be otherwise:¹²² impossible, presumably, because determined as such from eternity by and in the Supreme Truth.

Thus, Anselm's clarification and elaboration of the argument in *Monologion* 18 consists, in its first stage here in *De veritate* 10, in an enriching of the understanding of truth in the *Monologion* with a metaphysics of participation through mediation. And since the teacher has denied that he meant, by this argument, that the truth of the statement was God, he seems to have answered, in the negative, the original question that drives the dialogue – viz., is God identifiable with every truth? However, this question has not been taken up explicitly, and our anticipation of an answer in the negative will be confronted by an unexpected positive answer, when the teacher and student take up this question explicitly in Chapter 13.

The elaboration of the *Monologion* argument here in *De veritate* 10 also serves as an explanation of an assertion the student made in Chapter 2, viz., that the *res enuntiata* is the

¹²² “*M. . . .* Similiter de illa intelligendum est oratione, quae dicit quia praeteritum est aliquid. Nam si nullo intellectu veritas orationi huic si facta fuerit deesse poterit, necesse est ut eius veritatis quae summa causa est istius, nullus finis intelligi possit. Idcirco namque vere dicitur praeteritum esse aliquid, quia ita est in re; et ideo est aliquid praeteritum, quia sic est in summa veritate. Quapropter si numquam potuit non esse verum futurum esse aliquid, et numquam poterit non esse verum praeteritum esse aliquid: impossibile est principium summae veritatis fuisse aut finem futurum esse” (Schmitt I, 190.24-32).

cause of the truth of a statement.¹²³ That the statement be true, and thus that it have truth, requires that the *res enuntiata* be such, which itself requires that matters be so in the Supreme Truth as cause of all existing things. So the intermediate cause of the truth of the statement is the truth in the existence of the *res enuntiata*, i.e., the *res enuntiata* precisely as having the truth that resides in the existence of every existing thing, and, thus as brought into existence and determined by the governing causality that the Supreme Truth exercises over all existing things.¹²⁴

The inter-relationship that obtains among the truth of the statement, the truth in the existence of things, and the Supreme Truth is therefore one of exemplar causality, grounded in the Supreme Truth,¹²⁵ for it is the Supreme Truth as the origin of every “ought” – i.e., as

¹²³ An objection might be raised here. The student’s assertion in Chapter 2 – that the thing stated is the cause of the truth of the statement – applies to all statements. But here in Chapter 10 the teacher and student are examining only one particular statement and therefore their characterization of the relationship that obtains between the thing stated and the truth of that particular statement applies only in that particular case, or in similar cases. Thus, it seems irresponsible to understand this Chapter 10 characterization as universally applicable to all statements, which means it is irresponsible to use it to explain the student’s assertion in Chapter 2. However, although it is true that the Chapter 10 presentation of the inter-relationship among the truth of the statement, the truth in the existence of things, and the Supreme Truth stems from the examination of one particular statement, Anselm certainly believes that this inter-relationship obtains universally (i.e., for all statements and things), since here in Chapter 10 the teacher approves the student’s general observation that the truth in the existence of things is the cause of the truth of statements and thoughts.

¹²⁴ Now this intermediate causing of the truth of the statement need not be exercised exclusively by the truth in the existence of the thing. To one who objects that statements not about the existence of something but about the essence of something would seem to be caused by the truth of the essence of the thing, it would seem to be in accord with the discussion in Chapter 10 to say that not only the truth in the existence of the thing but also the truth of the essence of the thing is an intermediate cause of the truth of the statement.

¹²⁵ Goebel, *Wahrheit und Freiheit*, 193-94. It should be noted here that Goebel understands this inter-relationship of exemplar causality to constitute a kind of “theological idealism,” in opposition to what he calls “sheer realism.” Following Flasch’s line of interpretation, Goebel understands Anselm to be affirming a conceptual apriori in the human mind (grounded, of course, in the Supreme Truth), rejecting a correspondence theory of truth (“sheer realism”), and elaborating a non-epistemic, normative concept of truth (*Wahrheit und Freiheit*, 199-210). Much can, and should, be said about this interpretation, but it falls outside the scope of the present study to address this issue at any length: only insofar as this interpretation touches directly upon Anselm’s argument for the unicity of truth will it be engaged, and such engagement will have to wait until our examination of Chapter 13. Suffice it to say that I do not agree with the major elements of this interpretation, for various reasons (some of which were presented in the discussion of Flasch in our examination of Chapter 2 above, 52-53).

establishing an exemplar in creating things – that is the causal principle responsible for the truth in the existence of the thing and thereby responsible also, though mediately, for the truth of the statement.¹²⁶ And if the Supreme Truth’s causality is to be understood thus as the establishing not only of the existing of created things but also of their having “oughts,” and if we are to understand the truth in the existence of the thing as an intermediate cause (grounded in the Ultimate Cause) of the truth of the statement, then it seems Anselm means us to understand that the truth in the existence of things gives (mediately) an ought to statements, so that the truth of the statement is caused by the truth in the existence of things insofar as the former fulfills an ought toward the latter by signifying the true thing in accordance with what it is.¹²⁷ So the *res enuntiata*, in virtue of the truth present in its existence, is the intermediate cause of the truth of the statement not only as being the object of the statement’s signification (and thereby making the statement possible in the first place) but also, and more fundamentally, as (mediately) establishing an ought in the statement, an ought that consists in the statement’s signifying the *res enuntiata* in accordance with what it is. This is the completion of our understanding of the truth of the statement: that the truth of a statement consists, at one level, in signifying that what is, is, and that what is not, is not, but at its deepest level consists in signifying what it ought to signify, is owing to the truth in the existence of the thing signified, which makes possible the existence of a statement and at the

¹²⁶ There is therefore a kind of unity of truth here in Chapter 10, a unity constituted by the inter-relationship of exemplar causality. Ducloz affirms that all modes of truth are in the Supreme Truth as directed towards It as “their originating and final ought” (“Structure and Meaning,” 414).

¹²⁷ “That a thing is what it is and not another thing demands that we signify it in accordance with what it is. We owe it to the nature of a thing to do that. We signify it truly, therefore, when we fulfill a *debitum* toward the thing signified” (Thomas F. Torrance, “The Ethical Implications of Anselm’s *De veritate*,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 24 [1968]: 309).

same time establishes (mediately) an ought in it. In this way, the truth in the existence of the thing, *qua* intermediate cause, mirrors the ultimate and governing causality of the Supreme Truth, Who makes things to be and then gives them obligations to Himself.

Chapter Eleven

At this point in the dialogue, the teacher and student agree that they have discovered all the kinds of truth – there remains no other rectitude that constitutes truth. The next step of the investigation, then, is to define truth. The manner in which they define truth is as follows. Truth being rectitude, it must be determined whether or not all rectitude is truth, i.e., whether there is some rectitude that is not truth. The student identifies a rectitude that does not constitute truth: corporeal rectitude, “straightness,” that which is displayed by a stick, for example.¹²⁸ But since this is not a rectitude that constitutes truth, the teacher and student must discover the respect in which these two kinds of rectitude differ, so as to define truth appropriately. Under questioning from the teacher, the student concludes that what differentiates corporeal rectitude from rectitude as truth is that the former is perceptible by corporeal vision, whereas the latter cannot at all be perceived by corporeal vision but only by the mind.¹²⁹ Thereupon, the teacher defines truth as “rectitude perceptible to the mind alone,” to which the student assents, noting that this definition, by distinguishing truth from everything else, fulfills the requirements of a true definition.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ “*M. Dic ergo mihi an tibi videatur esse aliqua alia rectitudo praeter has quas contemplati sumus. D. Non alia praeter has nisi illa quae est in rebus corporeis, quae multum est aliena ab istis, ut rectitudo virgae*” (Schmitt I, 191.6-9).

¹²⁹ “*D. Etiam. Sed eadem quae sic ratione intelligitur, visu sentitur in subiecto. Illae vero non nisi sola mente percipi possunt*” (Schmitt I, 191.17-18).

¹³⁰ “*M. Possumus igitur, nisi fallor, definire quia veritas est rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis. D. Nullo modo hoc dicentem falli video. Nempe nec plus nec minus continet ista definitio veritatis quam expediat, quoniam*

This definition of truth as rectitude is, of course, quite expected. The investigation of the various things in which we say (or in which we believe) there is truth has shown that, in all such truth-bearers, truth is rectitude, for a thing is true in virtue of its being or doing what it ought, which is also that in virtue of which a thing is right.¹³¹ Truth, then, is rectitude, and Chapter 11 serves only to distinguish this rectitude, which constitutes truth, from corporeal rectitude (“straightness”).

But a clarification is required here. While it is tempting to explain this definition of truth as affirming that all being-true in things is a being-right, i.e., a doing or being what one ought, this would be a mistake, since there is one instance of truth in which this is not so: the Supreme Truth. For it is not true to say of the Supreme Truth that He is or does what He ought to be: the Supreme Truth is rectitude insofar as He is the cause and the object of all created rectitude. To define truth as rectitude, then, requires understanding “rectitude” in a sufficiently flexible way, as not only being or doing what one ought (created truth), but being the object and cause of all such being and doing (Uncreated Truth). This would seem to over-extend the meaning of “rectitude”: is it any longer possible to speak of the rectitude of a

nomen rectitudinis dividit eam ab omni re quae rectitudo non vocatur; quod vero sola mente percipi dicitur, separat eam a rectitudine visibili” (Schmitt I, 191.19-24).

¹³¹ Andreas Bächli claims that for Anselm the concepts “truth” and “rectitude” refer to a created essence in different ways, because “truth” (with reference to things/essences) is an ontological concept, while “rectitude” is an epistemological concept, the former referring to the being of things, the latter referring to the “being-justified” of things (“Anselm von Canterburys Definition der Wahrheit,” *Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, no. 2 [2004]: 217-18). I take it that Bächli does not mean that “rectitude,” as an epistemological concept, refers to mental being, or, more specifically, our beliefs about things, for clearly Anselm does not restrict “rectitude” to the “epistemological,” in the typical sense of that word. Rather, by describing “rectitude” as an epistemological concept Bächli points to the fact that a thing’s being what it ought to be, its being-justified, refers precisely to its correspondence, the determining of which requires a mind, whereas, according to Bächli, “truth” refers to a thing’s sheer existing as what it is. However, I think this characterization fails to appreciate what Anselm has accomplished in his inquiry into truth, for Anselm considers himself to have discovered that “truth” is, rightly understood, not merely about states of affairs or what is (“ontological”) but is more fundamentally about how things ought to be (“epistemological”). The truth of a thing, then, is precisely its “being-justified,” and our concept of truth ought to be conformed thereto.

statement, for example, as in the same category (“rectitude”) as the Supreme Rectitude? “Rectitude,” that is, seems not to have univocity of meaning. This question does not pass unnoticed in *De veritate*: it is at the very heart of the question driving the entire dialogue, i.e., whether God is every truth. Thus, resolution of this objection awaits Anselm’s answer to the primary question of the dialogue, which answer is presented in Chapter 13.

Chapter Twelve

Having differentiated, in Chapter 11, the rectitude that constitutes truth from visible (corporeal) rectitude, and having completed the definition of truth on the basis of that differentiation, Chapter 12 begins with the student’s identification of another meaning of “rectitude,” viz., justice. The student wishes the teacher to teach him what justice is,¹³² and the entire chapter is spent in search of a clear definition of the rectitude we call “justice.”

The guiding principle of the inquiry into justice is that justice is praiseworthy,¹³³ the initial understanding of justice, then, is that it is praiseworthy rectitude. Now a being is praised for having rectitude only if it wills that rectitude. And since what wills rectitude must know rectitude, justice can reside only in those beings that can know and will rectitude, i.e., in rational beings.¹³⁴ Furthermore, justice can reside only in the will of such creatures – rather than in their intellects or actions – precisely because one is praised for willing rightly

¹³² “*D.* . . . Sed quoniam docuisti me omnem veritatem esse rectitudinem, et rectitudo mihi videtur idem esse quod iustitia: iustitiam quoque me doce quid esse intelligam” (Schmitt I, 191.27-29).

¹³³ The teacher initially assumes a broader meaning of “justice,” according to which “justice” is inter-defined with “truth” and “rectitude.” But the teacher and student quickly move to the more customary meaning of “justice,” according to which justice is deserving of praise.

¹³⁴ “*M.* Quaeris ut video definitionem iustitiae cui laus debetur; sicut contrario eius, scilicet iniustitiae, debetur vituperatio. *D.* Illam quaero. *M.* Constat quia illa iustitia non est in ulla natura quae rectitudinem non agnoscit. Quidquid enim non vult rectitudinem, etiam si eam tenet, non meretur laudari quia tenet rectitudinem. Velle autem illam non valet qui nescit eam. *D.* Verum est. *M.* Rectitudo igitur quae tenenti se laudem acquirit, non est nisi in rationali natura, quae sola rectitudinem de qua loquimur percipit” (Schmitt I, 192.27-34 and 193.1-2).

and not for knowing rightly or acting rightly. Justice, therefore, is rectitude of will, viz., willing what one ought to will.¹³⁵ But this is not yet a sufficient account of justice, for praiseworthy rectitude of will (viz., justice) requires that one wills for the proper reason. Clearly, willing something because of compulsion or for ulterior motives is not willing justly, for we do not praise such willing. Rather, willing justly requires that one will what one ought and will it because one ought so to do. But even this is inadequately put: willing something because one ought to will it can occur, the teacher says, by means of compulsion.¹³⁶ Willing justly is, properly speaking, willing what one ought and willing it for the sake of the rectitude itself.¹³⁷ Therefore, justice is “the will’s rectitude . . . that is being preserved for its own sake.” Justice, then, being the rectitude of the will, is a species of the genus “truth” (or “rectitude”).¹³⁸

¹³⁵ “*M.* Quid si quis recte intelligit aut recte operatur, non autem recte velit: laudabit eum quisquam de iustitia? *D.* Non. *M.* Ergo non est ista iustitia rectitudo scientiae aut rectitudo actionis, sed rectitudo voluntatis” (Schmitt I, 193.9-13).

¹³⁶ The teacher gives no examples to illustrate this kind of willing. Presumably, he is thinking of a situation like a child obeying his parents, when his parents are compelling him to will something but compelling him because he ought to will it. In such a situation, one is, in some sense, willing what one ought because one ought to, but compulsion is the more immediate motivation, and so one is not, properly speaking, willing justly.

¹³⁷ “*M.* Bene intelligis haec duo esse necessaria voluntati ad iustitiam: velle scilicet quod debet, ac ideo quia debet. Sed dic an sufficient. *D.* Cur non? *M.* Cum aliquis vult quod debet quia cogitur, et ideo cogitur quia hoc velle debet: nonne hic quodam modo vult quod debet, quoniam debet? *D.* Non possum negare; sed alio modo iste vult, alio modo iustus. *M.* Distingue ipsos modos. *D.* Iustus namque cum vult quod debet, servat voluntatis rectitudinem non propter aliud, in quantum iustus dicendus est, quam propter ipsam rectitudinem. Qui autem non nisi coactus aut extranea mercede conductus vult quod debet: si servare dicendus est rectitudinem, non eam servat propter ipsam sed propter aliud. *M.* Voluntas ergo illa iusta est, quae sui rectitudinem servat propter ipsam rectitudinem” (Schmitt I, 194.11-24).

¹³⁸ “*M.* Bene igitur diximus iustitiam esse rectitudinem voluntatis servatam propter se, id est quae servatur propter se” (Schmitt I, 196.19-20). While this definition implies that justice is a species of truth, the teacher states this explicitly at the beginning of Chapter 13: “*M.* Redeamus ad rectitudinem seu veritatem, quibus duobus nominibus, quoniam de rectitudine mente sola perceptibili loquimur, una res significatur quae genus est iustitiae; . . .” (Schmitt I, 196.28-30).

In the course of this discussion of justice, the teacher asks the student whether their definition of justice applies to the Supreme Justice. Admitting the qualification that very little, if anything, can properly be said of the Supreme Being, and acknowledging that rectitude and will are not distinct in the Supreme Being, the student states that we can appropriately speak of His rectitude of will (preserved for its own sake). In fact, of no other rectitude of will is it as fitting to say that it is being preserved for its own sake, for the “for-its-own-sake” character of justice is most truly present in the Supreme Justice, Whose rectitude preserves itself, through itself, for its own sake.¹³⁹ Whereas all other beings who have rectitude of will have it (and therefore will it and preserve it) only in virtue of receiving it from the Supreme Justice, He has it and wills it and preserves it through Himself, without receiving it from another.¹⁴⁰

What role does this protracted discussion of justice play in the argument of *De veritate* other than serving to distinguish justice from truth?¹⁴¹ For surely the lengthy nature of this Chapter 12 indicates that its purpose is not merely to clarify the definition of truth by distinguishing it from justice, for that could be achieved by a much briefer treatment of

¹³⁹ “*M. Videtur tibi quod ista definitio possit aptari summae iustitiae, secundum quod de re loqui possumus de qua nihil aut vix aliquid proprie potest dici? D. Licet non ibi sit aliud voluntas, aliud rectitudo, tamen sicut dicimus potestatem divinitatis aut divinam potestatem sive potentem divinitatem, cum in divinitate non sit aliud potestas quam divinitas: ita non inconvenienter dicimus ibi rectitudinem voluntatis . . . Si vero illam rectitudinem dicimus propter se servari, de nulla alia rectitudine sic convenienter dici posse videtur. Sicut enim non aliud illam sed ipsa se servat, nec per aliud sed per se: ita non propter aliud quam propter se*” (Schmitt I, 195.31-33 and 196.1-8).

¹⁴⁰ “*M. . . . Quippe sicut eiusdem rectitudinis acceptio natura prius est quam habere aut velle illam – quoniam illam habere aut velle non est causa acceptionis, sed acceptio facit velle illam et habere –; . . . Quare a quo simul accipimus et habere et velle et servare voluntatis rectitudinem, ab illo accipimus iustitiam; . . .*” (Schmitt I, 195.18-20 and 24-25).

¹⁴¹ See, *inter alia*: Eduardo Briancesco, “Justicia y verdad en san Anselmo: el capitulo 12 de ‘*De veritate*’,” *Patristica et Mediaevalia* 2 (1981), 5-20; Pouchet, *La rectitudo*, 58 and 85; Perez-Paoli, “Truth and Justice,” 137-41; Duclow, “Structure and Meaning,” 414-16. Pouchet surely goes too far in stating (p. 85) that Chapter 12 is the culmination of the entire dialogue, since the question that drives and therefore structures the entire dialogue finds its answer only in Chapter 13.

justice. First, we must keep in mind that, as we have seen, justice is a species of truth (being the rectitude of the will, which is one kind of truth/rectitude), so it is not as if justice is, within the inquiry into truth, an interloper that requires mention only because it, like truth, is defined as rectitude. Unlike visible rectitude (“straightness”), which is such an interloper and which is therefore treated only briefly, justice is a species of truth. The lengthy examination of justice is, then, another instance of Anselm examining truth in a particular truth-bearer, so that what Anselm accomplishes here is not merely showing how justice is not the same as truth but also examining a particular, and important, instantiation of truth.

But one might press the question further: Anselm has already, albeit briefly, examined the truth of the will, in Chapter 4, so why the protracted treatment of the rectitude of the will here in Chapter 12? At least two considerations are in order here. First, Chapter 12 augments our understanding, first gained in Chapter 10, of the rectitude/truth of the Supreme Nature. In Chapter 10, we were brought to see that His rectitude consists in His being the object and cause of all other rectitudes, so that He owes nothing to any being and just is what He is. But Chapter 12 brings out the self-referential nature of His rectitude – He wills what He wills and preserves His rectitude, through Himself alone, for the sake of that rectitude itself – and in so doing completes Anselm’s account of God as self-sufficient cause of all else.¹⁴² Second, Chapter 12 deepens Anselm’s account of the rectitude/truth of rational beings, and in so doing identifies their privileged status among created beings. Rational beings, alone among created beings, partake in justice: they, like the Supreme Nature, are able to will what they will for the sake of the rectitude of will itself, whereas non-rational beings cannot will, and thus they can and do act as they ought to only non-voluntarily. What

¹⁴² Briancesco, “Justicia y verdad,” 18.

Anselm has done, in this respect, is to fill out and complete his picture of the hierarchy of beings in terms of truth (ought-fulfillment). Until this point, the only hierarchical ordering that Anselm has presented is that of the Supreme Truth as first cause (being the effect of no being), the truth in the existence of things as both an effect of the Supreme Truth and intermediate cause of the truth of statements and thoughts, which latter are mere effects, and not the cause of any other truth. But now there is another hierarchical arrangement of beings, one that complements and contextualizes the previous arrangement. Least of all beings are non-rational beings, whose sheer existence and whose existence as what they are and whose involuntary action constitute their ought-fulfillment. Above non-rational beings stand rational beings, who fulfill their ought not only in the respects that non-rational beings do, but also in voluntary action (including statements, thoughts, etc.), in which action their wills can partake in the rectitude/truth that is justice. At the summit is the Supreme Truth, Who is subject to no ought, but rather is the cause and object of all “oughts,” and Whose rectitude consists in willing what He wills for the sake of His rectitude itself.

Chapter Thirteen

The beginning of the thirteenth and final chapter of Anselm’s *De veritate* brings the discussion back to the question with which the dialogue began, the question that has driven the entire dialogue: is there only one truth (i.e., the Supreme Truth) in all true things, or are there many truths, just as there are many true things?¹⁴³ As we saw in our discussion of Chapter 1, the search for the definition of truth was proposed and undertaken as the first step in answering this question about the unicity or multiplicity of truth, so that, having arrived at

¹⁴³ “*M. . . . ; et quaeramus an sit una sola veritas in omnibus illis in quibus veritatem dicimus esse, an ita sint veritates plures, sicut plura sunt in quibus constat esse veritatem*” (Schmitt I, 196.30 and 197.1-2).

this definition (in Chapter 11) and having distinguished it from, and determined its relationship to, other concepts closely related to truth (i.e., “straightness” and “justice,” in Chapters 11 and 12), the teacher and student are now, in Chapter 13, in a position to answer the original question.

This question, then, comes into focus more clearly once the student and teacher have arrived at the definition of truth (in Chapter 11). Because of this definition, and because of the identification of different kinds of (and not just different particular) truth-bearers,¹⁴⁴ the original question of the dialogue now has context and structure: does the definition of truth refer to rectitudes that are, in fact, as multiple as their truth-bearers – such “rectitudes” and “truth-bearers” being multiple not only as individuals under a species but also as proximate (sub-) species (plural) under a genus – or does the definition of truth refer to a single rectitude existing in (or at least present to) the many truth-bearers?¹⁴⁵

The teacher and student begin answering the question by examining what is involved in the thesis that there are many truths. This constitutes the first stage of the argument in Chapter 13.¹⁴⁶ The teacher begins by uncovering the pre-requisites for there being many truths. This thesis of the multiplicity of truth rests upon the fact that there are diverse things in which there is truth: given this diversity of true things – a diversity of both individual true

¹⁴⁴ It must be noted in this regard that when the teacher speaks of “many truths” in Chapter 13, he is referring primarily to the (presumed) many kinds of truth (truth of statements, truth of thoughts, truth of the will, etc.) rather than to individual truths (“It is day,” etc.). This is borne out by the fact that in the course of this chapter the teacher never uses examples of individual truths but only examples of particular kinds of truth (truth of signification, truth of the will, etc.): for it is precisely the difference among the kinds of truth-bearers that drives the initial argument for the multiplicity of truth/rectitude.

¹⁴⁵ Külling’s phrasing of the question is similar (*Wahrheit als Richtigkeit*, 260-64).

¹⁴⁶ I will identify three stages of the Ch. 13 argument for the unicity of truth. Külling makes the same division (*Wahrheit als Richtigkeit*, 259).

things and classes of true things – it would seem that in accordance with this diversity of true things there would be a diversity of truths (rectitudes). For how could the truth of signification be one and the same truth as the truth of the will or the truth in the essence of the thing?¹⁴⁷ So, if there are many truths, these truths are many in accordance with the diversity of true things. But furthermore, “if there must be diverse rectitudes [truths] in accordance with the diversity of things, then certainly these rectitudes have their being in accordance with these diverse things; and just as the things in which these rectitudes exist are changed, so also necessarily are the rectitudes changed.”¹⁴⁸ In response to the student’s request for an example, the teacher clarifies his meaning: if one assumes that rectitude of signification differs from rectitude of will because the former is present in signification whereas the latter is present in the will, then one must consequently affirm that the rectitude of signification has its being from, and changes in accordance with, the signification itself.¹⁴⁹

Since the argument of Chapter 13 is governed by a disjunct – either there are many truths or there is only one truth – and since the teacher has assumed one side of the disjunct (that there are many truths) and elaborated upon what this thesis entails, the argument is a dilemma, having (to this point) the following form:

- O = There is only one truth/rectitude*
- M = There are many truths/rectitudes*
- R = Rectitudes are many in accordance with the diversity of true things*
- D = Rectitudes depend upon and change in accordance with the things in which they*

¹⁴⁷ On this point, see Bächli, “Definition der Wahrheit,” 216-17.

¹⁴⁸ “*M. Si ergo plures sunt veritates secundum plures res, plures quoque sunt rectitudines. D. Hoc quoque non minus certum est. M. Si secundum diversitates rerum necesse est esse diversas rectitudines: utique secundum res ipsas habent esse suum eadem rectitudines; et sicut res ipsae in quibus sunt variantur, sic quoque rectitudines varias esse necesse est*” (Schmitt I, 197.7-13).

¹⁴⁹ “*M. Dico quia si rectitudo significationis ideo est alia quam voluntatis rectitudo, quia ista in voluntate, illa in significatione est: habet suum esse rectitudo propter significationem et secundum eam mutatur*” (Schmitt I, 197.16-18).

exist

O ∨ M

M ⊃ R

M (ex hypothesi)

∴ R

R ⊃ D

R

∴ D

The student then gives an affirmation and defense of “D,” on grounds independent of the already-constructed dilemma. The rectitudes present in true things do, the student says, depend upon those things for their existence and do change in accordance with changes in those things. To show this the student uses an example, viz., the rectitude of signification: the presence of rectitude in signification requires that one signify that what is, is, or that what is not, is not, so that if one does not so signify, or does not signify at all, there will be no rectitude of signification. This makes clear, the student thinks, that the rectitude of signification depends upon signification for its existence and changes in accordance with it, because this rectitude can be present only when there is both signification and signification of a certain kind, whereas there can be signification without rectitude. The student uses an analogy: just as color depends on body for its being or not-being (without body, there is no color; if there is a body, there is color), so the rectitude of signification depends upon signification.¹⁵⁰ The point is clear: rectitude in a true thing is as a quality in a substance

¹⁵⁰ “D. Ita est. Cum enim significatur esse quod est, aut non esse quod non est, recta est significatio, et constat esse rectitudinem sine qua significatio recta nequit esse. Si vero significetur esse quod non est, vel non esse quod est, aut si nihil omnino significetur: nulla erit rectitudo significationis, quae non nisi in significatione est. Quapropter per significationem habet esse et per eam mutatur eius rectitudo, quemadmodum color per corpus habet esse et non esse. Existente namque corpore colorem eius esse necesse est, et pereunte corpore colorem eius manere impossibile est” (Schmitt I, 197.19-27).

(whence the analogy to color and bodies), for there can be things (substance) that have not rectitude (quality), but there can be no rectitude (quality) without a thing-as-potential-bearer-of-truth (substance), and the character of the thing (substance) will determine whether rectitude (quality) is present in it.

Therefore, there is at least one instance – signification – in which rectitude depends upon the truth-bearer (true thing) and changes in accordance with it, since the rectitude in question passes in and out of existence in accordance with, first, the existence of the signification and, second, the being-in-accordance-with-reality of the signification. Now the student clearly thinks that not only is the rectitude of signification dependent upon its truth-bearer, but all rectitudes are dependent upon their truth-bearers, for the rectitude of signification was an example given to him by the teacher to make more concrete the thesis that the many rectitudes have their being from and change according to their truth-bearers. And, indeed, the student’s request itself indicates this, for he asks for an example of this relationship of dependence in order that he may understand this relationship in the other truth-bearers (*in ceteris*).¹⁵¹

By the end of the student’s argument it seems clear that he is not merely assuming that there are many rectitudes (“M”) for the sake of argument but indeed is affirming “M.” For if the true thing’s existing and being-a-certain-way determines whether or not rectitude is

¹⁵¹ “*D. In una re in qua rectitudinem esse dicimus, ostende quod in ceteris intelligam*” (Schmitt I, 197.14-15). It should also be noted, as a possible further indication of this universal dependence of rectitudes upon their truth-bearers, that the student here speaks of the truth of signification, rather than the truth of a statement – nowhere here does he speak of an *enuntiatio* or *oratio* or *affirmatio*. Given this, and given the conclusion argued for in Chapter 9 – that there is true and false signification not only in “signs” but indeed in all truth-bearers (actions, the essence of things, and also the Supreme Truth) – given this, again, it is possible that what the student has in mind in his “example” is not merely statements or thoughts, but all true things, since signification is present in all true things.

present in it, it would seem necessary that there be many rectitudes (“M”), since the existence of one sole rectitude could not depend upon the existence and being-a-certain-way of many, sometimes contradictory, truth-bearers, each having different conditions for rectitude to be present in them. This seems to be confirmed by the student’s recourse to the analogy of rectitude in true things as color in bodies: color is different (i.e., is many rather than one) in different bodies. All this is to say that the student’s argument seems to be not merely a defense of the thesis that rectitude depends upon and changes in accordance with its truth-bearer (“D”) but also an argument for the multiplicity of truth (“M”) on the basis of this dependence of rectitude upon its truth-bearer.¹⁵² If this is so, then the student’s contribution to the argument is to understand the hypotheticals as equivalences: if there are many rectitudes, they are many in accordance with the diversity of true things, and if they are many in this way, they are dependent upon their truth-bearers; and likewise, if rectitude is dependent upon its truth-bearer, rectitude is many in accordance with the diversity of truth-bearers, and if it is many according to this diversity, then there are many rectitudes. The student, then, contributes the following to the argument:

O = There is only one truth/rectitude
M = There are many truths/rectitudes
R = Rectitudes are many in accordance with the diversity of true things
D = Rectitudes depend upon and change in accordance with the things in which they exist

$D \supset R$

D

$\therefore R$

$R \supset M$

¹⁵² See, *inter alia*, Flasch (“Zum Begriff,” 339), who understands Anselm, in this first part of the argument of Chapter 13, to be identifying the thesis of the multiplicity of rectitudes as the consequence of the student’s realist conception of truth.

R
 $\therefore M$

Combined with the teacher's two original hypothetical arguments ($M \supset R$ and $R \supset D$), we get the following equivalencies:

$M \equiv R$
 $R \equiv D$
 $M \equiv D$

So if rectitude is understood as present in the true thing only in virtue of the true thing's existing and existing in a certain way, by that very fact there are many rectitudes, viz., as many rectitudes as true things.

It is clear, then, that everything hinges on the thesis that rectitude is dependent upon and changes in accordance with its truth-bearer ("D"). The teacher recognizes this, and as soon as the student completes his argument, the teacher attacks this proposition. This begins the second stage of the argument. The teacher begins his response with a blunt rejection of the student's analogy of rectitude in signification to color in bodies, followed and buttressed by an argument for the independence of the rectitude of signification from the signification itself. The teacher leads the student to see that even in the absence of signification, it will still be right that what ought to be signified, be signified, so that even when signification does not exist, the rectitude by which it is right and required that what ought to be signified, be signified, does exist.¹⁵³ And since all signification is right on account of and in accordance with this very rectitude, rectitude is not present in signification in virtue of the coming-into-

¹⁵³ "*M. Non similiter se habent color ad corpus et rectitudo ad significationem. D. Ostende dissimilitudinem. M. Si nullus aliquo significare velit signo quod significandum est: erit ulla per signa significatio? D. Nulla. M. An ideo non erit rectum, ut significetur quod significari debet? D. Non idcirco minus erit rectum, aut minus hoc exiget rectitudo. M. Ergo non existente significatione non perit rectitudo qua rectum est et qua exigitur, ut quod significandum est significetur*" (Schmitt I, 197.28-37).

being of the signification that what is, is, or that what is not, is not; rather, signification then comes about according to a rectitude that always exists. Likewise, when signification is not as it ought or when there is no signification, the rectitude of signification does not thereby cease to exist; rather, the signification falls short of a rectitude that does not fall short. Therefore, the rectitude of signification does not depend for its existence nor change on account of signification, even if signification itself changes.¹⁵⁴

The student's defense of the thesis that rectitude is dependent upon its truth-bearer ("D") has been completely overturned, as he admits to the teacher. He also admits that the same argument just set forward applies to all truth-bearers, so that it is not merely the rectitude of signification that is independent of signification: whatever the ontological status of any truth-bearer (the will, signification, etc.), rectitude remains independent and immutable.¹⁵⁵

The *dénouement* is swift. Since rectitude is not dependent upon its truth-bearer, then there are not many rectitudes in virtue of the fact that there are many true things (upon which rectitude depends for its existence). Now, as was made clear in the first stage of this argument, if there are many rectitudes it is because there are many true things in which there is rectitude and thus rectitude is dependent upon its truth-bearer. But the student sees not

¹⁵⁴ "M. Putasne cum significatur quod significari debet, significationem tunc esse rectam propter hanc et secundum hanc ipsam rectitudinem? D. Immo non possum aliter putare. . . . M. Nulla igitur significatio est recta alia rectitudine quam illa, quae permanet pereunte significatione. D. Palam est. M. An ergo non vides quia non ideo est rectitudo in significatione, quia tunc incipit esse cum significatur esse quod est, vel non esse quod non est, sed quia significatio tunc fit secundum rectitudinem quae semper est; nec ob hoc abest a significatione, quia perit cum non sicut debet aut cum nulla sit significatio, sed quoniam tunc significatio deficit a non deficiente rectitudine? D. Sic video, ut non possim non videre. M. Rectitudo igitur qua significatio recta dicitur, non habet esse aut aliquem motum per significationem, quomodocumque ipsa moveatur significatio" (Schmitt I, 198.2-4 and 198.8-20).

¹⁵⁵ "D. Nihil mihi iam clarius. . . . M. Puto quia iam tibi notum est, quid de voluntate et eius rectitudine et de aliis quae rectitudinem debent sentiendum sit. D. Omnino video hac ipsa ratione probari, quoquo modo ipsa sint, rectitudinem immutabilem permanere" (Schmitt I, 198.21 and 198.25-28).

only that this reason for there being many rectitudes is false but also that there are no other reasons to be found for there being many rectitudes: the original structure “ $M \supset R$ and $R \supset D$ ” is to be understood as “ M only if R and R only if D .” This means that for there to be many rectitudes (“ M ”), rectitude must be dependent upon its truth-bearer (“ D ”). But the consequent (“ D ”) was shown to be false – rectitude is independent of its truth-bearer – and so the antecedent (“ M ”) is also false, *modo tollente*. Therefore, there are not many rectitudes, but only one and the same rectitude (truth) in all things.¹⁵⁶

This second stage of the argument of Chapter 13 completes the argument for the unicity of truth. This argument can be rendered as follows:

O = There is only one truth/rectitude
M = There are many truths/rectitudes
R = Rectitudes are many in accordance with the diversity of true things
D = Rectitudes depend upon and change in accordance with the things in which they exist

$O \vee M$

$R \supset D$

$\sim D$

$\therefore \sim R$

$M \supset R$

$\sim R$

$\therefore \sim M$

$\therefore O$

¹⁵⁶ “*M*. Quid ergo consequi existimas de ipsis rectitudinibus? Sunt aliae ab invicem, aut est una et eadem omnium rectitudo? *D*. Supra concessi quia si ideo plures sunt rectitudines, quoniam plures sunt res in quibus considerantur: necesse est eas existere et variari secundum res ipsas; quod nequaquam fieri demonstratum est. Quapropter non ideo sunt plures rectitudines, quia plures sunt res in quibus sunt. *M*. An habes aliquam aliam rationem cur tibi plures esse videantur, praeter ipsam rerum pluralitatem? *D*. Sicut istam nullam esse cognosco, ita nullam aliam inveniri posse considero. *M*. Una igitur et eadem est omnium rectitudo. *D*. Sic mihi fateri necesse est. . . . *M*. Una igitur est in illis omnibus veritas” (Schmitt I, 198.29-34 and 199.1-6 and 199.11).

