

Anselm on Semantics, Modality and Free Will



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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration

I hereby declare that except where specific reference is made to the work of others, the contents of this dissertation are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in this, or any other University. This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration, except where specifically indicated in the text. The main body of this dissertation contains less than 80,000 words including footnotes.

Keqi Chen

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Abstract: Anselm is the outstanding Christian Latin philosopher and theologian of the eleventh century. However, Anselm's philosophical thought has rarely been seen as a whole. The *interrelation* between Anselm's core philosophical theories and their *coherence* has yet to receive proper attention. My thesis aims to fill this gap. This thesis provides a rational reconstruction of Anselm's thought on semantics, modality and free will. I not only bring to light the originality of Anselm's individual philosophical theories but also show how Anselm's core philosophical theories mutually support each other, and how his use of certain concepts in many places gives it a coherence that has not often been noticed. Moreover, Anselm's theories of semantics, modality, and ethics build up a unified, theistic metaphysics. Instead of fitting Anselm into the Platonic, Neoplatonic, Augustinian, or Scholastic traditions, I emphasise that Anselm develops a coherent and unique *realism* of his own. Generally speaking, his *realism* is power-based and teleological. Everything, directly or indirectly, is assigned a set of powers – natural power, rational power, the power of free will, the power to signify, and so forth – and every power achieves a divine purpose. This power-based and teleological metaphysical worldview is twofold – natural and ethical. On the one hand, God creates every individual being and regulates their purpose. A creature attains its purpose (i.e., in the position that it ought to be) and participates in God's rectitude. On the other hand, rational creatures are given a privileged power – free will – of which the purpose is to help them acquire justice and in pursue what they ought to will. Yet it also entitles rational agents to deviate from what they ought to do. The structure of free will constitutes the source of genuine contingency against the background of theism.

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Introduction

Anselm is widely acknowledged as the outstanding Christian Latin philosopher and theologian of the eleventh century. In the modern era, his best-known legacy is his brief ‘ontological argument’ (found in *Proslogion* 2 and 3) for the existence of God. However, it has been recognised for some time that Anselm’s contribution to philosophy and theology goes far beyond this argument. In what follows, I provide a brief *methodological* review of some current Anselmian scholarship.

Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams’ *Anselm* is the most comprehensive and rigorous study of the Anselmian corpus.¹ They cover different aspects of Anselm’s philosophy and theology, including semantics, truth, arguments for the existence of God, divine attributes, the trinity, modality, ethics and divine grace. In general, their analytical reconstruction of Anselm’s philosophical theories is perspicuous and precise, based on a careful examination of the original texts. Peter King has written several, significant papers on Anselm’s theory of language, his ontological argument, and angelic sin.² Some of King’s discussions clarify Anselm’s intellectual similarities and differences with Augustine and Duns Scotus. Brian Leftow has a particular interest in the philosophical elements of Anselm’s modality and eternity.³ Leftow’s rational reconstruction of Anselm is insightful. He himself is inspired by Anselm and incorporates his reading of Anselm into his own theological speculation. Moreover, he utilises contemporary philosophical ideas to draw out the full consequences of Anselm’s philosophical arguments. However, this overly concentrated focus on philosophy sometimes obscures Anselm’s own position. Katherin Rogers has investigated Anselm’s doctrines broadly, yet her main contributions have been on Anselm’s theory of morality and his notion of eternity.⁴ Apart from the endeavour to identify the innovative elements embedded in Anselm’s morality and eternity, Rogers also compares Anselm with contemporary thinkers and argues that Anselm’s philosophy anticipates some modern theories. In my view, her comparative work is less successful than her

¹ Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

² King, Peter, ‘Anselm’s Philosophy of Language’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85; Peter King, ‘Anselm’s Intentional Argument’, *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 1, no.2 (1984): 147–65; Peter King, ‘Augustine and Anselm on Angelic Sin’, in *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Tobias Hoffman (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 261–281.

³ Brian Leftow, ‘Time, Actuality and Omniscience’, *Religious Studies* 26, no.3 (1990): 303–321; Brian Leftow, ‘Anselm on Necessity’, *Oxford Studies in Medieval Philosophy* 5, no.1 (2017): 1–40; Brian Leftow, ‘Anselm on the Necessity of the Incarnation’, *Religious Studies* 31, no.2 (1995): 167–185; Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2019).

⁴ Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Katherin Rogers, ‘Anselmian Eternalism: The Presence of a Timeless God’, *Faith and Philosophy* 24 (2007): 3–27; Katherin Rogers, ‘Anselm on Eudaimonism and the Hierarchical Structure of Moral Choice’, *Religious Studies* 41 (2005): 249–68.

work on Anselm's view on eternity and his moral theory. It is not that comparison *per se* is an unreasonable goal, but Rogers tends to misunderstand both Anselm's scheme and the contemporary philosophical concepts she appeals to in her comparison.

However, despite these various approaches to Anselm's corpus, Anselm's philosophical thought has rarely been seen as a whole. The *interrelation* between Anselm's core philosophical theories and their *coherence* has yet to receive proper attention. My thesis aims to fill this gap, especially by looking at how Anselm's various core philosophical theories support each other, and how his use of certain concepts in many places gives it a coherence that has not often been noticed. It is noteworthy that, when speaking of Anselm's philosophical thoughts and theories, it is not as if Anselm works on philosophy as an independent study. In Anselm's time, most philosophical discussions are inseparable from theological context; most rational argumentations are constructed in response to a theological debate. Although the problems studied in my thesis are often reconstructed by terms and framework in contemporary philosophy, they constitute Anselm's main discussions on Christian doctrines. The philosophical elements in the eyes of a contemporary philosopher are, in fact, the 'byproduct' of Anselm's rational theology. For example, when it comes to the concepts of necessity and possibility, Anselm's own motivation, unlike a modern philosopher, is not to develop a new modal system, but resides in explaining the similarities and differences between the power held by God, rational creatures, and natural world.

Anselm's central philosophical concerns are semantics, modality, and ethics. A central and overarching task of my thesis is a holistic treatment of these three areas. My first step, following what other scholars have done, is to provide a rational reconstruction of Anselm's view on these individual topics. On the one hand, I carefully distinguish Anselm's own intention and reasoning from charitable interpretations of his view; my reconstruction is grounded on a 'rigid' reconstruction of the available resources *within* Anselm's texts, regardless of whether Anselm himself explicitly connects them. The main value of this rational reconstruction is that what the charitable interpretation provides should converge with Anselm's own intended conclusions and make sense of them (On occasion, I do draw out the *potential value* of Anselm's philosophical system, when doing so might be of interest to contemporary philosophers.) On the other hand, drawing on both the possible sources of Anselm's view and his *own* innovations and contributions to early medieval philosophy, I place Anselm's thought in its historical context. Thus, I also offer a comparison between Anselm's thought and that of his predecessors or

contemporaries, who include Augustine, Boethius, Peter Damian and Garlandus Compotista. These comparisons guide me to a more faithful reconstruction of Anselm's philosophy.

The second step in my holistic approach is to show the *interrelations* between Anselm's terminology and reasoning across semantics, modality, and ethics, and their coherence. One benefit of investigating the coherence of his thought is that his originality on these topics comes to light. Anselm's solutions to various philosophical conundrums are consistent and insightful. For instance, Anselm's use of modal terms is consistent throughout his pragmatic and semantic considerations for the proper assignments of predicates. His consistent use of necessity constitutes a ground for an argument against *predicating* necessity of God in any respect. Moreover, Anselm dissolves the paradox between the existence of evil and divine omnibenevolence by distinguishing different senses of the verb *facere* ('to do or to bring about'). The power-based conception of necessity and possibility suggests a new reading of Anselm's ontological argument, and his conception of necessity partly contributes to his solution to the paradox between free will and divine omniscience.

My approach to Anselm's philosophy, on the one hand, differs from Leftow's and Rogers's approach, who want to use Anselm for some other purpose in contemporary philosophy. I restrict myself to the history of medieval philosophy and clearly distinguish between Anselm's own commitments and my charitable interpretation. On the other hand, my method differs from Visser and Williams's and King's insofar as I examine the coherence underlying Anselm's philosophical system rather than analysing individual topics within Anselm's system. Using this methodology, I attempt to seek a middle course, respecting historical authenticity whilst striving for philosophical rigour. My methodology is original for two different reasons. First, I seek the coherence of Anselm's philosophical system and, by demonstrating its coherence, also seek the intrinsic value of Anselm's philosophy. Second, as I will explain shortly, my approach suggests that we reconsider Anselm's place in the historiography of medieval philosophy, especially in medieval metaphysics.

My thesis consists of six chapters. In Chapter 1, I briefly introduce Anselm's life, philosophical works, his possible sources, and methodology. Chapter 2 delineates Anselm's theory of language. I begin with Anselm's basic semantic structure by examining *Monologion* 10, in which Anselm articulates the relations between mental conception, things, and spoken words. I compare the semantic triangles that Anselm, Boethius, and Augustine theorise. Anselm inherited Augustine's semantic structure insofar as both hold that a word *signifies* an external thing directly. Then I investigate Anselm's seemingly strange theory of truth in *De Veritate* 2. Anselm distinguishes two levels of truth in the signification of a statement. One sense accords with the Aristotelian

correspondence theory – a statement is true only if what is signified corresponds to what is the case in reality – while the other sense simply relies on the ontological status of signification and does not account for the sentence’s relation to reality. I then turn to Anselm’s pragmatic semantics in *De Grammatico*, particularly his distinction between *per se* and *per aliud* signification, and his view on the proper and improper use of words. For Anselm, if someone signifies something improperly, it does not imply that what is signified is false. Instead, the signifying word may be correctly understood in terms of its *per aliud* signification. Psychological analysis plays an essential role in the correct or true signification of a word. In the final section of Chapter 2, I investigate Anselm’s theory of predication in the *Lambeth Fragments* and examine the proper use of modal predication so to apply it in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, I explore how Anselm and his contemporaries understood modality. Philosophers in the eleventh century understood modality through the relation of power and agency. In the first two sections, I analyse Peter Damian’s and Garlandus’ conceptions of modality. While these accounts are largely unsystematic, one can identify several ways of linking modal concepts to power and agency. Anselm systematically develops a power-based model of modality. In the third section, I explore the metaphysics underlying Anselm’s conception of modalities. Anselm’s conception of modality is reductionist: modal concepts can be explained in terms of an agent’s power. However, different notions of necessity involve different conceptions of power. Subsequent necessity is directly derived from divine immutability, which constitutes the fundamental rules of the created world. Antecedent necessity, by contrast, reduces to the power of a created being. In the fourth section, I investigate the modal force of Anselm’s different notions of necessity. Despite being based on power-based metaphysics, the modal force of subsequent necessity is close to the contemporary conception of logical necessity.

In Chapter 4, I discuss Anselm’s epistemic modality, which derives from Anselm’s notion of power-based modality. Epistemic necessity and possibility are connected to a person’s rational power of conception. Recognition of the role of epistemic modality deepens our understanding of Anselm’s ontological argument for the existence of God. I provide two parallel interpretations of *Proslogion* 2 and 3. While the first is closer to Anselm’s intentions, the second is a charitable reconstruction. According to the second interpretation, Anselm’s ontological argument is not a metaphysical proof of God’s existence but, rather, an epistemic proof. Its conclusion is an epistemically necessary one – the rational conception of God necessarily encodes the property of existence.

I investigate Anselm’s thought on free will and ethics throughout Chapter 5. First, I explain

Anselm's three senses of 'will': the instrument of will, the disposition of will, and the exercise of will. Second, I introduce Anselm's definition of 'rectitude' and 'justice'. According to Anselm, rectitude is a status in which something ought to be; its criterion is whether a being fulfils its God-given purpose. Justice, then, is the rectitude of rational will, which is defined as 'to will rectitude for its own sake'. Third, I explore Anselm's definitions of 'freedom' and 'free will'. Freedom is the power to preserve justice or to do just things. Free will, by contrast, is the *spontaneous* power of willing whatever the agent prefers. Based on these discussions, I investigate Anselm's doctrine on angelic sin and explain in what sense the emergence of the primal sin is compatible with divine omnibenevolence. In addition, I reconstruct Anselm's view on human redemption and explain how Anselm's free-will libertarianism is compatible with the function of divine grace. In this chapter, I also consider how Anselm's view engages three contemporary philosophical problems. The first concerns Frankfurt's hierarchical structure of will, which distinguishes the first-order desires, the desires for anything other than a desire, from the second-order desires, which refers to the desires for first-order desires. I argue that Anselm's theory of will bears no resemblance to this hierarchical structure, precisely because Anselm's structure involves only the first-order desires and their underlying motivation. The second concerns the debate over whether Anselm offers a deontological or an eudaimonistic account of morality; I provide a defence of the deontological reading based on Anselm's moral psychology. The third is the problem of unintelligibility: if free will is the ultimate source of a free choice, then a free choice lacks an intelligible cause and must be random. Any advocate of free will faces this challenge, and Anselm is aware of this problem. For Anselm, free will is a robust, discretionary power. Rather than being random, an agent's reason and self-formed preference account for the cause of a choice.

In Chapter 6, I reconstruct Anselm's solutions to various paradoxes of free will. I begin this chapter with a careful examination of Boethius' solution to the paradox between free will and divine foreknowledge. Both Boethius' and Anselm's solutions rely on a conception of divine eternity. I argue that their notions of eternalism, which play an essential role in their solutions, are different. For Boethius, the notion is epistemic: God's metaphysical status of eternality endows Him with a unique cognitive power that allows God to acquire knowledge about objects without their actuality as a truth-maker. According to Boethius, God has knowledge of every temporal fact, including unrealised future contingents, as a whole. Typically, scholars treat Anselm as following Boethius. However, I argue that Anselm offers an original solution: a more radical libertarianism. Anselm does not challenge the cognitive mode of God but instead appeals to an inclusive dimension of the Eternal Present. Whether Anselm's solution is satisfactory, in my view, remains unsettled. With

regard to divine predestination, Anselm insists on his libertarianism. Appealing to his semantic analysis of the verb '*facere*' (to bring about), Anselm contends that God is not the efficient cause of some agent's choosing to sin but only *permits* its occurrence.

In the conclusion, I argue that Anselm deserves a place in the historiography of medieval *metaphysics*. Given the assumption that all medieval metaphysics is based on the framework of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, it is natural to think that a systematic construction of metaphysics in medieval philosophy began in the middle of the twelfth century, when the Aristotelian corpus was translated from Arabic into Latin. Many technical terms were introduced, because of the new access to Aristotle's non-logical works, and these did provide subsequent generations with a new apparatus for philosophical and theological discussions as well as a range of new philosophical problems. However, the suggestion that all medieval metaphysics is linked to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is problematic. The influence of Platonism, through various Neoplatonic treatises, had a consistent and considerable impact on Latin medieval philosophy and theology.⁵ While I do not here explore the reception of other traditions in medieval philosophy, my thesis demonstrates that Platonism and Augustinianism, alongside Aristotle's logical works and Boethius' commentaries on them, received remarkable attention in the eleventh century and, more importantly, facilitated the systematic consideration of metaphysical problems. Anselm's works are the best evidence of such attention. Without access to the non-logical Aristotelian treatises, Anselm took his philosophical explorations in a different direction.

Anselm absorbed the relatively limited sources available to him and incorporated them into his own thinking and writing. He deliberated on his use of technical terms and reasoning over and over again until he discovered his own rational solutions. In doing so, Anselm came to be a serious metaphysician in the early Middle Ages. He should be understood as an active contributor who developed his own theistic metaphysics rather than as a passive witness to a discussion of broader philosophical issues. With regard to theological doctrines, Anselm subscribed to the traditional worldview in which God is the supreme being and from which everything else is derived. Anselm originally put forward a single phrase – 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' – to prove, at least epistemically, God's existence and the other divine attributes – divine simplicity, eternity, immutability, and omnibenevolence. Within this theistic framework, Anselm developed coherent theories of ethics, semantics, and modality. On the one hand, everything – from the

⁵ For more detailed analysis of the influence of Platonism on scholasticism of the thirteenth century and later, see Robert Pasnau, 'The Latin Aristotle', in *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, ed. Christopher Shields (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 665–89.

rectitude or truth of a statement to that of a rational creature's free will – is organised into a *teleological* picture. Everything ought to satisfy its divine purpose so to have rectitude or justice: creatures are regarded as being in the position in which they *ought to* be in the divinely created universe. On the other hand, however, rational creatures have the prerogative of their free will and rationality. With regard to semantics, whether something is *correctly* signified largely depends on the hearer's psychological analysis of the context of utterance. God does not regulate whether a statement fulfils its purpose. A rational creature's free choice, unlike that of animals and plants, is not bound by antecedent necessity. The underlying premise is that the will of rational beings resembles God's insofar as it constitutes the *ultimate* source of their free choices. Anselm's theistic metaphysical picture, thus, is a sophisticated mixture of God's vertical authority with respect to the criterion of rectitude and absolute spontaneity, which allows rational creatures to deviate from God's demand. God actively leaves such flexibility for rational creatures so that they can decide for ourselves and take full responsibility of their choices.

Chapter 1 Anselm's Life, Main Works, and Sources

1.1 The Life of Anselm⁶

Anselm was born around 1033 in Aosta, a north-western border town in the kingdom of Burgundy (now the Piedmont region of Italy). According to his friend and biographer, Eadmer, Anselm had decided, before he turned fifteen, to become a monk because 'there was nothing in the life of men superior to the life of a monk' [nichil in hominum conversatione monachorum vita prestantius esse].⁷ However, given Anselm's experiences, Eadmer is probably not reliable on this point. In 1057, at the age of twenty-three, Anselm left his home town to escape from his father's influence. In fact, he wandered aimlessly for three years in Burgundy and the region of the Loire. In 1059, he came to Normandy, where he entered the Benedictine monastery at Bec (France), though he did not become a monk immediately. Anselm followed the eminent theologian Lanfranc and stayed with him at Bec for four years.⁸ In 1060, under the influence of Lanfranc, Anselm decided to devote himself to monastic life.

In 1078 Anselm became abbot of Bec. In the years (1070–1078), prior to becoming abbot and following the monastic tradition of *Lectio Divina*, Anselm made a collection of *Meditationes et Orationes* (Meditations and Prayers). Written in the prevailing eleventh century genre, *Meditationes* provided material for private meditative reading rather than an elaborate reflection on the nature of meditation or a method.⁹ This collection was intended for the private devotions of his monastic friends and noblewomen. He also corresponded frequently, and many of his letters survive today. Indeed, much of his correspondence is of a very high literary and spiritual quality.

Anselm's contributions to the history of philosophy are most readily seen in his treatises and

⁶ The primary sources for Anselm's life and dating his works are Eadmer, *The Life of St Anselm Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and tr. Richard Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972) and Richard Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁷ Eadmer, *Life of St Anselm*, 5.

⁸ Traditionally, Lanfranc is regarded as Anselm's teacher and substantially contributes to Anselm's education in dialectic, or logic, and its application to theology. See Southern, *Saint Anselm*, 39–66. Toivo Holopainen has argued that Lanfranc's role in the formation of Anselm's thought is overestimated. Holopainen contends that it is more plausible that Anselm was an associate working with Lanfranc rather than a student. As Holopainen points out, Anselm was about 25 or 26 years old when he arrived in Normandy. He very likely received an education before entering Bec. Moreover, the best, liberal arts education was available in the schools of Anselm's home country. Some of Anselm's thoughts show his apparent familiarity with the texts such as Anselm of Besate's *Rhetorimachia* and Peter Damian's *De Divina Omnipotentia*. See Toivo Holopainen, *A Historical Study of Anselm's Proslogion* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 93–109. For more on the study of Italian schools, see note 17 in Holopainen: 'See Margaret Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 11–15, for the schools of northern Italy and their concentration on the three linguistic arts of the *trivium*, that is, grammar, dialectic or logic, and rhetoric. It is worth remembering that one of the first universities in Western Europe was that in Bologna, founded towards the end of the eleventh century (perhaps in 1088).'

⁹ Cf. Jean Leclercq, 'Western', in *Christian Spirituality: Origins to the Twelfth Century*, Volume 1, ed. Bernard McGinn, John Meyendorff, and Jean Leclercq (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 423–24.

dialogues. In 1075–76, he produced the *Monologion* and, in 1077–78, the *Proslogion*. Anselm's distinctive writing style, with an emphasis on rational argument and without recourse to Scripture or other authoritative sources, was developed in the *Monologion*.¹⁰ With the *Proslogion* and *Monologion*, Anselm earned a reputation beyond his own monastery. As these two treatises were widely read in France and England, Anselm was engaged in a debate (prior to 1089) with Gaunilo, a monk from Marmoutier. Gaunilo challenged Anselm's proof for the existence of God in the *Proslogion*. Nonetheless, Anselm, confident in the defence for his own argument, instructed that both Gaunilo's letter and his own response should be attached to the end of the *Proslogion*.

Between 1080–1085, distracted by his duties as abbot at Bec, Anselm still managed to write three dialogues, *De Veritate* (On Truth), *De Libertate Arbitrii* (On Freedom of Choice), *De Casu Diaboli* (On the Fall of the Devil), as well as *De Grammatico* (On the Grammarian).¹¹

Around 1090, Anselm entered into a theological controversy over the Trinitarian doctrine with Roscelin of Compiègne (1050–1125),¹² a teacher at various French schools. The controversy led Anselm to write a first version of *Epistolae de Incarnatione Verbi* (On the Incarnation of the Word). Anselm addressed the final version of this letter (1094) to Pope Urban II.

In 1093, King William II of England nominated Anselm, against his own wishes, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Not long after his election, Anselm began writing *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became a Man), and finished it in 1098 while abroad because he had been exiled in November 1097 as a result of various disputes with William II over the respective roles of Church and State. Anselm travelled to Rome where he plead the case of the English church to the Pope Urban II, who affirmed Anselm's position, but refused Anselm's request to be relieved of his office. Anselm was

¹⁰ Lanfranc criticised *Monologion* for its lack of any appeals to authority. Anselm insisted that everything in the *Monologion* is defensible through either Scripture or Augustine: 'My intention throughout this disputation, whatever worth it may have, was as follows: I assert exclusively what seems to me to be thoroughly defensible, either with canonical statements or the words of Blessed Augustine; and however often I reconsider my statements, I cannot see that I have asserted anything contrary to such an approach' [Nam haec mea fuit intentio per totam illam qualemunque disputationem, ut omnino nichil ibi assererem, nisi quod aut canonicis aut beati Augustini dictis incunctanter posse defendi viderem; et nunc quotienscunque ea quae dixi retracto, nichil aliud me asseruisse percipere possum] (Anselm, 'i. 68 To Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury (1075–1078)', in *Epistolae Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi: Letters of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, Volume 1, ed. and trans. Samu Niskanen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 198–99.

¹¹ The dating of *De Grammatico* is a controversial issue. See more details in John Marenbon, 'Some Semantic Problems in Anselm's *De Grammatico*', in *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century*, ed. Michael Herren, Christopher James McDonough, and Ross Arthur (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 76.

¹² For more details about the Trinitarian debate, see Constant J. Mews, 'Nominalism and Theology before Abaelard: New Light on Roscelin of Compiègne', *Vivarium*, 30, no. 1 (1992), 4–33; Marek Otisk, 'Essentia and Substantia in the Trinitarian Dispute of Roscelin of Compiègne and Anselm of Canterbury', *Archiwum Historii Filozofii i Myśli Społecznej*, 61, no. 61(2016), 107–122. Roscelin of Compiègne is well-known for his dispute with Abelard. He held an extreme position on nominalism, arguing that universals are no more than verbal expressions. See Constant J. Mews, *Abelard and Heloise* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 21–42; Constant J. Mew, *Reason and Belief in the Age of Roscelin and Abelard* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002).

not allowed to return to England until the death of William II in 1100.

During his exile, Anselm worked on the treatise *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato* (On the Virgin Conception and Original Sin); following the Council of Bari in 1098, he began writing *De Processione Spiritus Sancti* (On the Procession of the Holy Spirit), which he finished in 1102.

Anselm was exiled again from 1103 to 1106 because of disagreements with the new king, Henry I. After his return, Anselm completed one more work, *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei cum Libero Arbitrio* (On the Harmony of the Foreknowledge, the Predestination, and the Grace of God with Free Choice), around 1107–8. Anselm spent his remaining two years in peace and died on Tuesday of Holy Week, 21 April 1109, in Canterbury.

1.2 Anselm's Main Philosophical Works

Anselm wrote mostly in a theological context, and his works had explicitly theological purposes (with the exceptions of *De Grammatico* and the *Lambeth Fragments*). However, this theological component does not undermine the philosophical value of Anselm's corpus. Although Anselm seldom provides a systematic treatment of any one philosophical problem in a complete work, the scattered discussions on a given topic, when combined and reconstructed properly, do provide a very coherent philosophical system. In addition, Anselm defines the crucial role of *reason* in theological arguments. Anselm demonstrates a strong reliance on rational methods for *understanding* Christian beliefs, as the full title of the *Proslogion* indicates: 'Faith seeking understanding [*fides quaerens intellectum*]'. This basic methodology is seen throughout his whole corpus.

In this section, I provide a brief sketch of the structure of each of Anselm's main works; important themes will be treated in depth later in the thesis. Note that I do not sketch some important works, such as *Cur Deus Homo* and *Epistolae de Incarnatione Verbi*, because the problems considered in those works are not the main concern of my thesis. Rather than investigate these works thoroughly, I analyse their relevant paragraphs when doing so furthers my argument.

1. *Monologion* (80 chapters)

The *Monologion* aims to provide a proof for God's existence by reason alone. Chapter 1 offers the core of the main argument. Anselm's reasoning is straightforward, and it relies on the assumption that all good things are good in virtue of *the same one thing*, which is good through itself. Therefore, the supreme good thing exists. After establishing this point, Anselm entertains a

thorough discussion of the divine attributes. The main theses of Chapters 2–17 are that the existence of everything is derived from and dependent on the supreme being and that the supreme being exists through itself (*per se*). In Chapter 10, Anselm discusses a semantic triangle composed of words, things, and mental conceptions; the semantic triangle serves as an analogy of the process of God’s creation. In Chapters 18–25, Anselm argues that the supreme being exists in every place and every moment without beginning or end and does not experience any change. Chapters 26–63 constitute the majority of the *Monologion* and in them Anselm investigates the problem of the trinity. Then, Anselm clarifies the relations between the rational mind and the truth of the supreme being and between the human soul and supreme good (Chapters 64–79). In the final chapter (80), Anselm concludes that the name ‘God’ is properly assigned to the supreme essence and that there is only one God.

2. *Proslogion* (26 chapters)

In the *Proslogion*, which is the sequel to the *Monologion*, Anselm intends to derive a single argument (*unum argumentum*) to replace the many, interconnected arguments of the *Monologion*. The single argument aims to prove that God really exists and that God possesses the other divine attributes. However, scholars disagree about what that single argument is.¹³ One probable candidate is the formula ‘that than which nothing greater can be thought’, which is close but not equivalent to the concept of the perfection of God. With the exception of Chapters 2–5 wherein Anselm offers an ontological argument for the existence of God (Chapters 2–3) and an extended discussion of it (Chapters 4–5), this formula is adopted throughout the *Proslogion* to prove many of God’s attributes, including God’s omnipotence (Chapter 7), God’s mercy (Chapter 8), and God’s justice (Chapters 9–11). In Chapter 12, Anselm reiterates that God exists through Himself. In Chapter 13, Anselm discusses God’s relation to time and eternity. In Chapters 14–17, Anselm explores to what extent a person can understand God. Chapters 18–21 constitute Anselm’s account of God’s relation to place. In the final five chapters, Anselm stresses that God is the only supreme good.

A noteworthy difference between the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* is that the *Monologion* aims to provide theological arguments through the use of reason alone, whereas the *Proslogion* has the form of a prayer and meditation. One might go further and regard the *Proslogion* as a meditative text for the religious practitioner. However, this view is wrong, if one presumes that a meditative text cannot also be philosophical. We should not ignore or underestimate the philosophical precision

¹³ Gregory Sadler provides a sophisticated discussion on this problem. See ‘What Precisely Is Anselm’s Single Argument in the *Proslogion*?’, presented to the *Indiana Philosophical Association Conference* (USA, Spring 2006).

and clarity that underline the prayerful and meditative elements of the *Proslogion*.

3. Three Dialogues

De Veritate (On Truth, 13 chapters)

The aim of this dialogue is to find a definition of truth. Anselm provides, in Chapter 1, an argument for the claim that the truth has no beginning or end. Throughout Chapters 2–7, Anselm examines the truth of statements, opinions, the will, actions, the senses, and the being of things. The most complicated, perhaps the strangest, chapter involves Anselm's discussion about the truth of statements. In Chapter 8, Anselm discusses various meanings of 'ought' and 'ought not' as well as 'can' and 'cannot', both of which are related to topics in the *Lambeth Fragments*. In Chapter 9, Anselm explains that every action signifies something true or false. Anselm reaches the conclusion in Chapter 10, 11, and 13 that the definition of truth is not multiple. There is only one supreme Truth, which is identical to God. In Chapter 12, Anselm provides the definition of justice: truth and rectitude define each other. At the end of the dialogue, Anselm also discusses the nature of justice: Justice is the rectitude of will, exclusively resides in rational beings, and determines whether specific rational creatures have moral goodness.

De Libertate Arbitrii (On Freedom of Choice, 14 chapters)

This treatise primarily deals with the nature of the rational will and its relation to the justice, or rectitude of will, as discussed in *De Veritate*. In Chapters 1–4, Anselm distinguishes the definition of freedom from that of free choice of will. Chapters 5–7 constitute Anselm's explanation for why will is more powerful than temptation. Then Anselm provides a logical argument for the inseparability of the rectitude of will from the structure of free will in rational creatures (Chapters 8–12). In Chapter 13, Anselm confirms that the earlier definition of freedom of will is the perfect definition. In the final chapter, Anselm distinguishes the freedom of choice of God from that of rational creatures; the former is neither created by nor received from anything else. Also, Anselm clarifies that separable rectitude belongs to rational creatures while inseparable rectitude to good angels and God; and that sinners may recover their lack of rectitude.

De Casu Diaboli (On the Fall of the Devil, 28 chapters)

This dialogue, considerably longer than the preceding *De Veritate* and *De Libertate*, analyses the problem of Lucifer's primal sin. The case of a fallen angel is baffling insofar as angels are the perfect rational creature, and so they would be unlikely to sin through negligence or irrationality.

Anselm attempts to explain how the free will of Lucifer is compatible with God's omnibenevolence and predestination. In Chapters 1–3, Anselm clarifies that the Devil lacked rectitude not because God did not give it but instead because the Devil did not receive it. In Chapters 4–6, Anselm analyses in what sense the Devil sinned and why the good angels retain their rectitude. Anselm then deals with a philosophical problem of evil: why does evil seem to be something when it is nothing (Chapters 7–11). In Chapters 12–14, Anselm contends that all angels receive two wills – the wills for justice and for happiness – simultaneously at the beginning of creation. Chapters 15–20 are Anselm's resolution of the paradox between the existence of evil and God's omnibenevolence. In Chapters 21–25, Anselm explains that all angels do not (should not) have known that if they sin, they will definitely be punished. In the final three chapters, Anselm reiterates his view that the source of evil is the free will of the Devil, and that the essence of the power to will is good and is given by God.

4. *De Concordia* (On the Harmony, 3 chapters)

De Concordia was Anselm's the last completed work. In it, Anselm further develops doctrines that he initially put forward in earlier works (specifically *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii*, *De Casu Diaboli*, and *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato*). This work consists of three sections; each one addresses a different paradox between free will and divine foreknowledge, between free will and predestination, and between free will and grace. Anselm's terminology about the structure of the will differs slightly between the Three Dialogues and the *De Concordia*. I believe that *De Concordia* reflects Anselm's mature terminology and thought.

5. *De Grammatico* (On the Grammarian, 21 chapters)

The *De Grammatico* is Anselm's only completed work devoted to semantic problems and is written as a dialectical dialogue between a master and a pupil. The starting point of *De grammatico* is the question about denominative things, in particular whether *grammaticus* (an expert-in-grammar) is a substance or a quality. Anselm sets up the conflict as between traditions: philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition maintain that *grammaticus* is a quality, while the grammarian, i.e., Priscian, regards *grammaticus* as a substance. Anselm first argues that *grammaticus* is both substance and quality but is so in different respects. Anselm clarifies these 'different respects' step by step as the dialogue proceeds. In Chapters 2–9, Anselm argues that it is *false* that a *grammaticus* is not a man or a substance without qualification. In Chapter 9, the student objects to this conclusion by offering Aristotle's argument (from the *Categoriae*) for the statement that no *grammaticus* is a man. Anselm

has the master reply that Aristotle means to say that the name *grammaticus per se* is *significative* of a quality. Thus, the semantic element enters into Anselm's argument. The metaphysical question of whether *grammaticus* is a substance or a quality becomes a semantic question about whether the word *grammaticus* signifies a substance or a quality. In the subsequent chapters, Anselm elaborates his semantic distinctions between signification and appellation, between *per se* and *per aliud* signification, and between proper and improper uses of a word. For Anselm, the word *grammaticus* is properly significative of a quality but appellative of a substance.

De Grammatico is a valuable work not only because of its content, which shows Anselm's wholehearted commitment to logic, dialectic and semantics, but also because it discloses both Anselm's own distinctive introduction to Aristotle's *Categoriae* and his pedagogical method.

6. *Fragmenta Philosophica* (Philosophical Fragments or Lambeth Fragments)

The unfinished fragments are purely philosophical and investigate the issues of will, power, action, possibility and impossibility – topics that Anselm also discussed in *Cur Homo Deus* and the Three Dialogues. However, the text is incomplete or, more probably, working notes for works that do not survive in a finished form. The fragments are discussions on the codification of the proper assignment of the verb 'to do' or 'to bring about' (*facere*) to the proper agent or, at the grammatical level, of the subject of a sentence. These rules are accordingly applied to other verbs such as 'ought', 'can', 'will', and so forth. Anselm also briefly discusses the proper sense of 'something' and 'cause'. Anselm's semantic considerations about 'to do' and 'to be able' are coherently applied to his uses of modal terms.

1.3 Anselm's Methodology: The Relation between Faith and Reason

Both faith and reason constitute the inseparable components of Anselm's philosophy. Yet their exact relation has been the topic of a long-simmering scholarly controversy. Here I offer a brief discussion instead of reviewing the whole spectrum of the debate. The modern debate can be traced back to Karl Barth's *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum*. Anselm's argument in the *Proslogion* for God's existence is typically regarded as a philosophical performance. Starting from the rational assumption that God is 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' (*id quo maius cogitari non potest*), Anselm concludes that God exists in understanding and (at least is conceived as existing) in reality simultaneously. Barth, by contrast, contends that Anselm argues from the perspective of a believer, so the whole proof should be treated as a theological argument, 'a proof of

faith by faith'.¹⁴ Barth also argues that, rather than a rational conception, God as *id quo maius cogitari non potest* is a Name of God, 'a divine revelation in the disguise of something "conceived" by a human brain'.¹⁵ This methodology, while important to Barth's own theological scheme, does not have many proponents within Anselmian scholarship. From my point of view, it is an indisputable fact that Anselm's proof in the *Proslogion* is grounded on rational argumentation because no explicit reference to any element of faith is involved to help construct the argumentation. However, this does not go to the other extreme that faith has a negligible role. We need clarification about the exact relationship between reason and faith in Anselm's system.

The real controversial question is: which element is *decisive* in theological speculations, faith or reason? Montague Brown offers the most reasonable answer.¹⁶ He explains that, for Anselm, faith has both a negative and a positive role. The negative role helps us not to reject theological teachings that surpass human reason. The positive role, instead of 'providing conclusions about what is true, good, and beautiful',¹⁷ *moves* us to search for the supreme good, truth, and beauty. In other words, faith, on the one hand, is a disposition for one's acceptance of the possible plausibility of several theological doctrines and, on the other hand, serves as the *initial impetus* for one's reflection on the doctrines so to facilitate a deeper level of understanding of one's belief. That is when reason enters the picture.

For Anselm, the relation between reason and faith are not exclusive, but cooperative. Without faith, a person would be unable to *will* to explore the truth embedded in scriptural teachings. Without reason, one's passion for pursuing the truth would be in vain. Indeed, reason in humans has an insurmountable limitation, as Anselm himself acknowledges:

I wish to be understood in this way: even if I present a conclusion as necessary on the basis of arguments that seem compelling to me, I mean only that it can seem necessary for the time being, not that it is therefore in fact altogether necessary.

Sic volo accipi ut, quamvis ex rationibus quae mihi videbuntur, quasi necessarium concludatur, non ob hoc tamen omnino necessarium, sed tantum sic interim videri

¹⁴ Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides Quaerens Intellectum* (London: S.C.M Press, 1960), 179.

¹⁵ Ibid, 82.

¹⁶ Montague Brown, 'Faith and Reason in Anselm: Two Models', *The Saint Anselm Journal* 2, no.1 (Fall 2004): 10–21.

¹⁷ Ibid, 20.

posse dicatur (*Monologion* 1, S I, 14.2–4).¹⁸

Although a conclusion *appears* to be necessarily true after careful examination, it does not entail that it *is* necessarily true. However, Anselm thinks that humans can reach some degree of understanding :

The mystery of so sublime a thing seems to me to transcend every power of human understanding. . . . After all, I think someone investigating an incomprehensible thing ought to be satisfied if his reasoning arrives at the knowledge that the thing most certainly exists, even if his understanding cannot fathom how it is so. Nor should we withhold any of the certainty of faith from beliefs that are asserted on the basis of necessary proofs and are contradicted by no other argument, simply because, owing to the incomprehensibility of their natural sublimity, they do not yield to explanation.

Videtur mihi huius tam sublimis rei secretum transcendere omnem intellectus aciem humani. . . . Sufficere namque debere existimo rem incomprehensibilem indaganti, si ad hoc ratiocinando pervenerit ut eam certissime esse cognoscat, etiamsi penetrare nequeat intellectu quomodo ita sit; nec idcirco minus iis adhibendam fidei certitudinem, quae probationibus necessariis nulla alia repugnante ratione asseruntur, si suae naturalis altitudinis incomprehensibilitate explicari non patiantur (*Monologion* 64, S I, 75.1–6).

In Anselm's view, the truth that human reason can attain and the supreme truth are *to some extent* harmonious and unifying. The endorsement of human reason, though not always infallible, provides a solid indication of the truth value of certain propositions in the secular life. Moreover, the nature of Christianity is centred on rationality because God Himself is absolutely rational and grants reason to humans so that it may guide humans to *know* Him. Under this framework, to reflect on the content of faith in a rational way is what a believer *ought to do*.

¹⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, Anselm's Latin texts are from *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, Volume I and II, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh, 1946) (reprinted in 1968 by Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag) (= S I/S II); English translations are from Thomas Williams, *Anselm: Basic Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007).

1.4 The Sources of Anselm's Philosophy

Because of a fair number of surviving texts and Peter Abelard's *Dialectica* (written around 1110–5), we have relatively sufficient knowledge about the philosophical sources that Latin thinkers *used* in the twelfth century.¹⁹ Yet identifying the sources available to Anselm is a difficult task because fewer texts survive in the eleventh century. According to the catalogues at Bec and Canterbury, the size of their collections in eleventh century was moderate compared with the typical size of twelfth century libraries. Moreover, the medieval collection at the abbey of Bec appeared to experience substantial loss.²⁰ Because of Anselm's distinctive writing style, it is even harder to identify the exact sources he *used*, let alone to determine his *understanding* of those sources. Instead of supporting his reasoning with citations of and commentaries on biblical texts and authoritative works, Anselm absorbed what he read and approached various philosophical and theological problems in terms of rational argumentations directly. Even in *De Grammatico*, which engages Aristotle's view on whether the thing signified by a denominative is a substance or a quality in the *Categoriae*, Anselm only cites Aristotle three times.

In spite of these various difficulties, I list the important ancient works that are believed to have been available during the eleventh century. Then, I review modern studies that explore a connection between Anselm and ancient sources. Because of the lack of solid historical evidence, contemporary scholars compare Anselm's work and potential sources in terms of parallel lines, similar lines of reasoning, and philosophical problems common to both sets of texts. Here I focus on identifying the historical facts about the sources that Anselm likely *read or used*. I do not delve into the intellectual discussions about comparisons between Anselm and his predecessors.

The available philosophical sources in the eleventh century fall into five groups. I have included texts to which Anselm may have had access but I lack certain evidence that he did. These are marked with a '*'.

[1] Church Fathers

¹⁹ In *Dialectica*, Abelard listed seven textbooks (*codices*) which constituted the standardised, logic curriculum of his time. They are Aristotle's *Categoriae* and *De Interpretatione*; Porphyry's *Isagoge* (an introduction to the *Categoriae*); and Boethius' *De divisione*, 'Topics' (*De topicis differentiis*), and his 'categorical and hypothetical syllogisms' (*De syllogismis categoricis*, *De syllogismis hypotheticis*). For a more detailed analysis of the logical manuscripts of the twelfth century, see John Marenbon and Caterina Tarlazzi, 'Logic', in *The European Book in the Twelfth Century*, ed. Erik Kwakkel and Rodney Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 215–39.

²⁰ Léopold Delisle published the catalogue that documents the twelve surviving manuscripts from the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in 1874. See Léopold Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Volume II (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1874), 340. According to the latest study, there is a larger corpus of extant manuscripts at Bec. The collection has been expanded to twenty-six manuscripts. See Jenny Weston, 'Manuscripts and Book Production at Le Bec', in *A Companion to the Abbey of Le Bec in the Central Middle Ages (11th–13th Centuries)*, ed. Benjamin Pohl and Laura Gathagan (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 144–70.

- a. Augustine:²¹ *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (*On the Psalms*); *In Iohannis Evangelium Tractatus* (*On St John's Gospel*); *De Civitate Dei* (*On the City of God*); *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*); *De Doctrina Christiana* (*On Christian Doctrine*); *Sermo in Monte* (*On the Sermon on the Mount*); *De Baptismo* (*On Baptism*); *De Catechizandis Rudibus* (*On Instructing the Young*); *Epistulae* (*Letters*); *Confessiones* (*The Confessions*).

[2] Sources from the sixth to eighth centuries²²

- a. Aristotle: the *Categoriae* (*Categories*) and *De Interpretatione* (*On Interpretation*), translated by Boethius, accompanied with his commentaries.
- b. Boethius: *Opuscula Sacra* (*Theological Treatises*)*; *In Topica Ciceronis Commentaria* (*Commentary on Cicero's Topics*); *De Topicis Differentiis* (*On Topical Differences*)*; *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*).²³
- c. Porphyry: Introduction to the *Categoriae* (*Isagoge*), accompanied with Boethius' commentaries.
- d. *The Categories* in the pseudo-Augustinian paraphrase: *Categoriae Decem* (*Ten Categories*).
- e. Priscian: *Institutiones Grammaticae* (*Institutes of Grammar*).

[3] Other Ancient Sources²⁴

- a. Plato: *Timaeus* (Calcidius's Latin translation) and Calcidius's commentaries
- b. Cicero: *Topica* (*Topics*), *De Officiis* (*On Duties*), *De Inventione*

[4] Italian Texts of Anselm's Contemporaries*

- a. Anselm of Besate: *Rhetorimachia* (*On the Art of Rhetoric*)

²¹ Richard Southern provided a list of Augustine's works that Lanfranc cited in his Eucharistic treatise. Southern assumed that these volumes were at Bec and, thus, were also available for Anselm. See Southern, *Saint Anselm*, 55–9. As Southern explains, *the Confessions* were not included in Lanfranc's citations. However, there were many copies of it in Northern France in the eleventh century, so it is plausible that one was also at Bec. In note 29, Southern writes: 'For a survey of surviving MSS of Augustine's Confessions, see André Wilmart, "La tradition des grands ouvrages de S. Augustin", *Miscellanea Agnostiniana*, ii (Rome), 257–315. Wilmart listed fourteen from the eleventh century, including one from Jumièges. There are none from England before the Conquest, but there are two with Canterbury connections before 1100.' (The pages of the original footnote given by Southern is 251–68. But Wilmart's paper starts on page 257. So I have kept the page range of the whole paper here.) For updated research about the reception of Augustine, see *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, ed. Karla Pollmann and Willemien Otten (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²² I owe this list largely to Marenbon and Tarlazzi, 'Logic', 215–239.

²³ About the manuscripts of *Consolatione Philosophiae* being datable from the medieval period to around the year 1100, see Rosalind C. Love, 'The Latin Commentaries on Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae* from the 9th to the 11th Centuries', in *A Companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, ed. Noel Harold Kaylor and Philip Edward Phillips (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 75–133.

²⁴ James Stuart Beddie, 'The Ancient Classics in the Mediaeval Libraries', *Speculum* 5, no. 1 (January, 1930), 3–20.

b. Peter Damian's *De Divina Omnipotentia* (On Divine Omnipotence)

Because of similarities in the form of their writing and various individual theological doctrines, scholars typically maintain that the great Church Father, Augustine, had a profound influence on Anselm.²⁵ For instance, Anselm's doctrines on the trinity are to a large extent influenced by Augustine's *De Trinitate*.²⁶ Anselm's theory of semantics, as I argue in Chapter 2, is close to Augustine's structure. As I demonstrate in Chapter 4, Anselm's views on free will, angelic sin, and fatal determinism resemble those of Augustine's in some aspects (but Anselm's originality and clarity ensure that his views are not merely derivative). An interesting but controversial issue concerns the connection between Anselm's general *methodology* for addressing theological problems and that in Boethius' *Opuscula Sacra* (*Theological Treatises*). John Marenbon believes that, for Anselm, 'Boethius sets an example of bringing the language and distinctions of logic to bear on problems in Christian doctrine'.²⁷ Peter Boschung agrees that Anselm's approach to theological problems in spirit resembles Boethius' methodology more than it resembles Augustine's, but 'there is no direct evidence in the catalogues of Bec or Canterbury to indicate that the library contained an independent copy of these treatises during Anselm's period there. The only volume containing the treatises combines them with Gilbert of Poitiers' commentary'.²⁸

At the very least, we have some very general knowledge about the study of logic before 1100. Many scholars acknowledge that logic before 1100 was the *logica vetus*, based on Aristotle's *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and the translations of Boethius along with his commentaries.²⁹ Some efforts are provided to acquire a more precise understanding of which sources Anselm used. In a careful comparison between Anselm's thought on universals and Boethius' and Porphyry's theory, Iwakuma Yukio provides a convincing argument that 'Anselm

²⁵ For a general account of the similarities between Anselm and Augustine, see Gareth B. Matthews, 'Anselm, Augustine, and Platonism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (see note 2), 61–83.

²⁶ For more studies, see William E. Mann, 'Anselm on the Trinity', in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (see note 2), 257–78; Lauge O. Nielsen, 'Trinitarian Theology from Alcuin to Anselm', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity*, ed. Gilles Emery and Matthew Levering (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 155–67; Paul Thom, *The Logic of the Trinity: Augustine to Ockham* (Oxford and New York: Fordham University Press, 2011).

²⁷ John Marenbon, 'Anselm: *Proslogion*', in *Central Works of Philosophy*, ed. John Shand (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing, 2006), 169–93.

²⁸ Peter Boschung, *From a Topical Point of View: Dialectic in Anselm of Canterbury's De Grammatico* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 25. In his note 26 (page 25), Boschung notes that it might be the case that 'the library might have already possessed the theological treatises during Anselm's residence but later collected them into a volume with Gilbert's commentaries'.

²⁹ For a list of the sources of the *logica vetus*, see the preface to De Rijk's edition of Garlandus's *Dialectica*: Compotista Garlandus, *Dialectica*, ed. L.M. de Rijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959).

never assumes a world apart from and beyond the sensible world as Plato does³⁰, and that ‘Anselm’s theology is full of new-Platonic elements which he mainly learnt from Augustine. However, in purely logical matters incorporated into his theology he faithfully follows Porphyry and Boethius.’³¹ John Marenbon has illustrated that Anselm was acquainted with the *Categoriae* and *De Interpretatione* by investigating (1) Anselm’s analysis of denominative in the *De Grammatico*, (2) Anselm’s distinction between antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity in response to the question raised in Chapter 9 of *De Interpretatione*, and (3) Anselm’s notion of infinite names in Chapter 2 of the *Proslogion*.³² Recently, Toivo Holopainen has argued that Anselm’s distinction between antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity is based on Augustine’s *De Civitate Dei* V 8–11.³³ While he might be correct, his claim would not necessarily contradict the view that Anselm’s distinction was also inspired by Boethius. Perhaps Anselm did not recognise any substantial difference between these two sources.

With regard to his dialectic strategies, Peter Boschung usefully points out that pseudo-Augustinian’s *Categoriae Decem* should not be considered as a source for Anselm. Moreover, Boschung provides a good argument that according to a twelfth-century catalogue, edited by Migne, from the library at Bec, Anselm was more likely to have used the *In Topica Ciceronis Commentaria* (Boethius’ commentary on Cicero’s *Topics*, *ICT*).³⁴ Boschung provides three reasons for treating the catalogue as reliability. First, codices at St Gaul from the tenth or eleventh century and the Codex Einsiedlensis 324 also contain *ICT*. Second, this catalogue was representative of other codices created during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The only uncertain item in this catalogue is *ICT*. Although *De Topicis Differentiis* (*DDT*) is conventionally regarded as more important than *ICT* during the middle ages, various contemporary studies have indicated that *ICT* had a distinctive role, particularly in the tenth and eleventh century, and that Anselm’s dialectic was largely shaped by

³⁰ Iwakuma Yukio, ‘The Realism of Anselm and his Contemporaries’, in *Anselm: Aosta, Bec, and Canterbury*, ed. D. E. Luscombe and G. R. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 124.

³¹ *Ibid*, 125.

³² John Marenbon, ‘Anselm and The Early Medieval Aristotle’, in *Aristotle in Britain during the Middle Ages*, ed. Johan Marenbon (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 1–19.

³³ Toivo Holopainen, ‘Future Contingents in the Eleventh Century’, in *Mind and Modality: Studies in the History of Philosophy in Honour of Simo Knuuttila*, ed. Vesa Hirvonen, Toivo Holopainen, and Miira Tuominen (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 103–20.

³⁴ Anonymous, ‘Catalogus Librorum Abbatiae Beccensis Circa Seculum Duodecimum’, in *Patrologia Latina*, volume 150, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: 1850), 769A–782C.

