Anselm's Quiet Radicalism[1]

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Though the point has received almost no scholarly attention, it is characteristic of Anselm to adopt the formulations of his authorities while giving them meanings of his own, hiding conceptual disagreement by means of verbal echoes. Anselm's considerable originality sometimes goes unnoticed because readers see the standard Augustinian language and miss the fact that Anselm uses it to state un-Augustinian views. One striking instance of Anselm's quiet radicalism is his understanding of free choice and the fall. He seems to uphold standard Augustinian privation theory when he affirms that injustice is merely an absence of justice where justice should be; he seems also to be committed to the standard Augustinian view that everything that has being is created by God. I shall argue, however, that Anselm clearly has qualms about whether privation theory can do all of the work to which Augustine had tried to put it. I argue further that although Anselm affirms that God "brings about" the free choices of creatures and that creatures "have" those choices "from God"—language that allows him to profess the standard Augustinian view that everything that has being is created by God—he interprets that language in a special sense that he applies only to free choices. The clear implication of that language is that free choices are brought about by God, or "had from God," only in a Pickwickian sense: in the ordinary sense of 'bring about,' it is creatures themselves who bring about their own free choices. And since every free choice has being, it turns out that not

everything that has being is brought about God in the ordinary sense of 'bring about'—this is what is radical in Anselm's view—though Anselm has provided himself with a vocabulary that allows him to continue to say all the traditional Augustinian things about God as the cause of everything that has being—this is what makes Anselm's radicalism quiet.

In the course of making my case for this view, I address Katherin Rogers's recent attempt to save Anselm from this radical conclusion by attributing to him a deflationary account of choice. According to Rogers, the "use" of the will (roughly, occurrent desire) is something, but volition is not to be identified with use; a volition "is what might be called a 'thin' event . . . in that it does not add anything to the sum of what there is in the world. It is not a thing at all" (Rogers 2012, 190). I show that her understanding of use is mistaken. Use is volition, and Anselm explicitly says that a volition has being. Further, the "thin event" account of volition is neither textually nor philosophically defensible. Anselm's quiet radicalism cannot be quined away.

The Ontological Parity of Just and Unjust Volitions

The primary aim of the privation theory of evil is to explain how there can be evil in the world even though a perfectly good God creates everything other than himself; if evil is not a "something," God's being the creator does not entail God's being responsible for evil. Anselm recognizes two different kinds of evil: misfortune (*incommodum*, or occasionally *incommoditas*) and injustice (*iniustitia*). Anselm distinguishes between misfortunes that are purely privative and misfortunes that have some positive ontological status. For example, in *De casu diaboli* he writes, "The evil that is misfortune is undoubtedly sometimes nothing, as in the case of blindness, and sometimes something, as in the case of sadness and pain" (*DCD* 26, I: 274, 210; see also *DCV* 5, II: 146–147, 335–336, and *DC* 1.7, II: 258, 371 for similar formulations).[2] Anselm's acknowledgment that some misfortunes are something requires him to argue that God acts properly in causing

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[2] References to Anselm's works use the following abbreviations: *De veritate, DV*; *De libertate arbitrii, DLA*; *De casu diaboli, DCD*; *De incarnatione Verbi, DIV*; *Cur Deus Homo, CDH*; *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato, DCV*; *De concordia, DC*. They are followed by two references: the first gives the volume and page number of the critical edition, Schmitt 1968; the second gives the page number of my translation in Williams 2007, which I have generally used here, modifying it for consistency in the translation of some key terminology that is central to the arguments of this paper.

(not merely permitting, but ultimately bringing about) such misfortunes: "When this evil is something, we do not deny that God brings it about, since he 'brings about peace and creates evil' [Isaiah 45: 7], as we read. For God himself creates misfortunes by which he disciplines and purifies the just and punishes the unjust" (*DC* 1.7, II: 258, 371). In taking upon himself the human condition, even the God-man, sinless though he was, had to share such misfortunes. But they did not make him unhappy, Anselm argues: "For just as having something advantageous against one's will does not make one happy, so too experiencing some misfortune wisely, willingly, and not under necessity, does not make one unhappy" (*CDH* 2.12, II: 11, 304).

Unlike misfortune, injustice is always a privation:

We ought to believe that justice is the very good in virtue of which both angels and human beings are good, that is, just, and in virtue of which the will itself is said to be good or just; whereas injustice is the very evil that we claim is nothing other than a privation of good, which makes them and their will evil. And consequently we hold that injustice is nothing other than the privation of justice. (*DCD* 9, I: 246, 183)

The mere absence of justice, however, does not automatically constitute injustice. Only something that is capable of justice is unjust if it lacks justice. Since Anselm defines justice as "rectitude of will preserved for its own sake," only a being that has the power to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake—the power that Anselm calls "free choice"—can be just or unjust.