It only remains for the teacher and student to identify this one truth/rectitude with the Supreme Truth; this constitutes the third and final stage of the argument of Chapter 13 that there is only one truth, viz., the Supreme Truth. This stage begins with the student asking the teacher to explain why we speak as if there are many truths (for we say “the truth of x ” and “the truth of y ”) when there is in fact only one truth. The teacher states that speaking of the truth of this or of that thing is improper speech: we speak this way not because truth has its being in or from or through the thing in which we say there is truth – this has been shown to be false. Rather, we speak this way “when the things themselves are in accordance with the truth that is always present to those things that are as they ought to be.” The teacher uses time as an analogy: there is only one and the same time for all things that are at the same time, and this time exists independently of the individual temporal thing, but we still say “the time of x ” or “the time of y .” We speak this way not because time is in temporal things but, rather, because they are in time. Likewise, just as we do not call time considered in itself “the time of x ,” but speak this way only insofar as we are considering the things that are in time, so also the Supreme Truth existing in itself is not the truth of a particular thing, but we speak of the truth or rectitude of a particular thing when that thing is in accordance with the Supreme Truth.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ “*D.* . . . Sed tamen ostende mihi: cur dicimus ‘huius vel illius rei’ veritatem, velut ad distinguendas veritatum differentias, si nullam ab ipsis rebus assumunt diversitatem? Multi namque vix concedent nullam esse differentiam inter veritatem voluntatis et eam quae dicitur actionis, aut alicuius aliorum. *M.* Improprie ‘huius vel illius rei’ esse dicitur, quoniam illa non in ipsis rebus aut ex ipsis aut per ipsas in quibus esse dicitur habet suum esse. Sed cum res ipsae secundum illam sunt, quae semper praesto est iis quae sunt sicut debent: tunc dicitur ‘huius vel illius rei veritas’, ut veritas voluntatis, actionis, quemadmodum dicitur ‘tempus huius vel illius rei’, cum unum et idem sit tempus omnium quae in eodem tempore simul sunt; et si non esset haec vel illa res, non minus esset idem tempus. Non enim ideo dicitur tempus huius vel illius rei, quia tempus est in ipsis rebus, sed quia ipsae sunt in tempore. Et sicut tempus per se consideratum non dicitur tempus alicuius, sed cum res quae in illo sunt consideramus, dicimus ‘tempus huius vel illius rei’: ita summa veritas per se subsistens nullius rei est; sed cum aliquid secundum illam est, tunc eius dicitur veritas vel rectitudo” (Schmitt I, 199.12-29).

With this third and final stage of the argument of Chapter 13, the dialogue *De veritate* ends. The teacher has answered the student's initial question, the question that has driven the entire dialogue – “Ought we to profess that, wherever truth is said to be, God is that truth?” What remains for us is to examine this answer (stage three) and the argument from which it issued (stage two). This examination will take into account *De veritate* as a whole, the relevant principles and arguments in the *Monologion*, and the major interpreters and interpretations of the argument of Chapter 13. In this way, we will identify the reason or reasons why Anselm concludes to the unicity of truth, thereby accomplishing the purpose of our investigation of Anselm's theory of truth.

Understanding stage two of the argument of Chapter 13 requires answering one major question. When the teacher proves there that “the rectitude by which signification is called ‘right’” is independent of its truth-bearer (the individual signification) – and then proceeds to claim the same status for the rectitudes of will, action, etc. – he uses various formulations that describe the rectitude in question. What, precisely, is this “rectitude by which signification is right”? The significance of this question will quickly become apparent in the course of our examination.

The teacher clearly equates “the rectitude by which signification is called ‘right’” with “the rectitude by which it is right that what ought to be signified, be signified,”¹⁵⁸ for he affirms with regard to both formulations – the latter at the beginning of stage two and the

¹⁵⁸ By “what ought to be signified” the teacher has in mind both senses previously indicated in Chapter 2: (1) the mere intended state of affairs, whether true or false (signified by any mere signification), and (2) what is, that it is, or what is not, that it is not (signified only by “true” signification). That he does mean both senses is not made explicit, but some passages in stage two seem to call for one sense as the intended meaning, while other passages seem to call for the other sense as the intended meaning. So it seems that the teacher is not concerned with differentiating which sense is intended, and I take this to indicate that both senses are intended. Other reasons can be adduced for this interpretation, but since this point is not crucial for our investigation, no further elaboration is necessary.

former near the end of stage two – that rectitude exists even when there is no signification.¹⁵⁹

In addition, the teacher speaks of signification as being right “on account of” and “in accordance with” this rectitude.¹⁶⁰ “Rectitude” understood in this way is clearly not the signification’s fulfillment of (doing) what it ought to do but rather the standard in accordance with which a signification is right, the standard by which it is right that a signification signify what it ought. There is, then, a significant shift, from stage one to stage two, regarding the meaning of the word “rectitude” For in stage one the student understood the rectitude of the signification as consisting in the signification’s doing what it ought to do (i.e., signifying that what is, is, and that what is not, is not), whereas the teacher, in stage two, speaks of the rectitude of signification as being that “in accordance with” which (or “on account of” which or “by” which) a signification is right, that by which it is right that what ought to be signified, be signified.¹⁶¹

The significance of this shift in meaning cannot be overstated, for it is precisely in virtue of the different meanings of “rectitude” that the student, in stage one, and the teacher, in stage two, conclude to contradictory theses regarding the relationship of rectitude to signification. The student assumes that the rectitude of signification consists in the signification’s doing what it ought to do (its signifying what it ought to signify, i.e., that what

¹⁵⁹ “*M. Ergo non existente significatione non perit rectitudo qua rectum est et qua exigitur, ut quod significandum est significetur* [italics mine]” (Schmitt I, 197.36-37). And later in stage two: “*M. Rectitudo igitur qua significatio recta dicitur* [italics mine], non habet esse aut aliquem motum per significationem, quomodocumque ipsa moveatur significatio” (Schmitt I, 198.18-20).

¹⁶⁰ “*M. Putasne cum significatur quod significari debet, significationem tunc esse rectam propter hanc et secundum hanc ipsam rectitudinem?* [italics mine]” (Schmitt I, 198.2-3).

¹⁶¹ Enders (*Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 546-47) helpfully and succinctly refers to these two different concepts of rectitude as “adequation concept” and “identity concept.” It should be noted that my analysis of the shift in meaning from “adequation concept” (the student: stage one) to “identity concept” (the teacher: stage two) follows largely the analysis of Enders. This shift in meaning is central to Enders’ interpretation of the reasons why Anselm concludes to the unicity of Truth, as also it is in my interpretation. But about this, more later.

is, is, and that what is not, is not); it is on the basis of this understanding of rectitude that he concludes that the rectitude of signification is contingent both upon there being signification in the first place and upon the signification's being a certain way.¹⁶² On the other hand, the teacher understands the rectitude of signification to be the standard, the ought, in accordance with which and on account of which a signification is right, and on the basis of this understanding of rectitude he concludes: (1) that the rectitude of signification exists always, independently of the being or being-such of any signification, and immutably (stage two); (2) that there is one and the same rectitude in all things (end of stage two); and (3) that God is this one rectitude (stage three).¹⁶³ For the teacher and student move with ease, and with very little positive argumentation, from this understanding of rectitude as standard/ought to these three conclusions. The first conclusion – that rectitude exists always, independently of its truth-bearer, and immutably – is the fruit of intuition of the nature of rectitude as standard: in virtue of being the standard/ought, rectitude is by that very fact independent of its truth-bearer, never-ending, and unchanging.¹⁶⁴ The second conclusion – that there is one and the same rectitude for all things – is arrived at when the student affirms that he perceives that no reason can be found for supposing there are many rectitudes, other than the reason that has

¹⁶² “*D. Ita est. Cum enim significatur esse quod est, aut non esse quod non est, recta est significatio, et constat esse rectitudinem sine qua significatio recta nequit esse* [italics mine]. Si vero significetur esse quod non est, vel non esse quod est, aut si nihil omnino significetur: nulla erit rectitudo significationis, quae non nisi in significatione est. Quapropter per significationem habet esse et per eam mutatur eius rectitudo, . . .” (Schmitt I, 197.19-24).

¹⁶³ See above, nn. 153-57.

¹⁶⁴ See above, nn. 153-55. In arriving at this thesis, the teacher's questioning of the student consists in asking the student if he “sees” that rectitude exists always, apart from its truth-bearer, and when the student answers in the affirmative, he immediately affirms the independence and immutability of rectitude. On this intuitive approach, see Engelbert Recktenwald, “Das *id quo maius cogitari non potest* als *rectitudo*: Anselms Gottesbeweis im Lichte von *De veritate*,” in *Twenty-Five Years (1969-1994) of Anselm Studies: Review and Critique of Recent Scholarly Views*, ed. Frederick van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt, *Texts and Studies in Religion* 70 (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), 138.

already been debunked (viz., because of the plurality of things having rectitude).¹⁶⁵ The third conclusion – that God (the Supreme Truth) is this one rectitude/truth of all things – is not even the result of any questioning on the part of the teacher.¹⁶⁶ The teacher assumes this identification of the one truth with God – no other candidates are considered – as if it is (because it is) self-evident. So, in stages two and three of Chapter 13 the student and teacher move easily from the teacher’s understanding of rectitude (as standard) to these three conclusions, conclusions that the teacher considers as constituting an answer to the original question of the dialogue, and they accomplish this with no explicit positive argumentation for, and very little explanation (development) of, the final two conclusions (that truth is one and the same for all things and that God is that one truth).

It is clear, then, that the teacher’s assumption of rectitude as standard/ought plays a crucial role in Anselm’s argument in Chapter 13 that there is only one truth of all things and that this truth is God. Now, another observation must be made. In addition to the facts just now elucidated – that (1) it is in virtue of a significant shift in the meaning of the word “rectitude” that the teacher concludes to the unicity of truth and identification of God with that one truth, and that (2) no positive argumentation for, and very little explanation of, these conclusions is given – in addition to these facts, it must also be noted that both the teacher’s understanding of rectitude as standard/ought and the conclusions that follow from this understanding seem to militate against the thrust of the first ten chapters of the dialogue. At the most obvious level, this tension consists in the fact that, early in *De veritate*, Anselm

¹⁶⁵ See above, 88n156.

¹⁶⁶ See above, 89n157.

speaks repeatedly of the “truths” (“rectitudes”) – plural – in things¹⁶⁷ and of “the truth of signification,” “the truth of opinion,” etc.,¹⁶⁸ whereas in Chapter 13 he concludes that there is only one Truth and that all talk of “the truth of x” or “the truth of y” is improper speech. Obviously, this tension is not only resolvable but is resolved by Anselm himself: the earlier formulations require correction, in light of the conclusion of Chapter 13.¹⁶⁹ But there is a deeper level of tension, which perhaps reaches contradiction, on two different fronts. First, the speaking of “truths” (plural) occurs in the student’s elaboration, in Chapter 10, of a causal hierarchy of truth (an elaboration which the teacher accepts and deepens), according to which even created truths cause other truths. This understanding is in contrast to the conclusion of Chapter 13 that there is only one Truth: if the truth of created things is, as it seems to be at the end of Chapter 13, a mere placeholder for the Highest Truth,¹⁷⁰ how can we accept in any meaningful way a causal hierarchy of truths in which created truths cause other created truths?¹⁷¹ Second, Anselm has, in the first seven chapters, spoken of rectitude as the fulfilling of (doing, or being) what one ought,¹⁷² which fulfilling/doing is surely on the part

¹⁶⁷ “*M. Considera quia, cum omnes supradictae rectitudines ideo sint rectitudines, quia illa in quibus sunt aut sunt aut faciunt quod debent: . . . M. Vides etiam quomodo ista rectitudo causa sit omnium aliarum veritatum et rectitudinum, et nihil sit causa illius? D. Video et animadverto in aliis quasdam esse tantum effecta, quasdam vero esse causas et effecta. Ut cum veritas quae est in rerum existentia sit effectum summae veritatis, ipsa quoque causa est veritatis quae cogitationis est, et eius quae est in propositione; et istae duae veritates nullius sunt causa veritatis [italics mine]*” (Schmitt I, 190.1-2 and 6-12).

¹⁶⁸ See, *inter alia*, the titles of Chapters 2-7.

¹⁶⁹ About this, more will be said later.

¹⁷⁰ I owe this description to Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 113.

¹⁷¹ Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 113. See also Visser and Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” 214-15.

¹⁷² That Anselm speaks of truth/rectitude as fulfilling/doing seems clear from the first seven chapters in general, and it is confirmed in Anselm’s discussion of the truth of the will, wherein the student concludes: “. . . : non aliud ibi [in voluntate] potest intelligi veritas quam rectitudo, quoniam sive veritas sive rectitudo non aliud in eius voluntate fuit quam *velle quod debuit* [italics mine]” (Schmitt I, 181.6-8).

of the true thing (i.e., that which does what it ought) so that rectitude belongs to and is present in the true thing.¹⁷³ It is only in the Supreme Truth that rectitude does not mean “doing what one ought”: in all other true things, “rectitude” means “doing what one ought.” This would seem to support the student’s understanding of “rectitude” (in stage one of the argument of Chapter 13), at least insofar as it applies to all beings other than the Supreme Truth, and, thus, to support also his conclusion that rectitude belongs to and is dependent upon its truth-bearer (and that, therefore, there are many rectitudes).¹⁷⁴ This second fact also thereby calls into question the teacher’s understanding of rectitude (in stage two of the argument of Chapter 13), since the teacher and student have understood the rectitude of every truth-bearer (excepting one alone: the Supreme Truth) to consist in its doing (or being) what it ought.

To summarize: Anselm’s conclusion that God is the one selfsame truth/rectitude of (in) all things (1) proceeds from an understanding of “rectitude” that is not substantiated in the argument of Chapter 13 and that, indeed, represents a significant and unexplained shift from the understanding of “rectitude” that is operative in stage one of the argument of Chapter 13; (2) has been arrived at by no positive argumentation and is given very little explanation; and (3) seems on two fronts to militate against the findings of the first ten chapters. Having made these observations and substantiated them, questions immediately arise. Why does Anselm not justify his starting-point in stage two of the argument of Chapter 13? Why does Anselm not present positive arguments for the unicity of Truth?

¹⁷³ The student himself affirms, in Chapter 2, that “the truth of the true thing is in the true thing itself” (“*D. . . . ; et ideo veri veritas in ipso vero est, . . .*” [Schmitt I, 177.16-17]).

¹⁷⁴ For this last point see Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 113.

Why does Anselm not elaborate upon and develop the thesis that constitutes the answer to which the entire dialogue has been directed? How do we explain the seeming inconsistency between the first ten (or even twelve) chapters and the starting-points and conclusions in stages two and three of the argument of Chapter 13? These questions are ultimately reducible to one basic question, the question that has governed our entire inquiry into Anselm's account of truth: What ultimately are the reasons, the principles, that impel Anselm to conclude to the unicity of Truth?

Our attempt to answer this question will begin with a consideration of the interpretations present in the secondary literature, after which and in light of which we will present our own account. But before we begin our examination of the scholarly interpretations that propose answers to these questions, we must establish several criteria for any satisfactory interpretation of the guiding principles behind Anselm's argument for the unicity of truth. First of all, given the first two observations above, it seems not only fitting but even requisite to conclude that Anselm's argumentation, in stages two and three of Chapter 13, must be understood in light of principles that are not explicit in Chapter 13.¹⁷⁵ Second, any satisfactory account of the principles that govern Anselm's argument to its conclusions in Chapter 13 must explain the pivotal move in that argument in Chapter 13, i.e., the teacher's unsubstantiated shifting of the meaning of "rectitude," from "fulfilling/doing what one ought" to "the standard or ought of such fulfilling/doing."¹⁷⁶ Third, such an

¹⁷⁵ This interpretive (methodological) principle is borne out by the interpretations of Chapter 13 present in the secondary literature: these interpretations all (or nearly all) identify, as the principle(s) governing the argument of Chapter 13, conclusions arrived at earlier in *De veritate* and/or principles elaborated elsewhere in the Anselmian corpus.

¹⁷⁶ We do not consider here the possibility that there is no justification for this unsubstantiated premise that begins stage two. For this would require either that Anselm consider such justification unnecessary or that

interpretation of the argument of Chapter 13 must explain, or at least account for, the tensions and contradictions that we have identified as existing between, on the one hand, the starting-points and conclusions of Chapter 13, and, on the other hand, two major elements of Anselm's argument in the first ten chapters of the dialogue.

Scholars who address Anselm's argumentation in Chapter 13 identify the principle (or principles) governing the argumentation of Chapter 13 as either (1) the definition of truth in Chapter 11¹⁷⁷ or (2) some element or other of Anselm's "metaphysics of creation."¹⁷⁸ Among those interpretations that fall into the first category – interpretations that identify the Chapter 11 definition of truth as the governing principle behind Anselm's concluding to the unicity of Truth – only the interpretation of Markus Enders purports to, or even seems able to, explain the pivotal shift in the meaning of "rectitude" between stage one and stage two of the argument of Chapter 13. Indeed, of all interpreters of *De veritate*, Enders most clearly and carefully displays and analyzes this shift in meaning. We will therefore present Enders's account of Anselm's conclusion that there is only one Truth (God) as representative of the first category of interpretation.

Anselm fail to realize that he has left this premise unjustified. But both of these are highly unlikely – nay, incredible – given the significance and the obviousness of the shift in meaning that this premise represents.

¹⁷⁷ Representative of this interpretation is, above all, Enders (*Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 547-50). Other scholars who likewise identify the definition of truth as the operative principle leading Anselm to conclude to the unicity of truth include: Hopkins, *A Companion*, 137; H.J. Werner, "Anselm von Canterbury's Dialog *De veritate* und das Problem der Begründung praktischer Sätze," *Salzburger Jahrbuch für Philosophie* 20 (1975): 127-28; and, less explicitly, Visser and Williams, "Anselm on Truth," 205.

¹⁷⁸ The main representatives of this interpretation must be considered to be Flasch ("Zum Begriff," *passim*, but especially 337-40) and Noone ("Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility," *passim*, but especially 124-25). Other scholars who likewise identify one or more elements of Anselm's "metaphysics of creation" as the operative principle leading Anselm to conclude to the unicity of truth include: Maurer, *Wahrheit ist Richtigkeit und sonst – nichts?*, 97-98; Goebel, *Wahrheit und Freiheit*, *passim*, but especially 209-10; Mechthild Dreyer, "Veritas – Rectitudo – Iustitia. Grundbegriffe ethischer Reflexion bei Anselm von Canterbury," *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* 64 (1997): 81; and, less explicitly, Walter Cavini, "Verità e ineranza: un'analisi del *De veritate* anselmiano," *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 48 (1993): 579-80.

Enders begins by pointing out the shift in meaning that we have already identified. But he goes further by claiming that the teacher's understanding of rectitude as standard/ought transfers the requirements of the Supreme Truth onto the truths of individual things: in other words, the teacher begins to answer the question of whether there are many truths or only one truth by characterizing rectitude in general (and not just the Supreme Rectitude) as completely independent of its truth-bearer and as unchangeable. In virtue of this characterization, says Enders, the teacher is able to conclude to the unicity of Truth, but at the price of begging the question, i.e., assuming the substantial identity of both forms of rectitude (standard/ought and fulfillment/doing).¹⁷⁹ So, for Enders, the teacher's understanding of rectitude as standard/ought, and the argument that follows from this understanding, constitutes a *petitio principii*: if rectitude in general is thought of as the standard/ought in virtue of which or on account of which or by which the true thing is true, one has already answered the question of the number of truth, since the Supreme Truth alone has been found to have (for Him, to be) rectitude *qua* standard/ought, all other true things having rectitude as fulfilling what they ought to do, so that the Supreme Truth alone is rectitude/truth.

Following upon this quite clear and cogent analysis, Enders proceeds to identify the grounds for the assumption of the substantial identity of both forms of rectitude (standard/ought and fulfillment/doing). According to Enders, it is the definition of truth in Chapter 11 that justifies, for Anselm, this assumption. For Anselm has, as we have seen, spent Chapters 2 through 11 elaborating one definition of truth that applies to all truths (this search was laid out explicitly in Chapter 1 of the dialogue). Now, in Chapter 8 of *De*

¹⁷⁹ Enders, *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 546-47.

grammatico Anselm expresses his acceptance of the principle, rooted in Boethius, that things whose definitions are the same are themselves substantially identical. Therefore, according to Enders, since the definition of truth serves precisely to provide a common definition for all truths – the truth of the statement, the truth of the will, the truth of action, the Supreme Truth, etc., all of which are defined as “rectitude perceptible to the mind alone” – all truths are substantially identical, which is to say, there is only one truth: God. Whence it is the definition of truth in Chapter 11 that drives, because it underpins, both the assumption that rectitude is to be identified with the standard of rectitude (i.e., the Supreme Truth) and the consequent conclusion that there is one selfsame truth in all things – the Supreme Truth.¹⁸⁰

Enders then lays out a significant consequence of this position: since rectitude as standard/ought is identical to rectitude as fulfillment/doing, God is not only the standard/ought but also the fulfillment/doing of the ought on the part of the finite true entities and their (true) actions! This is indicated by Anselm’s statement, in stage three of the argument of Chapter 13, that it is improper to speak of the rectitude/truth of *x* or the rectitude/truth of *y* – i.e., to speak of the “doing of the ought.” The rectitude of created things, then, is not *per proprietatem suam* but rather *per aliud*.¹⁸¹

Enders’s analysis and interpretation has the great merit of displaying the problems and providing an explanation for the seeming incongruity of the argument and conclusions in stages two and three of Chapter 13. More specifically, Enders is nearly alone among the interpreters of Chapter 13 in explicitly accounting for the pivotal move of the argument of Chapter 13, i.e., the teacher’s unsubstantiated understanding of rectitude as standard/ought.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 547-50.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 551.

But Enders's explanation of this assumption is not sufficient, by itself, to account for Anselm's final conclusion. For he claims that Anselm has already, in Chapter 11, arrived at the substantial identity of all truths (in virtue of the definition of truth), which would seem to explain the teacher's assumption (in stage two of Chapter 13) of rectitude as standard/ought, since this understanding of rectitude leads to the conclusion of the substantial identity of all rectitudes whereas the student's understanding of rectitude as fulfillment/doing of the ought leads to the opposite conclusion, viz., the multiplicity of truths. However, if before the beginning of Chapter 13 Anselm already holds that all truths are substantially identical, it would seem licit for the teacher to begin the argument in Chapter 13 with either understanding of rectitude (*qua* truth), i.e., either rectitude as standard/ought or rectitude as fulfillment/doing of the ought: it shouldn't matter with what meaning of rectitude he begins, because both meanings of rectitude have, by this point in the argument, been accepted as legitimate (e.g., as Anselm says in Chapter 4,¹⁸² truth in the will consists in willing what one ought, and, as Anselm indicates in Chapter 10,¹⁸³ the Supreme Truth is such in virtue of His being the object/standard and cause of rectitude in all other things). But, as Chapter 13 very clearly demonstrates, these two legitimate meanings of rectitude lead to contradictory conclusions: one leads to the unicity of Truth and the other to the multiplicity of truths. Enders's explanation does not fully account for this difficulty: it is only the fact that the student's understanding of rectitude leads to the multiplicity of truths, whereas the teacher's understanding of rectitude leads to the already-determined substantial identity of truths (according to Enders), that justifies the teacher's understanding of rectitude. On Enders's

¹⁸² See above, 56n83.

¹⁸³ See our discussion above, 66-74.

account, then, there is no way that the teacher can, on the intrinsic merits of the two legitimate meanings of rectitude, privilege one meaning of “rectitude” over another: why is it suddenly illegitimate to speak of rectitude as fulfillment of the ought, whereas before Anselm had explicitly acknowledged such an understanding of rectitude?

Significantly, because these two legitimate meanings of rectitude lead to conflicting conclusions, it seems that there is, in fact, no one, univocal definition of truth – without which it is hard to see how Enders can affirm that Anselm has already arrived at the substantial identity of all truths, an affirmation that, on Enders’s interpretation, is necessary to justify the teacher’s presupposition of rectitude as standard/ought. And, in fact, Enders himself concludes, at the end of his discussion of Chapter 13, that Anselm’s understanding of truth is analogical rather than univocal.¹⁸⁴ In addition, it is not at all clear that the kind of identity that obtains between things with the same definition (what Enders calls “substantial” identity [*substantielle Identität*]) is the same as the identity that Anselm claims to obtain between the Supreme Truth and all other “truths.” More specifically, can we say that according to Anselm all things that have the same definition are identical to such a degree that they constitute, in actuality, one selfsame *x*, as God does with regard to all “other” truths? Enders does not address this point in any depth – but establishing this is crucial to his interpretation!¹⁸⁵

There are, then, grave objections to Enders’s claim that Anselm has already established, in Chapter 11, the substantial identity of all truths. This, combined with the

¹⁸⁴ *Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 552-53.

¹⁸⁵ Our interpretation of the principles operative in the argument of Chapter 13 will explicitly account for the degree of identity Anselm is claiming for truth here in Chapter 13.

inability of Enders's explanation to account positively for the rejection of the already-established meaning of rectitude as fulfillment of the ought in favor of the also already-established meaning of rectitude as the Standard constituting the ought, leads us to conclude that, at the very least, Enders's account cannot stand on its own. His claim that Anselm's definition of truth constitutes an affirmation of the substantial identity of all truths, and that this entails the unicity of Truth, is not sufficiently established and is subject to serious objections. And even granting the first part of this claim, there is no positive argument that establishes that with which all rectitudes are to be identified (i.e., the locus or axis of their substantial identity) and there is no explanation of this fact: it is merely that the teacher's understanding of rectitude leads to the proper, already-determined conclusion, and that this conclusion somehow requires identifying rectitude/truth with the Supreme Truth.

The fact is, though, that identifying the Supreme Truth in particular (rather than any other truth) as the one truth in all true things ultimately requires justification on the basis of considerations other than the definition of truth and the Boethian-inspired dictum. For we can justify this identification only when we know (1) that the Supreme Truth alone exists *per se*, (2) that all other things exist through and by and in Him, and (3) that He has models (ideas) of all created things in His Word, through which He creates all else. So we need Anselm's "metaphysics of creation" adequately to establish the thesis that God (rather than any other truth heretofore identified) is the one selfsame truth in all true things. And while Enders is by no means ignorant of the significant role that this "metaphysics of creation"

plays in the *De veritate*, and in Anselm's account of truth in other writings,¹⁸⁶ he does not explain the argument and conclusions of Chapter 13 as following from this metaphysics.

Consideration of Enders's interpretation has led us to the second category of interpretation of Chapter 13. According to this second group of interpreters, it is one or more elements of Anselm's fundamentally Augustinian "metaphysics of creation" that drives the argument of Chapter 13 to the conclusion that there is one Truth in all true things. Now, because to my mind no one interpreter elaborates a sufficient interpretation along these lines,¹⁸⁷ we will not proceed here as we did with the first category of interpretation – i.e., by choosing, presenting, examining, and critiquing one interpretation representative of the group. Rather, we will give our own interpretation, drawing upon the various interpreters who have contributed to this second basic category of interpretation of Chapter 13.

We have already said, in our critique of Enders's interpretation, that elements of Anselm's "metaphysics of creation" are operative in his concluding that there is one sole Truth in all things, insofar as without this metaphysics of creation one cannot in stage three of Chapter 13 identify the one truth of all things with the Supreme Truth. Now, this accounts only for the movement from the conclusion of stage two (there is one sole truth of all things) to the thesis of stage three (God is that one Truth), whereas what we are seeking is the principle or principles that will account for the entirety of the argument of Chapter 13, i.e., the premises assumed in stage two and the three conclusions that follow in stage two and

¹⁸⁶ See, *inter alia*, Enders's discussion of the role of Anselm's metaphysics in his account of truth in the *Monologion* (*Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 44-51) and Enders's analysis of Chapter 10 of *De veritate* (especially 470-96).

¹⁸⁷ Few of the interpretations that fall into this category explain the pivotal *explanandum* that we have identified, viz., why the teacher assumes rectitude as standard/ought at the beginning of stage two of the argument of Chapter 13. And of those that do explain this, only one (to my mind) identifies the precise principle in play, and this one interpretation (that of Kurt Flasch, "Zum Begriff") not only is never fully elaborated as an explanation of Chapter 13 but also suffers from misconceptions that require purging.

stage three. Still, although we have already said that ultimately we will have to look outside Chapter 13 for this *explanans*, the fact that aspects of Anselm’s metaphysics of creation are clearly operative within Chapter 13 suggests that these aspects, and other closely-related elements of Anselm’s metaphysics of creation, deserve attention in our quest for the ultimate *explanans* of Anselm’s concluding to the unicity of Truth.

Let us turn, then, to a fuller consideration of the elements of Anselm’s “metaphysics of creation” that are operative within Chapter 13. We have already seen that there is nothing in stage three of the argument of Chapter 13 that substantiates the teacher’s identification of God as the one truth of all things. What about stage two? As we saw, in stage two the teacher (1) assumes an understanding of rectitude as standard/ought; (2) shows that rectitude/truth exists always, independently of created things, and immutably; and (3) concludes that there is only one rectitude/truth of all things. Immediately following this, in stage three, the teacher identifies this one rectitude/truth with God, the Supreme Truth, in a way that clearly indicates that the teacher considers this identification to be inevitable and obvious. But on what basis has he made this inevitable and obvious identification? The sensible and even self-evident answer is: on the basis of an already-established understanding of God as the sole eternal and immutable and *per se* being, an understanding that constitutes a fundamental element in Anselm’s metaphysics of creation. This understanding of God – argued for explicitly and at length in the *Monologion*¹⁸⁸ – would be granted by the student, so no argumentation is necessary. Thus, Anselm’s understanding of God as the sole eternal and immutable being, which understanding constitutes an important element of his “metaphysics

¹⁸⁸ See above, 32-36 and 40-42, for our (partial) presentation of this understanding of God as developed in the *Monologion*.

of creation,” is what accounts for his movement from rectitude as eternal, immutable, and independent (first conclusion of stage two) to rectitude as one and the same in all things (second conclusion of stage two) to God as the one rectitude in all things (stage three).¹⁸⁹

Here, of course, Anselm is following Augustine’s line of argumentation: truth is immutable and eternal, but God alone is immutable and eternal, and therefore God is truth.¹⁹⁰

This interpretation can be taken even further. If we look to *De veritate* as a whole and in connection with the *Monologion*, we will discover that this metaphysics of creation (which, as we have seen, underlies much of, and appears explicitly here and there in, the *De veritate*¹⁹¹) constitutes the ultimate reason for the necessity that, if rectitude is taken as the standard/ought (the unsubstantiated premise of stage two), there is only one such rectitude and this rectitude is God. We have already seen, in Chapter 10, that the ought/standard of a thing is established by the Supreme Truth: all created beings “owe Him” because He establishes the “oughts” in all things.¹⁹² For this reason, Anselm describes the standard/ought of the essence and existence of things as “what” (meaning also: “how”) something is in the Supreme Truth,¹⁹³ and he speaks of the standard/ought of the powers (action: thought, will, etc.) that are inherent in those essences as “that for which they

¹⁸⁹ See Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” especially 124-25.

¹⁹⁰ For Augustine, see *De libero arbitrio* II, especially chs. 10-14, and *De vera religione*, ch. 30. We examined these texts in Chapter One above, 10-15.

¹⁹¹ See above, 67-74.

¹⁹² See above, 67 and 72-74.

¹⁹³ Ch. 7: “*M. Quidquid igitur est, vere est, inquantum est hoc quod ibi est* [italics mine]. . . . *M. Est igitur veritas in omnium quae sunt essentia, quia hoc sunt quod in summa veritate sunt* [italics mine]” (Schmitt I, 185.15 and 185.18-19).

received” the power in question, a power they received from their Creator.¹⁹⁴ Now, if we connect this with the explicit, Augustinian metaphysics of creation present in the *Monologion*, particularly in Anselm’s conclusions, examined above,¹⁹⁵ that (1) the Supreme Nature has “models” – ideas – of all created things in His mind, that (2) these ideas are identified with His Word, which is identified with Him, and that (3) created beings are imitations of these ideas, such that these ideas, rather than the things created through them, are the true essences of things – again, if we make this connection, the picture becomes clear. Not only does the Supreme Truth establish the standard/ought for all things (in accordance with which standard a thing is “right” or “true”); He constitutes that standard Himself, in virtue of His divine ideas. This is ultimately why rectitude (*qua* standard/ought) is eternal and immutable: the standard in accordance with which a thing is true is the idea of the thing in the divine Mind, which idea is identical with the Supreme Nature’s Word, Which is identical with the Supreme Nature.¹⁹⁶ So, for the teacher, all rectitude is the Supreme Truth Himself, the standard in accordance with which a thing is “true.”

Anselm’s “metaphysics of creation,” then, fills out the movement in Chapter 13 from the unsubstantiated premise of stage two – the teacher’s assumption of rectitude as standard/ought – to the conclusions that follow in its train – rectitude is eternal, independent

¹⁹⁴ Ch. 2: “*D. . . . Pariter namque [oratio] accepit significare esse, et quod est et quod non est. Nam si non accepisset significare esse etiam quod non est, non id significaret. . . . M. . . . Sed cum [oratio] significat esse quod est, dupliciter facit quod debet; quoniam significat et quod accepit significare, et ad quod facta est*” (Schmitt I, 178.30-32 and 179.2-4). Ch. 3: “*D. . . . Ad hoc namque nobis datum est posse cogitare esse vel non esse aliquid, ut cogitemus esse quod est, et non esse quod non est*” (Schmitt I, 180.12-14). Ch. 4: “*D. . . . Nam si quamdiu voluit quod debuit, ad quod scilicet voluntatem acceperat, in rectitudine et in veritate fuit, . . .*” (Schmitt I, 181.4-5). Ch. 5: “*D. Si ignis ab eo a quo habet esse accepit calefacere: cum calefacit, facit quod debet*” (Schmitt I, 182.3-4). All italics are mine.

¹⁹⁵ See above, 32-36.

¹⁹⁶ See our discussion above, 33-36.

of its truth-bearer, and immutable; there is one and the same rectitude/truth of all things; and the Supreme Truth is this one and the same rectitude/truth of all things. In other words, the lack of any positive argumentation for the conclusions that there is one truth of all things and that God is that one truth can be explained by reference to those elements of Anselm's "metaphysics of creation" present in the *De veritate* and in the *Monologion*, elements that, given the assumption of rectitude as standard/ought, demand the aforementioned conclusions.

But this still leaves unaccounted for the pivotal element of the argument of Chapter 13, i.e., the teacher's unsubstantiated assumption of rectitude as standard/ought. For, as we have seen, Anselm builds his entire argument for the unicity of Truth (stages two and three of Chapter 13) upon the premise that rectitude/truth is the standard/ought in accordance with which and by which something is right/true. On what basis, on what grounds can Anselm justify this premise? As we have seen, Enders argues that this premise is justified by Anselm's having arrived at a definition of truth that is common to all "instances" of truth, so that Anselm can, by way of the principle affirmed in *De grammatico*, affirm already in Chapter 11 that all truths/rectitudes are substantially identical. On this reading, Anselm could then begin the argument of stage two in Chapter 13 with an understanding of rectitude either as standard/ought or fulfillment/doing the ought, since the two have already been found to be substantially identical. But, as we have also seen, this alone is not sufficient to account for the final conclusion that God is the one truth of/in all things, because it does not sufficiently account for the teacher's choosing rectitude as standard/ought over rectitude as fulfillment. So we are left with the original question: on what basis can Anselm justify assuming that rectitude is the standard/ought in accordance with which and by which something is right/true?

We have seen that Anselm's understanding of God as the origin and establisher of "oughts" in created things and as the standard itself of those "oughts" (via the divine ideas) – an understanding of God that belongs to his "metaphysics of creation" – underpins and explains ultimately the movement from (1) the first premise (of stage two) that rectitude is the standard/ought in accordance with which something is true, to (2) the conclusions that there is only one truth and that God is that one truth. But what grounds this aspect of Anselm's metaphysics of creation? It is his fundamental thesis – demonstrated and elaborated in the opening chapters of the *Monologion*, and referred to here and there in the *De veritate* – that a created thing does not have its own being.¹⁹⁷ No created thing has (holds) its own being, for no created thing is what it is through itself (*per se*) but only through another (*per aliud*).¹⁹⁸ As we have seen, Anselm goes so far as to assert that created things do not have true existence, being but imitations of the Word, Who alone has (is) true existence.¹⁹⁹ But the explanatory foundation and structure of this important thesis is what can be called Anselm's "metaphysics of participation,"²⁰⁰ and particularly his participational principle – all "x" things are "x" by participating in "x-ness." As we have seen in our discussion of the opening chapters of the *Monologion*,²⁰¹ it is on the basis of this

¹⁹⁷ For interpreters who attribute to this thesis a marked role in the argument of Chapter 13, see: Flasch, "Zum Begriff," 329-30; Maurer, *Wahrheit ist Richtigkeit und sonst – nichts?*, 97-98; Dreyer, "Veritas – Rectitudo – Iustitia," 81.

¹⁹⁸ *Monologion*, ch. 3: "Quoniam ergo cuncta quae sunt, sunt per ipsum unum, proculdubio et ipsum unum est per seipsum. Quaecumque igitur alia sunt, sunt per aliud, et ipsum solum per seipsum" (Schmitt I, 16.18-20). See also *Monologion*, chs. 1-7, 14, and 31.

¹⁹⁹ See *Monologion*, ch. 31, and our discussion of this chapter above, 33-36.

²⁰⁰ I am borrowing this term from Flasch ("Zum Begriff," 329 ff.) and Enders (*Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 44).

²⁰¹ See above, 38-42.

participational principle that Anselm develops his metaphysics of participation, within which he argues for the existence of one Supreme Nature through/by/in which all other things are, and after which he elaborates more fully upon the relationship between this Supreme Nature and all other things. Therefore, at least in the *Monologion*, the governing principle within Anselm's "metaphysics of creation" is his metaphysics of participation, which is itself governed by the participational principle. And if the logically "later" elements of Anselm's metaphysics of creation provide the ground for, and thus ultimately explain, the movement in Chapter 13 of the *De veritate* from rectitude as standard/ought to the conclusions that there is but one truth and that God is that truth – if this is so, as we have attempted to prove, then it stands to reason that the prime candidate for our last missing (and most important) piece of the interpretive puzzle – what explains the teacher's unsubstantiated assumption of rectitude as standard/ought, the assumption that constitutes the governing premise of the entire argument of Chapter 13? – is Anselm's understanding of participation.

Before we proceed, let us review Anselm's understanding of participation as developed in his *Monologion*. As we saw earlier in our investigation, Anselm assumes in Chapter 1 of the *Monologion* the participational principle: nothing is "x" (i.e., of a certain quality) apart from "x-ness," i.e., all "x" things are "x" through "x-ness." Anselm develops this Augustinian thesis into a metaphysics of participation in the following way. All things that, whether equally or more or less relative to each other, are said to be of a certain quality (e.g., "good") "are called such through something that is understood as not different but rather the same in the[se] diverse things, whether it is considered to be in them in equal or

unequal measure.”²⁰² This “something” that is understood as the same in diverse things is the Form governing the category in question: all just things are just through justice, justice not being different in the many just things; all good things are good through goodness, goodness being understood as the same in the many good things.²⁰³ In Chapter 16, Anselm identifies this “justice,” through which all just things are just, and this “goodness,” through which all good things are good, as the Supreme Justice and the Supreme Goodness that is just and good through Himself.²⁰⁴ And since he has already said that all just things are just through justice, which is not different in the many just things, we can conclude that all just things are just through the one Supreme Justice that is not different in the many just things. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to goodness and truth: all true things are true through one Supreme Truth that is not different in the many true things but rather must be understood as the same in all of them.

Our preliminary thesis -- that Anselm’s understanding of participation is the ultimate explanation, because ultimate ground, of the entire argument of Chapter 13 – finds clear

²⁰² *Monologion*, ch. 1: “Certissimum quidem et omnibus est volentibus advertere perspicuum quia, quaecumque dicuntur aliquid ita, ut ad invicem magis vel minus aut aequaliter dicantur: per aliquid dicuntur, quod non aliud et aliud sed idem intelligitur in diversis, sive in illis aequaliter sive inaequaliter consideretur” (Schmitt I, 14.9-13).

²⁰³ *Ibid.*: “Nam quaecumque iusta dicuntur ad invicem sive pariter sive magis vel minus, non possunt intelligi iusta nisi per iustitiam, *quae non est aliud et aliud in diversis* [italics mine]. Ergo cum certum sit quod omnia bona, si ad invicem conferantur, aut aequaliter aut inaequaliter sint bona, necesse est, ut omnia sint per aliquid bona, quod intelligitur idem in diversis bonis, licet aliquando videantur bona dici alia per aliud” (Schmitt I, 14.13-18).

²⁰⁴ “Si igitur [summa natura] non est iusta nisi per iustitiam, nec iusta potest esse nisi per se: quid magis conspicuum, quid magis necessarium, quam quod eadem natura est ipsa iustitia; . . . Quapropter si quaeratur quid sit ipsa summa natura de qua agitur: quid verius responderetur, quam: iustitia? . . . Quod vero in exemplo iustitiae ratum esse conspicitur, hoc de omnibus quae similiter de ipsa summa natura dicuntur, intellectus sentire per rationem constringitur. . . Illa igitur est summa essentia, summa vita, summa ratio, summa salus, summa iustitia, summa sapientia, summa veritas, summa bonitas, . . .” (Schmitt I, 30.13-16 and 18-19; Schmitt I, 30.32-33 and 31.1 and 31.3-5).

support in the scholarly literature only in the interpretation of Kurt Flasch.²⁰⁵ Flasch claims that the appearance of the participational principle in Chapter 2 of *De veritate*, when the student affirms that “nothing is true except by participating in truth,”²⁰⁶ announces “an essential thought of the dialogue, namely, that there is only one truth and that this truth may not be understood as an accident that inheres in our statements, arising and perishing along with them.”²⁰⁷ Flasch, then, connects Anselm’s participational principle directly with the conclusion that there is only one Truth. More specifically, according to Flasch the unicity of truth is implied in Anselm’s definition of truth precisely because the definition of truth demands Anselm’s Platonic metaphysics of participation (which, Flasch comments, pervades Anselm’s entire thought).²⁰⁸

Although Flasch does not explicitly connect Anselm’s metaphysics of participation with the governing premise of stages two and three of the argument of Chapter 13, Flasch’s insight – that Anselm’s understanding of participation implies his conclusion that there is only one truth – can be developed in such a way as to show that Anselm’s participational principle is precisely that which explains and justifies that governing premise in Chapter 13, i.e., the teacher’s assumption of rectitude as standard/ought. However, it would be well to state a few methodological points first.

In identifying Anselm’s participational principle as the ultimate explanation of this governing assumption, we are standing on less solid ground than heretofore. We are not

²⁰⁵ “Zum Begriff,” especially 329-39. See also his later article: “Anselm und der Augustinische Neuplatonismus,” in *Analecta Anselmiana* II (1970): 22.

²⁰⁶ “D. Quia nihil est verum nisi participando veritatem; . . .” (Schmitt I, 177.16).

²⁰⁷ Flasch, “Anselm und der Augustinische Neuplatonismus,” 22.

²⁰⁸ “Zum Begriff,” 338-39.

filling out the argument itself of Chapter 13; we are not explaining a later thesis of Chapter 13 (stage three) in light of the conclusion of the immediately prior argument (stage two).

Rather, we are attempting to explain the first premise of the argument, an unsubstantiated assumption that constitutes a significant and all-important shift in the meaning of the word “rectitude.” In doing so we, like Enders, have to resort to some principle or element outside Chapter 13 in order to explain the premise that governs the argument of Chapter 13.

Nevertheless, we are not left completely to guesswork. A few points will establish the legitimacy of interpreting the conclusions of *De veritate* in light of Anselm’s participational principle. First, we have seen that the thesis of the unicity of Truth is already implicit in the *Monologion* and that the participational principle provides the basis for the argument for this thesis. Now, it is already clear that the teacher and student take the earlier *Monologion* as operative and governing in *De veritate*. Not only does a passage from the *Monologion* constitute one of the principal starting-points of the dialogue, but, as we have seen, within *De veritate* the teacher and student use elements of the metaphysics of creation elaborated in the *Monologion*. These facts led us to identify Anselm’s already-worked-out metaphysics of creation as providing the foundation for, and thus positive account of, Anselm’s arguing from rectitude as standard/ought to the last two conclusions in Chapter 13 (that there is one truth in all true things and that God is that truth). Second, as we saw in our earlier discussion of the *Monologion*, this metaphysics of creation that Anselm has worked out in the earlier *Monologion* has, as its foundational element, a metaphysics of participation. Third, and most significantly, in Chapter 2 of *De veritate* Anselm refers (albeit briefly) to the participational principle itself – viz., that nothing is “x” (true) except by participating in “x-

ness” (truth) – as one of the governing principles in his search for an adequate understanding of truth.

In light both of these general points and of our prior elaboration of Anselm’s metaphysics of participation, identifying Anselm’s participational principle as the justification for the teacher’s unsubstantiated understanding of rectitude as standard – the pivotal move in the argument in Chapter 13 for the unicity of Truth – not only is legitimate but even appears to be the only satisfactory interpretive option. For, as we have seen, by “rectitude” the teacher means, here in stage two of Chapter 13, the standard (the ought) in accordance with which (*secundum quam*) and by which (*qua*) and on account of which (*propter quam*) it is right for what ought to be done (or exist) to be done (or exist). It is, then, in accordance with and by and on account of rectitude, so understood, that something is true/right.²⁰⁹ This understanding of rectitude, unsubstantiated by the teacher in Chapter 13, can be justified by Anselm’s understanding of participation, which we presented above.²¹⁰ In the *Monologion* Anselm makes clear that all “x” things are “x” through “X-ness.” In Chapter 2 of *De veritate* the student reiterated this principle by applying it to the case of truth: all true things are true by participating in truth. This “truth” by which all true things are true is, according to this principle, the cause of the being-true of all true things, precisely because it is by/through truth that true things are true at all. If we survey the findings of *De veritate* through Chapter 12, can we find “truth” in the sense of “that by participating in which all true things are caused to be true”? The answer is obvious: truth, so understood, is God, the

²⁰⁹ See above, 90-91.

²¹⁰ Originally we presented this understanding of participation in our discussion of the *Monologion* (above, 38-42). We summarized this understanding above, 108-10.

Supreme Truth *qua* establisher of the oughts in things through His divine ideas, which constitute the standard/ought governing created things. Clearly, “truth” as the student understands it (stage one of the argument of Chapter 13) – i.e., truth as “doing what one ought” (truth as fulfillment) – is not the “truth” by participation in which all true things are true; rather, “truth” as the standard/ought in accordance with which and on account of which and by which something is true (i.e., “truth” as defined by the teacher at the beginning of stage two, ultimately identified by further argumentation as God) is this “truth,” spoken of in the *Monologion*, by participating in which all true things are caused to be true.²¹¹ Thus, the truth through which all true things are caused to be true (*Monologion*) is the truth/rectitude in accordance with which and by which all true things are true (*De veritate*). Here we have our justification for the teacher’s premise that rectitude is the standard/ought in accordance with which and by which all true things are true.

On this reading, the generic structure of participation that is presented in the *Monologion* receives specification in, gets filled out by, the account of truth in *De veritate*. That is, whereas in the *Monologion* Anselm is concerned with the structure of participation in general in order later to develop a general metaphysics of creation, in the *De veritate* he is concerned with truth in particular, so that the generic *Monologion* understanding of “X-ness” as that “through (*per*) which” “x” things are “x” becomes, in *De veritate*, specified to truth: “Truth” is that “through which” true things are true in the sense of “the standard in accordance with (*secundum*) which, by which (*qua*), on account of (*propter*) which true things are true.”

²¹¹ Here we are reminded of the words of Augustine’s *Soliloquiorum* (I.1.3): “*Aug.: . . . Te invoco, Deus veritas, in quo et a quo et per quem vera sunt, quae vera sunt omnia*” (PL 32, 870).

Now Anselm, as we have seen, does not begin stage two of the argument of Chapter 13 by an explicit identification of this “truth” (through which all things are true) as God – he merely affirms that “truth” is the standard, the ought, by which all true things are true. Of course, he will ultimately identify this “truth” as God, in stage three of Chapter 13 at the very end of the dialogue. But he gets to this final conclusion, this identification of God with truth, only after proving the unicity of truth, and this by way of various other elements of his metaphysics of creation, as we have already seen: fundamentally, it is truth’s eternity, immutability, and independence from its truth-bearers that act as the middle term of the argument in stages two and three. Likewise, as we have already seen, in the *Monologion* Anselm moves from the participational principle – all “x” things are “x” through “x-ness” – to a proof that the “x-ness” through which all “x” things are “x” is one and the same in all these “x” things, and on this basis ultimately identifies this “x-ness” with the Supreme Nature.²¹² So the pattern is the same in the two works: the participational principle is the starting-point; it is followed by a proof for the unicity of that which is participated; and it concludes with an identification of that one *participatum* with God. On our interpretation, then, Anselm presupposes the Augustinian participational principle (as affirmed in his earlier *Monologion* and in Chapter 2 of *De veritate*), then on the basis of that principle argues for the unicity of Truth (using his metaphysics of creation), and, finally, concludes by arguing for the identification of this one Truth with God (again, implicitly using his metaphysics of creation).

In stage two of the argument of Chapter 13, then, Anselm (in the voice of the teacher) can assume rectitude to be the standard/ought by which and on account of which true things

²¹² *Monologion*, ch. 16; *De veritate*, stage three of ch. 13.

are true since he has already in *De veritate* invoked as an operative principle his participational principle, according to which all true things are true by/through/on account of truth. Our consideration of Chapter 13, undertaken in dialogue with Anselm's earlier *Monologion* as well as with the scholarly literature, has led us to this conclusion. As we have seen, the only competing scholarly interpretation of the justification for this assumption of rectitude as standard – viz., the interpretation of Markus Enders – is insufficient and, in fact, presupposes our interpretation: even assuming Enders's claim that the substantial identity of all truths follows from the common definition of truth, this alone does not justify choosing rectitude *qua* standard as the one truth over and against rectitude as the fulfilling/doing of what one ought. Rather, it is Anselm's participational principle that justifies this assumption of truth as the standard by which and on account of which all true things are true, and Enders's interpretation cannot ultimately explain what it professes to explain without this participational principle and the metaphysics of creation built upon it.

It now remains to confirm and develop our thesis that Anselm's metaphysics of creation, and most fundamentally his participational principle, are the basic assumptions operative in his argument for the unicity of Truth. To do so, we need first to assess our interpretation in light of the criteria we established earlier. These criteria, which must be met for any interpretation of the argument of Chapter 13 to be adequate, are the following: (1) the interpretation must explain the unsubstantiated premise that governs the entire argument for the unicity of truth in Chapter 13, i.e., the premise that rectitude/truth is the standard in accordance with which and by which something is true; (2) it must provide a positive account of and argument for the final two conclusions, i.e., that there is only one truth in all true things and that God is that one selfsame truth; and (3) it must explain the seeming

inconsistency between various affirmations of the first ten chapters of *De veritate* and the starting-points and conclusions of the argument of Chapter 13 for the unicity of truth.

We have seen, in concert with various works in the scholarly literature, that various elements of Anselm's metaphysics of creation, present in the *Monologion* and here and there in the *De veritate*, provide the positive account of and argument for the conclusions that there is only one truth in all true things and that God is that one truth. This aspect of our interpretation meets the second criterion. We have just finished showing that Anselm's participational principle, as the foundation of and governing structure for his metaphysics of participation and for those (logically later) elements in his metaphysics of creation that we found to be operative within the argument of Chapter 13, not only explained but also justified the fundamental premise of that argument (the premise, namely, that truth/rectitude is the standard/ought in accordance with which something is true), thereby meeting the first criterion. What remains, then, is to see how this interpretation – according to which Anselm's metaphysics of creation, especially his metaphysics of participation with its participational principle, is what governs, because it grounds, the entire argument of Chapter 13 – explains the seeming inconsistency between certain affirmations of the first ten chapters of *De veritate* and the argument (starting-points and conclusions) of Chapter 13.

We will seek to accomplish this last goal, and thereby to meet the aforementioned third criterion of an adequate interpretation of the argument of Chapter 13, by “reading” the major elements of Anselm's understanding of truth and true things, as laid out in *De veritate*, in light of his metaphysics of participation and of his metaphysics of creation more generally. That is, we will seek to resolve any seeming inconsistency (between the first ten chapters and

Chapter 13) on the way to elaborating a synthetic account of the relationship between Truth and true things, thereby also confirming and developing our interpretation.

We begin at the end of *De veritate* – stage three of the argument of Chapter 13 – with the observation that the final conclusion of *De veritate* follows seamlessly from the *Monologion*'s metaphysics of participation (elaborated above). Since according to this metaphysics of participation all true things are true through one Supreme Truth that is not different in the many true things but rather the same in all of them, it follows that:

[Truth] is improperly said to be “of this or of that thing,” because it [truth] does not have its being in or from or through the things themselves in which it is said to be. But when things themselves are in accordance with it [truth], which is always present to those things that are as they ought to be, then we speak of “the truth of this or of that thing” (for example, the truth of the will or of action) . . . thus the Supreme Truth subsisting in itself is of no thing, but when something is in accordance with It, then we speak of the thing's “truth” or “rectitude.”²¹³

When something is true – i.e., when something is as it ought to be, when something is in accordance with the Supreme Truth – then Truth is “present to,” or “is in,” that thing (although It does not have Its being in or from that true thing).²¹⁴ This is the heart of Anselm's metaphysics of participation: true things participate in the one Supreme Truth as their common ground/cause, through the one Supreme Truth, as participated, dwelling within (i.e., being present to) true things.²¹⁵

²¹³ “*M. Improperie ‘huius vel illius rei’ esse dicitur, quoniam illa non in ipsis rebus aut ex ipsis aut per ipsas in quibus esse dicitur habet suum esse. Sed cum res ipsae secundum illam sunt, quae semper praesto est iis quae sunt sicut debent: tunc dicitur ‘huius vel illius rei veritas’, ut veritas voluntatis, actionis, . . . : ita summa veritas per se subsistens nullius rei est; sed cum aliquid secundum illam est, tunc eius dicitur veritas vel rectitudo*” (Schmitt I, 199.17-21 and 27-29).

²¹⁴ Here we should note Goebel's objection to Aertsen's characterization of Anselm's account. As Goebel rightly points out (*Wahrheit und Freiheit*, 211, fn. 78), Anselm does not say that the Truth is not in things (as Aertsen stated) but rather that the Truth does not have its being in things.

²¹⁵ See Flasch, “Zum Begriff,” 329 and 337-38.

The logically later elements of Anselm's metaphysics of creation (elements we have seen at work both in the *Monologion* and in *De veritate*) work out in more detail the nature, the structure, of this participation: things are true when they are in accordance with the divine idea by which the Supreme Truth establishes the "oughts" in all things. Now, by the mere fact of having created all things, the Supreme Truth has established an invariable truth in their essence and in their existence and in their non-voluntary (necessary) action, because they always are "what they are in the Supreme Truth."²¹⁶ In other words, the essences of created things and their existing and their necessary (natural, non-voluntary) actions are in accordance with the divine ideas through which the Supreme Truth has created all things, so that created things have truth in their essence and existence and necessary action. And certain of those created things – i.e., creatures with free choice – can have truth also in voluntary (rational) action, which is either of the will or of the intellect, if and when they act correctly, i.e., as they ought to, i.e., in accordance with the "ought" established for them in the divine ideas.

One might object, at this point, that it is improper, according to Anselm's own words in stage three of Chapter 13, to say that a created thing "has truth." According to this objection, Anselm's speaking of true things, early on in *De veritate*, as "having" truth²¹⁷ is "improper" speech, in light not only of the conclusion of Chapter 13 but also of Anselm's metaphysics of participation. For, the objection goes, it should rather be said, in accordance with the way things are, that "there is truth in true things" (not that "true things have truth").

²¹⁶ *De veritate*, ch. 7: "*M. Est igitur veritas in omnium quae sunt essentia, quia hoc sunt quod in summa veritate sunt*" (Schmitt I, 185.18-19).

²¹⁷ See ch. 2: "*M. Vera quidem non solet dici cum significat esse quod non est; veritatem tamen et rectitudinem habet* [*italics mine*], . . ." (Schmitt I, 179.1-2).

In reply, it should first be noted that Anselm speaks outside *De veritate* of created things as “having” justice: in Chapter 16 of the *Monologion*, within his discussion of his identifying the Supreme Nature as Justice Itself, he explicitly affirms that a human being “can have [*habere*] justice.”²¹⁸ Second, this affirmation occurs within the very context of elaborating his metaphysics of participation, and it clearly applies not only to justice but also to truth (as *De veritate* shows, justice is a species of truth) and to goodness and to being, etc. So there is no principle operative in this text according to which we should understand as “improper” speech Anselm’s affirmation that a created thing can have justice. The conclusion is clear: Anselm affirms that the participant (the just or true or good thing) can have the participated (justice or truth or goodness)!

But this conclusion needs careful explanation to avoid exaggeration. Although a true thing does indeed have truth, this does not mean that it has its own truth: Anselm affirms the former without qualification, as we have just seen, but the latter must indeed be considered as an instance of what Anselm refers to, at the end of Chapter 13 of *De veritate*, as “improper” speech about true things. For, there in Chapter 13, Anselm identifies speaking of “the truth of this thing” (*veritas huius rei*) and speaking of “the thing’s truth” (*eius veritas*) as improper speech. If a thing did in fact have its own truth, then there would be the truth of this will, the truth of that statement, etc.: that is, there would be many truths, which Anselm has just shown to be false. Therefore, a thing cannot be understood as having its own truth – truth is not, in reality, of this or of that thing.

²¹⁸ “Videndum igitur quomodo intelligendum sit, quando illa natura, quae est ipsa iustitia, dicitur iusta. Quoniam enim homo non potest esse iustitia, sed *habere potest iustitiam* [italics mine], non intelligitur iustus homo existens iustitia, sed habens iustitiam. Quoniam igitur summa natura non proprie dicitur quia habet iustitiam, sed existit iustitia: . . .” (Schmitt I, 30.19-24).

So a true thing has truth but not in such a way as to allow us to speak of “the truth of this thing” or “the thing’s truth.” In what, then, does the true thing’s having truth consist? Given the conclusion of Chapter 13, and given Anselm’s metaphysics of participation in the *Monologion*, it seems clear not only that a true thing has truth (albeit not its own truth, as we have seen) in virtue of the fact that Truth Itself is present to the true thing, but also that a true thing’s having truth consists precisely in this presence of Truth to (or in) the true thing. Obviously, this is a somewhat weak sense of “has,” but Anselm would not affirm a stronger sense, maintaining as he does that a thing neither has its own truth nor has Truth as it is in Itself²¹⁹ but instead has truth as received (rather than as its own), i.e., as Truth makes itself present to the true thing. The key here is to understand the complete reliance of all true things upon the Supreme Truth: the thing’s truth is something given it by the Supreme Truth, is something received, and is therefore not its own. This language of “receiving” (*accipere*) is present throughout *De veritate*: the existence and essence of a thing is given it by the Supreme Truth,²²⁰ and the action of a thing proceeds from the power it has received from the Supreme Truth,²²¹ in such a way that all truth in things is caused by the Supreme Truth (in some cases, through the mediation of the truth in other created things).²²² This is why, in the

²¹⁹ *De veritate*, ch. 13: “*M. . . . : ita summa veritas per se subsistens nullius rei est* [italics mine]; sed cum aliquid secundum illam est, tunc eius dicitur veritas vel rectitudo” (Schmitt I, 199.27-29).

²²⁰ Ch. 7: “*M. An putas aliquid esse aliquando aut alicubi quod non sit in summa veritate, et quod inde non acceperit quod est in quantum est* [italics mine], aut quod possit aliud esse quam quod ibi est? *D. Non est putandum*” (Schmitt I, 185.11-14).

²²¹ Ch. 2: “*D. . . . Sed doce me quid respondere possim, si quis dicat quia, etiam cum oratio significat esse quod non est, significat quod debet. Pariter namque accepit significare esse, et quod est et quod non est* [italics mine]. Nam si non accepisset significare esse etiam quod non est, non id significaret” (Schmitt I, 178.28-32). The same thesis – viz., that a created thing receives its powers of action – is affirmed within the discussions of truth in thought, truth in the will, and truth in action.

²²² See Chapter 10 of *De veritate*. See also, in the last part of Chapter 12, the discussion of justice as received.

conclusion of Chapter 13, the teacher makes clear that when we speak of the truth of a true thing (speech that is, in fact, “improper”), that to which our speech actually refers is the presence of the Supreme Truth to the true thing, rather than a (supposed) truth belonging to and dependent upon the true thing.²²³

What, then, are we to say about the fact that in Chapter 4 of *De veritate* Anselm affirms that rectitude is the thing’s doing what it ought, when he says that we must understand the truth in the will to be its rectitude since it is “nothing other than willing what one ought”²²⁴? As we have pointed out, if “rectitude” means the (thing’s) doing what ought to be done, then it would seem that rectitude (truth) not only is present in but also belongs to the true thing (since the doing what ought to be done must surely belong to the doer); but this would seem to contradict what we stated above, viz., that a thing cannot be said to have its own truth. Now Anselm nowhere says that the truth of a true thing belongs to the true thing,²²⁵ and in fact, as we have shown, Anselm does not, ultimately, accept that as true, because the truth in a true thing is not its own. But this is precisely the problem: how can Anselm speak of “rectitude” (“truth”) as the thing’s doing or being what it ought to do or be without also admitting that truth belongs to the true thing?

²²³ See Flasch, “Zum Begriff,” 337: “Truth is uncreated . . . and gives birth to itself in each individual true thing and is one with it and gives to it what it has.” Flasch refers to Socrates’ insight that what is beautiful is such for no other reason than that it participates in Beauty itself – it is beautiful through the presence of Beauty. According to Flasch, Anselm has identified this as the crucial point: there dwells within all true things one selfsame principle – Truth – that, as the form common to all true things, acts as their ground.

²²⁴ “*D. . . . : non aliud ibi [in voluntate] potest intelligi veritas quam rectitudo, quoniam sive veritas sive rectitudo non aliud in eius voluntate fuit quam velle quod debuit [italics mine]*” (Schmitt I, 181.6-8).

²²⁵ Noone (“Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 113) states that Anselm, in Chapter 2, “was reluctant to identify the truth of a statement with the truth of the thing the statement is about” because he realized that “the truth of something true had to belong to the thing that was true.” But Anselm does not say that the truth of something true belongs to the true thing; rather, he says that the truth of something true is in the true thing (“et ideo veri veritas in ipso vero est” [Schmitt I, 177.16-17]).

There is a deeper problem here, however, a problem that shows itself more explicitly in Chapter 10. This problem, which we identified earlier in discussing the seeming inconsistencies between Chapter 13 and Chapters 2-10,²²⁶ is a matter of making consistent two theses: (1) that the Supreme Truth is the one selfsame truth in all true things, and (2) that there is a hierarchy of truths according to which only the Supreme Truth is uncaused, whereas created truths are caused by the Supreme Truth, sometimes by the mediation of other created truths. Now, as we have seen, in Chapter 2 of *De veritate* Anselm affirms that the *res enuntiata* is the cause of the truth of the statement. Anselm elaborates upon this in Chapter 10, in his reprise of the *Monologion* argument (Chapter 18) for the eternity of truth: it is the truth in the existence of the *res enuntiata* – the fact that something is what and how it is in the Supreme Truth, which is true of all created beings – that is the intermediate cause of the truth in the statement. The ultimate cause of the truth of the statement is, of course, the Supreme Truth in virtue of his divine ideas, under whose governing causality the truth in the existence of the *res enuntiata* is able to act as intermediate cause of the truth of the statement. But if we read this passage from Chapter 10 in light of the conclusions of Chapter 13, it is hard to see how it is in any way meaningful for Anselm to speak as he does of the truths in created things as causes of other truths in created things: for if there is but one Truth in all true things, and that Truth is the Supreme Truth, how can we speak of such truth as being, in some truth-bearers, caused by the truth in other truth-bearers? By denying that a true thing has its own truth – such that talk of “the truth of *x*” or “the truth of *y*” is improper – Anselm

²²⁶ See above, 93-96.

seems to render meaningless the hierarchy of truths he has elaborated in Chapter 10.²²⁷

Noone states the problem aptly: “At the end of the *De veritate* we seem to find that the truth of the essences of things is left with no proper role and seems to enjoy no precise value beyond being a placeholder for the Highest Truth.”²²⁸

This problem is further exacerbated by Anselm’s explicit denial, in Chapter 10, that the truth of the statement in question is God.²²⁹ This denial indicates that Anselm himself is aware that identifying God as the truth of the statement would collapse the hierarchy of truth because it would deny to created truths their role as causes of the truth of thoughts and of statements. But Anselm’s final conclusion, in Chapter 13, erases the distinctions among truths by identifying all truth with the Supreme Truth, thereby denying that created truths play a role as intermediate causes of truth. So not only is there no hierarchy of causes of truth, but there is no hierarchy of truth at all.

One way of dealing with this grave difficulty is suggested by Flasch. Flasch states that Anselm initially leaves open and tolerates two rival “terminologies”: that of the metaphysics of participation and that of a realist understanding of truth (things are the cause of truths).²³⁰ But, according to Flasch, the latter “terminology” ultimately gives way to the former: in the final analysis, the *res enuntiata* is merely the matter in which a statement

²²⁷ See, *inter alia*, Visser and Williams, “Anselm on Truth,” 214-15. Enders takes this passage in Chapter 10 as evidence that Anselm’s understanding of truth is analogical rather than univocal (*Wahrheit und Notwendigkeit*, 552-53). This seems right, but it would then seem very difficult to maintain, as Enders does, that the definition of truth entails the substantial identity of truth, when this definition does not apply univocally to all instances of “truth.”

²²⁸ “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 113.

²²⁹ “*M. . . Cum enim dixi ‘quando non fuit verum quia futurum erat aliquid’, non ita dixi, ac si absque principio ista oratio fuisset quae assereret futurum esse aliquid, aut ista veritas esset deus [italics mine]; . . .*” (Schmitt I, 190.15-17).

²³⁰ “Zum Begriff,” 330.

realizes its own truth, so that the statement (and thought in general) does not have its truth from the *res enuntiata*. Ultimately, according to Flasch, Anselm rejects the realist understanding of truth, because it entails the multiplicity of truth, which Anselm shows to be false.²³¹ And although Flasch does not state specifically that Anselm abandons his (“realist”) understanding of Truth and truths as elaborated in Chapter 10, on Flasch’s account Anselm would have to abandon it in order to remain consistent, precisely because this understanding of Truth and truths in Chapter 10 involves acknowledging that created things have a causal role relative to other truths, whereas on Flasch’s account Anselm’s final position, grounded in his metaphysics of participation, grants all causality to Truth Itself.

We have seen in our treatment of Chapter 2 that Flasch’s understanding of the role of the *res enuntiata*, as elaborated by the teacher and student in Chapter 2, is inadequate. Now, even assuming that Flasch is interpreting Chapter 2 in light of the ultimate conclusion of the dialogue – i.e., even assuming that Flasch is attempting to resolve the problem that Chapters 2 and 10 raise by characterizing their findings as ultimately transcended and abandoned in the dialogue – several serious problems still remain. First, as Fr. Schmitt points out, if there were such a “turn” (or “break”) in the dialogue, as Flasch thinks, Anselm would have more clearly expressed it.²³² Second, and more significantly, even on Flasch’s interpretation, how can we account for Anselm’s explicit denial, in Chapter 10, that the truth of the statement is God? Are we to say that Anselm categorically retracts that denial by virtue of his conclusion in Chapter 13? That seems untenable: given the prominence of place Anselm accords, in *De veritate*, to the *Monologion* 18 argument for the eternity of truth and given his careful

²³¹ Ibid., 330 and 339.

²³² “Introduction,” (1966), 9.

elaboration of its meaning and significance, it is unlikely that Anselm would, as Flasch's interpretation suggests, consign Chapter 10 to the dustbin of "realism."

An interpretive point is in order here. The *onus probandi* is on those who would read Anselm as having abandoned certain theses expressed in the first ten chapters of *De veritate*: we ought to operate on the principle that Anselm does not abandon these earlier statements in *De veritate* unless they cannot be made consonant with the conclusion that God is the one truth of all true things. That is, if the conclusions of Chapter 13 require only minor adjustments to be made to these statements (i.e., terminological adjustments that do not constitute an undermining of the basic meaning of the statements), there is no reason to conclude that Anselm has abandoned these statements.

With this in mind, if we examine some of our major findings up to this point, we will find that they converge upon a satisfactory explanation. Clearly, as we have seen, Anselm's conclusions in Chapter 13 require him, and us, to re-read the earlier terminology of *De veritate*: any speaking of "the truth of *x*" or "the truth of *y*" has been discovered to be improper speech, so all the many instances of such speech in the first ten chapters of *De veritate* must now be understood in that light. This means that the truth present in/to any truth-bearer is, properly speaking, the Supreme Truth. There is no truth on the side of the created truth-bearer: there is merely the being-true, i.e., the being-inaccordance-with the Supreme Truth, and our speaking of "the truth of *x*" refers to this being-true. This would mean that the created being's doing what it ought to do is not to be identified as its "truth" but as its "being-true." In this sense, Anselm is indeed tolerating a terminology, early in *De veritate*, that he will ultimately reject at the end of *De veritate*, the terminology, that is, of "the truth of *x*" and "the truth of *y*." And this rejection of the terminology of "the truth of *x*"

does indeed bespeak a rejection of the underlying position, i.e., that there are many truths. But this rejection of an earlier terminology and the thesis that underlies it does not demand a full rejection of the “realist” thesis that some created things are the causes of other created things’ being true. We need only correct the terminology of this Chapter 10 causal hierarchy of truths and re-interpret it in light of the conclusion that there is but one Truth: the Supreme Truth is the ultimate cause of the being-true of all created things, but some created things (essences and their existence) act as intermediate causes for the being-true of other created things (thought and statements). The *res enuntiata*, then, do indeed maintain their role as causes of the being-true of a statement (Chapter 2). And when Anselm says in Chapter 10 that we are not to understand the *Monologion* 18 argument for the eternity of truth as meaning that the truth of the statement is God, we ought to read this affirmation, in light of Chapter 13, to mean that we should not understand the being-true of the statement to be identified with God. This re-reading of Anselm’s affirmation, which affirmation posed a major interpretive difficulty, maintains the concern behind Anselm’s original affirmation, viz., that we not collapse the causal hierarchy in virtue of which things are said to be true.

Therefore, although Anselm’s earlier statements in *De veritate* require terminological correction and purging of the thesis of the multiplicity of truths, this does not require that the positions taken earlier in *De veritate* (positions expressed using the “early” terminology that requires correcting) be abandoned altogether. This interpretation is further strengthened by the fact that the student and the teacher know at the very beginning of the dialogue that any speaking about “the truth of *x*,” and any acceptance, implicit in that language, of the thesis that there are many truths, is conditional, i.e., is subject to review, depending upon the outcome of the dialogue. For the entire purpose of the dialogue is to determine whether God

is to be identified with truth, wherever truth is said to be, and the approach the teacher and student decide upon is to examine truth wherever it is said to be, in order to find a definition of truth and thereupon to determine whether there is one truth or many truths and whether God is that one truth.²³³ The teacher and student, therefore, are aware that if their search leads them to conclude that God is the one selfsame truth in all true things, their very journey to that conclusion will itself be subject to correction after-the-fact, because one of the principal starting-points of the dialogue, one which plays a large role throughout the course of the dialogue, is the common opinion (expressed in ordinary language) that there is truth of the will, truth of thought, truth of signification, etc. So, since *De veritate* concludes that God is the one selfsame truth in all true things but begins from the thesis, expressed in ordinary language and enshrined in common opinion, that there is truth of the will, truth of signification, truth of thought, etc., the entire project of *De veritate* consists in a correcting and clarifying of ordinary language and common opinion about “truth.” It is in this way that our interpretation satisfies the third criteria we laid out above: the contradiction that exists between the conclusions of Chapter 13 and the two positions taken earlier in *De veritate* – that (1) truth is doing what one ought and that (2) the truths of some created things cause the truths of other created things – can be resolved by correcting the terminology of the earlier positions, as Anselm indicates at the end of Chapter 13. So the basic meaning of those positions must be understood as being retained by Anselm (although, of course, Anselm does not give any explanation of these newly-understood theses²³⁴).

²³³ See our discussion above, 44-47.

²³⁴ Whence Noone’s observation (“Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 113): “At the end of the *De veritate* we seem to find that the truth of the essences of things is left with no proper role and seems to enjoy no precise value beyond being a placeholder for the Highest Truth.”

Our interpretation of Chapter 13 of *De veritate*, then, consists fundamentally in the following theses. First, the only satisfactory foundation for the argument of Chapter 13 – that which both justifies the unsubstantiated premise of the entire argument and provides positive argumentation for the conclusions reached in Chapter 13 – is Anselm’s metaphysics of creation with its metaphysics of participation and, most fundamentally, its participational principle. For the teacher can, in Chapter 13, assume rectitude as the standard/ought in accordance with which and by which all true things are true only on the basis of an account of participation according to which it is through participating in “x-ness” that all “x” things are caused to be “x.” Apart from this foundation, the fundamental premise for the teacher’s argument for the unicity of truth in Chapter 13 cannot be justified.

Second, as stage three of the argument of Chapter 13 makes clear, we must correct any statements made earlier in *De veritate* in light of Anselm’s conclusion that there is but one truth in all true things; this means understanding such earlier statements in light of the foundation for the argument in Chapter 13, i.e., in light of Anselm’s metaphysics of creation (especially his metaphysics of participation). This does not, however, require abandoning the fundamental meaning of these statements: we ought to understand Anselm as affirming, even at the end of the dialogue, that created things act as intermediate causes for the being-true of other created things. It is more textually justifiable to conclude that Anselm affirms both the ultimate conclusion of *De veritate* as well as these earlier statements (in their corrected form), even if Anselm does not work out in the dialogue the relationship between these assertions and even if there is, in fact, tension between them – this is more justifiable than to understand Anselm as having transcended and abandoned the earlier statements on the grounds that they reflect the naïve-realist, Boethian understanding of truth, which is

(allegedly) in opposition to Anselm's Platonic metaphysics (especially his understanding of participation).²³⁵ For, as we have seen, we can understand these earlier statements to have been corrected by the ultimate conclusion without thereby having been evacuated of their basic meaning.