ICT.³⁵ Moreover, the catalogue of the library at Canterbury, which was transferred from Bec, also lists *ICT* but not *DDT*.³⁶ Finally, Boschung particularly stresses that the influence of *DDT* on Anselm might be overestimated. Comparing the terminological distinction between argument (*argumentum*) and argumentation (*argumentatio*) in Anselm's *De Grammatico* and *ICT*, Boschung contends that Anselm's terminology follows *ICT* rather than that of *DDT*.³⁷

Apart from the ancient sources, Holopainen claims that Anselm's doctrines on future contingents are reminiscent of Italian discussions, especially those found in Anselm of Besate's *Rhetorimachia* and Peter Damian's *De Divina Omnipotentia*.³⁸ However, while the texts share an awareness of a common problem and similar conception of modalities, no historical evidence proves a direct connection between Anselm and his Italian contemporaries. The resemblance might have resulted from simple fact that the authors had access to the same ancient sources during the eleventh century.

Chapter 2 Anselm's Theory of Language

³⁵ The contemporary studies cited by Boschung include Niels J. Green-Pedersen, *The Tradition of the Topics in the Middle Ages: The Commentaries on Aristotle's and Boethius' 'Topics'* (München: Philosophia, 1984); Osmund Lewry, 'Boethian Logic in the Medieval West', in *Boethius: His Life, Thought and Influence*, ed. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981); Toivo Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Lothar Steiger, 'Contexte syllogismos. Über die Kunst und Bedeutung der Topik bei Anselm', in *Analecta Anselmiana* I, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Frankfurt/Main: Minerva, 1969), 107–43.

³⁶ R. M. Rhodes, *The Ancient Libraries at Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), cited by Boschung in *Topical Point of View*, 25.

³⁷ For a more detailed and comprehensive analysis, see Boschung, *Topical Point of View*, 31–65.

³⁸ Holopainen, 'Future Contingents', 103–20.

During the Carolingian age, scholars gradually disassociated Augustine's theory of verbal signs from its original rhetorical context and applied the theory to grammar, which was derived from Donatus and Priscian. Eleventh-century scholars inherited this trend, which was steadily rationalised because of a revived interest in Boethian-Aristotelian logic and the semantics of the Stoa. At the convergence of various traditions, Anselm advanced a theory of semantics under the influence of Boethian-Aristotelian logic, which has drawn the interest of modern scholars since the 1960s.³⁹ One main scholarly debate, which centres on how best to interpret Anselm's semantics, began with Desmond Paul Henry's influential research into Anselm's theory of language in *De Grammatico*. Henry produced a careful translation of that dialogue⁴⁰ as well as a detailed commentary on it.⁴¹ He also published several specialised studies on Anselm's semantics and logic that argued that the technical apparatus of Anselm's semantics is reminiscent of Lesniewski's logical systems of Ontology and Mereology and that Anselm, a consummate logician, intended to initiate a reform to replace ordinary uses of language with a logical language.⁴² Since the early 2000s, Henry's interpretation has been heavily criticised. Marilyn McCord Adams argues persuasively that Henry's project deviates from both Anselm's semantic theory and his intention in composing *De Grammatico*. On her view, the entailment from 'expert-in-grammar signifies a quality' to 'expert-in-grammar is a quality' is justified once one understands the context of Aristotle's *Categories* and accordingly distinguishes two senses of 'is'. Adams appeals to the transition from the '*lectio*' to '*quaestio*' styles of teaching during the medieval period and contends that *De Grammatico* should be treated as Anselm's own distinctive introduction to Aristotle's *Categoriae*.⁴³ John Marenbon argues that Anselm's initial consideration of '*grammaticus* is a substance' is *not* incompatible with '*grammaticus* is a quality'. Instead of developing a definitive solution, Marenbon suggests that these two claims can be explained without contradiction if one

³⁹ The secondary literature discussed in this and the next paragraph are indebted to the 'further reading' section in the online version of King's 'Anselm's Philosophy of Language': http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/articles/Anselm_on_Language.CC.pdf. This section does not appear in the published version.

⁴⁰ Desmond Paul Henry, *The De grammatico of St. Anselm: The Theory of Paronymy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964).

⁴¹ Desmond Paul Henry, *Commentary on De grammatico: The Historical-Logical Dimensions of a Dialogue of St. Anselm's* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1974) (republished in 2012).

⁴² Desmond Paul Henry, *The Logic of Anselm* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Desmond Paul Henry, *Medieval Logic and Metaphysics: A Modern Introduction* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1972) (republished in 2019 by Routledge); Desmond Paul Henry, *That Most Subtle Question (Quaestio Subtilissima): The Metaphysical Bearing of Medieval and Contemporary Linguistic Disciplines* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

⁴³ Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Re-reading *De Grammatico*, or Anselm's Introduction to Aristotle's *Categories*,' *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 2 (2000): 83–112.

attends to what the word '*grammaticus*' brings to mind in listeners.⁴⁴

Some scholars have investigated Anselm's account of semantics beyond *De Grammatico*. Marcia Lillian Colish examines Anselm's argument for the existence of God in the context of Anselm's theory of language because she regards Anselm's semantics as a practical tool for theological analysis. After providing a very detailed introduction to the historical context of Anselm's semantics, Colish identifies Anselm's grammar as part of an ongoing process in the separation of grammar and logic in medieval philosophy.⁴⁵ Tetsuro Shimizu, after introducing the semantic theories of Alcuin and the *Glosule*, compares Anselm's notion of words, concepts, and divine words with those of Abelard.⁴⁶ Anselm's account of the relation between predicates and agency and its use in connection with Anselm's notion of modalities have received systematic treatment from Eileen Serene, Douglas Walton, and Krister Segerberg.⁴⁷ I shall explore this topic in Chapters 3 and 4. Ermanno Bencivenga has written on Anselm's view on the limitations of language and 'nonsense'.⁴⁸

More recently, scholars have focused on reconstructing Anselm's philosophy of language as a whole. The work of Peter King and the collaboration between Thomas Williams and Sandra Visser examine the Anselmian corpus and reconstruct his account of semantics based on various accounts in specific works.⁴⁹ In his monograph, Peter Boschung examines the historical background of the dialectical conventions that influence Anselm, and observes that, for Anselm, appellation does not always go with *per aliud* signification.⁵⁰ Maria Cerezo, through an analysis of the semantic distinctions in the *De Grammatico*, reconstructs Anselm's solution to the problem of paronymy.⁵¹

Despite these efforts, providing a systematic and historically convincing reconstruction of

⁴⁴ Marenbon, 'Some Semantic Problems', 71–86.

⁴⁵ Marcia Lillian Colish, 'Anselm: The Definition of the Word', in *The Mirror of Language (Revised Edition): A Study of the Medieval Theory of Knowledge*, Volume 88 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983): 55–109.

⁴⁶ Tetsuro Shimizu, 'Words and concepts in Anselm and Abelard,' *Langage, sciences, philosophie au XIIIe siecle*, ed. Joel Biard (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999), 177–97.

⁴⁷ Eileen F. Serene, 'Anselm's Modal Conceptions', in *Reforging the Great Chain of Being*, ed. Simo Knuuttila (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1980); Douglas Walton, 'St. Anselm and the Logical Syntax of Agency', *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976): 298–312; and Krister Segerberg, 'Getting Started: Beginnings in the Logic of Action', *Studia Logica* 51, no. 3–4 (1992): 347–78.

⁴⁸ Ermanno Bencivenga, *Logic and Other Nonsense: The Case of Anselm and His God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

⁴⁹ King, 'Anselm's Philosophy of Language'; Williams and Visser, *Anselm*.

⁵⁰ Peter Boschung, *Topical Point of View*.

⁵¹ Maria Cerezo, 'Anselm of Canterbury's Theory of Meaning: Analysis of Some Semantic Distinctions in *De Grammatico*,' in *History of Logic and Semantics*, ed. Paloma Pérez-Ilzarbe and María Cerezo (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 56–81.

Anselm's theory of language remains a challenging task. One difficulty is that Anselm's accounts of semantics occur sporadically throughout his corpus. He never presents a comprehensive semantic theory in any one work. Another difficulty, which King identifies, is that Anselm's theory of semantics 'seems overly thin': Anselm's explanatory resources concerning the rich variety of semantic phenomena rest on a single relation designated by *significare*. Yet King also maintains that Anselm 'develops his resources in subtle and nuanced ways that give it far more flexibility than it might have seemed to possess'.⁵² Unfortunately, the lack of comprehensiveness in Anselm's theory of language adds extra difficulties for modern study. One of the most important omissions is the theory of imposition (*impositio*). David Lewis distinguishes semantic theories that ask *what* the semantic value of an expression is, from foundational theories of meaning that discuss *how*, or *in virtue of which facts*, linguistic expressions came to have their semantic values.⁵³ In medieval philosophy, the semantic value of an expression roughly corresponds to the notion of signification (*significatio*), whereas the original process of stabilising the signification of an expression is called imposition (*impositio*). By imposing a word on a thing, a stable connection between the word and a thing is established. In this process, the semantic value (i.e., the signification) enters into the word. Medieval philosophers maintain that the signification of a linguistic expression is conventional and that the conventional signification is fixed by an original name-giver.⁵⁴ Scholars identify Boethius as the first to introduce the notion of imposition to medieval philosophers. Anselm, however, never takes up the notion of imposition, nor does he offer a separate theory of *how* the conventional agreement about that a certain sign signifies a certain thing is stabilised. To make the situation worse, in *De Grammatico*, Anselm misleadingly speaks of the *per se* signification of a word as being *natural* and, in *De Veritate*, seems to imply that every word receives a *natural* power to signify. These remarks suggest that, for Anselm, the signification of ordinary language is not fixed through conventional agreement but is given and preserved by God directly.⁵⁵ On this interpretation, Anselm's theory of semantics is counterintuitive and full of strangeness: God stabilises the signification of every word and regulates what a sentence *ought to* signify. In this sense, linguistic expressions are, as are other concrete existences, natural entities that belong to the natural world

⁵² Peter King, 'Anselm's Philosophy of Language', 88.

⁵³ David Lewis, 'General Semantics', *Synthese* 22, no. 1/2 (1970): 19. See also Robert Stalnaker, 'Reference and Necessity', in *Blackwell Companion to the Philosophy of Language*, ed. Crispin Wright and Bob Hale (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1997): 534–554.

⁵⁴ Cf. Margaret Cameron, 'Meaning: Foundational and Semantic Theories', in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 344.

⁵⁵ G. R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 13; Williams and Visser, *Anselm*, 42–45.

governed by God. This view generates various problems about the use of ordinary language and the development of the linguistic system. For instance, one cannot claim, without any qualification, that human impositors or name-givers are perfectly in accord with God's imposition of words. Human beings could impose the word *x* on a thing whereas God imposes the word *y* on the very same thing. Moreover, it does not seem plausible that God would strictly regulate the complicated development of the whole linguistic system and then update the imposition of word as it changes. Even if someone were to address all its problems, the resulting interpretation itself, as I shall argue, would misrepresent Anselm's semantics. Yet this misreading would exemplify the difficulty in understanding Anselm's semantics because of his dismissal of certain topics.

In this chapter, I provide a careful analysis of the relevant passages in the *Monologion*, the *Proslogion*, *De Grammatico*, *Lambeth Fragments*, and *De Casu Diaboli*. My primary goals are to delineate Anselm's theory of language and to clear away the misrepresentations of Anselm's view in current scholarship. In addition, Anselm's philosophy of language plays an important role in his philosophical system. The ramifications of Anselm's semantic considerations are extensive insofar as almost every treatise bears some signs of them. The connection, as will emerge at the end of this chapter, is particularly close between Anselm's pragmatic semantics and his theory of modality. I divide the chapter into four sections. In the first, I outline Anselm's basic semantic structure. Starting with a passage in *Monologion* in which Anselm introduces three ways of speaking (*loquendi*), I carefully examine Anselm's notion of mental conception and his theory of signification. According to Anselm, mental conceptions are natural words about knowable things, which bear the maximum resemblance to the things for which they stand, and are shared by all human beings. Mental conceptions lay the foundation for the semantic value of conventional signs. The scope of mental conceptions ranges from corporeal things to incorporeal things as well as counterfactuals, which relate to modal truths. There are two conventional models of the relation designated by *significare*. While Augustine believes that a linguistic sign signifies a thing, Boethius argues that *significare* designates the relation between words and mental concepts. Anselm is committed to Augustine's view that a word can be used to signify a certain *thing* in terms of its signification. In the second section, I investigate Anselm's theory of truth in statements. Anselm distinguishes two levels of truth in statements. The first, ontological truth, rests on the statement's *power* to signify. The second level of truth submits to a correspondence theory of truth – a statement is true if and only if it corresponds to how things are. To be precise, the second type of truth is the correct *use* of conventional language. Only the second truth fits the *purpose* of the statements' power to signify. Therefore, when speaking of the truth value of a statement in daily life, the

criterion is correspondence. In the third section, I reconstruct Anselm's pragmatic semantics by scrutinising the semantic distinctions in *De Grammatico*. I argue that in Anselm's framework, the proper (*proprie*) use of words is the case in which the thing is signified by a word's *per se* signification *alone*, whereas the improper use is the case in which the thing cannot be signified by the word without *per aliud* signification. The proper/improper distinction does not correspond to the truth/falsehood of statements. Whether a statement is true depends on whether it fulfils its purpose: to signify how things are. Even when a word is signified in terms of *per aliud* signification within a statement, the statement can still be true despite its improper use. In the final section, I introduce Anselm's codification of the proper assignments of predicates; his principle can be applied to modal predicates coherently.

2.1 Anselm's Basic Semantic Structure

2.1.1 Three Ways of Speaking (*loquendi*)

In *Monologion* 10, Anselm distinguishes three ways of speaking (*loquendi*):

For we know from frequent experience that we can say one and the same thing in three ways. For either we say a thing [1] *by making perceptible use of perceptible signs*, that is, signs that can be perceived by the bodily senses; or [2] *by thinking imperceptibly within ourselves the very same signs that are perceptible when they are outside ourselves*; or by not using these signs at all, whether perceptibly or imperceptibly, but rather [3] *by saying the things themselves inwardly in our mind* by either a corporeal image or an understanding of reason that corresponds to the diversity of the things themselves. For example, in one way I say a man when I signify him by the word 'man', in another way when I think that same word silently, and in yet another way when my mind sees the man himself either through an image of a body (as when it imagines his sensible appearance) or through reason (as when it thinks his universal essence, which is rational, mortal animal).

Frequenti namque usu cognoscitur, quia rem unam tripliciter loqui possumus. Aut enim [1] *res loquimur signis sensibilibus*, id est quae sensibus corporeis sentiri possunt sensibilibus utendo; aut [2] *eadem signa, quae foris sensibilia sunt, intra nos insensibiliter cogitando*; aut nec sensibilibus nec insensibiliter his signis utendo, sed

[3] *res ipsas vel corporum imaginatione vel rationis intellectu pro rerum ipsarum diversitate intus in nostra mente dicendo*. Aliter namque dico hominem, cum eum hoc nomine, quod est ‘homo’, significo; aliter, cum idem nomen tacens cogito; aliter, cum eum ipsum hominem mens aut per corporis imaginem aut per rationem intuetur. Per corporis quidem imaginem, ut cum eius sensibilem figuram imaginatur; per rationem vero, ut cum eius universalem essentiam, quae est ‘animal rationale mortale’, cogitat (*Monologion* 10, S I. 24.29-25.9).

There are three ways of speaking, and each way corresponds to a kind of word (*verbi*). The first two kinds of speech involve *signs*. Anselm calls members of the third kind ‘natural words of speech’ (*naturalia verba locutionis*), and they are mental conceptions of things that do not involve any spoken or written signs. The first way of speaking is to *signify* things with signs perceptible to the senses. For instance, when I speak or write the word ‘man,’ I signify a man. The second way is to *think* non-sensibly of the sign, which stands for the thing, within one’s mind. This sort of mental word shares the phonetic features of conventional words. The third way of speaking, by contrast, is when one forms a conception of the thing in one’s mind. The human mind sees (*intuetur*) a thing in two ways. One can imagine (*imaginatur*) the thing through an image (*imaginem*) or picture (*figuram*). Or, one can understand (*cogitat*) the universal essence of the thing through reason (*rationem*). Given Anselm’s view that there are no separate, existing universals beyond the real world,⁵⁶ mental conceptions, whether of a universal or an individual, are based on how we mentally represent or understand a particular thing. An individual could be regarded either through the bodily imagination, or the common essence shared by its species.

Anselm clarifies the relation between these three sorts of word:

Each of these three kinds of utterance corresponds to its own kind of word. [1] *But the words of the kind of utterance that I put third and last, given⁵⁷ that they are about things that are not unknown, are natural*; they are the same among all peoples. Now all other words were invented on account of these natural words. Therefore, [2] *where there are natural words, no other word is necessary to know a thing*; and [3] *where natural words are impossible, no other word will serve to make a thing known*.

⁵⁶ For Anselm’s universal theory, see Iwakuma Yukio, ‘The Realism of Anselm’.

⁵⁷ Thomas Williams translates ‘cum’ as ‘when’, which suggests misleadingly that there are cases when mental conceptions are about things that are *unknown*. To avoid this misinterpretation, I have rendered it as ‘given’ because it is more appropriate to consider ‘cum’ here as providing a definition.

And it makes good sense to say that words are truer the more similar they are to, and the more distinctly they signify, the things of which they are words. Now except for those things that we use as their own names in order to signify themselves (like certain sounds: for example, the vowel ‘a’) – except for those, I say, no other word seems as similar to the things of which it is a word, or expresses it in the same way, as the likeness that is expressed in the gaze of the mind of someone who is thinking the thing itself. And so that should by right be called the most proper and principal word for the thing.

Hae vero tres loquendi varietates singulae verbis sui generis constant. [1] *Sed illius quam tertiam et ultimam posui locutionis verba, cum de rebus non ignoratis sunt, naturalia sunt* et apud omnes gentes sunt eadem. Et quoniam alia omnia verba propter haec sunt inventa: [2] *ubi ista sunt, nullum aliud verbum est necessarium ad rem cognoscendam*; [3] *et ubi ista esse non possunt, nullum aliud est utile ad rem ostendendam*. Possunt etiam non absurde dici tanto veriora, quanto magis rebus quarum sunt verba similia sunt et eas expressius signant. Exceptis namque rebus illis, quibus ipsis utimur pro nominibus suis ad easdem significandas, ut sunt quaedam voces velut ‘a’ vocalis, exceptis inquam his, nullum aliud verbum sic videtur rei simile cuius est verbum, aut sic eam exprimit, quomodo illa similitudo, quae in acie mentis rem ipsam cogitantis exprimitur. Illud igitur iure dicendum est maxime proprium et principale rei verbum (*Monologion* 10, S I. 24.27–25.22).

According to Anselm, natural words are the most *proper* ‘words’ for things because they have a maximal similarity to the things for which they stand, and these ‘words’ are the same for every rational mind. All spoken and written signs that signify knowable things are created on the basis of mental conceptions, which reflect the things’ metaphysical constitutions. In this sense, mental conceptions are *epistemically* prior to spoken and written language and lay the foundation for the signification of spoken and written signs. That is, mental conceptions are known before any vocal or written words. When a sound is significant, necessarily, there is a corresponding mental conception constitutive of its signification but not vice versa.

2.1.2 Anselm’s Theory of Mental Conception

Anselm’s account of natural words echoes both Augustine’s notion of mental words (*verbum*

mentis) and the Aristotelian view on the affections, or passions, of the mind (which were interpreted as mental conceptions) outlined in the opening chapter of *On Interpretation* (*De Interpretatione*).⁵⁸ Anselm's notion of mental conception inherits two salient features from those of Augustine and Boethius. First, mental conceptions, as with natural language, are identical for all human minds. Second, they are likeness of things. Thus, Anselm claims that mental conceptions are what is termed 'word' in its most proper sense. This is only a very brief sketch, however. It is worthwhile to take a closer look at three qualifications found in the texts cited above.

[1] 'But the words of the kind of utterance that I put third and last, *given that* they are about things that are not *unknown*, are natural' (*Sed illius quam tertiam et ultimam posui locutionis verba, cum de rebus non ignoratis sunt, naturalia sunt et apud omnes gentes sunt eadem*).

The third sort of words – mental conceptions – are natural and, thus, are identical in all human minds, *given that* they are about things which are *not unknown*. This qualification needs further specification with respect to three questions: a. How and what are things known by human beings? b. What does Anselm mean by calling the third sort of words 'natural'? c. In what sense are the conceptions 'identical' in all human minds? I explore answers to each question below.

a. How are things known and what are knowable things?

In *De Trinitate*, Augustine provides some hints:

For whereas there are two kinds of knowable things, – one, of those things which the mind perceives by the bodily senses; the other, of those which it perceives by itself,

⁵⁸ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 15.12.22: 'All these things, then, both those which the human mind knows by itself, and those which it knows by the bodily senses, and those which it has received and knows by the testimony of others, are laid up and retained in the storehouse of the memory; and from these is begotten a word that is true when we speak what we know, but a word that is before all sound, before all thought of a sound. For the word is then most like to the thing known, from which also its image is begotten, since the sight of thinking arises from the sight of knowledge; when it is a word belonging to no tongue, but is a true word concerning a true thing, having nothing of its own, but wholly derived from that knowledge from which it is born. Nor does it signify when he learned it, who speaks what he knows; for sometimes he says it immediately upon learning it; provided only that the word is true, *i.e.* sprung from things that are known' [Haec igitur omnia, et quae per se ipsum et quae per sensus sui corporis et quae testimoniis aliorum percepta scit animus humanus, thesauro memoriae condita tenet. Ex quibus gignitur verbum verum quando quod scimus loquimur sed verbum ante omnem sonum, ante omnem cogitationem soni. Tunc enim est verbum simillimum rei notae de qua gignitur et imago eius quoniam de visione scientiae visio cogitationis exoritur, quod est verbum linguae nullius, verbum verum de re vera, nihil de suo habens sed totum de illa scientia de qua nascitur].

Aristotle, *Peri Hermeneias* (*On Interpretation*) 16a3–9: 'Now those things that are in spoken sound are signs of affections in the soul, and those things that are written [are signs] of the things that are in spoken sound. And just as letters are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of – affections of the soul – are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of – actual things – are also the same. These matters have been discussed in the work *On the Soul*²¹ and do not belong to the present subject' (Aristotle, *Categories, On Interpretation, Prior Analytics*, ed. and trans. Harold P. Cook and Hugh Tredennick (Harvard University Press, 1938), 114–15).

—these philosophers have babbled much against the bodily senses, but have never been able to throw doubt upon those most certain perceptions of things true, which the mind knows by itself, such as is that which I have mentioned, I know that I am alive.⁵⁹

Cum enim duo sint genera rerum quae sciuntur, unum earum quae per sensum corporis percipit animus alterum earum quae per se ipsum, multa illi philosophi garriverunt contra corporis sensus; animi autem quasdam firmissimas per se ipsum perceptiones rerum verarum, quale illud est quod dixi: ‘Scio me vivere,’ nequaquam in dubium vocare potuerunt (*De Trinitate* 15.12.21).

All these things, then, both those which the human mind knows by itself, and those which it knows by the bodily senses, and those which it has received and knows by the testimony of others, are laid up and retained in the storehouse of the memory; and from these is begotten a word that is true when we speak what we know, but a word that is before all sound, before all thought of a sound. For the word is then most like to the thing known, from which also its image is begotten, since the sight of thinking arises from the sight of knowledge; when it is a word belonging to no tongue, but is a true word concerning a true thing, having nothing of its own, but wholly derived from that knowledge from which it is born.

Haec igitur omnia, et [1] quae per se ipsum et [2] quae per sensus sui corporis et [3] quae testimoniis aliorum percepta scit animus humanus, thesauro memoriae condita tenet. Ex quibus gignitur verbum verum quando quod scimus loquimur sed verbum ante omnem sonum, ante omnem cogitationem soni. Tunc enim est verbum simillimum rei notae de qua gignitur et imago eius quoniam de visione scientiae visio cogitationis exoritur, quod est verbum linguae nullius, verbum verum de re vera, nihil de suo habens sed totum de illa scientia de qua nascitur (*De Trinitate* 15.12.22).

⁵⁹ Latin texts of *De Trinitate* are from Augustine, *De Trinitate* libri XV (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (CCSL 50A)), ed. W.J. Mountain and F. Glorie (Turnholt: Brepols, 1968). http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/resources/augustine/De_Trinitate.txt. English translations are from Arthur West Haddan, *From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, volume 3., ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887). <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf103.iv.i.iii.html>.

Augustine clearly distinguishes two logical stages in the formation of a thought or a mental conception. In the first stage, things are known by the human mind in three ways: through the mind itself, through the bodily senses, through the testimony of others.⁶⁰ In this stage, what are known have not yet turned into a *thought* or a *mental conception*. In the second stage, the ‘word’ is begotten because a person inwardly ‘speaks’ what one has known previously. According to Augustine, this sort of word is prior to all spoken words, and shows a maximal similarity with the things that are known. Apparently, this ‘word’ is a thought (*cogitatio*) about things. Earlier in *De Trinitate*, Augustine describes what occurs in the act of thinking:

And yet who does see his own thought, I do not say with the eye of the flesh, but with the inner sight itself? Who does not see it, and who does see it? Since thought is a kind of sight of the mind; whether those things are present which are seen also by the bodily eyes, or perceived by the other senses; or whether they are not present, but their likenesses are discerned by thought; or whether neither of these is the case, but things are thought of that are neither bodily things nor likenesses of bodily things, as the virtues and vices; or as, indeed, thought itself is thought of; or whether it be those things which are the subjects of instruction and of liberal sciences; or whether the higher causes and reasons themselves of all these things in the unchangeable nature are thought of; or whether it be even evil, and vain, and false things that we are thinking of, with either the sense not consenting, or erring in its consent.

Et quis videt cogitationem suam (non oculis carnalibus dico sed ipso interiore conspectu)? Quis non eam videt, et quis eam videt? Quandoquidem cogitatio visio est animi quaedam sive adsint ea quae oculis quoque corporalibus videantur vel caeteris sentiantur sensibus, sive non adsint et eorum similitudines cogitatione cernantur. siue nihil eorum sed ea cogitentur quae nec corporalia sunt nec corporalium similitudines sicut virtutes et vitia, sicut ipsa denique cogitatio cogitatur; sive illa quae per disciplinas traduntur liberalesque doctrinas, sive omnium

⁶⁰ In Augustine’s early works, it appears that he believes one knows only when what is known is known *per se ipsum*. However, for the later Augustine, knowledge occurs through the senses. For more analysis, see John Heil, ‘Augustine’s Attack on Skepticism: The *Contra Academicos*’, *The Harvard Theological Review* 65, no.1 (1972): 99–116; Peter King, ‘Augustine on Knowledge’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, eds. Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 142–65; Andrew Louth, ‘Augustine on Language,’ *Literature and Theology* 3, no.2 (1989): 151–58.

istorum causae superiores atque rationes in natura immutabili cogitentur; sive etiam mala et uana ac falsa cogitemus vel non consentiente sensu vel errante consensu (*De Trinitate* 15.9.16).

The process of thinking is as if the interior gaze of thought ‘sees’ into the mind. When a particular thing is present, the gaze of thought sees the thing just as it is perceived by the bodily senses; when a thing is absent, the gaze of thought sees its likeness, which has been stored in the memory. The objects of thinking also include abstract concepts, reflections on what we have learned, and God.

Anselm inherits the metaphor of the gaze of thought (*cogitationis intuitu*) as indicated in this passage from a late chapter in *Monologion*:

But in a human being’s thought, when he thinks of something that exists outside his mind, the word of the thing that is thought is not born from the thing itself, since that thing is absent from the gaze of his thought; rather, the word is born from some likeness or image of the thing. That likeness or image exists in the memory of the one thinking; or else perhaps a bodily sense is conveying it into his mind from some present object right then as he is thinking.

Sed in hominis cogitatione cum cogitat aliquid quod extra eius mentem est, non nascitur verbum cogitatae rei ex ipsa re, quoniam ipsa absens est a cogitationis intuitu, sed ex rei aliqua similitudine vel imagine quae est in cogitantis memoria, aut forte quae tunc cum cogitat per corporeum sensum ex re praesenti in mentem attrahitur (*Monologion* 62, S I. 72.14–18).

For Anselm, as long as a person thinks or conceives of an external thing, the mental conception of that thing is not derived directly from the thing *itself*. If the thing is not present when the person thinks about it, the mental conception is formed on the basis of a likeness or image of the thing in one’s memory. If the thing is present when the person thinks about it, the bodily senses ‘drag’ (the image or other properties of) the thing into the mind so that it constitutes a potential object for the gaze of thought. Although Anselm does not enumerate exactly how things are known by human beings prior to the formation of mental conceptions and conventional signs, the recently quoted passage suggests that Anselm recognises sensations as a fundamentally cognitive source.

With regard to the question what are knowable, corporeal things, which can be grasped by

the bodily senses, in part constitute the objects of mental conceptions. But, for Anselm, the objects of mental conception extend to incorporeal beings and counterfactual scenarios.⁶¹ The mental conception of higher existence is an example of the former. Anselm explicitly claims that mental conceptions of higher existence should be treated differently from bodily imaginations and be contemplated by reason alone:

And since everyone ought to be admonished to approach questions concerning Holy Scripture as cautiously as possible, those dialecticians – or rather, heretics of dialectic – in our own day who suppose that universal substances are nothing but empty air, who cannot understand color to be anything but body or human wisdom to be anything but the soul, ought to be blown far away from any engagement with spiritual questions. Indeed, in their souls, reason – which ought to be the ruler and judge of everything in a human being – is so covered up by bodily imaginations that it cannot extricate itself; their reason cannot discriminate between those bodily imaginations and the things that ought to be contemplated by reason itself, alone and unmixed.

Cumque omnes ut cautissime ad sacrae paginae quaestiones accedant, sint commonendi: illi utique nostri temporis dialectici, immo dialecticae haeretici, qui non nisi flatum vocis putant universales esse substantias, et qui colorem non aliud queunt intelligere quam corpus, nec sapientiam hominis aliud quam animam, prorsus a spiritualium quaestionum disputatione sunt exsufflandi. In eorum quippe animabus ratio, quae et princeps et iudex debet omnium esse quae sunt in homine, sic est in imaginationibus corporalibus obvoluta, ut ex eis se non possit evolvere, nec ab ipsis ea quae ipsa sola et pura contemplari debet, valeat discernere (*Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* 1, S II. 9.20–10.4).

As for counterfactual scenarios, Anselm argues, in his reply to Gaunilo, that we can conceive of every existing being (with the exception of God) as not existing.⁶² This suggests that human beings

⁶¹ While individual beings are conceptual objects, counterfactual scenarios are propositional objects. However, Anselm neither has this distinction in mind nor explains the mental structure of propositional objects.

⁶² ‘For even if nothing that actually exists can be understood not to exist, everything can be thought not to exist, except for that which exists supremely’ [Nam et si nulla quae sunt possint intelligi non esse, omnia tamen possunt cogitari non esse, praeter id quod summe est] (*Responsio*, S I. 133.30–134.2).

can grasp modal truths through their rationality. I will address this topic in detail in Chapter 4.

Yet Anselm does not mean that we can conceive incorporeal things or counterfactuals without the bodily senses. Rather, mental conceptions start from bodily senses. We must appeal to reason to correct misrepresentations that our bodily imaginations cause. In any case, a mental conception links to the external world once our bodily senses have interacted with objects in the world and have obtained some information (irrespective of its truth-value) about the world. On this basis, the mind further *processes* and, simultaneously, *expresses* that information through the mental act of thinking or conceiving. This process either is through the imagination by means of *reproducing* the image according to how it has been perceived by bodily senses, or through reason by understanding or abstracting its universal essence. As Anselm writes in *Monologion* 32: ‘For every word by which a thing is uttered by the mind is a likeness of that thing’ [Cum omne verbum quo aliqua res sic mente dicitur, similitudo sit rei eiusdem] (S I 50.17–18). This suggests that by saying ‘likeness’, Anselm is not considering pictorial resemblance but is considering the degree of accuracy in the conception because, although it is plausible that an image would be pictorially similar to the thing, the understanding of the thing’s universal essence would have little resemblance to any particulars.⁶³

b. What does Anselm mean by speaking of the third sort of words as ‘natural’?

Anselm calls mental conceptions ‘*natural*’ words rather than those words we express through conventional signs. He inherits this terminology from Boethius, who claims that thoughts are the same for all and, therefore, are natural.⁶⁴ Therefore, Anselm’s use ‘natural’ is in the sense of *unanimity*. Additionally, Anselm thinks that correct thoughts are natural because *natural* mechanisms in human minds form a *correct* conception of what was previously been known by the mind. The mechanism, which is God-given, operates through the faculties of imagination and rationality. The former reproduces the image of things, the latter understands the universal essences of things.

⁶³ Cf. King, ‘Anselm’s Philosophy of Language’, 87: ‘To get something into the mind . . . we use a variety of more or less accurate means, ranging from mental images to rational conceptions. Hence likeness is a matter of accuracy, not pictorial resemblance, in the means we use to conceive something.’

⁶⁴ ‘We must say that things and thoughts are constituted naturally since they are the same for everyone’ [dicendum est res et intellectus, quoniam apud omnes idem sunt, esse naturaliter constitutos] (PH2. 23.1–3). Latin texts of Boethius’ longer commentary on *De Interpretatione* are from *Commentarii in librum Aristotelis Peri Hermeneias pars posterior*, ed. C. Meiser (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880)(=PH2). http://individual.utoronto.ca/pking/resources/boethius/Perihermeneias.comm_maiores.txt. English translation are from Andrew Smith, *Boethius: On Aristotle On Interpretation 1–3* (London: Duckworth, 2010).

c. In what sense are the conceptions ‘identical’ in all human minds?

Natural words, mental conceptions, are identical in all human minds, but they are *numerically* distinct in everyone’s mind. As Anselm explains:

For if several human beings utter some one thing in their thought, there appear to be as many words of that thing as there are people thinking, since a word of that thing exists in the thoughts of each of them. Similarly, if one human being thinks of several things, there are as many words in the mind of the thinker as there are things being thought.

Si enim plures homines unum aliquid cogitatione dicant: tot eius videntur esse verba, quot sunt cogitantes, quia in singulorum cogitationibus verbum eius est. Item si unus homo cogitet plura aliqua, tot verba sunt in mente cogitantis, quot sunt res cogitatae (*Monologion* 62, S I. 72. 10–13).

According to Anselm, natural words are merely *type*-identical and not token identical in human minds. By claiming that every mental conception about known things is qualitatively identical in all human minds, Anselm maintains that mental conceptions constitute a normative component in language, which enables communication and acquisition of knowledge about the world.

[2] ‘Where there are natural words, no other word is necessary to know a thing’ [*Ubi ista sunt, nullum aliud verbum est necessarium ad rem cognoscendam*].

Anselm contends that mental conception is sufficient for a rational mind to know a thing because, through the process of mental conception, a piece of fully-fledged knowledge is formed. In saying that ‘no other words are necessary for a thing to be known’, Anselm is not rejecting the view that we need a conventional language to convey knowledge. (As I explain soon, Anselm recognises the essential role of conventional language in communicating knowledge.) Instead, Anselm emphasises that mental conceptions are *more direct*, *expressive*, and *precise* than conventional words. Therefore, no other words are required to convey what mental conceptions do.

[3] ‘And where natural words are impossible, no other word will serve to make a thing known’ [*Et ubi ista esse non possunt, nullum aliud est utile ad rem ostendendam*].

For Anselm, a mental conception constitutes a necessary condition for possessing

knowledge about things. Knowledge about things is *in the first place* expressed through the whole set of natural words. Without the foundation of a mental conception, a conventional utterance cannot qualify as a bearer of knowledge. As Anselm writes in *Prosologion* 4:

There must be more than one way in which something is ‘said in one’s heart’ or ‘thought.’ In one way, to think a thing is to think the word that signifies that thing. But in another way, it is to understand what the thing is. God can be thought not to exist in the first way, but not at all in the second way. No one who understands what God is can think that God does not exist, although he may say these words in his heart with no signification at all, or with some peculiar signification.

Non uno tantum modo dicitur aliquid in corde vel cogitatur. Aliter enim cogitatur res cum vox eam significans cogitatur, aliter cum id ipsum quod res est intelligitur. Illo itaque modo potest cogitari deus non esse, isto vero minime. Nullus quippe intelligens id quod deus est, potest cogitare quia deus non est, licet haec verba dicat in corde, aut sine ulla aut cum aliqua extranea significatione (*Prosologion* 4, S I. 103.17–104.2).

The fool may think the sentence ‘God does not exist’ silently, either by employing an idiosyncratic conception of God, which misrepresents the status of God, or without any mental conception at all. In the first case, that sentence might have a strange (*extraneus*) signification that fails to establish a *correct* understanding of God. The meaning of ‘*extraneus*’ is unclear. However, on Anselm’s view it is clear that the conception of God without the property of existence is contradictory and irrational (see my analysis in Chapter 4). Thus, the fool’s conception can in no way correspond to any metaphysical fact. Anselm does not explain how false mental conceptions arise, nor does he explain why, in fact, not all mental conceptions about knowable things are the same among all human minds. One plausible explanation is that, when Anselm speaks of mental conceptions as natural words, he refers to only those mental conceptions that *correctly* grasp how things are by *rationality*. Everybody has the power of rationality equally, yet not everyone exercises it correctly. In the second case, the signification is completely absent in the sentence ‘God does not exist’ because of missing mental conception that represents the Fool’s cognitive content. So, the sentence is ‘vacuous’.

2.1.3 Anselm’s Theory of *Significare*

In this section, I discuss Anselm's view of the semantic relation established by *significare*. To avoid ambiguity, I distinguish between signification and significate: the former is a property of a sign and plays an essential role in the *activity* of signifying, whereas the latter is whatever the sign signifies.

There are two distinct theories of signification in the Augustinian tradition and the Boethian-Aristotelian tradition. The theories designate different relations between words, things, and mental conceptions. I sketch each model before turning to Anselm's theory.

Augustine believes that signification establishes the relation between words and things. Humans use conventional signs to communicate their thought:

Given signs are those which living things give to each other, in order to show, to the best of their ability, the emotions of their minds, or anything that they have felt or learnt. There is no reason for us to signify something (that is, to give a sign) except to express and transmit to another's mind what is in the mind of the person who gives the sign.⁶⁵

Data vero signa sunt quae sibi quaeque viventia invicem dant ad demonstrandos quantum possunt motus animi sui vel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet. Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit qui signum dat (*De Doctrina Christiana* 2.3).

To communicate, a speaker uses a conventional sign to signify the things that the speaker intends to refer to so that the signs cause a thought into a hearer's mind. In *De Trinitate*, Augustine clarifies his view in more detail:

Whoever, then, is able to understand a word, not only before it is uttered in sound, but also before the images of its sounds are considered in thought, – for this it is which belongs to no tongue, to wit, of those which are called the tongues of nations, of which our Latin tongue is one; – whoever, I say, is able to understand this, is able now to see through this glass and in this enigma some likeness of that Word of whom

⁶⁵ Latin texts and English translations of *De Doctrina Christiana* are from Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. and trans. R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). Oxford Scholarship Online, 2004. <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/0198263341.001.0001/acprof-9780198263340>.

it is said, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ (John i.1) . . . letters have been invented that we might be able to converse also with the absent; but these are signs of words, as words themselves are signs in our conversation of those things which we think.

Quisquis igitur potest intellegere verbum non solum antequam sonet, verum etiam antequam sonorum eius imagines cogitatione voluantur (hoc est enim quod ad nullam pertinet linguam, earum scilicet quae linguae appellantur gentium quarum nostra latina est), quisquis, inquam, hoc intellegere potest iam potest videre per hoc speculum atque in hoc aenigmate aliquam verbi illius similitudinem de quo dictum est: In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud deum, et deus erat verbum . . . Inventae sunt etiam litterae per quas possemus et cum absentibus conloqui, sed ista signa sunt vocum, cum ipsae voces in sermone nostro earum quas cogitamus signa sint rerum (*De Trinitate* 15.10.19).

In the Augustinian tradition, *significare* designates a referential relation between words and things. Spoken signs signify things directly in terms of their signification. So, when a speaker says ‘apple’, he refers to an apple in reality. The speaker says ‘apple’ because he is thinking of an apple at that moment and he wants to express his thought. When a competent hearer hears the word ‘apple’, she realises that the speaker is referring to an apple in reality, and then she forms a conception of the apple in her mind according to how apples are in reality. The logical order is as follows: the spoken sign ‘apple’ - the real apple - the conception of apple.

The Boethian-Aristotelian tradition, in contrast, maintains that spoken words *principally* signify thoughts (*intellectus*) in the mind and *secondarily* things (*res*) by the *mediation* of

thoughts.⁶⁶ Boethius' view on signification is consistently a one-stage process and, as he modifies in the second commentary, spoken words signify *only* thoughts. As Taki Suto explains:

When Boethius says that spoken words signify things by the mediation of thoughts, we should not understand by the expression 'mediation' (*medietas*) that something else besides the thoughts is also signified . . . but that the very contents inside the thoughts are signified when the spoken words signify the thoughts.⁶⁷

In the Boethian-Aristotelian tradition, signifying is not a referential relation. Rather, spoken signs signify only the content of thought. When a speaker says 'apple', the word signifies the mental concept apple, which is shared by everyone, including the speaker. So, when a speaker thinks the concept apple and wants someone else to have the same thought (or, more precisely, another token of the same type), the speaker speaks the word in the language everybody shares that signifies the concept. When a hearer hears that word, she thinks the content of the conception signified by the word. Because the content of a mental conception is a likeness of the thing represented, the mental conception functions similar to a referential term. So through her mental conception, the hearer can relate the sign 'apple' to the external world. The logical order according to this model is: the spoken sign 'apple' – the concept apple – the real apple.

Now that I have explained the traditional theories of signification, I examine Anselm's

⁶⁶ See Boethius's account of *ordo orandi* in PH2. 20.12–26: 'For if there is to be questioning and answering or continuous and coherent speech so that another person hears and understands, if anyone is to teach, another learn, the whole arrangement of speech consists of these three: things, thoughts and spoken sounds. The thing is conceived in a thought. Spoken sound signifies the concepts of the mind and thoughts, whilst the thoughts themselves both conceptualise the things which underlie them and are signified by spoken sounds. Then although there are three things by which all speech and conversation is brought about – the things which act as subject, the thoughts which conceive them and are in turn signified by spoken sounds, and the spoken sounds which indicate the thoughts, there is also a fourth thing, by which the spoken sounds themselves can be indicated, the letters. For written letters signify the actual spoken sounds' [Sive enim quaelibet interrogatio sit atque responsio, sive perpetua cuiuslibet orationis continuatio atque alterius auditus et intelligentia, sive hic quidem doceat ille vero discat, tribus his totus orandi ordo perficitur: rebus, intellectibus, vocibus. Res enim ab intellectu concipitur, vox vero conceptiones animi intellectusque significat, ipsi vero intellectus et concipiunt subiectas res et significantur a vocibus. Cum igitur tria sint haec per quae omnis oratio conlocutioque perficitur, res quae subiectae sunt, intellectus qui res concipiant et rursus a vocibus significantur, voces vero quae intellectus designent, quantum quoque quiddam est, quo voces ipsae valeant designari, id autem sunt litterae. Scriptae namque litterae ipsas significant voces].

And in PH2. 33.27–31: 'It remains to add why he didn't say "the things that are in spoken sound are the signs of thoughts" but rather "signs of the affections in the soul". For since the things that are in spoken sound signify things and thoughts, thoughts in a primary way and the things which intelligence itself comprehends, by a secondary signification through the medium of thoughts, the thoughts themselves are not without some affections which enter the soul from the underlying things' [Restat igitur ut illud quoque addamus, cur non ita dixerit: sunt ergo ea quae sunt in voces intellectuum notae sed ita earum quae sunt in anima passionum notae. Nam cum ea quae sunt in voce res intellectusque significant, principaliter quidem intellectus, res vero quas ipsa intelligentia comprehendit secundaria significatione per intellectuum medietatem, intellectus ipsi non sine quibusdam passionibus sunt, quae in animam ex subiectis veniunt rebus].

⁶⁷ Taki Suto, *Boethius on Mind, Grammar and Logic* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 34.

account of signification. First, Anselm, following his ancient predecessors, does not go as far as claiming that mental conceptions are signs that have the function of signifying.⁶⁸ Stephan Meier-Oeser has argued that only from the late thirteenth century were mental concepts officially regarded as signs.⁶⁹ Generally, Anselm's understanding of sign is a continuation of the Augustinian system. Anselm follows Augustine's division of all signs into two groups: natural signs (*signa naturalia*) and given/conventional signs (*signa data*). Anselm accepts the notion of natural signs insofar as he calls human actions 'signs' in *De Veritate*.⁷⁰ As for conventional signs, Anselm speaks of only spoken words as conventional signs.

Although Anselm does not provide an explicit account of the function of conventional signs in human communication, his discussion in *Monologion* 10 supplies some hints for developing his view. Recall the passage from the start of section 2.1.1 that introduces Anselm's view of three ways of speaking. While Anselm uses *significare* and *dicere* interchangeably from time to time, he always uses *significare* and *cogitare* distinctly. He uses *significare* and *dicere* when discussing only the first way of speaking; he uses *cogitare* when discussing the second and third ways of speaking. Of course, this does not mean that Anselm treats *significare* and *dicere* the same. Yet his usage suggests that *significare* is characteristic of perceptiveness because he usually regards *dicere* as an externally observable behaviour and *cogitare* as an inner act. These usages suggest that Anselm inherited thinking of perceptiveness as a substantial feature of the sign. Insofar as the main function of a sign is to bring something other than itself into someone's *mind* through itself, whether the sign is effective depends on its perceptiveness.⁷¹ Thus, only conventional signs can contribute to human communication. Mental conceptions do not have a signification function because a mental conception is not *transmissible* and *perceptible*. Human beings cannot communicate their mental conceptions directly, despite the fact that correct mental conceptions are the most proper 'words' for

⁶⁸ I disagree with Peter King on this point. Peter King classifies mental conceptions as non-sensible signs. See King, 'Anselm's Philosophy of Language,' 85.

⁶⁹ Stephan Meier-Oeser, 'Medieval Semiotics, Section 6', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/semiotics-medieval/>.

⁷⁰ 'Then let us see how widespread the truth of signification is. *For there is true and false signification not only in what we usually call signs, but also in all the other things we have discussed.* After all, since no one should do anything but what he ought to do, by the very fact that someone does something, he says and signifies that he ought to do it. And if he ought to do what he does, he says something true; but if he ought not, he lies' [Videamus ergo quam lata sit veritas significationis. *Namque non solum in iis quae signa solemus dicere, sed et in aliis omnibus quae diximus est significatio vera vel falsa.* Quoniam namque non est ab aliquo faciendum nisi quod quis debet facere, eo ipso quod aliquis aliquid facit, dicit et significat hoc se debere facere. Quod si debet facere quod facit, verum dicit. Si autem non debet, mentitur] (*De Veritate* 9, S.I. 189.2–7).

⁷¹ 'For a sign is a thing which of itself makes some other thing come to mind, besides the impression that it presents to the senses' [Signum est enim res praeter speciem quam ingerit sensibus aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire] (Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* 1.1)

things. Accordingly, I think it is plausible that, first, Anselm did not classify mental conceptions as signs and, second, following Augustine, he also thinks that conventional signs play an important role in human communication.

With regard to the significate of conventional sign, Anselm accepts the Augustinian model, rather than the Boethian model, of the significate of conventional signs. Anselm thinks that the significate of a vocal or written sign is the *thing* rather than the *content* (i.e., the likeness of things themselves) of mental conception. Anselm writes: ‘And it makes good sense to say that words are truer the more similar they are to, and the more distinctly they signify the things of which they are words’ [Possunt etiam non absurde dici tanto veriora, quanto magis rebus quarum sunt verba similia sunt et eas expressius signant] (*Monologion* 10, S I 25.15–17). In addition, Anselm often uses either the structure ‘I use the name “man” to signify that man’ or ‘something is signified’. In this sense, signification is concerned only with a relation between linguistic signs and things. Thus, from the perspective of modern semantics, Anselm’s notion of *significare* has the function of *reference*, at least in the broadest sense, which designates a relation between representational tokens and objects. However, we need to pause here and consider more carefully what exactly is the significate in Anselm’s theory of signification. Two considerations warrant more attention. First, Anselm considers the signification of a statement, though he does not explicitly distinguish between conceptual objects and propositional objects. For him, ‘things’ (*res*) is a very loose concept that ranges from individual beings to facts, events, and even states of affairs. Second, Anselm’s concept of signification is similar to the modern notion of Fregean sense, insofar as the sense of an expression is what people grasp when they understand words. As I discuss in more detail in the third section of this chapter, Anselm elaborates the notion of signification in *De Grammatico* by introducing the distinction between *per se* signification and *per aliud* signification. The former arguably derives from imposition, while the latter is based on people’s psychological analysis of extra information in the context of utterance. Depending on the ways people understand the signification of an utterance, the significate will vary. That is, a linguistic expression signifies a thing in the mind rather than that thing in the world. What is the thing in the mind? Is it a memory stored in the mind, that represents how things are without any errors? Not exactly. In his framework, the thing in the mind partly resembles the notion of an intentional object because not every significate exists in the world. For example, when I say, ‘the white is in the house’, I refer to the white horse which is actually in the house. Yet you might misunderstand ‘the white’ as referring to a white person, who is in the house. In this case, the significate of your token ‘the white’ does not have a significate in the real world. However, although the significate does not posit any ontological

status, the interlocutors' intention is directed to the external world. There is still an *intentional* referential relation between words and things. Indeed, Anselm does not elaborate the notion of signification to this extent. My point is that we need to be aware of the implications of Anselm's theory of signification as well as its mixed traits.

2.2 Anselm's Theory of Truth

I now turn to some passages from *De Veritate* 2, in which Anselm discusses the criteria for a true *sentence*. Anselm does not distinguish between sentences (*orationes*), propositions (*propositiones*), and statements (*enuntiationes*).⁷² Yet his discussion of the truth values of sentences is about the truth of statements, or declarative sentences, which are the bearers of truth values.

Anselm distinguishes two truths of a statement:

Student: I understand what you're saying. But teach me how I could respond if someone were to say that even when a statement signifies that what-is-not is, it signifies what it ought to. A statement, after all, has received (the power) to signify both that what-is is, and that what-is-not is – for if it had not received (the power) to signify that even what-is-not is, it would not signify this. So even when it signifies that what-is-not is, it signifies what it ought to. But if, as you have shown, it is correct and true by signifying what it ought to, then a statement is true even when it states that what-is-not is.

