

## Was Anselm really an immanent realist?

There has been, and still is, much disagreement as to the nature of Anselm of Canterbury's solution to the ontological problem of universals. Anselm has recently been taken to be saying that a universal is strictly immanent to its corresponding particulars (Iwakuma, Erismann, Marenbon, King). The chief evidence cited for Anselm's alleged immanent realism is his theory of original sin. The main part of my paper will be devoted to demonstrate that Anselm's theory of original sin does not support any interpretation of this kind. Quite on the contrary, his theory of original sin shows that Anselm does *not* regard a universal as strictly immanent to its corresponding particulars. As a matter of fact, Anselm makes two similar remarks: (1) that "the whole human nature" (*tota humana natura*) was in Adam and Eve and "nothing of it" (*nihil de illa*) outside of them; and again, (2) that the "whole human nature" was in Adam such that "nothing of it" was outside of him. Despite Anselm's use of the mereological preposition *de*, this has been taken to mean that Adam's sin affected other persons through their human nature, because human nature in its entirety was in Adam. That is, not only was there no *part* of human nature outside of Adam, but also did human nature not exist anywhere else in the universe or, for that matter, in the mind of God, just as immanent realism has it. This alleged view of Anselm's has been compared to the position represented by David Armstrong. Now, as Anselm's and Armstrong's metaphysics are somewhat incongruous otherwise, Anselm's theory of universals must *a priori* appear an unlikely candidate for an early version of Armstrongian immanentism. And indeed, that this reading cannot be true is already shown by the fact that Anselm's first remark is referring to Adam and Eve, while his second remark is about Adam only: the alleged pieces of evidence hence nullify each other. Again, if this reading were correct, only an individual human being (i.e. a person) who is at a given time the only of his kind, or even the first-and-only of his kind, would be capable of committing a sin that affects other persons through their human nature. But Anselm is quite unequivocal that his theory is not to be understood in this manner. Indeed, when Anselm writes that "when Adam sinned, man [sc. the human nature] sinned", he does not presuppose that Adam sinned while he was *the only of his kind*. Adam's sin was the "original" sin because Adam happened to be the *first man who sinned*. That "nothing of" human nature was outside of him, therefore, only means that the substantial universal 'human nature' was *wholly, rather than partially*, instantiated in him. Other simultaneous instances (in other human persons) of the substantial universal in question are not thereby excluded, nor are other forms of realism (universals in the human mind and universals in the mind of God). It is further important to see that when Anselm affirms the presence of the universal 'human nature' *as a whole* in an individual man or in individual men, this is quite different from saying that the universal exists *to its fullest degree* in an individual man: it only exists so in the divine mind. The gist of his theory of universals is a three-level account of reality where the entities on different levels vary in their degree of existence. Yet in spite of the universal's diminished existence on the level of individual substances (compared to its full existence in the divine mind), the universal can be *wholly present* in each individual substance. As to the universal's existence in the divine mind, this is ontologically prior and does not depend on the existence of individual substances. Rather, the existential dependence goes the other way around. Anselm is no immanent realist. His theory of universals is not that of a follower of Aristotle.