D. Conclusion

Our investigation has led us to locate, as the foundation of Anselm's argument for the unicity of Truth, his metaphysics of creation, developed in the earlier *Monologion*. More specifically, we have identified Anselm's participational principle, which grounds the metaphysics of participation that is fundamental to Anselm's metaphysics of creation, as the ultimate explanation of the argument for the unicity of Truth in *De veritate* 13. We have noted that Anselm's metaphysics of creation, and his metaphysics of participation in particular, are heavily indebted to Augustine, for whom the same considerations (albeit less fully elaborated) led to the conclusion that there is but one Truth "in Whom and by Whom and through Whom all true things are true."²³⁶

What remains, then, is to examine Grosseteste's account of truth and his conclusion that there are many truths, in order to ascertain the reasons impelling him to this conclusion. And since we have found that it was Anselm's understanding of participation that ultimately drove Anselm to the conclusion that all truth is one, we will in our examination of

²³⁵ It should be pointed out in this regard that Flasch himself admits that we cannot presuppose systematic unity in a medieval thinker ("Zum Begriff," 324) then later says we cannot understand Anselm to have accepted the realist understanding of truth because it would mean he has an inherently disunited account of truth ("Zum Begriff," 328)! I point this out to show that even Flasch admits the possibility that there is internal and unresolved tension in *De veritate*.

²³⁶ Book I, ch. 1, #3: "Aug.: . . . Te invoco, Deus veritas, in quo et a quo et per quem vera sunt, quae vera sunt omnia" (*PL* 32, 870).

Grosseteste be vigilant in ascertaining the role (or lack thereof) of participation in his account of truth as many.

CHAPTER THREE

GROSSETESTE'S ACCOUNT OF TRUTH AS MANY

More so than Anselm's *De veritate*, Robert Grosseteste's *De veritate* manifestly incorporates into its argument themes and theses that are discussed or argued for at greater length, or at least in more detail, in his other writings. These themes and theses are several not only in number but in kind: some are theological, others philosophical, and still others scientific. This means that any interpretation of Grosseteste's account of truth, while it will focus principally upon his *De veritate* (since this is his only work devoted to the subject of truth in general), will also have to examine passages from a number of other works of Grosseteste – theological, philosophical, and scientific – in order fully to understand the argument of *De veritate*.

Understanding the argument of *De veritate* in light of these other writings requires great care. We must, of course, not only be sensitive to the different contexts or concerns governing the various writings of Grosseteste but also have an eye upon the date of composition of the writings we bring into our analysis of *De veritate*, considering the possibility that Grosseteste's thought underwent a development over the course of his career. But in this latter regard we come upon difficulties, for the chronology of Grosseteste's writing is a contentious matter.

In the case of Anselm, we came upon no such mare's nest of difficulties. For the two works of Anselm that we examined – the *Monologion* and the *De veritate* – were explicitly connected, in their teaching, by Anselm himself at the beginning of the *De veritate*: Anselm's *De veritate*, as we saw, represents in part an attempt further to elaborate upon a passage from

the earlier *Monologion*. But here, in Grosseteste, we do not have the advantage of Grosseteste himself connecting the *De veritate* with these other relevant writings (as Anselm connected his *De veritate* to his earlier *Monologion*), nor do we have the advantage (as we did in the case of Anselm's *Monologion* and *De veritate*) of knowing with assurance the dates of composition of the writings of Grosseteste relevant to his account of truth.

For our present investigation, this problem is an acute one, because the only book-length treatment of Grosseteste's account of truth¹ – Steven Marrone's *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century*² – relies upon a peculiar chronology of Grosseteste's writings in arguing that Grosseteste's account of truth undergoes a fundamental change over the course of his career. More specifically, Marrone assumes certain dates of composition for the *De veritate* and the *Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum libros*, and on this basis, in part, he argues that the former work represents the immature and the Augustinian-influenced thought of Grosseteste on truth whereas the latter work represents his mature, Aristotelian-influenced thought on truth.³

Therefore, before we turn to an examination of Grosseteste's writings on truth, and even before we give an overview of the secondary literature on Grosseteste's understanding of truth, we must briefly address the problem of dating Grosseteste's works, in order to

¹ There is one other book that treats of Grosseteste's understanding of truth – Robert Palma's *The Understanding of Truth in the Thought of Robert Grosseteste* (Ph.D. diss., University of Edinburgh, 1970). But because this is an unpublished dissertation that is nowhere discussed in the secondary literature on Grosseteste, it is *de facto* not a part of the scholarship on Grosseteste.

² Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983. Although Marrone himself has written a second, more recent work that addresses at some length Grosseteste's understanding of truth (Part One of *A Doctrine of Divine Illumination*, vol. 1 of *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 98 [Leiden: Brill, 2001]), this latter work is fundamentally a reprise of the argument of his earlier work, a reprise that is less focused on Grosseteste and less exhaustive in its examination than the earlier work.

³ *New Ideas of Truth*, 139-42; *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. I, pp. 34-36 (hereafter, I.34-36).

situate the writings of Grosseteste that are relevant for our investigation – above all, the *De veritate*, but also the *De unica forma omnium*, *De libero arbitrio*, and *Commentarius* – in their proper chronological order, if that is possible, and, if it is not possible, to realize that any synthetic account of Grosseteste’s theory of truth cannot rely on a chronology of these writings for any developmental claims. This examination of the chronological problem, then, will enable us adequately to judge Marrone’s chronological assumptions.⁴

A. The Problem of Dating Grosseteste’s Works

The life of Robert Grosseteste has attracted the attention of historians,⁵ especially in the past sixty years, predominantly because of the famously scarce historical evidence for his whereabouts and activities in the crucial period of 1200-1225. Born around 1170, Grosseteste’s Oxford career of teaching and writing began, at the earliest, around 1200 and reached its height perhaps in the 1220’s and early 1230’s. Grosseteste was consecrated bishop of Lincoln in 1235, and although he continued to write and study after this point in his life, most of the writings relevant for our investigation (and both of the principal ones – *De veritate* and the *Commentarius*) undoubtedly belong to his pre-episcopal period. So it is the

⁴ This inquiry into the chronological problem will also serve to fill a hole in Grosseteste scholarship: there is no recent summary of the Grosseteste scholarship addressing the chronology of those writings of Grosseteste that are relevant to his account of truth.

⁵ See above all: D.A. Callus, “The Oxford Career of Robert Grosseteste,” *Oxoniensia* 10 (1945): 42-72; Callus, “Robert Grosseteste as Scholar,” in *Robert Grosseteste, Scholar and Bishop: Essays in Commemoration of the Seventh Centenary of His Death*, ed. D.A. Callus, 1-69 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955; reprint, 1969); James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Sir Richard Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste et la théologie à l’université d’Oxford (1190-1250)*, trans. Éliane Saint-André Utudjian (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1999); James McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

period 1200-1225 that concerns us. But it is precisely this period that has been the object of much scholarly scrutiny: there is very little historical evidence that allows us to pinpoint Grosseteste's whereabouts and activities during this period, and even that evidence is subject to differing interpretations. The central problem, around which much of the controversy turns, consists in identifying the years in which Grosseteste was chancellor (or the equivalent thereof) of the new university at Oxford. For, inseparably linked to this question are all the significant questions about Grosseteste's career during this period: When did he study theology? When did his theological regency begin? Was he indeed at Oxford before 1214, or even before 1225?

Now, as we have said earlier, our focus in this examination of the chronological problem is directed primarily at the dates of composition of the *De veritate* and of the writings relevant to Grosseteste's account of truth. Therefore, we are not concerned *per se* with the general problem of Grosseteste's whereabouts and activities between 1200 and 1225, nor are we concerned to adjudicate between the competing historical hypotheses regarding Grosseteste's life in this 25-year period. Rather, we seek to answer the question whether Grosseteste scholars have determined with any certainty the dates of composition of *De veritate* and these other writings and, in so doing, to determine whether Marrone's chronological assumptions, or indeed any chronological assumptions, ought to be accepted. To that end, we will briefly present the basic scholarly positions concerning Grosseteste's whereabouts and activities between 1200 and 1225, and, in so doing, we will present the dates of composition that scholars have assigned to the writings in question.

The major schools of thought regarding Grosseteste's whereabouts and activities during the period 1200-1225 are represented by three of the most significant Grosseteste

scholars: Fr. Daniel Callus, O.P., Fr. James McEvoy, and Sir Richard Southern.⁶ The basic construction of Grosseteste's life by Fr. Callus, who is the first prominent modern historian of Robert Grosseteste's life (writing in the 1940's and 1950's), was not radically challenged until 1986, when Sir Richard Southern published his landmark study on the life and thought of Robert Grosseteste, entitled *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe*. Fr. James McEvoy, the foremost scholar of the thought of Robert Grosseteste, defended the basic positions of Fr. Callus's construction against the challenge of Southern.

Fr. Callus concluded that Grosseteste, having taught at Oxford as a master of arts from 1199-1209, studied theology in Paris in the years 1209-1214, after which, coming back to England as a master of theology (or becoming a master soon thereafter), Grosseteste became the first chancellor, or one of the first chancellors, of the University of Oxford. On this reading, Grosseteste's theological teaching career began early, in 1214, ending only in 1235;⁷ it is to this "teaching period," 1214-1235, that Callus assigned the composition of the *De veritate* as well as the composition of the works closely related to it, viz., the *De veritate*

⁶ These three scholars, of course, were preceded by such Grosseteste scholars as Samuel Harrison Thomson and Francis Seymour Stevenson, whose works were the early standard in 20th century Grosseteste scholarship – Thomson's *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste* (Cambridge: 1940) and Stevenson's *Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1899). But Thomson does not address at much length the chronology of Grosseteste's writings (and when he does his position is largely in agreement with that of the later research of Fr. Callus), and the explanation of Stevenson (24-29) regarding Grosseteste's whereabouts and activities for these years are, fundamentally, the same as that of Fr. Callus, although they are expressed with more reservation. Furthermore, Stevenson's and Thomson's dating of the works of Grosseteste is too broad to be of any help for our present inquiry. For these reasons, and because the research and scholarship of later scholars like Fr. Callus and Richard Southern are more thorough on these points, we have not treated Thomson and Stevenson as major representatives of a distinct school of thought regarding the chronology of Grosseteste.

⁷ "Oxford Career," 45; "Robert Grosseteste as Scholar," 5-11.

propositionis, *De libero arbitrio*, and *De scientia Dei*.⁸ The only further indication Callus gave of the composition of *De veritate* and of the closely-related works was his statement that these works “belong undoubtedly to Grosseteste’s early years.”⁹ The *Commentarius* Callus dated to the decade 1200-1210, on the basis of the evidence of Nicholas Trivet.¹⁰ According to Callus, then, Grosseteste’s *Commentarius* (a philosophical work) pre-dated his *De veritate* (a theological work).

From 1950-1985, Grosseteste scholars came to identify later dates of composition for the *De veritate*, the closely-related *De libero arbitrio*, and the *Commentarius*. With the exception of Marrone, scholars during this period identified the years 1225-1235 as the dates within which the *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* were composed.¹¹ The date of composition of the *Commentarius* was gradually narrowed down to the years 1228-1231.¹² At this point in time in Grosseteste scholarship, then, the *De veritate*, *De libero arbitrio*, and

⁸ “Oxford Career,” 45 and 48-54; “Robert Grosseteste as Scholar,” 5-8 and 28-29. As far as I can tell, all Grosseteste scholars consider *De veritate*, *De veritate propositionis*, *De scientia Dei*, and *De libero arbitrio* to have been composed within a few years of each other.

⁹ “Robert Grosseteste as Scholar,” 29. Marrone (*New Ideas of Truth*, 139-40) takes Fr. Callus to mean 1210-1215, but such a reading of Fr. Callus seems wrong for two reasons: first, according to Fr. Callus, Grosseteste would still have been a student at Paris during the years 1210-1215; second, the chronology of Grosseteste’s life given at the back (p. 251) of *Robert Grosseteste: Scholar and Bishop*, edited by Fr. Callus, states that Grosseteste’s theological treatises were written c.1215-1221.

¹⁰ “Oxford Career,” 45; “Robert Grosseteste as Scholar,” 12.

¹¹ Josiah C. Russell, “Phases of Grosseteste’s Intellectual Life,” *Harvard Theological Review* 43, no. 1 (1950): 114; Pietro Rossi, introduction to *Commentarius in Posteriorum analyticorum libros*, by Robert Grosseteste, ed. Pietro Rossi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1981), 9-10; McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 230-31. Standing against this (admittedly small) trend is Marrone, who professes to follow Callus in assigning to the *De veritate* (and *De libero arbitrio*) a date of composition between 1210 and 1215 (*New Ideas of Truth*, 139-40).

¹² Russell, “Phases of Grosseteste’s Intellectual Life,” 115; Alistair C. Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science 1100-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 46; Richard Dales, “Robert Grosseteste’s Scientific Works,” *Isis* 52, no. 3 (1961): 395-402; Rossi, “Introduction,” 13-21; McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 230; McEvoy, “The Chronology of Robert Grosseteste’s Writings on Nature and Natural Philosophy,” *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 58, no. 3 (1983): 636-43; Marrone, *New Ideas of Truth*, 141-42.

the *Commentarius* were generally being assigned similar dates of composition – again, with the exception of Marrone.

Sir Richard Southern's 1986 work changed the face of Grosseteste scholarship. Southern advanced the thesis that Grosseteste transitioned from secular to theological studies much later than the generally-accepted Callus hypothesis maintained. Southern concluded that Grosseteste began to teach theology at Oxford in 1225, so that his theological teaching career was 1225-1235, during which time he held the position of chancellor of the university.¹³ Southern found no evidence for Grosseteste having been at either Paris or Oxford before 1225.¹⁴ According to Southern, then, none of Grosseteste's theological writings could have been composed before the mid-1220's, so that the *De veritate*, *De libero arbitrio*, and *De unica forma* were assigned to the mid- to late-1220's.¹⁵ As for the *Commentarius*, Southern sided with Crombie in dating it to the early 1220's.¹⁶ For Southern, then, Grosseteste wrote the *Commentarius* a little earlier than the other writings (*De veritate*, etc.), the former coming near the end of the secular phase of his career and the latter coming only after he had begun the theological phase of his career.¹⁷

Fr. James McEvoy argued against Southern's thesis that Grosseteste's theological career began only in 1225. Defending Fr. Callus's position, Fr. McEvoy claimed that

¹³ Southern, *Growth of an English Mind* (1986), 70-75 and 135-39. Unless otherwise noted, references to Southern are to the first edition (1986) of his work; when the second edition differs from the first edition in any relevant way, I will indicate as much.

¹⁴ "A Last Review," in *Growth of an English Mind*, 2nd. ed. (1992), xxvii-xxxii.

¹⁵ Southern, *Growth of an English Mind*, 32 and 113; Southern, "A Last Review," 1992, lviii.

¹⁶ Southern, *Growth of an English Mind*, 131-32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 113 and 131-39; Southern, "A Last Review," 1992, lv-lviii.

Southern misconstrued the major historical evidence that suggested (to Southern) a late theological career for Grosseteste.¹⁸ Fr. McEvoy also provided several positive arguments for the thesis that Grosseteste was already an established theologian by 1225, and he argued in favor of Fr. Callus's dating of Grosseteste's chancellorship. According to Fr. McEvoy, then, Grosseteste's theological career at Oxford extended from 1214 to 1235 (as Callus had concluded earlier).¹⁹ Now, prior to the appearance of Southern's book, Fr. McEvoy had maintained that Grosseteste wrote the *De veritate*, *De libero arbitrio*, *De unica forma*, and the *Commentarius* during the period 1225-1230.²⁰ So, for our present purposes, we should note that Fr. McEvoy had, before the critique of Southern, already departed from Fr. Callus' dating of both the *De veritate* and the *Commentarius*, assigning both works to the late 1220's. And since Southern also dated both works to the 1220's (although he concluded that the *Commentarius* was written in the early 1220's and the *De veritate* in the late 1220's), Southern's critique of the Callus reconstruction of Grosseteste's life had no bearing on the leading (McEvoy's) dating of the *De veritate* and the *Commentarius*.

In general, Grosseteste scholarship after Southern's 1986 work agrees with Southern's and McEvoy's dating of the *De veritate* (and *De libero arbitrio*) as post-1225²¹

¹⁸ Review of *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe*, by Sir Richard Southern, *Bulletin de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 14 (1987), 353-58; *Robert Grosseteste et la théologie*, 50; *Robert Grosseteste* (2000), 24-25.

¹⁹ Review of Southern, 354-58; *Robert Grosseteste et la théologie*, 50-54; *Robert Grosseteste* (2000), 25-29.

²⁰ For Fr. McEvoy's dating of the *De veritate*, see his *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 230-31. For his dating of the *Commentarius*, see his "The Chronology of Robert Grosseteste's Writings," 636-43. For his dating of *De unica forma*, see his "Der Brief des Robert Grosseteste an Magister Adam Rufus (Adam von Oxford, OFM): ein Datierungsversuch," in *Franziskanische Studien* 63 (1981): 221-26 (cited in Southern, *The Growth of an English Mind*, 32n10).

²¹ See: Bruce Eastwood, review of *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe*, by Sir Richard Southern, *Speculum* 63 (1988): 235; Neil Lewis, "The First Recension of Robert Grosseteste's *De libero arbitrio*," *Mediaeval Studies* 53 (1991): 23-26; Southern, "A Last Review," 1992, lviii; Joseph Goering,

and with the general dating of the *Commentarius* to the late 1220's.²² The most recent representatives of this dominant trend are James Ginther (2004) and Neil Lewis (2007), both of whom concluded that the *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* were written in the late 1220's or early 1230's while the *Commentarius* belongs to the 1220's.²³

In summary, it is clear that there is a consensus, on the part of Grosseteste scholars in the past fifty years, that Grosseteste composed the *Commentarius* in the 1220's.²⁴ It is also clear that there is a general trend in the past fifty years of Grosseteste scholarship – on the part of both those Grosseteste scholars who accept Southern's general construction of

“When and Where Did Grosseteste Study Theology?” in *Robert Grosseteste: New Perspectives on his Thought and Scholarship*, ed. James McEvoy, *Instrumenta Patristica et Mediaevalia* 27 (Steenbrugge: Brepols Publishers, 1995), *passim*, but especially 42, 50, and 39n82.

²² See: Marrone, “Metaphysics and Science in the Thirteenth Century: William of Auvergne, Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon,” in *Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. 3 of *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (London: Routledge, 1998), 205; Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, I.36; Lewis, “Robert Grosseteste,” in *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone, Blackwell Companions to Philosophy 24 (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 597; James Ginther, *Master of the Sacred Page: A Study of the Theology of Robert Grosseteste, ca.1229/30-1235* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2004), 37; Christina Van Dyke, “An Aristotelian Theory of Divine Illumination: Robert Grosseteste’s *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17 (2009): 685n1.

²³ Ginther, *Master of the Sacred Page*, 17-18 and 37; Neil Lewis, “Robert Grosseteste,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2007), under “2. Works,” <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/grosseteste/> (accessed July 20, 2011).

²⁴ Most Grosseteste scholars state that the *Commentarius* was written in the late 1220's. But there are several who do not make such a claim. Southern, as we have said, bucks this trend in dating the *Commentarius* to the early 1220's (*Growth of an English Mind*, 131-32); Eastwood agrees with Southern (review in *Speculum* 1988, 235). Rossi and Lewis do not narrow the dating to the late 1220's: Rossi refuses to do so, saying the *Commentarius* could have been started as early as 1214 or 1220 (“Introduction,” 21), while Lewis merely fails to specify anything other than the 1220's (“Robert Grosseteste” [2007]) or 1220-1235 (“Robert Grosseteste” [2003], 597). But, aside from the disagreement of Southern and Eastwood, the hesitation of Rossi, and the vagueness of Lewis, Grosseteste scholars, going all the way back to Richard Dales in 1961 (“Robert Grosseteste’s Scientific Works,” 395-402), affirm that the *Commentarius* was written sometime in the period 1225-1230.

Grosseteste's theological career and those Grosseteste scholars who do not – to date Grosseteste's *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* to the late 1220's or early 1230's.²⁵

Standing against this second general trend – i.e., of dating *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* to the late 1220's or early 1230's – is the position of Steven Marrone. According to Marrone, Grosseteste composed his *De veritate* in the period 1210-1215, and since (as most Grosseteste scholars agree) the *Commentarius* was composed in the late 1220's, the *De veritate* (and *De libero arbitrio*) represents Grosseteste's early views on truth and knowledge whereas the *Commentarius* represents his mature views on truth and knowledge.²⁶ The only other Grosseteste scholar who maintains this chronology is Christina Van Dyke, but she professes merely to accept Marrone's dating of the *De veritate* and McEvoy's dating of the *Commentarius*, she herself not giving any arguments to accept either of these positions since she is not concerned with the chronological question.²⁷ So Marrone is the only Grosseteste scholar in the last fifty years who argues that *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* should be assigned a date of composition earlier than the mid-1220's, and, since the only other scholar who affirms such an early dating for these works (i.e., Callus) affirms an even earlier date for the composition of the *Commentarius*, Marrone is the only Grosseteste scholar at all who

²⁵ Southern identifies the mid-1220's as the probable period of composition of *De veritate*, but he gives no argument for this dating – he merely asserts it, very briefly, his focus being on another topic.

²⁶ Marrone first elaborated this position in his 1983 work *New Ideas of Truth* (139-42). He reiterated this position in 1998 (“Metaphysics and Science in the Thirteenth Century,” 205) and again in 2001 (*The Light of Thy Countenance*, I.34-36).

²⁷ “An Aristotelian Theory of Divine Illumination,” 685n1 and 686n2. Interestingly, Van Dyke states (686n2) that she is following Marrone's dating of *De veritate* “in holding that *De veritate* was most probably composed sometime in the 1220s [sic].” Undoubtedly this is a typographical error and she meant to say “1210s.”

believes the *Commentarius* to be a significantly later work than the *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio*.²⁸

Strangely enough, Marrone seems to think otherwise, for in his 2001 work *The Light of Thy Countenance* he says,

For Grosseteste, it will be necessary to start with a number of short works once thought to have been composed late in his career but now generally dated much earlier, probably sometime in the second decade of the thirteenth century: his *De veritate*, *De veritate propositionis* and *De scientia Dei*. Although Richard Southern has recently re-championed a later date for *De veritate*, his arguments depend on a complicated reevaluation of the whole course of Grosseteste's career that, for all its ingenuity, is not in the end convincing. In this study, the early date for *De veritate* will be accepted.²⁹

This passage, which constitutes Marrone's entire discussion of the dating of *De veritate* (not counting a footnote discussing Southern's reconstruction), is an incredible statement. As we have seen, from 1955 to 2001 (when this work of Marrone's was published) no Grosseteste scholar, except Marrone, maintained that the *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* were written before the mid-1220's. Josiah Russell, Pietro Rossi, Fr. McEvoy, Richard Southern, Bruce Eastwood, Neil Lewis, and Joseph Goering all place *De veritate* within the period 1225-1235.³⁰ So I see no way to agree with Marrone that the *De veritate* is "now generally dated much earlier"; in fact, it is evident that the opposite is true: the *De veritate* is now generally dated later than it was in the 1940's and 1950's (by Fr. Callus). And even if we remove from

²⁸ As we have seen, Fr. Callus, who is the only other scholar to maintain an early dating of *De veritate*, dated the *Commentarius* to an even earlier period in Grosseteste's career, viz., 1200-1210! So Marrone finds himself in a position in which he has accepted (or, rather, exaggerated: see above, 137n9) Fr. Callus's early dating of *De veritate* but has rejected Fr. Callus's even earlier dating of the *Commentarius*. This means that there is no other Grosseteste scholar who has maintained the chronology that Marrone affirms.

²⁹ *The Light of Thy Countenance*, I.34-35. The parallel passage in *New Ideas of Truth* reads: "Although it was once thought that Grosseteste wrote these works rather late in his career, it is now believed that they date from much earlier" (139).

³⁰ See above, 137-40, 137n11, and 139n21.

this list of scholars those who accept the Southern hypothesis, the great authority of Fr. McEvoy remains, who, as we have seen,³¹ concluded that 1225-1230 is the “most likely” date of composition for the *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio* (and for the *De unica forma*) while maintaining that very construction (Callus’s) of Grosseteste’s life upon which Marrone himself establishes his own earlier dating of *De veritate*. It is clear, then, that it is not the Southern hypothesis that is the cause of the “later date” for *De veritate*. Therefore, on all fronts, Marrone’s position about the date of composition of the *De veritate* is not reliable.

In a footnote to the above-quoted passage from his 2001 work, Marrone refers the reader to the discussion of the dating of *De veritate* that is contained in his earlier (1983) work on Grosseteste. In that earlier work, Marrone’s foundation for the earlier dating of *De veritate* (and the closely-related works) is an argument from authority. The authority Marrone appealed to was Fr. Callus: Marrone brought forth no historical evidence for an early dating of *De veritate*, but rather merely accepted Callus’s construction.³² Since Marrone did not present an argument for the early dating of *De veritate* but rather merely affirmed (as he thought) Callus’s conclusions, and since all other scholars who accepted Callus’s construction of Grosseteste’s life concluded that the *De veritate* was composed in the mid- or late-1220’s, and since nearly all Grosseteste scholars since Fr. Callus have assigned the composition of the *De veritate* to the mid- or late-1220’s – for all these reasons,

³¹ See above, 138-39.

³² *New Ideas of Truth*, 139-40. As we have seen (above, 137n9), however, Fr. Callus seems to have held to a less early dating of *De veritate* – c.1215-1221 – than Marrone thinks.

there is no reason to accept Marrone's conclusion that *De veritate* is an early (1210-1215) work of Grosseteste.³³

In summary, Grosseteste scholars of the past fifty years are nearly unanimous in assigning to the period 1225-1235 Grosseteste's composition of *De veritate* (and of the works closely related to it) and to the period 1225-1230 Grosseteste's composition of the *Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum libros*. Those few scholars who do not agree with this dating have not presented any positive arguments, or any historical evidence, to the contrary. Therefore, Grosseteste scholars have indeed come to a general consensus (although not complete certainty) about the dates of composition of most of the works we will be investigating – *De veritate*, *De libero arbitrio*, and the *Commentarius* – and those few scholars who put forward a date of composition for the *De unica forma* agree in assigning it to the period 1225-1230.³⁴ But the dates of composition have not been sufficiently narrowed down for us to know with any assurance the order in which these works were written.³⁵ The fact that there is a consensus that these works were written in the same ten-year period,

³³ Joseph Goering ("When and Where Did Grosseteste Study Theology?" 39n82) indicates as much when he says that Marrone's division of Grosseteste's writings into early (*De veritate*) and late (*Commentarius*) is "misleading." And, as we have seen, Grosseteste scholarship subsequent to Marrone's 2001 work rejects the early dating of *De veritate*. In 2004, James Ginther, disagreeing with both Callus and Southern, argued that Grosseteste became a master of theology in 1229 or 1230, and he concluded further that the *De veritate* is from the period of Grosseteste's theological regency, viz., 1229-1235 (*Master of the Sacred Page*, 1-4 and 17-18). And in 2007, Neil Lewis asserted that the *De veritate* dates from the late 1220's or early 1230's ("Robert Grosseteste," 2007, under "2. Works").

³⁴ In his early essay "Der Brief des Robert Grosseteste" (221-26), Fr. McEvoy identified 1220-1230 as the most narrow conclusive dating possible (according to Southern, *The Growth of an English Mind*, 32n10), but in his later writings Fr. McEvoy stated that the *De unica forma* was written in 1225/1226 (*Robert Grosseteste et la théologie*, 50; *Robert Grosseteste*, 25). Southern says that the *De unica forma* was probably written between 1225 and 1229 (*The Growth of an English Mind*, 32). Lewis ("Robert Grosseteste" [2003], 597) identifies the broad period 1220-1235 as the time within which the *De unica forma* (and all the other writings under consideration: *De veritate*, *De veritate propositionis*, *De scientia Dei*, *De libero arbitrio*, *Commentarius*) was written. At any rate, these Grosseteste scholars agree that the *De unica forma* was written either just before or at the same time as the *De veritate* and *De libero arbitrio*.

³⁵ It should be noted that I am prescinding here from the distinction between the first and the second recensions of *De libero arbitrio*. Later, I will briefly address the dating of the recensions (see below, 198n175).

combined with the fact that no one has with any certainty established more precise dates of composition (in order to determine the order in which they were written), not only requires us to reject the chronological basis for Marrone's claim that Grosseteste's doctrine of truth and knowledge underwent a significant development over the course of his career, but also makes it impossible for any investigation of these writings of Grosseteste to rely upon their chronology for any developmental claims.

B. Overview of the Secondary Literature

The scholarship on Grosseteste is somewhat sparse, and a sizeable portion of that relatively little scholarship deals with Grosseteste's life and writings in general. There are only five works in the scholarship on Grosseteste that explore his account of truth; only two of these works address Grosseteste's argument for the thesis that there are many truths, and both these treatments are very cursory.³⁶ Still, before we begin our examination of Grosseteste's writings to establish his account of truth, we must briefly present the contributions that these five scholarly works make to an understanding of Grosseteste's general account of truth.

³⁶ Ludwig Baur, *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters: Texte und Untersuchungen 18, no. 4-6 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1917); Robert Palma, "Robert Grosseteste's Understanding of Truth," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (1975): 300-06; Steven Marrone, *New Ideas of Truth*; Steven Marrone, *A Doctrine of Divine Illumination*, vol. 1 of *The Light of Thy Countenance*; Timothy Noone, "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure," in *Truth: Studies of a Robust Presence*, ed. Kurt Pritzl, O.P., Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy 51 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 102-26. I do not include Fr. McEvoy's seminal 1982 work *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, because his discussion of the *De veritate* is restricted almost entirely to epistemological concerns. Baur 1917 and Noone 2010 are the two works that discuss Grosseteste's claim that there are many truths.

Ludwig Baur, many of whose 1912 editions of the writings of Grosseteste remain to this day the standard editions in the field, discussed Grosseteste's understanding of truth in his 1917 work *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*. Baur understands Grosseteste to have concluded that (1) what is always denoted by the term "truth" is the one truth, viz., the Highest Truth, but that (2) it is not wrong to speak of many truths as long as one understands by "many truths" the ontological truths and essences of things as conformities to the divine ideas in the Eternal Truth.³⁷ Supporting this manifold application and meaning of the concept of "truth" is the fact that the truth of mathematical judgments, for example, is different from the truth of historical judgments of fact, of conditional sentences, and of negative judgments.³⁸

In a 1975 article entitled "Robert Grosseteste's Understanding of Truth," Robert Palma attributes the unique character of Grosseteste's thought in general, and his account of truth in particular, to Grosseteste's own temperament and interests and to the influence of the new works of Aristotle, pseudo-Dionysius, Greek and Arabic scientific treatises, and the school of Chartres. These factors, Palma contends, contribute to set Grosseteste "somewhat apart from St. Augustine and St. Anselm."³⁹ According to Palma, Grosseteste distinguishes 4 categories of truth and is very concerned to order these categories properly, i.e., according to ontological priority: (1) the Highest Truth, which is the primary locus of truth, foundational for all other truth (as measuring the measured); (2) the truths of things ("ontic" truth); (3)

³⁷ *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste*, 205.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 206.

³⁹ "Robert Grosseteste's Understanding of Truth," 301.

cognitive truth; and (4) logical truth.⁴⁰ Palma notes that both Anselm and Grosseteste take up the question of the unity or plurality of truth in recognition of the necessity of preserving the status of the Highest Truth as radically different from created beings, as ontologically prior and first: Palma's point seems to be that, whatever kind of truth is under discussion, the Highest Truth is, as the foundation of all other truth, "always in view."⁴¹

The most thorough examination of Grosseteste's account of truth is to be found in Steven Marrone's *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century* (1983). Now, Marrone's focus in this work is almost entirely epistemological (whence his lengthy treatment of the *Commentarius*):⁴² Marrone is concerned to show that "early" Grosseteste adhered to the Augustinian theory of divine illumination whereas "later" Grosseteste basically abandoned illumination theory in favor of a fundamentally Aristotelian, "secular" epistemology. Nevertheless, Marrone's exegesis of *De veritate* and of the *Commentarius* bears some relevance to our investigation insofar as Marrone presents Grosseteste's understanding of the nature of truth. Marrone's thesis in this regard is that according to Grosseteste's early writings – especially *De veritate* – created truth (simple, not complex) is the conformity (*rectitudo*) of a created thing to its corresponding idea in the mind of God (truth as relation), whereas according to Grosseteste's later writings – exemplified by the *Commentarius* – created truth is that which is (*id quod est*), being (*esse*), the true thing itself (truth as simple quality).⁴³ According to Marrone, then,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 302.

⁴¹ Ibid., 304-05.

⁴² Fr. McEvoy, in his review of Marrone, criticizes the heavily epistemological focus of Marrone's book (*Bulletin de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 14 [1986]: 134-36 [no. 304]).

⁴³ *New Ideas of Truth*, 146 and 155-60.

there is a major shift in Grosseteste's views on truth. The early views of Grosseteste are said to be influenced by St. Augustine and St. Anselm, whereas the late views of Grosseteste are said to be occasioned by Grosseteste's reading of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.⁴⁴ As we have already seen, the chronological assumption grounding Marrone's thesis – viz., that the *De veritate* was written significantly earlier than the *Commentarius* – has been undermined by the consensus of Grosseteste scholars in dating his *De veritate* and his *Commentarius* to the same period of time (with the *De veritate* perhaps being even a bit later than the *Commentarius*!).⁴⁵ What remains to be examined, then, is Marrone's treatment of Grosseteste's account of truth in the *De veritate* and in the *Commentarius*.

In 2001, Marrone published a second work in which he examined Grosseteste's account of truth: *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*. In Part One of this significant work, Marrone traces the history of illumination theory in the thirteenth century from its beginnings in William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste. Although he slightly tempers the thesis of his 1983 work, Marrone still maintains that there is a significant shift in Grosseteste's views, not only in his epistemology⁴⁶ but also in his account of truth.⁴⁷ Part One of this later work is, fundamentally, a re-structured and slightly condensed reprisal of Marrone's earlier work on William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 145-46 and 158.

⁴⁵ See above, 134-44.

⁴⁶ *The Light of Thy Countenance*, I, chs. 1-4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., I.40-44.

The final work of Grosseteste scholarship that examines Grosseteste's account of truth is a 2010 article by Timothy Noone, entitled: "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility in Anselm, Grosseteste, and Bonaventure." After discussing Anselm's account of truth, Noone identifies three problems in Anselm's account, problems that bothered Grosseteste: the failure to characterize the distinction between necessary and contingent truths, the problem of the unity or plurality of truth, and Anselm's attenuation of the truth of created things (created truth seems to be a placeholder for the Highest Truth). According to Noone, Grosseteste resolves the last problem by concluding, on the basis of our speaking of many truths, that there are in fact many truths (not just many true things). But Grosseteste also incorporates Anselm's conclusion by acknowledging that in any predication of truth the Highest Truth is referred to indirectly.⁴⁸ More specifically, Grosseteste's conclusion that there are many truths accounts for the non-superfluity of created truth – both the Highest Truth and created truth are truly operative in and integral to human cognition – while maintaining the true kernel of insight in Anselm's conclusion that there is but one Truth, viz., that God is referred to (indirectly) in any predication of truth. This allows Grosseteste to argue that we require some acquaintance, albeit indirect, with the Highest Truth, if we are to arrive at knowledge of created truth.⁴⁹ Contributing to this conclusion, according to Noone, is Grosseteste's understanding of the ontological status of creatures as contingent and as undetermined (unformed) apart from God: the mutability and contingency of creatures cannot account for the stability (immutability, necessity, eternity) of certain truths that we know, which means

⁴⁸ "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility," 112-16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 117.

that God must provide the ultimate ontological foundation for such truths and that God must play a significant role in human knowledge of such truths.⁵⁰

Before we proceed to examine Grosseteste's account of truth, two points are in order. First, because of the lack of secondary literature directly bearing on this subject and because of the generally cursory character of even the relevant secondary literature, in our investigation of the texts of Grosseteste that bear on truth the relevant Grosseteste scholarship will be incorporated into our textual analysis, so that we will address such scholarship at length only on a few, necessary occasions. Second, in light of the narrow span of time that Grosseteste scholars nearly unanimously assign to the works we will be considering, we shall present a synthetic account of Grosseteste's teaching on truth.

C. Grosseteste's Account of Truth

The *De veritate* is Grosseteste's only work that is devoted to elaborating an account of truth, and so our investigation will naturally focus on the *De veritate*. There are, of course, other writings of Grosseteste which contribute to Grosseteste's account of truth, and we will certainly address these writings and cull from them that which is relevant to our investigation. The order in which we will examine these writings is suggested by the text of *De veritate* itself. For the *De veritate* incorporates in its argument themes and positions elaborated (and sometimes at greater length) in these other writings of Grosseteste. Therefore, we will investigate these other writings of Grosseteste (1) insofar as they bear upon the argument of the *De veritate* and (2) in the order in which their relevant themes and

⁵⁰ Ibid., 118-19 and 124-25.

theses appear in the *De veritate*. In this investigation, we will, of course, bear in mind the date of composition of the writings we are examining.

This section of the chapter, then, follows the argument of the *De veritate*. It is divided into subdivisions in accordance with my division of the text of *De veritate*.⁵¹

*The Question and the Marshalling of Preliminary Arguments*⁵²

As we have seen, Robert Grosseteste probably composed the *De veritate* sometime in the decade preceding his elevation to the episcopal see of Lincoln, viz., between the years 1225 and 1235.⁵³ In the tradition of Anselm of Canterbury's *De veritate*, written nearly 150 years before Grosseteste's work of the same name, Grosseteste poses as the fundamental problem of his *De veritate* the question of the unity or plurality (unicity or multiplicity) of truth.⁵⁴ He begins the dialogue in this way: "I am the way, the truth, and the life.' Here Truth Itself says that He is Truth. Thus one may reasonably ask whether there is some other truth or no other truth than the Highest Truth."⁵⁵ What follows in the next 18 paragraphs of text are two sets of preliminary arguments: first, arguments affirming the multiplicity of

⁵¹ The current standard edition of Grosseteste's *De veritate* is that of Ludwig Baur in *Die Philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters: Texte und Untersuchungen 9 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1912), 130-43. I will cite the text using page and line number (and, sometimes, paragraph number). *Nota bene*: Timothy Noone has produced an edition (unpublished) of Grosseteste's *De veritate*, and his edition departs from Baur's in a handful of places. In general I will cite Baur's edition, but I will follow Noone's edition where it disagrees with Baur's, and when I do so I will indicate this deviation from Baur.

⁵² This first section of the work corresponds to Baur ¶ 1-19 (130.1 – 134.16).

⁵³ See above, 134-45.

⁵⁴ Noone, "Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility," 114.

⁵⁵ "Ego sum via veritas et vita'. Hic ipsa Veritas dicit se esse veritatem. Unde dubitari non immerito potest, an sit aliqua alia veritas, an nulla sit alia ab ipsa summa veritate?" (Baur 130.1-4). My translation of passages from *De veritate* is my own, although I have referred to Timothy Noone's translation that accompanies his edition of the text of *De veritate*. (Richard McKeon produced a translation of this treatise, but his translation is, to my mind, subpar.)

truth; second, arguments affirming the unicity of Truth. Both sets of preliminary arguments present not only positive arguments for their respective conclusions but also appeal to authoritative figures and texts.

The first preliminary argument for the multiplicity of truth appeals to Scripture. If the Highest Truth is the only truth, then truth is unique and singular and cannot “receive distribution or plurality.” And if this is so, we cannot say “every truth” or “many truths. But this language is found in Scripture: “He will teach you every truth [*omnem veritatem*].”⁵⁶ Therefore truth is not unique and singular – it can be distributed – and so the Highest Truth is not the only truth. The significance of this first argument lies in the fact that Grosseteste will return to – reprise, in fact – this argument in his resolution of the question.

The next three preliminary arguments for the multiplicity of truth do not rely upon any authority. First, if God is the only truth, then everything that is true (this includes created things) is divine: since God – truth – is denominatively predicated of anything that is true, and since the rule of equivalencies is operative here (if A=B and B=C then A=C), to be true (A) is to be divine (C) by virtue of predicating God (B) of whatever is true (A).⁵⁷ Next, there seems to be corruptible truth with regard to future and contingent states of affairs; but God is not corruptible; therefore there is some truth other than God.⁵⁸ Lastly, since the truth of a

⁵⁶ “Si enim nulla est alia veritas, tunc veritas est unica et singularis nec recipit distributionem aut pluralitatem, ut dicatur ‘omnis veritas’, aut ‘multae veritates’. -- Sed e contra in Evangelio legitur: ‘Ipse docebit vos omnem veritatem’” (Baur 130.4-7). The scriptural passage Grosseteste cites is John 16:13.

⁵⁷ “Item: si non est alia veritas, ubicunque praedicatur aliquid esse verum, praedicatur de eodem Deus, licet adiacenter et denominative et nuncupative. Numquid igitur idem est esse verum et esse divinum? Sic videtur per locum a coniugatis. Si non est alia veritas, quam Deus, esse verum est esse divinum, et hoc est vera arbor, quod divina arbor, et vera propositio, quod divina propositio, et ita de ceteris” (Baur 130.8-14).

⁵⁸ “Item: in futuris et contingentibus videtur esse veritas corruptibilis. Veritas autem, quae Deus est, nullo modo est corruptibilis. Est igitur alia veritas ab illa, summa veritate” (Baur 130.15-17).

proposition is the adaequation of speech and reality, and since God is not this adaequation, there is some truth other than the Highest Truth.⁵⁹

Three of the final four preliminary arguments that there is some truth other than the Highest Truth rely upon the authority of Augustine. Accepting Augustine's identification of truth with that which is (*id quod est*),⁶⁰ Grosseteste concludes that the being (*entitas*) of each thing is its truth, and since the being of a creature cannot be identified with the Highest Truth, there is some truth apart from the Highest Truth.⁶¹ Grosseteste, then, draws this conclusion – that there is some truth other than the Highest Truth – from a statement of Augustine. But Grosseteste immediately proceeds to claim that this conclusion is even more clearly present in other writings of Augustine. According to Grosseteste's argument, Augustine's statements regarding the knowledge of the impure of heart amount to an avowal that there is some truth other than the Highest Truth. For if both the pure of heart and the impure of heart know many true things, and if something is true only by virtue of truth, then the pure of heart and the impure of heart "see" truth. But only the pure of heart see the Highest Truth; the impure of heart, then, when they know true things, must see some truth other than the Highest Truth.⁶² Furthermore, in his treatise *De mendacio* Augustine

⁵⁹ "Item: veritas propositionis est adaequatio sermonis et rei[.] Deus autem non est haec adaequatio, quia non erat haec adaequatio, antequam esset sermo et res; cum Deus et veritas summa et sermonem et res creatas sermone significatas praecesserit. Est ergo aliqua veritas, quae non est summa veritas" (Baur 130.18-22).

⁶⁰ See Augustine's *Soliloquies* II, ch. 5 (above, 8n8), and our discussion of this text in Chapter One above, 7-8.

⁶¹ "Item dicit Augustinus in libro Soliloquiorum, quod veritas est id quod est. Uniuscuiusque igitur rei entitas est eius veritas. Sed nullius creaturae entitas est summa veritas, quae Deus est. Ergo est aliqua alia veritas a summa veritate" (Baur 130.23 – 131.2).

⁶² "Item: Augustinus retractat hoc verbum, quod dixit in libro Soliloquiorum: 'Deus, qui non nisi mundos verum scire voluisti', ita inquit: 'responderi potest: multos non-mundos multa vera scire.' Multi igitur non-mundi veritatem vident, qua verum est verum, quod sciunt. Sed soli mundi corde summam veritatem vident: 'Beati enim mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt'. Et secundum Platonem teste Augustino in libro de vera religione veritas pura mente videtur, cui inhaerens anima beata fit. -- Idem quoque Augustinus ait in libro 'de

distinguishes between the truth of contemplation and the truth of true statements. Now, Augustine situates these two truths in the order of things: he places the truth of contemplation above the soul and the truth of true statements beneath the soul. The truth of contemplation, being above the soul, is to be identified with God, the Highest Truth; the truth of true statements, being beneath the soul, cannot be God. According to Grosseteste's exegesis, then, Augustine distinguishes between two different truths and indicates that there is some truth other than the Highest Truth.⁶³

Having given eight preliminary arguments for the multiplicity of truth, Grosseteste then presents three preliminary arguments for the unicity of Truth. The first of these is merely an appeal to the authority of Anselm, who concluded that the Highest Truth is the one selfsame truth for all true things.⁶⁴

Grosseteste's second preliminary argument for the unicity of Truth starts from the beginninglessly and endlessly true character of certain statements: since the truth of certain statements – e.g., mathematical statements, statements of the past or future existence of

agone christiano: 'Errat quisquis putat veritatem se cognoscere, cum adhuc nequiter vivit'. -- Est igitur alia veritas ab hac summa, quam aliam vident non-mundicordes" (Baur 131.3-14). Grosseteste will return to this topic later in the *De veritate*, and he will give an explanation of the way in which the impure of heart can be said to see the truth.

⁶³ "Item: Ex verbis Augustini in libro de mendacio potest haberi, quod duplex est veritas: una scilicet in contemplando, altera in vero enuntiando. Et illam, quae est in contemplando praeponit Augustinus animo ita inquiens: 'ut animus corpori, ita veritas etiam ipsi animo praeponenda est, ut eam non solum magis quam corpus, sed etiam magis quam se ipsum appetat animus'. -- Sed cum nihil praeponendum sit animo, nisi Deus, patet, quod veritas, de qua hic intendit Augustinus, Deus est. -- Postea veritatem, quae est in enuntiando, non audet praeferre animo, sed innuit eam temporalibus omnibus praeferendam sic inquiens: . . . In his satis evidenter distinguit Augustinus duas veritates, quarum secundam non audet aequare animo, nedum praeferre. Sed nisi crederet, aut saltem dubitaret, veritatem enuntiationis aliam esse a veritate summa, non dubitaret eam praeferendam esse animo" (Baur 131.18-28 and 132.8-11). See Augustine's *De mendacio*, chs. 7 and 20 (above, 8n10), and our discussion of this text in Chapter One above, 8.

⁶⁴ "Quod autem non sit alia veritas a veritate summa, videtur secundum Anselmum, qui in libro suo de veritate concludit ad ultimum, quod unica est omnium verorum veritas, et quod illa est summa veritas, sicut unum est tempus omnium illorum, quae sunt simul in uno tempore" (Baur 132.12-16).

something real, conditional statements – lacks beginning and end, and since only the Highest Truth is beginningless and endless, the truth, therefore, of such statements is the Highest Truth. But, says Grosseteste, it is likely that if the truth of such particular statements is the Highest Truth, then the truth of all statements and of all possible objects of statements (*enuntiabilia*) is that same Truth. And since the category of true things is exhaustively divided into statements and possible objects of statements, it would seem that there is one Truth of all true things.⁶⁵ In confirmation of this conclusion, Grosseteste cites Augustine's discussion, in his *De libero arbitrio*, of the participation of rational minds in incorruptible truth.⁶⁶

The third and final preliminary argument that Grosseteste puts forward for the unicity of truth is drawn from Augustine. In his *De vera religione*, Augustine says that truth is what shows that which is. Taking this as his starting-point, Grosseteste affirms that the truth of a thing shows its being (*esse*, or *id quod est*). Now, no truth better shows the being of something than the truth of that entity whose very being is Truth; i.e., the Highest Truth. Thus, if the Highest Truth alone shows the being of some thing to the vision of the mind,

⁶⁵ “Item: verisimile est, quod, si unius alicuius enuntiationis veritas, qua enuntiatio vera est de creaturis, sit summa veritas, et omnium enuntiationum et enuntiabilium veritas sit eadem veritas, nihil iam caret initio et fine, nisi suprema veritas. Atqui veritas huius: ‘septem et tria sunt decem’ caret initio et fine. Ergo haec veritas est summa veritas. -- Huic consonat Augustinus in libro de libero arbitrio ita inquit: ‘septem et tria sunt decem et non solum nunc, sed etiam semper; nec ullo modo septem et tria non fuerunt decem aut aliquando septem et tria non erunt decem. Hanc ergo incorruptibilem numeri veritatem dixi mihi et cuilibet ratiocinanti esse communem.’ Aeterna est igitur talium veritas ac per hoc summa veritas” (Baur 132.17-28).

“Similiter sine initio fuit verum ‘aliquid fuisse futurum’; sed non fuit verum, nisi veritate sua. Sua igitur veritas aeterna est et summa; similiter omnium conditionalium veritas ut: ‘si est homo, est animal.’ Per hypothesim igitur omnis enuntiabilis veritas est summa veritas” (Baur 132.29-32).

I have treated this entire passage, which Baur divides into two paragraphs, as constituting one argument.

⁶⁶ For our discussion of Augustine's argument in *De libero arbitrio*, within which the passage quoted by Grosseteste occurs, see Chapter One above, 10-14.

then there is no truth other than the Highest Truth.⁶⁷ Grosseteste follows up this argument, in the five subsequent paragraphs, by quoting Augustine to the effect that the Highest Truth alone reveals to the mind's eye that which is.⁶⁸

At this point in the treatise, Grosseteste raises a series of questions bearing upon the texts of Augustine that he has just brought forward. Perhaps, Grosseteste muses, someone might say that we need not affirm that the Highest Truth is the only "light" that reveals the true thing: i.e., perhaps one and the same true thing is simultaneously revealed by the light of the Highest Truth and by the light of another truth. According to this position, the necessity of the Highest Truth for illuminating the true thing so that we can know that thing is not such that we need deny the existence of any other truth. But Grosseteste offers a counter-point: positing that any other truth plays a role in illuminating the true thing either would make the Highest Truth insufficient to show the true thing, or, if it affirmed the sufficiency of the Highest Truth, would make that other truth superfluous.⁶⁹ To illustrate this counter-point, Grosseteste brings in an analogy, inspired by the standard Augustinian metaphor for illumination, viz., the light of the sun. Just as the light of the sun is so bright that when it is present all other lights can show nothing to our bodily sight, so also, and even more so, does

⁶⁷ "Item dicit Augustinus in libro de vera religione, quod veritas est, quae ostendit id quod est. Esse igitur cuiuslibet rei sua monstrat veritas. Cum enim sit haec veritatis definitio, omni veritati convenit monstrare id quod est. Nullius autem esse potius monstrabit aliqua veritas, quam eius esse, cuius est veritas. Igitur si nihil aliud ostendit mentis aspectui esse alicuius rei, quam lux summae veritatis, non est alia veritas a summa veritate" (Baur 132.33 – 133.5).

⁶⁸ The texts to which Grosseteste refers are: *Retractationes* I.4.4; *De libero arbitrio* II.13; *Confessiones* XII.25.35; *De Trinitate* XII.14.23; and *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus* XIV.8. We took *De libero arbitrio* II.13 and *De magistro* 10-12 as representative of these texts and discussed them in Chapter One above, 18-21.

⁶⁹ "Quod si dicat aliquis: et huius veritatis luce et alterius veritatis simul ostendi idem et unum verum, numquid igitur lux illa summae veritatis non sufficit ad ostendendum, quod illustrat, aut si sufficit, quomodo reliqua non superfluit?" (Baur 134.6-9).

it seem that the light of the Highest Truth, being infinitely brighter than any other spiritual light, will overpower all other such lights so that the latter are inactive in Its presence.⁷⁰

Grosseteste's presentation of arguments for the multiplicity of truth and of arguments for the unicity of truth ends here. What Grosseteste has accomplished here, in preparation for his resolution of the problem of the number of truth, is twofold: first, he has nicely displayed the *aporia*; second, in doing this, he has brought forward the major authoritative texts – Scripture, Augustine, and Anselm – which need to be harmonized and synthesized. What follows is Grosseteste's attempt at such a synthesis. This attempt begins with a consideration of what truth is – as Grosseteste says at the end of this section of the treatise: “This obscure darkness of contrary opinions may perhaps be put to flight and dissipated, if the light of truth would begin to shine upon us for a little while. So we should for a moment seek to apprehend what truth is.”⁷¹

*The Inquiry: What is Truth?*⁷²

Grosseteste identifies two kinds of truth: the truth of speech and the truth of things. He begins with the truth of speech, by noting that we are most accustomed to speak of the truth of declarative speech.⁷³ Grosseteste, then, takes ordinary language as the starting-point – it is instructive to note this, for he will do so again later in the treatise, when he lays out his answer to the question whether there is one Truth or many truths. The truth of declarative

⁷⁰ “Praeterea: si lux huius solis cetera luminaria ofluscat, ut ipsa praesente nihil ostendant visui corporis, quomodo non amplius lux illa omni alia luce spirituali incomparabiliter lucidior omnem aliam vincet, ut alia nihil agat ipsa praesente?” (Baur 134.10-13).

⁷¹ “Hae nebulae caliginosae contrariarum opinionum forte diffugerent et dissiparentur, si parumper nobis claresceret lux veritatis. Unde parumper intendendum est ut, quid sit veritas, agnoscat” (Baur 134.13-16).

⁷² This second section of *De veritate* corresponds to Baur ¶¶ 20-25 (134.17 – 136.35).

⁷³ “Consuevimus autem usitatius dicere veritatem orationis enuntiativae” (Baur 134.17-18).

speech, Grosseteste says, consists in “matters being in the thing signified as speech says they are,” whence some call truth “the adaequation of speech and reality” and “the adaequation of reality to the mind.”⁷⁴ Grosseteste specifies this definition of truth by observing that interior speech – the understanding that is grasped by the spoken word – is truer than exterior speech, so we should understand truth to be the adaequation of interior speech and reality.⁷⁵

This more precise definition of truth leads Grosseteste to consider the pre-eminent Interior Speech, the Word of the Father. If, Grosseteste says, speech itself were the very adaequation to reality, then such speech would be not only true but also truth itself; and, indeed, this is the case with the Speech of the Father, Wisdom, the Word, who is maximally adaequated to the reality that He speaks, i.e., the created thing, because the created thing is most fully as this Speech expresses it and is not otherwise than it is expressed by this Speech. This Speech is the adaequation of Himself to the things that he speaks, and therefore, according to the definition of truth heretofore accepted, this Speech is maximally Truth. And since this Speech cannot fail to speak and cannot fail to be adaequated to that which He speaks, truth cannot not be.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ “Et haec veritas, sicut dicit philosophus, non est aliud, quam ita esse in re signata, sicut dicit sermo. Et hoc est, quod aliqui dicunt veritatem esse ‘adaequationem sermonis et rei’ et ‘adaequationem rei ad intellectum’” (Baur 134.18-21). I have not been able to determine with certainty to whom Grosseteste is referring here under the title “philosopher.” Aristotle comes first to mind, but the title “*philosophus*” was not universally applied to Aristotle alone at that time: it could easily be Boethius or Avicenna that Grosseteste has in mind here.

⁷⁵ “Sed cum verior sit sermo, qui intus silet, quam qui foris sonat, intellectus videlicet conceptus per sermonem vocalem, magis erit veritas adaequatio sermonis interioris et rei, quam exterioris; . . .” (Baur 134.21-24).

⁷⁶ “. . . ; quod si ipse sermo interior esset adaequatio sui ad rem, non solum esset sermo verus, sed ipsa veritas. - Sapientia autem et verbum, sive ‘Sermo Patris’ maxime adaequatur hoc modo adaequationis rei, quam dicit et loquitur. Ita enim est res quaeque plenissime, ut hic sermo dicit; nec in aliquo aliter est, ac dicitur hoc sermone; nec solum adaequatur, sed est ipsa adaequatio sui ad res, quas loquitur. Ipse igitur Sermo Patris secundum hanc definitionem veritatis maxime veritas est. -- Nec potest hic Sermo non loqui, nec non adaequari ei, quod dicit. Unde non potest non esse veritas” (Baur 134.24-33).

What this amounts to is (1) defining truth as the adequation of the Word of the Father and the thing and (2) identifying the Word with this adequation and thereby identifying the Word as Truth in the fullest sense (*maxime*). Truth, then, “is best defined in terms of relations between God and his creation.”⁷⁷ But this relationship is not merely one of God to His creatures, but also one of creatures to God, as is clear from the next move in Grosseteste’s argument, viz., the identification of truth in things as the conformity of things to the Word:

But in the things that are expressed by this eternal Speech is a conformity to that Speech by which they are expressed. That very conformity of things to their eternal utterance is also their rectitude and their ‘ought’ of being what they are. For a thing is right and is as it ought to be insofar as it is conformed to this Word. But insofar as the thing is as it ought to be, to that degree is it true. Therefore the truth of things is their being as they ought to be and their rectitude and conformity to the Word by Whom they are eternally spoken.⁷⁸

Grosseteste, therefore, agrees with Anselm’s definition of truth as “rectitude perceptible to the mind alone,” and, like Anselm, he understands this definition to be sufficiently flexible as to include both the Rectitude that makes things right (*rectitudo rectificans*) and the rectitudes that are made right (*rectitudines rectificatae*) by this Rectitude.⁷⁹ Truth, then, is everywhere a relation of adequation or conformity – a rectitude. On the part of the Word, it is the adequation to creatures, not as conformed to them but as conforming them, whereas on the

⁷⁷ Ginther, *Master of the Sacred Page*, 96.

⁷⁸ “In rebus autem, quae dicuntur hoc aeterno Sermone, est conformitas ipsi sermoni, quo dicuntur. Ipsa quoque conformitas rerum ad hanc aeternam dictionem est earum rectitudo et debitum essendi, quod sunt. Recta enim est res et est ut debet, in quantum est huic Verbo conformis. Sed in quantum est res ut debet, in quantum vera est. Igitur veritas rerum est earum esse prout debent esse, et earum rectitudo et conformitas Verbo, quo aeternaliter dicuntur” (Baur 134.34 – 135.6).

⁷⁹ “Et cum haec rectitudo sit sola mente perceptibilis et in hoc distinguatur a rectitudine corporali visibili, patet, quod convenienter definitur ab Anselmo veritas cum dicit, eam esse rectitudinem sola mente perceptibilem. Et complectitur haec definitio etiam summam veritatem, quae est rectitudo rectificans simul cum veritatibus rerum, quae sunt rectitudines rectificatae. Rectitudo autem est in nullo a se exitus aut declinatio” (Baur 135.6-13).

part of creatures it is their adequation to the Word as conformed to Him. Neil Lewis rightly observes, then, that in the *De veritate* Grosseteste unites the theological and logical conceptions of truth.⁸⁰ Grosseteste's account synthesizes, within a broader – because fundamental – understanding of truth as rectitude, the theological understanding of truth as the Word with the logical understanding of truth as conformity of speech and reality.

The truth of declarative speech, then, has led Grosseteste to the deeper truth of things and to the Highest Truth – the Word. The truth of declarative speech becomes one instance, one version, of the truth of things: this is clear from the final section of the *De veritate*, in which Grosseteste speaks of the truth of propositions as one particular instance of the truth of things.⁸¹

But Grosseteste provides a further and crucial elaboration upon what it means for a thing to be what it ought to be, to have rectitude, to be true. Following Augustine, Grosseteste further characterizes truth as the lack of defect, i.e., the fullness of being (*plenitudo essendi*): since that which falls short of what it tends to be, that which has a defect of being, is falsely what it tends (or pretends) to be, that is true which is what it tends to be, which has no defect of being. This is precisely what is meant by truth as rectitude, as conformity to the Word: truth as the fullness of being. For created things, then, truth consists in being conformed to the divine idea to which the creature corresponds, and this conformity

⁸⁰ “Robert Grosseteste” (2003), 598.

⁸¹ “Supradictae autem definitiones veritatis communes sunt omnibus veris. Sed si descendatur ad singula, inveniatur uniuscuiusque veri ratio diversificata. . . . , utpote veritas propositionis, a qua est propositio vera, nihil aliud est, quam enuntiatio alicuius de aliquo vel alicuius ab aliquo; . . .” (Baur 142.34-36 and 142.37 – 143.2).

is the creature's fullness of being.⁸² But a creature can have fullness of being in two ways, because the being (*esse*) of things is twofold: first being and second being. The first being of a creature is its merely being what it is; the second being of a creature is its being what it ought to be over and above what it is by nature. A creature, then, can have the fullness of first being while lacking the fullness of second being. Nevertheless, as is clear from Grosseteste's words, both first being and second being bear reference to the Eternal Word: "since everything that is, is only and is completely what it is said to be in the eternal Word, everything that is, insofar as it is and however much it is, is true."⁸³ In other words, both the first being and the second being of a thing consist in a conformity to the Word, i.e., a conformity to their divine idea in the Word. In their first being (their ontological constitution or nature), things follow their model (divine idea) "spoken" by the Word – they are what they are said to be in the Word. The fact that they exist means that they conform to their respective idea in the Word: "insofar as [something] is and however much it is, [it] is true." In their second being, things can be or not be as they ought to be, over and above their given ontological constitution (nature): they conform (or fail to conform) to the divine idea in the Word.⁸⁴

⁸² "Item: Omnis res, in quantum deficit ab eo, quod tendit esse, intantum est falsum illud, quod tendit aut fingit esse. . . . Item idem in eodem: 'Falsum est, quod ad similitudinem alicuius accommodatum est, neque id tamen est, cuius simile apparet. Quapropter quodlibet est verum, quod privatur defectione'. -- Quapropter veritas est defectus privatio, sive essendi plenitudo; tunc enim est vera arbor, cum habet plenitudinem esse arboris caretque defectione esse arboris, et haec plenitudo essendi quid est nisi conformitas rationi arboris in Verbo aeterno?" (Baur 135.14-15 and 135.18-24).

⁸³ "Cum autem omne, quod est, solum id est et totum id est, quod aeterno Verbo dicitur esse, omne quod est, in quantum est et quantumcunque est, verum est" (Baur 136.17-20).

⁸⁴ Clearly Grosseteste here is following Anselm's distinction between natural/necessary truth and variable truth. Grosseteste even uses the example of the proposition's first *esse* and second *esse*, which was the key example in Anselm's *De veritate* (ch. 2) of the twofold truth of things.

Grosseteste provides several examples of the distinction between first being and second being, one of which is from Augustine. All men, insofar as they are animals composed of a body and rational soul, are true men – they have the fullness of first being. But a man who is a liar and is vicious lacks the fullness of second being and, in that sense, is a false man (as well as a true man, insofar as he has the fullness of first being). Similarly, a statement is a true statement with respect to its first being insofar as it merely is a statement, but for it to be a true statement with respect to its second being it must have the second perfection (being) of a statement, i.e., it must signify that what is, is, and that what is not, is not.⁸⁵ In this example, of course, Grosseteste is following Anselm’s teaching on the two truths of a statement – he also utilizes this teaching in his *De veritate propositionis* when he distinguishes between the truth of a future contingent assertion as an assertion and the truth of a future contingent assertion as expressing a future, as-of-yet-not-real state of affairs.⁸⁶

Therefore, truth and being are correlative: to the degree that a thing is, it is true. For a thing’s conformity to its divine idea in the eternal Word is its truth as well as its fullness of being, so that the truth of a thing is its fullness of being, and, therefore, a thing is true to the degree that it is. The truth of a thing is, thus, the measure of its being: “anything whose

⁸⁵ “Rerum autem duplex est esse: primum et secundum; potestque res habere plenum esse primum et carere plenitudine esse secundi. Et propter hoc potest eadem res esse vera et falsa, utpote: verus homo est animal, quod componitur ex corpore et anima rationali. Idem quoque Augustinus: ‘si mendax est et vitiosus, falsus homo est.’ -- Similiter vera propositio est [‘]hominem esse asinum[’], quia habet plenum esse primum enuntiationis; sed falsa est, quia caret plenitudine esse secundi. Haec enim est secunda perfectio enuntiationis: significare id esse, quod est, et non esse, quod non est. Cumque hoc modo dicitur res una simul vera et falsa, non est assertio de eodem contraria, quia non eiusdem esse asseritur plenitudo et defectio” (Baur 135.25 – 136.3).

⁸⁶ “Quaelibet igitur talium propositionum ‘antichristus erit’, ‘antichristus est futurus’ est vera non necessaria, sed contingens, quia possibile est, quamlibet talem esse falsam. -- Sed veritas horum partim est assertio praesentialis de antichristo futuro, quoniam erit, partim est existentia antichristi futura” (Baur 144.28-33).

“Sed ex parte assertionis est haec veritas impermutabilis. Quaelibet enim talium propositionum semper idem et eodem modo dicit quomodo nunc dicit” (Baur 144.34-36).

being is conformed to its idea in the eternal Word is true, and anything that pretends to be and does not conform to its idea in the eternal Word is false. But since everything that is, is only and is entirely what it is said to be in the eternal Word, everything that is, insofar as it is and however much it is, is true.”⁸⁷ Ultimately, then, the conformity of a thing to its divine idea is its rectitude – its truth – and this is likewise a measure of its being.⁸⁸

Grosseteste will re-iterate the correlativity of truth and being in the fifth and sixth section of *De veritate*, where he identifies truth with *esse* and with *id quod est*⁸⁹ and where he identifies the two truths of a thing as the definitions of its first and second being.⁹⁰ Therefore, a complete account of the relationship between truth and being will have to wait until we come to examine these final two sections of *De veritate*.

*Illumination and Man’s Knowledge of Truth*⁹¹

Grosseteste now draws out some epistemological consequences of his (metaphysical) definition of truth. Since the truth of things is their conformity to their corresponding divine idea in the eternal Word, for us to perceive this truth we need to see the divine idea, in order that we can ascertain the conformity of the thing to the idea. Without perceiving the relevant

⁸⁷ “. . . : quodlibet est verum id, cuius esse conformatur rationi suae in Verbo aeterno; et falsum id, quod fingit esse eiusque rationi in Verbo aeterno non conformatur. Cum autem omne, quod est, solum id est et totum id est, quod aeterno Verbo dicitur esse, omne quod est, in quantum est et quantumcunque est, verum est” (Baur 136.15-20).

⁸⁸ Lewis, “Robert Grosseteste” (2003), 598. On the other hand, Robert Palma (“Robert Grosseteste’s Understanding of Truth,” 301-02) and Steven Marrone (*New Ideas of Truth*, 147-56) fail, it seems to me, to appreciate the significance and centrality of Grosseteste’s identification of truth with being (*esse*, or *id quod est*). This question will become crucial when we discuss Grosseteste’s model of illumination.

⁸⁹ See Baur 141.13-17: “Potest autem quaeri, cum idem sit veritas et esse, quia veritas est ut dicit Augustinus ‘id, quod est’, an sicut non videtur aliqua veritas, nisi in luce supremae veritatis, sic non videatur aliquid esse, nisi in ente supremo?”

⁹⁰ See Baur 142.35-37: “Sed si descendatur ad singula, inveniatur uniuscuiusque veri ratio diversificata. Singulorum namque veritates sunt definitiones esse eorum primi vel secundi, . . .”

⁹¹ This third section of the work corresponds to Baur ¶ 26-29 (137.1 – 138.23).

divine idea, it is impossible for us to see that the thing is as it ought to be, since that divine idea establishes the “ought” for the thing or, as Grosseteste says, is the rule in accordance with which the thing is made right.⁹² Therefore, knowing the truth of a thing requires seeing the thing in its divine idea, in conformity with which it is as it ought to be.⁹³ Grosseteste speaks of this pre-condition of knowledge in terms of light (following Augustine). The light of the divine idea must be present to the human knower for the created truth to be accessible to the knower; the created truth of the thing is by itself not a sufficient ground for our apprehension of the thing as true.⁹⁴

At this point in the discussion, Grosseteste employs a detailed and lengthy analogy to help explain what is involved in man’s coming to know created truth. This analogy is employed to account for two significant truths: (1) since created truth consists in the conformity of a creature to its divine idea, as Grosseteste has just shown, then in order for man to come to know created truth he must somehow be aware of the Highest Truth (It must be operative and governing in man’s knowledge); (2) only a few humans – the pure of heart – can see the Highest Truth in Itself. Maintaining both of these positions is crucial for Grosseteste: his definition of truth requires some kind of access to the Highest Truth on the part of the human knower, as we have seen, but Revelation requires him to reject the position

⁹² “Cum autem, ut praedictum est, veritas cuiuscunque est eius conformitas rationi suae in aeterno Verbo, patet, quod omnis creata veritas non nisi in lumine veritatis summae conspicitur. -- Quomodo enim conspici posset conformitas alicuius ad aliquid, nisi conspecto etiam illo, cui est conforme? Aut rectitudo rei quomodo agnoscitur, quoniam rectitudo est, cum non sit secundum se rectitudo, nisi in regula sua, quae secundum se recta est, et secundum quam ipsa res est rectificata? Quae regula non aliud est, quam ratio rei aeterna in mente divina. Aut qualiter cognoscetur, quod res est, ut esse debet, nisi videatur ratio, secundum quam sic esse debet?” (Baur 137.1-11).

⁹³ “Et sic erit recursus usque dum videatur res esse ut debet in sua ratione prima, quae secundum se recta est. Et ideo res est ut debet, quia huic conformis est” (Baur 137.15-17).

⁹⁴ “Omnis igitur creata veritas intantum patet, inquantum conspicienti praesto est lux suae rationis aeternae, sicut testatur Augustinus. Nec potest aliqua res in sua tantum creata veritate conspici vera” (Baur 137.17-20).

that in ordinary human knowledge man sees the Highest Truth in Itself. What is central to Grosseteste's analogy, then, is the role of the Highest Truth in man's knowledge of created truth, especially the nature of man's awareness of the Highest Truth in his knowledge of created truth. The centrality of this aspect of the problem is clear from the fact that Grosseteste is at pains, near the end of his presentation of this analogy, to explain how anyone who knows anything true (even if he be impure of heart) in some way knows also the Highest Truth. Put another way, the analogy is perfectly suited to illustrate in what sense the human knower knows the Highest Truth because Grosseteste has this problem in mind all along.

But Grosseteste's very deployment of the analogy to illustrate epistemological principles reveals that these principles are grounded in metaphysical positions. More specifically, Grosseteste's explanation of how man comes to know true things, and whether (and if so, how) this involves knowledge of the Highest Truth, rests upon basic positions regarding the reality and nature of created truth and its relationship to the Highest Truth. It is these metaphysical positions that are of importance for our present investigation, since our concern is to understand Grosseteste's account of truth in order to determine why he concludes that there are many truths. Therefore, our exposition and examination of this analogy, while it will present the analogy in its fullness and will identify the basic import of the analogy vis-à-vis epistemological concerns, will nevertheless focus primarily on its relevance to the question of the nature and number of truth.

Grosseteste introduces the analogy in this manner: just as seeing a body as colored is impossible without an extrinsic light – i.e., the sun – shining upon the body, so also seeing a

created thing as true is impossible without a higher Light shining upon the thing.⁹⁵ The thing's created truth is, on its own, not sufficient for man to know the true thing, just as color is, on its own, not sufficient for sight to see the colored thing. Rendered affirmatively, just as color shows us the body only in the presence of a light pouring over it (the sun), so the created truth shows us the true thing (*id quod est*) only in the light of the Highest Truth.⁹⁶

Crucial to this analogy is the relationship between colors and the sun (which Grosseteste sometime refers to as the “extrinsic light” shining upon bodies). In fact, the entire analogy turns on this point. When we remember the series of questions that Grosseteste asked at the end of the first section of *De veritate*, questions surrounding the relationship between the Highest Truth and other truths as competing truths (Are not other truths useless without the Highest Truth? Doesn't the Highest Truth makes other truths superfluous?), and if we remember that in that very discussion Grosseteste employed an analogy of the sun's relationship to other lights in order to illustrate this difficulty,⁹⁷ we will see even more clearly the significance of the analogy here in this third section, and, more specifically, the significance of the relationship between the sun and colors. Now Grosseteste does tell us here that “color itself is not a shining light added to the light pouring over it,” i.e., color “does not shine apart from it [light].”⁹⁸ But to understand better both what color is and its relationship to the sun, we must look outside the *De veritate*, to several

⁹⁵ “Nec potest aliqua res in sua tantum creata veritate conspici vera, sicut corpus non potest conspici coloratum in suo colore tantum, nisi superfuso extrinseco lumine” (Baur 137.19-22).

⁹⁶ “Veritas igitur etiam creata ostendit id, quod est, sed non in suo lumine, sed in luce veritatis summae, sicut color ostendit corpus, sed non nisi in luce superfusa” (Baur 137.23-25).

⁹⁷ See our discussion above, 156-57.

⁹⁸ “. . . *ipse color non sit lux lucens adiuncta luci superfusae*; sed haec est lucis potentia, quod lux non colorem praeter se lucentem offuscat, sed *non praeter se lucentem illustrat* [italics mine]” (Baur 137.26-29).

writings – above all, the *Hexaemeron* and the *De operationibus solis* – in which Grosseteste gives a positive account of color and its relationship to the sun.⁹⁹

According to Grosseteste, color is light incorporated in a transparent medium.¹⁰⁰ As such, color is connatural to visible light (it has something of sunlight in its substance, according to Grosseteste). But because of its being incorporated in a medium, color cannot of itself perform the natural activity of light, viz., the self-generation of its own species in the air, whereby light is made visible to the corporeal eye. Color, then, is, in some sense, dormant light. But when light shines upon color, it unites itself to color and moves it to the act of generating its own species, thereby making color visible *in actu*. Therefore, the sun, which is for our corporeal eyes the source of visible light, is the first visible light that reveals to sight the species of all colors; without the sun, all bodies would be hidden and unknown.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Because Grosseteste was intensely interested in optics and developed a renowned account of optics and the physics of light, it is essential that we understand clearly the physical aspect of the analogy Grosseteste is utilizing. The best way to accomplish this is to look to Grosseteste's own understanding of the relationship between light and color, since that relationship is the crucial element of the physical aspect of the analogy. What follows, then, is a paraphrase of passages from the *Hexaemeron* and *De operationibus solis*, in which passages Grosseteste most fully elaborates his views on the inter-relationship between color and the sun.

¹⁰⁰ See the opening lines of his *De colore*: "Color est lux incorporata perspicuo" (Baur 78.4). See also his *De iride*: "Cum autem color sit lumen admixtum cum diaphano, . . ." (Baur 77.12).