Teacher: Certainly it is not customary to call a statement true when it signifies that what-is-not is; nonetheless, it has truth and rectitude, in that it is doing what it ought to. But when it signifies that what-is is, it is doing what it ought to in two ways, since it not only signifies what it received (the power) to signify but also signifies in keeping with the purpose for which it was made. We customarily call a statement correct and true according to the rectitude and truth by which it signifies that what-is is, not according to that by which it signifies that even what-is-not is. After all, what a statement ought to do depends more on the purpose for which it received (its power) of signification than on what was not the purpose for receiving signification; and the only reason it received (the power) to signify that a thing is when it is not, or

⁷² Sentences are general linguistic expressions composed of a subject and a predicate. Propositions have truth values. Statements or declarative sentences express propositions.

that a thing is not when it is, was that it was not possible for it to be given only (the power) of signifying that a thing is when it is, or that it is not when it is not. Therefore, the rectitude and truth that a statement has because it signifies in keeping with the purpose for which it was made is one thing; that which it has because it signifies what it received (the power) to signify is quite another. The latter is invariable for a given statement, whereas the former is variable, since a statement always has the latter but does not always have the former. For it has the latter naturally, while it has the former accidentally and according to its use.

Discipulus. Video quod dicis. Sed doce me quid respondere possim, si quis dicat quia, etiam cum oratio significat esse quod non est, significat quod debet. Pariter namque accepit significare esse, et quod est et quod non est. Nam si non accepisset significare esse etiam quod non est, non id significaret. Quare etiam cum significat esse quod non est, significat quod debet. At si quod debet significando recta et vera est, sicut ostendisti: vera est oratio, etiam cum enuntiat esse quod non est.

Magister. Vera quidem non solet dici cum significat esse quod non est; ueritatem tamen et rectitudinem habet, quia facit quod debet. Sed cum significat esse quod est, dupliciter facit quod debet; quoniam significat et quod accepit significare, et ad quod facta est. Sed secundum hanc rectitudinem et ueritatem qua significat esse quod est, usu recta et vera dicitur enuntiatio; non secundum illam qua significat esse etiam quod non est. Plus enim debet propter quod accepit significationem, quam propter quod non accepit. Non enim accepit significare esse rem cum non est, vel non esse cum est, nisi quia non potuit illi dari tunc solummodo significare esse quando est, vel non esse quando non est. Alia igitur est rectitudo et ueritas enuntiationis, quia significat ad quod significandum facta est; alia uero, quia significat quod accepit significare. Quippe ista immutabilis est ipsi orationi, illa uero mutabilis. Hanc namque semper habet, illam uero non semper. Istam enim naturaliter habet, illam uero accidentaliter et secundum usum (*De Veritate* 2, S I. 178.28–179.15).

According to Williams and Visser, Anselm's account of truth in statements is a kind of two-edged correspondence theory: 'A statement is true when it corresponds *both* to the way things are *and* to the purpose of making statements. Now Anselm holds that the purpose of making statements

just is to signify the way things are, so the two correspondences cannot pull apart.’⁷³ Also, Williams and Visser appeal to the modern type-token distinction to explain Anselm’s truth theory of sentences; they argue that, for Anselm, ‘a statement (*oratio*) is a type, not a token. The token is a use of the type, and such use is correct – or true – when the speaker uses the type in accordance with the purpose for which the type was made.’⁷⁴ The application of the token-type distinction is imprecise because, for Anselm, the correspondence theory of truth is merely about the second truth (i.e. the *use* of statements). If Williams’s translation of Anselm’s expression *accepit significare esse* as ‘a statement receives a nature power to signify’ is correct,⁷⁵ the first truth in statements lies in its *power* to signify, which is received from God. When the propositional content of a statement fails to correspond to an actual scenario, the statement still has a truth with respect to its power to signify. The underlying premise is that the power is ultimately God-given. Whatever is from God has correctness. It is more plausible to regard Anselm’s first truth in statements as a truth on the level of ontology. Anselm clearly indicates that the indexical sentence ‘it is a day’ has the first sort of truth wherever and whenever it is spoken. So, the first sort of truth does not lie in the statement-type because a statement-type that contains an indexical does not have a determinate truth value. Although Anselm’s account of statements seems similar to the modern notion of statement-type, insofar as they both might have the feature of *indexicality*, the reasons that they have this feature are completely different. According to the modern type-token distinction, sentence types without an indexical, for instance, ‘snow is white’ or ‘a man is a stone’, have definite truth values because the former corresponds to how things are and the latter does not. Indeed, sentence types containing an indexical have a meaning, but do not bear a truth value because the relation between the sentence type and the world is *indeterminate* and not because the criteria for its truth value, which involves a corresponding relation to the world, is inapplicable. In this case, only sentence tokens have a truth value in terms of the relation between its propositional content and the world. Different sentence tokens of the same sentence type might have different truth values because they express different propositional content in different contexts. By contrast, for Anselm’s notion of statements, the first truth in statements is an ontological truth, relying on the power to signify, the criteria for which are irrelevant to the relation between the propositional content and the actual world.

⁷³ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 42.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 45.

⁷⁵ As Williams’s explains in footnote 7 of his translation of *De Veritate*, the linguistic construction of Anselm’s speaking of a statement’s signifying is the same as the case when Anselm says that the angel receives the power from God to choose freely. Thus, the natural power of signifying is also from God. See Thomas Williams, *Anselm: Basic Writings* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2008), 121.

However, it is uncertain whether Anselm thinks that a logically impossible statement has an ontological truth or not. Consider the statement ‘the man is a stone’. Does this statement have the power to signify? It is right to say that the individual components of the statement, e.g. ‘man’ and ‘stone’, have the power to signify, yet when combined in use, they do not signify any possible state of affairs. There are two possible interpretations. First, that a statement has the power to signify means that a statement can correspond to a possible state of affairs. Therefore, if a statement can in no way correspond to the metaphysical constitution, it loses the power to signify. Second, that a statement has the power to signify means that a statement can at least generate some understanding in a hearer’s mind (e.g., this statement is false), provided that the speaker has the *intention* to refer to an eternal scenario. On this reading, even a logically impossible statement has the power to signify. Anselm does not state his position on this issue.

Visser and Williams also misrepresent Anselm’s thought insofar as they interpret Anselm as holding the positions that God is the author of human language and that God determines both what a word can signify and its purpose.⁷⁶ Despite the obvious strangeness of this interpretation, which they themselves recognise,⁷⁷ some passages seem to support their interpretation. In *De Veritate* 5, Anselm explicitly notes that the (first) truth in statements cannot be separated from natural truth:

So since it is established that there is a natural truth in action as well as a non-natural truth, that truth in statements which we saw above cannot be separated from them should be classified as *natural* truth. For just as fire when it heats, does the truth, since it received (the power) to heat from the one who gave it being, so also the statement ‘It is day’ does the truth when it signifies that it is day, whether it is actually day or not, since *it received naturally (the power) to do this*.

Cum ergo constet actionis veritatem aliam esse naturalem, aliam non naturalem: sub *naturali* ponenda est illa veritas orationis, quam supra vidimus ab illa non posse separari. Sicut enim ignis cum calefacit veritatem facit, quia ab eo accepit a quo habet esse: ita et haec oratio, scilicet ‘dies est’, veritatem facit, cum significat diem

⁷⁶ Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God*, 42–45.

⁷⁷ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 45: ‘The strangeness of the view lies not in the mere claim that God makes natural-language statement-types. ... The strangeness lies instead in the teleological element of Anselm’s claim. God not only makes the type “It is day” but confers on it its purpose of signifying that it is day (when, in fact, it is day). So if the English language had developed in such a way that we all used “It is day” to express what we now mean by saying “It is obligatory,” we would all be misusing that statement-type. We would be violating God’s will for our linguistic practices.’

esse, sive dies sit sive non sit; quoniam hoc *naturaliter accepit facere* (*De Veritate* 5, S I. 183.1–6).

However, that the power to signify is a natural power derived from God does not necessarily entail that God is the direct author of human language. An alternative interpretation is that God endows human beings with the power to invent signs, impose significates on linguistic signs, and use the signs to communicate. On this reading, the power of the sentence ‘it is a day’ to signify that it is a day is natural, despite its being conventional, because humans’ powers come from God and, thus, is natural.

Visser and Williams admit that this interpretation mitigates the problem, yet they immediately present an objection: ‘unfortunately, Anselm himself cannot take this approach, since it involves conceding that creatures do have a limited power to create natures and confer purposes on them.’⁷⁸ But if we accept that the significate of spoken words is conventional, it does necessarily follow that creatures have a limited power to create *natures*. A thing’s power does not necessarily hinge on its own nature. It can be the case the power is derived from the nature of another thing. Indeed, each statement that has the power to signify also has an ontological truth. This is not because it has an ‘artificial’ nature but because God permits the existence of this power insofar as human have the capability to invent the significant signs. The power of statements to signify is derived from the natural power of humans.

God *is* and sustains the rectitude of everything, and Anselm’s notion of rectitude is *teleological*. Therefore, according to Anselm, it is correct to say that God confers the purpose of statements but does so in a limited sense. God regulates the purpose of statements so that they signify what is the case rather than intervene in the process of how a semantic value enters into a linguistic sign. Thus, rectitude lies in a correspondence *relation* between the signification and the world. The rectitude exists constantly, independently of the actuality of the relation, as Anselm indicates in a later chapter of *De Veritate*:

So when rectitude is present in signification, it’s not because rectitude begins to exist in signification when someone signifies that what-is is, or that what-is-not is not; instead, it’s because at that time signification comes about in accordance with a rectitude that always exists. And when rectitude is absent from signification, it’s not

⁷⁸ Ibid, 46.

because rectitude ceases to exist when signification is not what it should be or there is no signification at all; instead, it's because at that time signification falls away from a rectitude that never fails. Don't you see that?

An ergo non vides quia non ideo est rectitudo in significatione, quia tunc incipit esse cum significatur esse quod est, vel non esse quod non est, sed quia significatio tunc fit secundum rectitudinem quae semper est; nec ob hoc abest a significatione, quia perit cum non sicut debet aut cum nulla sit significatio, sed quoniam tunc significatio defecti a non deficiente rectitudine? (*De Veritate* 13, S I. 198.11–16)

The second truth in statements, as Anselm explains in *De Veritate* 2, qualifies the correct *use* of a sentence. Thus, it is the truth in human acts. Yet so long as a sentence is *used* to signify a fact, this sentence *itself* is said to be true *according to common uses*. When Anselm contends that a statement is true in terms of teleological criteria, he means that someone's *act* in expressing a statement is correct and, thus, the *purpose* of the sentence is *actually* fulfilled.

That God confers the purpose of statements does not undermine the importance of human intentions in using language. From the premise that the divine-designed purpose of sentences is to signify what is the case is, we can conclude that that people *ought to* willingly set their purposes in signifying how things are when they use language. What a person *ought to* do does not conflict with what one actually intends to do.

These remarks, I think, again imply that Anselm emphasizes the role of *communication* and suggest that the purpose of communication is to convey *what is true*. Thus, communication is very important in living righteously. We cannot communicate the content of our mental conceptions directly (though they are the most proper 'words' for things) and need the system of perceptible signs (i.e., conventional language) to signify the *things* that we intend to refer to. Importantly, we need to use these perceptible signs correctly so that we can communicate truths such that we convey the correct understanding to another person's mind. In this process, our speech acts can have rectitude, and we can live righteously. Moreover, Anselm accepts that the desire to pursue knowledge is rooted in rational human nature. God wills human beings to pursue knowledge because God endowed humans with rationality and free will and, consequently, human beings are expected to acquire knowledge about God and to love God.

However, in practice, the linguistic system is imprecise, which affects our reliability in communicating truths. Anselm's reaction to this complexity is two-edged. On the one hand,

Anselm demonstrates a tolerant attitude towards various ordinary uses of language; on the other hand, Anselm develops a systematic semantic theory that requires a more rigorous understanding of language, especially when one speaks of God's nature and attributes or argues for a theological point. These two attitudes, as we shall see, do not necessarily conflict with each other.

2.3 Anselm's Pragmatic Semantics in *De Grammatico*

The *De Grammatico* is Anselm's only completed work that exclusively focuses on a semantic problem. This treatise begins with a question about denominative things: whether *grammaticus* (an expert-in-grammar) is a substance or a quality. Anselm then sets up the conflict as between two traditions: logicians, of the Aristotelian tradition, maintain that *grammaticus* is a quality, while the grammarian (i.e., Priscian) regards *grammaticus* as a substance. Anselm argues that *grammaticus* is both substance and quality but is so in different respects. Anselm clarifies these 'different respects' step by step as the dialogue proceeds. In Chapters 2–9, Anselm argues that it is *false* that a *grammaticus* is not a man or a substance without qualification. In Chapter 9, the student objects to this conclusion by putting forward Aristotle's argument (from the *Categoriae*) for the statement that no *grammaticus* is a man. Anselm has the master reply that Aristotle here means to say that the name '*grammaticus*' *per se* is *significative* of a quality. Thus, the semantic element enters into Anselm's argument. The metaphysical question of whether *grammaticus* is a substance or a quality becomes a semantic question about whether the word '*grammaticus*' signifies a substance or a quality. In the subsequent chapters, Anselm elaborates his semantic distinctions between signification and appellation, between *per se* and *per aliud* signification, and between proper and improper uses of a word. For Anselm, the word '*grammaticus*' is properly significant of a quality but appellative of a substance. In this section, rather than examine Anselm's reply, I restrict myself to an investigation of his semantic concepts in *De Grammatico* to explain his theory of pragmatic semantics.

2.3.1 *Per Se* Signification versus *Per Aliud* Signification

First, consider Anselm's distinction between *per se* signification and *per aliud* signification:

It is not the case that the name 'expert-in-grammar' signifies as a single thing man and expertise-in-grammar; rather, of and by itself it signifies expertise-in-grammar, and on the basis of something else it signifies man. Moreover, although the name 'expert-in-grammar' is appellative of (a) man, nevertheless it is *not proper* to say

that it signifies man; and although ‘expert-in-grammar’ signifies expertise-in-grammar, nevertheless it is not appellative of expertise-in-grammar. Now, I term the name of any given thing appellative of it if this thing is called by this name in the customary course of speaking. For example, it does not accord with the customary way of speaking to say ‘Expertise-in-grammar is (an) expert-in-grammar’ or ‘(An) expert-in-grammar is expertise-in-grammar.’ But [it does accord with the customary way of speaking to say] ‘A man is (an) expert-in-grammar’ and ‘An expert-in-grammar is a man.’⁷⁹

‘Grammaticus’ vero non significat hominem et grammaticam ut unum, sed grammaticam per se et hominem per aliud significat. Et hoc nomen quamvis sit appellativum hominis, *non* tamen *proprie* dicitur eius significativum; et licet sit significativum grammaticae, non tamen est eius appellativum. Appellativum autem nomen cuiuslibet rei nunc dico, quo res ipsa usu loquendi appellatur. Nullo enim usu loquendi dicitur: grammatica est grammaticus, aut: grammaticus est grammatica; sed: homo est grammaticus, et grammaticus homo (*De Grammatico* 12, S I. 157.1-8).

Consider also that of these two significations the one which exists of and by itself belongs to significant utterances *substantially*; but the other signification belongs to them *accidentally*. For example, when in the definition of ‘name’ or of ‘verb’ it is said that a name or a verb is a significant utterance, we must interpret ‘significant’ to mean only the signification which exists of and by itself. For if that signification which exists on the basis of something else had to be included in the definition of a name or of a verb, then ‘today’s’ would no longer be a name but would be a verb. For in terms of this [accidental] signification ‘today’s’ would upon occasion signify something together with signifying a time (as I said earlier). And this is the characteristic of a verb rather than of a name.

Considera etiam, quoniam harum duarum significationum illa quae per se est, ipsis vocibus significativis est *substantialis*, altera vero *accidentalis*. Cum enim in

⁷⁹ English translations of *De Grammatico* are from Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson, *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury* (Minneapolis: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 2000), 132–62.

definitione nominis vel verbi dicitur quia est ‘vox significativa’, intelligendum est non alia significatione quam ea quae per se est. Nam si illa significatio quae est per aliud, in definitione nominis vel verbi intelligenda est, iam non erit ‘hodiernus’ nomen sed verbum. Significat enim aliquando ea significatione aliquid cum tempore, sicut supra dixi, quod non est nominis sed verbi (*De Grammatico* 15, S I. 161. 14–21).

Signification, by definition, is *per se* signification and constitutes the substantial signification of a word. Anselm sometimes speaks of *per se* signification as the natural signification that a word possesses. Here ‘natural’ involves a sense of fixedness and is opposed to *per aliud* signification, which is variable and contextual. The relation between a word and its substantial signification is *constant* and *regress-free*. ‘Man’ is not the substantial signification of the word *grammaticus* insofar as another sort of rational creature may have knowledge of grammar. Although it is possible that every *grammaticus* is a man, ‘man’ still should not be included in the substantial signification of *grammaticus*. Otherwise, *grammaticus* would signify ‘the man who is expert in grammar’, and ‘the man who is the man who has expertise in grammar’, and so on. Thus, an infinite regress ensues. By contrast, ‘having expertise-in-grammar’ (*grammatica*) constitutes the substantial signification of *grammaticus* because *grammaticus* constantly signifies *grammatica*. Only through *grammatica* could anything be a *grammaticus*.

Anselm exclusively uses ‘propriety’ to describe *per se* signification. Only the *per se* signification is the proper signification of a word. Accordingly, a person uses a word or a sentence *properly* when he uses its *per se* signification to signify what is the case. *Per aliud* signification is not attached to words in a fixed manner but derives from information in addition to what a word signifies *per se*. The relation between a word and its *per aliud* signification is accidental because a person attaches *per aliud* signification through an analysis of the context of the utterance. *Per aliud* signification, in contrast to *per se* signification, is the *improper* signification of a word. Nonetheless, *per aliud* signification plays a crucial role in communication insofar as it relates to our *interpretative* understanding of words. To use Anselm’s own example: when a speaker says ‘the white in that house’, the hearer cannot tell what is in that house merely on the basis of the *per se* signification of ‘white’. Instead, that hearer knows that it is a white horse because of additional information in the context of the speaker’s utterance. Intuitively, such an appellation is not false in that the speaker signifies the fact that there is a white horse in the house. What is certain is that this appellation is improper because it signifies the fact *per aliud*.

2.3.2 Truth Values of Improper Statements

What exactly is the truth value of a statement containing improper uses of conventional language? We can clarify the question if we distinguish the criteria for *true or correct* uses from the criteria for *proper* uses of conventional language. Recall the discussion about the truth of a sentence in *De Veritate* 2 (section 2.2 above). The *use* of a statement is true if and only if the statement fulfils its purpose (i.e., to signify *a fact*). If we consider the distinction between *per se* and *per aliud* signification, the previously quoted passages from *De Veritate* may be interpreted differently. One could consider ‘signification’ in *De Veritate* 2 as *per se* signification. On this reading, a sentence is correctly used if and only if it *per se* signifies how things are. Thus, the criterion for the true use of a sentence concurs with its proper use; all improper uses would fall under the category of false uses.

Alternatively, signification could be understood in a more general way, to include both *per se* and *per aliud* signification. So long as speakers successfully signify facts with their statements, whether through *per se* or *per aliud* signification, speakers would act correctly. The inevitable implication of this interpretation is that a person’s intention and understanding is of great importance. However, that a fact is successfully signified through *per aliud* signification depends on whether a competent hearer could interpret the extra information correctly and could understand the exact fact the speaker intends to refer to. On this interpretation, the correct use of a sentence has a broader range than the proper one. The criterion for correct use stresses the successful reference to the fact to which the speaker intends to refer (given that the speaker’s understanding is correct). A speaker successfully refers to a fact only in case that the hearer understands what the speaker intended to signify through their expression. The proper use, by contrast, requires a rigid use of conventional language. A sentence is properly used if and only if a speaker successfully signifies a fact through *per se* signification *alone*. A sentence is improperly used if the speaker intends to signify a fact, but does not achieve this purpose without the help of *per aliud* signification that is derived from additional information from the context of the sentence.

I propose that the second interpretation is more plausible. Anselm never characterises any improper use as false. For Anselm, the proper/improper distinction is a technical apparatus of semantics, which itself is independent of the criterion of truth value. Improper use does not necessarily entail *false* understanding because improper use might cause both correct and false understanding of how things are and, hence, establish different referential relations according to different ways of using and assessing the statement. Moreover, a given linguistic system contains so many deficiencies and imprecisions that cases in which interpretative understanding of utterances’

per aliud signification might be common. Anselm recognises this. Sometimes even the *per se* signification of a word deviates from how things are and that in these cases a correct understanding of the referent occurs through the improper signification of the word:

The form of an expression often doesn't *match the way things are in reality*. For example, 'to fear' is active according to the form of the word even though fearing is passive in reality. And in the same way 'blindness' is something according to the form of the expression, even though it is not something in reality. . . . And there are many other similar cases in which things that are not something are called something according to the form of the expression, in that we speak of them as we speak of things that really exist.

Multa quippe dicuntur secundum formam, *quae non sunt secundum rem*. Ut 'timere' secundum formam vocis dicitur activum, cum sit passivum secundum rem. Ita quoque 'caecitas' dicitur aliquid secundum formam loquendi, cum non sit aliquid secundum rem. . . . Multa quoque alia similiter dicuntur aliquid secundum formam loquendi quae non sunt aliquid, quoniam sic loquimur de illis sicut de rebus existentibus (*De Casu Diaboli* 11, S I. 250.21–251.2).

Anselm points out that we signify many things through improper appellations. These appellations are improper because of their grammatical forms. If grammatical form, which constantly belongs to a word, is the substantial signification of a word, a mismatch between *per se* signification and how things are constantly occurs. For instance, *caecitas per se* signifies something (i.e., blindness), but *caecitas* in itself *is* not something but the privation of something (i.e., a lack of vision).

To summarise, human beings invent conventional language that signify all conceivable things. An utterance has two sorts of signification: (1) *per se* signification, the (conventionally) fixed signification of language; and (2) a collection of *per aliud* significations, which competent hearers determine through their analysis of contexts and which plays an important role in various daily uses. The former is proper and substantial, whereas the latter is improper and accidental. The gap between *per se* signification and the thing we intend to signify may be filled by the *per aliud* signification that, through certain psychological processes, hearers attach to the word. In this way, speakers successfully signify but not in virtue of the *per se* signification of the word or, at least, not in virtue of the *per se* signification *alone*.

Importantly, Anselm argues that the improper signification is not arbitrary or boundless but bears a certain relation with the proper one. Anselm explains this relation only once; that passage occurs in *Lambeth Fragments*:

It seems to me that whenever a name or verb is attributed improperly to some thing, the thing to which it is attributed is related to the thing of which that name or verb is properly said as similar, or as cause, or as effect, or as genus, or as species, or as whole, or as part, or as equivalent, or as representation, or as what is represented (for although every representation bears some similarity to the thing it represents, not everything that is similar is a representation or something represented), or (as I was about to say) as signifying in some way other than representation the thing whose name or verb it receives, or as signified by it, or as being in it; or, conversely, that of which it is properly said is in that of which it is predicated improperly; or else the two are related as someone who makes use of something and the thing of which he makes us in a case in which ‘to do’ is predicated.

Videtur mihi, quotiens attribuitur alicui rei aut nomen aut verbum improprie, quia illa res, cui attribuitur, est illi, de qua proprie dicitur, aut similis aut causa aut effectum aut genus aut species aut totum aut pars aut idem valens aut figura aut figuratum – quamvis enim omnis figura habeat similitudinem cum re quam figurat, tamen non omne simile est figura aut figuratum – aut, sicut incepti dicere, alio modo quam per figuram est significans illud cuius nomen aut verbum recipit, aut eius significatum, aut est in eo; aut e converso illud, de quo proprie dicitur, est in eo, de quo improprie profertur; aut ita se habent ut qui re aliqua utitur, et res qua utitur, illud quod facere dicitur (*Memorials* 347.5–14).⁸⁰

Every improper signification deviates from a proper signification, which is based on a group of metaphysical relations between the things they signify such that the proper signification of these relations could explain the metaphysical relations. Given the proper signification of a word or a sentence, a person may be inclined to associate a potential collection of improper significations. This reveals humans’ habits to make associations based on how things are. For instance, given the

⁸⁰ Latin texts of the *Lambeth Fragments* are from Anselm, *Memorials of St. Anselm*, ed. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1969) (=Memorials).

proper signification of the word ‘white’ (i.e., ‘having white’), one might think of *something* having white. Indeed, ‘white’ is not the proper name for a white horse, but with it a speaker could refer to a fact and, in some contexts, cause the correct mental conception in a hearer’s mind.

2.3.3 Appellation versus Signification

Now I discuss the concept of *appellatio*. The activity of appellation is one way to use conventional language and designates a direct referential relation between conventional words and things. Anselm explicitly commits himself to a *descriptive* theory of names and he seems committed to individuation through properties. This is exemplified in *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbis*:

The expression ‘human being’ signifies only the nature that is common to all human beings. By contrast, when we use a demonstrative and say ‘this human being’ or ‘that human being’, or when we use the proper name ‘Jesus’, we designate a person. A person has a collection of distinguishing characteristics along with the nature; it is by those characteristics that human being in general is made an individual and is distinguished from other individuals. . . . as has been said, by the expression ‘human being’ we mean only the nature, whereas by the expression ‘assumed human being’ or the name ‘Jesus’ we mean, in addition to the nature (that is, in addition to human being) the collection of distinguishing characteristics, which is one and the same for both the assumed human being and the Word.

Nam cum profertur ‘homo’, natura tantum quae communis omnibus est hominibus significatur. Cum vero demonstrative dicimus ‘istum vel illum hominem’ vel proprio nomine ‘IESUM’, personam designamus, quae cum natura collectionem habet proprietatum, quibus homo communis fit singulus et ab aliis singulis distinguitur... quoniam in nomine hominis, sicut dictum est, sola intelligitur natura, in assumpto vero homine vel in nomine IESU intelligitur cum natura, id est cum homine, collectio proprietatum, quae est eadem eidem assumpto homini et verbo (*Epistola de Incarnatione Verbis*, S II. 29.4–9; 29.23–26).

An individual person is *understood* as comprised of human nature, which is common to everyone, and a collection of distinguishing characteristics. Therefore, the name ‘Jesus’ *per se* signifies the person who has those distinguishing characteristics along with the property of human nature; the

distinguishing characteristics and human nature constitute the substantial signification of the name 'Jesus'. The name 'Jesus' signifies the nature of human being and the distinguished differentiae *as one (ut unum)*.

In Anselm's semantic theory, both appellation and signification have the function of designating the relation between words and things. However, they are different concepts. Appellation derives from human beings' *causal act* of establishing the relation between a *given* word and a thing. It is one of the ways of *using* the given language system. Signification is the semantic value of words and indicates what a word refers to. Thus, it is a property belonging to words, which could be used to refer to an external thing, regardless of the way in which a person uses words. *Per se* signification probably has its origin in conventional agreement. *Per aliud* signification derives from people's psychological analysis of different conversational contexts. Appellation is subject to the criterion for true/false and proper/improper uses of language in terms of the signification of the name. An appellation is proper if and only if the *per se* signification of the name fits well with the way things are, and improper if and only if the thing is signified with the help of certain *per aliud* signification. Appellation and *per se* signification do not contradict each other because we do appellate something entirely according to a word's *per se* signification in daily life. As in Anselm's example above, the word 'man' is *both* appellative of and significative of man.⁸¹

2.4 Anselm's Theory of Predication

The contrasting pair of proper and improper uses does not bear a definite relation on the truth value of a statement. A statement consisting of improper uses can still establish a correct understanding of how things are, while a statement consisting of proper uses of words might lead to a misunderstanding about the world. People must have a clear understanding of a word's *per se* signification and its *per aliud* signification. Such a clear understanding of the types of signification would help address confusion from various uses of ordinary language and would strengthen a correct understanding of the world. For instance, when one hears the word 'blindness', one would be inclined to think of blindness as something existing because of the *per se* signification of the word. Yet once one knows that the supposed existence is only derived from the word's fixed signification, one would be able to resist that inclination and understand blindness as a privation of vision. In addition, when one has a clear understanding of a word's *per se* signification and *per*

⁸¹ See *De Grammatico* 12.

aliud signification, one might be reminded of the proper uses of language. For instance, once one understands the *per se* signification of ‘necessity’ as compulsion or constraint, one would stop ascribing ‘necessity’ to God without any qualifications because in that case it is improperly used and might lead to confusion. Generally speaking, Anselm’s purpose is not to replace *all* improper uses with the proper ones but to eliminate improper uses that negatively affect people’s understanding, especially those within a given linguistic system and sacred texts, as much as possible. These semantic considerations are consistently seen in Anselm’s theory of predication. Anselm aims to provide a general theory of predications and, as a part of it, a general theory of modal predicates in his unfinished *Lambeth Fragments*. In this section, I first examine Anselm’s thought on *facere*. Then I show how Anselm codifies the proper signification of *modal predicates* to establish a correct understanding of God.

2.4.1 The Semantic Value of *Facere*

Anselm selects *facere* (‘to bring about’) as a proxy for any finite or infinite verb. Anselm maintains that the grammatical function of a predicate is to link a subject and an object, whereas the semantic function is to bridge the causal relation between a cause and an effect. Moreover, the subject signifies an agency, and the predicate signifies an action. Therefore, the agency, as a cause, brings about an effect through action. A predicate is properly ascribed in cases in which the subject directly and efficiently brings about what it is said to bring about. This is the *per se* signification of *facere*. Anselm distinguishes six modes of ordinary uses of *facere*. I borrow Serene’s reconstruction:⁸²

- i. *A* directly brings about *s* (*Facere idipsum esse*);
- ii. *A* directly does not bring about *s* not occurring (*Non facere idipsum non esse*);
- iii. *A* brings about *m*, and *m* causally contributes to *s*’s occurring (*Facere aliud esse*);
- iv. *A* fails to bring about *n*, and *n*’s not occurring causally contributes to *s*’s occurring (*Non facere aliud esse*);
- v. *A* prevents *o* from occurring, and *o*’s not occurring causally contributes to *s*’s occurring (*Facere aliud non esse*);
- vi. *A* fails to prevent *r* from occurring, and *r*’s occurring causally contributes to *s*’s occurring (*Non facere aliud non esse*).

⁸² Serene, ‘Anselm’s Modal Conceptions,’ 123.

According to Anselm, the verb *facere per se* signifies the first mode of ascription and *per aliud* signifies the modes ii–vi. Therefore, only the first mode is proper. The ascription is improper when a speaker uses the first mode to signify what happens in ii–vi. A competent hearer could not understand what the speaker intends to signify without the help of *per aliud* signification. Although *Lambeth Fragments* is incomplete and, consequently, does not include a codification of modal predicates, we can apply this principle to ascriptions of modal predicates. In this section, I discuss the two problems that the Student raises in the *Fragments*, and the corresponding general rules that Anselm introduces for the proper ascription of predicates.

The verb *esse*, which is identified as a *copula* in the Boethian tradition, challenges Anselm’s theory of predication because the verb is an exceptional case for predicates. According to Anselm’s account of predication – a causal relation holds between the signification of the subject and predicate – the semantic value of the sentence ‘the sun is/exists’ ought to be that the sun, as an agency, causes its own existence. This is problematic. Anselm tries to dodge the problem by arguing that the conception of something is a cause of the that thing’s being *said* to exist.⁸³ Yet this explanation does not address the problem of how ‘*esse*’ can serve as an instance of the general theory of predication. So I agree with Visser and Williams that Anselm’s theory of predication is not a complete one.⁸⁴ This problem, nevertheless, does not affect Anselm’s understanding of modal predicates.

2.4.2 The Proper Use of ‘Possibility’

In the *Lambeth Fragments*, the Student raises a question about the proper ascription of the possible existence of the non-existent world:

STUDENT: We sometimes say that there is power in something in which there is no power. For no one denies that whatever can [do something], can do [it] in virtue of its power. So when we say that what does not exist can exist, we are saying that there is power in that which does not exist, as when we say that a house that does not yet exist can exist – and I just cannot understand that. After all, there is no power in that which does not exist. I will say again: [1] that which in no way exists has no power. Accordingly, it does not have a power for being or for not being. And so it follows

⁸³ See the example in *Memorials* 338.5–18.

⁸⁴ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 40.

that what does not exist both cannot exist and cannot not exist. [2] And what goes along with the negative statement, ‘what does not exist cannot exist,’ is that what does not exist is such that (a) it is not possible for it to exist, (b) it is impossible for it to exist, and (c) it is necessary that it does not exist. Or, [3] if we take the other negation, ‘what does not exist cannot not exist,’ we find that what does not exist is such that (a) it is not possible for it not to exist, (b) it is impossible for it not to exist, and (c) it is necessary that it exists. Therefore, because that which in no way exists cannot exist, it is impossible for it to exist and necessary that it does not exist; but from the fact that it cannot not exist, it follows that it is impossible for it not to exist and necessary that it exists.

Discipulus. Dicimus namque potestatem esse aliquando in quo nulla est potestas. Nullus enim negat, omne quod potest potestate posse. Cum ergo asserimus quod non est posse esse, dicimus potestatem esse in eo quod non est; quod intelligere nequeo, velut cum dicimus domum posse esse, quae nondum est. In eo namque quod non est nulla potestas est. Adhuc dicam: [1] Quod nullo modo est, nullam habet potestatem. Quare neque ad esse potestatem habet neque ad non esse. Sequitur itaque quia quod non est nec potest esse nec potest non esse. [2] Illam quidem negationem, quae est ‘quod non est non potest esse’ comitatur quia ‘quod non est non est possibile esse, et impossibile est esse, et necesse est non esse’. [3] At si alteram negationem accipimus qua dicitur ‘quod non est non potest non esse’, invenimus quia ‘quod non est non est possibile non esse et impossibile est non esse et necesse est esse’. Quapropter illud quod nullo modo est, ex hoc quidem quia non potest esse, impossibile est esse et necesse est non esse. Ex hoc vero quia ‘non potest non esse’, sequitur quia ‘impossibile est non esse, et necesse est esse’ (*Memorials* 341.7–12).

The student begins with the premise that what does not exist does not have any power. From this, the Student reasons that what does not exist does not have the power of existing or not existing. So, what does not exist cannot exist and cannot not exist. Thus, a contradiction emerges: (1) If we say that what does not exist cannot exist, it would follow that what does not exist impossibly exists; (2) if what does not exist cannot not exist, it would follow that what does not exist necessarily exists. Nothing could necessarily exist and impossibly exist at the same time.

Although the manner in which the Student articulates the problem follows a sophistic style,

it is still plausible to ask how to ascribe the modal predicate to a non-existent being properly. Anselm does not provide an answer in the *Lambeth Fragments* but does in *De Casu Diaboli* 12: ‘The world exists because before it was made, God could make it, not because before it existed the world itself could exist’ [Quia ergo deus prius potuit facere mundum quam fieret, ideo est mundus, non quia ipse mundus potuit prius esse] (*De Casu Diaboli* 12, S I. 253. 15–17). So, the answer is: no modal predicate could be ascribed to a non-existent being *properly*. Such an ascription cannot reflect how things are if the hearer only appeals to the *per se* signification of the expression ‘a non-existent being possibly exists’. Anselm’s strategy is to reduce the modal notion of ‘possibility’ to a capacity-bearer. ‘It is possible for *x* that *p*’ amounts to ‘*x* has the power to bring about *p*’. In other words, ‘It is possible for *x* that *p*’ *per se* signifies that ‘*x* has the power to bring about *p*’. Therefore, it is proper to say: it is impossible for the non-existent world to bring itself into existence, but it is possible for God to do so because the power resides in God. So, it is always improper to ascribe ‘possible’ to a non-existent being. In this sense, Anselm completely blocks the assignment of any modal predicates to non-existent being. The jump from ‘what does not exist does not have the power of existing’ to ‘what does not exist *cannot* exist’ is illegitimate.

2.4.3 The Proper Use of ‘Necessity’

The Student then asks a question about ascribing necessity and impossibility to God:

Student: Another thing that motivates me to ask about impossibility and necessity is that we say that something is impossible for God, such as lying, or that God is something out of necessity, such as being just. For impossibility suggests inability, and necessity suggests violence. But there is neither inability nor violence in God. After all, if God preserves the truth because of an inability to lie or is just as a result of violence, he is not truthful or just freely. Now you might reply that this impossibility and this necessity signify an unconquerable strength in God. But in that case I will ask why this strength is designated by words that signify weakness.

Discipulus. Movet me quoque hoc de impossibilitate et necessitate, quod dicimus deo aliquid esse impossibile, ut mentiri; aut deum aliquid esse ex necessitate, ut iustum esse. Nam et impossibilitas portat secum impotentiam, et necessitas violentiam. Sed in deo nec impotentia est nec violentia. Si enim per impotentiam mentiendi servat veritatem aut violentia iustus est, non est ex libertate verax aut

iustus. Quod si respondes impossibilitatem hanc et istam necessitatem fortitudinem in deo significare insuperabilem, quaero cur designetur ista fortitudo nominibus significantibus infirmitatem (*Memorials* 342.1–9).

The Student does not understand why the strength of God is signified by the *significative* of weakness. Anselm responds that ascribing ‘necessity’ or ‘impossibility’ to God is improper, provided that ‘x is necessarily p’ *per se* signifies ‘x is compelled or constrained to bring about p’. When one says that it is necessary for God to be good, it is incorrect to understand the statement in terms of the *per se* signification of necessity because the statement entails the *false* claim – God is compelled to be good. The correct way to understand the statement is through the *per aliud* signification of necessity. Although Anselm does not articulate what the *per aliud* signification is, the correct mental conception of God should be that God’s goodness does not result from any external compulsion but results from his own nature.

2.5 Conclusion

Anselm’s semantic theory heavily relies on a single relation designated by the technical term *significare*. While the theory seems rather ‘thin’, it turns out, when reconstructed systematically, to be a unique and complicated theory. According to Anselm, conventional signs – spoken words – signify things through their *per se* or *per aliud* significations. Whether a statement is true depends on whether it successfully signifies how things are. It is possible that a statement signifies what is the case on account of the *per aliud* signification of a component in the statement. Whether a fact is signified successfully depends on whether the hearer precisely grasps the fact the speaker intends to refer to. Although the relation between words and things is a fixed one, Anselm creates space within this relation by combining the teleological criterion for the rectitude of a linguistic expression with the interlocutors’ understanding of its signification. Thus, the referential function of signification, which, at first sight, seems mind-independent, is inseparable from hearers’ psychologies. Whether a statement is true (i.e., whether it successfully signifies what is the case), on the one hand, depends on the speaker’s understanding of how things are and his use of language and, on the other hand, depends on the hearer’s understanding of the expression and the context.

Anselm, on the one hand, is aware of the complicated, ordinary uses of language and respects the value of such diversity. On the other hand, he introduces a technical, semantic distinction between proper and improper uses of conventional language to clarify misunderstandings that arise in ordinary communication. For instance, technically speaking, a speaker’s use of the denominative

'*grammaticus*' to appellate a grammarian is an example of the *improper* use of words insofar as a grammarian can in no way be signified by the name '*grammaticus*' without the help of its *per aliud* signification (i.e., a person).

Anselm's emphasis on the distinction between *per se* and *per aliud* signification indirectly suggests the *cognitive* function of spoken signs. What we express or understand in a conversation does not always rely on our prior *knowledge*, which is supposed to be infallible, of *things themselves*. Instead, communication through conventional language contributes to the acquisition of knowledge. The goal is to use language correctly, which constitutes part of a righteous life, and simultaneously sharpen our understanding of how things are. Thus, we must understand what conventional signs precisely signify and *which* signification refers to the object in question. The correct understanding of the referential relation between signifier and significate establishes the correct understanding of things. The question, however, is: in what sense is the significate of a spoken sign strictly of the thing external to the mind? In many cases, the significate is likely to be a mental object that, in one way or another, exists in our minds. This mental object may not correspond to any thing in the real world. The boundary between mind-independent things and *mental objects*, which do not necessarily exist in the real world, is blurred. Anselm's notion of significate, especially the significate of statements, is neither purely of external things nor purely of mental objects; it is somewhere in between. The most accurate description seems to be that the significate represents humans' *intention towards how things are*. The relation designated by *significare*, thus, is only *potentially* referential. Although the speaker does *intend* to refer to how things are, what the speaker describes might not in fact have a referent in the world. This aspect adds flexibility to Anselm's semantics and, importantly, relates to Anselm's argument for God's existence, as I will discuss in Chapter 4. Anselm adopts the linguistic structure 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived' (*id quo maius cogitari non potest*) to speak of God. Anselm does not assume that this expression signifies a certain, actual being in the real world; otherwise, his whole proof would be circular. Instead, his argument is an intentional attempt to reach the correct understanding of God and, ideally, to refer to God.

Apart from its intrinsic value, Anselm's pragmatic semantics plays an essential role in Anselm's modal theory. The signification of modal predicates in the first place conform to a general account of predicates, which holds that the subject of which a verb is predicated, as an agent, is said to *cause* or to *bring about* what is signified by the verb and meanwhile is an effect. Anselm's semantic theory squares with his power-based metaphysical picture of modal conceptions. Moreover, Anselm further codifies the *proper* signification of *each* modal concept; he retains this

codification through his work. The discussion, in this chapter, of the distinction between the proper and improper uses of language and of the standard by which statements are true or false will help us understand the topics of the next chapter – Anselm's conceptions of modalities and relevant practices.

Chapter 3 Anselm's Conception of Modality and His Contemporaries

During the eleventh century, Christian thinkers often conceived of modality in terms of the power embedded in an agent. Although no one systematically developed the concept of power, the general consensus was that the concept of power involved something that resides in the world and related to the nature, essence, potency, and potentiality. Anselm developed the most systematic power-based modality. He assumed that a power-bearing agent constitutes a necessary condition for the realisation of possibilities and that it could also exert compulsion or constraint on other agents; necessities and impossibilities follow from these compulsions and constraints. Some features of the power-based modal model are also found in the accounts of modality of Anselm's contemporaries. Although we lack historical evidence for a concrete connection between Anselm's thought and those texts, the common features of their accounts suggest that eleventh century Latin thinkers absorbed the available sources, particularly the Augustinian account of modality and Aristotle's account in *De Interpretatione* via Boethius' translation and commentary, in similar ways.

In this chapter, prior to turning to Anselm's conception of modality, I examine two contemporaneous texts – Peter Damian's *De Divina Omnipotentia* and Garlandus Compotista's *Dialectica*. I first analyse *De Divina Omnipotentia*, in which Damian address two problems: (1) Can God restore virginity to the woman who has lost it? (2) Can God undo the past? Damian's conception of modality is closely connected to his definition of divine omnipotence. Reconstructing Damian's modal metaphysics deepens our understanding of Damian's position on whether God can undo the past. Interestingly, despite the similarity between Damian's and Anselm's conceptions of modality, they have different positions on whether God can undo the past. In the second section, I investigate the account of possibility and necessity in Garlandus' *Dialectica*. Although controversial, there are good reasons to consider Garlandus and Anselm as contemporaries and date the former's work to the end of the eleventh century (see 3.2 for more detail). If Garlandus is Anselm's contemporary, then Garlandus' account of possibility and impossibility deserve careful examination because it suggests a trend of power-based modality theories in the late eleventh (or perhaps, the very early twelfth) century. In the third section, I return to Anselm's conception of modality and thoroughly investigate two topics: (1) the metaphysical picture that grounds Anselm's understanding of modality and (2) the modal force of Anselm's notions of antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity.

3.1 Peter Damian's *De Divina Omnipotentia* – Can God Undo the Past?

Peter Damian (1007–1072) was an eleventh-century monastic leader and Church reformer in the Gregorian Reform movement.⁸⁵ He produced a collection of 180 letters. The only philosophical tract among them is Letter 119, known as *De Divina Omnipotentia (On Divine Omnipotence)*. Damian addressed the letter to Abbot Didier of Monte Cassino and his community, and it is dated at the beginning of 1065.⁸⁶

Peter Damian's *De Divina Omnipotentia* has sparked controversy on the question of whether Damian believes that God can *genuinely* undo the past. There are three main treatments of Damian's position. The first two are, as Lawrence Moonan calls them, the 'Standard View' and the 'Outrageous View'.⁸⁷ Supporters of the Standard View believe that God can undo the past only in the sense that God *could have* created the world otherwise than He had. However, this capacity cannot be genuinely actualised in changing past events because scholars assume that Damian regards the creation of a contradiction in itself as evil. Yet, God cannot do evil, so God cannot violate the principle of non-contradiction.⁸⁸ By contrast, proponents of the Outrageous View argue that Damian believes that God does have the power to violate the law of non-contradiction. This means that God has the genuine power *located in our time* to make the past not as it has been.⁸⁹ In addition, some other scholars hold a third position: that we cannot provide a coherent interpretation of Damian's account.⁹⁰

I defend the plausibility of the Outrageous View in virtue of Damian's modal metaphysics and Damian's account of divine eternity. Damian himself does not explicitly take his conception of

⁸⁵ For more about Damian's career and personality, see William David McCready, *Odiosa Sanctitas: St. Peter Damian, Simony, and Reform* (Pontifical Institution of Mediaeval Studies, 2011); Patricia Ranft, *The Theology of Peter Damian: 'Let Your Life Always Serve as a Witness'* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

⁸⁶ For more background introduction to Damian's life, see Toivo Holopainen, 'Peter Damian, Section 1', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/peter-damian/>.

⁸⁷ Lawrence Moonan, 'Impossibility and Peter Damian', *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 62, no. 2 (1980), 146–63; Jean-François Genest shares the Outrageous view. See Jean-François Genest, 'La liberté de Dieu à l'égard du passé selon Pierre Damien et Thomas Bradwardine', *École Pratique des Hautes-Études* 85 (1977), 391–93. The latter is cited by Irven Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility in St. Peter Damian's De Divina Omnipotentia* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 100.

⁸⁸ See Richard Gaskin, 'Peter Damian on Divine Power and the Contingency of the Past', *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 5 (1997), 229–47; Lawrence Moonan, 'Impossibility and Peter Damian'; Toivo Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); John Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁸⁹ See Robert McArthur and Michael Slattery, 'Peter Damian and Undoing the Past', *Philosophical Studies*, 25 (1974), 137–141; Richard Gaskin, 'Peter Damian'.

⁹⁰ Knuuttila accepts the Standard View generally but allows for the possibility the Outrageous View; see Simo Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 67. Resnick argues that there is unsolvable inconsistency in Damian's considerations for and against God's power over the past; see Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility* 112–14.

modalities as an essential ingredient of his position. Therefore, my approach aims at a rational reconstruction of Damian's theoretical resources.

3.1.1 Damian's Definition of Omnipotence

Unlike human beings, who might be impeded by various external restrictions, God *can* do whatever He *can* will. This indicates a power of bringing about what is desired, alongside what is not desired but what could be desired in mind, into reality. Damian further elaborates his understanding of omnipotence:

Indeed, God cannot do something evil because he cannot even will [The original translation: wish] it; but this should never be attributed to impossibility, but rather to the natural goodness of his exceptional forbearance. But [The original translation: on the other hand], he can both wish and do that which is good, although there are some good things which he rarely or never does, following, as it were, the judgment of his caution or of his wisdom.

Quod enim malum est, non potest facere Deus, quia nec potest etiam velle. Quod tamen nequaquam referendum est ad impossibilitatem, sed ad naturalem potius singularis clementiae bonitatem. Quod vero bonum est, et velle potest et facere, tametsi quodam cautela suae vel provisionis intuitu, quaedam bona aut raro faciat, aut nunquam faciat (*Letter* 119, 600A–B, LTD. 400.56–402.62).⁹¹

Damian makes two points in this passage. First, Damian does not treat the ability to do evil things as an ability and so is not part of God's omnipotence. Thus, God's omnipotence is merely the ability to do good things. The expression of internal constraints (i.e., the natural goodness of God's exceptional forbearance) on God's action is rather an indication of His power, not of His impotency. Second, Damian not only distinguishes between what God can do and what God really does but also maintains that God can do *more than* He does. Even though God can do any good thing so long as He wills to do so, He does not necessarily will to do all good things. Damian has raised this point at the beginning of *De Divina Omnipotentia*, when He rejects one explanation of why God cannot restore virginity: 'God is unable to do this for no other reason than that he does not wish it' [Deum

⁹¹ Latin texts and translations of *De Divina Omnipotentia* are from Damien, Pierre. *Lettre sur la toute-puissance divine*, ed. and trans. André Cantin (Paris: Cerf, 1972) (=LTD).

non ob aliud hoc non posse, nisi quia non vult](*Letter* 119, 597A, LTD. 388.21). He then elaborates:

If God *can* do none of the things that he *does* not wish to do, he does nothing but that which he wishes; therefore, he can do none of the things at all, which he does not do. . . . It follows, therefore, that whatever God does not do, he is totally unable to do. This seems clearly to be so absurd and so ridiculous.

Si nichil, inquam, potest Deus <facere> eorum quae non vult; nichil autem, nisi quod vult, facit; ergo nichil omnino potest facere eorum quae non facit. . . . Sequitur ergo ut quicquid Deus non facit, facere omnino non possit. Quod profecto tam videtur absurdum tamque ridiculum . . . (*Letter* 119, 597A, LTD. 388.22–32).

Damian reasons that it is implausible to say that God *cannot* do something because He *does* not do or *does not* wish it, otherwise it follows that God can do only what He actually does.⁹² Damian does not accept this assumption because he does not want God's omnipotence to be confined to the realm of actuality. Rather, he believes that God always has genuine power over all good things, and this has nothing to do with whether He uses the power. Apparently, Damian is not bothered by the notion that God should always do *the best*. Unlike Peter Abelard, who contends that God cannot do more than He does because what He does is the best, Damian's God wills all good things without any preconceived preferences. As long as something is good, God can do it.