That injustice is purely privative allows us to say that God creates everything but does not bring about injustice, because it is not in any way something. But what about unjust *volitions*? Anselm argues that an unjust volition is something, and indeed no less something than a just volition. The textual case for the claim that an unjust volition is no less something than a just volition is straightforward. By the beginning of the seventh chapter of *De casu diaboli* the Teacher and Student have agreed that the devil fell by willing some "additional something" (*illud plus*) that he did not possess, that would have been advantageous for him to possess, but that God did not will for him to possess—at least not yet. In chapter 7 the Student asks some questions about this account: "I am very troubled about the source of this inordinate will," he says. The Student poses a number of dilemmas for the account of the fall agreed on thus far. The two that are

relevant for our purposes are these:

> Now if that will is evil and is also something, the problem arises . . . : his evil will must have been from God, who is the source of whatever is something. And once again one can ask what his sin was in having the will God gave him, or how God could give an evil will. If, however, this evil will was from the devil himself and is also something, then the devil had something from himself, and not every essence is good; nor will evil be nothing, as we are accustomed to say, since an evil will is an essence. On the other hand, if an evil will is nothing, it was on account of nothing, and therefore without cause, that he was so harshly condemned. . . .

> Now suppose someone said that a will is an essence and is therefore something good, but that it becomes a good will by turning to what it ought but is called a bad will when it turns to what it ought not. Then I notice that whatever I said about the will can be said about this turning of the will. (*DCD* 7, I: 244–245, 181)

What does the Student mean by 'will' (*voluntas*) in such expressions as "inordinate will" and "evil will"? Is he speaking of the *faculty* of will or of what Anselm will later call an exercise or use of that faculty,[3] that is, a particular volition? The most natural reading of the chapter is that Anselm has not yet made a clear distinction between the two, and the Student is providing some of the materials on the basis of which that distinction will later be made. One could perhaps argue that the devil's "evil will" is his evil *volition* on the grounds that according to the account of the fall given up to this point in the dialogue, the devil's fall consists in a particular volition; but the Student's distinction between the devil's "evil will" and the "evil turning (*conversio*) of the will" suggests that 'turning' is being used for the volition and 'evil will' to describe the faculty of will, which is evil in virtue of having that volition. I acknowledge the ambiguity in order not to overstate my conclusion: even if 'evil will' here refers to the faculty and not to a particular volition, it will still turn out that Anselm clearly affirms the ontological parity of good and evil volitions, because 'turning' unmistakably refers to a particular volition.

The Teacher replies by affirming both the positive ontological status of volitions and the ontological parity of just and evil volitions:

> I don't think we can deny that both the will and its turning are something. For even if they are not substances, it still cannot be proved that they are not essences, since there are many essences besides those that are properly called substances. Moreover, a good will is

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[3] Anselm's distinction of three senses of *voluntas*—as *instrumentum*, *affectio*, and *usus*—is found in DC 3.11. I discuss the passage in some detail below and make the case for identifying *usus* with volition.

no more a something than is a bad will, nor is a bad will more an evil than a good will is a good. . . . Now what I said about the will can also be applied to the will's turning: the turning by which a will turns from stealing to bestowing is no more a something than that by which the very same will turns from generosity to greed. (*DCD* 8, I: 245–246, 182)

Strictly speaking, one could read this last sentence as affirming only the ontological parity of just and evil volitions and not their positive ontological status, since the Teacher says only that a good *conversio* is no more a something (*non enim magis est aliquid*) than an evil *conversio*, which is consistent with the claim that neither of them is something. But such a reading would be inconsistent with the clear statement in the first sentence that will's turning is something. When Anselm returns to the matter in chapter 20, he is again explicit in affirming the positive ontological status of evil volitions: "So when the devil turned his will to what he ought not, both that willing and that turning were something" (*DCD* 20, I: 265, 201).[4]

The Positive Ontological Status of Volitions

But is a volition really something? That is, do volitions have some sort of positive ontological status? In the course of my argument for the ontological parity of good and evil volitions, I turned up a number of indications that the answer should be "yes." "Both the will and its turning are something," and "when the devil turned his will to what he ought not, both that willing and that turning were something." But Katherin Rogers has recently argued that a volition "does not add anything to the sum of what there is in the world. It is not a thing at all" (Rogers 2012, 190).