¹⁰¹ From the *Hexaemeron* (Part II, ch. 10, par. 2): "Est quoque lux, ut dicit Augustinus, colorum regina, utpote eorumdem per incorporacionem effectiva et per superfusionem motiva. Lux namque incorporata in perspicuo humido color est; qui color sui speciem in aere propter incorporacionis sue retardacionem per se generare non potest; sed lux colori superfusa movet eum in generacionis sue speciei actum. Sine luce itaque omnia corporea occulta sunt et ignota" (ed. Richard C. Dales and Servus Gieben, *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi* 6 [London: Oxford University Press, 1982], 99.6-11). From the *De operationibus solis*: "Aliter autem intelligitur sol esse in conspectu Dei, quia forte lux eius est lux prima visibilis manifestans visui species omnium colorum; et cum color sit lux incorporata, quae propter incorporationem non movet se ad visum nisi cum lux superfunditur, manifestum est quod color connativus est luci visibili. Si igitur lucis visibilis oculis nostris radix est in sole, omnis color habet in sui substantia de luce solari, cui lux superfusa se unit ut faciat colorem actu visibilem, et ita quidquid est conspectibile per naturam lucis conspectibile erit" (James McEvoy, ed., "The Sun as *Res* and *Signum*: Grosseteste's Commentary on *Ecclesiasticus* ch. 43, vv. 1-5," in *Robert Grosseteste, Exegete and Philosopher* [Aldershot, England: Variorum, 1994], 69.8 – 70.3).

Therefore, when the sun shines upon colors, it moves them to generate their species in the air, thereby making colors capable of affecting the eye (the object of sight is all colored things as illuminated by “fiery light,” i.e., as made capable of affecting the eye¹⁰²). Now Grosseteste holds to an extromissive theory of sight: when we see, visual rays proceed from the eye to objects. But we have seen that the eye also receives something, viz., the species of colors generated by the action of light on color. So light rays are both emitted from the eye and received by it.¹⁰³ What is remarkable in Grosseteste’s account of sight is that, since he believes that light is the inner instrument of the soul (that through which the soul acts) in all sensation,¹⁰⁴ in his account of sight “the activity of light is . . . present both in the perceiving eye and in the colours it [light] activates.”¹⁰⁵

Let us now return to the *De veritate*, to Grosseteste’s analogy, and read the central part of the analogy in light of his understanding of color and its relationship to the sun. The sun’s relationship to color is not that of a powerful luminary that overpowers or dims a competing luminary but rather that of a powerful luminary that makes shine something that

¹⁰² McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 296. In the exposition of sight that follows, I am following McEvoy’s presentation. See also David Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976; reprint, 1996), 94-102.

¹⁰³ McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 336 and 351; Lindberg, *Theories of Vision*, 100-01.

¹⁰⁴ See *Hexaemeron* II.10.1: “Lux itaque instrumentalis anime in sentiendo per sensus corporeos . . . Lux igitur est per quam anima in omnibus sensibus agit et que instrumentaliter in eisdem agit” (98.9-10 and 98.15-16).

¹⁰⁵ McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 336. Grosseteste’s metaphysics of light is the ultimate ground for this view. Most fully expressed in his *De luce*, this “metaphysics of light” has been the object of a good deal of study. See, *inter alia*: Baur, *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste*, 76-84; Servus Gieben, “De metaphysica lucis apud Robertum Grosseteste” (doctoral diss., Gregorian University, 1953); McEvoy, “Ein Paradigma der Lichtmetaphysik: Robert Grosseteste,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 34 (1987): 91-110.

cannot shine apart from that luminary.¹⁰⁶ This is so because color is not an illuminating light in addition to the light of the sun but is rather a dormant light that is actualized by the light of the sun shining upon it. In virtue of this illumination, color shows forth the colored body. Likewise, the Highest Truth, far from obscuring or overpowering created truth, makes it shine forth, for created truth is not a truth that is true apart from the Highest Truth but is rather a truth that is actualized by the light of the Highest Truth illuminating it. So, although the Highest Truth alone primarily and in itself shows *id quod est* (just as the sun alone, primarily and in itself, shows forth bodies), through this very illuminating (and through it alone) the truth of the created thing also shows *id quod est* (just as through the very illuminating of color by the sun, and through it alone, does color itself also show bodies).¹⁰⁷

The significance of the analogy can be seen by reading it in light of the objection Grosseteste raised near the end of the first section of the *De veritate*. As we have seen,¹⁰⁸ at the end of his presentation of arguments for the unicity of truth (in the first section of the *De veritate*) Grosseteste objected to giving both the Highest Truth and created truth a role in illuminating the true thing, on the grounds that this either would make the Highest Truth insufficient to show the true thing or, if we wished to affirm the sufficiency of the Highest Truth, the role assigned to the Highest Truth would make created truth superfluous. To use the terms of the analogy, either there are other lights (multiplicity of truths) that show things

¹⁰⁶ “Nec haec est lucis insufficientia, quod per colorem ostendit corpus, cum ipse color non sit lux lucens adiuncta luci superfusae; sed haec est lucis potentia, quod lux non colorem praeter se lucentem offuscat, sed non praeter se lucentem illustrat” (Baur 137.25-29).

¹⁰⁷ “Non est igitur lux veritatis summae ad veritates alias, sicut sol est ad cetera caeli luminaria, quae [reading: *qui*, as Noone does] fulgore suo offuscat, sed potius sicut sol ad colores, quos illustrat. Sola igitur lux summae veritatis primo et per se ostendit id, quod est, sicut sola lux ostendit corpora. Sed per hanc lucem etiam veritas rei ostendit id, quod est, sicut color ostendit corpora per lucem solis” (Baur 138.31 – 139.2).

¹⁰⁸ See above, 156-57.

and the Highest Light is insufficient, or the Highest Light is sufficient to show things and all other lights are superfluous (unicity of truth). Grosseteste's analogy of color and the sun, here in the third section of *De veritate*, is clearly Grosseteste's response to this objection, for through this analogy Grosseteste provides his account of the relationship between created truth and the Highest Truth, or, more specifically, his answer to the objection that either the one (created truth) is superfluous or the other (the Highest Truth) is insufficient.

The central element of Grosseteste's analogy in this regard, that whereby he undermines this objection, is his use of color rather than a heavenly luminary as the second element of the analogy. For competing luminaries are indeed obscured by the sun and are not necessary for the colored body to be manifested, whereas color, although not a competing luminary, is necessary for the colored body to be manifested, because it is only through its color, as illuminated by the sun, that the thing can be revealed to human vision. So Grosseteste is not forced to choose between the sun and color: he affirms the necessity of both. Likewise, it is only through its created truth, as illuminated by the Highest Truth, that a true thing can be revealed to the human mind: Grosseteste is not forced to choose between the Highest Truth and created truth, for he considers both to be necessary. For Grosseteste, then, the original objection – viz., that assigning to both the sun (the Highest Truth) and other lights (created truth) a role in illuminating the true thing (i.e., affirming the multiplicity of truths) either makes the sun (the Highest Truth) insufficient to show the colored body (true thing) or makes other lights (created truth) superfluous – assumes an erroneous premise, viz., that the “other” lights (truths) are competing luminaries vis-à-vis the Highest Light. For Grosseteste, there is only one luminary – the Highest Truth – but there are other realities that play a necessary, though not illuminative, role in human knowledge. So Grosseteste can

maintain both the sufficiency of the Highest Truth and the reality and role of created truths: by using color as his analogue for created truth, he can maintain both the singular otherness of the Highest Truth (the sun) as the sole luminary as well as the reality of created truth (as light, but not light that is luminous *per se*) and its role in revealing the true thing. In short, the Highest Truth is the sole luminary (sole illuminator) but not the sole truth, just as the sun is the sole luminary but not the sole light.¹⁰⁹

Therefore, Grosseteste's choosing as his analogy the relationship of the sun to color, rather than the relationship of the sun to another heavenly luminary (the stars, the moon, etc.), reveals Grosseteste's understanding of created truth as a reality – a truth – distinct from the Highest Truth. Further analysis of the analogy makes this even clearer. According to Grosseteste's analogy, color is the analogue for created truth. Now, for Grosseteste (as we have seen) color is incorporated (embodied) light – it is, like the sun, light. Likewise, created truth is, like the Highest Truth, truth. But color is a being that is distinct from the sun; likewise, created truth is a being (truth) that is distinct from the Highest Truth. Grosseteste, then, is affirming the reality of created truth and, thereby, the multiplicity of truth: if Grosseteste intended to deny the reality of created truth – and thereby to affirm the unicity of truth – he would not have used color as an analogue for created truth; rather, he would have used a luminary that is obscured and dimmed (read: negated, done away with) by the sun (read: the Highest Truth).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Appropriate in this context is Robert Palma's basic contention that Grosseteste is concerned to preserve the radically different status of the Highest Truth ("Robert Grosseteste's Understanding of Truth," 304-05) – but Grosseteste does not wish to maintain this at the expense of the reality of created truth.

¹¹⁰ Confirming our thesis – viz., that Grosseteste's analogy affirms the reality of created truth and its role in human knowledge and therefore affirms the multiplicity of truth – is the fact that in this third section of *De veritate* Grosseteste is clearly affirming some of the preliminary arguments for the multiplicity of truth and

Grosseteste's analogy also allows him to illustrate the proper understanding of the relationship between created truths and the Highest Truth. It is of the nature of created truth (color) to require illumination by the Highest Truth (the sun) in order to be known (seen), so that this illumination, far from obscuring or overpowering created truth, rather makes created truth fully actual (i.e., fully intelligible to the mind). Nor is this proper understanding of the relationship between the Highest Truth and created truths arbitrarily asserted by Grosseteste in this analogy: it is, rather, an immediate consequence of his definition of truth, for if the truth of a created thing consists in its conformity to its divine idea in the Highest Truth, then we humans can only know that truth as it is illuminated by the Highest Truth, i.e., as seen to be in conformity to its divine idea.

Grosseteste concludes the analogy with a rather lengthy exposition of the way in which human knowers – especially the impure of heart – see the Highest Truth. Just as weak eyes are unable to behold the light of the sun in itself and can only see that light as it is poured over colored bodies, so the weak eyes of the mind cannot behold the Highest Truth as It is in Itself and can only see It as It is poured over and joined to (so to speak) true things.¹¹¹ It is in this fashion – i.e., indirectly – that even many of the impure of heart see the Highest Truth, whether or not they are aware that they see it, just as those with weak eyes indirectly see the sun, whether or not they are aware that they see it. On the other hand, the pure of heart who are perfectly cleansed behold the light of the Highest Truth in itself. All human

rejecting some of the preliminary arguments for the unicity of truth. But we will postpone consideration of this fact until the end of our presentation of this section of *De veritate* (see below, 187-89).

¹¹¹ “Sed quemadmodum infirmi oculi corporis non vident colorata corpora, nisi superfuso lumine solis, ipsam autem lucem solis non possunt contueri in se, sed solum superfusam coloratis corporibus, sic infirmi oculi mentis ipsas res veras non conspiciunt nisi in lumine summae veritatis; ipsam autem veritatem summam in se non possunt conspiciere, sed solum in coniunctione et superfusione quadam ipsis rebus veris” (Baur 138.4-10).

knowledge, then, indirectly or obliquely (and sometimes unconsciously) involves knowledge of the Highest Truth.¹¹² The analogy, then, has served one of its central epistemological purposes: it has allowed Grosseteste to maintain that all human knowledge requires, and therefore involves, access to the light of the Highest Truth, without thereby collapsing natural knowledge of truth into the beatific vision.

It should be noted here that our presentation of the model of illumination that Grosseteste puts forward through his analogy by no means constitutes a complete account of illumination in Grosseteste. To provide such an account, it would be necessary to determine, among other things, whether, according to Grosseteste, illumination is not merely “objective” but also “subjective,” and, if it were both objective and subjective, how these two concomitant illuminations relate to each other.¹¹³ It would also be necessary to consult other writings in which Grosseteste addresses the question of illumination, especially his *Commentarius* and his commentaries on pseudo-Dionysius.¹¹⁴ But because our concern in

¹¹² “Hoc modo puto, quod etiam immundi multi summam veritatem vident et multi eorum nec percipiunt se videre eam aliquo modo, quemadmodum si aliquis primo videret corpora colorata in lumine solis, nec unquam defleceret visum ad solem, nec didicisset ab aliquo, solem aut aliud lumen esse, quod illustraret corpora visa, nesciret omnino se videre corpora in lumine solis, ignoraretque se videre aliquid nisi corpus coloratum tantum. Mundicordes vero et perfecte purgati ipsam lucem veritatis in se conspiciunt, quod immundi facere nequeunt. -- Nemo est igitur, qui verum aliquid novit, qui non aut scienter aut ignoranter etiam ipsam summam veritatem aliquo modo novit. Iam igitur patet, quomodo soli mundicordes summam vident veritatem et quomodo nec etiam immundi penitus eius visione frustrantur” (Baur 138.11-23).

¹¹³ McEvoy addresses this question in his pre-eminent treatment of Grosseteste’s account of illumination (*The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 321-24).

¹¹⁴ The secondary literature on this subject is, in proportion to the entire literature on Grosseteste, quite extensive. Almost all Grosseteste scholars argue that ultimately Grosseteste maintains both Augustinian illuminationism and the essentials of Aristotelian epistemology, situating these modes of knowledge within a broader framework of a hierarchy of knowledge, in which illumination is highest and the mode of knowledge described by Aristotelian epistemology is lesser. The most significant representatives of this interpretation are: Crombie, *Robert Grosseteste and the Origins of Experimental Science*, 128-31; McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste*, 325-51; John Longeway, introduction to *Demonstration and Scientific Knowledge in William of Ockham: A Translation of Summa Logicae III-II: De Syllogismo Demonstrativo, and Selections from the Prologue to the Ordinatio* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 14-32; Christina Van Dyke, “An Aristotelian Theory of Divine Illumination: Robert Grosseteste’s *Commentary on the Posterior*

this investigation is with Grosseteste's account of truth, it pertains to this investigation to address Grosseteste's account of illumination only to the extent that it bears upon Grosseteste's understanding of truth. This is why we have focused, in our examination of Grosseteste's model of illumination, on the question of truth, or, more specifically, on the reality and nature of created truth and on its relationship to the Highest Truth. And since Grosseteste's account of illumination in the *Commentarius* does not directly bear on the question of truth, much less the question of the unicity or multiplicity of truth, we will not here examine Grosseteste's account of illumination in the *Commentarius*.¹¹⁵

Let us summarize our findings to this point. Through his analogy of color and the sun, Grosseteste affirms the following: (1) created truth is a truth distinct from the Highest Truth but is not a competing illuminator (being of a different order); (2) created truth is such that its becoming intelligible to the human knower requires illumination by the Highest Truth, an illumination that, far from obscuring or overpowering created truth, rather actualizes created truth in order that it may be intelligible; (3) consequently, although only the Highest Truth primarily and *per se* reveals that which is (*id quod est*, the true thing), nevertheless created truth, in virtue of its being illuminated by the Highest Truth, also reveals that which is.

Analytics," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 17 (2009): 685-704; Christina Van Dyke, "The Truth, the Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth: Robert Grosseteste on Universals (and the *Posterior Analytics*)," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 48, no. 2 (2010): 153-70. But Steven Marrone (*New Ideas of Truth*, part 2; *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. I, part 1) argues that Grosseteste's *Commentarius* represents an abandoning of the fundamental principles of Augustinian illuminationism in favor of a more "secular," "worldly" Aristotelian epistemology.

¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, in the *Commentarius* Grosseteste does, in one passage, discuss truth; we will examine this passage later in this chapter, when we come to consider more fully the relationship between truth and being.

Up to this point in our examination of the analogy, we have not clearly indicated whether created truth or the true thing itself is the object of knowledge: we have to this point allowed the ambiguity of Grosseteste's own text to remain in our presentation. Our reason for doing so is that the major scholarly interpretation and critique of Grosseteste's understanding of truth in *De veritate* focuses upon this question – viz., whether it is truth or the true thing that we know – and concludes that Grosseteste's account of truth is inconsistent. Because we are concerned in our investigation to present Grosseteste's account of truth, in order to determine why he concludes to the multiplicity of truth, we must address this interpretation and critique of Grosseteste's account of truth.

In his 1983 work *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century*, Steven Marrone begins his examination of Grosseteste's doctrine of truth with an interpretation and critique of Grosseteste's account of truth in the *De veritate*. Marrone's general thesis is that Grosseteste's understanding of truth in simple cognition undergoes a radical alteration over the course of Grosseteste's career: in his early writings (Marrone claims) Grosseteste defines truth as rectitude (a relation), whereas in his later writings he identifies truth with being (a simple quality).¹¹⁶ This thesis is based on Marrone's interpretation of Grosseteste's understanding of truth in the *De veritate*.

Marrone states that, in what we have identified as the third section of *De veritate*, “[a]lthough Grosseteste spoke as if he were giving a perfectly straightforward exposition of a single epistemological procedure, in fact he offered two different descriptions of the way the

¹¹⁶ *New Ideas of Truth*, 145-46 and 155-56. In his 2001 work *The Light of Thy Countenance*, Marrone reprises this critique. But since his treatment of this question in his earlier work is more extensive than the treatment in his later work, and since the latter does not differ significantly from the former, I will examine his interpretation and critique as they appear in his 1983 work *New Ideas of Truth*.

mind came to know simple truth, each one dependent on a model not fully compatible with the other.”¹¹⁷ The first “description” of how the mind comes to know simple truth (created truth, the truth of the thing) comprises the first part of this third section, up to (but not including) the analogy to the sun and color.¹¹⁸ As we discussed above, in this passage Grosseteste’s major point is that since the truth of things is their conformity to their corresponding divine idea in the eternal Word, for us to perceive this truth we need to see the divine idea, in order that we can ascertain the conformity of the thing to the idea. This “first description,” of course, is founded upon the definition of truth as a conformity of the thing to the *ratio* in the Eternal Word: knowledge of the truth requires the divine Light being present to us so that we can compare the true object to the divine idea that makes it true. It is in this comparison that the mind comes to perceive the truth.¹¹⁹ Created truth, then, appears to be the object of human knowledge, according to this first description.

What Marrone identifies as Grosseteste’s “second description” of the way the human mind comes to know created truth is Grosseteste’s model of illumination patterned after the relationship between the sun, colors, and bodies: i.e., the analogy to the sun and color comprises the “second description.”¹²⁰ According to this second description, just as the sun illuminates color, which then indicates the colored body, so the Highest Truth illuminates

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹¹⁸ This first description comprises Baur 137.1-19. Because Marrone is not explicit about where the first description ends and the second begins, it is possible that the first description extends to Baur 137.22 (the end of a paragraph, in Baur’s edition). But since Baur 137.19-22 seems to introduce the analogy to sun and color, I take it that this last sentence of the paragraph is actually the beginning of the second description. For our discussion of this “first description,” see above, 163-64.

¹¹⁹ *New Ideas of Truth*, 147-48.

¹²⁰ This second description seems to comprise Baur, 137.19 – 138.10.

created truth, which then reveals the true thing (*id quod est*) to the knower. This seems to indicate that the true thing (the true being, *id quod est*) is the object of human knowledge.¹²¹

Marrone concludes that the second description reverses the role of instrument and final object: “In the first of the two cases [descriptions], the true thing along with the Highest Truth made it possible for the mind to see simple truth in the world. In the second, it was created simple truth, along with the Highest Truth, that revealed the true thing.”¹²²

Essentially, according to Marrone, in the first description the true thing and the eternal reason make possible our apprehension of the created truth, whereas in the second description the eternal reason and the created truth make possible our apprehension of the true thing.

This conclusion raises, for Marrone, the obvious question: since the two descriptions or models are inconsistent, why does Grosseteste present the second account? According to this first description, knowing the truth of the thing means seeing its conformity to the divine idea, and this requires that we see the divine idea, whence the emphasis in this first description on the need to see the rule (standard) according to which a thing is true. For Marrone, Grosseteste’s first description, in establishing the conditions for our knowledge of truth, implies that human beings, in knowing truth, see God. So the second description is an attempt to escape from the charge of ontologism: it describes knowledge as seeing other things in the light of God, reserving the direct vision of God to those who are pure of heart and perfectly cleansed. This explains why the second description focuses on the process of knowledge (whereas the first description sought to analyze the object of knowledge).¹²³

¹²¹ *New Ideas of Truth*, 148-50.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 150.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 151-53.

But according to Marrone the second description is not merely a clarification that fixes the first description: in “fixing” the first description, the second description sacrifices the original definition of truth as a relationship of conformity.¹²⁴ Until the second description, Grosseteste spoke of created truth as a conformity to the eternal reason in the divine Mind – i.e., he spoke of created truth as a relation. But the second description, in comparing created truth to color, makes created truth a quality of the true thing. This is far from the earlier, formal definition of truth as a relation (of conformity): if truth is a relation between God and the thing (first description), how can we make sense of saying that God’s light has to shine on the created truth so that it can reveal the true thing (second description)? For Marrone, any attempt to read the second description (the analogy) in light of the first description – i.e., to read the analogy as a loose metaphor – robs the analogy of its value in avoiding ontologism.¹²⁵

Now Marrone concedes that the second description’s characterization of created truth as a simple quality is not a lone instance: here and there in the *De veritate*, Grosseteste identifies truth and being (whether *esse* or *id quod est*). And since Grosseteste identifies *id quod est* and *res vera*, it seems that Grosseteste also identifies truth and the true thing. But this is to conflate two of the three clearly distinguished elements of the analogy: the Highest Truth, the created truth illuminated by It, and the true thing revealed by the created truth. Therefore, Marrone considers Grosseteste’s identification of truth and being, in various passages of *De veritate*, as an abandonment of his definition of truth as conformity

¹²⁴ Ibid., 154.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 154-55.

(relation).¹²⁶ For Marrone, it is not until his later, more mature works (like the *Commentarius*) that Grosseteste will consistently identify truth and being (i.e., identify truth as a simple quality or substance): in his early works the identification of truth with being is an exception to the rule, because Grosseteste for the most part “adhere[s] to his original formal definition, whereby simple truth consist[s] in the conformity of a thing to its divine exemplar.”¹²⁷

Marrone’s criticism of Grosseteste can be condensed as follows. Grosseteste’s two descriptions of how the mind comes to know created truth are inconsistent because (1) the second description reverses the role of instrument and final object, and (2) the second description characterizes truth as a simple quality (or substance) rather than as a relation (as it was previously defined – a conformity). This second inconsistency appears also in Grosseteste’s identification of truth and being.¹²⁸

In response to Marrone’s interpretation and criticism, it should first be pointed out that there is no textual evidence that suggests that the “two descriptions” are anything but one continuous account. There is no obvious transition to a different account/description of how we come to know: rather, the “first description” seems to set up the “second description,” insofar as the former outlines some of the factors necessary for the human knower to apprehend created truth while the latter elaborates the process of knowledge in more detail.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 155, especially 155n21.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 156.

¹²⁸ In *The Light of Thy Countenance* (I.42), Marrone characterizes these two descriptions as contradictory, and he says that Grosseteste neither saw the contradiction nor saw the two descriptions as significantly different or as serving different philosophical roles.

And while we have already stated above¹²⁹ that Grosseteste is indeed very aware of the danger of ontologism and employs the analogy (“second description”) to explain the way in which it can be said the human knower knows the Highest Truth whenever he knows created truth – nevertheless, there is no evidence that Grosseteste considered his “first description” to need “fixing” on this score; rather, he employed the “second description” (the analogy) as a clarification, rather than a revision, of the “first description.”

That this is so is clear from a consideration of the “first description” in light of the “second description.” The “first description,” which begins this third section of *De veritate*, begins with the conclusion “it is clear that every created truth is seen only in the light of the Highest Truth.”¹³⁰ Following this statement is the series of rhetorical questions in which Grosseteste makes clear that one can know the truth of something only by seeing the divine idea to which the thing ought to correspond. At the end of this series of rhetorical questions Grosseteste re-states the conclusion: “every created truth is clear to the degree that the light of its eternal idea is present to the knower.”¹³¹ This indicates that we are to take “seeing the divine idea” as meaning “seeing the created truth in light of the Highest Truth.” Grosseteste, then, is already aware, and has been aware, of the danger of ontologism, and the “first description” itself evinces this awareness: he is already bringing in the theme of light to explain the way in which we can be said to see the divine idea. We ought, then, to attempt to read the “first description” and its conclusion as clarified, rather than corrected, by the analogy to color and the sun (the “second description”), and if we take this as our guiding

¹²⁹ See above, 164-65.

¹³⁰ “. . . , patet, quod omnis creata veritas non nisi in lumine veritatis summae conspicitur” (Baur 137.2-4).

¹³¹ “Omnis igitur creata veritas intantum patet, inquantum conspicienti praesto est lux suae rationis aeternae, . . .” (Baur 137.17-19).

principle in reading the “second description,” we find that, in this respect at least, the second description incorporates the conclusion of the first description and elaborates upon that conclusion in order better to explain it.

Thus, in our consideration of the question of the consistency between the two descriptions with regard to the nature of created truth and its role in the process of knowledge, instead of assuming that there are two descriptions, we should start from the premise that there is really only one description, which gradually clarifies Grosseteste’s position. We begin our reply to Marrone’s critique, then, on this assumption.

Without a proper understanding of Grosseteste’s notion of truth, especially his understanding of the relationship between truth and being (*esse*, or *id quod est*), it is very easy to misunderstand the analogy to sun and color that Grosseteste presents as a model for illumination. Therefore, we must be clear about Grosseteste’s understanding of truth (presented in the second section of *De veritate*) if we are to understand properly Grosseteste’s model of illumination (the third section of *De veritate*). We have seen, in our discussion of Grosseteste’s definition of truth, that for Grosseteste the truth of a thing is its conformity to its divine idea, its rectitude, its being as it ought to be. Grosseteste further defines truth as the fullness of being, so that truth and being are correlative. Truth, for Grosseteste, is the measure of a thing’s being.¹³² We must keep this in mind as we consider Marrone’s interpretation and critique of Grosseteste.

¹³² See our discussion above, 160-63.

On Grosseteste's model of illumination, we cannot apprehend the thing as true (*res vera*, or *id quod est* as true) unless we see its created truth, in virtue of which it is true.¹³³ But since the truth of a thing consists in the conformity of the thing to its divine idea, to know that truth we must "see" both the thing in question and the divine idea of that thing.¹³⁴ Before any determination is made of conformity, then, we are already aware of the thing in question, whose truth we are seeking: we do not yet "see" it in its fullness, because its color (created truth) has not been illuminated, but we are somehow aware of it (just as we can feel or hear something before, or without, seeing it). But to know the truth of the thing, to "see" it (color), we must also have access to its divine idea (the sun), which is the standard of its conformity. Therefore, we can apprehend the truth of the thing (created truth) only in the light of the Highest Truth.¹³⁵ And when the light of the Highest Truth shines upon the thing, its truth, its conformity – its color – will be revealed, which will, in turn, reveal the thing as true (the colored body).¹³⁶ The truth of the thing, then, reveals the true thing, reveals the degree of its being, because, as we have seen, the truth of a thing is the measure of its being: having apprehended the conformity of the thing to its divine idea, we can apprehend the thing as true, the thing as it truly is.

¹³³ The created truth reveals the thing as true: "Similiter potentia est lucis summae veritatis, quae sic illustrat veritatem creatam, quod ipsa etiam illustrata ostendit rem veram" (Baur 137.29-31). Through the light of the Highest Truth the created truth reveals that which is: "Sola igitur lux summae veritatis primo et per se ostendit id, quod est, sicut sola lux ostendit corpora. Sed per hanc lucem etiam veritas rei ostendit id, quod est, . . ." (Baur 137.34 – 138.1).

¹³⁴ "Aut qualiter cognoscetur, quod res est, ut esse debet, nisi videatur ratio, secundum quam sic esse debet?" (Baur 137.10-11).

¹³⁵ "Cum autem, ut praedictum est, veritas cuiuscunque est eius conformitas rationi suae in aeterno Verbo, patet, quod omnis creata veritas non nisi in lumine veritatis summae conspicitur. -- Quomodo enim conspici posset conformitas alicuius ad aliquid, nisi conspecto etiam illo, cui est conforme?" (Baur 137.1-5).

¹³⁶ See 182n133.

Now, Marrone's first criticism of Grosseteste was that Grosseteste reversed the role of instrument and final object by saying, in the first description, that the true thing and the divine idea make possible our apprehension of the created truth and then saying, in the second description, that the divine idea and the created truth make possible our apprehension of the true thing. Our account in the preceding paragraph makes clear, however, that Grosseteste identifies two separate "moments" of the process he is describing: in the first moment, the thing in question is the object whose truth (conformity) is being determined, and in the second moment it is the object, whose truth (conformity) having been determined, can now be perceived by the knower as true (conformed) or false (not conformed). So Marrone is right to say that the thing plays the role of instrument and final object, but he is wrong to say that this renders Grosseteste's account inconsistent, because the thing plays these roles in different respects (in different moments of the process): the thing is the instrument insofar as its presence to the mind is required to apprehend its conformity to the divine idea (its truth), but the thing is the final object insofar as, created truth having been apprehended, the thing is revealed to the knower as true (or false). In the first moment, the thing is apprehended merely as a thing whose truth is not yet determined; in the second moment, the thing is apprehended as true (or false).

What remains, then, is to confront Marrone's second criticism, according to which both Grosseteste's use of color as an analogue for created truth, and his identification of truth and being, make of created truth a simple quality and thereby constitute an abandoning of his definition of truth as a conformity (relation).¹³⁷ There are at least two reasons not to construe

¹³⁷ Marrone thinks that Grosseteste does not consciously abandon this definition later in *De veritate*: rather, Marrone says, Grosseteste is unsystematic and inconsistent and does not see the contradiction inherent in his various descriptions of truth (*New Ideas of Truth*, 154-56; *The Light of Thy Countenance*, 42).

Grosseteste's analogy (and his identification of truth and being) as constituting an affirmation of truth as a simple quality and an abandonment of truth as conformity. First, to take the analogy of created truth to color to mean that, since color is a simple quality, created truth is also a simple quality, is to take the analogy at a simplistically literal level. For the import of the analogy of created truth to color is that: (1) created truth (color) is, like the Highest Truth (sun), truth (light); (2) created truth (color) requires illuminating by the Highest Truth (the sun) to be made actually intelligible (visible); (3) created truth (color), illuminated in this way by the Highest Truth (sun), reveals the thing as true (body as colored); and (4) created truth, being the conformity of the thing to the divine idea, is the conformity of the thing, belonging to the thing in a significant sense. The *onus probandi* lies with Marrone here: we must assume that Grosseteste meant to maintain the definition of truth as conformity, and we must evaluate his analogy with this in mind, so that we are allowed to conclude that the analogy failed to maintain this definition only if there is no way to maintain that definition within the terms of the analogy. But, in fact, the very use of color as the analogue to created truth does seem to point to the reality of created truth as a relation, for we have seen that color, being light incorporated in a medium, has an intrinsic relationship with the sun. All color has sunlight in its substance, since the light of the sun brings color into existence: color is visible light as incorporated in a medium, and the activity of connatural, overpouring visible light (from the sun) uniting itself to color (incorporated light) actualizes color.¹³⁸ Analogously, created truth has an intrinsic relationship with the Highest Truth. So it seems that Grosseteste's use of color as the analogue for created truth also bears out the nature of created truth as relation, which means that Marrone's criticism is based on not merely a

¹³⁸ See the relevant passages from the *Hexaemeron* and *De operationibus solis*, quoted above, 167n101.

simplistic interpretation of the analogy but also a misconstrual of the physical aspect of the analogy.¹³⁹

There is, however, a more significant misreading of Grosseteste in Marrone's interpretation and critique of the analogy: Marrone's claim that in identifying truth with being (like comparing truth to color) Grosseteste is classifying truth as a simple quality, rather than a relation of conformity, fails to appreciate Grosseteste's understanding of being. As we have seen,¹⁴⁰ for Grosseteste the being (*esse*) of a thing, both its first being and its second being, consists in its conformity to its divine idea in the Word: "everything that is, is only and is completely what it is said to be by the eternal Word," and, thus, everything that is, "insofar as it is and however much it is, is true."¹⁴¹ And later in the *De veritate*, Grosseteste will state that the first *esse* of a thing consists in its being supported by the Word who forms (conforms) it in accordance with its divine idea.¹⁴² This account of truth and being will find its final form in Grosseteste's conclusion, at the end of *De veritate*, that "the truths of individual things are the definitions of their first being and second being."¹⁴³ All this makes clear that, for Grosseteste, both first being and second being, whose definitions constitute the truth of a thing, are conformities to the Eternal Word. Therefore, one cannot

¹³⁹ Regardless, though, we have to keep in mind that the analogy is not meant to illustrate the way in which truth is a conformity but rather to illustrate what is involved in our coming to know truth and, ultimately, the true thing.

¹⁴⁰ See above, 161-63.

¹⁴¹ "Cum autem omne, quod est, solum id est et totum id est, quod aeterno Verbo dicitur esse, omne quod est, in quantum est et quantumcunque est, verum est" (Baur 136.17-20).

¹⁴² "Cum igitur non ex se sit, sed in se solum consideratum, invenitur labile in non-esse: ubi vel quomodo videbitur, quod sit, nisi in coaptatione ad illud, quod supportat ipsam ne fluat in non-esse et in conspectione, quod hoc supportatur ab illo? Hoc est igitur, ut videtur, alicui creaturae esse, quod ab aeterno Verbo supportari" (Baur 141.26-32).

¹⁴³ "Singulorum namque veritates sunt definitiones esse eorum primi vel secundi, . . ." (Baur 142.36-37).

conclude, as Marrone does, that Grosseteste's identification of truth with being (*esse*, or *id quod est*) introduces a new notion of truth as "something complete in itself" that does "not formally involve a comparison between thing and divine idea,"¹⁴⁴ precisely because Grosseteste does not conceive of created being as something complete in itself (simple quality or substance) as opposed to a conformity (relation).

So, whereas Marrone sees an inherent inconsistency in Grosseteste's account of truth in the first three sections of *De veritate* – Grosseteste, according to Marrone, originally defines truth as conformity but in his analogy he describes truth as something simple rather than a conformity – in fact there is no such inconsistency. Rather, Grosseteste maintains that the being of a thing consists in its conformity to its divine idea in the Word and that truth is the measure of that conformity. And whereas Marrone criticizes Grosseteste's identification of truth with being as inconsistent with his original definition of truth as conformity, it likewise seems clear, from our examination of the first three sections of *De veritate* and from our looking ahead to later passages in the *De veritate*, that there is in fact no inconsistency in Grosseteste's account. A complete account of this last point, however, will have to wait until we examine the final section of *De veritate*, in which Grosseteste rounds out his account of the relationship between truth and being. In connection with that discussion we will have the occasion to examine Grosseteste's understanding of truth as expressed in his *Commentarius* and, in so doing, to once again address Marrone's thesis that the *Commentarius* represents Grosseteste's mature thought on truth and being.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ *New Ideas of Truth*, 155-56.

¹⁴⁵ When we reach this point in our investigation, we will also examine the further objection of Marrone that, whereas in his analogy Grosseteste clearly distinguishes between created truth and the true thing (*id quod est*),

Having addressed the charge that Grosseteste's analogy to the sun and color renders inconsistent his account of the nature of truth in the first three sections of *De veritate*, it now remains to consider the bearing of the third section of Grosseteste's *De veritate* on the question of the number of truth (i.e., its unicity or multiplicity). As we have already seen,¹⁴⁶ Grosseteste's analogy distinguishes the Highest Truth from created truth (collapsing this distinction would undermine the analogy). Furthermore, the analogy clearly indicates that created truth should not be understood as "in competition with" the Highest Truth – the sufficiency of the Highest Truth does not require the superfluity of created truths, i.e., it does not negate the reality of created truth. Rather, although created truth is, like the Highest Truth, truth (color is, like the sun, light), nevertheless created truth is not a competing truth (color is not a competing luminary). Grosseteste's analogy, therefore, expresses, and is grounded upon, the position that there are many truths, even though Grosseteste does not explicitly affirm this conclusion until the next section of *De veritate*.¹⁴⁷

Several other considerations confirm this interpretation. First, Grosseteste's epistemological conclusions, illustrated in his use of the analogy to sun and color, substantially agree with the sixth of his preliminary arguments, in the first section of *De veritate*, for the multiplicity of truth. In that sixth preliminary argument, Grosseteste, using passages from Augustine, stated that both the pure of heart and the impure of heart "see" truth, whereas only the pure of heart see the Highest Truth, so that the impure of heart must,

elsewhere in *De veritate* Grosseteste explicitly identifies truth and *id quod est*, thereby conflating created truth and the true thing.

¹⁴⁶ See above, 168-71.

¹⁴⁷ Timothy Noone ("Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility," 117) makes the same point, stating that Grosseteste's conclusion that there are many truths governs his answer to the very problem we are addressing, viz., whether the sufficiency of the Highest Truth renders other truths superfluous.

when they know something true, see some truth other than the Highest Truth.¹⁴⁸

Grosseteste's use of the analogy in this third section makes it clear both that the truth seen by the impure of heart is the created truth as illuminated by the Highest Truth and that the impure of heart cannot see the Highest Truth (nor are many of them even aware of it).

Second, not only is Grosseteste in substantial agreement with these two preliminary arguments for the multiplicity of truth, but he is also in substantial disagreement with the third and final preliminary argument for the unicity of truth. This last argument for the unicity of truth affirmed that the Highest Truth alone reveals to the mind the true thing (its *esse*, or *id quod est*). This argument was followed by a list of authoritative passages from Augustine that confirmed this position.¹⁴⁹ But one of the crucial elements of Grosseteste's analogy, and that which allowed him to maintain that the impure of heart can come to knowledge of truth without thereby seeing the Highest Truth in Itself, is that not only the Highest Truth but also created truth reveals to the mind the true thing; on this point Grosseteste is absolutely clear.¹⁵⁰ Therefore, Grosseteste's deployment of the analogy constitutes a rejection of this third preliminary argument for the unicity of Truth.

It is clear, then, that Grosseteste's account of truth in this third section of the *De veritate* constitutes an affirmation of the multiplicity of truth, prior to his explicit affirmation,

¹⁴⁸ See our discussion above, 153.

¹⁴⁹ See our discussion above, 155-57.

¹⁵⁰ The conclusion of the last preliminary argument for the unicity of truth states: "Quod autem lux summae veritatis *et non aliud* [italics mine] ostendit mentis oculo id quod est, videtur ex auctoritatibus Augustini diligenter inspectis" (Baur 133.6-8). But near the end of his analogy to color and the sun, Grosseteste states: "Sola igitur lux summae veritatis primo et per se ostendit id, quod est, sicut sola lux ostendit corpora. Sed per hanc lucem *etiam veritas rei* [italics mine] ostendit id, quod est, sicut color ostendit corpora per lucem solis" (Baur 137.34 – 138.2). Ironically, Grosseteste follows up this last statement by saying that Augustine was right to say that no truth is seen except in the light of the Highest Truth! This is of course true, but it fails to mention the difference between "*only the light of the Highest Truth* reveals that which is" and "*the light of the Highest Truth and also, through this, the truth of the thing* reveals that which is."

in the next section of *De veritate*, of this position. We turn now to an examination of this next section, in which Grosseteste for the first time explicitly addresses the question of the number of truth.

*Resolution of the Main Question: There are Many Truths*¹⁵¹

Grosseteste opens this section of his *De veritate* in this way: “We also think, as Augustine indicates in his work *De mendacio*, that the truth of things is multiple.”¹⁵² Here, of course, Grosseteste is referring back to the final preliminary argument he gave, at the beginning of *De veritate*, for the multiplicity of truth. In this argument, Grosseteste pointed out that Augustine distinguished between the truth of contemplation and the truth of true statements and situated these two truths in different “places” in the hierarchical order of things: the truth of contemplation he identified with God, but the truth of true statements he relegated to a status beneath the human soul. In so doing, argued Grosseteste, Augustine indicated that there is some truth other than the Highest Truth.¹⁵³

Having stated his thesis, Grosseteste immediately provides an argument for it: if there were not many truths, but only one Truth, then the term “truth” could not be made plural or be distributed. For we speak of “many truths” and “every truth,” and we predicate “truth” of many things. Now, such language – the use of a plural term and the distributing of a universal term – requires many *supposita*, many subjects that are the bearers for that term.

¹⁵¹ This fourth section of the work corresponds to Baur ¶¶ 30-35 (138.24 – 141.13).

¹⁵² “Putamus etiam, sicut innuit Augustinus in libro de mendacio, multiplicem esse rerum veritatem” (Baur 138.24-25).

¹⁵³ For our discussion of this preliminary argument of Grosseteste, see above, 153-54.

Therefore, the subjects for such expressions are the many truths of things (which, Grosseteste reiterates, are the conformities of things to their divine ideas in the Eternal Truth).¹⁵⁴

Quite aware that he is contradicting Anselm's own conclusion that there is only one Truth of all true things, Grosseteste affirms the inadequacy of true things as the *supposita* for the above-mentioned expressions ("many truths," "every truth," etc.). He begins his discussion with a concession to Anselm: the multiplicity of true things does not of itself demand the multiplicity of truth, for, as Anselm noted, the mere comparison of one thing to many (one time to many things in time, one Truth to many true things) does not make that one (time, Truth) to be many (times, truths). However, many true things do not suffice as *supposita* for our speaking of "many truths" or "every truth": presumably, Grosseteste's reasoning here is that we speak both of "many truths" and "many true things," so that rejecting the existence of many truths, and affirming only the existence of many true things, does away with the *supposita* of such expressions as "many truths." Therefore, such expressions cannot be accounted for if there were only one Truth and not many truths.¹⁵⁵

Whereas Anselm, in his *De veritate*, took such expressions of ordinary language as one of the starting-points of his inquiry but then ended up criticizing them as improper, Grosseteste takes such expressions as proper. According to Grosseteste, we do speak of

¹⁵⁴ "Putamus etiam, sicut innuit Augustinus in libro de mendacio, multiplicem esse rerum veritatem. Alioquin non susciperet nomen veritatis pluralitatem et distributionem. . . . Nomen enim [reading *autem*, as Noone does] plurale aut distributum signum universale exigit multa supposita. Quapropter non possent dici "plures veritates", aut "omnis veritas", nisi essent multae veritates suppositae. -- Supponuntur ergo in talibus locutionibus veritates rerum, quae sunt conformitates rationibus rerum in aeterna veritate" (Baur 138.24-26 and 139.1-5).

¹⁵⁵ "Putamus etiam, sicut innuit Augustinus in libro de mendacio, multiplicem esse rerum veritatem. Alioquin non susciperet nomen veritatis pluralitatem et distributionem. Unius enim ad multa sola comparatio non facit illud unum multa, sicut comparatio unius temporis ad plura temporalia, quae simul sunt, non facit illud multa tempora. Non enim sunt multa tempora simul. Similiter, si non esset veritas nisi summa, quae in se est unica propter collationem illius nominis ad multa, possent esse multa vera, sicut simul sunt multa temporalia. Sed propter hoc non essent multae veritates, sicut nec multa simul tempora" (Baur 138.24-33).

many truths, and therefore “truth” is capable of distribution, and this requires a genuine plurality, which cannot be accounted for by the mere comparison of one Truth to many things identified as true.¹⁵⁶

Nevertheless, immediately after concluding that there must be many truths acting as the *supposita* for such expressions as “every truth,” Grosseteste continues:

But perhaps the term “truth” is never stated without signifying the Highest Truth as the form of the term in some way, at least indirectly or obliquely. For just as the truth of a thing cannot be understood except in the light of the Highest Truth, so perhaps neither is anything supposed by the term “truth” without signifying the Highest Truth. There is, therefore, one sole truth that is everywhere signified and predicated by the term “truth,” as Anselm desires, namely, the Highest Truth. But in the many truths of things that One Truth is called many truths.¹⁵⁷

The Highest Truth, Grosseteste suggests, is referred to indirectly or obliquely whenever the term “truth” is signified.¹⁵⁸ As Grosseteste indicates, this is fitting given his conclusion that the truth of a thing can be seen only in the light of the Highest Truth. More specifically, given his definition of the truth of a thing as its conformity to its divine idea in the Highest Truth, and given the epistemological consequence that created truth is seen only in the light of the Highest Truth, it would indeed seem that, at the logical level, the Highest Truth, as the form of the term “truth,” is referred to (if only indirectly) whenever we speak of “truth.”

The significance of this statement about the Highest Truth, in light of Grosseteste’s immediately prior argument for the multiplicity of truth, is a point of some disagreement.

¹⁵⁶ See: Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 116.

¹⁵⁷ “Sed forte nusquam ponitur nomen veritatis quin significet ut formam nominis aliquo modo saltem adiacenter vel oblique veritatem summam. Sicut enim veritas rei nec intelligi potest nisi in luce veritatis summae, sic forte nec supponitur per nomen veritatis nisi cum significatione veritatis summae. Unica est ergo veritas ubique significata et praedicata per hoc nomen veritas, sicut vult Anselmus, scilicet veritas summa. Sed in multis veritatibus rerum dicitur illa una veritas multae veritates” (Baur 139.5-13).

¹⁵⁸ Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 116.

Baur suggests that Grosseteste grants the legitimacy of speaking of many truths while affirming above all that the Highest Truth is what is denoted always and everywhere by the term “truth.”¹⁵⁹ Less radical is Palma’s point that Grosseteste wishes to maintain the radically different status of the Highest Truth by affirming that whenever truth is under consideration the Highest Truth is always in view.¹⁶⁰ Most recently, Noone interprets Grosseteste here as acknowledging Anselm and incorporating Anselm’s answer into his own account.¹⁶¹ It seems most true to the thrust of Grosseteste’s overall argument in *De veritate* up to this point to say that he unequivocally affirms the multiplicity of truth and then, here in the fourth section, grants that the Highest Truth is referred to in some way whenever the term “truth” is used, for, as we have seen, the prior (third) section of the *De veritate* already exhibits and expresses Grosseteste’s commitment to the multiplicity of truth. This reading is confirmed by examination of Grosseteste’s phrasing of the argument in question (here in the fourth section of *De veritate*): Grosseteste’s repeated use of the qualifier “perhaps” (*forte*) in the argument confirms that he is granting, in a qualified way, an element of Anselm’s position that there is but one Truth, rather than affirming this element as normative and central. Noone’s reading, then, better reflects the argument of *De veritate*, both that of the fourth section and that of the work as a whole up to this point, than does Baur’s rendering, which is somewhat misleading.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste*, 205.

¹⁶⁰ “Robert Grosseteste’s Understanding of Truth,” 304-05.

¹⁶¹ “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 116.

¹⁶² Baur says that the one Highest Truth is always and everywhere denoted by the term “truth,” but that it is not false to speak of “many truths” so long as one understands by that that the truths of things are conformities to the divine ideas. This is not quite Anselmian, but it is arguably nearer Anselm than it is Grosseteste, for it

The final sentence of Grosseteste's acknowledgement of the "unicity of Truth" position is striking: "But in the many truths of things that One Truth is called many truths."¹⁶³ This would seem to weaken substantially Grosseteste's commitment to the multiplicity of truth, were it not that Grosseteste here is surely referencing a parallel statement in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: "That Truth is one, by which holy souls are illuminated; but since there are many souls, many truths can be said to be in them, just as from one face many images appear in mirrors."¹⁶⁴ Now, as we have seen, Augustine's statement here is a clear instance of his assertion of the unicity of truth.¹⁶⁵ And since Grosseteste's sentence, implicitly referencing Augustine's assertion of the unicity of truth, follows on the heels of an explicit acknowledgement of Anselm's position, we ought to understand this statement as Grosseteste's recognition that Anselm's position is one way of understanding Augustine's texts, a way that Grosseteste himself wishes to incorporate into his own account. Again, it must be remembered that this acknowledgement of Grosseteste is governed by his repeated use of the qualifier "perhaps" at the beginning of this discussion of the "unicity of Truth" position.

Immediately after acknowledging that the Highest Truth is obliquely referred to whenever the term "truth" is used, Grosseteste turns to a consideration of the imperishability of truth. Since truth follows upon all things – even its contrary and its negation – truth is

completely obscures Grosseteste's belaboring of the point that there must be many truths that act as the *supposita* for the expressions that we use in ordinary language.

¹⁶³ "Sed in multis veritatibus rerum dicitur illa una veritas multae veritates" (Baur 139.12-13).

¹⁶⁴ "Veritas una est, qua illustrantur animae sanctae; sed quoniam multae sunt animae, in ipsis multae veritates dici possunt, sicut ab una facie multae in speculis imagines apparent" (CCSL 38, #11.82.2.4-7).

¹⁶⁵ For our discussion of this passage, see Chapter One above, 16-17.

something that must *per se* necessarily exist, or, at least, it necessarily follows upon something that is *per se* necessary. Truth, then, is imperishable: “it cannot in any way be corrupted.”¹⁶⁶ But rather than elaborate upon this fact, Grosseteste proceeds to address a different question, viz., the problem of the eternity of certain true propositions. Grosseteste notes that the truths of mathematical propositions, of conditionals, and of all negations of creaturely existence seem eternal. But such truths consist in the conformity to their expressions in the eternal Word, and so such truths are not identifiable with God. Therefore, there seems to be something eternal apart from God, viz., the truths of certain propositions.¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, the truths of such propositions are not identical to each other: the conformity of one such proposition to its expression in the Word is different from the conformity of another such proposition to its expression in the Word.¹⁶⁸ So it seems that there are many things other than God that are eternal.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ “Cum autem veritas sequatur ad omnia, etiam ad contrarium suum, quia falsum necessario est verum falsum, et contra regulam logicorum etiam ad omnem negationem sequatur veritatis affirmatio . . . Est igitur veritas, quod per se necesse est esse vel saltem necessario consequens ad per se necesse esse. . . . Quomocunque sit, manifeste inextinguibilis est lux veritatis, quae etiam sui illustrat extinctionem, nec aliquo modo corrumpi potest” (Baur 139.13-16 and 21-22 and 26-28).

¹⁶⁷ “Sed dubitari potest, an aliqua rerum veritas, quae est conformitas earum ad suas rationes aeternas, aeterna sit et sine initio? Veritates namque mathematicarum propositionum videntur esse aeternae et conditionalium omnium et veritates negationum omnium de creaturarum existentia videntur habuisse veritatem sine initio ante rerum creationem, utpote ‘mundum non esse’ verum fuit et sine initio verum ante mundi creationem et fuit conforme dictioni suae, qua dicitur Verbo aeterno. Huius igitur enuntiabilis conformitas ad dictionem suam in aeterno Verbo non est Deus. Ergo aliud a Deo fuit sine initio” (Baur 139.29 – 140.2).

¹⁶⁸ Baur (*Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste*, 206) identifies this as another consideration supporting the multiple application and meaning of the concept “truth.”

¹⁶⁹ “Similiter veritates talium dictionum ‘aliquid fuisse futurum’, sine initio sunt; et alterae ab invicem sunt. Non enim est eadem veritas huius dicti ‘aliquid fuisse futurum’ et huiusmodi ‘septem et tria esse decem’. Altera est enim conformitas huius ad suam dictionem in aeterno Verbo et altera illius. Sunt igitur plura immo innumerabilia sine initio et erunt sine fine” (Baur 140.3-8).

“Similiter quaeri potest de ipsis enuntiationibus. Aeternum namque est ‘aliquid fuisse futurum’; similiter ‘septem et tria esse decem’ et neutrum eorum est reliquum neutrumque Deus: alia igitur a Deo eademque plurima aeterna sunt” (Baur 140.9-12).

Grosseteste, then, moves from the merits of the “unicity of Truth” position (viz., that God is obliquely referred to whenever the term “truth” is used) to an affirmation of the imperishability of truth, then to a consideration of the question of the eternity of some true propositions. Grosseteste’s train of thought seems to be as follows. If, as Grosseteste has admitted, the Highest Truth is obliquely referred to in every predication of “truth,” then it would be natural to argue that the imperishability of truth is to be referred to the Highest Truth. Now, this position would seem to require that, since the truths of certain propositions are imperishable, therefore the Highest Truth is to be identified with the truth of all such propositions (viz., eternally true propositions). But this seems impossible: God cannot be identified with a statement’s conformity to its expression in the eternal Word. Therefore, the imperishable truths of eternally true propositions are not identical with God. But this means that there are many eternal truths – i.e., many eternal things – apart from God, and this, too, is impossible.

The significance of this train of thought for Grosseteste’s central thesis is as follows. If, like Anselm, one affirms that God is the sole Truth of all true things, then it becomes simple to answer the problem of eternally true statements: since God is the truth of such statements, God is the ground of their eternity. Now, although this resolution has its own difficulties (for one, it does not account for the distinction between eternally inevitably true statements and eternally non-inevitably true statements¹⁷⁰), nevertheless, it seems even more

¹⁷⁰ Noone identifies this difficulty as one aspect of Grosseteste’s general dissatisfaction with Anselm’s account of truth (“Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 112). Although Grosseteste does not develop this distinction in the *De veritate*, he does so explicitly in the contemporaneous *De scientia Dei* and *De libero arbitrio*. The most likely reason for Grosseteste’s omission of this distinction in *De veritate* is that it is not necessary for his argument to present, establish, and explain this distinction: his concern in the *De veritate* is to explain how affirming the multiplicity of truths and the existence of eternally true statements does not necessitate the existence of eternal beings apart from God, and this concern extends equally and without difference to inevitably eternally true statements and non-inevitably eternally true statements.

difficult to answer the problem satisfactorily if one affirms the multiplicity of truths: how can one maintain that the truths of eternally true propositions are not identical with God (i.e., the “multiplicity of truths” position) without maintaining thereby that there are many eternal things (i.e., truths) apart from God? Therefore, Grosseteste’s project here, at the end of the fourth section of the *De veritate*, is to maintain his central thesis (affirmed at the beginning of the fourth section) that there are many truths, while answering the objection that he thereby admits an eternity of beings (truths) apart from God.

Grosseteste’s resolution of this problem is incisive. He begins with an example: from eternity someone was praising Caesar and also praising Socrates. On this assumption, it is eternally true that “Caesar has been praised and Socrates has been praised.” If we take “Caesar praised” as A, and “Socrates praised” as B, then A and B are eternal. But it does not follow from this that Caesar and Socrates are eternal, nor anything other than the one praising, because eternity belongs to A and B only in virtue of the one praising. It is only on account of the eternity of the praiser that the praise (*qua* received) can be deemed eternal. But this does not demand an eternal subject or being apart from the one praising.¹⁷¹

Likewise, if we take “Socrates known by God” as A, and “Plato known by God” as B, then it is true that A and B are eternal and that A and B are not identical with each other nor with God, and yet it is also true that God alone exists eternally. The reason for this is that, when

¹⁷¹ “Ad respondendum autem ad haec obiecta pono exemplum tale; ponatur, quod ab aeterno fuisset laudans Caesarem et similiter laudans Socratem. Secundum hanc positionem ab aeterno verum est ‘Caesar laudatus est et Socrates laudatus est’, quia si est laudans Caesarem, Caesar laudatus est. Sit igitur hoc nomen A, cuius definitio sit ‘Caesar laudatus’ et hoc nomen B, cuius definitio sit ‘Socrates laudatus’; ergo verum est A esse aeternum et B esse aeternum, . . . Nec tamen sequitur Caesarem et Socratem esse aeternos, aut aliquid esse aeternum praeter laudantem, quia non redditur aeternitas, cum dicitur A aeternum, nisi propter laudationem, quae in laudante aeterna est. Propter cuius aeternitatem suscipit aeternitatis praedicationem eius correlativa laudatio. Tales autem correlationes, ut est laudatio, passio [reading *laudatio-passio*, as Noone does], non exigunt subiectum aeternum, aut ens vel aliquid vel aliquam existentiam extra laudantem praeter [reading *propter*, as Noone does] positionem” (Baur 140.13-20 and 21-28).

we say “A is not B and B is not A and neither of these is God” we make this predication with regard to the corruptible subjects A and B, whereas when we say “A or B exist eternally” the predication is rendered *per se* in virtue of the form by which these terms are imposed and these terms are called eternal in virtue of the eternal knowledge of God. So, the truth of the proposition “A or B exist eternally” does not demand the existence or co-eternity of anything other than God. So, when we predicate eternity of some truth or of some expressible state of affairs (*enuntiabile*), this predication is possible in virtue of the form corresponding to the utterance of the Word, but on account of this relation nothing need be other than God.¹⁷²

According to Grosseteste, then, all the varieties of eternally true statements that were listed earlier in this fourth section – mathematical propositions, conditionals, and negations of creaturely existence – can be called “eternal” with reference to God’s knowledge of the relevant *enuntiabilia*. That is, the statements (along with their particular *enuntiabile* as well as their particular truth) are eternal insofar as they stand in an eternal relation, only one of whose *relata* – viz., God as knower – is eternal.¹⁷³ So in any predication of eternity of such eternally true statements, the statement (as subject) is “supposed under eternal relations.”¹⁷⁴ If the statement (or the *enuntiabile*) were supposed in itself, eternity could not be predicated

¹⁷² “Exemplum ad idem est, quod Deus scit omnia ab aeterno. Quapropter si scit A, cuius definitio sit: ‘Socrates scitus a Deo’ et B, cuius definitio sit ‘Plato scitus a Deo’, per se loquendo verum erit ‘A aeternaliter est’, ‘B aeternaliter est’, quia scilicet scitur a Deo aeternaliter ipsum B, et A non est B nec e converso, neutrumque eorum Deus est et tamen solus Deus aeternaliter est; quia cum dicitur ‘A non est B et B non est A, et neutrum horum est Deus’ redditur praedicatio pro subiectis corruptibilibus. Cum enim [reading *autem*, as Noone does] dicitur ‘A vel B aeternaliter sunt’, redditur praedicatio per se gratia formae, a qua nomina haec imponuntur, quae scilicet aeterna dicuntur propter scientiam Dei aeternam. Nec exigit veritas talis sermonis alicuius extra Deum existentiam aut coaeternitatem. Similiter igitur cum dicitur ‘hoc verum aeternum est aut enuntiabile aeternum est’, suscipitur praedicatio haec propter formam correlativam dictioni in aeterno Verbo; propter quam tamen relationem nihil exigitur extra Deum esse” (Baur 140.29 – 141.10).

¹⁷³ See especially Neil Lewis, “The Problem of a Plurality of Eternal Beings in Robert Grosseteste,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 7 (1998): 28-33. See also Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, I.85-86.

¹⁷⁴ Lewis, “The Problem of a Plurality,” 29.

of it; only as supposed under eternal relations, only as standing in an eternal relation to the sole eternal being – God – can a statement (or *enuntiabile*) be called “eternal.”

Grosseteste’s resolution of this question, as it appears here in the fourth section of the *De veritate*, appears nearly word-for-word in the second recension of Grosseteste’s *De libero arbitrio*, within the very same context, viz., the problem of eternally true propositions necessitating a plurality of eternal beings apart from God. The treatment of this question in the second recension of *De libero arbitrio* is more exhaustive, and it sheds light on its counterpart passage in the *De veritate*.

Composed around the same time as the *De veritate*,¹⁷⁵ the second recension of *De libero arbitrio* addresses, more fully than *De veritate* does, the question of the ontological basis for eternally true statements. There, Grosseteste identifies this problem as follows: both the infinite number of eternal relations between God and creatures and the infinite number of *dicta (enuntiabilia)* that are eternally true seem to constitute an infinite number of eternal beings, distinct from God.¹⁷⁶ After presenting a convincing argument that concludes

¹⁷⁵ As we have seen, Grosseteste scholars are agreed that *De veritate*, *De veritate propositionis*, *De scientia Dei*, and *De libero arbitrio* all date from the same period. See especially: Callus, “The Oxford Career,” 54; Russell, “Phases of Grosseteste’s Intellectual Life,” 114; Southern, *Growth of an English Mind*, 113; Lewis, “The First Recension of *De libero arbitrio*,” 23-26; Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, I.34-35; Ginther, *Master of the Sacred Page*, 17-18. Neil Lewis (“The Problem of a Plurality,” 17) points out that the second recension of *De libero arbitrio* seems to develop the nearly-verbatim material presented in *De veritate*. It seems reasonable, then, to date the second recension of *De libero arbitrio* slightly later than the *De veritate*, say, the very late 1220’s.

¹⁷⁶ “Tertium quoque verbum videtur obscurum, scilicet quo dicebatur, relationes innumeras esse aeternas creatoris ad creaturas et e contrario, quia ex hoc videtur aliquibus plura esse aeterna, et aliud quam Deum esse aeternum – licet nos frequenter addiderimus et conculcaverimus unicum solum, scilicet Deum trinitarem, esse aeternum, et tales relationes nullas facere aeternarum essentialium multitudinem. . . .” (Baur 188.9-15).
 “Item talia dicta ‘Petrum fuisse futurum’ et ‘Paulum fuisse futurum’ et sic de omni creatura ‘illam fuisse futuram’, ab aeterno fuerunt vera. Ergo ab aeterno fuerunt. Numquid itaque Deus est ‘Paulum fuisse futurum’ et quodlibet talium dictorum, aut ista dicta eadem ad invicem? Si enim non eadem, tunc plura ab aeterno sunt” (Baur 189.20-25).

Since Neil Lewis has not yet published his edition of the second recension of *De libero arbitrio*, I am using Baur’s edition.

that there is something eternally true that is not God, nor a creature, but is rather an eternal truth-bearer, Grosseteste provides his reply, which repeats nearly verbatim the reply given in his *De veritate* (which we examined above). But Grosseteste's reply in *De libero arbitrio* is longer than the reply he gives in *De veritate*. At the point where the *De veritate* reply ends, in *De libero arbitrio* Grosseteste continues his explanation of how to account for eternal relations. Most instructive in this explanation is a thought-experiment Grosseteste employs: if a new being were to be created right now, there would come into being not only a multiplicity but even an infinity of new relations, but there would not thereby come into being an infinity of essences.¹⁷⁷ The significance of this point lies in the fact that Grosseteste admits that there are an infinite number of eternal relations, but he shows that this does not involve an infinite number of eternal essences – rather, God stands alone as the eternal essence acting as one of the *relata* in all of these eternal relations.¹⁷⁸ Therefore, the unicity of God's eternity is threatened neither by the existence of eternally true statements nor by the existence of eternal relations between God and creatures.

¹⁷⁷ “Quod autem tales relationes essentiam non multiplicant, patet. Ponatur enim nunc unicum solum aliquid subito creatum ceteris omnibus manentibus: manifestum est, quod illius ad singula ceterorum multae connascentur relationes et singulorum ad ipsum multae relationes. Ergo si relationes istae haberent essentias praeter essentias extremitatum, unico nato et unico addito numero rerum duplaretur et triplaretur vel forte multiplicaretur numerus rerum, immo et in infinitum augmentaretur numerus earum, quia cuiuslibet relationis essentia connata ad singulas rerum haberet multas relationes, et e contrario et similiter relationes illarum relationum, et sic in infinitum. Sed hoc est inconveniens, essentias scilicet infinitas esse, si unum quid solum generetur, vel si musca nascatur” (Baur 192.22-34).

¹⁷⁸ “Pono itaque A Deum, B et C duo dicta Dei disciplinabilia vel duas res suppositas sub aeternis relationibus. Dico itaque A esse aeternum et B esse aeternum et C esse aeternum, et nullum eorum esse alterum, et tamen unicum solum, scilicet A, esse aeternum, nec aliquam essentiam nec aliquid aeternum praeter A unicum et solum. Dicuntur haec tria esse altera ab invicem propter res alteras suppositas. Sed res suppositae per B et C non sunt, posito, quod sit sermo noster secundum statum ante creationem; propter autem ipsas relationes attribuitur esse et B et C, quae relationes nullam habent essentiam vel existentiam extra suas extremitates et quarum multiplicitas nullam facit multiplicatam vel numerositatem essentiae. Propter talem igitur alterationem non sequitur, quod multa sunt, quia dicuntur altera propter res alteras, quae nihil sunt. Propter relationum autem numerositatem non sequitur, quod multa sint, quia earum numerositas non exigit numerositatem aliquam existentiarum vel essentiarum” (Baur 191.31 – 192.14).

Thus, Grosseteste's affirmation that there are many truths does not necessitate that the many truths of eternally true statements constitute eternal beings distinct from God: such statements (and their truths) are eternal only as supposed under eternal relations, i.e., as eternally known by God. Now, immediately after his resolution of this problem in *De veritate*, Grosseteste provides an alternate explanation: one could, instead, identify *enuntiabilia* with the divine ideas in God's mind.¹⁷⁹ Grosseteste, however, does not develop this alternative any further. This, combined with the fact that he speaks of being "forced" (*cogemur*) to this conclusion if the original explanation is not acceptable, indicates that Grosseteste does not consider this alternative to be equally viable.¹⁸⁰ But, whatever the reason, Grosseteste clearly presents this alternative explanation as merely an aside.

It should be noted, before we proceed to the next section of *De veritate*, that in this fourth section of *De veritate* Grosseteste has completed his response to the three preliminary arguments for the unicity of truth. For Grosseteste's analogy to the sun and color, in the prior section of *De veritate*, constituted his response to the third and final preliminary argument for the unicity of truth, as we have seen,¹⁸¹ and here in the fourth section of *De veritate* Grosseteste presents his response to the other two preliminary arguments for the unicity of truth. By granting that the Highest Truth is obliquely signified whenever the term "truth" is used, Grosseteste has, as he himself explicitly noted,¹⁸² incorporated Anselm's

¹⁷⁹ "Hoc itaque modo respondebitur ad supra dictas oppositiones, aut cogemur fateri, enuntiabilia nihil aliud esse, quam rationes aeternas rerum in mente divina" (Baur 141.11-13).

¹⁸⁰ And, indeed, upon examination this alternative explanation seems to have disagreeable consequences. For example, would not this require the grossest kind of ontologism? For if the *enuntiabilia* are the divine ideas, then our *enuntiationes* would be possible only if we had direct access to these divine ideas.

¹⁸¹ See our discussion above, 188.

¹⁸² See the text we quoted above, 191.

response into his own account. And since the first preliminary argument for the unicity of truth consisted in an appeal to the conclusion of Anselm,¹⁸³ Grosseteste's incorporation of Anselm's conclusion constitutes a response to this first preliminary argument. Furthermore, Grosseteste's account of the ontological basis of eternally true statements constitutes his response to the second of the three preliminary arguments for the unicity of Truth.

According to that second argument, since the truths of all eternally true statements and the truths of all corresponding *enuntiabilia* are eternal, and since nothing is eternal except the Highest Truth, the truths of all eternally true statements and the truths of all corresponding *enuntiabilia* are identical with the Highest Truth.¹⁸⁴ As we have seen, Grosseteste attributes the eternity of such statements not to their truth *per se*, but rather to the fact that the statement is supposed under an eternal relation, so that God alone, as eternally knowing and expressing the *enuntiabilia*, is the ground of the eternity of such statements and *enuntiabilia*. Therefore, because Grosseteste's account in this fourth section of *De veritate* provides his responses to the two remaining preliminary arguments for the unicity of truth, none of the original arguments for the unicity of truth remain standing.

In this fourth section of his *De veritate*, then, Grosseteste has affirmed unequivocally that there are many truths. He based this conclusion on the fact that such expressions as “many truths” or “every truth” require there to be many truths serving as the *supposita*. Unlike Anselm, then, Grosseteste takes our speaking of “many truths” – i.e., the making plural or distributing of the term “truth” – to require, as its ontological basis, the existence of

¹⁸³ See above, 154.

¹⁸⁴ See above, 154-55.

many truths; such speech, according to Grosseteste, cannot be chalked up to “improper speech” (*pace* Anselm).

Nevertheless, Grosseteste has granted that whenever the term “truth” is used the Highest Truth is obliquely signified as the form of the name (just as whenever the truth of a thing is known it is known in the light of the Highest Truth). The relationship between the many truths and the Highest Truth – established and elaborated upon at the ontological level (the definition of truth), the epistemological level (the analogy to sun and color), and the logical level (the oblique signification of the Highest Truth in every use of the term “truth”) – prepared the way for Grosseteste to identify the Highest Truth as the ground for the eternity of eternally true statements, thereby ensuring that his thesis that there are many truths did not commit him to a multiplicity of eternal beings.

*Truth and Being*¹⁸⁵

Having completed his response to the problem of eternally true statements, Grosseteste abruptly returns to the question of the relationship between being and truth. As we have seen,¹⁸⁶ the final characterization of truth that Grosseteste presented in his discussion of the nature of truth (in the second section of *De veritate*) was that truth is the fullness of being. According to this understanding of truth, truth and being are correlative, and truth is the measure of being.

This earlier discussion is in the background as Grosseteste opens this fifth section of *De veritate* with a question: is it the case that, just as the truth of a thing can be seen only in the light of the Highest Truth, so also a thing’s being (*esse*) can be seen only in the Supreme

¹⁸⁵ This fifth section of *De veritate* corresponds to Baur ¶ 35-36 (141.13 – 142.33).

¹⁸⁶ See our discussion above, 160-63.

Being?¹⁸⁷ This question presupposes, of course, a correlation between truth and being (*esse*), and indeed Grosseteste affirms here not merely that truth and being are correlated but that they are the same. In defense of this identification of truth and being Grosseteste refers to Augustine, who stated that truth is that which is (*id quod est*).¹⁸⁸

Grosseteste, then, seems to affirm here that truth = *esse* = *id quod est*. And if to this we add his identification, in the third section of *De veritate*, of *id quod est* with the true thing (*res vera*), it appears that Grosseteste is committed to stating that truth is identical with the true thing, thereby undermining his analogy in the third section, central to which was the distinction between the truth of a thing and the thing as true.¹⁸⁹ This is a significant interpretive question, since it bears on the very consistency of Grosseteste's understanding of truth, but we must reserve consideration of this question until we have examined Grosseteste's understanding of being (*esse*) as presented in this fifth section of *De veritate*.

Grosseteste begins his answer to the question by saying that it does indeed seem to be true that the being of a thing can be seen only in the Supreme Being and by introducing a striking analogy to illustrate his point. Water, he says, is in itself fluid and without a determinate shape, being always shaped by the shape of that which contains it. This is the reason why we cannot know that the water is square in shape merely by considering the water in itself. Rather, we must see both (1) the square shape of the water's container and (2) the shaping of the water in conformity with the shape of the container shaping it and, in this

¹⁸⁷ "Potest autem quaeri, cum idem sit veritas et esse, quia veritas est ut dicit Augustinus 'id, quod est', an sicut non videtur aliqua veritas, nisi in luce supremae veritatis, sic non videatur aliquid esse, nisi in ente supremo?" (Baur 141.13-17).

¹⁸⁸ See Augustine's *Soliloquiorum*, II.5.8, which we quoted and discussed in Chapter One above, 7-8 and 8n8.

¹⁸⁹ See Marrone, *New Ideas of Truth*, 155 (especially 155n21) and 159-60.

shaping, supporting it (the water, since it is in itself fluid, would lose all shape, if left to itself).¹⁹⁰ Likewise, creatures, since they are from nothing, would revert to nothingness if they were left to themselves. Therefore, the *esse* of a creature can be known only in its conformity to that which supports it: we must be aware that the thing is so supported, for the *esse* of a creature consists precisely in this being supported (by the Word). This “clinging” to the Supreme Being (comparable to water’s clinging to its container) constitutes the being (*esse*) of a thing.¹⁹¹

Just as in the third section of *De veritate* Grosseteste was careful to explain that his definition of truth did not necessitate ontologism, so also here Grosseteste states that this definition of being does not necessitate ontologism. Although in knowing a created being one sees, in some fashion, the Supreme Being, nevertheless, one who knows a created being is unaware that he is seeing the Supreme Being. At the same time, one cannot know such a created being except in reference to the Supreme Being that supports it.¹⁹² It is not, then, a matter of direct vision of the Supreme Being: analogous to the case of our apprehension of created truth, although we see the being of a created thing only in reference to the Supreme

¹⁹⁰ “Quod videtur exemplo tali: aqua fluida in se ex se nullam habet determinatam figuram, sed figuratur semper figura continentis. Unde non potest sciri et vere mente conspici, hanc aquam esse quadratam, nisi cognito et conspecto, quod figura continentis eam quadrata est et nisi conspecta eius figurazione in coaptatione ad figuram continentem figurantem et in figurazione sua supportantem aquam fluxibilem et per se, si sibi relinqueretur, ab hac figurazione labentem” (Baur 141.18-25).

¹⁹¹ “Similiter omnis creatura ex se, si sibi relinqueretur, sicut est ex nihilo, sic relaberetur in nihilum. -- Cum igitur non ex se sit, sed in se solum consideratum, invenitur labile in non-esse: ubi vel quomodo videbitur, quod sit, nisi in coaptatione ad illud, quod supportat ipsam ne fluat in non-esse et in conspectione, quod hoc supportatur ab illo? Hoc est igitur, ut videtur, alicui creaturae esse, quod ab aeterno Verbo supportari. De quo Verbo dicit Paulus: ‘portansque omnia verbo virtutis suae.’ Nec scitur vere aliquid creatum esse, nisi in mente videatur ab aeterno Verbo supportari. Et ita in omni esse, quod est adhaerere esse primo videtur aliquo modo esse primum, . . .” (Baur 141.25 – 142.2).

¹⁹² “Et ita in omni esse, quod est adhaerere esse primo videtur aliquo modo esse primum, licet etiam nesciat videns se videre esse primum, nec videtur esse posterius, nisi in comparatione eius ad esse primum, quod supportat illud” (Baur 142.1-5).

Being that supports it, nevertheless we see created being as formed by the Supreme Being without direct apprehension of the Supreme Being itself. For Grosseteste, then, we see a thing's *esse* without necessarily seeing what undergirds it and supports it in being, just as we see a thing's truth without thereby seeing directly the Highest Truth: we see created truth and created being under the governing influence (illumination) of the Supreme Being without thereby directly apprehending the Supreme Being.

The brevity of Grosseteste's treatment of this question here in *De veritate* is understandable, since the question of being is subservient to the question of truth and, ultimately, to the primary question, viz., the question of the unicity or multiplicity of truth. Nevertheless, in order to determine the consistency of Grosseteste's account of truth, it is crucial to understand adequately Grosseteste's account of being, since he identifies truth with being (*esse* and *id quod est*). So, to understand better the import of Grosseteste's analogy to water and the nature of his subsequent conclusions about created being (especially vis-à-vis the Supreme Being), we turn to a work in which Grosseteste addresses this precise question in more detail, viz., his *De unica forma omnium*.

Written in the mid- to late-1220's,¹⁹³ *De unica forma omnium* is a letter from Grosseteste to Adam Rufus in response to the latter's request for Grosseteste's opinion of the statement "God is the first form and the form of all things."¹⁹⁴ Appealing to "the great authority of the great Augustine,"¹⁹⁵ Grosseteste argues, in this work, that God is the form of

¹⁹³ See above, 144n34.

¹⁹⁴ "Rogavit me dulciflua dilectio tua, quatenus scriberem tibi, quid de hoc verbo sentiam: '*Deus est prima forma et forma omnium*'" (Baur 106.15-17).

¹⁹⁵ "Si autem quaeras, quid me moveat ad sentiendum Deum esse formam et formam omnium, respondeo: magna magni Augustini auctoritas" (Baur 107.4-6).

creatures as their exemplar, their maker and former, and their conserver. As he does in the *De veritate*, here also Grosseteste relies heavily on examples to illustrate his meaning. God, says Grosseteste, is like a craftsman who not only has in his mind the exemplar of the house-to-be-built but also has a will so powerful that he can apply the matter of a house-to-be to the form of house in his mind and thereby form the matter into a house.¹⁹⁶ In addition, however, according to the analogy we must consider the matter of the house to be fluid so that it cannot remain in the form it has received if it is separated from the exemplar form in the mind of the craftsman: therefore, God is a craftsman who must continually apply the matter to the exemplar form in his mind, in order that the house might remain in its being.¹⁹⁷ The way in which such an exemplar form in the mind of a craftsmen is the form of a house is the way in which the Word of God is the form of all creatures: “For He at the same time is exemplar and is the maker and former and is the one who conserves the given form, as long as creatures are joined to Him and are subjected to Him.”¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ “Imaginare itaque in mente artificis artificii fiendi formam, utpote in mente architectoris formam et similitudinem domus fabricandae, ad quam formam et exemplar solummodo respicit, ut ad eius imitationem domum faciat; et imaginare cum hoc per impossibile ipsius architectoris volentis domum fabricare voluntatem ita potentem, quod se sola applicet materiam formandam in domum formae in mente architectoris, qua applicatione figuraretur in domum; . . .” (Baur 109.26-33).

¹⁹⁷ “. . . ; et imaginare cum his, quod materia domus esset fluida, nec posset permanere in forma recepta in se, si separaretur a forma in mente architectoris, sicut aqua figurata sigillo argenteo separato sigillo statim amitteret figuram receptam. -- Imaginare itaque voluntatem artificis applicantem materiam domus ad formam in mente architectoris non solum, ut per hanc applicationem formetur in domum, sed etiam applicantem illam ei, quamdiu domus manet in esse domus, ut formata in esse servetur” (Baur 109.33 – 110.5).

¹⁹⁸ “Eo itaque modo, quo forma huius in mente huiusmodi architectoris esset forma domus, est ars, sive sapientia, sive verbum omnipotentis Dei forma omnium creaturarum. Ipsa enim simul et exemplar est et efficiens et formans est et in forma data conservans est, dum ad ipsam applicantur et revocantur creaturae” (Baur 110.5-9).

For Grosseteste, therefore, the *esse* of creatures consists in their being joined and conformed to their divine idea, i.e., to the Word of God.¹⁹⁹ For only insofar as they are joined to and conformed to their Form are they like that Form and are they preserved in their likeness to It (i.e., in their form), and without this ongoing joining and conforming creatures would return to nothing. The Word of God is, then, the form of all things, just as the shape of a seal is the form of the wax impressed with its likeness.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, as Grosseteste points out, in virtue of this continual impressing by the Supreme Being, the creature receives a form, i.e., a likeness to the Supreme Being, which likeness corresponds to the divine idea through which the creature is “impressed” by the Supreme Being.²⁰¹

In comparing creatures to water, to wax, and to the matter of a house-to-be-built, and in comparing God (*qua* divine idea) to the container, the seal, and the idea/form, Grosseteste not only underscores the complete dependence of creatures upon God but also attributes all fixity or stability in creatures to the governing, conforming activity of God (as *rectitudo rectificans*). By the power of the Word impressing form upon them, creatures receive form, which is a likeness to the corresponding divine idea in the Word (just as the wax receives the likeness of that which impresses it). And although creatures do not hold their form in any significant sense – they receive it continually, so that the form remains in them only so long as the divine idea is continually impressed upon them – nevertheless the form is particular to

¹⁹⁹ See Baur, *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste*, 205-06.

²⁰⁰ “. . . ipsaque [figura] hac sola voluntate informem et fluidam ceram ad se revocaret sibi que applicaret et ad se revocando sibi que applicando sua similitudine aliquanta imprimeret et in impressa similitudine servaret. Sic inquam percipies ex iam dictis aeternam Patris sapientiam esse formam omnium, sicut talis figura sigilli argentei, si esset, esset forma cerae sua similitudine praedicto modo impressae” (Baur 111.18-24).

²⁰¹ “Dicitur quoque forma, cui materia formanda applicatur, et per applicationem ad illud recipit formam ipsius, cui applicatur, imitatoriam” (Baur 109.16-18).

them and is “in” them. The principle of stability in creatures, then, is their form not as it is in itself but rather as it is continually impressed by its corresponding divine idea.²⁰²

The consequences of this highly Platonic ontology, an ontology implicit in the identification of truth (*qua* conformity) with fullness of being in the second section of the *De veritate*, are several. First, as we have already seen, not only created truth but also created *esse* can be seen only in the Supreme Being: created truth and created *esse* are not intelligible in themselves.²⁰³ Second, although it can and must be said that there are many created truths (and many instances of created *esse*), just as there are many true things (and beings), nevertheless the Highest Truth (Being) is always signified whenever “truth” (“being”) is spoken of. Third, the eternity of certain statements must be attributed to God, who is the sole eternal being and therefore the sole ground of the eternally true character of eternally true statements.²⁰⁴ Fourth, knowledge of creatures in their exemplars is nobler and clearer and more certain than knowledge of creatures in themselves, since the exemplars (the divine ideas), which impress form and thus intelligibility upon creatures, more truly are and therefore are more intelligible (*lucidioris*) than creatures.²⁰⁵

²⁰² See: Lawrence E. Lynch, “The Doctrine of Divine Ideas and Illumination in Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln,” *Mediaeval Studies* 3 (1941): 172; Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 118.

²⁰³ Noone, “Truth, Creation, and Intelligibility,” 118.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 118-19.

²⁰⁵ Grosseteste makes this point at the end of the fifth section of *De veritate* (where we left off in order to consider the *De unica forma*): “Diximus autem supra, quod oculus mentis sanus videns primam et supremam lucem in se in ea etiam omnia cetera videret clarius, quam contuens eadem in seipsis. -- Quod forte alicui non videtur, ut res in suo exemplari clarius, quam in se videri possit. Sed cum duplex sit rei cognitio, una in se, altera in exemplari vel similitudine sua, cum similitudo vel exemplar lucidioris est essentiae, quam ipsa res, cuius est similitudo, nobilior et clarior et apertior est rei in sua similitudine vel exemplari cognitio. . . . Ac per hoc, cum divina essentia sit lux lucidissima, omnis cognitio eius per similitudines, quam per se ipsam obscurior, in rationibus vero aeternis creaturarum in mente divina lucidissimis, quae sunt [reading: *est*] creaturarum exemplar lucidissimum, omnis creaturae cognitio certior et purior et manifestior est, quam in se ipsa” (Baur 142.5-12 and 16-20).

Grosseteste's account of created *esse* as consisting in the creature's being conformed to the Word must be meant as applying both to a creature's first *esse* (*esse primum*) and to its second *esse* (*esse secundum*). For, as we have seen,²⁰⁶ Grosseteste identifies a thing's fullness of *esse* with its conformity to its divine idea in the Word, after which he distinguishes first *esse* and second *esse*. And although it was clear earlier in the *De veritate* how a creature's second *esse* is measured according to its conformity to its divine idea, it was not so obvious how a creature's first *esse* consisted in its conformity to its divine idea (although it was clear that Grosseteste considered first *esse* to consist in such a conformity). So Grosseteste's discussion of created *esse* in the fifth section of *De veritate*, augmented by his consideration of God as form of all creatures in *De unica forma*, serves to explain the way in which even the first *esse* of a creature consists in the creature's conforming to the Word.²⁰⁷

These considerations explain Grosseteste's identification of truth with *esse*: since created *esse*, whether first *esse* or second *esse*, consists in the creature's conforming to its divine idea in the Word, and since truth likewise is the conformity of a thing to its divine idea, then truth is the same as *esse*. But objections to this identification of truth with *esse* can be, and have been, raised. As we have seen, Steven Marrone charges that Grosseteste's identification of truth with *esse* and with *id quod est* necessitates his identifying truth with

²⁰⁶ See our discussion above, 160-63.

²⁰⁷ Here, of course, it can be pointed out that first *esse* and second *esse* differ as conformities insofar as first *esse* is the creature's being conformed to the Word by the Word alone, whereas second *esse* (at least, in some cases) is the creature's being conformed to the Word but not by the Word alone, i.e., not inevitably. For instance, the first *esse* of a human consists in his being conformed to the Word's idea of "man," and this conformity is accomplished by the Word entirely (and not at all by the man), whereas the second *esse* of a human consists in his being conformed to the Word's idea of "man," and this conformity is accomplished by the Word and also by the man's own free-will. But this distinction does not affect Grosseteste's point here: the point is merely that created *esse* (whether first *esse* or second *esse*) consists in the conformity of the creature to the Word.

the true thing, thereby conflating two elements of his analogy to the sun and color, elements the distinction between which was central to the analogy. For if the truth of a thing is identical with the true thing itself, what sense does it make to say that the truth reveals the true thing? More importantly, by identifying truth with something simple (*id quod est*, the true thing), Grosseteste abandons (at least momentarily) his Anselmian definition of truth as conformity.²⁰⁸ Therefore, according to Marrone, Grosseteste's identification of truth with *esse* and with *id quod est* is inconsistent with and undermines his definition of truth as conformity. Marrone also observes that Grosseteste's identification, in the *De veritate*, of truth as something simple (i.e., as identical with *esse* or *id quod est*) is an exception to the rule in Grosseteste's early works, whereas it is the normative understanding of truth in his later works (i.e., the *Commentarius*), so that what was a "secondary" and "rare" notion of truth in his early, theological works became his primary notion of truth in the later works.²⁰⁹

As we stated earlier regarding another aspect of Marrone's interpretation, Marrone's criticism of Grosseteste here misses the significance and limits of Grosseteste's analogy in the third section of *De veritate* and also fails to take into account Grosseteste's understanding of *esse*. In the analogy to sun and color, the relationship between created truth and the true thing was illustrated by the example of color and the colored body: as color reveals to our sight the colored body, so, too, does truth reveal to our intellectual sight the true thing. The explanatory mechanism of this "revealing" was that color, being incorporated light (having sunlight in itself), constitutes the colored body's participation in sunlight, and likewise truth,

²⁰⁸ *New Ideas of Truth*, 155-56 and especially 155n21.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 156-60.

being the likeness to the divine idea in the Highest Truth, constitutes the true thing's participation in the Highest Truth.

Now, we have seen that for Grosseteste the *esse* of a thing – whether first *esse* or second *esse* – consists in its conforming to its divine idea in the Word. This understanding of being allows Grosseteste to identify truth with *esse*: it does not constitute an abandonment of the Anselmian definition of truth, precisely because *esse* is not, as Marrone would have it, something “complete in itself” that does “not formally involve a comparison between thing and divine idea.”²¹⁰ Rather, since *esse* itself is the conforming of the thing to its divine idea in the Word, truth and *esse* are fundamentally the same, being distinct only in the sense that truth, as the fullness of *esse*, is the measure, the register, of *esse*. Applying this understanding of *esse* to Grosseteste's analogy, the true thing (*res vera*, or *id quod est*) is the thing in its first *esse* and second *esse* (*esse = id quod est*, as Grosseteste makes clear²¹¹) and, therefore, the true thing consists in the thing's conforming to the divine idea in the Word, which conformity is measured by truth: as color is the measure (the register) of a colored body's light, so truth is the measure (the register) of a thing's being.

The fundamental principle here, upon which Marrone operates but which Grosseteste rejects, is the conception of *esse* as something “complete in itself,” as something that does not formally involve a comparison to the divine idea. Grosseteste does not accept a notion of *esse* as sheer facticity, as sheer factual existence: a thing's *esse*, its being, is precisely its being conformed to the Word. Whether or not this understanding of *esse* can stand up to philosophical objections, nevertheless it is Grosseteste's position, and we must understand

²¹⁰ Ibid., 155-56.

²¹¹ “Potest autem quaeri, cum idem sit veritas et esse, quia veritas est ut dicit Augustinus ‘id, quod est’, . . .” (Baur 141.13-15). See our discussion above, 202-03.

Grosseteste's account of truth in light of this position he takes on *esse*; when we do this, we see the harmony (ultimately, the unity) of his account of truth.

Therefore, Grosseteste's periodic identification in the *De veritate* of truth with *esse* or with *id quod est* is neither anomalous nor secondary: far from being inconsistent with his definition of truth as conformity, it is rather entirely consistent with – and, indeed, central to – that definition.

Now, Grosseteste also identifies truth with *id quod est* and *esse* in one passage of his *Commentarius*. In Book I, Chapter 2 of that work, Grosseteste begins to formulate an acceptable definition of “to know.” “To know” can be said commonly, or properly, or more properly, or most properly. As commonly used, “knowledge” is the comprehension of truth – even erratic, contingent events are objects of “knowledge” so understood. Properly said, “knowledge” is the comprehension of the truth of things that always or very frequently are in one way – this includes contingent natural beings. “Knowledge” more properly said is the comprehension of the truth of those things that always are in one way (e.g., the premises and conclusions of mathematics). Grosseteste continues:

But since truth is that which is [*illud quod est*], and since the comprehension of truth is the comprehension of that which is, but the being [*esse*] of that which depends on something is known only through the being [*esse*] of that on which it depends, it is clear that what is most appropriately called “to know” is to comprehend that which immutably is through comprehending that by which it has its immutable being, and this is through comprehending the immutable cause in its being and its causing.²¹²

²¹² “Cum autem veritas sit illud quod est et comprehensio veritatis sit comprehensio eius quod est, esse autem eius quod dependet ab alio non cognoscitur nisi per esse eius a quo dependet, manifestum est quod maxime proprie dicitur scire comprehensio eius quod inmutabiliter est per comprehensionem eius a quo illud habet esse inmutabile, et hoc est percomprehensionem cause inmutabilis in essendo et in causando” (edited by Pietro Rossi [Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1981], 99.16-22).

In this passage, Grosseteste states that truth is that which is (*id quod est*), but he also identifies *id quod est* with *esse*, for he says that the comprehension of truth is the comprehension of that which is and that the comprehension of that which is, is the comprehension of the being (*esse*) of a thing.

As Marrone has pointed out, this identification of truth with *id quod est* and with *esse* is not new in the *Commentarius* – we have just seen that Grosseteste makes this identification in the fifth section of the *De veritate*. However, Marrone claims that in the *De veritate* the definition of truth as that which is, is “absorbed” into the illuminationist account, whereas in the *Commentarius* the same definition is understood in an Aristotelian context. According to Marrone, in the *Commentarius* truth is understood as the quiddity or essence or substance of a thing (apprehended by the intellect in simple cognition), whereas in the *De veritate* truth is understood as rectitude or comparison.²¹³ This interpretive question is complex, and a complete treatment of it not only would require an extensive digression into the epistemology of the *Commentarius* but also would only be obliquely relevant to our current investigation, for our concern is with Grosseteste’s account of truth insofar as it bears on his conclusion that there are many truths, and what little there is of an account of truth in the *Commentarius* is in no way directed to the question of the unicity or multiplicity of truth.²¹⁴ Therefore, we

²¹³ *The Light of Thy Countenance*, I.43-44.

²¹⁴ The theme of truth is not prominent in the *Commentarius*, because the theme of truth is not prominent in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, upon which Grosseteste is commenting. In addition, the context for those few passages in the *Commentarius* in which Grosseteste does speak about truth is not the same context as that of the *De veritate*: in the latter, the primary question of the unicity or multiplicity of truth is the overarching context within which Grosseteste develops an account of truth, whereas the concern of the former work is the explication and judgment of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*, so that the *Commentarius* is fundamentally logical and epistemological in character. For these reasons, the *De veritate* must certainly be considered as normative for Grosseteste’s account of the multiplicity of truth, and, as it seems to me, for Grosseteste’s account of truth in general.

merely note here that in his *Commentarius* also Grosseteste affirms the identification of truth with *id quod est* and with *esse*, leaving aside the question of whether this identification ultimately constitutes, in the *Commentarius*, a different understanding of truth and *esse* than is found in the *De veritate*.²¹⁵

In summary, in the fifth section of his *De veritate* Grosseteste rounds out his account of *esse* and in so doing provides an explanation for his identification of truth with *esse* (*id quod est*). Created *esse* consists in the creature's conforming to its divine idea in the Word, through which idea the Word impresses form upon a creature, thereby giving it being as the kind of creature it is. Since truth likewise consists in the conformity of a thing to its divine idea in the Word, truth is the same as *esse*: to the degree that a being is, to that degree is it true, and vice-versa. Because the *esse* of a thing can be seen only in its conformity to the Word Who supports the creature in its being, and because truth, being the conformity of the thing to its divine idea, thereby reveals the true thing, truth is also that which reveals *esse*: truth is the measure of *esse*.

²¹⁵ It should once again be pointed out that nearly every Grosseteste scholar other than Marrone concludes that Grosseteste's *Commentarius* does not represent a rejection or silent abandoning of his "Augustinian" understanding of truth, being, and knowledge (represented by his *De veritate*); rather, scholars conclude that in the *Commentarius* Grosseteste incorporates the principles of Aristotelian epistemology into the wider, neo-Platonic and Christian understanding of truth, being, and knowledge. See above, 173n114, for a list of the most significant scholarly works on this topic.

Indirectly supporting this majority interpretation is the fact that, as we have seen, Marrone's dating of the *De veritate* as very early (1210-1215) and the *Commentarius* as somewhat late (1228-1231) is unacceptable: there is no viable chronological assumption that indicates or confirms a development of thought from the one work to the other, for Grosseteste scholars are nearly unanimous in assigning these two works to the same basic period – 1225-1230 – with the *De veritate* perhaps being a little later than the *Commentarius*. See our discussion above, 134-45.

*Conclusion: The Meaning of Truth*²¹⁶

Grosseteste concludes his *De veritate* by considering the meaning of truth in light of what he has said in the treatise. The definitions of truth that he gave earlier in the *De veritate* are, he says, common to all true things.²¹⁷ By “definitions of truth” Grosseteste clearly has in mind the various definitions he gave of the truth of things: (1) the conformity of a thing to (its divine idea in) the Word; (2) rectitude perceptible to the mind alone; (3) the fullness of *esse*; (4) *id quod est* (or *esse*). But because truth is *esse*, and because *esse* is distinct for different kinds of beings, the account of truth is diverse according as true things are diverse, so that different kinds of true things have different definitions of truth: “the truths of individual beings are the definitions of their first being and second being.”²¹⁸ There is, then, a twofold diversity here: not only is the truth of an individual being diverse from the truth of another individual thing of a different kind, as we have said, but also the truth of an individual thing is itself twofold, corresponding to its twofold *esse*. For example, the truth of a proposition is distinct from the truth of a tree. Furthermore, the truth of a proposition is itself twofold. The truth of a proposition in accordance with which it is a (real) proposition consists in its judging by composition or division (affirming or denying one thing of another): when it does this, a proposition is truly a proposition, it is a true (real) proposition with regard to its first *esse*, for the definition of the first *esse* of a proposition is precisely the judging by composition or division. On the other hand, the truth of a proposition whereby it is said to be true consists in its signifying that what is, is, and that what is not, is not: when it

²¹⁶ This sixth and final section of *De veritate* corresponds to Baur ¶ 37 (142.34 – 143.8).

²¹⁷ “Supradictae autem definitiones veritatis communes sunt omnibus veris” (Baur 142.34-35).

²¹⁸ “Sed si descendatur ad singula, inveniatur uniuscuiusque veri ratio diversificata. Singulorum namque veritates sunt definitiones esse eorum primi vel secundi, . . .” (Baur 142.35-37).

does this, a proposition is a true proposition not only with regard to its first *esse* but also with regard to its second *esse*, for the definition of the second *esse* of a proposition is precisely the signifying of what is, that it is, and of what is not, that it is not.²¹⁹

Therefore, Grosseteste concludes, the meaning (*intentio*) of “truth,” like the meaning of “being,” is manifold: in one respect there is one meaning of truth in all true things, but in another respect the meaning of truth is diversified in individual things by appropriation.²²⁰

This passage seems to echo what Grosseteste said in concluding his incorporation of Anselm’s thesis of the unicity of Truth into his own thesis of the multiplicity of truth: “in the many truths of things that one Truth is called many truths.”²²¹ Perhaps, then, the “one meaning of truth in all true things” is the Highest Truth, which, by appropriation in individual things, is diversified in them, thereby constituting many truths.²²² But, on the other hand, Grosseteste is speaking here of the meaning (*intentio*), rather than of the subject, of truth, and, in fact, this entire concluding section of *De veritate* is concerned with the definitions (*definitiones*) of truth, with the account (*ratio*) or meaning (*intentio*) of truth as diverse according to the diversity of *esse*. So the passage as a whole indicates that what Grosseteste means here is that the above-mentioned universal definitions of truth (i.e., those definitions that are common to all true things) are the one meaning of truth in all true things,

²¹⁹ “. . . , utpote veritas propositionis, a qua est propositio vera, nihil aliud est, quam enuntiatio alicuius de aliquo vel alicuius ab aliquo; et haec est definitio eius esse primi. -- Veritas autem propositionis, a qua est propositio vera, nihil aliud est, quam significatio esse de eo, quod est, vel non esse de eo, quod non est. Et haec est definitio eius esse secundi” (Baur 142.37 – 143.6).

²²⁰ “Quapropter intentio veritatis, sicut intentio entis ambigua est: ex parte aliqua est una in omnibus veris et tamen per appropriationem diversificata in singulis” (Baur 143.6-8).

²²¹ “Sed in multis veritatibus rerum dicitur illa una veritas multae veritates” (Baur 139.12-13).

²²² This seems to be the interpretation that Robert Palma proposes (“The Rehabilitation of Truth in Theology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 28, no. 3 (1975): 226).

a meaning that is diversified in individual things when that meaning is applied to a particular kind of being, a particular form of *esse*: the truth of a proposition and the truth of a tree and the truth of man all consist in their “rectitude perceptible to the mind,” their “conformity to the divine idea in the Word,” their “fullness of being,” but what this rectitude consists in, what this conformity consists in, what this fullness of being consists in, is different according as the being in question (the proposition, the tree, the man) is different. This interpretation also incorporates Grosseteste’s emphasis on the correlation between truth and being: just as the meaning of being is manifold, so also is the meaning of truth manifold, because “the truths of individual beings are the definitions of their first being and second being.”²²³

D. Conclusion

Grosseteste’s indebtedness to Augustine and Anselm is evident. The problem posed, the arguments marshaled for both positions, the definition of truth as rectitude, the account of illumination, the incorporation of Anselm’s conclusion into Grosseteste’s own contrary conclusion, and the understanding of created *esse* as receiving form (determination) through the divine ideas – all these elements of Grosseteste’s account of truth plainly show his espousal of the basic Augustinian principles in play and of several Anselmian theses as well. This makes Grosseteste’s conclusion – that there are many truths – surprising. More specifically, Grosseteste’s various definitions and characterizations of truth seem to converge on the Anselmian conclusion that there is but one truth. For according to Grosseteste’s definitions of truth as (1) the thing’s rectitude, (2) the thing’s being what it ought to be, (3)

²²³ “Singulorum namque veritates sunt definitiones esse eorum primi vel secundi, . . .” (Baur 142.36-37).

the thing's fullness of being, and (4) the definition of the thing's first being and second being, it would seem that the truth of a thing is to be identified with its standard, i.e., with the divine idea in accordance with which, and thus by the measure of which, it is true. This is precisely Anselm's line of thought, for he identifies the rectitude (truth) of a thing with its standard of conformity, thereby identifying truth with the Highest Truth.

However, other elements of Grosseteste's account of truth seem either to bespeak or to require the multiplicity of truths. His analogy of the sun, color, and light, by making color the analogue of created truth and by affirming that not only the Highest Truth but also created truth is operative in our coming to know the true thing, implies that created truth is a truth, distinct from the Highest Truth, that belongs significantly to created things. If there were no created truth distinct from the Highest Truth – i.e., if there were but one Truth – ontologism would seem to be unavoidable. Furthermore, Grosseteste's simple identification of truth with *id quod est* and with *esse* seems to require that there be as many truths as there are beings (despite the fact that his understanding of *esse* is such as to attribute stability and intelligibility in creatures to the governing activity of God in conforming the creature to Himself).

As we have seen, Grosseteste concludes unequivocally that there are many truths. The reason he gives for this conclusion is that such truths are necessary to account for ordinary-language expressions such as “every truth” and “many truths”: if there were not many truths acting as the *supposita* in such statements, such statements – in which “truth” is distributed – could not be accounted for. Grosseteste seems not even to consider the real possibility that there is only one Truth: apart from the preliminary arguments at the outset of

the treatise, he does not raise any serious argument as an obstacle to affirming the multiplicity of truth.

How, then, are we to understand Grosseteste's arriving at this conclusion, in opposition to Anselm, when he embraces so many of the same crucial and fundamental Augustinian principles? We can take our cue from the findings of our examination of Anselm. We saw in Chapter Two that it is Anselm's metaphysics of creation, and especially his participational principle, that drives him to the conclusion that there is but one Truth. We also saw that Anselm notes the same phenomenon of ordinary language – i.e., our speaking of “many truths” or “every truth” – but that, under the driving influence of his participational principle, Anselm rejects such language as improper. According to Grosseteste, though, such language is not improper, and must therefore be accounted for, and this requires affirming the multiplicity of truth. Participation does not appear to be relevant to Grosseteste's considerations; it seems that Grosseteste thinks that it just must be assumed that such expressions of ordinary language are proper, and that the ontological claim that follows – the multiplicity of truth – is in no way inconsistent with his account of truth.

If we look back upon Grosseteste's understanding of created *esse*, however, we can see in it a latent account of participation. As we saw in our examination of the *De unica forma omnium*, in concert with the fifth section of *De veritate*, Grosseteste states that the Supreme Being must continually “impress” form (being) upon the created thing, in order for that thing to remain in existence. Grosseteste also states that in that impressing by the Supreme Being the created thing receives its form, which form is its likeness to the (divine idea in the) Supreme Being.²²⁴ Therefore, in contrast to Anselm's account of participation,

²²⁴ See our discussion above, 206-08.

Grosseteste affirms a created referent and, thus, a triadic account of participation, according to which it is not merely that God is present to the creature (à la Anselm) but that in this particular presence to the creature arises, in the creature, a (participated) likeness to that in which the creature participates, viz., the divine idea in God.

Therefore, Grosseteste need not reject the reality of created truth as something distinct from the Highest Truth. Unlike Anselm, he has no metaphysics of creation (and, particularly, metaphysics of participation) that precludes the existence of created truth: Grosseteste can account for the stability of creatures, and for the eternity of certain *enuntiationes* and *enuntiabilia*, by referring such stability and eternity to the Highest Truth, without rejecting the existence of created truth. In addition, his affirmation that there are many truths allows Grosseteste to put forward an account of illumination that avoids ontologism: our knowledge of truth, rather than consisting in the apprehension of the one Truth, consists in our vision of the true thing in its created truth, as illuminated by the Highest Truth.

Therefore, our analysis of not only Grosseteste's account of truth but also Anselm's account of truth leads us to conclude that the affirmation of the multiplicity of truth is, so to speak, the "default" position and is to be rejected only under the compulsion of other considerations. If the traditional problems associated with truth can be resolved while maintaining that there are many truths, it is unnecessary, and arbitrary, to state that the only truth is the Highest Truth. That is, if one can, while maintaining the existence of many created truths, at the same time explain the eternity of eternally true statements without referring eternity to something other than God (*contra* the second preliminary argument for the unicity of Truth); and if one can maintain the absolute distinction and radical difference

between the Highest Truth and created truths, identifying the former as not only the source and ground of stability in created things and in the truths we know about creatures but also as the one ultimate source of illumination, all the while maintaining the existence of many created truths and their role in our knowledge (*contra* the third and final preliminary argument for the unicity of Truth) – if one can do all of this, and Grosseteste does, it is unnecessary to conclude, against ordinary language and the ontology required to support it, that there is but one Truth.

CONCLUSION

Our investigation of the teaching of Augustine, of Anselm, and of Grosseteste on the nature and number of truth has led us to several conclusions. First, despite the unsystematic and oftentimes ambiguous nature of the Augustinian texts dealing with the question of truth, it seems clear that Augustine affirms the unicity of Truth. Second, Anselm's account of truth is fundamentally Augustinian: those considerations that lead Augustine to the conclusion that there is only one Truth – considerations that Anselm more fully elaborates upon and systematizes in his metaphysics of creation – likewise are operative in Anselm's explicit and unambiguous affirmation of the unicity of Truth. For both Augustine and Anselm, the eternity and immutability of truth, displayed so clearly in the fact that it exists independently of true things, ultimately require identifying truth with God; for Anselm, the explanation of this fact is to be found in his metaphysics of participation. Third, despite the fact that Grosseteste's account of truth is heavily indebted to both Augustine and Anselm, nevertheless Grosseteste fundamentally diverges from Augustine and Anselm in rejecting the conclusion that there is but one Truth and in affirming the multiplicity of truths, because Grosseteste is not committed to the same operative principles in his metaphysics of creation (above all, the principle of participation) and because Grosseteste is committed both to the legitimacy of (ordinary-language) speaking of "truths," with all the logical and metaphysical implications this commitment entails, and to the need to avoid ontologism. Being able to account for the eternal and independent character of truth without affirming the unicity of that truth, and being committed to the above-mentioned principles, Grosseteste concludes

that there are many truths, and in so doing does not appear to consider the Anselmian conclusion as a real, competing alternative. However, Grosseteste does incorporate the Anselmian conclusion into his own account: he recognizes that, when we speak of the “truth” of something, the Highest Truth (Anselm’s one Truth) is indirectly referred to, in some way, as the form of the term “truth.”

We have noted¹ that Grosseteste’s incorporating Anselm’s conclusion into his own account of truth is, in all likelihood, a bow to the fact that the writings of Augustine seem indeed to converge upon the conclusion that Truth is one. However, Grosseteste explicitly affirms that his conclusion – that there is a genuine plurality of truths – is itself indicated by Augustine: according to Grosseteste, several of Augustine’s own statements, and the implications of many other statements of Augustine (implications drawn out by Grosseteste), indicate that there are many truths. Anselm and Grosseteste, then, both make judicious use of the teaching of Augustine but ultimately arrive at opposing conclusions.² The reasons for this divergence have been indicated in our summary above (and in the final section of our chapter on Grosseteste). First, Anselm and Grosseteste are committed to different operative principles within their “metaphysics of creation,” above all, to different understandings of participation. Second, Grosseteste has a more fully developed account of the eternity of truth, one that allows him to avoid the simple identification of truth with God and to maintain the validity of ordinary speech about “truth” and the implications that this entails (most especially, that there be many truths). Third, Grosseteste displays an explicit and substantial

¹ See Chapter Three above, 193.

² Here, of course, we see the ubiquitous medieval interpretive problem of wrestling not only with the sheer number of the texts of Augustine but also with their unsystematic and ambiguous character.

recognition of the necessity of maintaining, on epistemological grounds, the plurality of created truths.

It is instructive to consider, in light of these conclusions, a fact that we noted above regarding the argument of Anselm's *De veritate* as a whole, viz., that until Chapter 13, Anselm's argument seemed to be heading to the conclusion that there are many truths. Anselm's speaking of "truths" in the plural ("*veritates*"), his identification of different kinds of truth-bearers, his distinguishing between the way in which God and creatures are true, his affirming that not only the Supreme Truth but also created truths cause other created truths, and his identifying the truth of created things as consisting in their fulfilling what they ought to do – all these elements of Anselm's argument in the first ten chapters of his *De veritate* seemed destined to lead to the conclusion that there are many truths. Chapter 13, then, in concluding that there is only one Truth, seemed not to follow from the argument of Chapters 1-10, and this fact caused us to search for an adequate explanation of the argument in Chapter 13. And even though our explanation of the argument of Chapter 13 both explained Anselm's argument that there is only one Truth and showed how Anselm did not reject wholesale, but rather corrected and purged from error, the findings of the first ten chapters of his *De veritate*, nevertheless, our explanation did not itself account for the broader problem, i.e., it did not explain why, in chapters 1-10, Anselm seemed to be moving inevitably to the conclusion that there are many truths. However, our examination of Grosseteste's argument, and our comparing it with Anselm's own argument, helps us in this regard: it indicates to us that the natural conclusion of any examination of truth that begins with truth in its various subjects ("truth-bearers") is that there are many truths, and that it is only by the intrusion of other considerations (in Anselm's case, a commitment to various principles of his

“metaphysics of creation”) that one can conclude that there is only one Truth. More specifically, it is Anselm’s commitment to a particular understanding of participation, and his inability properly to account for the eternally true character of certain statements and states of affairs, that drives his argument to an unforeseen conclusion and forces Anselm to go back and correct the findings of the first ten chapters of the dialogue, since those findings were *prima facie* in tension with the ultimate conclusion. Read in light of Grosseteste’s own argument, Anselm’s project of re-interpreting various elements of his argument in chapters 1-10 in light of his conclusion in Chapter 13 cannot eradicate, although it does help explain, the tension that exists between chapters 1-10 and Chapter 13 of his *De veritate*, precisely because Anselm’s argument ought to have led to the conclusion that there are many truths.

It is here that we see, it seems to me, the superiority of Grosseteste’s account of truth: Grosseteste can “save the appearances” – i.e., can validate our ordinary-language expressions like “many truths” or “every truth” as being properly said – while still affirming the eternity of truth and the absolute transcendence of the Highest Truth vis-à-vis created truths. Put another way, Grosseteste can affirm Anselm’s insistence upon the independence of Truth from its truth-bearers – as a Rectitude that makes right – while nevertheless also affirming that there is truth in every true thing: the transcendent Truth in accordance with which all true things are true does not obscure, does not dim, does not do away with created truths, but rather is that which makes such truths possible. This turning Anselm’s argument on its head – i.e., seeing that the transcendence of the Highest Truth, far from negating all other truths, in fact, rather, makes them possible at all – this is, I think, the central point of contrast between Anselm and Grosseteste on the question of the number of truth. Anselm’s commitment to his participational principle, according to which that which makes all things true – truth – is one

in all such true things, does not allow him to conclude to the existence of many truths, whereas Grosseteste's "triadic" participational account – according to which there is indeed a created referent, since God's impressing form upon created things results in those things receiving a form (a likeness to the divine idea) – not only permits him but even impels him, along with the other reasons he enunciates, to affirm the reality of created truths. Therefore, not only does Grosseteste avoid the inherent tension that so clearly characterizes Anselm's account, but also he preserves both the common-sense understanding, enshrined in ordinary-language expressions, that there are many truths, as well as the transcendence of the Highest Truth as the one Truth in virtue of which all true things are true.

It is clear that Grosseteste's ontology, insofar as it is operative in his account of truth, follows that of Anselm in being committed to certain fundamentally Augustinian metaphysical principles, and yet Grosseteste's ontology gives more metaphysical "weight" to individual created beings than does Anselm's metaphysics of creation. Whether this fact is to be attributed to Grosseteste's inclination towards and studies in natural science, or to his engagement with the texts of Aristotle that had been re-introduced to the West between the time of Anselm's death and the beginning of Grosseteste's theological studies, or to some other cause – whatever the reason, Grosseteste's account of truth constitutes a significant move, within the Augustinian tradition, away from the Anselmian (and, as we have seen, the Augustinian) position and towards a more realist position,³ for Grosseteste sees that the Anselmian position leads to untenable conclusions, not only untenable metaphysical

³ This requires clarification. According to one meaning of "realist," a realist account of truth would affirm that truth resides primarily in the intellect and only secondarily and improperly in things (see Thomas Aquinas: *De veritate*, Question 1, and *Summa theologiae*, Ia, Question 16). But given the Augustinian position, which makes no such affirmation, to insist upon the reality of created truths (in addition to the Highest Truth) as well as the legitimacy of ordinary language about truth is to ascribe to created beings their own metaphysical principles, thereby giving such beings a real role in human knowledge: it is in this sense that Grosseteste's account represents a more "realist" account than that of Anselm and Augustine.

conclusions (there is nothing on the side of things to explain our speaking of “truths”) but also untenable epistemological conclusions (ontologism). So when we look at the development of the Augustinian account of truth, from its beginnings in Augustine to its elaboration in Anselm (the first great student of Augustine) to its further development in Grosseteste, we see a clear progression: the largely unsystematic and inchoate account of Augustine is systematized, clarified, and specified by Anselm, and the account of Anselm is critically evaluated and modified, in some ways substantially, by Grosseteste, who brings to bear a competing account of participation as well as epistemological concerns and logical analyses that are not present in Anselm’s account.

It is to be hoped that this elaboration of the development of the Augustinian account of truth in the major representatives of the Augustinian tradition before 1250 serves as a helpful prelude to a consideration of the accounts of truth elaborated by medieval thinkers in the Augustinian tradition after 1250, especially in those fifty or so years, from the time of Grosseteste’s death to the early 14th century, of intense intellectual activity and development in medieval Europe.

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