From this brief sketch, we can identify two main characteristics of Damian's definition of omnipotence: (1) God can do all that is good, and (2) God can do more good than He actually does. The first characteristic prevails in medieval Christianity. Following the Augustinian tradition, Damian holds the metaphysical position that being is explained in terms of the value of good, while non-being is explained in terms of the value of evil. Medieval theologians attempted to dissolve the paradox between the existence of evil and God's omnibenevolence by maintaining a connection between being and good. Given that evil is the privation of good or, say, the lack of essence or existence, one could not attribute the existence of evil to God because God creates only good

⁹² Damian later maintains that, in ordinary use of language, the only situation in which we can properly predicate God by using 'God cannot...' is one in which God cannot desire or do evil. (Certainly, this in fact does not suggest impotence as I mentioned earlier). However, because Damian believes that the restoration of virginity is good, it is wrong to say that God is unable to do so. On this point, Moonan clarifies that Damian attacks the use of certain 'God cannot...' sentences because Damian believes the 'cannot' says something about God's nature. Damian has no objection to 'God cannot...' sentences used to say something true, for instance, God cannot do evil (see Moonan, 'Impossibility and Peter Damian', 158).

existence. However, the value of evil does not have essence or existence in the first place. Therefore, this reasoning establishes that God is not the author of evil.

Like-minded theologians use this framework to explain both ontological and moral goods. An ontological good is applied to the existence of individual things. It is plausible to think that everything that God creates should be evaluated as good *to some extent*. For instance, it is right to say that plants, animals, and human are all good insofar as they exist. This sort of good, nevertheless, may come in different degrees, depending on which type of object we are considering. Ancient thinkers in this tradition thought that animals have *more* goodness in their nature than plants, while humans have *more* goodness in their nature than animals. This discourse works as a ranking system that marks the ontological value of individuals in the natural world. At one end is the maximally good, or perfect divine being, and, at the other end, is the minimally good, which endlessly approaches but never reaches non-being. Whether there is ontological evil is controversial. Most theologians would accept that, although unwelcome consequences, such as blindness (i.e., the privation of eyesight) or withered leaves (i.e. privation of the plant's health), do exist in the natural world, such consequences are not the privation of an ontological good without qualification. Because God creates and preserves all natural regularities, everything that occurs in the natural world, whether it seems good *to us*, is ontologically good.

A moral good, by contrast, is derived from a rational being's free choices. An Augustinian theologian might happily accept that all good choices are indirectly caused by God, and Damian writes:

Good deeds, in fact, belong equally to God and to us because he operates in us and gives efficacy to our labors.

Opera quippe bona et Dei sunt et nostra, quoniam ille opratur in nobis, qui effectum tribuit operandi (*Letter* 119, 609B, LTD. 436.10–12).

Accordingly, moral evil should be understood as a privation of moral good. Consider some one murdering a friend. The choice to murder lacks the value of moral good, such as exercising one's temperance or caring for the friend's health. And, although the event of murder occurs, the act lacks a value of *moral* good. In this sense, moral evil is a negation of good and is not something existent. Thus, it is not derived from God. Nonetheless, Damian's account on this issue is not very sophisticated and he simply states that all manners of evils are nothing:

All manners of evils, such as iniquities and crimes, even when they seem to exist, do not exist because they are not from God and are therefore nothing simply because God, ‘without whom nothing was made’, has in no sense made them. . . . But if an evil was done, even then it was nothing at the moment that it seemed to be. . . . One must not assert, therefore, that they become nothing after they arrive at their peak, but unquestionably they are nothing at the moment they appear to be something: nothing, according to the evidence of the truth, something, under the shadow of darkness.

Mala autem quaelibet, sicut sunt iniquitates et scelera, etiam cum videntur esse, non sunt, quia a Deo non sunt, ac propterea nichil sunt, quod videlicet Deus omnino non fecit, *sine quo factum est nichil*. . . . Quod si malum factum est, etiam tunc nichil erat, cum esse videbatur. . . . Non itaque hoc adserendum est quod postquam ad extrema deveniunt, tunc nichil fiunt, sed tunc procul dubio sunt nichil, cum videntur aliquid. Nichil apud testimonium veritatis, aliquid in umbra caliginis (*Letter* 119, 609B; 609C; 609D–610A, LTD. 436.3–6; 436.16–17; 438.37–43).

Damian does not clearly distinguish between ontological and moral goods and he does not distinguish the existence of the evil things and events from the *value of evil* in them. With regard to the case of moral evil, the point is that bad things lack a moral good rather than bad things lack existence (i.e., lack an ontological good). The value of moral evil is simply the negation of moral good, thus it is nothing. Damian’s claim is ambiguous: all sorts of evil, including moral evil, cannot be something existent, given the self-evident presupposition of theism that God is in no way the source of any sort of evil. This appears to suggest that evil *events* that have occurred just appear to occur but, in fact, are nothing.

Damian takes advantage of the ambiguity to argue that God’s omnipotence is not undermined by God’s incapability of doing evil. In a paragraph in which he reiterates that evil is nothing, Damian writes:

They [evils] exist indeed, in external form, but not according to the truth. . . . Therefore, we must believe with unquestioned faith that God has power over all things, whether he acts or does not act. For whatever is evil should rather be called nothing than something, and so it does not prejudice our saying that to God all

things are possible, even though he cannot produce evil, since evil should preferably be excluded from all things and not counted among them.

[Mala] sunt quidem in superficie coloris, non autem in iudicio veritatis. . . . Quamobrem indubitabili fide credendum est omnia Deus posse, sive faciat sive non faciat. Nam quod malum est potius debet dici nichil quam aliquid, atque ideo nichil praeiudicat si dicamus omnia Deum posse, licet mala non possit, cum mala non intra omnia, sed extra omnia potius debeant supputari (*Letter* 119, 610B–C; 610D, LTD. 440.67–68; 442.9–14).

Damian is content with the reasoning that if evil is excluded from what exists, then God’s inability to do evil does not imply a failure in His power. In short, ‘the lack of power over evil’ simply equals ‘the lack of power over nothing’. And the equivalence does not affect the truth of the proposition ‘God has the power over all beings’ at all.

3.1.2 Damian’s Modal Metaphysics

In Damian’s definition of omnipotence, the second component – God can do more than He actually does – underlies Damian’s modal metaphysics, which, once properly reconstructed, will help us better understand whether God can undo the past.

As I have shown, Damian distinguishes between what God can do and what God really does, and he firmly believes that God can do more than He really does. The implication is that there are things God can do but rarely or never does. But how can we distinguish between what God can do but never does, and what God cannot do at all?

Damian’s response to this question suggests that there is a clear boundary in God’s *will* between what He can do and what He cannot do:

The will of God is truly the cause of the existence of all things, whether visible or invisible, in that all created things, before appearing in their visible forms, were already truly and essentially alive in the will of their Creator. . . . In the first place it is said that ‘they have their being,’ and then that ‘they were created,’ because the things that were externally expressed by their making, already *existed internally* in the providence and in the design of the Creator.

Voluntas quippe Dei omnium rerum, sive visibilium, sive invisibilium, causa est ut existant, adeo ut condita quaeque, antequam ad formarum suarum visibiles procederent species, iam veraciter atque essentialiter viverent in sui opificis voluntate. . . . Prius dicitur quia erant, et postmodum fuisse creata, quia quae foris expressa sunt per conditionem operis, iam intus erant in providentia et consilio Conditoris (*Letter* 119, 599A–B; 599B, LTD. 396.3–398.7; 398.12–15).

Damian neither distinguishes the existence of individual beings from events, nor elaborates on the difference between what God creates and what God brings about. In both cases, the concepts are approximately equivalent in his system. The process of creation divides into two stages. First, the concept or the idea that corresponds to a certain being pre-exists in God's will. So, in this sense, things have *a prior* existence that has not yet been made 'visible'. Second, God creates (or actualises) the concept or the idea. Everything that God has created existed as a concept or an idea in God's will prior to its actual existence. Therefore, the things that God can do but never does still have an ontological status different from those things that God cannot do. Furthermore, given that God is the efficient cause of all existence, the potency of existence is not in the being itself but is in God. Therefore, it is plausible for us to equate 'what God can do' with 'what is possible to be', and 'what God cannot do' with 'what is impossible to be', and 'what God really does' to 'what is actualised'.

From this brief sketch, we can summarize Damian's modal metaphysics: (1) nothing or evil is correlated with the concept of impossibility, while possible beings reduce to those which have *a prior* existence in the will of God; (2) the possibility of being is a necessary condition for actualised being, but not a sufficient condition; (3) there is a distinction between non-actualised possibility and impossibility insofar as the former has existence in God's will, whereas the latter does not.

3.1.3 The Restoration of Virginity

In defending God's omnipotence, Damian first explains why he believes that God can restore a woman's virginity. Damian's main argument is that God can restore virginity because God has the ability to do all good things, even though some of those good things are beyond the order of nature. Even though the loss of virginity is an irreversible effect, God can restore a woman's merit and body after a violation. God's transcendental nature allows Him to achieve this. As the creator of nature, God is external to the whole natural system and has a dominant position over the system. This point can be seen in this excerpt:

In respect to nature this is certainly true, as is also the statement: it is impossible for one and the same thing to have happened and not to have happened; for, indeed, they are mutually contrary in the sense that, given the one, the other cannot exist. For assuredly what was, cannot in truth be considered not to have been, and antithetically, what was not, cannot rightly be said to have been: for things that are contrary cannot coincide in the same subject. This impossibility, moreover, is properly maintained in reference to the needs of nature. But God forbid that it be applied to divine majesty: for he who brought nature into being, at will easily abrogates the necessity of nature. For the need that governs created things, by law is subject to the creator; but who created nature has power to change the natural order at his pleasure.

Quod certe quantum ad naturam verum est statque sententia. Factum quoque aliquid fuisse et factum non fuisse unum idemque inveniri non potest. Contraria quippe invicem sunt adeo ut si unum sit, alterum esse non possit. Nam quod fuit non potest vere dici quia non fuit, et e diverso quod non fuit non recte dicitur quia fuit. Quae enim contraria sunt in uno eodemque subiecto congruere nequeunt. Haec porro impossibilitas recte quidem dicitur si ad naturae referatur inopiam; absit autem ut ad maiestatem sit applicanda divinam. Qui enim naturae dedit originem, facile, cum vult, naturae tollit necessitatem. Nam quae rebus praesidet conditis, legibus subiacet Conditoris, et qui naturam condidit, naturalem ordinem ad suae ditionis arbitrium vertit (*Letter* 119, 612A–B, LTD. 448.13–27).

However, Damian's expression in this passage is ambiguous. He argues that what is contradictory cannot coincide in the same subject. But if we focus on the literal meaning of his claim, the consequence is that the woman cannot even have her virginity at t_1 and then lose her virginity at t_2 ($t_2 > t_1$). However, Damian does not mean to imply this. Indeed, a woman can be a virgin and then lose her virginity. Because of the nature of humans, once she has lost her virginity, she cannot restore it physically nor restore her merit. This impossibility is derived from the limitations of our own abilities, yet these limitations are not applicable to God, who created the whole regulatory system.

This divine prerogative is also exemplified by the pregnant virgin that Damian mentions.

Likewise, in our view, the necessity of causation is invalid in this case because, to be pregnant, a woman would have had to lost her virginity.⁹³ But, because of God's omnipotence, God can create things in ways different from natural causation. Not only can He erase the effect of a seemingly existent cause, as would happen in restoring someone's virginity, He can also bring about an effect without its natural cause. In this regard, Damian appears to make the point that God is not bound by the necessity of natural causation.

However, on Damian's account, the restoration of virginity does not involve God's ability to undo the past.⁹⁴ Damian simply argues that God has the ability to restore a woman's virginity *after she loses it*. This means that, for instance, a woman may have chosen to lose her virginity on 10 May 2018, yet God restored her virginity on 20 May 2018. We might say that the woman regained her virginity on 20 May 2018. Thus, what *happened* on 10 May 2018 remains unchanged and the woman had lost her virginity from 10 May 2018 to 20 May 2018, when God restored it. But Damian does not discuss whether God alter events on 10 May 2018 such that the woman never lost her virginity. Someone might argue that, because from God's perspective, there is *nothing* to undo in the past, so it is unnecessary to discuss whether God can undo the past in this case. However, this answer is not satisfying. As I discussed earlier, an evil event is nothing insofar as the value of evil is nothing. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the event did not in fact happen. The problem still exists whether God has the ability to change the past, given that God might have the ability to prevent the occurrence of an evil event. Damian appears not to be interested in this issue here. Perhaps Damian thinks God prefers to restore a woman in such a way so as to demonstrate His goodness rather than alter the past directly; or, perhaps, Damian wants to establish his argument step by step. In any case, Damian begins to address the problem about God's ability to affect the past only after the above considerations.

3.1.4 In What Sense Cannot God Undo the Past?

Throughout *De Divina Omnipotentia*, when Damian discusses whether God can undo the past, his focus is on whether God can make what has happened no longer the case. He does not consider the converse – whether God can make *what has not happened* have happened. Damian's main argument against God's having the power of undoing the past is that, when someone requires God

⁹³ 'God could both cause a virgin to become pregnant before she should lose her virginity and restore virginity after it was lost. Each, of course, was good, but even though he had as yet done neither one nor the other, there is no doubt that he has the power to do both' [poterat Deus et fetare virginem ante ruinam et reparare virginem post ruinam. Vtrumque scilicet bonum erat, sed licet eatenus neutrum fecerat, utrumque posse facere procul dubio credendus erat] (*Letter* 119, 611B, LTD. 444.48-51).

⁹⁴ For similar point, see Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 22.

to undo the past, one is in fact demanding God to do evil and create nothing.⁹⁵ The basic notion is that, if undoing the past were a good thing, then God certainly could do it. Yet, in a sense, undoing the past is not good.⁹⁶ God cannot make evil and nothing, as Damian's asymmetric definition of omnipotence suggests; therefore, God cannot undo the past in this sense.

However, why does Damian reduce the ability to undo the past to doing an evil thing? Let's look at some key passages in which Damian addresses the problem:

Tell me, you who play the role of accuser in this cunning matter: do you also believe that whatever God does is good and is therefore something, and that anything that he has not made, is nothing? Listen to what Scripture says, 'God saw everything that he had made and it was very good.' And again, 'Without him nothing was made.' But since you cannot deny this, you say, 'I agree.' You, therefore, while demanding that one and the same thing has been and has not been, that it be and not be, that it shall be and shall not be, you are surely trying to confuse things that have been made with things that will be made [The original translation: make things that have happened indistinguishable from those that will happen], and to demonstrate that they are tottering between being and non-being. This, certainly, the nature of things will not tolerate; for nothing can simultaneously be and not be, and anything that does not exist in accord with the nature of things, without doubt is nothing. You, therefore, acting the role of unyielding extortioner, demand that God make that which is contrary to his nature, that is, nothing; but take note that the evangelist stands opposed to you, saying that 'without him nothing was made.' God has not as yet learned to make nothing. Now you instruct him and command him to make nothing for you.

⁹⁵ 'So now let us hear from those others who raise useless questions, or rather who strive to advance false doctrines, and who ask, "Does God have the power to act in such a way that events that have happened should not have happened?"' To these on first sight I reply, that this is not a question of divine goodness producing something from nothing, but rather of reducing something to nothing' [Iam itaque veniant supervacuae quaestionis auctores, immo qui perversorum dogmatum nituntur esse cultores, et dicant: numquid potest Deus agere ut quae facta sunt facta non fuerint? Quibus ego in prima fronte respondeo quia hoc non est quod divinae bonitatis est: de nichilo aliquid agere, sed de aliquo potius nichil efficere] (*Letter 119*, 608A, LTD. 432.47-52)."

⁹⁶ 'Since, therefore, God has power over all things, why are you inclined to doubt that God should be unable to act so that a thing may simultaneously be and not be, provided it were good that this should happen? However, if it is useless for anything to be confused between being and non-being, and God has made all things not to be useless but to be good; if moreover it is evil and in that case, nothing, this God does not do at all, because without him nothing was made' (43) [Cum ergo Deus omnia possit, cur addubitas Deum hoc posse ut aliquid simul sit et non sit, si hoc fieri bonum est? Porro si inutile est res quaslibet inter esse et non esse confundi, Deus autem non inutilia, sed bona omnia fecit. Immo, si malm est ac per hoc nichil est, hoc Deus omnino non facit] (*Letter 119*, 608D, LTD. 88-94).

Dic mihi, versutae quaestionis obiector: credis etiam tu quia quidquid Deus facit, bonum est atque ideo aliquid est, et quicquid ille non facit nihil est? Audi Scripturam: ‘Vidit, inquit, Deus cuncta quae fecerat et erant valde bona’; et illud: ‘Sine ipso factum nihil’. Sed quia hoc negare non potes, ‘assentior’, inquis. Tu itaque, dum quaeris unam eademque rem et fuisse et non fuisse, esse et non esse, futuram esse et futuram non esse, niteris profecto quaeque facta vel facienda confundere et inter esse et non esse nutantia demonstrare. Quod certe rerum natura non habet; nihil enim simul potest esse et non esse, sed quod in rerum natura non est, procul dubio nihil est. Quaeris ergo a Deo, durus exactor, ut faciat quod suum non est, hoc est nihil, sed ecce Evangelista contra te stat dicens quia ‘sine ipso factum est nihil’. Deus adhuc non didicit facere nihil, tu eum doce et praecipe ut tibi faciat nihil (*Letter 119, 608B–C, LTD. 432.68–434.83*).

Damian thinks that the main mistake of those accusers is that they accept the inference from ‘God can undo the past’ to ‘one thing will be simultaneous being and non-being’. Damian’s reasoning goes as follows:

1. God makes only what is something. (Authority of Bible)
2. If x undoes the past, x confuses being and non-being. (understanding of ‘undo the past’)
3. Nature does not allow the confusion being and non-being.
4. Whatever nature does not allow is nothing.
5. If x undoes the past, x makes nothing. (2,3,4)
6. God cannot undo the past. (1,5)

In what sense is premise 3 true? It seems that Damian takes this claim for granted and does not further explain it. However, we can better understand reasons for thinking premise 3 true, by appealing to Damian’s modal metaphysics. On the one hand, because Damian explores whether God can undo what has been done by Himself, ‘*esse*’ here refers to good being, which means it has a divine source, and, hence, has an ontological status. On the other hand, ‘*non esse*’ means what is *impossible* in terms of ontological status. All things are derived from God, regardless of whether they are actualised or not, so each thing would at least possess the possibility of being. However, the possibility of being cannot be replaced with the impossibility of being because that would

require God to make non-being, and doing so contradicts His nature. In the passage, Damian is not saying that, because *actualised* being has solid necessity in itself, God cannot remove it. Instead, Damian's view is that the impossibility of being contradicts the possibility of being, so God cannot undo the past because that would contradict the nature of God and of things. However, some scholars (e.g., Knuutilla and Holopainen) interpret the passage as one in which Damian appeals to the validity of the principle of non-contradiction. They argue that, for Damian, simultaneous 'being' and 'non-being' implies contradictory states of affairs and that he implicitly presupposes that contradictory states of affairs are nothing and evil because of the principle of non-contradiction. Therefore, God can in no way make them.⁹⁷ This interpretation is popular among contemporary scholars, but we need to be more careful on this point.

First, we need to clarify what the principle of non-contradiction means. One option is to treat it as a principle governing the natural world. That is, two contradictory states of affairs cannot literally be contained in one subject at the same moment. On this reading, undoing the past means that God needs to bring about two contradictory states of affairs at the same time in the natural world. Apparently, this is not true, because undoing the past for God means *replacing* one state of affairs with another rather than bringing about two contradictory states of affairs at the same time. Importantly, I believe that Damian is aware of this. This can be seen in 610b, which, however, is often read as evidence that Damian tacitly approves of the principle of non-contradiction in the natural world:

Good things, however, that is, those that the good Maker had produced, as you, whoever you are, investigate, cannot simultaneously be and not be, because this *alternation* has no place in the nature of things, which the rational Creator brought into being. Since namely it is an evil thing to be confused between being and non-being, and it is rather nothing, therefore this confusion of alternation [The original translation: this confusing alternation] is not made by the good Creator, who has made all good things. This confusing alternation [The original translation: mutuality], however, can be seen in one way or another in evil things, which indeed seem to be and are not, and hence, in a certain sense, exist and do not exist; they exist indeed, in external form, but not according to the truth; although, moreover, we cannot with precision grant such reciprocal diction to these evil things, that, because

⁹⁷ See Knuutilla, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, 66; and Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 37.

they seem to be, but are not, they should be and not be at the same time; and therefore, it would be more true to say that they are always nonexistent, than that they possess existence and nonexistence.

Bona autem, id est ea quae bonus Artifex condidit, ut tu, quisquis es, quaeris, esse simul et non esse non possunt, quia in rerum natura, quas rationabilis Artifex esse constituit, alternitas ista non invenit locum. Quia enim inter esse et non esse confundi malum est, ac potius nichil est, idcirco a bono Creatore, qui bona omnia fecit, alternitatis ista confusio facta non est. In malis autem potest utcumque videri haec confusionis alternitas, quae certe videntur esse et non sunt atque ideo quasi sunt et non sunt. Sunt quidem in superficie coloris, non autem in iudicio veritatis. Quamquam et ipsis malis non possumus hanc diversitatem exacte concedere ut simul sint et non sint, quia videntur esse sed non sunt, atque ideo verius dicuntur semper non esse, quam et esse et non esse (*Letter 119*, 610B, LTD. 440.58–71).

Damian uses ‘alternation’ (*alternitas*), rather than the word ‘contradiction’ (*contradictio*), to describe the simultaneous being and non-being caused by the act of undoing the past. This is direct evidence that Damian is aware of how the act of undoing the past operates in the real world. By saying ‘alternation’, Damian realises that undoing the past requires that God directly change the content of that moment rather than literally create two contradictory states that coexist in one moment.⁹⁸ In other words, if God can really undo the past, then the fact that one thing exists is completely *replaced* by another fact that one thing does not exist. Therefore, no contradiction follows from undoing the past with regard to what happens in the real world. This application of the principle of non-contradiction is simply irrelevant.

An alternative understanding of the principle of non-contradiction is to treat it as relating to propositions. Suppose that *P* is the proposition ‘*x* happens at *t*₁’. If *x* happened at *t*₁, then *P* is true (eternally). If at *t*₂ God brings it about that *x* did not happen at *t*₁, then *P* is false (eternally). Therefore, if God can undo the past, He must be able to violate the law of non-contradiction for propositions. Given the logical principle, even though the act of undoing the past does not involve a contradiction in the natural world, it still involves a contradiction of propositions, at least between propositions about the past. Damian needs additional justification for God’s power of undoing the

⁹⁸ Gaskin sees that no contradiction follows from the act of undoing the past, but he does not think Damian is aware of it (see Richard Gaskin, ‘Peter Damian’, 234).

past.

This interpretation touches on the problem of the *source* of the logical principle of non-contradiction and its relation with God. If the logical law belongs to an independent system separate from God's creation, one might think that the system can exert restriction on God and, thus, that God cannot violate the logical principle of non-contradiction. However, if God created the logical law, one might think that the logical law only constrains creatures and has no *unconditional* regulatory force on God. This means that the truth value of a proposition is not necessarily immutable for God. A third option is that the logical law, whatever its source, and God's acts are always *in accord with* each other. In this case, God *never* violates the logical law, though not because of an *external* restriction of the logical system but because of a certain internal restriction derived from God's nature. Damian's position on this problem is unclear. But we should ask two questions: (1) at this stage, does Damian have the logical principle in mind? And, in the context of Damian's work, (2) does the logical principle really constrain God's act of undoing the past? I take up the second question in the next section (3.1.5), so I will address the first question now. No solid textual evidence suggests that Damian has the notion of logical contradiction in mind, at least not when he explains why undoing the past is evil and nothing. At 610b, instead of appealing to the validity of the principle of non-contradiction, Damian contends that the concurrent alternation is evil, insofar as the alternation refers to the replacement of being with non-being and marks the absence of the ontological goodness created by God. In other words, the concurrent alternation is evil because the process involves non-being. It is not the case that the alternation *per se* is evil on account of the restriction of any logical law. Similar reasoning is found at 608B-C, where Damian argues that God cannot make things in such a way so as to cause this confusion. Damian believes it evil for things to be confused between being and non-being. It is evil because it involves a component of non-being, which is the impossibility of being. Thus, the things which are brought about by God will never be alternated from being to non-being.

My interpretation largely relies on understanding non-being as that which does not have *prior* existence in God's will at all (i.e., what is impossible to be). This understanding, I suggest, is supported by what Damian writes in 610B. Damian explains that, on the one hand, it is an evil thing to be confused between being and non-being. On the other hand, we can also encounter this confused alternation between being and non-being in many seemingly existent evil things. Consider the confusion caused by moral evil, which seems to exist but in fact does not the value of moral good. This confusion arises because we notice that the nature of evil is contradictory with the good

nature of being. Ultimately, this underscores the distinction between the things that have their origin in God and the things that do not. The former can never cause confusion, while the latter always does. Further, if the confusion caused by moral evil is the same as the confusion caused by the act of undoing the past, then, we confirm with confidence, that the reason Damian rejects the view that God can undo the past is that the view requires God to make *non-being* a component of the nature of things. This, I would say, is the real contradiction that Damian has in mind. That is, there is a contradiction between *being* (including both the actuality and *possibility* of being) and the *impossibility* of being, insofar as the former refers to the nature of things that *could* be given by God, while the latter refers to what is impossible in the nature of any of God's creations.

3.1.5 In What Sense Can God Undo the Past?

As I have shown, Damian believes that God cannot undo the past because doing so requires God to replace what He has willed with non-being, which is impossible. Nonetheless, the possibility of God's being able to undo the past is still open to Damian: the concurrent alternation refers to the alternation from *actualised being* to *non-actualised possible being* rather than an alternation to the impossibility of being. This possibility is based on Damian's acknowledgement that God can do more than He does. God can freely choose to actualise or not to actualise anything that has the possibility of being. Therefore, in principle, God can legitimately change a state of affairs without creating non-being. However, the Outrageous View faces some difficulties. I focus on two problems that might undermine its plausibility.

(1) The necessity of past events

The first problem is about the necessity of past events. One view of temporal modality maintains:

- (1) That which never is, is impossible,
- (2) That which always is, is necessary,
- (3) That which sometimes is, is possible (that which is neither eternally unrealised nor eternally is).

Accordingly, there are different treatments for untensed propositions and tensed ones. Some untensed propositions, such as 'the sun rises in the morning' or 'humans are mortal', are necessary. They always happen. However, the treatment for tensed propositions is different. Consider these

three propositions: (1) I slept last night; (2) I am sleeping now; (3) I will sleep this afternoon. According to the temporal modal model, the first and the second events are necessary, given that this past and present instant have exhausted all other possibilities that can be actualised in the same instant. The third event, however, is not necessary, insofar as other possibilities could be actualised in a future instant.

Damian rejects this view of modality because he thinks that it is incorrect to ascribe the necessity of the past to both the nature of things and God.⁹⁹ Yet he does not deny the validity of the necessary entailment of ‘if x happened at t_1 , then x happened at t_1 ’.

What is said of past events may be applied with equal cogency to present and to future things; in this sense, that, just as everything that happened, necessarily had to happen, so also everything that exists must exist so long as it exists, and everything that will happen, must happen in the future. And so, in relation to the logical order of speech, for whatever was, it is impossible not to have been for whatever is, it is impossible not to be; and for whatever will be, it is impossible that it will not be.

Quod ergo dicitur de praeteritis, hoc consequitur nichilominus de rebus praesentibus et futuris, nimirum ut, sicut omne quod fuit, fuisse necesse est, ita et omne quod est, quamdiu est, necesse sit esse, et omne quod futurum est, necesse sit futurum esse. Atque ideo, quantum ad ordinem disserendi, quicquid fuit, impossibile sit non fuisse, et quicquid est, impossibile sit non esse, et quicquid futurum est, impossibile sit futurum non esse (*Letter* 119, 603A-B, LTD 412.29–414.37).

Damian agrees that ‘what has happened has happened’ is necessarily true. However, his point is that ‘what has happened has happened’ and ‘what will happen will happen’ should both be necessarily true. In other words, these *complex*, tensed propositions should have the same truth value. However, in Damian’s view, this necessity is a verbal necessity and so cannot constrain God’s power over natural things. Otherwise, it would have detrimental consequences, such as that God does not have the power over present and future things and events:

⁹⁹ ‘Therefore, this question, in that it is proven that it pertains neither to the investigation of the power of divine majesty, but rather to the skills of the art of dialectic, nor to the perfection or to the nature of things, but rather to the method and order of speech and to the relationship of words, has no place amidst the mysteries of the Church, which are loosely discussed by young lay students in the schools’ [Haec igitur quaestio, quoniam non ad discutiendam maiestatis divinae potentiam, sed potius ad artis dialecticae probatur pertinere peritiam, et non ad virtutem vel materiam rerum, sed ad modum et ordinem disserendi consequentiamque verborum, non habet locum in Ecclesiae sacramentis, quae a saecularibus pueris ventilatur in scolis] (*Letter* 119, 604A–B, LTD. 416.84–418.90).

Notice, therefore, how the blind foolhardiness of these pseudo-intellectuals who investigate non-problems, by boldly attributing to God those things that refer to the art of rhetoric cause him to become completely impotent and deprived of strength, not only regarding things past, but also relating to things present and to come.

Videat ergo inperite sapientium et uana quaerentium caeca temeritas, quia is haec quae ad artem pertinent disserendi ad Deum procaciter referant, iam non tantum in praeteritis, sed et in praesentibus ac futuris, eum inpotentem penitus et inualidum reddant (*Letter 119*, 603B–C, LTD. 414.38–42).

Damian's opponents say 'necessarily (If God did x , He did x)' and infer what He did in the past is necessary. But one can speak exactly the same about present and future, and so they would also have to infer that God is determined in all His actions. In this way, it appears that Damian realises the fallacy of scope – mistakenly confusing the wide-scope necessity operator 'necessarily (if p , then p)' with the narrow-scope necessity operator 'If p , then necessarily p '.¹⁰⁰ When we say 'what has happened has happened' is necessarily true, we are using the wide-scope necessity operator rather than the narrow one. Therefore, as Damian suggests, this verbal necessity cannot subdue God's power over the past.

However, this understanding is not sufficient for Damian's argument that God can undo the past. Even though Damian presumably believes that the necessity operator in the proposition 'necessarily (if p , then p)' has a wide scope, he cannot escape from the charge that, in the consequent, p still implies some sort of necessity insofar as p refers to a past event. In other words, the past event is metaphysically irrevocable. At this point in the argument, we need to consider seriously the principle of non-contradiction. The problem is: past events may be contingent for God; however, that claim does not entail that God can without any qualification violate the principle of non-contradiction *at least with regard to the truth value of propositions of past events*. We need to clarify what sort of contingency the past is for God. If this contingency is merely with respect to the *nature* of how things would have happened in principle (e.g., it is contingent for me to sit down or stand up at any time insofar as I have the power to actualise either possibility) and God simply

¹⁰⁰ Marenbon has offered a very detailed analysis on this issue. He thinks that Damian implicitly sees the fallacy of scope in people's arguments for determinism, but Damian lacks the terminological apparatus for distinguishing the scopes of necessity operators that would explain why their arguments are invalid. Thus, Damian has no other recourse than to describe it as a verbal problem (see Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy*, 118).

knows it, then the *irrevocability* inherent in *past* events is not excluded. That is, the proposition if *p* ‘*x* happened at *t*₁’, then ‘*p* is true eternally’ is still true in this sense. This view, then, is compatible with Boethius’ view. Therefore, to defend the position that God can undo the past, Damian needs to go beyond Boethius’ view. He needs to explain how God has the power to will such that His will is not constrained, even by the metaphysical irrevocability of past events.

Damian does provide such an explanation in his account of God’s relationship with time. According to Damian, God’s relationship with time is different both epistemically and metaphysically from ours:

At the critical summit of all nature where he regulates the right of all things, he so embraces all times past, present, and future within the mysteries of his providence that nothing new at all befalls him, and nothing escapes his attention as it passes on its momentary way. He does not view dissimilar things in various ways so that, while attending to past events, he is unaware of the present and the future; nor, however [The original translation: on the other hand], does he take his attention from the past while considering things present and to come; but with merely one simple glance of his ever present majesty he comprehends all things in an instant.¹⁰¹

In illo itaque summo rerum cardine naturarum omnium iura dispensans, sic omnia tempora, praeterita videlicet, praesentia et futura, intra suae provisionis arcana complectitur, ut nec novum aliquid sibi penitus accidat, nec aliquid ab eo per cursus momenta recedat, sed nec diversis obtutibus diversa considerat, ut, cum intendit praeteritis, vacet a praesentibus vel futuris, vel rursus cum praesentia sive futura considerat, oculos a praeteritis avertat, sed uno dumtaxat ac simplici praesentissimae maiestatis intuitu simul omnia comprehendit (*Letter* 119, 605D, LTD. 422.4–424.14).

From God’s point of view, all tenses are present to him in His eternity according to His providence, and he perceives time in a tenseless way. On these grounds, and near the end of *De Divina Omnipotentia*, Damian explains how God can undo the past:

¹⁰¹ This view is similar with Boethius’ account of eternity in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Book V. For a detailed analysis, see Chapter 6.

I can say without appearing foolhardy, that God, in that immutable and ever uniform eternity of his, is able to bring it about that what had happened relative to our passing time, did not happen. For example, we may say: God can so cause it to happen that Rome, which was founded in antiquity, had not been founded. In saying can, that is, in the present tense, we use the word properly insofar as it relates to the unalterable eternity of almighty God; but in relation to us, in whom there is continuous movement and perpetual change, we should more correctly say could have, as we normally do.

...non inepte possumus dicere quia potest Deus facere in illa invariabili et constantissima semper aeternitate sua, ut quod factum fuerat apud hoc transire nostrum factum non sit. Scilicet ut dicamus: Roma, quae antiquitus condita est, potest Deus agere ut condita non fuerit. Hoc quod dicimus potest, praesentis videlicet temporis, congrue Deus quantum pertinet ad immobilem Dei omnipotentis aeternitatem sed quantum ad nos, ubi continuat mobilitas et perpes est transitus, ut mos est, potuit convenientius diceremus (*Letter* 119, 619A, LTD. 474.39–48).

Damian argues that, because all time is present to God, the past tense is not applicable to Him at all. Rather, it is more proper to use the present tense to indicate that God *can* undo the past.

But what is the implication of this claim?

There is no doubt that God can undo the past in this sense: God *could have* (*potuit*) done otherwise despite the world having been what it is. Precisely speaking, God could have chosen not to actualise a certain being which has existed or He could have chosen to actualise a certain being which does not exist (i.e., He could have done so, but He did not). Similarly, if I can undo the past in this sense, then I might not have done as I in fact did. If this interpretation is correct, Damian's position is that because God, in His eternity, has no position in time, the tensed expression applied to our temporality that 'God could have done otherwise' should be translated into the tenseless expression that is applied exclusively to the predication of God such that 'God can do otherwise'. From God's point of view, His acts are always in His eternal present and He could have created things differently *before* He did create everything. On this reading, God's capability of undoing the past is at the *semantic* level. As the Standard view suggests, metaphysically, God cannot genuinely actualise this power in our timeline because doing so would violate the principle of non-contradiction. However, this does not undermine God's omnipotence. On this interpretation, given

that Damian thinks that creating a contradiction is evil, God's inability to violate the principle of non-contradiction is an indication of His power. Nonetheless, God cannot genuinely *actualise* this power located in our timeline.

However, as I have argued, according to Damian, undoing the past does not create a natural contradiction but only an alternation. The alternation is evil because it involves an alternation between what actually exists and what is *impossible* to exist. There is no evidence that Damian has a logical contradiction in mind. It is uncertain whether Damian thinks that God is subject to the logical principle of non-contradiction. Therefore, the ground for the Standard view is questioned. Moreover, one passage from *De Divina Omnipotentia* supports the Outrageous view, the view that God has the power over *our time* so that *for us* what is the past can, at some future time, be genuinely undone:

In fact, the potency that was in God before all ages is the same today; and the same potency that he possesses today was his before all ages and it eternally endures still firm and immutable through all the ages yet to come. Since, therefore, God could have caused things not to exist before anything was made, so even now he has that power that the things which were made *would not have existed*; for the same potency that he then possessed has been neither changed nor removed, but just as he always is what he is, so also God's potency cannot be changed.

Illud enim posse quod apud Deum erat ante saecula, illud est hodie, et illud posse quod sibi est hodie, erat nichilominus ante saecula, et fixum adhuc atque immobile in omnia quae futura sunt saecula aeternaliter perseverat. Sicut ergo potuit Deus, antequam quaeque facta sunt, ut non fierent, ita nichilominus potest et nunc ut quae facta sunt non fuissent. Illud enim posse quod tunc habebat nec inmutatum est nec ablatum, sed sicut ipse semper est quod est, ita et posse Dei mutari non potest (*Letter* 119, 619D, LTD. 476.78–478.87).

In this paragraph, Damian is trying to translate the language used to assert God's tenseless being into language used to describe our timeline. In our common language, when we intend to describe God as a timeless being, who creates the whole world, we adopt a metaphorical way of speaking, as when we say that God creates the world *before all time*. Therefore, in the above passage, *antequam* and *nunc* are used to describe God's creation. Damian emphasises that this power of making things

otherwise than they are is absolutely immutable. Therefore, provided that God has a genuine power to make things differently *before* everything happened, this genuine power is preserved intact *now* or, to be more precise, His genuine power is preserved intact *at any moment located in our time*.¹⁰² Therefore, in principle, God has the genuine power of undoing the past, though He might rarely or never use it. When He really exercises this power with His caution, it means, *for us*, that the world becomes different.

God's status of timeless eternity appear to help free Him from the irrevocability of past facts. God's situation is different from ours. It is impossible for us to exercise this capacity over past events because, from our point of view, those instants have passed forever and propositions that express those facts become true eternally. Yet every temporal fact is equally present to God's existence. Indeed, this does not entail that God can act upon the past events. If Damian believes that God is not restricted by the logical principle of non-contradiction, then God can change temporal facts. So the past does not have the privileged position of being metaphysically irrevocable for God. Therefore, what is actualised in our timeline is not eternally true from God's perspective. Given that, from God's view, past events are not metaphysically irrevocable in the first place, it is plausible to argue that there is no eternal truth value of propositions of past events *for God*, either. Thus, for God, there is no logical principle of non-contradiction. Therefore, even if God really undoes the past, He would not violate any logical law.

(2) The immutability of God's will

The second problem that might undermine the plausibility of Damain's view that God can undo the past involves God's immutable will: changing a past event threatens the immutability of divine will.¹⁰³ This is a very tricky problem indeed, given that textual evidence suggests that Damian believes that God's will is changeless when He decides whether to actualise something or not:

To this one may add, that the will of the most high and omnipotent Maker is such an efficacious cause of the existence or non-existence of things, that whatever he wills

¹⁰² Gaskin rightly perceives that modern scholars' insistence on a timeless solution does not undermine the traditional interpretation (or, the Outrageous View) insofar as Damian may argue that God has genuine, temporally located power over the past and this power is derived from God's existence in eternity. But in his view, Damian adopts this strategy because, without seeing that undoing the past is not a power over contradiction, Damian needs to argue that God can affect contradictions (see Gaskin, 'Peter Damian', 242-3). This latter point, as I have suggested, is wrong.

¹⁰³ Holopainen understands this as a problem of divine providence and argues that the past cannot be changed because the past events are immutably present in the divine providential plan, which is immutable; the things that have being from God cannot but be when they are (see Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 17).

to exist cannot but exist and whatever he does not will to exist, is not capable of existence. The power of God has, in fact, established that what he has ordered to have happened, is impossible not to have happened; and what he has ordained to be, so long as it exists, is unable not to exist; and what he has appointed to happen in the future, can no longer not happen in the future.

Huc accedit quia voluntas summi et omnipotentis Opificis tam efficax causa est rebus existendi vel non existendi ut quod ille vult esse non possit non esse, et quod non vult esse non valeat esse. Virtus quippe Dei fecit ut quod constituit fuisse, iam non valeat non fuisse, et quod constituit esse, quamdiu est, non valeat non esse, et quod constituit futurum esse, iam non valeat futurum non esse (*Letter* 119, 608D–609A, LTD. 434.95–436.102).

Here Damian claims that God is the efficient cause of both the existence and non-existence of things. Yet God cannot create nothing, and so cannot be the efficient cause of nothing, insofar as it is opposed to His own nature. Therefore, ‘non-existence’ here does not mean nothing (i.e., the impossibility of being) but instead means ‘non-actualised possible being’. On this basis, Damian means to say that God is omnipotent insofar as He can successfully create whatever He wills. If God wills to actualise something, then that thing will necessarily be actualised in the sequence of time. If God wills not to do actualise it, then that thing will just end up being an unactualised possibility.

However, Damian’s remarks do not entail that God cannot make any *change* in the content of His divine providence. Damian merely contends that once God has willed to actualise something, that thing will necessarily happen. This does not exclude the possibility that God, in His eternal present, wills the alternation to happen, or, that God arranges this alternation ‘in advance’. Therefore, the way in which God can undo the past can be expressed as follows:

God, in His eternal present wills N , given that N can be any event that happens in reality.

$N: A \wedge B$

$A: \{x \text{ happens at } t_1\}$

$B: \{\neg A \text{ at } t_2\}$

$(t_2 > t_1)$

(In other words, God wills that at t_1 it should be the case that x and that at t_2 it should be the case that it was not the case that x at t_1 .)

In this sense, God's undoing the past not only is compatible with the claim that 'God wills p , then p will necessarily happen', but also is compatible with the immutability of God's will. When we say God's will is unchangeable, we are certainly not saying that the content of God's will cannot contain any change. Because God can will the alternation of four seasons, there is no reason why God cannot mark the alternation of one event's actualisation and non-actualisation in the sequence of time before everything is created.

Someone may object that the position still implies that God wills a contradiction and hence He could create nothing, which is evil. However, nothing in what I established earlier entails that, for Damian, producing a contradiction *per se* is evil. Whether it is evil is up to the *content* of the contradiction. As long as neither component of the contradiction includes what is impossibility of being, the contradiction will not result in nothing and evil. In this sense, even though God wills a contradiction, He legitimately wills it. Moreover, as I have explained above, there might not be a logical contradiction *for God*, given that Damian believes that temporal facts are not metaphysically irrevocable for God.

One unwelcome consequence of God's having genuine power to undo the past seems to be that, metaphysically, propositions would not have eternal truth values. It appears that Damian is willing to accept this consequence. He could also try to argue that God, in principle, would never *actually* do this, though He has this power. I shall not delve into this topic here; Damian himself never pursues this line of reasoning.

To summarize the discussion so far, Damian's modal metaphysics is grounded on his conception of God's omnipotence. According to Damian's definition of omnipotence, God can will and can do all things that are good, while God does not necessarily actualise all things that are good. Thus, we can distinguish three types of being: (1) possible being (God can make), (2) impossible being (God cannot make), and (3) actualised being (God can make and really makes).

My interpretation of Damian's position on whether God can undo the past relies on this modal metaphysics heavily. Damian has the resources to argue that God can undo the past in the case of replacing actualised being with non-actualised, possible being. Even the logical principle of non-contradiction of past propositions is not an impediment to God because God's tenseless being prevents Him from being threatened by the metaphysical irrevocability of past events in the way humans are prevented. Moreover, an act of undoing a past does not necessarily undermine God's

immutable will, if we accept that God can arrange the concurrent alternation of different states of affairs in advance just as He arranges any other change in the actual world.

If my interpretation is plausible, one salient feature of Damian's metaphysical picture is that God almost has absolute power over everything in the sublunar world. From God's point of view, nothing existing in the actual world contains absolute necessity. The only thing that constrains Him is His own nature insofar as He can only will good. Nevertheless, for Damian this internal restriction is not an impotence but rather is an emphasis of God's perfection. In this sense, Damian provides a very strong defence of God's omnipotence.

3.2. The *Dialectica* of Garlandus Compotista

The authorship and dating of the *Dialectica* are controversial. The editor of the *Dialectica*, de Rijk, has dated the work to 1075. Iwakuma, in his first article on the *Vocales*, argued that the author of the *Dialectica* should be identified with Gerlandus of Besançon, who died after 1148.¹⁰⁴ This attribution has been challenged. According to John Marenbon, there are three possible authors:

It is now agreed, and Iwakuma accepts, that there are three of them: Saint Garland, who taught at Besançon in the 1080s and died in 1100 as Bishop of Agrigento; Gerlandus, who was teaching in Besançon in 1118, became prior of the Augustinian canons at Saint Paul there in c. 1128 and was alive in 1149, when he travelled with Thierry of Chartres to Frankfurt; and a Garlandus who was a schoolmaster at Metz in the years 1111–1128.¹⁰⁵

Because of the lack of solid historical evidence, one simply cannot ascertain which Garlandus wrote the *Dialectica*. On this point, Marenbon suggests that 'it seems wisest to leave the identification of the author of the *Dialectica* open and to accept that it could date from the 1080s or even earlier, or from as late as the 1120s, or from sometime between'.¹⁰⁶ However, as he claims later in the same paper, Garlandus' *Dialectica* fits with the language-focused logic movement that

¹⁰⁴ Yukio Iwakuma, "'Vocales', or Early Nominalists,' *Traditio* 47 (1992), 47–54.

¹⁰⁵ John Marenbon, 'Logic at the Turn of the Twelfth Century: A Synthesis,' *Arts du langage et théologie aux confins des XIe-XIIIe siècles* 26 (2011), 194–95. Marenbon's citation of this paragraph is note 66 in page 195: 'See the articles '2. Gerland' and '3. Gerland' by B. de Vregille, in the *Dictionnaire d'Histoire et de Géographie Ecclésiastiques* 20, p.884–885 and, for Garlandus of Metz: Garlandus Compotista, 1959, p. XI and Vregille, '3. Gerland', p.886 for the proof (cited by Iwakuma) that this Garlandus cannot be identified with the younger Gerlandus who taught in Besançon.'

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 195.

occurred at the end of the eleventh century.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, there is at least some contextual evidence that supports a more precise dating of Garlandus' *Dialectica*, so it is plausible to recognise him as Anselm's contemporary.

The *Dialectica* is a complete logic text from the early middle ages. Despite the controversy over its dating, it is still useful to investigate its modal conceptions. I shall examine three paragraphs of the *Dialectica*. The first paragraph sets out the metaphysical underpinning for possibility and necessity, though in fact it provides only an explanation of the notion of possibility:

<In how many ways it is said to be 'necessary' and 'possible'>

I shall discuss in how many ways 'necessary' and 'possible' are said, so that the understanding of modal propositions may become clear and that it will become evident in what way true and false propositions are divided. There are two sorts of 'possible': (1) in act, (2) outside act; it is in act, as when I say: 'it is possible for a human to be an animal, when he is alive'; this potency is in act since the person is alive, when the person exists. The potency outside act in one way is that from which the effect follows, in the other way is that from which only potency follows, i.e., no effect follows. The potency outside act which an effect follows is when it is possible for something to be made white and it becomes white either on account of a certain cause or a certain disposition; also, an effect follows sometime by some necessity, as 'it is possible for someone to die'. Potency outside act which the effect does not follow is that to which neither is nature repugnant, nor however will it ever occur, as when I say: 'it is possible for Garlandus to be a bishop', yet he never will be a bishop.

<Quot modis dicatur 'necessarium' et 'possibile'>

Dicendum est quot modis dicatur 'necessarium' et 'possibile' ad id ut et ratio modalium colliquescat propositionum et ut evidentius pateat quomodo dividant verum et falsum. Quod igitur possibile est, aliud in actu, aliud extra actum; in actu est, ut cum dico: 'hominem possibile est esse animal, dum vivit'; in actu enim est ista potentia quia vivit homo, dum est homo. Extra actum potentia est alia quam

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 205.

consequitur effectus, alia quam sequitur sola potentia, idest quam non consequitur effectus. Potentia extra actu quam effectus consequitur, est cum possibile est aliquem fieri album et fit albus vel aliquo casu vel aliqua dispositione; aliqua etiam necessitate sequitur effectus aliquando, sicuti ‘possibile est occidere solem’. Potentia vero extra actum quam effectus non consequitur, est illa cui nec natura repugnat nec tamen umquam erit, ut cum dico: ‘possibile est Iarlandum fieri episcopum’, numquam tamen episcopus erit (83–85).¹⁰⁸

Garlandus’ notion of possibility reduces to potency (*potentia*) embedded in an agency, and he attempts to elaborate this model. Garlandus divides two sorts of potencies – one is in act, the other is outside act. One interpretation of this distinction is that the potency in act refers to the potency that is actualised, given the qualification. As Garlandus explains, the person’s act (i.e., existence) entails the actualised potency of the existence of an animal. The potency outside act, by contrast, suggests that the potency has not yet been actualised. According to the example of a person’s being animal, Garlandus’ possibility appears to be a one-sided possibility, which is incompatible with impossibility but not with necessity. Garlandus further distinguishes two sorts of potencies outside act – one is that from which an effect follows, the other is that from which an effect does not follow. While the former is the potency that will be actualised (e.g., given that a person is alive), the potency that he will die has not yet been actualised but will be actualised at some future point. The latter is that which can be actualised but never be unactualised. By reducing possibility to potency, Garlandus explicitly admits the distinction between impossibility and unrealised possibility. There is unrealised possibility, so long as the corresponding potency exists.

The second paragraph introduces three modes in which necessity can be expressed. To be more precise, this paragraph is about three sorts of propositions that signify necessity:

‘Necessary’ is said in three modes, the first mode is when the proposition is similar to the proposition which signifies inherence, i.e. a simple proposition; the second mode is when we declare that something to have something, when it exists and perseveres. That proposition that is similar to the simple proposition, such as when we say: ‘It is necessary that Socrates is sitting when he is sitting’; it has the same power as the proposition that says: ‘Socrates is sitting’. The signification of necessity

¹⁰⁸ Latin texts are from Compotista Garlandus, *Dialectica*, ed. L.M. de Rijk (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959). I provide my own English translation. I thank John Marenbon for guidance with the translation.

that designates something to have something, when it exists and perseveres, is as when I say: 'It is necessary for a human to have a heart, when he or she exists and is alive'. See therefore what this proposition means: not only does it signify that it is necessary for the human to have a heart as long as he or she has one, but also it signifies that it is necessary to have so long as he or she exists. The third signification of necessity is that it expresses an absolute necessity with no condition added, as when we say: 'It is necessary that God is immortal'.

'Necessarium' vero tribus modis dicitur, uno quidem modo quando propositio consimilis est ei propositioni que inesse significat, idest que simplex est; alio vero modo cum proponimus aliquam rem habere aliquid, dum est atque permanet. Ea propositio que consimilis est simplici propositioni, talis est ut cum dicimus: 'necesse est Socratem sedere dum sedet': hec enim eandem vim optinet ei que dicit: 'Socrates sedet'. Ea vero significatio necessitatis que proponit aliquem aliquid habere, dum est atque permanet, est ut cum dico: 'necesse est hominem habere cor, dum est atque vivit'. Vide igitur quid hec propositio sonat: non enim significat quoniam tamdiu necesse sit hominem habere cor quamdiu habet, sed significat quia tamdiu necesse est habere quamdiu fuerit ille. Tercia vero est significatio necessitatis que absolutam predicat necessitatem nulla determinatione addita, ut cum dicimus: 'necesse est Deum esse immortalem'.

Garlandus presents three modes of necessity. The first is a simple proposition, which indicates the relation of inherence (e.g., an activity that inheres in a subject). According to Garlandus' example, what the first necessity precisely qualifies is not the relation of inherence in itself but the whole conditional that 'Socrates is sitting when he is sitting'. For Garlandus, this is equivalent to the proposition that expresses the fact that Socrates is sitting. This implies that the first kind of necessity is ultimately derived from the irrevocability of actuality. The second mode designates that something possesses something. This sort of necessity not only qualifies the whole conditional that 'a person has a heart when he or she has one', but also qualifies the relation of possession in itself (i.e., a person *alive* necessarily has a heart). The additional condition – that the person exists or is alive – suggests that this kind of necessity is based on the relation between properties and substance existing in the real world rather than on the relation of categorical definitions between different terms. Moreover, universals constitute no independent part of the real world, otherwise there would

be no need to emphasise the existence of an individual. The third mode is absolute necessity without any conditions. This mode exclusively applies to God insofar as even God's existence is unconditional.

The three modes of necessity have counterparts in the case of possibility as follows:

Similarly, 'possible' is said to have three modes. That which inheres is said to be possible, as when I say: 'It is possible for Socrates to sit, when he is sitting,' or that is possible which can happen at any time, so long as the thing for which it is said that something can happen remain, as when I say: 'It is possible for Socrates to read, when he still exists': so long as Socrates exists, he can read. Likewise, that which absolutely can happen at any time is possible, as 'it is possible for a bird to fly': for although the bird does not exist at every time, it can however happen that it is brought about by God, and that it flies. Say the same about the contingent as has been said about the possible.

Similiter 'possibile' tribus modis dicitur. Aut enim possibile dicitur quod iam inest, ut cum dico: 'possibile est Socratem sedere, dum sedet', aut illud est possibile quod omni tempore contingere potest, dum ea res permanet cui aliquid contingere posse proponitur, ut cum dico: 'possibile est Socratem legere, dum permanet': quamdiu enim Socrates est, legere potest. Item possibile est quod absolute omni tempore contingere potest, ut 'possibile est avem volare': licet enim avis omni tempore non sit, potest tamen contingere ut fiat a Deo et ut volet. Eodem modo dic de contingenti quomodo dictum est de possibili.

Accordingly, there are three modes of possibilities. The first one flows from the first mode of necessity. The second mode of possibility resides in the potency of an existing agent. The third mode is absolute possibility in the sense that the possibility is from the potency of God, which is without any qualification. Garlandus' example indirectly deals with the problem of assigning possibility to a non-existent being. His position is the same as Anselm: although what is non-existent does not have any potency or power, God has the power to bring it about. In this case, the possibility of bird's flying rests on God's power or potency. The contrast between the second and the third mode is that the former requires the condition of the existence of the agent, whereas the latter does not, because God's existence is without qualification.

Therefore, it is conditionally possible for a person to read, even though that person might not exist. If a person does not exist, the potency of reading that resides in him or her does not exist as well. By contrast, it is absolutely possible for a bird to fly because God's potency of bringing about its existence and its flying unconditionally perseveres. It is uncertain whether Garlandus thinks that the absolute possibility can also be applied to the case of human beings. God is able to bring about a person's existence, but it is unclear whether God can directly bring about a person's free choices of will. This topic is not examined by Garlandus.

To summarize Garlandus' position, his notion of possibility reduces to the potency of an agent. What is actualised can also be articulated as possibility insofar as it provides a direct evidence for the existence of the corresponding potency. Garlandus does not account for the metaphysical foundation for the notion of necessity, though necessity is expressed through both the irrevocability of temporal facts and the metaphysical relation between properties and substance. Garlandus' theory of modality is incomplete, yet we can still understand how his modal conception connects with the real world. As does Peter Damian, Garlandus also explicitly acknowledges the ontological status of unrealised possibility. The difference is that, while Damian grounds the unrealised possibility on divine power, Garlandus places the modal discussion in a more philosophical context. In addition, as we shall see in the following section, Garlandus' view is similar to Anselm's in that they both believe that the possibility of non-existence rests in the power of God.

3.3 Anselm's Conception of Modality

One salient feature of Anselm's conception of modality is its reliance on the notions of power and agency. However, scholars have yet to reach consensus about the metaphysics that ground Anselm's theory of modality. Some scholars divide Anselm's modality into two types: (1) natural modality and (2) logical modality.¹⁰⁹ For them, this division neatly mirrors Anselm's distinction between antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity; they also think that the metaphysical bases of these two sorts of necessities are different. While antecedent necessity is grounded on a metaphysical account of power and prevention, subsequent necessity follows the *a priori*, logical law. Other scholars do not think that any *a priori*, logical law is involved in Anselm's modal conception. Simo Knuuttila argues that Anselm's subsequent necessity is merely an application of the Aristotelian notion of necessity of the present to the future and the past, and suggests that this necessity is

¹⁰⁹ For instance, see Williams and Visser, *Anselm*, 149-170; Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 170; Henry, *The Logic of St. Anselm* 177-80.

derived from actuality.¹¹⁰ Eileen Serene probably was the first to notice the profound interrelation between Anselm's semantics and modality; she systematically analyses Anselm's proper designation of modal terms in terms of the notion of power and agency.¹¹¹ She understands that Anselm's subsequent necessity differs from modern notions of logical necessity insofar as Anselm's subsequent necessity is not an empty tautology. Instead, Serene writes that 'God is responsible for the stability and consistency of a proposition's truth-values in Anselm's view'.¹¹² Brian Leftow provides another comprehensive project and not only argues that the metaphysics behind Anselm's account of modality is consistently power-based but also that the *modal force* grounded on this metaphysics is similar to the modern notion of absolute necessity or, broadly, logical necessity.¹¹³ My general thesis is based on Knuuttila's, Serene's and Leftow's insightful studies. I also clarify some of their misreadings so to provide a more thorough and systematic treatment of Anselm's conception of modality. In doing this, the philosophical originality and significance of Anselm's modal model comes to light.

This section deals with two topics. In the first part, I explore the metaphysics of Anselm's conception of modality. I agree with Leftow that Anselm's modal metaphysics is power-based. However, Leftow does not notice that his metaphysical account lacks a unifying power. I trace the source of these powers and disclose their differences. In the second part, I investigate the modal force of Anselm's necessities, and argue that Anselm's antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity have different modal forces.

3.3.1 Anselm's Power-Based Metaphysics of Modality

3.3.1.1 Possibility

The metaphysical underpinning for Anselm's notion of possibility is power and agency. Anselm is most concerned with the existence of a power-bearer who has the capability of bringing a possibility or potentiality into actuality. This concern is mainly reflected in Anselm's semantics (Chapter 2). Anselm disambiguates the meaning of sentences that contain the modal term 'possibility' by prescribing the proper ascriptions of possibility to a power-bearer. As Serene suggests, the ascription is proper, in Anselm's view, if and only if the grammatical subject of a

¹¹⁰ Knuuttila, 'Anselm on Modality', 111–31.

¹¹¹ Serene, 'Anselm's Modal Conceptions', 117–62.

¹¹² Ibid, 142.

¹¹³ Brian Leftow, 'Anselm on Necessity', 1–40.

sentence names the relevant capacity-bearer, otherwise, it is improper.¹¹⁴ In *De Casu Diaboli* 12, Anselm explains:

That [the world] was both possible and impossible before it existed. It was impossible for the world, since the world did not have the power to exist; but it was possible for God, who had the power to make the world. Therefore, the world exists because before it was made, God could make it, not because before it existed the world itself could exist.

Et possibile et impossibile erat antequam esset. Ei quidem in cuius potestate non erat ut esset, erat impossibile; sed deo in cuius potestate erat ut fieret, erat possibile. Quia ergo deus prius potuit facere mundum quam fieret, ideo est mundus, non quia ipse mundus potuit prius esse (*De Casu Diaboli* 12, S I. 253. 13–17).

Because of such impropriety in speaking we quite often apply the word ‘can’ to a thing, not because it can do anything, but because something else can; and we apply the word ‘cannot’ to a thing that can do something, simply because some other thing cannot.

Ex qua improprietate loquendi fit ut saepissime dicamus rem posse, non quod illa possit, sed quoniam alia res potest; et rem quae potest non posse, quoniam alia res non potest (*De Casu Diaboli* 12, S I. 253. 22–24).

In Anselm’s view, the words ‘can’ and ‘possible’ are synonymous if they are used properly. What Anselm cares about is possibility *for* an agent. Accordingly, before the world existed, it was impossible for the world to exist: what does not exist does not have any power, so the world did not have the power to exist. Therefore, it is improper to say that it is possible for the world to exist because saying so would mean that the world comes into existence *in terms of its own power*. Instead, it is proper to say that it is possible for God that the world exists because God has the power to make the world exist.

What kind of power is the power that grounds Anselm’s possibility? I borrow Leftow’s

¹¹⁴ Serene, ‘Anselm’s Modal Conceptions’, 120.

distinction between intrinsic power and primed power.¹¹⁵ (Knuuttila offers a similar distinction between partial possibilities and full possibilities.¹¹⁶) Intrinsic power is similar to the concept of potentiality that is preprogrammed into the *nature* of things, which depends on the way God has created this nature. For instance, a pine seed has the intrinsic power to grow into a pine tree. But this does not mean that it will definitely become a pine tree. If the rainfall is very low, the sprouted seed might die before it becomes a tree. By contrast, primed power is a power that has a genuine chance to bring something into actuality *so long as it operates*. One finds this distinction in Chapter 3 of *De Libertate Arbitrii*. Anselm explains in what sense a person has what is needed to preserve justice after the person loses it:

Even if it lacks rectitude of will, the rational nature nonetheless has what is properly its own. For I believe we have no power that by itself suffices for action. And yet even in the absence of those things without which we can't exercise our powers at all, we are nonetheless said to have those powers within ourselves. In the same way, no instrument is sufficient by itself for any action or task; and yet even in the absence of those things without which we cannot make use of the instrument, we are nonetheless correct to affirm that we have the instrument for some particular action or task.

Etiam si absit rectitudo voluntatis, non tamen rationalis natura minus habet quod suum est. *Nullam namque potestatem habemus, ut puto, quae sola sibi sufficiat ad actum*; et tamen cum ea desunt sine quibus ad actum minime perducuntur nostrae potestates, non minus eas, quantum in nobis est, habere dicimur. Sicut nullum instrumentum solum sibi sufficit ad operandum; et tamen cum desunt illa sine quibus instrumento uti nequimus, instrumentum nos cuiuslibet operis habere sine falsitate fatemur (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 3, S I, 212.29–213.4).

The possession of free will alone is not sufficient to preserve justice. Other necessary conditions, such as divine grace, are required. Anselm does not believe that any of our intrinsic powers alone is sufficient for achieving an action. In other words, none of our intrinsic powers alone constitutes a primed power. Some other necessary condition must also be satisfied so that our

¹¹⁵ Brian Leftow, 'Anselm on Necessity', 3–5.

¹¹⁶ Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, 73–5.

intrinsic power can successfully operate. Anselm considers the act of seeing a mountain. There are four intrinsic powers involved to achieve the act of seeing: (1) the power in the subject to see, (2) the power in the object to be seen, (3) the powers in the medium that gives aid to vision, and (4) that something does not impede vision. The result can only be accomplished when all those four powers are present: ‘If any one of them is lacking, the other three cannot accomplish anything, either individually or all together’ [si una quaelibet desit, aliae tres nec singulae nec omnes simul aliquid possunt efficere] (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 3, S I. 213. 21–22).

This conception of possibility frees Anselm from the Principle of Plenitude (POP) – no genuine possibility remains eternally unactualised. According to Arthur Lovejoy, POP prevails in ancient and medieval thought.¹¹⁷ An advocate of POP would accept that, while some species-based possibilities are never realised by *an individual member* of a species, at least *one* individual of the species actualises the possibility at some time. Yet in Anselm’s framework, even though *no* individual member ever actualises a species-based possibility, this possibility is not equivalent to impossibility. Whether an eternally unactualised possibility is impossible relies on whether an agent holds a corresponding *primed power* (i.e., whether *all* necessary conditions for acting are at present). For instance, suppose that no one has ever played nor will play a well-designed instrument. For Anselm, one could say that it is possible for a person to play it with respect to humans’ *capability* of learning to play a new instrument.

The relation between primed power and actuality is subtle. The primed power of bringing about a certain event only guarantees a set of preconditions for its actualisation. Nevertheless, the move from possibility to actuality requires the *operation* of the primed power. Moreover, Anselm nowhere indicates that, for a certain possibility to be genuine, the underlying primed power must be operated at least once. When we say that humans have the primed power to do a certain thing, so long as we operate the power, we will actualise that thing successfully. However, no rule regulates that someone *has to* operate it at least once. Anselm, thus, disconnects possibility and actuality in his power-based conception of possibility.

3.3.1.2 Necessity and Impossibility

Anselm construes necessity in terms of compulsion or constraint:

¹¹⁷ Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936). For criticism of Lovejoy’s thought, see Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval*, 4–5. Knuuttila does not think that the POP is applicable to the notion of divine power found in medieval discussions. Yet, as he notes, Serene argues that ‘the Principle of Plenitude is not present in Anselm’s modal theory’ (Simo Knuuttila, ‘Introduction,’ in *Reforging the Great Chain of Being: Studies of the History of Modal Theories*, ed. Simo Knuuttila (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1981), 12. Serene, ‘Anselm’s Modal Conceptions’, 141).

For all necessity is either compulsion or constraint; these two necessities are related to each other as contraries, just like necessary and impossible. For whatever is compelled to exist is constrained from not existing, and what is compelled not to exist is constrained from existing, just as what is necessary to exist is impossible not to exist, and what is necessary not to exist is impossible to exist, and vice versa.

Omnis quippe necessitas est aut coactio aut prohibitio; quae duae necessitates convertuntur invicem contrarie, sicut necesse et impossibile. Quidquid namque cogitur esse prohibetur non esse, et quod cogitur non esse prohibetur esse; quemadmodum quod necesse est esse impossibile est non esse, et quod necesse est non esse impossibile est esse, et conversim (*Cur Deus Homo* 2.17, S II. 123.22–27).

As Visser and Williams suggest, Anselm's notion of compulsion (*coactio*) always involves an *external agency*.¹¹⁸ External agency does not only refer to a physically external force, but also refers to the ultimate *source* of the power, which is from an external source. In this sense, the nature of a natural thing is an external agency with respect to its *source* because every natural disposition is granted and preserved by God. Anselm's notion of necessity refers to an external causal power that is exerted on the subject. Combining this point with what I have already analysed about the metaphysics of possibility, Anselm's notion of necessity involves an external power that results in the lack of a subject's primed power *to do otherwise*. So, the proper understanding of 'it is necessary that the sun will rise in the morning' is that the sun lacks a primed power *not* to rise in the morning insofar as, given the fixed nature of the sun, it lacks the *intrinsic* power not to rise in the morning. Accordingly, necessity is compatible with possibility: Whatever is necessary is also possible. Possibility requires that a primed power is at present, yet does not regulate the source of that power.

3.3.1.3 Subsequent Necessity and the Principle of Non-Contradiction

However, a consistent power-based modal metaphysics appears to collapse when we consider Anselm's distinction between antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity. In this section, I argue that subsequent necessity, as Leftow suggests, can and should be organised within a power-based, metaphysical framework. However, Leftow does not notice that the power underlying

¹¹⁸ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 150–51.

subsequent necessity is different from that of antecedent necessity. Antecedent possibility reduces to the compelling power embedded in the natures of things. The *ultimate* source of this compelling power is the power of God's will of creation, from which the providential design of the world derives. By contrast, subsequent necessity is derived from the *immutability* of God's will. This immutability is the indication of God's power to establish irrevocable facts. Therefore, no *a priori*, logical law is involved in Anselm's modal metaphysics. Divine power constitutes the condition for all existence in the natural world, and divine power establishes every temporal fact in an irrevocable manner.

To demonstrate this claim, I examine Anselm's own accounts. Anselm makes the distinction between antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity in *Cur Homo Deus* 2.17 and *De Concordia* 1.2. The former explicitly shows that, when Anselm speaks of subsequent necessity, he is not considering an empty tautology:

You see, there is antecedent necessity, which is the cause of something's being; and there is subsequent necessity, which the thing itself brings about. It is a case of antecedent and efficient necessity when it is said that the heavens revolve because it is necessary that they revolve, whereas it is a case of subsequent necessity – and necessity that brings nothing about but rather is brought about – when I say that you are speaking of necessity because you are speaking. *For when I say this, I signify that nothing can make it the case that while you are speaking you are not speaking, not that anything is compelling you to speak.* For the violence of their natural condition compels the heavens to revolve, whereas no necessity brings it about that you speak.

Est namque necessitas praecedens, quae causa est ut sit res; et est necessitas sequens, quam res facit. Praecedens et efficiens necessitas est, cum dicitur caelum volvi, quia necesse est ut volvatur; sequens vero et quae nihil efficit sed fit, est cum dico te ex necessitate loqui, quia loquieris. *Cum enim hoc dico, significo nihil facere posse, ut dum loqueris non loquaris, non quod aliquid te cogat ad loquendum.* Nam violentia naturalis conditionis cogit caelum volvi, te vero nulla necessitas facit loqui (*Cur Deus Homo* 2.17, S II. 125.8–14).

Anselm talks about real events in the natural world when he speaks of both antecedent necessity

and subsequent necessity. Anselm specifies that the reason why ‘your speaking’ is necessary is that ‘nothing *can make* (*facere posse*) it the case that while you are speaking you are not speaking, not that anything is compelling you to speak.’ In other words, it is the *irrevocability* inherent in every temporal fact that prevents everything from making one not speak when one is speaking.

However, *De Concordia* 1.2 suggests that subsequent necessity does not belong to an account of the power that compels:

I say that it is important to realize that we often say something is necessary that is not compelled by any power, and that something is necessarily not the case that is not eliminated by a constraint. . . . So when I say that if God foreknows something, it is necessary that it is going to be, that is the same as saying that if it will be, it will be by necessity. But that necessity does not compel or constrain anything to be or not to be. It is because something is posited as existing that its existence is said to be necessary, and because something is posited as not existing that its non-existence is said to be necessary.

Et ego: Sciendum est quia saepe dicimus necesse esse, quod nulla vi esse cogitur; et necesse non esse, quod nulla prohibitionem remouetur. . . . Quare cum dico quia si praescit deus aliquid, necesse est illud esse futurum: idem est ac si dicam: Si erit, ex necessitate erit. Sed hae necessitas nec cogit nec prohibet aliquid esse aut non esse. Ideo enim quia ponitur res esse, dicitur ex necessitate esse; aut quia ponitur non esse, affirmatur non esse ex necessitate (*De Concordia* 1.2, S II. 247.6–8; 248.7–249.5).

So, what accounts for the irrevocability inherent in temporal facts on Anselm’s view? One conventional candidate is the *a priori*, logical Principle of Non-contradiction (PNC) – necessarily, if *p*, then *p*, or (the variant) necessarily, if *p* is true, *p* is true *eternally*. Anselm never refers to PNC as an *a priori*, logical rule in his work, though he does approve the *validity* of the PNC. In Anselm’s view, the ultimate source of subsequent necessity reduces to the power of God’s immutable will. All things and events are governed by subsequent necessity because, according to the *immutability* of God’s will, what is settled in the timeline cannot be unsettled by *any* power. Everything, even God Himself lacks the primed power to unsettle the established facts; otherwise, having that power would undermine God’s perfection. Anselm further explains this point in *Cur Deus Homo*, in claiming that God cannot undo the past due to the immutability of His will:

Now when God does something, after it has been done it can (no longer) not have been done, but rather it is always true that it has been done; and yet it is not rightly said that it is impossible for God to bring it about that what is past is not past – for in this case there is no necessity of not bringing it about, or impossibility of bringing it about, at work, but only the will of God, who, because he is himself the truth, wills that the truth be always immutable, just as he is. In the same way, if he immutably resolves to do something, then although what he resolves to do, before it is done, cannot fail to come about in the future, nonetheless there is not in God any necessity of doing it or impossibility of not doing it, since only God's will is at work in him.

Et sicut cum deus facit aliquid, postquam factum est, iam non potest non esse factum, sed semper verum est factum esse; nec tamen recte dicitur impossibile deo esse, ut faciat quod praeteritum est non esse praeteritum – nihil enim ibi operatur necessitas non faciendi aut impossibilitas faciendi, sed dei sola voluntas, qui veritatem semper, quoniam ipse veritas est, immutabilem, sicuti est, vult esse –: ita si proponit se aliquid immutabiliter facturum, quamvis quod proponit, antequam fiat, non possit non esse futurum, non tamen ulla est in eo faciendi necessitas aut non faciendi impossibilitas, quoniam sola in eo operatur voluntas (*Cur Deus Homo* 2.17, S II. 123.3–11).

On the one hand, God's will, understood as a power, could establish irrevocable facts in the world. On the other hand, however, no *external* power can intervene and exert compulsion on God's will *before* and *when* it operates. In this sense, Anselm thinks it is improper to say that it is necessary for God not to undo the past, or necessary for God not to do unjust things. *God's acts are not even governed by subsequent necessity*. Instead, for Anselm, it is proper to say that it is necessary for other things not to unsettle the facts insofar as the power of God's will is an external agency. In this sense, those things are governed by subsequent necessity.

Why does Anselm want to exclude subsequent necessity in his account of compulsion, power-based metaphysics? Perhaps, Anselm thinks that the power, which is directly traced back to divine attributes, is distinct from the power that God distributes to the creatures according to their properties. The former power is not compelling because it does not directly participate in the horizontal interactions between different agents within the created world. Instead, the power of the

divine attributes lays down a separate, fundamental metaphysical rule for the operations of various powers delegated to the created world. Anselm assimilates the Aristotelian necessity of the past and present to a metaphysical law grounded on subsequent necessity. Subsequent necessity does not refer to any power within the natural world, but instead to a vertical power from a higher dimension that sets up the first principles for every created being. All events, contingent or not, so long as they are eventually actualised, are governed by subsequent necessity. Anselm's removal of subsequent necessity from the account of prevention and compulsion, in fact, secures the *independence* of Anselm's account of power-based modality within the created world. Anselm tends to separate these two kinds of powers. As shown in the example in *De Libertate Arbitrii* 3 (see 3.3.1.1), when Anselm considers whether it is possible for x that p , he does consider temporality as one of the necessary conditions for possibility. In Anselm's context, when speaking of the foundations of possibility and antecedent necessity in the created world, the metaphysical feature of temporality has no place.

3.3.1.4 Anselm's Modal Conceptions and Synchronic Alternative Possibilities

The theoretical potential of Anselm's power-based modal conceptions is remarkable. Although Anselm himself does not explore this potential, I believe that it is meaningful to disclose it because doing so would motivate us to review the contemporary notion of synchronic alternative possibilities.

Anselm's conception of possibility invites us to go through a set of conditions presented in a particular scenario. We need to examine whether those conditions suffice for the *effectiveness* of the primed power of bringing about p (' p ' refers to any event in the real world). The effectiveness precisely means: if the primed power operates, p will be successfully actualised. If *none* of the necessary conditions for primed power is missing, the metaphysical foundation for the corresponding possibility is laid down. In this case, it is correct to claim that p is genuinely possible for the bearer of the primed power. Accordingly, p is *contingent* just in case the primed powers of actualising it and of *not* actualising it are both present and the operation of either is not causally determined by any external agency. An event is necessary just in case a certain external agency, explicit or implicit, causally determines the operation of the only primed power of the agent such that it negates all other primed powers in the situation. The modal conceptions are based on the relation between the bearer of the primed power and the ultimate source of the primed power (i.e., whether the operation of power is causally determined by an external agency).

This conception of modality, in principle, endows us with a new semantics that allows us to

admit simultaneous alternative possibilities. When speaking of synchronic alternative possibilities, no contemporary philosopher demands that the actualised event must be compatible with an alternative possibility at the same moment of the *diachronically singular* timeline because, apparently, it is absurd. Nor does anyone expect that the past can be undone so that the previously unrealised alternative option would have the chance to be actualised at the same moment; this would contradict the irrevocability of temporal facts. Unlike Peter Damian, Anselm would not accept these demands. But whether Anselm believes that temporal facts are irrevocable, this is irrelevant to the characterisation of modality. The notion of synchronic alternatives requires a set of modal notions, of which the metaphysical foundations are *unaffected* by or are *irrelevant* to the irrevocability inherent in temporality and actuality, that allow us to speak of the *coexistence* of a pair of *genuine* counter-possibilities in a legitimate way. Of course, the modern notion of possible worlds along with possible world semantics is a strong candidate for doing so because it provides a rather straightforward solution by expanding *modal space*. That is to say, to justify the contingency of a fact, we can refer to the same moment located in a parallel timeline of a conceivable possible world in which the counterfactual event could occur. Yet this is one but not the only solution. The power-based modal theory also fulfils the requirement. We can safely designate both possibilities of my drinking and my not drinking a cup of tea at the same moment t insofar as I have both corresponding primed powers. The fact that an agent has done something else at t does not change the fact that the agent possesses a certain primed power. The fact of my drinking a cup of tea at t has the modal force of logical necessity, which negates the *actual* operation of *any* other primed powers at t , yet the whole package of the necessary conditions for my primed power of not drinking a cup of tea remains unaffected. In this sense, we can legitimately claim that counter-possibilities can exist simultaneously as long as the corresponding primed powers are present.

3.3.2 The Modal Force of Anselm's Modality

I now investigate the modal force of Anselm's notion of modality. Although scholars who divide Anselm's modality into two parts fail to recognise the power-based metaphysics of subsequent necessity, they rightly grasp that Anselm's notions of modalities have different modal forces. In Anselm's framework, both antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity are different types of alethic necessity. I quantify the concept of modal force in terms of alternative possibilities: the more alternative possibilities with which a necessity is compatible, the less modal force it possesses. I shall show that, in Anselm's framework, antecedent necessity has alternative possibilities according to God's creation, whereas subsequent necessity does not. Therefore, while subsequent necessity is

similar to the contemporary notion of logical necessity, antecedent necessity only has the modal force of natural necessity.

3.3.2.1 Antecedent Necessity as Natural or Nomic Necessity

For Anselm, the underlying power of antecedent necessity is the nature of things, which functions in a fixed manner. The nature of things is created by God according to His whole providential design. Unlike Peter Abelard, Anselm does not declare that God only brings about what is *best* such that what God does exhausts what God could have done. Although in *Cur Deus Homo*, it appears that Anselm believes that the incarnation of Christ is the *only* way to save humanity, Anselm precisely claims that it is *fitting* for God to restore human sin through the incarnation of Christ.¹¹⁹ This does not exclude the possibility that God creates the nature of human beings differently so that there are other fitting ways to achieve the redemption of human beings.¹²⁰ Following Augustinian theology, Anselm would likely agree that God has the power to bring about alternative possibilities of the universe. In this sense, antecedent necessity is compatible with a set of alternative possibilities existing in God's mind.

3.3.2.2 Subsequent Necessity as Logical Necessity

Subsequent necessity in effect endorses PNC. Anselm explains in *De Concordia*:

Hence, when we say that it is necessary that what God foreknows to be future is future, we are not always claiming that the thing is by necessity future, but that a future thing is by necessity future. *After all, it cannot be future and not future at the same time.*

Quapropter cum dicimus quia quod deus praescit futurum necesse est esse futurum, non asserimus semper rem esse necessitate futuram, sed rem futuram necessitate esse futuram. *Non enim potest futurum simul non esse futurum* (*De Concordia* 1.2, S II. 250.25–27).

It is correct to treat Anselm's expression that 'it cannot be future and not future at the same

¹¹⁹ 'Freedom, after all, is only for what is expedient or fitting; and what acts in a way that is unfitting for God should not be called kindness' [Libertas enim non est nisi ad hoc quod expedit aut quod decet, nec benignitas dicenda est quae aliquid deo indecens operatur] (*Cur Deus Homo*, 1.12, S II. 70.13–14).

¹²⁰ For a more detailed analysis of Anselm's necessity on incarnation, see Leftow, 'Anselm on the Necessity', 167–85.

time' as a reference to PNC. However, approval of PNC does not entail that the *source* of subsequent necessity is PNC. Recall that subsequent necessity is derived from the divine *immutability*. Yet the modal force of subsequent necessity has the same degree of modal force as does logical necessity entailed from PNC. Anselm believes that God's will is *absolutely* immutable. And, unlike Peter Damian, Anselm believes that this immutability contributes directly to the irrevocability of temporal facts. So as long as the divine attribute cannot be otherwise *at all*, no alternative possibility is involved in the notion of subsequent necessity. Thus, subsequent necessity governs every established temporal fact.

To summarise, the immutability of God's will is the foundation for the logical or metaphysical truth that validates PNC and constitutes the force of subsequent necessity. God's creation of the nature of things generates antecedent necessity. The modal force of antecedent necessity is not as strong as subsequent necessity insofar as Anselm believes that God could have created the world differently.

3.4 Conclusion

The power-based model of modality is prevalent in eleventh-century Latin discussions of modality. This modal conception is based on the power that resides in the real world, and it provides an intuitive approach to modal notions. This conception is significant in two ways aspects. First, in reducing possibility and necessity to the power held by an agency, Anselm disconnects possibility and actuality. Doing so allows Anselm to reject the Principle of Plenitude – no genuine possibility remains eternally unactualised. Peter Damian, Garlandus, and Anselm all admit the ontological status of unrealised possibilities. In a broader sense, the modal concepts are conceptually independent of temporality. They are simply two distinct systems. Damian, from the perspective of theology, contends that temporal modality is only dialectical and so cannot be used to speak of God because it would largely constrain divine omnipotence. Garlandus regards temporal necessity as one of three modes of speaking of necessity. He claims that a proposition that expresses the necessity of what has happened is the same as a simple proposition that states a fact. Yet he also conceives of necessity as the relation between substance and properties. Anselm distinguishes between antecedent necessity and subsequent necessity. While the former belongs to the modality of the delegated powers in the created world, the latter amounts to an independent, metaphysical rule, laid down by divine power directly, that prevents the past and present from being mutable. Second, this modal conception provides us with a distinct semantics that entitles us to speak of synchronic alternative possibilities in a diachronically temporal line. This is not contradictory with possible

world semantics but rather provides a concrete explanation for the *metaphysical ground* of what is possible and necessary. For when someone states that '*p* is possible' and means that '*p* is true in some possible worlds', one does not add any substantial explanation of *why p* is possible. Instead, one introduces a semantic tool or a set of extensional logic devices. The power-based modality, by contrast, has more explanatory power of what is possible and necessary in our actual world; at the same time it frees us from the restriction of diachronic actuality and temporality.

Chapter 4 A New Approach to Anselm's Ontological Argument

This chapter discusses a modality – epistemic modality – that derives from Anselm's power-based modality and Anselm's Ontological Argument for the existence of God. According to Anselm's

theories of modality and semantics, epistemic necessity and possibility are connected to a person's rational power of conception. Recognising this modal realm sheds new light on our understanding of Anselm's Ontological Argument. Most modern scholars who treat Anselm's Ontological Argument as rational speculation assume that Anselm's purpose is *metaphysical* – to establish the fact that God exists in reality. They then investigate the validity and soundness of the argument. In this chapter, I argue that, regardless of whether Anselm himself notices it, his Ontological Argument cannot establish the fact of God's ontological existence in the first place. Instead, Anselm *at best* establishes an *epistemically necessary* conception of God's existence.

Our first step is to recognise Anselm's *epistemic* modality and how the *rational powers* of humans is central to epistemic modality. Next, I work out two different versions of the epistemic proofs for the existence of God, one each from *Proslogion* 2 and *Proslogion* 3. The first version assumes that Anselm intends to prove God's metaphysical existence. I explain why Anselm fails in proving God's metaphysical existence. The second interpretation, which is speculative, provides a more charitable reading of Anselm's argument by reconstructing the epistemically necessary proof in a correct way. This reconstruction is derived from Anselm's consistent application of modal terms according to his semantics considerations and metaphysical conception of modality.

4.1 Anselm's Epistemic Modality

Anselm's epistemic modality derives from his power-based conception of modality. Epistemic modality is centred on the rational power of conceiving, or understanding, something. Thus, we can have a set of epistemic modal notions:

- (1) A property *P* of *x* is epistemically possible just in case that if someone starts to examine the concept of *x*, one's rational power allows a person to conceive it as of *x*.
- (2) A property *P* of *x* is epistemically necessary just in case that if someone starts to examine the concept of *x*, one's rational power does not allow the person to conceive property *P* as *not* of *x*.
- (3) A property *P* of *x* is epistemically impossible just in case that if someone starts to examine the concept of *x*, one's rational power does not allow a person to conceive it as of *x*.

What is the criterion for whether a rational power allows a person to conceive property *p* of *x* or not? I concentrate on the property of *existence in reality* because of its close connection to Anselm's proof of the existence of God. Whether *x* can be conceived as existing in reality depends

on the type of conception of x . As I explain in the next section, I distinguish the conception of x as having an encoded property and the conception of x as having a constructive property. The former is based on *logical* possibility alone, while the latter depends on *actual* possibility. If the property of existing in reality is an *encoded* property, then a rational person can conceive of x as existing in reality as long as having this property does not result in a logical contradiction. By contrast, if the property is *constructively* conceived as part of x , whether a rational mind can conceive of x as existing in reality requires rational justification in addition to the logical principle of non-contradiction. It is possible that x 's existence in reality is logically possible but still impossible in the actual world. Anselm's power-based modality permits that there is no power that resides in the world to bring about x 's existence or that a power prevents bringing about x 's existence. Thus, the range of a rational person's power of constructive conception is limited. Without another rational basis, it is not rational to constructively conceive of x as existing in reality. Although defining or quantifying what constitutes a 'sufficient' rational basis is not easy, minimum requirements are that a rational mind should not commit to something's possible existence in the actual world arbitrarily and that the reasoning should not contain any unqualified gaps.

Anselm is aware that the domain of epistemic modal truth *based on rational power* might not be identical with the domain of metaphysical modal truth. At the beginning of the *Monologion*, Anselm writes:

I wish to be understood in this way: even if I present a conclusion as necessary on the basis of arguments that seem compelling to me, I mean only that it can seem necessary for the time being, not that it is therefore in fact altogether necessary.

Sic volo accipi ut, quamvis ex rationibus quae mihi videbuntur, quasi necessarium concludatur, non ob hoc tamen omnino necessarium, sed tantum sic interim videri posse dicatur (*Monologion* 1, S I, 14.2–4).

On the one hand, given the rational methods at our disposal, Anselm is confident that humans' rational power can reach a *compelling* conclusion. On the other hand, he acknowledges that rational compulsion is not absolute. Anselm is suspicious of what is epistemically necessary. There might be a gap between what is epistemically necessary and what is logically, or metaphysically, necessary. Although a conclusion seems to be compelling in the presence of a rational mind, a metaphysically modal truth may be beyond human comprehension; or a conclusion may be epistemically but not

metaphysically necessary.

4.2 The Problem of the Ontological Argument in *Proslogion* 2

I begin with *Proslogion* 2:

But when this same fool hears me say ‘something than which nothing greater can be thought,’ he surely understands what he hears; and what he understands exists in his understanding, even if he does not understand that it exists [in reality]. For it is one thing for an object to exist in the understanding and quite another to understand that the object exists [in reality]...And for certain that than which nothing greater can be thought cannot exist in the intellect alone. For if it is in the intellect alone, *it can be thought to exist also in reality*, which is greater. If therefore that than which nothing greater can be thought is in the intellect alone, that than which nothing greater can be thought is that than which something greater can be thought.

Sed certe is idem insipiens, cum audit hoc ipsum quod dico: ‘aliquid quo maius nihil cogitari potest’, intelligit quod audit; et quod intelligit in intellectu eius est, etiam si non intelligat illud esse. Aliud enim est rem esse in intellectu, aliud intelligere rem esse...Et certe id quo maius cogitari nequit, non potest esse in solo intellectu. Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, *potest cogitari esse* et in re, quod maius est. Si ergo id quo maius cogitari non potest, est in solo intellectu: id ipsum quo maius cogitari non potest, est quo maius cogitari potest (*Proslogion* 2, S I. 101.7-10; 101.15–102.1).

The conventional interpretation is that Anselm intends to prove an ontological truth: that something that than which nothing greater can be conceived (‘*G*’ for short) exists in reality through a *reductio ad absurdum* argument. I shall skip the step that Anselm identifies *G* with God. For the key proof of God’s existence is contained in the one that establishes *G*’s existence. I shall also skip the detailed review of discussions on the *Proslogion*. My primary aim is purely philosophical, i.e. to examine whether Anselm could establish *G*’s existence from rational conceptions. I reconstruct Anselm’s proof as follows:

1. *G* is something that than which a greater cannot be (rationally) conceived.

(Definition)

This definition is equivalent to the claim that the thing *G* is so great that no concept that can be conceived is greater than the corresponding concept of *G*.

2. A concept or a thought object, including both the *encoded* and *constructive* property of existence, is greater than one that does not include them, or that includes only the encoded property. ('Existence in reality' is a great-making property.)

I borrow Graham Oppy's distinction between properties encoded in a concept and properties attributed to a concept, or a mental object.¹²¹ Note that when using 'encoded properties', I only take it as a metaphorical way of discussing the process of conceiving; I call 'properties attributed to a concept' constructive properties, and redefine them by combining Anselm's modality. Although reconstructing Anselm's distinction between existence in understanding and existence in reality as the distinction between encoded properties and constructive properties, at first sight, is not a faithful reading of Anselm's texts, this reconstruction reveals the implicit philosophical assumption of Anselm's argument, and helps to expose its invalidity. An encoded property is that which can be conceived as part of the concept with a minimum requirement that it is not logically incompatible with the concept's other properties. In other words, encoded properties are in the realm of logical possibility. A constructive property, by contrast, requires that the conceiver assumes that the property has a metaphysical basis for the possible existence in the *actual* world.

3. Suppose *G* is not in reality. Given this supposition, the corresponding concept or thought object of *G* does not include the constructive property of existence.

¹²¹ Oppy introduces the distinction between the properties *encoded* in an idea or a concept and the properties *attributed* in positive atomic *beliefs* which have the idea or concept as an ingredient (see his 'Ontological Arguments', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/ontological-arguments/>). Many scholars also accept similar distinctions. Jasper Hopkins defends Gaunilo's position by distinguishing the *conceivability* of something as existing in reality and something's existing in reality (*A Companion to the Study of St Anselm* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1972)). Gyula Klima combines the medieval notion of reference with Anselm's Ontological Argument and distinguishes between the *parasitic* reference and the *constitutive* reference to the thought object. In this way, he explains in what sense Anselm is right, and in what sense an atheist may also preserve his position safely ('Saint Anselm's Proof: A Problem of Reference, Intentional Identity and Mutual Understanding', in *Medieval Philosophy and Modern Times*, ed. Ghita Holmström-Hintikka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2000), 69–87). Brian Davies, in general, follows Klima's explanation, but provides a charitable view by including Anselm's contemplation of God. In his view, Anselm 'thought it absurd *seriously* to think of something than which nothing greater can be thought while also insisting that this is something which might not exist *in re* and which might possibly not exist' ('Anselm and the Ontological Argument', in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (see note 2), 174).

Note that this does not prevent anyone from conceiving of *G* as also including the *encoded* property of existence. The underlying presumption is that the scope of logical possibility is wider than the scope of metaphysical or actual possibilities. This presumption, as I shall show, is supported by Anselm's modal model.

4. *G* is understood by a rational mind; therefore, the person has the rational power to conceive of *G* as including the constructive property of existence, which is greater.

Indeed, the rational person can conceive of *G* as including the *encoded* property of existence, but it would not make *G* greater *in this case*. The reason is stated above.

5. A contradiction follows. So (3) is false. (1, 2, 4)

I want to discuss the problematic premise (4). In what sense does a rational mind have the rational power to conceive of *G* as having the constructive property of existence? A rational mind should suspend his judgment at this stage. Anselm does not provide an additional rational basis for conceiving of *G* as including the constructive property of existence or non-existence. Of course, one can firmly claim that one could do that. But that would be an arbitrary and not a *rational* claim. Because of the gap between something's logically possible existence and its possible existence in the actual world, a rational mind requires qualifications to bridge the gap. Indeed, the basic, logical rule of non-contradiction applies to all actual possible existences and provides a minimum justification for an actual possible existence. Nonetheless, another set of rules, which are separate from the purely logical model realm, govern actual beings. At this stage, Anselm has provided no additional philosophical justifications to bridge this gap. The conception that *x* possibly exists in the actual world, if not irrational, cannot be constructed straightforwardly from the single premise that *x*'s existence is logically possible. At best, a rational mind has the power to conceive of *G* as including the encoded property of existence. Therefore, if we take Anselm's proof in *Proslogion* 2 as an ontological proof, it is invalid.

Indeed, someone might argue that, for Anselm, what is understood as non-contradictory is possible to exist and that it is rational to conceive of what is metaphysically possible to exist as existing in reality.¹²² One implicit assumption of this reasoning is that (1) there is no gap between

¹²² See Richard Campbell, 'Appendix A: Validating Anselm's Claim that It Is Greater to Be in Reality than Not', in *That God Exists: A Cosmological Reformulation of Anselm's Proof* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

logical possibility and actual possibility. Another implicit assumption is that (2) actual possibility provides sufficient rational support for the constructive conception of *G*'s existence in reality. The claim (2) appears to be plausible. Assumption (1) is problematic. I would not say that assumption (1) – the equivalence between logical possibility and metaphysical possibility – is definitely wrong. However, the problem is that Anselm needs to provide additional justification for this equivalence. Moreover, the danger is that, if this assumption is right, then Anselm's ontological argument is applicable to arguing for the actual existence of many other things, such as the perfect island or other less perfect beings.

Scholars might also object that the distinction between an encoded property and constructive property is pointless and that there is no need for a further rational justification of the constructive conception of something's existence. This objection, again, is based on the assumption that there is no gap between logical possibility and actual possibility. I think that, at least given Anselm's power-based modal theory, it is plausible to make this distinction. Therefore, more explanation of how to fill this gap is needed.

4.3 The Alternative Interpretation of *Proslogion* 2

According to Anselm's epistemic modality, an alternative interpretation of *Proslogion* 2 runs as follows:

1. Every rational mind would accept that a thought object (at least a good thing) conceived as including the encoded property of existence is greater than that same object conceived as not including the encoded property of existence.
2. Given that *G* is a logically non-contradictory concept, everyone has the rational power to conceive of *G* as also including the encoded property of existence in reality.
3. If a rational mind conceives of *G*, it is *necessary* for it to conceive of *G* as including the encoded property of existence in reality; otherwise, either person is not conceiving of *G*, or the person is irrational.

On this reading, what is established is an epistemically necessary truth: when a rational mind entertains a concept of *G*, it is compelled to conceive of the property of existing in reality as part of *G*.

4.4 The Problem of the Modern Modal Version of the Ontological Argument in *Proslogion* 3

Anselm continues his proof in *Proslogion* 3:

This [being] exists so truly that it cannot even be thought not to exist. *For it is possible to think that something exists that cannot be thought not to exist, and such a being is greater than one that can be thought not to exist.* Therefore, if that than which a greater cannot be thought can be thought not to exist, then that than which a greater cannot be thought is not that than which a greater cannot be thought; and this is a contradiction. So that than which a greater cannot be thought exists so truly that it cannot even be thought not to exist.

Quod utique sic vere est, ut nec cogitari possit non esse. *Nam potest cogitari esse aliquid, quod non possit cogitari non esse; quod maius est quam quod non esse cogitari potest.* Quare si id quo maius nequit cogitari, potest cogitari non esse: id ipsum quo maius cogitari nequit, non est id quo maius cogitari nequit; quod convenire non potest. Sic ergo vere est aliquid quo maius cogitari non potest, ut nec cogitari possit non esse (*Proslogion* 3, S I. 102.6–103.2).

How this argument is to be interpreted is controversial. Since Norman Malcolm and Charles Hartshorne, scholars have provided a modal reconstruction of this passage.¹²³ Alvin Plantinga contributes to this trend of interpretation by combining it with the S5 modal system.¹²⁴ Malcolm rejects Kant's criticism that Anselm regards existence as a perfection (and, therefore, that 'existence' is a 'real predicate') on the basis of Malcolm's alternative interpretation of the proof in *Proslogion* 3. Malcolm renders the main thesis as that the property of *necessary existence* constitutes a perfect-making property. Malcolm interprets Anselm's claim that 'for it is possible to think that something exists that cannot be thought not to exist, and such a being is greater than one that can be thought not to exist' as 'that a being whose nonexistence is logically impossible is "greater" than a being whose nonexistence is logically possible'. Contingent existence and non-existence do not apply to God; otherwise, God's existence would be limited. God's existence must either be logically necessary or logically impossible. God's existence is not logically impossible

¹²³ Norman Malcolm, 'Anselm's Ontological Arguments', *Philosophical Review* 69, no.1 (January 1960), 41–62. Charles Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery: A Re-Examination of the Ontological Proof for God's Existence* (La Salle, Ill: Open Court, 1965).

¹²⁴ Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 196–221.

insofar as the concept is neither self-contradictory nor logically absurd. Therefore, God's existence is logically necessary. God exists in the sense that the *a priori* statement that 'God necessarily exists' entails the *a priori* statement that 'God exists'. The mistake of this modal version lies in treating conceivability and possibility as equivalent. There is no textual evidence that justifies the equivalence. According to Anselm's modal and semantic theories, possibility and impossibility are the equivalent of 'can' and 'cannot', respectively. When Anselm says 'This [being] exists so truly that it cannot even be thought not to exist', he means 'it is impossible *to be thought* not to exist', rather than 'it *is* impossible not to exist'. 'It is impossible *to be thought* not to exist' means that the property of non-existence is logically incompatible with the concept but does not naturally render it true that what is signified by this concept in the first place necessarily exists in reality. For instance, it is impossible to conceive of a triangle that does not have three sides; otherwise, what one conceives of would contradict the definition of a triangle. Therefore, it is impossible that a triangle, whether as a mental concept or as a real object, does not have three sides. What we can infer from this is that a triangle, *if* it exists in reality, necessarily has three sides. Nonetheless, the justification of the premise that there is a real triangle has nothing to do with the definition of a triangle.

Hartshorne's and Plantinga's reasonings are similar, though the latter articulates his reasoning more explicitly. With the aid of the modern S5 modal system, Plantinga argues that it is possible that God exists and, therefore, it is necessary that God exists. Thus, God exists in the actual world. Two problems are noteworthy. Anselm rejects ascribing tokens of 'necessity' not only to acts of God but also to the existence of God. Anselm's reason for the rejections is the same: God is not governed by antecedent necessity or subsequent necessity. Given that Anselm consistently regards 'necessity' as signifying an involvement of an external agency, it is implausible to say that God necessarily exists. The use of a token 'necessity' applied to God would weaken His perfection anyway. Throughout the *Proslogion*, Anselm never claims that God necessarily exists.¹²⁵ This usage does not conform to Anselm's codification of proper uses for modal predicates. Someone might argue that this rejection is trivial and superficial because, if Anselm's notion of necessity is similar to the modern notion of necessity and if Anselm had the apparatus of possible world semantics, then he would agree that God necessarily exists in reality, at least in the sense that the proposition 'God exists' is true in every possible world. This is correct. However, Anselm would not follow the line

¹²⁵ The only place where Anselm seems to ascribe necessity to God is in *Proslogion* 23: "Moreover, one thing is necessary." And this is that one necessary thing, in which is all good – or rather, which is itself the complete, one, total and unique good" [Porro unum est necessarium (Luke, 10:42). Porro hoc est illud unum necessarium, in quo est omne bonum, immo quod est omne et unum et totum et solum bonum] (*Proslogion* 23, S I. 117.20–22). Anselm cites the Bible here. However, the biblical quote does not mean that God is that necessary thing. Rather, the necessary thing is that Mary has chosen the good portion. Anselm may mean that it is necessary for us to believe that God is all good.

of reasoning found in modern modal reconstruction; the reconstruction aims to prove God's necessary existence from God's possible existence and to prove God's existence from God's necessary existence. Anselm would not embrace this reasoning because it fails to show the *uniqueness* of God's existence. As Robert Kane has argued, this argument is applicable for proving not only the existence of the greatest greatness but also the existence of many other less great things. For instance, it would also prove the existence of a perfect island and even the existence of certain evil things.¹²⁶

According to Anselm, God's existence is *unique*. This uniqueness is not understood through the conception of necessity (whether Anselm's or the modern conception). Instead of distinguishing God as 'necessary being' from other things as 'contingent being', Anselm contends that God's existence is unique in the sense that it is the only *per se* existence:

But clearly, you are whatever you are, not through anything else, but through yourself. Therefore, you are the very life by which you live, the wisdom by which you are wise, and the very goodness by which you are good to the good and to the wicked, and so on for similar attributes.

Sed certe quidquid es, non per aliud es quam per teipsum. Tu es igitur ipsa vita qua vivis, et sapientia qua spis, et bonitas ipsa qua bonis et malis bonus es; et ita de similibus (*Proslogion* 12, S I. 110-6-8).

Anselm's own argument for God's existence, as I shall show later, reflects Anselm's thought on God's uniqueness.

In addition, as is mentioned above, equating conceivability with possibility is not justified in Anselm's modal system. Therefore, that it is possible to think of something is not equivalent to that it is possible that something exists. Although Anselm might accept, with certain qualifications, the relation of *entailment* between the two claims, Anselm's notion of possibility relies on a different metaphysical picture. For Anselm, 'it is possible that something exists' does not mean that it is true that something exists in at least one possible world. Instead, it means that an agency has the power to bring about that thing's existence. The properties of a S5 modal world (i.e., reflexivity, transitivity, and symmetry) are inapplicable and untranslatable into Anselm's modal system.

Therefore, although the modern, modal version is philosophically insightful, it cannot

¹²⁶ See Robert Kane, 'The Modal Ontological Argument', *Mind* 93, no. 371 (July 1984): 336-50.

provide a literal and historical interpretation of Anselm. At best, it provides a working-out of Anselm's underlying meaning with modern tools that Anselm lacks. Thus, the contribution of modal version of the proof of God's existence to the modern philosophy of religion is irrelevant to Anselm's work.

4.5 Two Interpretations of *Proslogion* 3

I now turn to examine Anselm's proof in *Proslogion* 3. There are also two different interpretations of this chapter, each of which is based on how we interpret *Proslogion* 2. If we believe that Anselm intends to prove that God exists in reality in *Proslogion* 2, then the argument of *Proslogion* 3 would run as follows:

1. It is *possible* to conceive of something as existing in reality of which the non-existence is *impossible* to conceive. (A person has the rational power to entertain such a concept.)
2. Something of which the non-existence is impossible to conceive is greater than something of which the non-existence is possible to conceive.
3. *G* is that than which nothing greater can be thought and *G* exists in reality. (*Proslogion* 2)
4. If *G*'s non-existence is possible to conceive, then either *G* is not *G* or *G* does not exist in reality. Both consequences are impossible. (1, 2, 3)
5. *G*'s non-existence is impossible (for a rational mind) to be conceived.
6. If an existing thing's non-existence is impossible to conceive, its existence is of absolute simplicity.
7. *G*'s actual existence is of absolute simplicity.

The second premise reduces to 'the inconceivability of something's non-existence is a great-making property'. The justification for this reduction is found in Anselm's reply to Gaunilo:

If something does not exist everywhere and always, even if perhaps it does exist somewhere and sometimes, it can undoubtedly be thought not to exist anywhere or at any time, just as it does not exist in this particular place or at this particular time. . . . Even if we say that time always exists and that the universe is everywhere, nevertheless, the whole of time does not always exist, and the whole of the universe

is not everywhere. And just as each individual part of time does not exist when the others do, so each can be thought never to exist. And just as each individual part of the universe does not exist where the others do, so each can be thought to exist nowhere. *Moreover, whatever is composed of parts can, at least in thought, be divided and fail to exist. Therefore, whatever does not exist as a whole in all places and at all times, even if it does exist, can be thought not to exist.* But that than which a greater cannot be thought, if it exists, cannot be thought not to exist.

Etiam si est alicubi aut aliquando, potest tamen cogitari numquam et nusquam esse, sicut non est alicubi aut aliquando. . . . Nam et si dicatur tempus semper esse et mundus ubique, non tamen illud totum semper aut iste totus est ubique. Et sicut singulae partes temporis non sunt quando aliae sunt, ita possunt numquam esse cogitari. Et singulae mundi partes, sicut non sunt, ubi aliae sunt, ita subintelligi possunt nusquam esse. *Sed et quod partibus coniunctum est, cogitatione dissolvi et non esse potest. Quare quidquid alicubi aut aliquando totum non est: etiam si est, potest cogitari non esse.* At ‘quo maius nequit cogitari’: si est, non potest cogitari non esse (*Responsio 1*, S I. 131.19–20; 25–32).

There are two reasons for the second premise. First, only the existence of *absolute simplicity* satisfies the description ‘that if x exists, x cannot be thought as not existing’. So long as one thing’s existence were divided into different moments and places, or so long as it had different parts occupying different moments or spaces, one would have the rational power to conceive of a counterfactual scenario in which that thing never exist. The key point is that, although something’s existence in fact has neither a beginning nor end, one has the power to conceive of it as not existing. According to Anselm, almost everything, including time and the universe, can be conceived of as never existing because their existence is not of absolute *simplicity*.

Second, Anselm assumes that this manner of existence ranks as the greatest of all types of existence. Thus, only this manner of existence fits well with his conception of G ’s existence. As Anselm states:

For even if nothing that actually exists can be understood not to exist, everything can be thought not to exist, *except for that which exists supremely*. Indeed, all and only those things that have a beginning or end, or are made up of parts, as well as

whatever does not exist always and everywhere as a whole (as I discussed earlier), can be thought not to exist. *The only thing that cannot be thought not to exist* is that which has neither beginning nor end, and is not made up of parts, and which no thought discerns except as wholly present always and everywhere.

Nam et si nulla quae sunt possint intelligi non esse, omnia tamen possunt cogitari non esse, *praeter id quod summe est*. Illa quippe omnia et sola possunt cogitari non esse, quae initium aut finem aut partium habent coniunctionem, et sicut iam dixi, quidquid alicubi aut aliquando totum non est. *Illud vero solum non potest cogitari non esse*, in quo nec initium nec finem nec partium coniunctionem, et quod non nisi semper ei ubique totum ulla invenit cogitatio (*Responsio* 4, S I. 133.30–134.6).

Therefore, the inconceivability of x 's non-existence is a great-making property. The argument proves the *property* of G 's ontological existence – i.e., its absolute simplicity.

However, given that the conventional interpretation that the proof in *Proslogion* 2 fails, one might read Anselm charitably and think that he does not intend to provide an ontological proof for God's existence in the first place. If we follow the second interpretation of *Proslogion* 2, we could reconstruct *Proslogion* 3 accordingly. I am aware that Anselm says that G 'exists so truly that it cannot even be thought not to exist' rather than that ' G 's non-existence is inconceivable so it exists truly', and these two statements are not equivalent. However, we can charitably read the first statement in a rather weak sense, and it might be case that Anselm begins a new line of reasoning for the claim that it is necessary to conceive of G as including the property of existence. The second interpretation of the argument is as follows:

1. It is *possible* to conceive of a thought object for which the property of non-existence is *impossible* to encode.
2. Every rational mind would accept that the thought object to which the property of non-existence is impossible to encode is greater than the thought object to which the property of non-existence is possible to be encode.
3. Everyone has the rational power to conceive of G .
4. If a rational mind conceives of G , it is *impossible* for it to conceive of G as including the property of non-existence; otherwise, what the rational mind conceives of is not G , or that mind is irrational. (1, 2)

5. It is necessary for a rational mind to conceive of *G* as including the property of existence. (I.e., a person is compelled to conceive of *G* as existing through the rational power of understanding the concept of *G*.)

This proof does not require the controversial assumption that existence in reality is a greater-making property, but it requires us to accept Anselm's view on the perfect existence, which, in Anselm's view, every rational mind should accept. Of course, from our point of view, a rational person can freely reject this epistemically necessary conclusion because the person may have a very different understanding of what counts as a universally rational premise. For instance, someone may reject that the greatest existence is the existence of simplicity, and, it is debatable, whether one can entertain the concept of *G* at all.

To conclude, I have discussed two interpretations of the relationship between the proofs in *Proslogion* 2 and *Proslogion* 3:

- I. Anselm intends to establish a metaphysical claim in *Proslogion* 2, although it appears that he fails. If so, in *Proslogion* 3 Anselm offers a proof for another property of *G*: that its non-existence is inconceivable.
- II. At best and regardless of Anselm's original intention, *Proslogion* 2 establishes only the epistemically necessary truth of God's existence. *Proslogion* 3 establishes the same conclusion as *Proslogion* 2 but does so in a different way.

The first interpretation may be closer to Anselm's original intention. The second one is a charitable reading that reconstructs the Ontological Argument on the basis of Anselm's theory of semantics and modality. This reconstruction adds more consistency to Anselm's larger, philosophical system. On the first reading, the arguments are not successful because believing that something has a logically possible existence is not a sufficient ground for believing that it has actually possible existence. Rather, it would be rational for a person to encode the property of existence in a mental object, insofar as this property is not incompatible with other encoded properties.

The second interpretation is not without its challenges. For instance, it is unclear how Anselm could move from establishing an epistemically necessary claim to then prove God's actual existence. Anselm admits that a gap between epistemic modality and metaphysical modality exists. One plausible response might be that Anselm has a strong faith in rational powers. According to

Anselm's theology, rationality is a power granted by God so that human beings can know Him and love Him. Of course, Anselm cannot use this belief in his proof for the existence of God without arguing in a circle. But Anselm's confidence in a rational power is evident throughout his argumentation. Although Anselm is aware of the limitations of human rationality, that a rational mind conceives of a thought object as necessary provides a sufficient or, at least very good, justification for the *belief* that the thought object really *is* that way. Those who accept Anselm's premises and follow his reasoning seriously would become convinced that the property of existence is epistemically inseparable from the concept of God. So, they would have a good reason to *believe* that that property *contributes* to God (i.e., God really exists in reality). Yet, at the same time, they do not have a good reason to believe that God does not exist in reality because they cannot conceive of the property of non-existence as belonging to God.

Anselm would gladly accept the second interpretation of the Ontological Argument. It works, because once one wholeheartedly accepts the package of 'rational' premises that Anselm offers, the gap between the epistemically necessary truth the argument establishes and the metaphysical truth becomes very slight. But for us it is not slight. First of all, we do not necessarily accept Anselm's rational assumptions. Moreover, the gap between the world and our language about or conception of it is not easily crossed. Therefore, even with the most charitable reading, one may still find Anselm's arguments that God exists – and exists necessarily (with no 'merely epistemically' as a qualification) – not satisfactory.

Chapter 5 Anselm's Theory of Free Will

Within classical theism, the main problem for divine omnibenevolence is: how can sin exist against the theistic background that God, as the creator of everything, is a source of good alone? One well-known response, provided by Augustine in his early works, appeals to the exercise of a free will. This strategy attributes the emergence of evil to rational agents and not God. Rational creatures are responsible for their wrongdoings because they are the primary agency of evil deeds, which they choose voluntarily. God *permits* this choice in light of a certain divine logic. However, the strategy

gives rise to the problem of unintelligibility – a rational agent’s choice to sin is unintelligible.¹²⁷ Nonetheless, God still seems partly responsible for creatures’ sins because He does not create a perfect world in which the possibility of the existence of evil is suppressed thoroughly. Recent studies show that Augustine himself is aware of some of the problems and is critical of the free will defence. His thought appears to undergo a change from a free-will theodicy in his early works to a compatibilism (i.e., there is no libertarian free will) during his later career.¹²⁸ Although this compatibilistic position inevitably entails that God is responsible for evil, Augustine sees the defence of free will more problematic. Augustine is deeply troubled by the inexplicability of a rational creature’s turning away from the highest good to the abyss of sin. He attempts to argue that, given that evil is simply a sort of privation rather than a sort of real being, there is no efficient cause of will; rather, to sin is simply a sort of ‘defect’.¹²⁹ In this sense, rational creatures do not choose to will evil voluntarily. Instead, given that God creates everything from nothing, the inclination towards evil exists in creatures.

Anselm inherits much of Augustine’s intellectual legacy, which forms a common tradition in medieval thought on the origin of primal sin.¹³⁰ Anselm absorbs the basic line of reasoning in Augustine’s early works that the source of evil is rational creatures’ free wills and that God permits the existence of evil. Unlike Augustine, however, Anselm is a staunch defender of the *superior* value of free will. Anselm firmly believes that a rational agent’s free will constitutes the primary and efficient cause of one’s choice and that the power of free will creates *contingencies* in the universe that God creates and sustains. Anselm develops a simplified but sophisticated structure of will and a philosophically precise definition of justice to further defend his libertarianism. In addition, other elements, such as modality and semantics, in his philosophical system provide supplementary support for his theory of free will.

¹²⁷ Many scholars are aware of this problem. For instance, Robert Brown, ‘The First Evil Will Must be Incomprehensible: A Critique of Augustine’, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 46, no.3 (September 1978), 315–29; Kevin Timpe, ‘The Arbitrariness of the Primal Sin’, *Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Religion* 5 (2014), 234–57; William Babcock, ‘Augustine on Sin and Moral Agency’, *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 16, no.2 (Spring 1988), 28–55.

¹²⁸ For research on Augustine’s position on freedom and predestination, see Eleonore Stump, ‘Augustine on Free Will’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (see not 60), 124–47; John Rist, ‘Augustine on Free Will and Predestination’, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, New Series 20, no.2 (1969), 420–47; Katherin Rogers, ‘Augustine’s Compatibilism’, *Religious Studies* 40, no.4 (2004), 415–35; Jesse Couenhoven, ‘Augustine’s Rejection of the Free-Will Defence: An Overview of the Late Augustine’s Theodicy’, *Religious Studies* 43, no.3 (2008), 279–98.

¹²⁹ For instance, see *De Civitate Dei* 12.7: ‘The cause is not efficient but deficient because the evil will is not something effective but a defect. For to defect from the highest to a lesser good, that is to begin to have an evil will’ [non est efficiens sed deficiens quia nec illa effectio sed defectio. Deficere namque ab eo quod summe est ad id quod minus est, hoc est incipere habere voluntatem malam]. The English translation is my own.

¹³⁰ For more thorough comparison between Augustine’s and Anselm’s ideas on angelic sin, King, ‘Angelic Sin in Augustine and Anselm’.

The primary aim of this chapter is to explain Anselm's argument for the superior value of free will against a theistic background. To achieve this explanation, I must also investigate essential ethical concepts, such as rectitude and justice, in Anselm's system. It is noteworthy that Anselm's ethical theory captures the attention of some modern scholars. Katherin Rogers has explored Anselm's relatively radical libertarian position. She has published a series of works on Anselm's free will, of which the most important is her monograph *Anselm on Freedom*. Her ambitious project has two objectives. First, she situates Anselm's theory in its historical context and highlights the originality of Anselm's free will defence within classical theism. Second, she argues that Anselm's theory prefigures some modern theories of free will, such as Frankfurt's hierarchical theory of will and Robert Kane's libertarian theory. Rogers believes that Anselm's discussion can bring new insights into contemporary philosophy of religion. I agree with Rogers' general stance that Anselm is the first thinker in the Middle Ages who develops a systematic account of a libertarian position. Motivated by his libertarian intuitions, Anselm successfully carves out a place for free will in the Augustinian worldview. However, Rogers misinterprets Anselm's view from time to time, and, as I argue in this chapter, misrepresents the connection between Anselm's structure of will and Frankfurt's hierarchical theory of will. Another debate among contemporary scholars is over the general features of Anselm's ethics. Jeffrey Brower contends that Anselm's ethical theory resembles Kantian deontological theory.¹³¹ Rogers rejects Brower's reading and contends that Anselm's ethics is a traditional eudaimonism. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, from the perspective of history of philosophy, argue that Anselm's ethical theory, despite its emphasis of the intrinsic value of free will, requires submission to the absolute sovereignty of God. Given these debates, I discuss three philosophical problems relevant to Anselmian ethical theories and provide a general account of Anselm's ethical theory.

This chapter is comprised of two parts. The first examines how Anselm, as a libertarian, understands the emergence of the primal sin. The first section of this part investigates how Anselm distinguishes between three senses of 'will'. In the second section, I introduce Anselm's definition of rectitude and justice and explain their differences. Then I proceed to analyse Anselm's definition of freedom and free will, focusing on Anselm's distinction between freedom and spontaneity, and why alternative possibilities constitute a necessary condition for the spontaneity of a rational creature. In the last section, I apply this framework and explain how Anselm's libertarianism is compatible with divine omnibenevolence. On the one hand, I use the case of Lucifer to explain in

¹³¹ Jeffrey Brower, 'Anselm on Ethics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (see note 2), 223.

what sense the emergence of the primal sin does not affect divine omnibenevolence; on the other hand, with regard to the case of human beings, I focus on how divine graces does not replace the essential function of human free will.

The second part deals with three distinct philosophical problems related to Anselm's theory of will and ethics. These discussions serve a very modest purpose, namely to correct misunderstandings about Anselm's own theory in current Anselmian scholarship. The first issue is whether Anselm's structure of will is similar to Frankfurt's hierarchical will. I argue that, unlike Frankfurt, Anselm does not develop a hierarchical theory of will. The second issue is how to classify Anselm's ethical theory. I argue that, given Anselm's moral psychology, Anselm's ethical theory is deontological and not eudaimonistic. The third problem is the problem of unintelligibility, which all variants of a free will defence face. Anselm is aware of this problem, and his resources help to clarify the problem.

The texts I focus on in this chapter are Anselm's *Three Dialogues* and *De Concordia*. Some of Anselm's terminology seems to have changed from *De Casu Diaboli*, which was completed in or around 1080, to *De Concordia*, which was Anselm's last completed work, written in the years before his death in 1109. I do not think those changes indicate any fundamental change in Anselm's thought, and I propose that *De Concordia* marks Anselm's most mature version of terminology concerning his theory of will.

5.1 Anselm's Solution to the Paradox between Free Will and Divine Omnibenevolence

5.1.1 Three Senses of 'Will'

Anselm distinguishes three senses of 'will' in *De Concordia*:

'Will' in fact, appears to be said equivocally. It has three senses: [1] *the instrument for willing*, [2] *the affection of the instrument*, and [3] *the uses of that instrument*. The instrument for willing is the power of the soul that we employ for willing. . . . The affection of this instrument is that by which the instrument itself is disposed in such a way to will something (even when one is not thinking of what it wills) that if that thing comes to mind, the instrument wills it, either immediately or at the appropriate time. . . . By contrast, the use of that instrument is what we have only when we think of the thing we will.

Voluntas utique dici videtur aequivoce tripliciter. Aliud est [1] *enim instrumentum*

volendi, aliud [2] *affectio instrumenti*, aliud [3] *usus eiusdem instrumenti*. Instrumentm volendi est vis illa animae qua utimur ad volendum. . . . Affectio huius instrumenti est, qua sic afficitur ipsum instrumentum ad volendum aliquid – etiam quando illud quod vult non cogitat –, ut si venit in memoriam, aut statim aut suo timore illud velit. . . . Usus vero eiusdem instrumenti est, quem non habemus, nisi cum cogitamus rem quam volumus (*De Concordia* 3.11, S II. 279.13–5; 17–20; 27–8).

The first sense of ‘will’ refers to the faculty of will, which is the power of the soul to will various objects. The second sense refers to the disposition of the faculty of will that indicates how the will is disposed to a certain object. The dispositions of will can also be called ‘affections’, insofar as ‘the instrument for willing is affected by its dispositions. That is why when a human soul wills something very intensely, we say that it is goaded into willing something, or that it wills it passionately’ [Affectum quippe est instrumentum volendi suis aptitudinibus. Unde dicitur hominis anima, cum vehementer vult aliquid, affecta esse ad volendum illud, vel affectuose velle] (*De Concordia* 3.11, S II. 297.9–12).

As Peter King rightly observes, the closest modern concept to this disposition is *motive*.¹³² According to Anselm, God originally assigned two dispositions, or, say, two sets of *primary* or basic motives, to all rational agents:

One of these is a disposition to will *advantage*; the other is a disposition to will *rectitude*. Indeed, the will that is the instrument wills nothing but either advantage or rectitude. Whatever else it wills, it wills either *for the sake of advantage* or *for the sake of rectitude*; even if it is mistaken, it takes itself to be relating everything it wills to them. In virtue of the affection for willing advantage, a person always wills happiness and being happy, whereas in virtue of the affection for willing rectitude, he wills rectitude and being upright, that is, [being] just.

Quarum una est ad volendum *commoditatem*, altera ad volendum *rectitudinem*. Nempe nihil vult voluntas quae est instrumentum, nisi aut *commoditatem* aut *rectitudinem*. Quidquid enim aliud vult, aut *propter commoditatem* aut *propter*

¹³² Peter King, ‘Scotus’s Rejection of Anselm’.

rectitudinem vult, et ad has – etiam si fallitur – putat se referre quod vult. Per affectionem quidem quae est ad volendum commoditatem, semper vult homo beatitudinem et beatus esse. Per illam vero quae est ad volendum rectitudinem, vult rectitudinem et rectus, id est iustus esse (*De Concordia* 3.11, S II. 381.6–13).¹³³

A rational agent's faculty of will has only two dispositions at the primal stage. One is for advantage (*commoditatas*), another is for rectitude (*rectitudo*). These dispositions delimit *what* the rational agent might will. There is no doubt that Anselm believes that advantage and rectitude themselves can constitute direct objects of volition. Yet in many cases, the person does not will advantage or rectitude directly but wills something else. Even so, the will is *for the sake of* advantage or rectitude: something that can bring about advantage or rectitude *according to the agent's personal judgment*. For instance, I will to work out for two hours every day. Although exercising for so long is tiring and does not seem to make me happy, I will to do so because I think it is advantageous to my health and would make me happy in the long term. In this sense, the dispositions for advantage and rectitude also account for *why* a rational agent wills something.

The two dispositions of will *constantly* affect the agent, regardless of whether the agent is aware of it, and the constant dispositions range from an agent's natural, non-moral willings, such as the *constant* disposition for willing health and sleep, to an agent's stable moral character, such as the disposition for willing justice, developed through free choices of will:

The instrument for willing is disposed in this way to will health, even when one is not thinking of health, so that as soon as health comes to mind, it wills health. It is also disposed in this way to will sleep, even when one is not thinking of sleep, so that when sleep comes to mind, it wills sleep at the appropriate time. After all, it is never disposed in such a way that it at some time wills illness or wills never to sleep.

¹³³ Anselm has a similar formulation in *De Casu Diaboli*, although he does not explicitly use the term 'disposition', and he contrasts justice and advantage rather than rectitude and advantage: 'For leaving aside the fact that every nature is said to be good, we commonly speak of two goods and of two evils that are contrary to them. One good is that which is called 'justice', whose contrary evil is injustice. The other good is what I think can be called 'the advantageous'; its opposite evil is the disadvantageous. Now not everyone wills justice, and not everyone avoids injustice, whereas not merely every rational nature, but indeed everything that can be aware of it wills the advantageous and avoids the disadvantageous. For no one wills anything unless he thinks it is in some way advantageous for himself. So in this way everyone wills his own well-being and wills against his own unhappiness' [Excepto namque hoc quod omnis natura bona dicitur, duo bona et duo his contraria mala usu dicuntur. Unum bonum est quod dicitur iustitia, cui contrarium est malum iniustitia. Alterum bonum est quod mihi videtur posse dici commodum, et huic malum opponitur incommodum. Sed iustitiam quidem non omnes volunt, neque omnes fugiunt iniustitiam. Commodum vero non solum omnis rationalis natura, sed etiam omne quod sentire potest vult, et vitat incommodum. Nam nullus vult nisi quod aliquo modo sibi putat commodum. Hoc igitur modo omnes bene sibi esse volunt, et male sibi esse nolunt] (*De Casu Diaboli* 12. S I. 255.4–14).

And in a just person, that same instrument is disposed in a similar way to will justice, even when the person is asleep, so that he wills justice as soon as he thinks of it.

Nam sic est instrumentum volendi affectum ad volendum salutem – etiam quando illam non cogitat –, ut mox cum venerit in memoriam, statim eam velit. Et sic est affectum ad volendum somnum – etiam quando non illum cogitat –, ut cum venit in mentem, velit illum suo tempore. Numquam enim ita est affectum, ut aliquando velit aegritudinem aut ut velit numquam dormire. In iusto quoque homine similiter est affectum idem instrumentum ad volendum iustitiam – etiam cum dormit –, ut cum eam cogitat, statim illam velit (*De Concordia*, 3.11, S II. 279.20–7).

Importantly, the disposition for advantage is *inseparable* from the agent, whereas the disposition for rectitude is *separable*.¹³⁴ Anselm's point is that, so long as the disposition *exists* in the agent's soul, the agent can be motivated to will the corresponding object whenever the object comes to mind. That a just man *is said to* will justice even when he is asleep is in virtue of the fact that he possesses the disposition for rectitude. However, once he willingly chooses to sin, he will no longer have the disposition for rectitude and, thus, will no longer be a just man. In this sense, the disposition for rectitude is naturally embedded in the agent's soul but is separable from it once the agent spontaneously chooses to abandon it. The disposition for advantage, by contrast, is always present in an agent, regardless of how one chooses.

The third sense of 'will' refers to the *exercise* of the faculty of the will. In *De Libertate Arbitrii* 7, Anselm distinguishes the instrument of will from the act of will – the first sense of 'will' from the third sense of 'will' in *De Concordia*. Although, in *De Libertate*, Anselm has not yet developed his mature theory of the disposition of will, he explains the act of will at more length:

The will that is the instrument for willing is always in the soul, even when it is not willing anything – for example, when one is asleep – but we have the will that I am calling the *exercise or deed* [The original translation: activity] of that instrument

¹³⁴ 'These two wills also differ in that the one that is for willing advantage is inseparable, whereas the one that is for willing rectitude was originally, as I said above, separable from the angels and our first parents, and is still separable from those who remain in this present life' [Quae duae voluntates etiam in hoc differunt, quia illa quae est ad volendum commodum, inseparabilis est; illa vero quae est ad volendum rectitudinem, separabilis fuit - ut supra dixi - in principio in angelis et in primis nostris parentibus, et est adhuc in hac vita manentibus] (*De Concordia* 3.12, S I. 284.10–14).

only when we are willing something. So the will that I am calling the instrument for willing is always one and the same, no matter what we will; but the will that is *its deed* is as multifarious as the many objects and occasions of our willing – just as the sight that we have even in darkness or with our eyes closed is always the same, no matter what we see, whereas the sight that is its deed, which is also called vision, is as various as the varied objects and occasions of our seeing.

Ita voluntas, iustrumentum scilicet volendi, semper est in anima, etiam cum non vult aliquid, velut cum dormit; voluntatem vero quam dico *usum* sive *opus* eiusdem instrumenti, non habemus nisi quando volumus aliquid. Illa igitur voluntas quam voco instrumentum volendi, una et eadem semper est quidquid velimus; illa vero quae *opus* eius est, tam multiplex est quam multa et quam saepe volumus; quemadmodum visus quem etiam in tenebris vel clausis habemus oculis, semper idem est quidquid videamus; visus autem, id est opus eius qui et visio nominatur, tam numerosus est quam numerosa et quam numerose videmus (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 7, S I. 219.7–16).

The exercise of will is an internal *act* or a mental *activity*. Anselm does not explicitly commit himself to the *causal* relation between an act of will and bodily action. Perhaps he does not because he is most concerned with the mental act, which does not necessarily direct the agent to any externally observable action, such as an angel's choice of whether to love God or to love itself more than God. Even with regard to moral dilemmas, such as lying for the sake of one's life or dying for the sake of truth, which require a person's bodily action, the bodily action is not that important because Anselm contends that moral evaluation rests on one's act of will and the motivation behind it. The bodily action is not reliable for moral evaluation insofar as it may be deceptive or be interrupted by an external force.

5.1.2 Rectitude and Justice

Anselm's discussion on truth and rectitude is mainly provided in *De Veritate*, where he goes through the truth of multifarious objects – the truth of statements, opinions, wills, actions, senses, and beings. Here, I provide a brief sketch of Anselm's definition of truth and rectitude. Anselm's definition of truth is 'rectitude perceptible only by the mind' [*veritas est rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis*] (*De Veritate* 11, S I. 191.19-20). In other words, truth and rectitude are almost

synonymous. Moreover, for Anselm, there is only one truth or rectitude, and its existence is immutable, without beginning or end. Thus, that something is true properly signifies that that thing is *in accordance with* the single truth. As Anselm clarifies at the end of *De Veritate*:

T: Truth is said *improperly* to be of this or that thing, since truth does not have its being in or from or through the things in which it is said to be. . . . And just as time regarded in itself is not called the time of some particular thing, but we speak of the time of this or that thing when we consider the things that are in time, so also the supreme truth as it subsists in itself is not the truth of some particular thing, but when something is *in accordance with* it, then it is called the truth or rectitude of that thing.

M. *Improprie* ‘huius vel illius rei’ esse dicitur, quoniam illa non in ipsis rebus aut ex ipsis aut per ipsas in quibus esse dicitur habet suum esse. . . . Et sicut tempus per se consideratum non dicitur temus alicuius, sed cum res quae in illo sunt consideramus, dicimus ‘tempus huius vel illius rei’: ita summa veritas per se subsistens nullius rei est; sed cum aliquid *secundum illam* est, tunc eius dicitur veritas vel rectitudo (*De Veritate* 13, S I. 199.17–9; 25–29).

Anselm speaks of something as having rectitude if and only if it is what it *ought to be* or does what it *ought to do*. The oughtness of each particular thing derives from God’s will and creation. God creates everything for a certain *purpose* according to His will. Rectitude, thus, precisely means that a thing *ought* to achieve the purpose for which it is created or for which it has the power given to do. In achieving its purpose, the thing is said to *participate* in the supreme truth insofar as it accords with God’s providential design. In this system, *prima facie*, nothing lacks rectitude. However, free will is a power that entitles rational agents to deviate from the trajectory expected by God and, thereby, lack rectitude. It is at this point that the concepts of justice and injustice enter Anselm’s account.

Anselm works out the definition of justice step by step in *De Veritate* 12. In Anselm’s

scheme, justice is moral and pertains to praiseworthy *will*s exclusively.¹³⁵ Here ‘moral’ means that a rational agent has the discretion to act in accordance with rectitude. One may characterise the will of the rational agent as apt of moral praise or blame and, accordingly, the agent may be rewarded or punished. This is because rational agents can will what they ought to will *knowingly* and *spontaneously*. (The precondition of the rational agent’s spontaneity will be discussed in the next section.) Importantly, each act of will has a *positive* motivation that reveals the moral character of the rational agent in its exercise of will. Therefore, Anselm’s full-fledged definition of justice is ‘rectitude of will preserved for its own sake’ [rectitudo voluntatis propter se servata] (*De Veritate* 12, S I. 194.26). Someone might argue that phrase ‘for its own sake’ only implies a negative rather than a positive motivation. For instance, if a rich person were to donate money to charity because he wants to appear generous in public, then he would not be donating for its own sake. However, if he were to donate the money without thinking anything about it, then arguably he would be donating for its own sake. This second case does not exist in Anselm’s theory of free will. Anselm’s discussion about moral decision-making is against a background of theism and is centred on the problem of divine redemption. As we shall see in more detail in the fifth section, God makes it the case that there are two sorts of dispositions presented in the will of rational creatures so that, to some extent, every agent must experience some struggle and has to exercise one’s discretionary power to decide what to do. Therefore, only this kind of decision indicates an agent’s genuine approval of a certain value. A decision without any engagement of rational discretion is outside of the scope of justice or injustice and is determined by God. In Anselm’s view, therefore, a rich person’s his donation would be just only if he positively appreciates the value of rectitude and decides to act accordingly.

To conclude, rectitude is conceptually distinct from justice, although Anselm does not always commit to his distinction in use (i.e., he interchanges ‘rectitude’ and ‘justice’ occasionally when discussing the rectitude of will). Technically speaking, justice is a moral value that relies on the oughtness of the rational agent’s *will*. When a rational agent exercises their free choice of will, the notion of justice can be used to characterise their will. Rectitude, by contrast, does not necessarily have a moral implication but indicates whatever has *oughtness* – whatever fulfils its

¹³⁵ John Marenbon also clarifies this point by arguing that justice is a sort of rightness that is worthy of praise. But he does not explicitly regard Anselm’s notion of justice in a moral sense because he notes that Anselm’s division between two dispositions of will – happiness and justice – does not correspond to his distinction between two sorts of good: advantage and rectitude. Rectitude, as a sort of good, has a broader sense than does justice. The former refers to all kinds of actions that the agent ought to do, while the latter specifically means a will for rectitude preserved for its own sake (see John Marenbon, ‘Boethius, Abelard and Anselm’, in *The Cambridge History of Moral Philosophy*, ed. Sacha Golob and Jens Timmermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 130–31).

purpose derived from God. Justice requires spontaneity and, thus, is incompatible with necessity, yet rectitude is compatible with natural necessity. For instance, necessarily, the horse will eat grass when it is hungry. In doing this, the horse does what it ought to do and, thus, has rectitude.

5.1.3 Freedom and Spontaneous Choices

Anselm's account of freedom appears to be inconsistent. On the one hand, in *De Libertate Arbitrii*, Anselm maintains that the power to sin does not constitute part of the definition of freedom. Anselm believes that God and the good angels are definitely free insofar as no external agency can compel them to do anything and that they do not have the power to sin in virtue of to their uprightness. So, if freedom were defined in virtue of the power to sin, God and the good angels would not have freedom. This is not acceptable for Anselm. Therefore, Anselm defines freedom as the power to do what the agent *ought to* do rather than to do *whatever* the rational agent wills. To be more precise, freedom of choice is the power to preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself [*illa libertas arbitrii est potestas servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem*](*De Libertate Arbitrii* 3, S1. 212.19–20). The more a person can resist the temptation to sin, the freer the person is. We may call this conception of freedom 'moral freedom'. On the other hand, however, Anselm clearly contends that Lucifer and human beings sin through the free choice (*libero arbitrio*) of their wills; otherwise, the action would be willed out of necessity and the agent would bear no moral responsibility for their wrongdoing.¹³⁶ The student interlocutor recognises that this understanding leads to a problem: in what sense does a rational agent sin freely if sinning is not understood as part of the power of freedom?¹³⁷ To solve this problem, Anselm replies:

T: The fallen angel and the first human being sinned through free choice, since they sinned *through their own choice*, which was so free that it could not be compelled to sin by any other thing. And so they are justly reproached, since, having this freedom of choice, they sinned: not because any other thing compelled them, and not out of

¹³⁶ 'The fallen angel and the first human being sinned through free choice, since they sinned through their own choice, which was so free that it could not be compelled to sin by any other thing. . . . They sinned through their choice, which was free; but they did not sin through that in virtue of which it was free, that is, through the power by which it was able not to sin and not to be a slave to sin. Instead, they sinned through that power they had for sinning; by that power they were neither helped into the freedom not to sin nor coerced into slavery to sin' [Per liberum arbitrium peccavit apostata angelus sive primus homo, via per suum arbitrium peccavit, quod sic liberum erat, ut nulla alia re cogi posset ad peccandum. . . . Peccavit autem per arbitrium suum quod erat liberum; sed non per hoc unde liberum erat, id est per potestatem qua poterat non peccare et peccato non servire, sed per potestatem quam habebat peccandi, qua nec ad non peccandi libertatem iuvabatur nec ad peccandi servitutem cogeatur] (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 2, S1. 210.2-4; 6–10).

¹³⁷ *De Libertate Arbitrii* 2.

any necessity, but *spontaneously*. They sinned *through their choice*, which was free; but they did not sin through that in virtue of which it was free, that is, through the power by which it was able not to sin and not to be a slave to sin. Instead, they sinned through that power they had for sinning; by that power they were neither helped into the freedom not to sin nor coerced into slavery to sin.

M. Per liberum arbitrium peccavit apostata angelus sive primus homo, quia *per suum arbitrium* peccavit, quod sic liberum erat, ut nulla alia re cogi posset ad peccandum. Et ideo iuste reprehenditur, quia cum hanc haberet arbitrii sui libertatem, non aliqua re cogente, non aliqua necessitate, sed *sponte* peccavit. Peccavit autem *per arbitrium suum* quod erat liberum; sed non per hoc unde liberum erat, id est per potestatem qua poterat non peccare et peccato non servire, sed per potestatem quam habebat peccandi, qua nec ad non peccandi libertatem iuvabatur nec ad peccandi servitutem cogeatur (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 2, S I. 210.2–10).

Anselm attempts to distinguish two powers of will. One is the power to preserve justice; the other is the power to initiate a spontaneous or voluntary act. Anselm never entertains two distinct definitions of freedom.¹³⁸ Instead, he struggles to distinguish his definition of moral freedom from the notion of *spontaneity or voluntariness*. When Anselm says that Lucifer sins through his free choice, he in fact means that Lucifer sins through his *spontaneous* choice. In other words, the choice is ultimately traced back to Lucifer's own will without the intervention of any external power. When the good angels employ their power of freedom (i.e., the power *not* to sin) they do that spontaneously as well. Spontaneity, thus, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for freedom.

Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams also notice Anselm's inconsistent account of freedom. They call divine freedom the 'normative definition' of freedom, and spontaneous choice the 'descriptive definition'.¹³⁹ They attempt to reconcile these two definitions by reformulating the latter as an *enriched* descriptive definition: 'free choice is the power to attain one's goal for the sake of those goals', which requires that 'an agent (1) be able to initiate his own action on the basis of

¹³⁸ 'Even though human free choice differs from that of God and the good angels, the definition of the word "freedom" should still be the same for both' [Quamvis differat liberum arbitrium hominum a libero arbitrio dei et angelorum bonorum, definitio tamen huius libertatis in utrisque secundum hoc nomen eadem debet esse] (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 1, S1. 208.3–5).

¹³⁹ Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, 'Anselm's Account of Freedom', in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (see note 2), 184.

what he believes will achieve his goal, and (2) be able to act for the sake of that goal'.¹⁴⁰ Their enriched descriptive definition correctly characterises the features of spontaneous choice. For Anselm, a choice is spontaneous only if an agent has a self-formed motivation (at least, one has a self-formed *preference* for one thing over another) and acts accordingly. However, Visser and Williams make a small mistake in analysing Anselm's lie-or-die example from *De Concordia*.

Suppose someone has a settled intention to preserve truth, since he understands that it is right to love the truth. Such a person already has an upright will and rectitude of will. But the will is one thing, and the rectitude by which it is upright is another. Now suppose someone else comes up to him and threatens him with death unless he tells a lie. We see now that it is up to his choice whether he will abandon life for the sake of rectitude of will or abandon rectitude of will for the sake of life. This choice, which can also be called a judgement, is free, because the reason by which he understands rectitude teaches that this rectitude ought always to be preserved out of love for that rectitude itself, and that whatever might be offered as an inducement to abandon rectitude should be held in contempt, and because it is up to his will either to reject or to choose something in accordance with his reason's understanding. For will and reason were given to rational creatures principally for this purpose. So this person's voluntary choice to abandon rectitude is not compelled by any necessity, even though he is assaulted by the anguish of death.

Habet aliquis in corde ut veritatem teneat, quia intelligit rectum esse amare veritatem. Hic utique rectam iam habet voluntatem, et rectitudinem voluntatis. Aliud autem est voluntas, et aliud rectitudo qua recta est. Accedit alius, et nisi mentiatur minatur illi mortem. Videmus nunc in eius esse arbitrio an deserat vitam pro voluntatis rectitudine, an rectitudinem pro vita. Hoc arbitrium, quod et iudicium dici potest, liberum est, quoniam ratio qua intelligitur rectitudo, docet rectitudinem illam eiusdem rectitudinis amore semper esse servandam, et quidquid obtenditur ut deseratur esse contemnendum, atque voluntatis est ut ipsa quoque reprobet ac eligat, quemadmodum rationis intellectus monstrat. Ad hoc enim maxime datae sunt rationali creaturae voluntas et ratio. Quapropter idem voluntatis arbitrium ut eandem

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 186.

rectitudinem deserat, nulla cogitur necessitate, quamvis mortis impugnetur difficultate (*De Concordia* 1.6, S II. 257.8–20).

Visser and Williams think that this passage implies that the enriched descriptive definition is the *same* as the normative definition. Their analysis of this passage is as follows:

Anselm begins by appealing to the key elements of the enriched descriptive definition: the person in the example is free because he knows what goal he ought to aim at and has the power to choose accordingly, and no external force is operating so as to necessitate his choice. But since the goal that he ought to aim at is precisely the preservation of rectitude for its own sake, he satisfies the normative definition. What it is for him to satisfy the enriched descriptive definition is precisely the same as what it is for him to satisfy the normative definition; the two definitions, in other words, are equivalent.¹⁴¹

They want to argue that Anselm's account of freedom is consistent. However, Anselm does not mean that the choice is free if and only if the person chooses what he ought to do according to the teaching of his reason. Anselm's point is that, even in this situation, the possibility of choosing not to lie is not completely suppressed by the threat of death. The knowledge of what he ought to do and the lack of external force merely constitute the necessary conditions for the agent's *spontaneous* exercise of the power to preserve justice. The precondition for the spontaneous choice of justice does not entail that the person will necessarily choose to preserve justice. Instead, the precondition guarantees (1) that, so long as the person appreciates the value of justice *more than* the value of his life, he preserves justice, and (2) that moral blame and punishment are apt if the agent chooses to lie because he *could have* chosen to tell the truth. Thus, the enriched descriptive definition of freedom is not equivalent to the normative definition. In fact, we do not need to reconcile the seemingly inconsistent account of freedom that Anselm provides. When Anselm speaks of freedom of choice (*libertas arbitrii*) and free choice (*libero arbitrio*), he refers to two *distinct* powers that are naturally embedded in the *will* of the rational agent. One is the power to choose spontaneously; the other is the power to preserve justice. The latter requires the former but not vice versa.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 187.

5.1.4 Spontaneity and Alternative Possibilities

According to Anselm, the spontaneity of will is a necessary condition for rational agents to act in a way that is morally praiseworthy or blameworthy. In the previous section, I explained how spontaneity requires that, first, a rational agent has a self-formed motivation for the choice and, second, the decision-making process involves no coercion. However, these two conditions are not sufficient for spontaneity in *created*, rational agents. To be spontaneous, created rational beings must be presented with genuine, alternative possibilities in the sense that they need to have two dispositions of will.¹⁴² In Anselm's view, God's freedom does not require alternative possibilities. This is because, according to the power-based modality (Chapter 3), an agent necessarily does something only in case that that act is causally determined by an *external* agency. In the case of God, no external power determines His choices. With regard to creatures, however, their spontaneity requires that the alternative possibilities of their choices must be presented to them at least at one moment:

For both angels received from God the having of justice, the ability to retain justice, and the ability to abandon it. God gave them this last ability so that they could, in a certain sense, give justice to themselves. For if there was no sense in which they were able to take away justice from themselves, there was also no sense in which they were able to give it to themselves.

Ab eo enim acceperunt ambo [angeli] habere et posse tenere et posse deserere. Hoc ultimum ideo deus dedit, ut possent sibi dare aliquo modo iustitiam. Si enim eam nullo modo sibi possent auferre, nullo modo sibi possent dare. Qui ergo hoc modo sibi eam dedit, hoc ipsum a deo accepit ut sibi eam daret (*De Casu Diaboli* 18, S I. 263.12–6).

¹⁴² In contemporary discussions, the Principle of Alternative Possibility (PAP) is first construed by Robert Kane, who maintains that 'the existence of alternative possibilities (or the agent's power to do otherwise) is a necessary condition for acting freely'; in other words, an agent is responsible for an action only if the agent could have done otherwise (*Oxford Handbook of Free Will* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 11). However, Harry Frankfurt challenges the PAP with a counterexample that shows that PAP misses the essential meaning of freedom. Frankfurt points out that the traditional PAP is mistaken for 'the fact that he [the agent] could not have done otherwise clearly provides no basis for supposing that he might have done otherwise if he had been able to do so' ('Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility', *The Journal of Philosophy* 66, no.23 (December 1969), 837). In Frankfurt's view, spontaneity constitutes an agent's freedom intrinsically, so even there is no alternative possibility, it is possible that the agent will still preserve the original choice simply because he wills it: 'the principle of alternative possibilities should thus be replaced, in my opinion, by the following principle: a person is not morally responsible for what he has done if he did it only because he could not have done otherwise' (ibid, 838). However, as I explain later in the chapter, Frankfurt's framework is not applicable to the case of Lucifer. Against the theistic background, Lucifer's alternative choice is necessary, otherwise he would lose the intrinsic spontaneity and cannot constitute the suitable subject of moral judgement.

To understand this paragraph more clearly, I distinguish two sorts of spontaneous choice – the *mere* spontaneous choice and the *intrinsic* spontaneous choice. The former requires only that the choice, as an act, is willed and conducted by the agent without any external coercion. For instance, a person willingly abandons his habit of smoking. The latter not only requires that the choice is willed and conducted by the agent, but also that the choice is *causally determined* by the agent's *own* cognitive and affective states. Suppose that a doctor secretly implanted a programme in a patient's brain. Whenever the patient develops the desire to smoke, the programme steps in and somehow negates the desire so that the patient would not will to smoke. Yet the patient is not aware that his abrupt change in desire results from the programme. Rather, he thinks that he himself resists the temptation in that moment. In this case, the patient wills not to smoke and acts accordingly, yet his act only has the mere spontaneity because his will at that moment is not determined by his own states but by the programme.

This problem becomes more manifest against a background of theism. According to Anselm, the rational agent's power of will and the different dispositions of will are all given and sustained by God. If God were to provide only one disposition of will to rational agents, an agent's situation would be even worse than that of the patient controlled by the secret programme. In that case, supposing the patient is in an *atheistic* universe, at least he has the intrinsic spontaneity of willing *not* to smoke so long as he never wants to smoke and, thus, never triggers that programme. In the theistic context, by contrast, if God were to provide only the disposition for rectitude to rational agents, no one would have the intrinsic spontaneous choice of willing rectitude because the rational agent would heedlessly translate that single disposition into the act of willing rectitude, just as the horse wills to eat grass whenever its appetite motivates it to eat grass. Moreover, the disposition (i.e., the motivation) is derived from God's creation alone, and so the rational agent would necessarily appreciate the object that they are motivated to pursue. Indeed, an agent creates an appreciation of rectitude on the basis of the God-given disposition for rectitude. However, this seemingly self-formed affective state of appreciation, in fact, is *causally determined* by the one, God-given disposition. So, every rational agent would be a perfect moral machine who not only always wills rectitude but also always and wholeheartedly enjoys that choice for the right reason. In this sense, the rational agent's will for rectitude is *necessitated* by God's creation, though *prima facie* the agent willingly wills rectitude for its own sake.

This situation, however, would be different if two *conflicting* dispositions of will were given to rational agents. Anselm does not allow situations in which agents do not will anything.

Therefore, when faced with the psychological struggle from two contrasting dispositions, the rational agent must choose. And so the agent needs to develop a *preference* for one choice over another. This preference cannot be causally determined from outside but rather must be an affective state originating in the agent. This *self-formed* preference causally *determines* the agent's choice and constitutes the reason for that choice. In this case, the agent's choice is *intrinsically* spontaneous. Therefore, under Anselm's framework, alternative possibilities are necessary for the intrinsic spontaneity of created rational agent.

5.1.5 Sin and Divine Omnibenevolence

5.1.5.1 The Angelic Model

Now that I have outlined Anselm's theory of freedom and spontaneous choice of will, Anselm's libertarian position becomes clearer. Anselm's libertarianism is grounded on the notion of self-causation. According to Anselm, a choice is spontaneous if and only if it is determined by the preference formed by the agent. In other words, a spontaneous choice must have its ultimate origin in the agent. However, how is this libertarian view compatible with Anselm's notion of divine omnibenevolence? To answer this problem, I examine the case of Lucifer's primal sin, because (1) Lucifer was born in the universe without the contamination of sin at all, and because (2) Lucifer has the superior intellectual power, which prevents him from making any mistakes out of ignorance.

According to Anselm, every angel is created in the same way: they possess the same power of will, the same two dispositions of will, and the same knowledge insofar as they all know what they ought to do and what ought not to do and none knows that they will be punished necessarily if they choose to sin.¹⁴³ Every angel has the disposition for rectitude when they are created, but Lucifer spontaneously abandons this disposition in using the power of will to will what he ought not to will and increase his own happiness.¹⁴⁴ Within this framework, Anselm provides an explanation about why evil originates Lucifer himself and why God is not the *originator* of evil. For the power of will, the dispositions of will and the turning of will are good in terms of their existence as are all things created and sustained by God. Although it is true that the pursuit of excessive advantage can lead us to act unjustly, the injustice does not derive from the excessive advantage but from *choosing*

¹⁴³ See the discussions in *De Casu Diaboli* 21–24.

¹⁴⁴ 'T: Therefore, he sinned by willing something advantageous that he did not have and ought not to have willed at that time, but that could have served to increase his happiness' [M. Peccavit ergo volendo aliquod commodum, quod nec habebat nec tunc velle debuit, quod tamen ad augmentum illi beatitudinis esse poterat.] (*De Casu Diaboli* 4, S I. 241.19–20).

T: Now when he willed this thing that God did not want him to will, he willed inordinately to be like God' [M. At cum hoc voluit quod deus illum velle nolebat, voluit inordinate similis esse deo] (*De Casu Diaboli* 4, S I. 241. 29–30).

excessive advantage. Advantage itself contains non-moral value, but moral value is introduced when Lucifer deliberately chooses to will according to his own will.

An additional question remains: given that Lucifer's spontaneous choice is an existing thing with an essence, how could Anselm insist that God does not bring about the sin? Anselm offers this answer:

T: So when the devil turned his will to what he ought not, both that willing and that turning were something, and nonetheless he had this something from no source other than God, since he could neither will anything nor move his will unless *permitted* by God, who makes all natures, substantial and accidental, universal and individual. . . . Therefore, that which is something is brought about by God and is from God, but that which is nothing, that is, evil, is brought about by the unjust person and is from him.

M: Cum igitur diabolus convertit voluntatem ad quod non debuit: et ipsum velle et ipsa conversio fuit aliquid, et tamen non nisi a deo et de dei aliquid habuit, quoniam nec velle aliquid nec movere potuit voluntatem nisi illo *permittente*, qui facit omnes naturas substantiales et accidentales, universales et individuas. . . . Quare quod aliquid est, a deo fit et dei est; quod vero nihil est, id est malum, ab iniusto fit et eius est (*De Casu Diaboli* 20, S I. 265.21–5; 265.31–266.2)

Anselm's answer seems to be: we could say that God brings about evil but only in the sense that God *permits* the rational agent to exercise the power of will to sin, or we could say that God does not prevent Lucifer from turning his will away from rectitude. According to Anselm's semantics, it is *improper* to say that God brings about the primal sin. In the *Lambeth Fragments*, Anselm states that only an efficient, proximate cause brings about what it is said to bring about and, thus, identifying these causes are proper expressions.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, for Anselm, evil is an effect of Lucifer's spontaneous choice of will. God does not create Lucifer's spontaneous choice in a direct and efficient manner; rather, God merely *permits* the choice. God is not morally responsible for Lucifer's sin, at least insofar as He never intervenes in the decision-making process and insofar as the choice is not causally determined in the way He creates Lucifer.

¹⁴⁵ *Memorials* 349.30–350.15.

However, another question arises: in what sense does Anselm argue that God is not morally responsible for Lucifer's wrongdoing *at all*, provided that God *could have* prevented Lucifer's wrong choice? This question reduces to: if God is really omnibenevolent and, of course, omnipotent, why would He permit the existence of such a will that brings about injustice in a world that is supposed to be good? Anselm assumes that the spontaneous will is created as part of the rational agent's soul and is created by God for preserving rectitude. Even God cannot take away the rational agent's power to preserve the rectitude of will because, preserving the rectitude of will requires willing what God wills a rational agent to will. If God takes away the rational agent's power to preserve the rectitude of will, then He would not will them to will what He wills them to will. But this is a logical contradiction.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, God would never take away the power of willing rectitude. The point is that, if God cannot take away Lucifer's moral freedom, namely, the power to preserve rectitude, then He cannot take away his power to sin either. The power of freedom requires the spontaneity of the choice, which requires alternative possibilities of choices. Therefore, God must permit Lucifer's choice.