She needs this claim in order to deny Anselm's quiet radicalism. For, she says,

That God is the absolute creator and sustainer of everything that has any being at all is a point Anselm makes over and over. In this he is in accord with the tradition of late classical and medieval Christian philosophers. To my knowledge, no scholar of Anselm's thought has disputed his commitment to this understanding of God as the *Creator omnium*,[5] so we may take it as an established and non-negotiable pillar in his system.

[4] The Student agrees: "I cannot deny that any given action is genuinely something" (*nec negare possum vere aliquid esse quamlibet actionem*, ibid., I: 266). The relevant action on the part of the devil was precisely his volition, his willing what he ought not will.

[5] In fact Sandra Visser and I dispute that commitment when we say "Anselm in effect argues that there is something creatures have that is not received from God. . . Anselm, perhaps unlike such later thinkers as Thomas Aquinas, is not at all zealous about guarding the prerogatives of God as First Cause" (Visser and

(183)

But Rogers holds (correctly, in my view) that Anselm is a libertarian in a way that precludes his holding that God is the efficient cause of the free choices of creatures in the same way in which he is the efficient cause of everything else.[6] Consequently, the only way to uphold Anselm's supposedly "established and non-negotiable" commitment to God's being the "creator . . . of everything that has any being at all" is to deny that creaturely free choices have any being.

Her suggestion is that a choice is not a thing. The use or exercise (*usus*) of the will is a thing and is caused by God; but a choice, she says, is not to be identified with the exercise of the will. A choice is not a thing but an event, and indeed a "thin event" that "does not add anything to the sum of what there is in the world" (190). In this section I argue that choice or volition should in fact be identified with the exercise of the will and that Rogers's appeal to choice as a "thin event" distinct from the exercise of the will is without foundation in the texts of Anselm; in the next section I argue further that her account of a "thin event" is philosophically unsustainable.

I begin where Rogers also begins, with Anselm's distinction of three senses of *voluntas*: "the instrument for willing, the affection of the instrument, and the uses of that instrument" (*DC* 3.11, II: 283, 388). The instrument for willing is the faculty or power of will itself. The affection of the instrument is an inclination (which need not be occurrent) to desire certain sorts of things (or, more accurately, to desire things seen as falling under certain descriptions). There are two such affections, an inclination to will advantage or benefit (*affectio ad volendum commoditatem*) and an inclination to will justice or rectitude (*affectio ad volendum rectitudinem*) But what is the use of the will?

According to Rogers,

An *affectio* produces the use of the will when we are actively thinking about a specific thing towards which we have the inclination and we desire it with a certain immediacy: "as when someone says: 'Now I have the will for reading (*voluntatem legendi*),' that is:

Williams 2009, 190; see also n. 46). However, we do not dwell on the matter.

[6] Anselm says, for example, that in the primal angelic choice, the angel's "will was its own efficient cause, if I may put the matter that way, and its own effect" (*DCD* 27, I: 275, 211). For different accounts see Rogers 2008, especially 73–86, and Visser and Williams 2009, 171–191.

'Now I want to read'; or, 'Now I have the will for writing,' that is, 'Now I want to write.'"
(188, quoting *DC* 3.11).

She appears, then, to understand use as occurrent desire, as contrasted with the dispositional desire that is *affectio*. In the case of the fall, the angel has both the affection for benefit and the affection for rectitude and, moreover, is actually thinking about both benefit and rectitude. He therefore has both an occurrent desire for benefit and an occurrent desire for rectitude: two uses present in the will at the same time.[7] Now just as the instrument and its affections are something, use is also something (190). But the angel's choice—whether the devil's choice to seek benefit and abandon rectitude or the good angels' choice to preserve rectitude and forgo benefit—is not use, she argues.

Rogers frequently claims that *usus* means nothing more than occurrent desire in accordance with one of the *affectiones*, and that such desire is always present when we are occurrently thinking of an appropriate object.[8] But in fact Anselm never speaks of uses of an *affectio*. Use belongs to the instrument in virtue of the affection; it does not belong to the affection. And Anselm consistently speaks of agents (or of the soul) as using the instrument, never as using the affection. Nor does he ever suggest that there can be two incompatible uses at the same time. The devil certainly had two different *affectiones*, and he may well have had two competing occurrent desires; but Anselm identifies neither of these desires as a use.

