

The Medieval Great Chain

Level	Types	Properties
5	God	existence & life & motion & reason & immortality & omni-perfections
4	angels	existence & life & motion & reason & immortality
3	humans	existence & life & motion & reason
2	animals	existence & life & motion
1	plants	existence & life
0	rocks	existence

Table 1. The Main Levels in the Great Chain.

Level	Types	Subtypes
5	God	God
4	Angels	Archangels
		Seraphim
		Cherubim
3	Humans	Humans
2	Animals	Mammals
		Birds
		Insects
		Fish
		Oysters
1	Plants	Trees
		Bushes
		Crops/Herbs
		Ferns
		Moss
		Fungus
0	Rocks	Gems
		Metals
		Stones

Table 2. Sublevels in the Great Chain.

Anselm's Hierarchy Argument

Anselm, Chapter 4 of the *Monologion*:

- (1) if one considers the natures of things,
- (2) one cannot help realizing that they are not all of equal value, but differ by degrees. For the nature of a horse is better than that of a tree, and that of a human more excellent than that of a horse . . . It is undeniable that some natures can be better than others.
- (3) there is some nature that so overtops the others that it is inferior to none. For if there is an infinite distinction of degrees, so that there is no degree which does not have a superior degree above it, then reason is led to conclude that the number of natures is endless. But this is senseless . . .
- (4) [It is] quite impossible that there exist several natures than which nothing is more excellent. . . . there is one and only one nature which is superior to others and inferior to none.
- (5) But such a thing is the greatest and best of all existing things. . . . there is some nature (or substance or essence) which is good, great, and is what it is, through itself. And whatsoever truly is good, great, and is a thing, exists through it. And it is the topmost good, the topmost great thing, the topmost being and reality, i.e. of all the things that exist, it is the supreme.

The Natures of Things are Forms

Forms are Not Things (error in Step 5)

The Identity of the Topmost Thing