5.1.5.2 Free Will and Grace

We have seen, for Anselm, how angelic sin emerges and in what sense the existence of sin is compatible with divine omnibenevolence. Human beings, as rational creatures, share the same structure of will as angels. Humans are not intellectually perfect, however. The model for explaining angelic sin also explains the original sin of Adam. Unlike Lucifer, human beings have the chance for redemption because of God's benevolence. In this section, I discuss how Anselm's doctrine on divine grace preserves human free will. Anselm presents a paradox between free will and divine grace in terms of contradictory biblical passages. Some passages show how God's grace can do everything that human beings could do. If this is the case, it is implausible that someone could be responsible for morally good choices. However, other passages emphasise the essential role of free will. In these cases, the force of divine grace appears trivial. Anselm, as a devoted Christian monk, in no way intends to undermine the significance of divine grace. However, as a radical libertarian, Anselm holds the view that human beings are responsible for their free choices and that only their free will causally determines what they choose to do. Anselm's scheme is that, to be just, a person's free will must *cooperate* with divine grace.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ See *De Libertate Arbitrii* 8.

¹⁴⁷ For a more detailed analysis of Anselm's use of biblical texts and the contrast between Anselm and Cassian, see Marcia Colish, 'Free Will and Grace: Method and Model in Anselm's *De Concordia*', in *Anselm of Canterbury: Nature, Order and the Divine*, ed. Ian Logan and Giles Gasper, Anselm Studies and Texts (Leiden: Brill, 2021), forthcoming.

According to Anselm, divine grace has twofold significance. First, divine grace ensures that humans by default *have* the rectitude of will. This is important insofar as Anselm reasons that nobody can will *justly* or *uprightly* unless one's will has rectitude in the first place. No one can acquire rectitude on one's own; only divine grace can do that. As Anselm explains:

A will is not upright because it wills rightly; rather, it wills rightly because it is upright. And when it wills this rectitude, it undoubtedly is willing rightly. Therefore, it wills rectitude only because it is upright. But a will's being upright is the same thing as its having rectitude. So it is clear that it wills rectitude only because it has rectitude. . . . Let us now examine whether anyone who does not have this rectitude can in some way acquire it from himself. Certainly he cannot acquire it from himself except by either willing or not willing. . . . So there is no way a creature can have it from himself. But neither can a creature have it from another creature. . . . And so it follows that no creature has this rectitude of will I have been talking about except through God's grace.

Ita voluntas non est recta, quia vult recte, sed recte vult, quoniam recta est. Cum autem vult hanc rectitudinem, procul dubio recte vult. Non ergo vult rectitudinem, nisi quia recta est. Idem autem est voluntati rectam esse et rectitudinem habere. Palam igitur est quia non vult rectitudinem, nisi quia rectitudinem habet. . . . Consideremus nunc utrum aliquis hanc rectitudinem non habens, eam aliquo modo a se habere possit. Utique a se illam habere nequit, nisi aut volendo aut non volendo. . . . Nullo igitur modo potest eam creatura habere a se. Sed neque creatura valet eam habere ab alia creatura. . . . itaque quia nulla creatura rectitudinem habet quam dixi voluntatis, nisi per dei gratiam (*De Concordia* 3.3, S II. 265.28–266.4).

Anselm's argument is that, at a preliminary stage, a person's will cannot acquire the property of being upright or just by willing rightly or justly because a will that does not yet possess the property of being upright or just *cannot* will uprightly or justly at all. Rather, being upright or just constitutes a *necessary condition* for willing rightly or justly. Anselm attributes the former state of possessing rectitude to divine grace. Besides, rectitude is continually presented to human beings and without which nobody could ever choose to preserve it. Yet what accounts for the property of being upright, which the will has possessed since the very beginning? A plausible answer within Anselm's

framework is that human beings have rectitude in the sense that, despite the original sin inherited from Adam, they still receive the *disposition* (*dispositio/affectio*) for rectitude from God.

Although Anselm does not explicitly clarify the connection between divine grace and the disposition for rectitude, the relation between divine grace and the act of will squares with Anselm's account of the relation between the disposition of will and the act of will:

From these two affections, which we also call wills, derives all human merit, whether good or bad. . . . They [the disposition for advantage and that for rectitude] also differ in that the one that is for willing advantage is not itself the thing that it wills, whereas the one that is for willing rectitude is rectitude. In fact, only someone who has rectitude wills rectitude; it is only in virtue of rectitude that anyone can will rectitude. But it is obvious that this rectitude belongs to the will that is the instrument.

Ex his duabus affectionibus, quas etiam voluntates dicimus, descendit omne meritum hominis, sive bonum sive malum. . . . In hoc quoque differunt, quia illa quae est ad volendum commodum, non est hoc quod ipsa vult; illa vero quae est ad volendum rectitudinem, rectitudo est. Nullus quippe vult rectitudinem, nisi rectitudinem habens; neque potest aliquis rectitudinem velle, nisi rectitudine. Plam autem est eius voluntatis quae est instrumentum, istam esse rectitudinem (*De Concordia* 3.3, S II.284.9–10; 14–19).

Anselm's reasoning appears to be that the disposition for rectitude in itself is rectitude and that this disposition belongs to the will as an instrument. Thus, a will with this disposition is considered as having rectitude in the first place. Only the will that has this disposition could act to will rectitude. Without the disposition for rectitude, it is *impossible* for anyone to choose to will rectitude at all. If the disposition for rectitude were absent in wills of humans, nobody would ever think to pursue self-happiness moderately or would ever be motivated by rectitude, even though one might understand the concept of rectitude. The disposition for rectitude, which is similar to the modern notion of natural motivation, serves as a *necessary condition* for a person's *act* of willing rectitude. Divine grace has the same role. In addition, as I mentioned earlier, the disposition for rectitude is separable from the soul. Once a rational agent wills unjustly, the disposition for rectitude will no longer be present in its soul. This trait fits with the mode of a rational agent's

abandoning divine grace. If the rational agent wills more happiness than it ought to pursue, the agent has abandoned the rectitude received from God. And this so-called rectitude received from God precisely is the disposition for rectitude.

With regard to the second role of divine grace, Anselm claims divine grace functions to help regulate a person's pursuit of self-happiness during decision-making process. As Anselm explains:

Grace also helps free choice when it is under pressure to abandon the rectitude it has received. Grace helps by mitigating or altogether removing the power of the temptation that assails free choice, or by increasing the affected (power) [The original translation: the felt strength] of rectitude itself.

Aduvat etiam gratia liberum arbitrium, quando ut deserat rectitudinem acceptam impugnatur, mitigando aut penitus removendo vim tentationis impugnantis aut augendo affectum eiusdem rectitudinis (*De Concordia* 3.4, S II. 268. 7–10).

Divine grace actively helps to strengthen the power of the disposition for rectitude, so that the person would be more inclined to rectitude when exercising the power of free will. However, humans' free will still has a decisive power to choose whether to accept the help from divine grace or submit to the power of temptation. The role of human free will in moral behaviour resembles the role of angelic free will. Human beings have *received* the disposition for rectitude, as well as the disposition for advantage, granted by divine grace, and their act of free will decides whether the disposition of rectitude should be preserved or abandoned. Divine judgment attends to *acts* of will. If a person chooses to preserve rectitude for its own sake, the act of free will is *just*. Thus, the person will continue to possess the disposition for rectitude. In Anselm's view, the main contribution of free will is preserving the disposition for rectitude by willing justly. A person no longer has the disposition for rectitude when he wills something that is incompatible with the rectitude of will:

Now grace follows upon its previous gift in such a way that, whether the grace be great or small, it never ceases to give that gift unless free choice wills something else and thereby abandons the rectitude it has received. For this rectitude never ceases to be present in the will unless the will wills something else that is incompatible with rectitude.

Sic autem gratia subsequitur donum suum, ut numquam - sive magnum sive parvum sit - illud dare deficiat, nisi liberum arbitrium volendo aliud rectitudinem quam accepit deserat. Numquam enim separatur haec rectitudo a voluntate, nisi quando aliud vult, quod huic rectitudini non concordat (*De Concordia* 3.4, S II. 268.1–4).

In Anselm's view, divine grace plays an essential role in humans' morally good choices in two ways. First, it donates the disposition for rectitude to the structure of will. This disposition in itself indicates the status of being just and serves as a necessary condition for the act of willing rectitude. Second, grace strengthens the disposition for pursuing rectitude. Despite the significant role of divine grace, free will is the *decisive* power of humans' choices to preserve the gift from God or to abandon it. Therefore, as Anselm concludes:

So in good deeds God is responsible both for their being good through their essence and for their being good through justice, whereas in evil deeds God is responsible only for their being good through their essence, not for their being evil through the absence of the justice that ought to be in them (since that absence is not anything). Human beings, however, are responsible in good deeds for their not being evil, since they did not abandon justice and do evil even though they could have, but instead preserved justice through free choice in cooperation with prevenient and subsequent grace. But in evil deeds they alone are responsible for their being evil, because they do them solely by their own unjust will.

Deus igitur habet in bonis quidem quod bona sunt per essentiam, et quod bona sunt per iustitiam; in malis vero solummodo quod bona sunt per essentiam, non quod mala sunt per absentiam debitae iustitiae, quae non est aliquid. Homo autem habet in bonis quod mala non sunt, quia cum posset deserere iustitiam et mala facere, non deseruit, sed servavit per liberum arbitrium, dante et subsequente gratia. In malis vero hoc solum quod mala sunt, quia ea sola propria, id est iniusta voluntate facit (*De Concordia* 3.14, S II. 4–10).

The good deeds conducted by human beings are the result of the cooperation between free will and divine grace. Anselm believes that divine grace should take more credit with regard to

good deeds insofar as divine grace prepares the necessary condition for human beings' willing justly and even actively guides a person in choosing. Without the disposition for rectitude and its active power, which is generously provided by divine grace, it is *impossible* for any human to will justly. Free will is praiseworthy in that it spontaneously does not submit to the power of temptation but submits to the disposition for rectitude given by God, and spontaneously keeps willing rectitude for *its own sake*. A person's free choice is one's self-determined preference when faced with two contrasting dispositions. The act of will is entailed by the preference, which contributes to a person's *moral character*. Therefore, the act of will rather than divine grace determines whether a person *preserves* the disposition for rectitude. In this sense, free will substantially contributes to a person's moral character.

5.2 Three Philosophical Problems Related to Ethics and Morality

5.2.1 The Non-Hierarchical Structure of Will

Rogers thinks that Anselm's view on the structure of will resembles Frankfurt's distinction between first-order desires and second-order desires.¹⁴⁸ However, the structure of will and Anselm's understanding of spontaneity are drastically different from Frankfurt's.

A brief introduction to Frankfurt's hierarchical theory of will and his notion of freedom is necessary. In his paper 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person', Frankfurt aims to provide a new definition of the concept of 'person'. To do this, he points out the intuition that a person is a rational creature who really *cares about* what he or she wills and desires. Thus, he introduces a *second-order will*. For Frankfurt, both desire and will refer to a certain dispositional status in the agent's mind. Frankfurt identifies a person's will with one's *effective* desires, which causally brings the agent along to the bodily action, regardless of whether the bodily action is successful. A first-order desire is a desire for anything other than a desire; a second-order desire is a desire for a first-order *will*. Note that a person may have a second-order desire regardless of whether the person in fact has the relevant first-order desire. According to Frankfurt, a person has freedom of action if and only if one's first-order desires cause the action. By contrast, a person has freedom of *will* just in case they have second-order desires, and their action-determining desires (i.e., the first-order *wills*) are *in accord with* their second-order desires.¹⁴⁹ The second-order desires indicate

¹⁴⁸ Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 61–72.

¹⁴⁹ Harry Frankfurt, 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person', *The Journal of Philosophy* 68, no. 1 (January 1971), 5–20.

what a person really values.¹⁵⁰ Thus, for instance, suppose that I have the first-order *desires* to write my thesis and *not* to write it at the same time. Suppose further that I am not writing my thesis. My effective desire in this case is the desire to not write my thesis. Yet, somehow, I have the second-order desire that the first-order desire to write my thesis should be *effective*. In this case, I do not have freedom of will because my effective desire (i.e., the desire to *not* write my thesis) does not fit with what I really value (i.e., to write my thesis). Frankfurt's view on freedom reflects his concern about the conflict between a first-order will and a second-order desire. He highlights the psychological phenomenon that results from a person's not appreciating what one *actually* wills to do.

Now let's return to Anselm's theory. Anselm's official definition of freedom is centred on the notion of justice, which requires consistency between the internal *act* of will for preserving rectitude and motivation to preserve rectitude. Freedom, by definition, *is* the power to actualise this consistency. It is easy to misunderstand the motivation behind the act of will and think of this motivation as a second-order desire. Indeed, the two concepts share a common feature: both reveal the genuine desire of the agent. Yet the motivation of will is conceptually distinct from the desire for a desire. In Anselm's scheme, motivation is a desire directed towards either personal happiness or rectitude and is the ultimate reason for the act. The act of will functions instrumentally, as a means to an end. In this sense, the motivation provides the explanatory power for every spontaneous exercise of will and renders the agent accountable for one's choices.

In addition, Anselm's moral psychology cannot accommodate the conflict between a first-order will and a second-order desire.¹⁵¹ Anselmian agents face struggles between two first-order desires or, to use Anselm's own term, two contrasting *dispositions* of will. For Anselm, nothing can compel an agent's will, which is absolutely spontaneous, so it is plausible to think that Anselm believes that, so long as a rational agent chooses, one's motivation is the most convincing indication of what the agent wants *most*. If a person does not will a certain choice over another, then he simply could and *would* have chosen differently. As Anselm explains:

S: . . . But how is the choice of the human will now free in virtue of this power, given that quite often a person having the right will [The original translation: whose will is right] abandons that rectitude *against his will* because he is compelled by

¹⁵⁰ Michael Smith, David Lewis, and Mark Johnston, 'Dispositional Theories of Value', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volumes 63 (1989), 113.

¹⁵¹ Tomas Ekenberg also notices this difference, in his 'Free Will and Free Action in Anselm of Canterbury', *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (October 2005), 303.

temptation?

D: . . . Sed nunc quomodo est humanae voluntatis arbitrium hac potestate liberum, cum saepe rectam habens homo voluntatem ipsam rectitudinem *invitus* cogente tentatione deserat?

T: No one abandons rectitude except by willing to do so. Therefore, if ‘against one’s will’ means ‘unwillingly’, no one abandons rectitude against his will. For someone can be tied up against his will, since he is unwilling to be tied up; he can be tortured against his will, since he is unwilling to be tortured; he can be killed against his will, since he is unwilling to be killed; but he cannot will against his will, since he cannot will if he is unwilling to will. *For everyone who wills, wills his own willing.*

M. Nemo illam deserit nisi volendo. Si ergo *invitus* dicitur nolens, nemo deserit illam *invitus*. Ligari enim potest homo *invitus*, quia nolens potest ligari; torqueri potest *invitus*, quia nolens potest torqueri; occidi potest *invitus*, quia nolens potest occidi; velle autem non potest *invitus*, quia velle non potest nolens velle. *Nam omnis volens ipsum suum velle vult.*

S: Then how is it that someone is said to lie against his will when he lies in order to avoid being killed, since he does not lie without willing to lie? For just as it is against his will that he lies, so also it is against his will that he wills to lie. And if it is against his will that he wills to lie, he is unwilling to will to lie.

D. Quomodo ergo dicitur *invitus* mentiri, qui mentitur ne occidatur, cum hoc non nisi volens facit? Nam sicut *invitus* mentitur, sic *invitus* vult mentiri. Et qui *invitus* mentiri vult, nolens vult mentiri.

T: Perhaps he is said to lie against his will because, when he so wills the truth that he lies only for the sake of his life, he both wills the lie for the sake of his life and does not will the lie for its own sake, since he wills the truth. And so he lies both willingly and unwillingly. . . . Hence, on the basis of these two wills; it could perhaps be said that his lying is both against his will and not against his will. So when he is said to

lie against his will because insofar as he wills the truth he does not will to lie, this is not inconsistent with my saying that no one abandons rectitude of will against his will: for in lying, he wills to abandon rectitude of will for the sake of his life. And in virtue of that will he does not abandon rectitude against his will; rather, he abandons it willingly.

M. Ideo forsitan invitus mentiri dicitur, quia cum sic vult veritatem ut non mentiatur nisi propter vitam: et vult mendacium quia propter vitam, et non vult mendacium propter ipsum mendacium, quoniam vult veritatem; et ideo volens et nolens mentitur. . . . Unde potest forsitan dici secundum has diversas voluntates, quia invitus et non invitus mentitur. Quapropter cum dicitur invitus mentiri, quia non id vult, inquantum vult veritatem: non repugnat illi sententiae qua dico neminem invitum deserere rectitudinem voluntatis; quia mentiendo vult eam deserere propter vitam, secundum quam voluntatem non invitus eam deserit sed volens, . . . (*De Libertate Arbitrii* 5, S I. 214.27–215.2; 215.5–10).

In other words, even if Anselm were aware of the notion of second-order desires, his theory of free will would render it trivial. Unlike Frankfurt, who considers the second-order desire as a genuine desire of the agent, Anselm contends that, whichever first-order will a person entertains, necessarily, a corresponding second-order desire wills it. Therefore, in Anselm's theory, the notion of a second-order desire does not have the function of revealing what a person really values. It does not even mark the fact that the person really cares about his desires. It appears that Anselm is not interested in exploring which desire is the agent's *true* desire, yet some passages in Anselm's corpus suggest that the motive behind an act of will or, say, behind a first-order will, indicates the agent's *preference*, namely, the *stronger* desire. Of course, one might argue that what is desired most is not equivalent to what is genuinely valued by the agent, but this is not the place to explore that line of reasoning. Intuitively, such an equivalence is plausible. As I have shown, Anselm emphasises that every act of will is absolutely spontaneous insofar as *nothing* can compel it, regardless of the difficulty of the situation. Thus, everyone has the power to will for the sake of what they *prefer*. There is no reason why someone wills something for the sake of that which he does not will *more*. If the person really prefers truth to his life, then he *could have* chosen to tell the truth. But, because he in fact chose to lie, he prefers to live. Indeed, this does not entail that he does not love truth *at all*; he might still have a desire for truth to some extent, but he just desires his life *more than* truth in

that situation.

To conclude, Anselm does not develop a hierarchical theory of will or desire. When Anselm says that someone wills something for the sake of something else, he is referring to the relation between an act of will and the motivation of that act. Faced with two conflicting dispositions, the agent must exercise the power of will to choose. Anselm strongly affirms the moral centrality of the agent's underlying motivation. The motivation behind the choice indicates the agent's preference. It cannot be the case that someone chooses for the sake of something, but in fact he does not want that choice. The underlying assumption is that the choice of the will is absolutely spontaneous. Neither can a person's will be compelled by any external force, nor can it be necessitated by any temptation or advice provided by reason. Therefore, Anselmian agents always will what they desire most.

5.2.2 Anselm's Deontological Ethics¹⁵²

While eudaimonistic theory maintains that *x* is good for *A* in virtue of *x* making *A* happy, deontological ethics claims that there is a moral value, which differs from the value of happiness, that a person *should* adhere to. In the deontological framework, to obtain what is good, a person might have to give up happiness.

Jeffrey Brower argues that Anselm's ethical theory has a feature distinctive of the deontological theories rather than the eudaimonistic theories prevailing in the early Middle Ages. Brower's main thesis is that Anselm separates morality from happiness insofar as Anselm understands justice as fundamentally different from happiness; the former involves rightness, and the latter, goodness. The will of a non-rational creature aims towards fulfilling or actualising the creature's own goodness and advantage. However, the will of a rational being aims at an end beyond its own advantage; it aims to the supreme good or justice.¹⁵³ Furthermore, the pursuit of justice requires an agent to sacrifice his own happiness. On this reading, Anselm's ethical theory differs from the eudaimonistic theories. However, some scholars reject the deontological reading and argue that 'for Anselm it is not that there are two mutually exclusive sets of objects of desire. . . it is to our advantage to be just, since the ultimate end of justice is happiness'.¹⁵⁴ Rogers rightly

¹⁵² For a more in-depth analysis of the connection between medieval moral theories and Kantian ethics, see Ian Wilks, 'Moral Intention', in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy* (see note 54), 588–604.

¹⁵³ Brower, 'Anselm on Ethics', 223.

¹⁵⁴ Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 67. For a the similar line of reasoning, see Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn, 'Ut sine fine amet summam essentiam: The Eudaimonist Ethics of St. Anselm', *Mediaeval studies* 70 (2008), 1–28. Tomas Ekenberg makes this distinction in *Falling freely: Anselm of Canterbury on the will* (Sweden: Uppsala Universitet, 2005), 116–21. However, Ekenberg distinguishes two different ways of willing because he thinks that all angels will the same object, that is advantage. In order to defend that God is not the cause of evil, Ekenberg sees it necessary to preclude the advantage from the field of injustice.

points out that, for Anselm, there are not two mutually exclusive objects of the will because preserving justice precisely means to will *happiness* in an ordinate manner. To see this, let's examine a few passages. As Anselm says, in principle, everyone is disposed to will what is well with him (*bene sibi est*) or, at least, what he judges to be well with him:

By contrast, the affection of the instrument for willing is called 'will' when we say that someone always has the will that things *be well with him*. For in this case what we are calling 'will' is the affection of that instrument by which this person wills that thing be well with him. We use 'will' in the same way when we say of a holy person that even when he is asleep and is not thinking about it, he unceasingly has the will to live justly.

Affectio vero instrumenti volendi dicitur voluntas, quando dicimus hominem semper habere voluntatem, *ut bene sibi sit*. Vocamus namque hic voluntatem affectionem illam eiusdem instrumenti, qua vult homo bene sibi esse. Eodem modo cum sanctus homo asseritur, etiam cum dormit et non hoc cogitat, indesinenter habere voluntatem iuste vivendi (*De Concordia* 3.11, S II. 280.10–15).

Therefore, even when a person wills to preserve rectitude, one wills something that is self-beneficial. Anselm spells out the exact meaning of rectitude in *De Casu Diaboli*:

Therefore, since he cannot be called just or unjust for if willing only happiness or for willing only *what is fitting* when he wills in that way out of necessity, and since he neither can nor ought to be happy unless he wills to be happy and wills it justly, God must create both wills in him in such a way that he both wills to be happy and wills it justly. *This added justice governs his will for happiness so as to curtail its excess without eliminating its power to exceed*. Thus, since he does will to be happy, he can exceed the limits of justice; but since he wills it justly, he does not will to exceed them. And thus, having a just will for happiness, he both can and ought to be happy.

Quoniam ergo nec solummodo volendo beatitudinem, nec solummodo volendo *quod convenit* cum ex necessitate sic velit, iustus vel iniustus potest appellari, nec potest nec debet esse beatus nisi velit et nisi iuste velit: necesse est ut sic faciat deus

utramque voluntatem in illo convenire, ut et beatus esse velit et iuste velit. *Quatenus addita iustitia sic temperet voluntatem beatitudinis, ut et resecet voluntatis excessum et excedendi non amputet potestatem.* Ut cum per hoc quia volet beatus esse modum possit excedere, per hoc quia iuste volet non velit excedere, et sic iustam habens beatitudinis voluntatem possit et debeat esse beatus (*De Casu Diaboli* 14, S I. 258.18–26).

This passage implies that the will for rectitude and the will for advantage are not always mutually exclusive but are in conflict at a certain moment. The will for rectitude is a self-regulatory disposition that restrains the will for advantage by limiting what it ought to pursue. Anselm clearly indicates that the pursuit of personal happiness of the will for advantage is not evil in itself. God creates advantage and happiness, which are good with respect to their existence. Injustice is the effect of the absence of justice, which has its origin in the spontaneous choices of rational agents. Note that justice and rectitude are *relativised* to different types of agents. Different species *ought to* will different types of advantage and happiness. Accordingly, injustice is also a relativised concept. As Anselm explains:

T. Let's return to our discussion of the will and recall what we discussed earlier, namely, that before the will receives justice, the will for happiness is not an evil but something good, no matter what it wills. It follows that when it abandons the justice it received, if it is the same essence it was before, it is something good insofar as it has being; but insofar as the justice that was once in it is no longer there, it is called evil and unjust. For willing to be like God were evil, the Son of God would not will to be like the Father; and if willing the lowest pleasures were evil, the will of brute animals would be called evil. But the will of the Son of God is not evil, since it is just; and the will of an irrational animal is not called evil, since it is not unjust.

M. Redeamus ad considerationem voluntatis et reminiscamur quod consideravimus, voluntatem scilicet beatitudinis quidquid velit non esse malum sed esse bonum aliquid, antequam accipiat iustitiam. Unde consequitur, quia cum deserit acceptam iustitiam, si eadem essentia est quae prius erat, bonum est aliquid quantum ad hoc quod est; quantum vero ad hoc quia iustitia non est in illa quae fuit, dicitur mala et iniusta. Nam si velle esse similem deo malum esset, filius dei non vellet esse similis

patri. Aut si velle quaslibet infimas voluptates esset malum, mala diceretur voluntas brutorum animalium. Sed nec voluntas filii dei est mala quia est iusta, nec voluntas irrationalis mala dicitur quia non est iniusta (*De Casu Diaboli* 19, S I. 264.3–12).

Strictly speaking, Anselm does not construe rectitude and advantage as two different sets of objects of the will. There is only one type of objects – advantage or happiness. When an angel wills rectitude, what it wills intrinsically is the moderate happiness that it ought to pursue.

However, this does not constitute a substantial objection to the deontological reading. A deontological theory does not necessarily require two concretely different sets of objects of volition. That is, the pursuit of justice does not necessarily entail that the object of volition is something essentially different from advantage or happiness. The value of justice is derived from the *way* of willing happiness and, more importantly, from the agent's *psychological motivation* in willing. Indeed, to will the appropriate degree of happiness is not a distinctive characteristic of deontological theory. A proponent of standard eudaimonism would also identify moderate happiness with *true* happiness, and thus the proponent would contend that angels and human beings should have *moderate* desires for their own goodness or happiness rather than have *maximum* desires for their own happiness in this life. The difference lies in the motivation behind the act of will. We can see this when Anselm explains the difference between the disposition for advantage and that for rectitude:

In virtue of the affection for willing advantage, a person always wills happiness and *being happy*, whereas in virtue of the affection for willing rectitude, he wills rectitude and being upright, that is, *(being) just*.

Per affectionem quidem quae est ad volendum commoditatem, semper vult homo beatitudinem et *beatus esse*. Per illam vero quae est ad volendum rectitudinem, vult rectitudinem et rectus, id est *iustus esse* (*De Concordia* 3.11, S II. 281. 10–11).

When the disposition for advantage affects someone – when one is aware of the advantageous and is *motivated* by it – the *purpose* of the agent is to obtain happiness or to be happy. When the disposition for rectitude affects someone, the purpose of the agent is to obtain rectitude or to be just. The agent's *appreciation* of happiness does not participate in the moral motivation for their willing justice. Anselm's account of advantage accords with the notion of advantage in

eudaimonistic tradition: the achievement or acquisition of the good that rational agents apprehend or desire leads to satisfaction or joy (i.e., happiness). By contrast, the preservation of justice submits to a distinct mechanism. To preserve justice, the rational agent must first be *motivated* by the intrinsic value of rectitude and then will moderate happiness. In other words, when a rational agent renounces some personal happiness, one must treat moderate happiness in this life as the *ultimate* end in virtue of the divine command rather than conceive of moderate happiness as the proper means for *true* personal happiness in the afterlife. Indeed, God is the object of supreme happiness, and the love for God is equal to the love for the supreme happiness. Yet, in light of Anselm's account, 'to love the supreme happiness for its own sake' does not mean that a person loves the supreme happiness because one has the motivation for a similar goal in which one's personal happiness will be remarkably increased. Rather, a person loves the supreme happiness insofar as he or she sincerely *appreciates* or is *amazed* by God's perfection and, thus, willingly submits his will to the higher will (i.e., to will what God wills him to will). The person needs to appreciate the value of pursuing moderate happiness as what he or she *ought* to do. In this sense, it is plausible that, in Anselm's ethical theory, one's psychological motivation has a deontological tint.

Anselm's moral theory is underdeveloped, especially because the vertical relation between creatures and God is central. Thus, Visser and Williams claim that Anselm 'had a clear theoretical framework for thinking about moral issues, but the central place of God's sovereign creative will within that framework led Anselm to focus on vertical relationships of subordination and submission, rather than the horizontal relationships in which love of neighbour would have to play the central role'.¹⁵⁵ However, I think it is unfair to characterise Anselm as believing that submission and obedience constitute the only parts of the moral life, if one assumes that submission and obedience imply the *passivity* of creatures and the *arbitrariness* of God. In Anselm's moral theory, an adherence to rectitude results from a rational agent's *active* choice and one's genuine appreciation of the value of rectitude. Moreover, that God is rectitude, or the supreme truth, does not imply that God arbitrarily determines the criterion of rectitude. Anselm is inclined to argue that God is always *identical with* rectitude. This does not mean that an entity called rectitude exists independently of the existence of God nor does the criterion of rectitude restrict God in any sense. Instead, it entails that God is the same entity as rectitude and the supreme truth. Therefore, Anselm had no need to investigate the relation between God and the criterion of rectitude. They are simply identical, as we would say that a triangle and a three-sided, closed, two-dimensional shape are

¹⁵⁵ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 211.

identical. In this sense, Anselm's divine-command theory is intertwined with a deontological ethics. On the one hand, the divine law is laid down by God, along with the judgment of reward and punishment; on the other hand, however, the divine law in itself is identical with the intrinsic moral value – rectitude. It does provide a theoretical framework for us to think about various moral issues based on robust psychological reflection on the value of rectitude itself. In general, Anselm's main focus of praiseworthy and blameworthy behaviour is in the context of natural theology. But, against this theistic context, Anselm has offered a deontological moral theory.

5.2.3 The Problem of Unintelligibility

If it is correct to regard Anselm as a libertarian, then his moral theory faces what contemporary philosophers call 'the problem of unintelligibility'. The objection maintains that if free will is the ultimate cause of people's choices and action, every free choice seems purely random. In other words, as Peter Singer states, 'a person can have no more control over a purely random action than he has over an action that is deterministically inevitable'.¹⁵⁶ Anselm is aware of this problem. He insists that agents are the ultimate source of their free choices, thus we should not seek for any further cause of that choice. If someone were to ask Anselm why an agent choose to sin rather than to preserve justice, Anselm would respond that the agent simply wills to sin *more*. Moreover, Anselm addresses the potential randomness in a free choice of the will. Anselm stresses that every choice for a certain reason. The upshot is that, even though a free choice is not predetermined, it does not entail a random event. A random event is indeterministic but not vice versa.

Anselm, as a libertarian, believes that a free choice is indeterministic but does not occur by chance. Moreover, the unintelligible element entailed from the indeterministic feature of free choice guarantees the independence of the free will. A libertarian maintains that the will is independent of reason and temptation, which means that a free choice is in no way causally determined by reason (no matter how sensible its advice) or any temptation (no matter how irresistible). However, the power of will is not empty in virtue of its discretionary power to judge. The will must be a *robust* power that a rational agent can exercise to *endorse* the agent's resolution to pursue the value one prefers and become the kind of person one wants to be. This means that the moral character of a free choice is *forwardly constructive* rather than backwardly determined. Free will is neither causally determined by other faculties nor determined by the stable personality of the agent. Rather, each free choice (potentially) pioneers a new dimension to the person's character. Although, before

¹⁵⁶ Peter Singer and Maya Eddon, 'Problem of Moral Responsibility', *Encyclopedia Britannica* (October 16, 2018), <https://www.britannica.com/topic/problem-of-moral-responsibility>.

the first choice, Lucifer did not yet possess a complete personality, the decision-making process is in fact the formation of his character. Every spontaneous choice of will is self-formed on the basis of the agent's voluntary and rational evaluation of the current situation and the competing motives, reasons, and purposes. Indeed, it might be the case that an agent believes that he faces a genuine dilemma and, thus, cannot endorse any choice. When asked to choose, he might do so randomly (e.g., by throwing a die) and have no motivation for that random result.

However, Anselm never considers such a case. In his view, every rational agent *must and can* make a morally significant choice, regardless of the struggle an agent might encounter, that is accounted for in divine reward and punishment. Anselm assumes that, once the agent chooses, the agent is clearly aware of his motivation – the reason and purpose for that choice. It is impossible for a rational agent to reject choosing just as it is impossible for an agent to choose *randomly*. In both cases, the agent in question is not morally praiseworthy because a morally praiseworthy choice requires the agent's active participation and clear endorsement at the psychological level. By contrast, because the agent has evaluated the situation rationally and voluntarily chose, the person would still be responsible for that *randomly evil* choice.

To conclude, an agent is morally responsible if and only if the agent voluntarily and rationally *participates* in the process of evaluation and decides. According to Anselm, given the same set of conditions, two angels could make different choices spontaneously not because they have owned distinct moral characters *before* choosing but because they themselves spontaneously prefer different choices through the faculty of will. The mysterious part of the decision-making process indicates a robust and independent power of will.

5.3 Conclusion

Anselm develops a sophisticated theory of free will to defend his libertarianism and explain the emergence of the primal sin. In the case of angels, every angel is given two dispositions of will equally at the very beginning of creation. One is the will for rectitude; the other, for advantage. These two dispositions contain no moral values, though both are good in terms of God's creation. Whether an angel preserves its disposition of rectitude depends on how the angel exercises its power of free will. Moral value emerges in the exercise of the will. Moreover, Anselm indirectly provides an argument for why it is necessary that God permits Lucifer's betrayal. Because a rational agent's preserving its disposition of rectitude *spontaneously* is a greater good, God must provide them two *genuine* alternative possibilities of free choices. Otherwise, created beings' choices would be causally determined or, say, necessitated by God. As long as God wills that angels preserve

rectitude of will spontaneously, He must permit them to abandon rectitude as well. Yet, God is not responsible for the existence of evil in that He is not the efficient cause of any evil act. Applying this structure of will to human beings, Anselm ingeniously shows that the good deeds of human beings are the result of the *cooperation* between humans' free will and divine grace. According to Anselm, divine grace provides the necessary conditions for the just exercise of will, yet free will retains the highest level of discretionary power and determines whether an agent wills justly.

Anselm's moral theory combines deontology and divine-command theory. Indeed, his theory has many limitations. First, the overall structure is oversimplified in that Anselm only focuses on two kinds of motivations for moral choices – rectitude and advantage. Second, the ultimate goal of Anselm's discussions on morality is to understand how agents can fulfil their purpose in God's created universe. Anselm ignores more complicated moral issues that occur in real life. However, Anselm does relate his moral framework to moral judgments, which can be extended to many other cases in the moral life. He explores some examples, such as choosing between life and truth and the motivation for donating money to the poor, that exemplify what one ought and ought not to do, according to an intuitive understanding of the value of rectitude. For Anselm, the judgment of justice and injustice relies on God, that justice is not arbitrary because it has a meaningful value that provides some concrete guidelines for human life.

Chapter 6 Anselm's Free Will Defence

In Chapter 5, I argued that Anselm produces a conception of the structure of will such that a rational agent's free will is the primary cause of evil. In this chapter, I provide a more comprehensive investigation of Anselm's defence of free will with respect to divine omniscience and divine predestination. I aim to show that Anselm clearly intends to provide a defence of free will and does so in a consistently libertarian way. However, we must admit that his project is philosophically incomplete in some aspects.

This chapter is comprised of two parts. The first explores Anselm's solution to the paradox between free will and divine knowledge. I compare Boethius' solution to this paradox with

Anselm's. Scholars tend to believe that Anselm largely relies Boethius' solution to the problem, especially Boethius' distinction between two sorts of necessities and his notion of eternity. However, their solutions are very different, and it is important to clarify the theoretical contrast between them. The second part explores Anselm's solution to the paradox between free will and divine predestination. I explain in what sense what God knows is identical with what God predestines, and in what sense it is not.

6.1 Free Will and Divine Omniscience

The debate about the threat that divine foreknowledge poses to free will has a long history. I shall not review the whole spectrum of relevant discussions here but instead briefly set out the problem.¹⁵⁷ The paradox about divine foreknowledge and future contingent events is one between the nature of divine knowledge and the metaphysical status of future contingent events, including the future, free choices of wills. Knowledge has two indispensable characteristics – infallibility and certainty. Certainty refers to the definite truth value of a statement. According to the correspondence theory of truth, in order for a statement to have a definite truth value, the existing status of the corresponding external event must be definite as well. However, a libertarian would contend that some future contingents, namely those resulting from free choices, are genuinely open. In other words, it is *intrinsically uncertain* whether they will occur or not. Infallibility indicates the absolute correctness of knowledge. Therefore, *necessarily*, if God knows *p*, then *p*. The infallibility of knowledge requires that on a metaphysical level, all future contingents are closed, just as are past and present contingents. However, again, for libertarians, the consequence of a future contingent caused by a free choice of will is *conatively defeasible*. In other words, people still have a robust, free power to bring about different futures.

From a contemporary point of view, the concept of knowledge does not have any compelling power to necessitate future contingents. That is, it does not constitute a concrete power that influences someone's decision-making process. This point can be illustrated by present contingent events. For example, consider a present contingent event: I know that you are sitting at this moment. My knowledge is based on the fact that you are sitting at this moment and is in no way prior to your sitting. Knowledge stays in the epistemic realm. But, for many medieval thinkers, this is not the case regarding *divine* knowledge. Some would gladly accept divine knowledge as a

¹⁵⁷ For a comprehensive review of the contemporary development of this topic, see Linda Zagzebski, 'Foreknowledge and Free Will', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2021 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/free-will-foreknowledge/>.

causative power, which could cross the boundary into the epistemic realm. Therefore, apart from the seemingly indissoluble paradox between the nature of divine knowledge and future contingents, divine foreknowledge contains destructive, metaphysical implications. How could God infallibly acquire certain knowledge about future events, which are uncertain? A medieval thinker might respond by arguing that future contingents, in fact, are *not* contingent but are predetermined, either by God's causative knowledge or by God's providence. In any case, God *knows* because He *causes*.

To avoid this deterministic consequence, thinkers during the Middle Ages provided various solutions. In this section, I compare Boethius' and Anselm's solutions. Boethius, who relies on the Neoplatonic tradition, begins the trend of eternalism that largely influences the later medieval discussions. Elenore Stump and Norman Kretzmann famously argued that Boethius' eternity is an atemporal duration.¹⁵⁸ John Marenbon, by contrast, contends that Boethius' account of eternity is applicable only to divine knowledge and not to divine existence. Marenbon believes that, according to Boethius, God's existence is in time in a special way and that the metaphysical basis for God's epistemic eternity is divine simplicity rather than atemporality.¹⁵⁹ Brian Leftow offers a detailed analysis of Stump and Kretzmann's project and concludes that their interpretation reduces the Boethian God to an atemporal point. He provides different reasons in favour of the claim that the Boethian God is an 'atemporal duration'.¹⁶⁰ My argument is based on the work of Marenbon and Leftow. It is true that the 'epistemic eternalism' is central in Boethius' solution to the paradox between free will and divine foreknowledge. However, unlike Marenbon, I argue that Boethius' notion of eternity has a metaphysical commitment to God's existence and that the metaphysical foundation for God's epistemic eternity is His metaphysical eternity, which is part of His divine simplicity. I agree with Leftow's explanation of God's eternal status. However, Leftow does not notice the advantages of Boethius' solution insofar as Boethius does not need to investigate the metaphysical relation between eternal being and temporal existence. For Boethius, metaphysical eternity and simplicity determine God's epistemic eternity and simplicity. God's eternal status entitles Him to have a unique cognitive power such that He can acquire knowledge without actual objects serving as truth-makers. Therefore, God's knowledge legitimately embraces knowledge about every temporal fact as a whole.

Following a discussion of Boethius' solution, I discuss Anselm's solution. Anselm, as a

¹⁵⁸ Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, 'Eternity', *The Journal of Philosophy* 78, no.8 (August 1981), 429–58.

¹⁵⁹ John Marenbon, 'Divine Prescience and Contingency in Boethius's Consolation of Philosophy', *Rivista di storia della filosofia* 68, no.1 (2013), 17–19.

¹⁶⁰ Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), 112–46; 159–81.

libertarian, is commonly thought to follow Boethius. Recently, Katherin Rogers has argued that Anselm systematically appeals to a fifth dimensional account of time in a systematic way.¹⁶¹ But she does not provide a philosophically precise analysis of this supertemporal dimension. Moreover, her understanding of Boethius is mistaken. Brian Leftow correctly notes the contrast between the Boethian and Anselmian metaphysical conceptions of eternity. My project departs from him in that I use the notion of eternity to explain Boethius' and Anselm's defences of free will and identify their differences. We should use an epistemic interpretation (i.e., God has a special way of *perceiving* the future *as if it were present*) to understand how Boethius addresses the deterministic implication of divine omniscience; for Anselm, we should follow a metaphysical interpretation: God knows the future as present because, given his metaphysical nature, it is present to him. Instead of restricting the notion of eternity to God's own existence and knowledge, Anselm appeals to the metaphysical foundation of the inclusive dimension of the Eternal Present. Whether Anselm's solution is consistent, in my view, remains unsettled. However, Anselm holds a more radical libertarian position than his predecessors.

6.1.1 Boethius' Epistemic Eternalism

Boethius' solution is comprised of three elements: (1) the distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity, (2) the principle of modes of cognition, and (3) God's epistemic eternity. Although the distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity is the last step of Boethius' original argumentation, I begin with it because contemporary scholars give it the most attention and it sparks much controversy.

Boethius appeals to the distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity to explain the Aristotelian necessity of the past and present. Boethius discloses his mature thought on this distinction in his *De Consolatio Philosophiae*:

There are in fact two necessities: One is simple (such as that it is necessary that [The original translation: for the fact that] all human beings are mortal]); the other is conditional (as when it is necessary that a man is walking if you know that he is walking). *For whatever anyone knows cannot exist in any other way than it is known to exist*, but this condition does not at all draw along with it that other, simple necessity. For it is not the thing's own nature that makes this necessity but only the

¹⁶¹ Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 146–84; Katherin Rogers, 'Anselm on Eternity as the Fifth Dimension', *The Saint Anselm Journal* 3, no.2 (Spring 2006), 1–8.

addition of condition, for no one compels someone who is walking voluntarily to walk, although *when he is walking it is necessary he is walking*.

Duae sunt etenim necessitates, simplex una, veluti quod necesse est omnes homines esse mortales, altera condicionis, ut si aliquem ambulare scias eum ambulare necesse est. *Quod enim quisque novit id esse aliter ac notum est nequit*, sed haec condicio minime secum illam simplicem trahit. Hanc enim necessitatem non propria facit natura sed condicionis adiectio; nulla enim necessitas cogit incedere voluntate gradientem, quamvis *eum tum cum graditur incedere necessarium sit* (V.6.27–29, DCP. 158.100–159.109).¹⁶²

Some scholars argue that introducing this distinction reflects how Boethius-the-author clarifies the scope-distinction fallacy that Boethius-the-character commits.¹⁶³ The fallacy involves Boethius-the-character mistakenly treating the wide-scope necessity of the conditional (‘Necessarily, if someone knows an event will happen, it will happen’) as the narrow-scope necessity of the consequent (‘If someone knows an event will happen, the event will necessarily happen’), according to this passage:

If God foresees all things and cannot be mistaken in any way, what providence has foreseen will be, will necessarily happen. So, if God foreknows from eternity not just what humans will do but also their plans and volitions, there will be no freedom of choice, for there will not be able to be any deed, or any sort of volition that infallible divine providence has not foreseen. For if volitions are capable of turning out differently from how they have been foreseen, then there will not be firm foreknowledge of the future, but rather uncertain opinion, and I judge it wicked to believe that about God.

¹⁶² Latin texts of *De Consolatio Philosophiae* are from *De Consolatione Philosophiae; Opuscula Theologica*, ed. C. Moreschini (Munich and Leipzig: K. G. Saur, 2005) (=DCP); English translations are from Joel Relihan, *Boethius: Consolation of Philosophy* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001).

¹⁶³ Boethius makes the same type of distinction in his first commentary (1inIsag. 121:20–124:7), which he takes from Aristotle (*Peri hermeneias* 19a23–6). Elizabeth Anscombe interprets Aristotle’s distinction in terms of a scope distinction. See Elizabeth Anscombe, ‘Aristotle and the Sea Battle’, *Mind* 65, no. 257 (1956), 1–15; Many scholars think that Boethius also employs the scope distinction. For instance, Henry, *The Logic of Saint Anselm*, 178; Richard Sorabji, *Necessity, Cause, and Blame: Perspectives on Aristotle’s Theory* (Ithaca, the New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), 122–23; Christopher Kirwan, *Augustine* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 96–98; Paul Spade, ‘Medieval Philosophy’, in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Western Philosophy*, ed. Anthony Kenny (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 72.

Nam si cuncta prospicit deus neque falli ullo modo potest, evenire necesse est quod providentia futurum esse praeviderit. Quare si ab aeterno non facta hominum modo sed etiam consilia voluntatesque praenoscit, nulla erit arbitrii libertas; neque enim vel factum aliud ullum vel quaelibet exsistere poterit voluntas nisi quam nescia falli providentia divina praesenserit. Nam si aliorum quam provisa sunt detorqueri valent, non iam erit futuri firma praescientia, sed opinio potius incerta; quod de deo credere nefas iudico (V.3.4–6, DCP. 140.5–141.15).

In principle, the distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity helps to clarify the scope-distinction fallacy insofar as the distinction provides an explanation for the *metaphysical basis* of wide-scope necessity and narrow-scope necessity. Wide-scope necessity is underpinned by conditional necessity, which is derived from certain external conditions; narrow-scope necessity is simple necessity, which is determined by the nature of things. Therefore, with regard to a future contingent, one can only legitimately claim that necessarily, if God foreknows p , then p but not claim that if God foreknows p , then necessarily p . God's foreknowledge of p has nothing to do with the modal status of p , but indicates only that it is true that p will occur and it is false that p will not occur.

In addition, this distinction tells us that even the argument in the following does not necessarily entail:

[1] Necessarily, if God foreknows p , then p . (The Infallibility of Knowledge)

[2] Necessarily, God foreknows p . (Divine Omniscience)

[3] Necessarily, p . (Distribution Axiom: $\Box(A \rightarrow B) \rightarrow (\Box A \rightarrow \Box B)$)

Although this argument is formally valid, one cannot conclude that the necessity of p in [3] is *simple* necessity because the necessity governing [1] is *conditional* necessity. The necessity operators in [1] and [3] fall under different categories because they are *non-interchangeable* sorts of necessity. Thus, there is no relation of entailment between them.¹⁶⁴

Despite the theoretical significance of the distinction between two sorts of necessity, Boethius-the-character's argument does not commit the fallacy in the first place, and Boethius-the-

¹⁶⁴ Jon Bornholdt provides a detailed analysis of this point in his *Walter Chatton on Future Contingents*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 20–24.

author, thus, does not intend to clarify the fallacy. As John Marenbon rightly notes, what Boethius-the-character puts forward a ‘transcendental argument’ about how the world must be, given that God *does* have genuine knowledge of all things and with the consequence that there cannot be open future events.¹⁶⁵ In other words, Boethius-the-character does not argue that God’s foreknowledge entails that something is necessary *simpliciter*. He simply notices and represents the paradox between the uncertainty of the outcome of a future event and the certainty and infallibility of divine knowledge. When Boethius-the-character says that ‘If God foresees all things and cannot be mistaken in any way, what providence has foreseen will be, will necessarily (*necesse*) happen’, the *necesse* indicates the consequent of God’s foreknowledge. That is, the event is *not* conatively defeasible, though it has not yet happened.

Given this paradox, Boethius-the-author does not distinguish between the necessity of a conditional and the necessity of its consequent but rather clarifies that, when applied to a description of the real *event*, there are two types of necessity.¹⁶⁶ Claiming that, given God’s foreknowledge, something is necessarily going to occur would not cause problems so long as we remember that, in this case, the token of ‘necessity’ means conditional necessity, which does not affect the ontological modal status of any contingent event.

Now take a closer look at the distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity. Consider the Aristotelian modal system, which does not involve possible worlds. In the first place, necessity is related to the *actualisation* of things or events. All necessities indicate only one possibility’s actualisation and exclude the actualisation of all the other alternative possibilities of the same subject. Different necessities have different sources. In Boethius’ view, simple necessity indicates something’s *ontological* modal status, which depends on the *nature* of things alone. Simple necessity does not amount to temporality. What is necessary *simpliciter* is always true, yet not anything that is always true is necessary *simpliciter*. Conditional necessity, in contrast, is *independent* of the nature of things but derived from certain external conditions. At the end of the passage cited above (V.6.27–29), Boethius-the-author provides two slightly different examples of conditional necessity. One is ‘when it is necessary that a man is walking if you know that he is walking’, and the other is ‘when someone is walking it is necessary he is walking’ (*eum tum cum*

¹⁶⁵ John Marenbon, ‘Divine Prescience and Contingency’, 9–21.

¹⁶⁶ To my knowledge, Simo Knuuttila first articulated this view in 1993, and it has been widely accepted afterwards. See Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, 60–61; Hermann Weidemann, ‘Die Unterscheidung zwischen einfacher und bedingter Notwendigkeit in der Philosophiae Consolatio des Boethius’, *History of Philosophy & Logical Analysis* 1, no.1 (1998), 195–207; John Marenbon, ‘Boethius: from antiquity to the Middle Ages’, in *Routledge History of Philosophy Volume III: Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (Routledge, 2003), 19–23; Robert Sharples, ‘Fate, Prescience and Free Will’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Boethius*, ed. John Marenbon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 210.

graditur incedere necessarium sit).¹⁶⁷ In the former, the necessity is derived from the infallibility of knowledge (necessarily, if God knows *p*, then *p*), while the latter case refers to the necessity of the present, which is the consequent entailed from the irrevocability of temporal facts (necessarily, if *p*, then *p*). Both the infallibility of knowledge and the irrevocability of temporal facts are independent of a conception of modality. Neither of them remove the fact that this event *in nature* is contingent and, when no such condition is attached, can be actualised otherwise. For instance, given that God foreknows that I shall choose to drink a cup of tea tomorrow, somehow my future choice is *fixed*. This fixedness may seem very problematic insofar as it suggests that my future choice is not conatively defeasible even *before* I actually choose. The distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity clarifies that future contingent events are fixed merely in the same way as are present and past contingents. When someone *infallibly knows* that I am walking or, given *the irrevocable fact* that I am walking, necessarily, I am walking. Yet, this fixedness, which derives from conditional necessity, is not incompatible with the fact that I could have *not* been walking.

This distinction does not solve another problem: how could a future contingent be conditionally necessary *in the same way* as a present or a past free choice? According to Boethius-the-author, the conditional necessity that governs future contingents derives from divine knowledge. However, intuitively, only the events with a definite outcome can constitute proper objects of knowledge. Unlike present and past contingents, which have occurred, the outcome of future contingents, especially those events generated from free choices of will, are *intrinsically uncertain*. What is intrinsically uncertain cannot constitute the object of any knowledge that is intrinsically certain.

Boethius-the-author replies to this question by claiming that divine knowledge does not require a definite object as the *truth-maker* or, say, the cause of truth. To do this, he first proposes what we can call *the principle of modes of cognition*:

You think that if things are foreseen then necessity is the logical consequence; you think that there can in no way be foreknowledge if necessity is absent; you think that nothing can be grasped by knowledge unless it is a definite thing. For [if] things that are characterized by indefinite outcomes are foreseen as if they were definite, that would be the darkness of opinion and not the truth of knowledge; for you believe that it is opposed to the infallibility of knowledge to think of a thing in some way

¹⁶⁷ The literal Latin translation is ‘when someone is walking it is necessary he is stepping forward’. However, in this context, Boethius is talking about present necessity.

other than it is constituted. The cause of this error [The original translation: miscalculation] is that it judges that all the things that a person knows are perceived only in accordance with the force and nature of the things [themselves] which are known. But it is completely the opposite. Everything that is perceived is grasped not according to its own force but rather according to the capability of those who perceive it. . . . For since every judgment exists as an act of the one who judges, it is necessarily the case that all who judge bring their work to completion by their own true powers, and not by a power outside of themselves.

Dissonare etenim videntur, putasque, si praevideantur, consequi necessitatem, si necessitas desit, minime praesciri, nihilque scientia comprehendere posse nisi certum. Quodsi quae incerti sunt exitus ea quasi certa providentur, opinionis id esse caliginem non scientiae veritatem; aliter enim ac sese res habeat arbitrari ab integritate scientiae credis esse diversum. Cuius erroris causa est quod omnia quae quisque novit ex ipsorum tantum vi atque natura cognosci aestimat quae sciuntur. Quod totum contra est; omne enim quod cognoscitur non secundum sui vim sed secundum cognoscentium potius comprehenditur facultatem. Nam ut hoc brevi liqueat exemplo, eandem corporis rotunditatem aliter visus aliter tactus agnoscit; ille eminens manens totum simul iactis radiis intuetur, hic vero cohaerens orbi atque coniunctus circa ipsum motus ambitum rotunditatem partibus comprehendit. . . . Videsne igitur ut in cognoscendo cuncta sua potius facultate quam eorum quae cognoscuntur utantur? Neque id iniuria; nam cum omne iudicium iudicantis actus exsistat, necesse est ut suam quisque operam non ex aliena sed ex propria potestate perficiat (V.4.22–26; 38–39, DCP. 148.62–149.79; 150.111–151.116).

This passage points out that what can be perceived is not up to the power and nature of objects but instead is up to the *power and nature* of the perceiver. The nature of the perceiver determines the perceiver's mode of cognition. To explain this relation, Boethius-the-author introduces an example:

Similarly, sense perception, imagination, reason, and understanding, each in its distinct way, view the same human being. For sense perception judges the shape as it has been constituted in its subject material, while imagination judges the shape alone, without its material; reason transcends this as well and from its universal point

of view weighs in the balance that very appearance that is present in all individuals. And the eye of understanding exists as something higher yet; for it has passed beyond what is encompassed by universality and views the one simple form itself in the pure vision of the mind.

Ipsam quoque hominem aliter sensus, aliter imaginatio, aliter ratio, aliter intellegentia contuetur. Sensus enim figuram in subiecta materia constitutam, imaginatio vero solam sine materia iudicat figuram; ratio vero hanc quoque transcendit speciemque ipsam quae singularibus inest universali consideratione perpendit. Intellegentiae vero celsior oculus exsistit; supergressa namque universitatis ambitum ipsam illam simplicem formam pura mentis acie contuetur (V.4.27–30, DCP. 149.80–88).

We acquire different sorts of knowledge about a particular thing through different modes of cognition. However, as Boethius-the-author suggests, different modes depend on different bases to form a proper judgment. For instance, sense perception requires subject material to form a proper judgement, while imagination only requires the shape. Therefore, this principle points out that it is the nature or the power of the cognitive faculty possessed by the perceiver that determines the *truth-maker* of a belief. For instance, when we see an object that is round, we know that the object is round. The round object by nature does not regulate that it is the truth-maker of our knowledge. Instead, the limitations of our sense perception regulate that, if it forms a true belief, it must be based on the material shape of the object. By contrast, our imagination and reason do not require the material shape to be truth-makers. Therefore, for one and the same object, different levels of knowledge can be formed through different cognitive modes. Some perceivers in virtue of their own power can form a *true belief* about something; while other perceivers in virtue of their limited powers cannot have the same true belief about the same thing.

Now, apply this principle to knowledge of future contingents. According to libertarianism, our knowledge about contingents are always posterior to their occurrences. In other words, our knowledge about contingents inevitably relies on truth-makers independent of our cognition. That is to say, our beliefs about a contingent event are made true only by its actualised status, which is certain. Given that we humans exist within the passage of time, our cognitive faculties are trapped in successive moments as well. Therefore, no one has access to the consequence of a future contingent in advance. Our mode of cognition determines that only past and present facts are the

proper objects of knowledge about contingent events. Given that, in time, only the present and past contingent events have been actualised, we can only assign a true or false value to present and past contingents. We are unable to acquire knowledge about future contingents because future events have not yet been actualised, so our beliefs about the future lack a truth-maker.

However, God has a very different mode of cognition, by which He has true beliefs about contingents that do not depend on any definite fact. How does God have this power? According to the principle of modes of cognition, an agent's cognitive power fits with its nature. So, the question reduces to: what is God's nature? Boethius-the-author first clarifies that God exists eternally:

Eternity is a possession of life, a possession simultaneously entire and perfect, which has no end. This becomes clear in a more transparent way from a comparison with temporal things. For whatever exists in time proceeds as a present thing from the things that have happened into the things that are going to happen, and there is nothing that has been established in time that is able to embrace the entire space of its own life at one and the same time.

Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio. Quod ex collatione temporalium clarius liquet. Nam quicquid vivit in tempore id praesens a praeteritis in futura procedit nihilque est in tempore constitutum quod totum vitae suae spatium pariter possit amplecti, sed crastinum quidem nondum apprehendit hesternum vero iam perdidit; in hodierna quoque vita non amplius vivitis quam in illo mobili transitorioque momento (V.6.4–5, DCP. 155.9–17).

Contemporary debate on this paragraph centres on whether God's existence is *atemporal*. While some scholars, such as Richard Sorabji, Elenore Stump, and Norman Kretzmann, treat this passage as expressing Boethius' view about God's *atemporality* – in the sense that God is a non-spreading existence in the whole temporal line.¹⁶⁸ John Marenbon contends that the Boethian God exists as a duration with temporal relations, yet God can *know* the present, the past, and the future simultaneously. The metaphysical foundation for God's mode of knowing is divine simplicity rather than atemporality.¹⁶⁹ I agree with Marenbon that Boethius conceives of God as having duration and

¹⁶⁸ Stump and Kretzmann, 'Eternity'; Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 119–20.

¹⁶⁹ John Marenbon, 'Divine Prescience and Contingency', 17–9.

temporal relations. Moreover, I agree that only God's epistemic eternity is at play in Boethius' solution to the paradox between free will and divine knowledge. I disagree, however, that the metaphysical basis for God's epistemic eternity is divine simplicity alone. According to Boethius, epistemic eternity is logically entailed from God's metaphysical eternal status. Both God's metaphysical eternity and the entailment from God's metaphysical eternity to His epistemic eternity are derived from divine simplicity.

To see why, we first need to examine Boethius' account of eternity. On this score, Brian Leftow provides a sophisticated analysis, although he misses the epistemic aspect of Boethius' account.¹⁷⁰ His main thesis is that the Boethian God is a *timeless duration* – precisely in the sense that there is temporal relation or order between the present, the past, and the future with regard to God's existence – but God's present, past, and future do not exist discretely. Rather, they exist simultaneously as a whole without any succession. Leftow writes: 'Even though points within QTE (Quasi-Temporal Eternality) are ordered as earlier and later, no segments of it are past or future in relation to any others, where being past or future entail, in addition to being earlier or later, that some segments of QTE have ceased to be lived or are not yet lived. (Thus, again, an extension in QTE is like a temporal extension in tenseless time.)'¹⁷¹ In essence, God's existence is a '*tenseless duration*', in which temporality extends in a non-linear way.

Passages from Boethius' support the above reading. Boethius has the intuition that God's existence is more than perpetuity. He explains the distinction between eternity and perpetuity as:

God ought not to be seen as more ancient and glorious than created things by the measurement of time, but rather by the distinctive character of his own simple nature. . . . Consequently, if we want to impose on things names that are worthy of them, let us follow Plato and say that God is eternal, but that the world is perpetual.

Neque deus conditis rebus antiquior videri debet temporis quantitate sed simplicis potius proprietate naturae. . . . Itaque si digna rebus nomina velimus imponere, Platonem sequentes deum quidem aeternum, mundum vero dicamus esse perpetuum (V.6.11; V.6.14, DCP. 156.37–9; 157.54–7).

¹⁷⁰ Leftow carefully examines Stump and Kretzmann's interpretation of Boethius' notion of eternity and Fitzgerald's objection (Paul Fitzgerald, 'Stump and Kretzmann on Time and Eternity', *The Journal of Philosophy* 82, no.5 (1985), 260–69). Leftow concludes that, according to Stump and Kretzmann, Boethian eternity is not a duration but a point; see his *Time and Eternity*, 112–34).

¹⁷¹ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 121.

While perpetuity indicates that something's existence extends through every moment, eternity is more than the maximal extension of temporal length. Yet this does not entail that God's existence has no duration. Boethius' point is that God's existence bears a distinctive mode of temporality. Unlike human beings, who first experience the past, proceed to the present, and then to the future, God embraces all moments of his perpetual existence as a whole, without experiencing the linear passage of time. As Boethius says:

That which grasps and possesses the entire fullness of a life that has no end at one and the same time (*nothing that is to come being absent to it, nothing of what has passed having flowed away from it*) is rightly held to be eternal. Further, it is necessary both that, as master of itself, it always be present to itself as a present thing and that it always has present the infinite of moving time [The original translation: has the infinity of swift time as present].

Quod igitur interminabilis vitae plenitudinem totam pariter comprehendit ac possidet, cui *neque futuri quicquam absit nec praeteriti fluxerit, id aeternum esse iure perhibetur* idque necesse est et sui compos praesens sibi semper assistere et infinitatem mobilis temporis habere praesentem (V.6.8–9, DCP. 156.24–9).

Importantly, for such an existence, to be located at a particular instant in our temporal succession is impossible; otherwise, a contradiction follows.¹⁷² Boethius' notion of eternity involves *atemporality*, insofar as God does not share in *successive temporality* with creatures. God is out of our temporality. God's existence bears on the temporal relation between the past, present, and future, but that relation is represented in a *non-linear* and *indiscrete* way. We ought to understand 'non-linear' in the sense that 'nothing that is to come being absent to it, nothing of what has passed having flowed away from it', and 'indiscrete' in the sense that there is no transition from existence to non-existence (or conversely) in any instant in God's existence. God is not 'trapped' in one particular instant at one moment and then carried by the flow of successive temporality into the next moment. Instead, God contains all moments at once.

¹⁷² As Leftow explains: 'Suppose that a temporal being lives at once that of its life which is at $t + 1$ and that of its life which occurs at an earlier time t . Something temporal can at once live life-at- t and life-at- $t + 1$ only if its living is temporally simultaneous with both t and $t + 1$. If its living is so, then t and $t + 1$ are simultaneous, counter to our original assumption' (*Time and Eternity*, 115).

Boethius describes God's eternal-present as part of divine *simplicity*. Moreover, given divine simplicity, both God's metaphysical and epistemic statuses must have the same attribute:

Since every judgment grasps the things that are subject to it in accordance with its own nature, and since God has an ever-eternal and ever-present-moment condition, his knowledge as well has passed beyond all the motion of time and is stable in the *simplicity* of its own present; it embraces the infinite reaches of what has passed and what is to come and, in its own simple perception, it looks at all things as if they are being carried out now. And so, should you want to ponder the foresight by which God distinguishes all things, you will more accurately determine that it is not foreknowledge as of something that is to come, *but rather a knowledge of a never-failing present*.

Quoniam igitur omne iudicium secundum sui naturam quae sibi subiecta sunt comprehendit, est autem deo semper aeternus ac praesentarius status, scientia quoque eius omnem temporis supergressa motionem in suae manet simplicitate praesentiae infinitaque praeteriti ac futuri spatia complectens omnia quasi iam gerantur in sua simplici cognitione considerat. Itaque si praevidentiam pensare velis qua cuncta dinoscit, non esse praescientiam quasi futuri sed scientiam *numquam deficientis instantiae rectius aestimabis* (V.6.15–16, DCP.157.58–67).

Note that divine simplicity does not necessarily contradict the claim that God's existence involves a temporal relation. The core of divine simplicity is *indivisibility*, which can be understood in a weak sense, that God's existence is of absolute integrity. Despite the fact that one can discern the fixed later-earlier relation in God's eternal existence, the *actuality* of His existence is complete to the highest extent: No part of God's life is unactualised. In this sense, God's life is *metaphysically* indiscrete and simple.¹⁷³ Return to the above passage. Given the assumption that one's cognitive power is in accordance with the perceiver's power and nature, we are restricted by

¹⁷³ On this reading, God's life is *epistemically* dividable. But every epistemically dividable part of God is, strictly speaking, identical with the other parts. Although in *De Trinitate*, Chapter 2, Boethius claims that God is simple and partless, we can interpret 'partless' in a weak sense. Leftow attempts to defend the view that it is possible for God to be indivisible and partless by introducing the concept of chronon, which is a physically indivisible atom that bears earlier-later relations within a single present (*Time and Eternity*, 137–43). Nevertheless, I still cannot see how this analogy helps to reconcile the contrast between the existence of temporal relations and epistemic simplicity with regard to eternity.

successive temporality and cannot perceive the metaphysical status of eternity. However, we can still describe God's relation with time, and we can understand that God's simple nature is parallel to God's simple knowledge. God's unique nature accounts for His unique cognitive mode and the nature of knowledge. God's existence is eternal and simple, so too His knowledge and His mode of cognition. Therefore, God's knowledge is neither bound by the succession of different moments, nor does God experience any change within the flow of time and the change of space. Nothing needs (or, indeed, *can* be) to be added or reduced in the totality of God's knowledge. God's knowledge is maximally *inclusive*. The logical consequence is that the correspondence theory of truth does not apply to God's knowledge.

According to God's mode of cognition, future contingents are certain. For God *perceives* everything as *if* they are present in His eternity. Boethius does not and cannot explain *the way* in which everything is perceived as being present to God. Boethius at best explains *metaphorically* that God perceives all events *just as* we see temporally present facts. God's knowing the definite outcome of a future contingent resembles the way in which we know that the definite outcome of a present or a past event. The necessity governing past and present contingents is only conditional necessary, so future contingents, though known by God in a definite manner, are only of conditional necessity as well. As Boethius explains as follows:

And yet, if there is any worthy comparison between the divine present and the human present – just as you humans see certain individual things in this time-bounded present of yours, he perceives all things in his own eternal present. And it is for this reason that this divine foreknowledge does not change the nature and the distinctive character of things; it looks at such things as are present to it just as they will eventually come to pass in time as future things. Nor does it confuse its judgments; rather, with the single gaze of its own mind, it distinguishes both what will happen of necessity as well as what will happen, but not of necessity.

Atqui si est divini humanique praesentis digna collatio, uti vos vestro hoc temporario praesenti quaedam videtis ita ille omnia suo cernit aeterno. Quare haec divina praenotio naturam rerum proprietatemque non mutat taliaque apud se praesentia spectat qualia in tempore olim futura prouenient. Nec rerum iudicia confundit unoque suae mentis intuitu tam necessarie quam non necessarie ventura dinoscit, sicuti vos cum pariter ambulare in terra hominem et oriri in caelo solem videtis,

quamquam simul utrumque conspectum tamen discernitis et hoc voluntarium illud esse necessarium iudicatis (V.6.20–22, DCP 157.74–158.85).

The future is conditionally necessary in relation to the nature of God's knowledge, but this does not affect whether the nature of one thing is contingent or necessary – just as human knowledge about the past and present does not affect an event's contingency or necessity by nature. For instance, that I am sitting now is definite at this moment and this fact can be infallibly grasped by a perceiver who is looking at me. Nonetheless, my sitting is still a contingent event by nature because my sitting is only conditionally necessary and *could have* turned out to be otherwise. So too, past events.

So far, it appears that Boethius believes that the future is intrinsically uncertain. God can grasp the results of future contingents only because God has a unique cognitive power. For Boethius, successive temporality is real, and future contingents neither exist nor are predetermined. Despite the fact that God's own existence does not follow diachronic temporality, this status does not affect the metaphysics of the temporality of our world. God's own eternal condition only entitles His cognitive power to be beyond time and space, which entails that His knowledge is inclusive. Therefore, Boethius jumps from a metaphysical account of God's own eternal status to God's eternal knowledge of everything. God's *metaphysical* eternity lays the foundation for God's *epistemic* eternity. In this framework, admittedly, God's cognitive power is not completely comprehensible to human beings. Some mysterious elements hide in God's mode of cognition. We do not know what is the truth-maker of God's knowledge. We only know that God, in terms of His transcendental cognitive force, can grasp the development of everything's whole process without any mistakes. With one glance, all information about a certain object (and everything else) is unpacked in front of God. Nobody knows how it works exactly.

However, one passage at the end of the chapter is ambiguous, which seems to undermine Boethius' libertarian position:

. . . [that] it is an unworthy thing that our future actions be said to provide a cause for the foreknowledge of God. For this force of [The original translation: such is the force for this] knowledge, embracing all things by its present-moment knowledge, that *it has itself established the status of all things, while it owes nothing to things that are subsequent to it.*

. . . indignum esse si scientiae dei causam futura nostra praestare dicantur. Haec enim

scientiae vis praesentaria notione cuncta complectens rebus modum omnibus ipsa constituit, nihil vero posterioribus debet (V.6 42–43, DCP. 161.154–8).

In this passage, Boethius states that God's knowledge is cause of the status of things. One possible interpretation that I suggest is that Boethius-the-author means that God's knowledge constitutes its own truth-maker. God has the ability to grasp the certain status of all things and infallibly assign true or false values to all of them. Thus, what has yet happened will completely be in accordance with what God knows though without a causal relation. However, I do not deny the possibility that Boethius-the-author does want to introduce a causal relation between God's knowledge and the mode of things. Perhaps, for Boethius, there is no need to separate God's knowledge from God's existence or God's acts, so he just wants to clarify that God Himself sets up everything's status of existing. Moreover, God's knowledge must be causative because God causes all things through knowing them. On this reading, Boethius is a determinist with respect to divine predestination, which makes his attempts to avoid the deterministic implications of divine prescience rather futile.¹⁷⁴

6.1.2 Anselm's Metaphysical Eternalism

Anselm explicitly defends free will in his discussions about divine omniscience, predestination, and grace in *De Concordia*. I addressed the relation between free will and grace in Chapter 5. Here, I examine Anselm's free will defence concerning divine knowledge and providence.

Faced with a paradox between free will and divine omniscience, Anselm first clarifies that the content of God's foreknowledge about a future contingent is not that something will occur by a certain *compelling* necessity. Rather, it is that something will occur from a person's free will:

For indeed God, who foresees that something is going to be from the will alone, foreknows the very fact that the will is not compelled or constrained by any other thing, and thus that what is done by the will is done freely.

Hoc ipsum namque praescit deus qui praevidet aliquid futurum ex sola voluntate, quod voluntas non cogitur aut prohibetur ulla alia re, et sic ex libertate fit quod fit ex voluntate (*De Concordia* 1.2, S II. 247.14–248.2).

¹⁷⁴ For the analysis of the coherence of Boethius' project in *Consolatio*, see John Marenbon, *Boethius* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 157–59.

Anselm believes that the necessity entailed from God's foreknowledge is non-compelling necessity, or subsequent necessity (Chapter 3). Anselm's notion subsequent necessity is different from Boethius' notion of conditional necessity, insofar as Boethius' notion can be the consequent of the irrevocability of temporal facts or the infallibility of knowledge. However, Anselm's subsequent necessity has only one *ultimate* source, that is, the irrevocability of facts. As Anselm says:

But that necessity [subsequent necessity] does not compel or constrain anything to be or not to be. It is because something *is posited as existing* that its existence is said to be necessary, and because something is posited as not existing that its non-existence is said to be necessary: not because necessity compels or constrains it to be or not to be.

Sed haec necessitas nec cogit nec prohibet aliquid esse aut non esse. Ideo enim quia *ponitur res esse*, dicitur ex necessitate esse; aut quia ponitur non esse, affirmatur non esse ex necessitate; non quia necessitas cogat aut prohibeat rem esse aut non esse (*De Concordia* 1.2, S II. 249.2–5)

The key difference between Anselm and Boethius is that Anselm does not challenge the universality of the human cognitive mode, which requires definite objects as truth-makers so that judgments and beliefs qualify as knowledge. Anselm assumes that this cognitive mode also applies to God. Anselm appeals to the metaphysical nature of God's eternity in response to a question about how God has access to knowledge about future contingents. First, consider Anselm's account of God's eternity in the *Proslogion*. In *Proslogion* 18, Anselm asserts that divine simplicity entails that God's eternity is not divided by time and space:

And since that you have no parts, and neither does your eternity, which you yourself are, it follows that no part of you or of your eternity exists at a certain place or time. Instead, you exist as a whole everywhere, and your eternity exists as a whole always.

Quoniam ergo nec tu habes partes nec tua aeternitas quae tu es: nusquam et numquam est pars tua aut aeternitatis tuae, sed ubique totus es, et aeternitas tua tota est semper (*Proslogion* 18, S I. 115.1–4).

In *Proslogion* 19, Anselm further describes God's eternal status:

So it is not the case that yesterday, today, and tomorrow you are; rather, you are / exist in an unqualified sense, outside time altogether. Yesterday, today and tomorrow are merely in time. But you, although nothing exists without you, do not exist in a place or a time; rather all things exist in you.

Non ergo fuisti heri aut eris cras, sed heri et hodie et cras es. Immo nec heri nec hodie nec cras es, sed simpliciter es extra omne tempus. Nam nihil aliud est heri et hodie et cras quam in tempore; tu autem, licet nihil sit sine te, non es tamen in loco aut tempore, sed omnia sunt in te. Nihil enim te continet, sed tu continet omnia (*Proslogion* 19, S I. 115.11–15).

In this passage, Anselm first clarifies that God's own eternal existence is outside the temporal dimension we human beings perceive. Note, again, that being outside time does not mean that something's existence bears no relation to time at all. Anselm's second important point is God's eternity contains all things existing in time and place. This is not likely a metaphorical expression to extol God's greatness. Instead, Anselm offers a serious philosophical claim, which he reiterates in *Proslogion* 21:

So is this 'the age of the age' or 'the ages of the ages'? For just as an age of time contains all temporal things, so your eternity contains even the very ages of time. This eternity is indeed 'an age' because of its indivisible unity, but it is 'ages' because of its boundless greatness.

An ergo hoc est 'saeculum saeculi' or 'saecula saeculorum'? Sicut enim saeculum temporum continet omnia temporalia, sic tua aeternitas continet etiam ipsa saecula temporum. Quae saeculum quidem est propter indivisibilem unitatem, saecula vero propter interminabilem immensitatem (*Proslogion* 21, S I. 116.6–9).

More importantly, in *De Concordia*, the metaphysics of the Eternal Present plays a central role in Anselm's compatibilism between free will and divine omniscience:

Now although in eternity there is only a present, it is not a temporal present like ours, but an eternal present that encompasses all times. Just as every place, and those things that are in any place, are contained in the present time, so too every time, and those things that are at any time, are enclosed all at once in the eternal present.

Quamvis quidem nihil ibi sit nisi praesens, non est tamen illud praesens temporale sicut nostrum, sed aeternum, in quo tempora cuncta continentur. Si quidem quemadmodum praesens tempus continet omnem locum et quae in quolibet loco sunt: ita aeterno praesenti simul clauditur omne tempus, et quae sunt in quolibet tempore (*De Concordia* 1.5, S II. 254.6–10).

At first sight, Anselm's account of eternity is similar to Boethius' account. First, both of their notions of divine eternity are generated from the concept of divine simplicity. Second, Anselm also adopts a metaphor between the status of eternity and the temporal present. However, he distinguishes between the Eternal Present and the temporal present. Third, both thinkers' notions of eternity are superior to temporal perpetuity. However, unlike Boethius, who explicitly indicates that God perceives everything in virtue of his own eternal status, Anselm thinks of God's eternity not only as God's own unique status of existence but also as a *superior dimension* that all temporal things hold distinctively. The Eternal Present is an inclusive *dimension* in which every temporal fact equally exists. This is to say, in the dimension of the Eternal Present, there is no passage of time – things in our past do not elapse, and things in our future are not awaiting to exist (but have existed).

Moreover, Anselm insists that there is no contradiction between something's non-existence in the temporal future and its existence in the Eternal Present:

Now since we have discerned that a thing exists differently in time from how it exists in eternity, so that it is sometimes true that something does not exist in time that does exist in eternity, and that its existence is past in time but not past in eternity or future in time but not future in eternity, there does not seem to be any reason to deny that in the same way something can be mutable in time that is immutable in eternity. Indeed, there is no more opposition between being mutable in time and being immutable in eternity than there is between not existing at a given time and always existing in eternity, or between having existed or being yet to exist in time

and not having existed or not being yet to exist in eternity.

Cum autem res tam aliter esse cognoscatur in tempore quam in aeternitate, ut aliquando verum sit quoniam aliquid non est in tempore quod est in aeternitate, et quia fuit in tempore quod ibi non fuit, et erit temporaliter quod non ibi erit: nulla ratione negari videtur posse similiter aliquid esse in tempore mutabile, quod ibi est immutabile. Quippe non magis opposita sunt mutabile in tempore et immutabile in aeternitate, quam non esse in aliquo tempore, et esse semper in aeternitate; et fuisse vel futurum esse secundum tempus, atque non fuisse aut non futurum esse in aeternitate (*De Concordia* 1.5, S II. 255.7–14).

Anselm's position appears to be that temporal things exist in two, distinctive dimensions – a temporal dimension and a tenseless dimension (i.e., eternity). I apply the A/B series distinction, introduced by John Ellis McTaggart in his well-known, 1908 paper 'The Unreality of Time', to describe the feature of the temporality in these two dimensions.¹⁷⁵ According to the A series, 'each position is either Past, Present or Future', and, according to the B series, 'each position is Earlier than some, and Later than some, of the other positions'.¹⁷⁶ The positions in A series are not fixed and permanent, whereas those in the B series are. The A series reflects the way in which we perceive temporal events in daily life. The B series suggests that the past, present, and future equally exist in a fixed sequence. In this sense, the B series fits Anselm's description of how temporal things exist in eternity. Anselm confidently indicates that the very same thing can have two existing statuses – one in each dimension – without any contradiction. However, the gap between the temporal dimension or, say, the subjective perception of time, and the eternal dimension cannot be crossed, especially by future contingent events. Note that the existence of future events in the tenseless eternal dimension does not necessarily lead to determinism. A free choice of will is still intrinsically spontaneous as long as an agent's free will ultimately determines one's choices in the Eternal Present. However, if one insists on this libertarian position, the trickiest problem would be the identity of an agent with one's consciousness. In what sense can an agent's *future free choice of will* exist in the Eternal Present? Given the fact that I clearly know that I have not yet chosen to drink coffee tomorrow morning, how could it be the case that I will have done so? Does this imply that there is a higher self? Putting the problem of human consciousness aside, this

¹⁷⁵ John Ellis McTaggart, 'The Unreality of Time', *Mind*, 17, no. 4, (October 1908), 457–74.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 458.

metaphysical picture also raises a basic problem of whether it is possible for the *same* thing to possess the status of existing and non-existing in different dimensions.

Leftow suggests that, when interpreting Anselm, we do not have to commit ourselves to the view that temporal beings exist in two dimensions. Rather, both eternal and temporal entities exist at once in the supertemporal dimension.¹⁷⁷ In other words, only the B-series is real. Therefore, God is *with* every discrete temporal moment. This reading avoids the problem of whether the same thing can have different existence statuses in distinct dimensions because, in this metaphysical framework, there is no A series but only B series. However, the problem of divine simplicity threatens this interpretation. As I have discussed above, Anselm explicitly contends that the existence of God cannot be divided by time and space. If God's existence occurs in discrete temporal moments, we need additional qualifications to justify God's simplicity.¹⁷⁸ Second, the problem about subjective experiences of temporality still exists. It appears that our perception of the A series is illusory. If so, the problem becomes more severe because it entails that what I have not yet experienced as happening has happened in the *same* temporal dimension. How could I co-exist and do different things in different moments of one temporal-spatial dimension?

Although Anselm's solution remains incomplete and unsatisfactory at this point, he clearly intends to provide a defence of free will. In his view, God's foreknowledge strictly entails only subsequent necessity, which is grounded on the irrevocability of temporal facts. There are future facts *for God*, not only because God's own existence is eternal but also because God's eternity marks a superior temporal-spatial dimension in which all temporal facts are equally contained. In this framework, God has knowledge about future contingents because it is God's prerogative to have access to the superior dimension of the Eternal Present.

6.2 Anselm's Free Will and Divine Providence

Anselm insists on his libertarian position with regard to the problem of divine predestination. According to Anselm, what God knows is *identical* with what God predestines:

Now to be sure, there is no room to doubt whether there is some discrepancy between God's foreknowledge and his predestination. On the contrary, as God foreknows, so too does he predestine. In the question on foreknowledge, we came to

¹⁷⁷ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 216.

¹⁷⁸ One plausible way to defend this view is to maintain that God is present in every temporal thing just as mathematical truth is present in every temporal thing. See Richard Campbell, 'Anselm's Concept of Eternity as Permeating Spacetime', presented to *The Seventh Anselm Conference* (St Anselm's College, Manchester, USA, April 2021).

recognize quite clearly that certain future things that will be done through free choice are foreknown, without any contradiction. Hence, evident truth and reason teach that certain future things that will be done through free choice are likewise predestined, without any inconsistency. For God neither foreknows nor predestines any future just person by necessity.

Dubitari utique non debet quia eius praescientia et praedestinatio non discordant; sed sicut praescit, ita quoque praedestinat. In quaestione de praescientia cognovimus aperte aliqua praesciri futura per liberum arbitrium sine omni repugnantia. Unde veritas quoque evidens et ratio docet praedestinari similiter per liberum arbitrium quaedam futura absque omni inconvenientia. Nam neque praescit deus neque praedestinat quemquam iustum futurum ex necessitate (*De Concordia* 2.3, S II. 261.15–21).

With regard to future, free choices of will, given that God knows that *x* will bring about *p* out of *x*'s free will in the Eternal Present, God predestines that *x* will bring about *p* out of *x*'s free will ('*x*' refers to a rational agent; '*p*' refers to an event). In what sense can we say that God's predestination of *x*'s choice of *p* does not threaten free will? If God predestines that *x* will choose *p*, *x*'s exercise of free will is from mere spontaneity, rather than from intrinsic spontaneity (see Chapter 4 for a discussion about these two sorts of spontaneity). Faced with this problem, Anselm's solution is to explain a rather *weak sense* of the action of predestining.

Although God predestines these things, he does not bring them about by compelling or restraining the will, but by leaving the will in its own power. But although the will does employ its own power, it does not bring about anything that God does not bring about: in the case of good people, by his grace; in the case of bad people, not by his own fault but by the fault of their will.

Non enim ea deus – quamvis praedestinet – facit voluntatem cogendo aut voluntati resistendo, *sed in sua illam potestate dimittendo*. Quamvis tamen sua voluntas utatur potestate, nihil tamen facit, quod deus non faciat, in bonis sua gratia, in malis non sua sed eiusdem voluntatis culpa (*De Concordia* 2.3, S II. 262. 3–6).

On the one hand, Anselm clearly believes that God has created humans with the power of free will. On the other hand, God still brings about humans' free choices. Anselm's semantics reconciles this apparent contradiction. Anselm identifies the act of *predestining* with the act of *bringing about*. According to Anselm, the statement that '*x* brings about *p*' has many improper significations. When we say that God brings about that *x* brings about *p*, it does not mean that God is the proximate and efficient cause of *p*. Rather, the statement means that God *permits* *p*'s occurrence.¹⁷⁹ So, the statement 'God predestines that *x* brings about *p* freely' does not mean that God uses his power to make *x* bring about *p*, but instead it means that God allows *x* to bring about *p* or $\neg p$ freely.

In Anselm's framework, divine knowledge accords with divine predestination insofar as God neither knows nor predestines any contingent thing as antecedent necessary. For instance, God knows that, if I drink a cup of tea tomorrow morning, I shall drink it out of my free choice of will. Correspondingly, God predestines that, if I drink a cup of tea tomorrow morning, I shall drink it out of my free choice of will. However, divine knowledge is more than this. Indeed, God can distinguish the intrinsic modal status of things or events, but God also knows the *definite* consequence of all future contingent events simultaneously. By contrast, Anselm contends that God only predestines the intrinsic modal status of things rather than predetermines, in a *definite* manner, any choices from humans' spontaneous wills. As we have seen, Anselm largely weakens the deterministic dimension of divine Providence. In this sense, a discrepancy between divine knowledge and divine predestination inevitably exists. Yet Anselm's sacrifice of God's deterministic power in turn demonstrates his radical, libertarian position.

6.3 Conclusion

According to Boethius, God's eternal status and the principle of modes of cognition guarantee that there is no need for God to ground the truth value of his beliefs about future contingents in any actualised status. Even though future contingents have not yet been actualised, God still has infallible beliefs about them. The distinction between simple necessity and conditional necessity help clear away the contradiction between the certainty of knowledge and the uncertainty of contingents. Even though God knows the definite outcome of a future contingent, its necessity

¹⁷⁹ 'Before I answer the question, it is first important to see that predestination is not only of good things. We can also speak of predestination of bad things, in the same way that God is said to bring about the bad things that he does not in fact bring about, on the grounds that he permits them' [In primis igitur ante quaestionis responsionem videndum est quia praedestinatio non solum bonorum est, sed et malorum potest dici, quemadmodum deus mala quae non facit dicitur facere, quia permittit] (*De Concordia* 2.2, S II. 261.2-4).

originates from an extrinsic condition (i.e., God's certain and infallible knowledge). However, Boethius does not explain the truth-maker of divine foreknowledge. Moreover, Boethius appears inconsistent and undermines his defence of free will insofar as he contends that God's knowledge is causative.

Anselm, by contrast, consistently demonstrates his libertarian position throughout his discussions on divine foreknowledge and divine predestination. For Anselm, the knowledge, including God's foreknowledge, of every rational being, is based on temporal facts. God has foreknowledge in that He has exclusive access to the tenseless dimension of eternity. Anselm neither explains how temporal entities could have different statuses of existence in a temporal series and in eternity nor realises the problem of the identity of consciousness. Compared with Boethius', Anselm's project faces a more difficult metaphysical problem. Despite the unsolved problem, Anselm insists that God does not determine rational agents' choices. With regard to divine predestination, Anselm appeals to the resources of his semantic theory and argues that God brings about everyone's choices in the sense that He *permits* everyone their choices in terms of intrinsic spontaneity. In other words, everyone's future, free choices have occurred and are present to God in Eternity.

Conclusion: Anselm as an Early Medieval Metaphysician

Traditionally, there is a tendency to link medieval metaphysics to a framework based on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. This narrow conception of medieval metaphysics leads to two consequences. First, because Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was introduced into the Latin West during the middle of the twelfth century, one might underestimate the significance of the discussion of metaphysics in the early Middle Ages. Second, the narrow conception of medieval metaphysics is very misleading because, although Aristotle's *Metaphysics* has an important role in medieval metaphysics, medieval metaphysics is based on a wider range of sources. Medieval metaphysics is not only influenced by Platonism and Aristotelianism but also discussed in other contexts, such as the theological commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae (the Sentences)*. My primary concern is the first claim. The way I study Anselm invites scholars to reassess their understanding of medieval metaphysics and Anselm's active contribution to it.

According to Aristotle and his interpreters, the subject matter of metaphysics is roughly

identified as ‘being *qua* being’, ‘first causes and principles of beings’, and ‘unchanging beings’. By contrast, modern philosophers have a wider conception of metaphysics, one that is not tied to the subject matter of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. This wider conception is rather vague. According to it, metaphysics investigates a whole range of subjects, such as modality, space and time, causation, the mind-body distinction, and so on. Moreover, contemporary philosophers conceive of metaphysics as distinct from domains of logic, ethics, and epistemology. Yet even this division is not so neat. For instance, modal theories concern both modal logic and the metaphysical foundation for modal concepts; the mind-body distinction is interconnected with epistemological considerations; and causal theories entail different doctrines of determinism and free will. Therefore, today’s metaphysics is more like a set of problems that permeate the fundamental layer of different philosophical topics rather than an independent branch of philosophy with a distinct subject matter. Thus, the transition from the narrow conception of metaphysics to a wider one is not about broadening the *scope* of the subject matter but rather a change of the *nature* of metaphysics. Entertaining a certain metaphysical view requires one to have a certain set of fundamental views on the foundation or constitution of the world. That is, one must hold a foundational *worldview*. Note that, however, in the Middle Ages, this foundational worldview can be largely guided by other concerns. For instance, the ethical problem of free will raises many metaphysical questions about the omnipotence of God.

In my view, a worldview conception of metaphysics is more suitable for the study of medieval metaphysics.¹⁸⁰ Given this conception, we are able to interpret a medieval thinker’s thought more systematically and holistically. The systematic treatment of a thinker’s metaphysics serves as an alternative (or a good supplement) to the problem-oriented method of interpretation. In the Middle Ages, almost every philosophical and theological theory is grounded on a thinker’s metaphysical views. Thus, a systematic study of metaphysics offers important clues for identifying the coherence and originality of a thinker’s thought and for appreciating the continuous development of metaphysics throughout the centuries of the Middle Ages. By ‘systematic’, I do not mean that any medieval thinker has intentionally set out to construct and systematically present a metaphysical system in the sense of contemporary philosophy. According to the modern distinction between philosophy and theology, most medieval thinkers’ intellectual project is directly linked to

¹⁸⁰ John Marenbon explicitly distinguishes between wide and narrow conception of metaphysics and applies the modern notion of metaphysics to the study of medieval metaphysics to show the latter’s complications. See John Marenbon, ‘Medieval Metaphysics II: Things, Non-things, God and Time’, in *The Routledge Companion to Metaphysics*, eds. Robin Le Poidevin, Peter Simons, Andrew McGonigal, and Ross P. Cameron (London and New York: Routledge), 58–67.

theology. A medieval thinker's metaphysical discussions are considered systematic rather in the sense that when today a historian of philosophy puts those thoughts together, a consistent and holistic scheme can be identified and reconstructed. There is no *given* system waiting to be discovered in those medieval manuscript. Instead, when some consistent and interrelated elements in a thinker's works are put together properly, a certain system, whether theological or philosophical, would emerge naturally which should be recognised,

Despite the potential richness of early Latin philosophy, the systematic study of metaphysics of this period is still insufficient. It is plausible to think a discussion of metaphysics began in the early Middle Ages. And, although early medieval philosophers did not have access to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, many other important sources were available. On the one hand, Aristotle's two logic works – *De Interpretatione* and the *Categoriae* – were available. They are classified as 'logical' works because the *Categoriae* investigates terms that constitute propositions from which syllogisms are constructed and *De Interpretatione* analyses the relation between language and logic. However, these two works touch on topics that go far beyond what we currently conceive of as logic. The *Categoriae* provides a general classification of beings, according to which substance (*ousia*) has a privileged position.¹⁸¹ *De Interpretatione* also deals with metaphysical issues, such as the relation between words, mental affections and things, and modalities. On the other hand, medieval philosophers had non-Aristotelian sources for their metaphysical theorising. Aristotle's metaphysics never constituted the exclusive way of theorising about being. Augustine's adaptations of Neoplatonic doctrines are another important source that constantly influenced medieval thinkers. For instance, during the Middle Ages, the Platonic notion of Forms had variants as concepts pre-existing in the mind of God. This version of the doctrine of Forms constituted the foundation for God's causal relations with creatures. Additionally, the Augustinian adaptation, combined with Aristotle's incomplete doctrines, largely affected the discussion of universals during the eleventh and the early twelfth centuries.

If we apply the wider, modern conception of metaphysics, then 'systematic metaphysician' would name many early medieval thinkers in the Latin West. Today many historians of philosophy tend to think of metaphysics in this wider sense. According to them, the history of medieval metaphysics stretches back to Abelard or, even earlier, to Augustine. In either case, scholars mainly focus on debates about theory of universals and the distinction between realism and nominalism. For instance, Christophe Erismann, in his introduction to medieval realism, shows that thinkers in

¹⁸¹ Some people (including some medieval commentators) interpret the *Categoriae* linguistically. The linguistic reading is not necessarily contradictory to the metaphysical reading.

the early medieval period developed various strands of dominant theory about universals. According to Erismann, from the ninth to the eleventh centuries, the dominant view of universals is ‘material essence realism’, which contends that ‘the universal man is taken to exist simultaneously in each of its particulars and to be fully realized in them’.¹⁸² This trend ‘ended abruptly with the powerful criticism of immanent realism by Peter Abelard’.¹⁸³ Peter King provides a systematic treatment of Abelard’s metaphysics, with a focus on Abelard’s *irrealistic* position and discussion of Abelard’s views on modality, space and time, and propositions.¹⁸⁴

However, the study of Anselm’s metaphysics remains in a very preliminary stage. Perhaps scholars have not given Anselm much attention because his view of universals is not his central philosophical interest. Scholars have produced many important, individual studies of Anselm’s views on universals, semantics, modality, ethics, and eternity, as well as his philosophy of religion, yet they rarely treat these topics in a holistic manner, especially from the perspective of metaphysics. My thesis has a modest purpose, that is, to argue that Anselm should be regarded a serious metaphysician of the eleventh century and that he made a systematic and far-reaching contribution to the history of medieval metaphysics. To do this, my thesis focuses on the Anselm’s philosophical theories of semantics, modality and ethics. However, it is important to note that these are not the only elements of Anselm’s metaphysics. At least three other categories of metaphysics deserves further investigation in Anselm’s works. First, rational theology. There is no doubt that Anselm is a brilliant rational theologian, who largely contributes to the discussions of incarnation and trinity. Second, as I have mentioned above, Anselm’s theory of universals. Besides, Anselm has a sophisticated discussion on change, accidents and relations.¹⁸⁵ Third, Anselm’s *De Grammatico* might be read as a critic of the whole system of Aristotle’s *Categories*.¹⁸⁶

Anselm’s originality and coherence place him in a prominent position in the development of medieval metaphysics. Although Anselm, as well as most early medieval thinkers, inherits some ideas from Augustine, for instance, that God is existence per se and is absolutely simple. However,

¹⁸² Christophe Erismann, ‘Realism’, in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy: Philosophy between 500 and 1500*, Second Edition, ed. Henrik Lagerlund (Dordrecht: Springer, 2020), 1654.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 1653.

¹⁸⁴ Peter King, ‘The Metaphysics of Peter Abelard’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Peter Abelard*, ed. Jeffrey Brower (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 65–125.

¹⁸⁵ Anselm’s discussion can be found in Monologion 25. Christophe picks out this paragraph and analyses that Anselm holds an anti-realism view on relations, which anticipates some aspects of Ockham’s thoughts. See Christophe Erismann, ‘Paternités multiples: les débats sur les relatifs entre Anselme et Abélard’, *Medioevo: rivista di storia della filosofia medievale* 39 (2014): 16–19.

¹⁸⁶ See John Marenbon, ‘Les Catégories au début du Moyen Âge’, in *Les Catégories et leur histoire*, ed. Otto Bruun and Lorenzo Corti (Paris: J. Vrin, 2005), 237–42.

he innovatively argues that God is identical with rectitude and can be described as ‘that than which nothing greater can be thought’. These views originate in Anselm. He develops a power-based modality, which, when combined with his pragmatic semantics, prescribes the proper way of understanding and using modal terms. For Anselm, modal concepts are reducible to other non-modal concepts. The primed power held by an agency constitutes the foundation of possibility. Necessity and impossibility derive from the constraints on or compulsion from an external agency. Two important implications arise from his view of power-based modality. First, rational power grounds epistemic modality and this view offers new insight into Anselm’s proof for the existence of God. Given the gap between rational conceivability and ontological commitment, Anselm’s argument at best reaches the epistemically necessary conclusion that God exists. Second, the primed power of free will lays the foundation for contingency and creates a causal chain independent of natural causation. Anselm works out a delicate structure of will, one that accommodates a rational agent’s spontaneous will and moral responsibility in the universe that God creates and sustains. Moreover, Anselm defends his libertarianism in terms of God’s eternity and simplicity. God’s foreknowledge does not affect rational creatures’ free wills because God’s foreknowledge entails subsequent necessity. God knows the future because temporal things are actually present to Him in the inclusive dimension of Eternity.

Anselm’s theories of semantics, modality, and ethics build up a unified, theistic metaphysics. Instead of fitting Anselm into the Platonic, Neoplatonic, Augustinian, or Scholastic traditions, I emphasise that Anselm develops a coherent and unique *realism* of his own. Generally speaking, his *realism* is power-based and teleological. Everything, directly or indirectly, is assigned a set of powers – natural power, rational power, the power of free will, the power to signify, and so forth – and every power achieves a divine purpose.

This power-based and teleological metaphysical worldview is twofold – natural and ethical. While the perfect natural aspect is under the complete control of both antecedent and subsequent necessity, the contingent aspect exclusively belongs to rational creatures and is governed by subsequent necessity alone. The contingent aspect involves a ‘chaotic’ mixture of rational creatures’ hesitation and determination, proper and improper uses of language, justice and injustice. Importantly, these two aspects are compatible with each other. On the one hand, God creates every individual being and regulates their purpose. God determines the causal chain of nature by assigning different sets of effective powers to different things in virtue of which an agent can fulfil its purpose and actualise God’s providential design. In this way, a creature attains its purpose (i.e., in the position that it ought to be) and participates in God’s rectitude. On the other hand, rational

creatures are given a privileged power – free will – of which the purpose is to help them acquire justice and pursue what they ought to will. Yet it also entitles rational agents to deviate from what they ought to do. The structure of free will constitutes the source of contingency. The power of free will permeates all aspects of human life. Consequently, human life has a remarkable flexibility. The complexity of the conventional linguistic system is a good example. Although Anselm does not connect free will and the use of language explicitly, our intentional actions play an important role in obtaining rectitude through language. The purpose of using language is to express what is true. The truth of a statement relies on the statement's correspondence to the real world. Using language to signify things correctly promotes truth and knowledge. However, in our daily use of language, the improper uses of words lead to ambiguous and inaccurate expressions. Whether these expressions are true depends on an interlocutor's intention, analysis of the context, and a mental conception of real things. In addition to the rectitude of speaking, Anselm also discusses the rectitude of acts (both mentally and bodily). Although every human act submits to the standard of rectitude, humans' wills allow them to depart from this standard.

When he uses the technical term 'free will', Anselm is most concerned with moral choices related to divine redemption. In this context, Anselm explicitly highlights the superior value of free will in his metaphysics. To preserve this value, God must permit the emergence of sin in the world. Moreover, Anselm explicitly denies the causative power of God's knowledge and does not accept that God's providence constitutes the efficient cause of humans' choices. Free will is the ultimate and efficient cause of the agent's various acts. This ethical dimension is directly derived from Anselm's power-based and teleological metaphysics and is of remarkable significance. God is the supreme rectitude and truth and sets species-specific criteria for rectitude that members of each species ought to pursue. Every act, mentally or physically, is organised into the teleological system that God regulates. Every individual being ought to respond to God's command so to achieve a perfect self. However, human beings still have the active power to choose how they will live. Given the robust power of free will, while some people actively devote themselves to the righteous life, others actively go astray. God has prepared everything for human beings – a rational mind, a disposition for rectitude, and so on – so they can step toward God. Whatever life one chooses to live, it is one's own life. We decide for our every word and every choice and so should take full responsibility for it. Importantly, the identical relation between God and rectitude dilutes the arbitrariness embedded in Anselm's divine command theory, and, to some extent, preserves the active role of human psychology in moral life. Also, Anselm's theory about God's eternity and simplicity justifies that, even though God creates and sustains our world, we can be genuinely free.

Regardless of whether Anselm's various individual arguments are perfect, he takes many original steps and demonstrates an extremely coherent metaphysics.

During the Middle Ages, many outstanding thinkers, such as Thomas Aquinas and Avicenna, wrote on a broad range of philosophical topics and dealt with each comprehensively and sophisticatedly. Anselm, though he might have been responsible for some monastic teaching, did not need to review a whole canon of philosophical or theological themes. He had the precious freedom of concentrating on issues that preoccupied him. He devoted himself to his own rational thinking to provide a precise and concise solution to the problems that he cared about. Admittedly, compared with later medieval thinkers, Anselm's individual philosophical theories, original and rigorous as they stand, are neither fully worked out nor anticipate objections that he needs to answer. Yet Anselm's efforts accumulatively form a coherent philosophical system and a unified metaphysical picture. Anselm's considerations on different philosophical topics mutually support each other, and they point out the way that, against the background of an omnipotent God, rational agents have genuinely free wills. This metaphysics merits a prominent place in the historiography of medieval philosophy.

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