Instead Anselm identifies the devil's unjust *volition* as a use of his will. There are two places in which Anselm quite explicitly identifies volition as a use of the power or instrument of will. The first passage is the two final sentences of *De casu diaboli*. Anselm is speaking of the fallen angel's unjust volition: "Therefore, since it was with God's permission that the angel, through an

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[7] I have simplified this discussion somewhat by omitting Rogers's alternative suggestion that "the two *affectiones* give rise to a use of the will that is struggling between two objects." Given that she understands use as occurrent desire, I can't make sense of "a use . . . that is struggling between two objects," since a desire is not the sort of thing that can struggle; alternatively, if the relative clause is meant to modify 'will' rather than 'use,' the struggling will is struggling precisely because it has two incompatible occurrent desires, and those two desires are the 'use' that belong to the struggling will. Thus this suggestion either makes no sense or turns out to be equivalent to the one I discuss in the body of the paper. Moreover, Rogers explicitly says (190 n. 28) that the situation of two uses in the will at the same time "seems to be the picture for the paradigm case of the fall of Satan." So I don't think I am doing any injustice by considering only that interpretation in the body of the paper.

[8] In addition to the instance quoted above, see pp. 188, 192, 193, and 194 (*bis*).

act of robbery, used the power God had spontaneously given him, he had this use of power—which is nothing other than the willing itself—from God. For to will (*velle*) is nothing other than to use the power to will, just as to speak is nothing other than to use the power to speak" (*DCD* 28, I: 276, 212). Note that Anselm not only twice calls the devil's rebellious choice a *use* of the instrument or power of will, but he also states it as a general principle that to will is to use the power to will. Although Anselm employs the noun *voluntas* in all three of its senses, for the power, its affection, and its use, the verb *velle* is always used to indicate a volition. For example: the devil "abandoned justice, and thus sinned, by willing something that he ought not to have willed at that time"; "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" (*DCD* 4, I: 241, 177; I: 241, 178). The "good angels willed the justice that they had, rather than that additional something which they didn't have" (*DCD* 6, I: 243, 180). In all these statements, and many others like them in *De casu diaboli*, Anselm employs the verb *velle* to indicate not a mere wanting, even an occurrent wanting, but an *efficacious* occurrent wanting, a volition or choice. And these choices, according to the final sentence of *De casu diaboli*, are uses of the will. A very similar formulation is found in the second passage in which Anselm expressly identifies a choice or volition as a use of the will, in chapter 10 of *De incarnatione Verbi*: "Both the devil and human beings willed to make themselves like God through an act of robbery when they used their own wills" (*DIV* 10, II: 27, 229).[9]

So the texts show that Anselm does understand volitions as uses of the will. Uses of the

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[9] It is telling that in one place where Anselm distinguishes between the instrument and its use, he employs *opus* as a synonym for *usus*: "et dicitur voluntas usus eius voluntatis, quæ est instrumentum volendi, sicut dicitur visus usus eius visus, qui est instrumentum videndi. Sicut igitur visum qui est instrumentum videndi habemus, etiam cum non videmus, visus autem quod est opus eius non est nisi cum videmus: 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 quæ opus eius est, tam multiplex est quam multa et quam sæpe 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" (*DLA* 7, I: 219, 158). Occurrent desire is not an *opus*.

will are something—Rogers agrees with this[10]—so it follows, contrary to what Rogers wants to maintain, that volitions are something. But if volitions are something, Rogers would argue, Anselm must abandon either his libertarianism—according to which the "choice of the created agent . . . is not caused by God" (185)—or his commitment to the doctrine that God is the creator of all that has being. The only way for Anselm to affirm both libertarianism and the doctrine that God creates everything that has positive ontological status is for him to offer an account of free choices according to which "what is contributed by the created agent is not any new *thing* worthy of the name 'thing' at all" (183). And that is what Rogers seeks to provide for Anselm.

Against the "Thin Event" Account of Choice

Her account can be summed up in this slogan: "God causes all that *exists*, but He does not cause all that *happens*" (188–189). A free choice is not something that exists, but something that happens. It is not "an action separate from the motivating inclination" (189). Rather, it is an event, and indeed a "thin event, not in itself contributing to the ontological sum of things in the universe" (194).

