

## The Ontological Argument

God =df the being than which none greater can be conceived.

### Anselm's argument:

- 1) Assume, for *reductio*, that God does not exist.
- 2) Therefore, the being than which none greater can be conceived exists in the imagination alone.
- 3) It is greater to exist in reality than in the imagination alone.
- 4) We can conceive of God as existing.
- 5) Therefore, we can conceive of a greater being than the being than which none greater can be conceived (*viz*, a God who exists in reality!)
- 6) This is a contradiction: We can't conceive of anything greater than the greatest being we can conceive of!
- 7) Therefore, God exists.

### Gaunilo's "argument":

- 1) Assume, for *reductio*, that the perfect island does not exist.
- 2) Therefore, the island than which none greater can be conceived exists in the imagination alone.
- 3) It is greater to exist in reality than in the imagination alone.
- 4) We can conceive of the perfect island as existing.
- 5) Therefore, we can conceive of an island being than the island than which none greater can be conceived (*viz*, a perfect island that exists in reality!)
- 6) This is a contradiction: We can't conceive of an island greater than the greatest island we can conceive of!
- 7) Therefore, the perfect island exists.

### Modal ontological argument:

- 1) It is greater to exist necessarily than contingently
- 2) It is possible that God exists
- 3) Therefore, it is possible that it is necessary that God exists
- 4) If something is possibly necessary, then it is necessary that God exists (S5 axiom)
- 5) Therefore, God necessarily exists
- 6) If something necessarily exists, then it exists.
- 7) Therefore, God exists