

AN ANSELMIAN REGRESS

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§1 Exemplifications of the central thesis of St. Anselm's *De grammatico* can be expressed in two ways, either as assertions *de re* or assertions *de voce* (Ch. XVIII). In terms of the specimen paronym¹ (i.e. derivative shared name) from which the dialogue takes its title, the *de re* expression of exemplifications of the thesis can have the following alternative formulations:

- (1) *grammaticus est habens grammaticam* (Ch. XIV, XVI)
- (2) *grammaticus est grammatica* (Ch. XII, XVI)

Corresponding *de voce* formulations are

- (3) *grammaticus significat habentem [or scientem] grammaticam*
(Ch. XIV, XIX)
- (4) *grammaticus significat grammaticam* (Ch. XII, XIV, XVI)

All these formulations are upheld by the Tutor of the dialogue, in opposition to the Student's exemplary antithesis (here formulated *de re*), namely:

- (5) *grammaticus est homo habens [or sciens] grammaticam*
(Ch. XIII)

The discourse of the dialogue alternates indiscriminately between *de voce* and *de re* assertions. In what follows, in order to avoid unnecessary multiplication of semantical categories, only the *de re* versions of the sentences under consideration, and the consequences of those versions (as opposed to the *de voce* versions and their corresponding consequences) will be considered. A general statement of the *de re* formulation of the central thesis would run as follows:

In all those cases where 'a' is a paronym and 'α' its corresponding abstract noun, the following are true:

- (6) *a est habens α* (cf. (1))
- (7) *a est α* (cf. (2))

A *de re* formulation of the antithesis would run:

In all those cases where 'a' is a paronym, 'α' its corresponding abstract noun, and 'b' some non-paronymous² shared name, the following is true: