

Anselm on Freedom

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Introduction

Can human beings have morally significant freedom if, as the classical theism of thinkers like Augustine and Aquinas holds, God is sovereign and the source of all created things? Yes, responds Anselm of Canterbury, and sets out to prove it in the careful analytic style which he pioneered. In doing so he becomes the first Christian philosopher (perhaps the first philosopher?) to attempt a systematic, libertarian analysis of freedom. Anselm's work offers viable solutions to some of the puzzles which have plagued Christian philosophers since the days of Augustine and which are still hotly debated today. Is there room for human freedom in a universe in which God sustains all created beings in existence from moment to moment? If grace is both necessary and unmerited, is there a role for human agency in salvation? Can divine foreknowledge and human freedom be reconciled? If morally significant freedom is important for human beings, must we say that God, too, deliberates and chooses between open options? Anselm's answers have played almost no role in the contemporary debate over these issues, but they are careful and consistent and deserve a hearing.ⁱ

This introduction will be devoted to some preliminary remarks and then a brief road map to the plan of the work. It should be noted at the outset that some hold that a project such as mine, which connects the work of a long-dead philosopher to philosophy in the present, is misguided because inherently anachronistic. The concerns of the medieval philosopher, it is argued, are so different from those of the contemporary philosopher that it is a mistake to suppose that they are addressing similar questions. The only way to answer this criticism as it might be raised against my argument in the present work is to offer a close and careful analysis of Anselm's writing, as I try to do throughout. Thus I have frequently included Anselm's original Latin. This is especially important because I contend that, on the issue of free will, all of the English editions of his work contain misleading translations.

Happily for the interpreter of Anselm, the job of textual analysis is made easier by the fact that Anselm wrote only a limited number of philosophical treatises and does not seem to change his mind significantly over the course of his philosophical career. And so, unlike the Augustine scholar, I do not have to

ⁱ My impression is that no Christian philosopher after Anselm fully appreciates and embraces his system, but I have not made a thorough study, and would be happy to discover otherwise.

worry about an 'early' as opposed to a 'late' Anselm. Instead I can appeal to the entire philosophical corpus to illuminate any given text.

I grant that some of the terminology I shall employ is anachronistic. Certainly Anselm did not use the modern terms 'determinism', 'compatibilism', or 'libertarianism'. Moreover, these terms are assigned a variety of meanings and definitions in the contemporary literature. Thus, it is vital to be very clear on the meaning of these words as used in the present work. The first task, then, in making the case that Anselm has much to offer the contemporary philosopher, should be an analysis of how these terms are to be understood.

What Anselm, and I take it most of us who concern ourselves with the question of human freedom, are chiefly concerned about is how to assess the phenomenon of morally significant choice, if indeed there is such a thing. So I shall focus not on actions in general, but rather on choices. I shall understand a 'determined' choice to be one which is causally necessitated by factors outside of the agent. By 'outside' I mean that these factors cannot ultimately be identified with the agent, the conscious, self-aware being who does the deliberating and choosing. So, if the mad neuro-surgeon who is such a ubiquitous character in the contemporary free will literature should implant a chip in your brain by which he causes you to choose A over B, your choice for A is determined. If the mad neuro-surgeon should implant a chip by which he causes you to have desires which cause you to choose A in that, given these desires you are inevitably drawn to A and cannot fail to choose it, your choice for A is determined.ⁱⁱ This is the case even if these implanted desires are ordered in a hierarchy such that you have a first order desire for A, and then a second order desire to possess a first order desire for A. No matter how complex the system of desire, if the desires are ultimately given to you by the mad neuro-surgeon in such a way that you inevitably choose A, then your choice is determined. And if the mad neuro-surgeon should implant a chip which causes, in addition to your desires, a process of judging which leads you inevitably to choose A, your choice for A is determined. Although the causal chain grows in the examples above, and although it comes to include your desires, your hierarchically ordered desires, and your judgment, since it is a causal chain which can be traced back ultimately to the mad neuro-surgeon, the choice which is its inevitable effect is determined. If we replace the mad neuro-surgeon with a blind nature, or with God, the choice is still determined.

On my understanding, a determining cause need not precede a choice temporally to render the choice determined. So, for example, if the mad neuro-surgeon should cause the choice simultaneously with the choice's occurrence,

ⁱⁱ Adopting Aristotelian concepts, the first situation might be read as an instance of efficient causality. An external agent simply moves the will. The second situation could be read as an instance of final causality in that the external agent supplies the desires, and then it is the desire for something which moves the will. This distinction is important and interesting. None the less, both situations fall squarely under the definition of determinism as I have defined it, and both pose the same problem for moral responsibility.

the choice is none the less determined. It is important to note this, since some definitions of determinism state that a determining cause is one which temporally precedes a choice.

Nor does my understanding of determinism require that the determining cause be an event in the natural world. This sets my view at odds with that of some contemporary philosophers of religion. Hugh McCann, for example, holds that God immediately causes us to exist along with everything about us, including our choices. On McCann's understanding, some of our choices are not determined by any preceding, natural causes. McCann goes on to propose that these choices, though caused by God, are free in a libertarian sense.ⁱⁱⁱ On my understanding these choices are determined. They are determined although God's causal activity is simultaneous with the existence of the choice, and although God's causal activity consists in keeping the choosing agent in being. To cite another example: Eleonore Stump notes that it was always Augustine's view that God is the ultimate first cause of everything, including human choices. She says that this point can be bracketed, and argues that the early Augustine ought to be considered a libertarian of some stripe.^{iv} My understanding of determinism would not allow this setting aside of the question of whether or not a choice is ultimately caused by God. If God is the ultimate first cause of your choice, then your choice is determined.

What if we replace the mad neuro-surgeon, or a blind nature, or God, with a causal necessity exerted on a choice by the character of the agent himself? I follow Anselm in holding that whether or not the choice should be considered determined in that instance will depend upon whether or not the agent's character is ultimately caused by the agent himself, or is traceable to something outside the agent. Anselm argues that the scope for an agent to create his own character is narrow, in the sense that his options are limited by a nature given by God. And yet there are options, and it is ultimately up to the created agent to form his character through choice. When a choice is caused by the agent's character, for which the agent can be said to bear the ultimate responsibility, then the choice is not determined. The choice is not, in the final analysis, necessitated by anything outside of the agent. This question will be dealt with at length in Chapter 4.

Note that my understanding of 'determinism' is non-standard within the contemporary literature. For one thing, it does not include or assume universal causation in nature.^v If all of nature is determined, then, barring a miracle, so

ⁱⁱⁱ Hugh McCann, 'Sovereignty and Freedom: A Reply to Rowe', *Faith and Philosophy* 18 (2001), 110–16, see p. 115.

^{iv} Eleonore Stump, 'Augustine on Free Will', in Stump and Kretzmann (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124–47. The discussion of Augustine as a libertarian is found on pp. 130–3, while the bracketing of the point about God's causing everything is in endnote 7 on p. 143.

^v My understanding of 'determinism' is clearly different from Peter van Inwagen's oft-cited definition: 'The thesis that there is at any instant exactly one physically possible future'; *An Essay on*

are your choices. But even if it is not the case that all of nature is determined, your choice may be. For example suppose, as McCann hypothesizes, that your choice is not determined by natural necessitating causes, but that God causes it. On my understanding your choice is determined. Moreover, there may be indeterminism in the history of a determined choice. Suppose your choice is caused by the indeterminate motion of a subatomic particle in your brain. Unless we can somehow identify you, the conscious agent, with the particle in question, I take it that your choice is determined, in that it is causally necessitated by something which is 'outside' yourself in the relevant sense. Or say that God makes a non-determined choice to cause you to choose A. Your choice for A is determined, although there is indeterminacy in its causal history. I adopt this understanding of determinism because it seems to me that any instance of choice which is causally necessitated by factors outside of the agent, whatever those factors may be, raises the key question: can the agent be held morally responsible for a choice of which the ultimate cause lies outside himself?

I shall understand by 'compatibilism' the view that answers 'yes' to that question. There are many types of compatibilism. I shall be discussing two: what I shall call 'standard compatibilism'; and what I shall call 'theist compatibilism'. One could subscribe to one or the other or both or neither. In this work Augustine will be taken as a proponent of both, while Anselm will deny both. Standard compatibilism is the view that human choices are causally necessitated by temporally preceding causes, such as desires, which did not ultimately originate in the agent. The desires may have originated from a blind nature or perhaps from God, such that standard compatibilism could be subdivided into 'naturalist standard compatibilism' and 'theist standard compatibilism'. The point is that the choice is the necessary product of preceding causes for which the agent is not responsible. And yet, according to the standard compatibilist, the human agent is sufficiently free to be held morally responsible. I apply the term 'standard' because in its purely naturalistic version it is quite common today. Theist compatibilism holds that human choices are caused *immediately* by God. That is, God simply and directly causes the choice itself. But again, the theist compatibilist holds that the human agent is sufficiently free to be held morally responsible.

Augustine is both a standard compatibilist and a theist compatibilist. He focuses mainly on the former, and sounds very like contemporary standard compatibilists when he explains that the sort of necessity which conflicts with freedom and responsibility is exemplified by external coercion. Such necessity forces you to do something against your will, and of course you cannot be praised

Free Will (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 3. Van Inwagen's definition would ill-suit my concerns since my chief worry is whether or not God must be supposed to cause our choices within the universe of classical theism. Determinism might be false under van Inwagen's definition and our choices still caused by God. Or determinism might be true under van Inwagen's definition, yet God could miraculously interfere with the 'physically possible' to allow rational agents open options and produce a future different from the only physically possible one.

or blamed for what you did not choose to do. But if you yourself choose to do something, it cannot be against your will. And if you do something willingly, then it is done freely and responsibly. True, the choice may follow inevitably from your judgement and desires, and your judgement and desires are causally traceable to factors outside of yourself. But still, you did the judging based on your desires, so you are free and morally responsible. Augustine develops this standard compatibilist view at length, but he also subscribes to the specifically theist form of compatibilism. He holds that all that has being is caused immediately by God. This includes the choices made by created agents. God is the immediate first cause of your choices, none the less you make them, and you are responsible.

Augustine sees two central advantages to this analysis of freedom over the view that there is no cause for a free choice beyond the agent's choosing. The latter thesis had been suggested to Augustine, though not systematically developed, by the Pelagian Julian of Eclanum. One advantage is philosophical. The compatibilist position, in both the standard and theist version, allows that the free choice is subject to a causal explanation and hence intelligible. There is, in Augustine's eyes, a second, theological advantage. The compatibilist position, while not denying freedom and responsibility to created agents, none the less allows the ascription of absolute sovereignty to God. God, in Augustine's view, is the immediate cause of all, and hence everything that happens, including all free choice, is the result of God's will.

But at this point, in the universe of classical theism, the compatibilist position runs up against the reality of sin. If we do not want to say that God is the cause of sin, then we must hold that the choice for sin originates in the creature. Anselm recognizes this. Though he is greatly influenced by Augustine in other contexts, he parts company with his predecessor and takes a different, libertarian, tack. I shall understand 'libertarianism' to involve two key principles. One is that free choice involves alternative possibilities. The created agent must be confronted with open options such that there is nothing, outside the agent's own choosing, causally or otherwise determining a libertarian free choice. It is true to say before, during, and after the choice, 'I could do/have done otherwise.'

But the bare presence of alternatives is insufficient for libertarian freedom, as I noted above in discussing how a determined choice may have indeterminism in its history. The second criterion is that a libertarian free choice must ultimately originate in, or be caused by, the agent himself. It is important here to emphasize the term 'ultimately'. Some recent philosophers deny both of the criteria I take to be central to libertarianism and advance positions which they label 'modified libertarianism'^{vi} or 'modest libertarianism'.^{vii} These philosophers hold that an agent can be free in a libertarian sense, in that his choices come 'from himself', so long as they are the result of his own process of reasoning. They grant, though,

^{vi} Stump, 'Augustine on Free Will', 124–6.

^{vii} Alfred Mele, *Autonomous Agents* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 211–21.

that the reasoning process and its conclusion may be the necessary causal results of factors outside of the agent. It seems to me unhelpful to label such views 'libertarian'. Since, on these accounts, the agent does not choose between open options, and the reasoning process which leads inevitably to the one possible choice is the result of causes outside of the agent, I take this to be a form of determinism. My use of the term 'libertarian' will intend only 'unmodified' or 'immodest' libertarianism, where the agent has open options and the choice is not ultimately caused by something outside himself. It is this second libertarian principle which takes precedence in Anselm's thought. The human being is made in the image of God, and the real point of human freedom is that we should have a measure, however small and reflected, of true independence. Only then can we mirror the divine by being good on our own.

Libertarians today usually agree that free choice must be 'self-caused' or 'agent-caused' in some way, but there is disagreement as to what that entails. One key question is, should the libertarian posit some special sort of causation, unique to human free choice, or should he aim to explain the thesis that choice truly originates with the agent, appealing only to the entities and events postulated by the sciences to explain natural phenomena in general?^{viii} Anselm is committed to the position that human beings are unique among animals. Just as rationality is not found in the lower animals, neither is free will.^{ix} Although Anselm feels the pressure to try to make libertarian free choice intelligible, he would not see any need to make it intelligible through principles equally applicable to the non-human universe. He takes it that human beings are in fact 'special', and a theory which denied that fact would be misguided. He clearly defends the view that free choice must be self-caused. And he makes some attempt to show how a self-caused choice can be intelligible. But he does not say enough to allow for an interpretation which would ascribe to him one of the several, detailed, and complex contemporary versions of self-causation over another. His purpose is to solve the puzzles regarding freedom and divine sovereignty with which he is confronted, and he says enough about self-causation to do that job.

That Anselm, in discussing the freedom of created agents, insists on both of these libertarian criteria may seem unlikely to those familiar with his definition of 'free choice'. He deliberately rejects a definition that would see free choice as the ability to sin or not, and says instead that free choice is the 'power to keep rightness of will for its own sake'. This definition does not seem to express *either* libertarian principle. And so some scholars have held that Anselm could not be a

^{viii} Robert Kane attempts to steer the latter course; *The Significance of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 116–17; 'Introduction: The Contours of Contemporary Free Will Debates', in R. Kane (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3–41, see p. 26.

^{ix} The medievals did not deny that lower animals are conscious and capable of cognition. What animals cannot do is grasp universal principles. One way to put it is that, while animals do understand enough to get by, they do not do science.

libertarian, or that he presents conflicting analyses of freedom. But as he unpacks the definition and explains what is required for freedom, it becomes clear that both of the criteria are necessary for created free will and that his analysis is both libertarian and consistent. The 'power' in question must genuinely belong to the agent. If the created agent 'keeps' rightness of will through necessitating causes, including his own desires, which arise from outside of himself, then he is not free. Thus the power in question entails self-caused choice.

What of alternative possibilities? It would seem, as Anselm works towards his definition, that they are *not* required. God, who cannot choose between good and evil, is certainly free. He keeps rightness of will through His own power, without the possibility of losing it. He does not have options and yet He is free. The conclusion then seems to be that the sort of freedom that Anselm has in mind does not require alternative possibilities. And it is true that alternative possibilities are not necessary for the freedom of *God*. God, then, does not have libertarian freedom. But this is because God exists *a se*, from Himself, completely independent of any other being. Human beings are not like that. Human beings exist in total dependence upon God, such that all of their abilities and all of their desires are from God. How could such a creature possibly have any power on its own? It could, says Anselm, only if it were endowed by its creator with alternative and competing desires such that, on its own, it could throw rightness away or cling to it. Since we have the ability to throw rightness away, we truly, and from ourselves, have the power to keep it. Anselm offers a robust and systematic libertarian analysis of *created* freedom. But created freedom and divine freedom, though both fall under the general definition of 'free will', differ in a significant way. While self-caused choice is essential for both, alternative possibilities are necessary only for the creature.

I have been discussing Anselm's theories regarding human free will. In fact, much of his central argument occurs in *De casu diaboli*. The contemporary reader may find it odd that Anselm would focus on the will of Satan. Whatever one's view of the Heavenly Host and their fallen brethren, it should be appreciated that Anselm chooses to discuss the fall of the devil from the best analytic motives. He is interested only in morally significant choice, and he is deeply concerned to get to the bare metaphysics of free will. He prefers to set aside instances of choice where the core act is difficult to discern, being encrusted with layers of competing desires born of years of lived history. He wants to examine a pure instance of choice, and he wants to put the central and most difficult puzzle of created freedom in the starkest terms: how could a being made perfectly good, with no one and nothing already evil in the world to tempt him, possibly choose against the will of God? Admittedly something is lost through this method. There is a sort of unreality to the 'pristine' choice which may make it difficult to map onto complex human experience. None the less, an examination of the idealized instance, stripped of its particularity, seems a valuable, indeed necessary, step in an analysis which aims to get to the metaphysical heart of free will.

That Anselm focuses on the angelic will might lead one to suppose that his analysis in some way assumes that choice is the action of an immaterial mind or soul. Sadly, Anselm died before he got the chance to work on the treatise which he had hoped to write on the nature and origin of the soul. It is probably safe to suppose that he is a dualist of an Augustinian stripe: soul and body are distinct and separable, but both are necessary components of the complete human being. However, there is nothing in his analysis of free will which presupposes or requires dualism. If, as some say, all of the phenomena which seem to fall under the heading of the mental can be explained as actions of the physical body, this would not impact his views one way or the other, unless the physicalist position itself entails a denial of libertarianism.

And so to a sketch of the argument of the book. In the first chapter I set out Anselm's version of classical theism. This is crucial because his understanding of the nature of God and the relationship of God to creation is very different from that of many contemporary philosophers of religion, and this has an impact on his analysis of created freedom. For example, it is very common nowadays to suppose that there are true propositions which exist as platonic abstracta independently of God. Anselm (and Augustine and Aquinas) reject this view as inconsistent with divine omnipotence. On this *traditional*, classical theism all that there is is God and what He has made. Thus Molinism, for example, cannot be considered in Anselm's system, since it posits a realm of 'middle knowledge', that is, true propositions about what any possible free agent would do in any possible situation, which exists independently of God. Clearly it is important at the beginning to explain Anselm's basic, non-negotiable presuppositions about the nature of God and the relationship of God to creation.

In this chapter I also discuss Anselm's analysis of language used to speak of God. For Anselm, analytic thinker that he is, defining terms and unpacking and distinguishing their various possible meanings plays a key role. Thus it is important to appreciate how he understands our words to apply to God. This is especially interesting because he very consciously defends univocity as opposed to some version of analogy, and this plays a role in his definition and analysis of 'free choice'. The chapter also includes discussion of Anselm's understanding of the relationship of God to the moral order. Anselm, like Augustine before him and Aquinas later, rejects both horns of the Euthyphro dilemma. God neither conforms to nor invents the moral order. Rather His very nature is the standard for value. And again, this point is crucially important for Anselm's understanding of freedom, since it is key to establishing how created and divine freedom are similar enough to fall under the same definition of 'free choice' yet very different in terms of how each meets the requirements of the definition. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Anselm's views on the nature of evil with a word about the problem of evil. Since the sort of created freedom which concerns him is morally significant freedom, the choice between good and evil, it is necessary to say something about what the evil option might entail. It is also worth while

to note that the evil of suffering, which seems to be the major consideration in contemporary philosophy of religion, is not the focus of Anselm's attention, although he does have some interesting things to say about it.

In Chapter 2 I discuss the state of the question of free will as it is found in Augustine. From time to time I shall mention comparisons with other historical figures, but Augustine's presence will loom largest. I take it that Anselm deliberately set himself the task of correcting difficulties bequeathed by Augustine, so an appreciation of the pre-Anselm history of the question is extremely important for both the historical and the philosophical aims of this work. I intend to show that Anselm is the first Christian philosopher to offer a systematic, libertarian analysis of created freedom, and to make the case it is necessary to look at his predecessors. Augustine, I shall argue, does offer a systematic analysis of human freedom, but it is a compatibilist one. The only important philosophers in the Latin West between Augustine and Anselm are Boethius and Eriugena. The latter may be a libertarian, but he does not offer a systematic analysis, while the former is neither systematic nor libertarian. Philosophically it is helpful to see how free will is treated in the work of Anselm's predecessors. In order to argue that Anselm is trying to solve the problems which Augustine bequeathed to European Christendom, it is crucial to get very clear on what those problems are.

Augustine's work had a huge impact on Anselm. It is safe to say that on the central questions of epistemology and on many metaphysical issues Anselm is an Augustinian. But he departs in a very significant way from the work of his predecessor when it comes to human freedom and the relationship of creature to Creator. In Chapter 2 I argue that on the question of the basic workings of the free will Augustine is a compatibilist. He holds that we are responsible for our choices and yet our choices are caused by God. For Augustine God can be said to cause human choices in two ways. First, God is the cause of the desires which cause the choice. This is the aspect which Chapter 2 will focus on. In saying this, Augustine sounds very like contemporary standard compatibilists who hold that the agent is free if he is able to follow his desires, even if those desires are caused by something outside himself. But Augustine also holds, though perhaps less obviously, that God is the immediate cause of choices in that it is God who gives existence to all things from moment to moment. I discuss this point at length in Chapter 6.

I take it that, though Augustine's analysis of free will changes over time, he is none the less a compatibilist, early and late. And, although he holds that the pre-lapsarian will differs from the post-lapsarian will, he offers a compatibilist analysis of the will in both circumstances. This is a difficult position in that it invests ultimate causality only in God, which means that the causes of sin are traceable back to the Creator. The problems with Augustine's position occasioned bitter disagreement in and shortly after his own day. There was debate over various permutations of Pelagianism as against Augustine's conclusion that divine grace

works in such a way that the human will, while free in the compatibilist sense, does not have any self-determining role to play in salvation. This debate simmered down over time, after the (philosophically speaking) inconclusive pronouncements of the Council of Orange in the sixth century. It flared up again in the ugly and divisive Predestination Controversy in the ninth century. This intellectual battle, too, was ended by metaphysically vague conciliar edict which did not address the fundamental philosophical issues generating the problems. Church councils, of course, are not in the business of metaphysics, so it is not surprising that their conclusions fail to satisfy on a philosophical level. But without going back to the root of the problem, which lies in the basic analysis of the workings of free will, the theological difficulties cannot really be settled. And here is where Anselm, combining philosophical depth and analytic clarity, comes on the scene.

Chapters 3–5 set out Anselm's analysis of free will. In answer to the question 'Why did God give us free will?', Anselm answers that it allows us to choose the good on our own, which is how we become closer images of the divine. He derives his definition of free will from this purpose. Free will is 'the power to keep justice' and 'justice' is 'rightness of will kept for its own sake'. He explains that what is unique about rational agents is not that they will, nor even that they can will rightly, that is, in accord with the plan that God has in mind for the creature. Lower animals can do the same. What sets us apart is that we can step back from our desires and choose to endorse those that correspond to God's plan. Thus Anselm prefigures Harry Frankfurt's analysis of what it takes to distinguish the genuine 'person' from other willing and desiring beings.

This interpretation is important in understanding Anselm's basic views on ethics. Because he explains that the choice which confronts the rational, created agent is between what is just and what is beneficial, Anselm has almost always been taken to espouse a sort of proto-Kantianism: the virtuous person is the one who chooses duty over the opposing options of self-interest and natural inclination. This is a mistake. Anselm holds that no one wills anything unless he believes it will make him happy. The options are between choosing, on one's own, to moderate one's desires such that the benefits one pursues are those that accord with God's will, which is what Anselm means by 'justice', or choosing to will in an inordinate manner whatever one happens to desire. Thus Anselm accepts the eudaemonism which is standard in the Middle Ages, at least from the time of Augustine up through Aquinas in the mid-thirteenth century.

The fourth chapter makes the case that Anselm is indeed a libertarian as regards created free will. The created agent must have the alternative possibilities of choosing justice (properly ordered benefits) or mere (disordered) benefits. If the agent had only one motivation, since that motivation is caused by God, it would make its choices by necessity, not freely such that it merits praise and blame. It is only the fact that the created agent can reject justice by choosing

the wrong benefit that renders the agent free, that is someone with the power to 'keep' justice. The power must belong to the agent himself, and unless he could reject justice, he would be willing rightly by necessity.

From this analysis it is clear that the open options serve a purpose beyond simply enabling a choice. The point of alternatives is to permit the creature a measure of aseity, of self-caused choice. I argue that Anselm ascribes to the created agent the elevated metaphysical status of being a 'primary' agent. Compatibilist philosophers like Augustine (I note that Aquinas, too, seems to be in this camp) hold that rational creatures are free agents, but they analyze created agency along the lines of secondary causation in general. Augustine and Aquinas hold that all creatures are endowed by their Creator with real causal powers, but they, and all their properties, and all their acts, are also immediately caused by God. Certainly it is correct to say that it is the fire that causes the cotton to burn. But it is equally correct to say that God causes the cotton to burn, and since God is the originating cause keeping everything in being from moment to moment, God is the primary cause, while the fire is merely a caused cause, and hence secondary. Both Augustine and Aquinas propose analyses of created freedom which see the created agent's choice as caused by himself, but also caused in a more fundamental and ultimate way by God.

Anselm parts company with Augustine and Aquinas. He holds that, although all that has genuine ontological status is kept in being by God, it is up to the created agent to choose between options. If he should sin, he is himself the cause of the choice. And since he could sin, if he chooses to cling to the good given by God he does so on his own. Anselm does not use the term, but I take it that this aseity can be labeled a sort of 'primary' agency. To be sure it is not like the divine agency which brings things into being *ex nihilo*. And yet, in however limited and dimly reflected a way, human agency has a measure of independence, and it is this which makes the created rational agent a true *imago dei*.

Chapter 5 addresses the difficult question of the causes of sin: what could possibly cause a rational creature, made good by God, to choose to reject the good given by his Creator? We can grasp the motivation to some extent in that the created agent always chooses what he believes will make him happy, and he might well find the wrong benefits attractive. But on Anselm's analysis the rational agent is also given a desire for justice, and he is free to follow it and restrain his inappropriate desires. So an explanation in terms of motive does not fully explain the cause of sin. Augustine had said that 'nothing' was the cause of sin, but he goes on to allow to his 'nothing' a sort of power which might have the effect of drawing the creature downward to the lesser and lower. Anselm will have none of that. The 'nothingness' of evil is the *product* of sin, not its cause. Nor can the mere ability to choose be the cause of sin, since some rational agents exercise that ability in the direction of clinging to the good. In the final analysis Anselm feels required to say that there is no cause for the choice beyond the actual choosing.

And this introduces what is probably the most serious difficulty with libertarianism known today as the ‘intelligibility problem’. If there is no cause for our choosing one option over the other, then isn’t the choice really just a sort of inexplicable accident for which the agent cannot be held responsible? Anselm does not address the problem directly, but he is clearly uncomfortable with his conclusion that there is no cause for the free choice. I propose several arguments, based on Anselmian premises, to try to mitigate the difficulty somewhat. First, Anselm’s discussion of how the will chooses based on the two inclinations, for justice and for benefit, sounds very like the thesis of ‘plural voluntary control’ which Robert Kane, a contemporary libertarian, has proposed to deal with the intelligibility problem. That is, the person involved in a moral dilemma is struggling to achieve two incompatible goals, so that, whichever should win out, it is true to say that the choice comes from the person and represents a consequence of that person’s character.

A second response to the intelligibility problem requires noting that it is crucial to Anselm’s theory that praise and blame are not ascribed to an agent because of a pre-existent character which is somehow expressed in a choice. On the contrary, it is the choices that we make that create our characters for which we are subsequently responsible. A final response trades on this notion of self-creation. Many critics of libertarianism take the intelligibility problem to prove that the view is absurd in that it ascribes to human beings the impossible ability to be god-like, unmoved movers. But in Anselm’s eyes this is not a failing in the analysis. Rather, allowing for aseity and self-creation is the whole point of freedom. God does indeed make us in His own image. Thus, while Anselm grants that libertarian freedom entails a certain irreducible element of mystery with respect to human choice, it is exactly the mystery one would expect to find given the relationship of creature to Creator.

Chapters 6–9 deal with Anselm’s solutions to some of the puzzles, bequeathed by Augustine and still troubling philosophers of religion to the present day, of how to square free created agency with the power and knowledge of God. Chapter 6 is concerned with the most fundamental of these issues. If all that has ontological status is made and sustained by God, how can there be any room for created aseity? Anselm responds that it is indeed the case that all that exists comes from God, including all the elements of a free choice. The agent, the agent’s desires and motivations, even the choice as a sort of act, are kept in being by God. What is entirely up to the agent, struggling with a moral choice, is which of his desires will actually ‘win out’. But this ‘winning out’ is not some new *thing*. It is simply the final success of one God-given desire over another. And if the choice is for sin, then the evil is caused by the free agent. But this evil is just the absence of the justice that ought to have been there. It has no ontological status and so is not caused by God.

This solution to the puzzle does entail that there are events in our world which are not caused by God. He permits them, but He would genuinely prefer that

they not happen. Anselm is adamant that sin is against the will of God. This conclusion will be insupportable for those who hold that God must be absolutely in control of all that happens. But there are only two options here. Either God controls everything and is the cause of sin, or He is not the cause of sin, and so does not control everything. Anselm takes both the reality of sin and the goodness of God to be non-negotiable, and so he must opt for the view that creatures have a robust enough causal power of their own to choose against the will of God.

Chapter 7 addresses the question of grace and free will in our fallen world. If, as Augustine had insisted, and as the Church subsequently confirmed, grace is absolutely necessary for salvation and cannot in any way be merited, where is there any role for human agency? A brief overview of the Pelagian controversy helps to set the stage here. Augustine argues that, in addition to being necessary and unmerited, grace is irresistible. He holds that this does not undermine the role of the human will. On his compatibilist view the will can be drawn irresistibly while remaining free, since it is choosing through its own, God-given, desires. The Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, on the other hand, struggled to insert some factor in the schema which would allow the human agent to initiate the process of his salvation. There are interesting and important differences between the Pelagians and the Semi-Pelagians, but, at least from the perspective of what became the established orthodoxy of the Church, they all make the unacceptable move of supposing that some good choice could originate with the fallen, human being before it receives the grace of God. Anselm's solution avoids any suspicion of Pelagianism of any sort, while it maintains his libertarian stance which grants to the human, and in this case, fallen, agent some role in its destiny. Grace is both necessary and unmerited. There is, however, a sense in which it is not irresistible. Free choice enters the scene only after grace has been offered to the fallen creature. God graciously restores the desire for justice which is what was lost to humanity in the Fall. But the human agent can then choose to cling to this justice, or, by choosing the wrong benefit, can reject it. Again, all that has being and goodness in this story of salvation comes from God. None the less the created agent is free to throw away the good it has received, and that means that if it should hold fast to the grace it has been given, there is a sense in which it does so on its own, and hence is deserving of praise.

Chapters 8 and 9 deal with the perennial dilemma of how to square human freedom with divine foreknowledge, paying special attention to how theories of time and divine eternity affect the issue. Chapter 8 discusses the problem in the context of some contemporary attempts to solve the dilemma and offers some historical background to Anselm's approach. Chapter 9 explains Anselm's solution to the problem with a discussion of his acceptance of the 'four-dimensionalist' theory of time. The dilemma, as it has come down to us from Augustine, is roughly this: if God knows today what I will choose tomorrow, then, come tomorrow, I cannot possibly choose otherwise. My choice seems to be necessary, and so not free.

In the contemporary debate, the two main opponents are the Molinists and the Open Theists. The latter simply deny that God knows future free choices. Anselm is unequivocally committed to the view that God has foreknowledge, and so he must reject Open Theism. He cannot accept the Molinist solution, either. Molinism posits an entire framework of propositions about contingent phenomena existing independently of God to which God must conform His plans. This conflicts in a fundamental way with Anselm's traditional, classical theism. Anselm takes a different approach and offers what is arguably the best statement of the 'eternalist' solution, a solution that has been widely dismissed in the contemporary literature as fundamentally inadequate. Chapter 9, then, is an effort to rehabilitate what is perhaps the only viable solution to the foreknowledge-freedom dilemma available to the proponent of Anselm's brand of classical theism.

Anselm reconciles libertarian freedom with divine foreknowledge by developing the notion of 'consequent' necessity. This is a necessity that *follows from* the positing of an event, and so it could not possibly conflict with the occurrence of the event. But God's foreknowledge occurs before the free choice, so how could the necessity attached to it be a consequent necessity? Anselm answers this question with an analysis of the nature of time. To my knowledge he is the first philosopher to propose a clearly four-dimensionalist (sometimes termed 'eternalist' or 'tenseless') theory of time: all of time, what is past, present, and future, relative to our limited, temporal perspective, is in fact equally existent. If God transcends the spatio-temporal universe, then all of time, like all of space, is equally present to God. Augustine and Boethius, as I note in Chapter 8, both offered suggestions in this direction, but neither developed the position with anything approaching systematic clarity. And since both Augustine and Boethius are compatibilists, neither allows the conclusion to which Anselm argues: if our yesterday, today, and tomorrow are equally 'now' for God, then God knows today what we do tomorrow as a result of 'observing' our doing it. Thus it is consequent necessity which attaches to divine foreknowledge. It is non-determining, and in fact originates with the actual choice of the free agent. Augustine and Boethius (and Aquinas later) could not allow that human choices have any sort of effect upon God at all, but Anselm takes this to be the necessary consequence of God's having created free creatures who can act as primary agents. Anselm's doctrine of created freedom thus elevates the human agent to a metaphysical status far above that allowed within the standard medieval versions of classical theism.

If, according to Anselm, morally significant freedom is so important for a created agent, and if alternative options are necessary for morally significant freedom, then must it not be the case that God, too, in order to be free in some meaningful sense, must deliberate between options and be able to do otherwise than He does? Chapter 10 addresses Anselm's answer, which is an emphatic 'No!' God's nature is the absolute standard for value, and it is logically impossible that He should choose to sin. So of course He does not have morally significant

freedom. Nor could He do the good, but somehow fail to do the best. God is the best and He does the best. Aquinas agrees, but then adds that 'the best' divine act could issue in any number of alternative possible effects. When the question is the creation of our world, Aquinas holds that God might have made any number of other, different, worlds, or might simply have not created any world at all. There is just no reason why perfect goodness should issue in the actual world. But this seems to introduce an uncomfortable arbitrariness at the heart of the relationship between creature and Creator.

Anselm, on the other hand, takes it that there is one best effect of the best cause, and so God does not deliberate and choose between open options. And yet He is free. Freedom is the 'power to keep justice for its own sake'. The created agent, existing *per aliud*, can be said to possess this power only if it can choose justice *on its own*. And since the created agent has nothing it has not received from God, the ability to choose justice on its own must be constituted by the power to cling to the received good, in the face of the real option to throw it away. So options are requisite for created freedom. But God exists entirely *per se*. He is what He is from Himself, and open options have no role at all to play in His perfect possession of justice. And so there is an answer to the question of why God has made things as they are: He does the best and, setting aside whatever evil is due to created freedom, our world is it.

The sort of traditional, classical theism to which Anselm subscribes, which sees God as eternal, immutable, and the immediate sustaining source of all that is not Himself, is widely rejected in contemporary philosophy of religion. Among the reasons for this rejection is the claim that there is no room for creatures with libertarian freedom in a universe made by such a God. And many earlier classical theists, most notably Augustine, agree. Anselm sets himself the task of explaining how the God of traditional, classical theism might leave space in the world for created agents to make their own choices and so, rather than being God's slaves, may become His children.