She offers no definition of "thin event" but simply elucidates the notion by an analogy:

Suppose that M challenges R to a foot race. R is less athletic than M, and so M, being sporting, gives R a head start. Off they go. Their feet (and indeed their whole bodies, since they cannot run with their feet alone) and their strength or power for running may be called things and hence, in Anselm's universe, thought to be from God. If we, as I believe Anselm does, wish to be liberal in our ascription of ontological status, the running itself, as the exercise of the power belonging to the instrument, may be a thing. But now suppose that M overtakes and passes R. The passing is an event. We can refer to it: "M's passing R allowed him to win the race." We can assign a time to it: "M's passing R happened at 3: 15: 22 precisely." It may even be an event with important consequences: "M's passing R, which allowed him to win the race, meant he won the million dollars." But the "passing" seems even less thing-like than the running. Perhaps, if we are committed to being extravagantly liberal in our ascriptions of ontological status, we may call it a thing. But it seems entirely appropriate to say that, while the exercise of the power of running may be a sort of thing—perhaps as an extension of the strength or ability in question—the passing just is not a thing. It is an event, but a thin event, having no ontological status distinct from the "runnings" of M and R. I suggest that Anselmian choice is plausibly understood as a thin event. (190–191)

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[10] "Anselm seems to understand all three—instrument, *affectio*, and use—as things of a sort" (190).

"The 'passing' seems even less thing-like than the running," and "it seems entirely appropriate to say that . . . the passing just is not a thing": that is all the argument we get for the claim that M's passing R is not a thing, has no ontological status distinct from M's running and R's running, and is a (merely) thin event.[11] Given that M's passing R has at least some of the hallmarks of the real—it has causal efficacy, we can quantify over it—we surely need more than mere assertion. Is there an account of the nature of events on which Rogers's claim comes out true?

One theory holds that events are exemplifications of attributes at a time or over a period. Jaegwon Kim, for example, states that "Event $[x, P, t]$ exists just in case the substance x has the property P at time t" (Kim 1976, 160). Such an account yields straightforward identity conditions for events: "$[x, P, t] = [y, Q, t']$ just in case $x = y$, $P = Q$, and $t = t'$" (Kim 1976, 161). On this theory M's passing R is clearly a distinct event from M's running: it involves a different property (running is not the same thing as passing) as well as a different time (the time period of the running is extended well beyond the time of the passing). M's passing R is even more clearly distinct from R's running: it involves not only a different property and a different time but also a different object. So on the theory of events as attribute exemplifications, M's passing R is a distinct event, not a "thin" event reducible to M's running or R's running or the two together.

A second theory holds that events are concrete particulars: "events are those denizens of space and time which occur at particular times and places and come in different kinds, but . . . there is no single metaphysical structure that all events possess, rather . . . they are variously structured and related according to kind" (Simons 2005, 367).[12] Such a view offers no straightforward way to determine the identity or distinctness of events, but it is clear that Rogers has to hold that M's running and R's running are distinct. For she intends both M's running and R's running to be instances of what Anselm calls the use of a power, and clearly M's power to run is not identical with R's power to run; so M's running and R's running are uses of distinct powers, and therefore surely distinct uses. Now it is hard to imagine a version of this theory that

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[11] I take it that Rogers intends those three formulations to be equivalent. Otherwise, what does "thin event" mean, if not event-that-isn't-a-thing, event-that-has-no-ontological-status-of-its-own?
[12] Simons identifies Quine, E. J. Lemmon, and Myles Brand as defenders of views that fall under this general description.

would be fine-grained enough to treat M's running and R's running as distinct events and at the same time coarse-grained enough to identify M's passing R with either M's running or R's running.

A third theory of events is that they are changes. On such a view, as Lawrence Lombard says, "it is clear that occurrence at the same time and at the same place is a necessary condition for the identity of events" (Lombard 1980, 157). Then M's passing R seems to have a good claim to be an event in its own right, distinct from M's running and from R's running. For M's passing R occurs at a single place—not a point, exactly, but a smallish region that is obviously not the same as the much larger regions of space in which M's running and R's running occur. And M's passing R occurs at an instant (or at least in a very short span of time), unlike the much longer periods of time at which M's running and R's running occur. So by Lombard's criterion, it seems clear that M's passing R is a distinct event from M's running and R's running.

But here a qualification is in order: on this criterion M's passing R is a distinct event *if it is an event at all.* Lombard himself would not recognize it as an event, because it is a purely relational change and for him events are non-relational changes.[13] This qualification suggests a different approach to the problem. Perhaps Rogers does not mean her claim to depend on any ontology of events. The "thinness" of a "thin event" *just is* its not being an additional thing—and so, trivially, not an additional event. Consider a parallel in the metaphysics of objects.[14] Someone with a broadly Aristotelian ontology might call something like a chair a "thin object," meaning that it is not really an object at all. We talk about it as though it were an object, but it is not in fact any *thing* over and above its constituents. An organism, by contrast, would be a "thick object," that is to say, an actual *thing*. When an organism is generated, a new object comes into existence. But when someone builds a chair, no new object comes into existence. There is a change, to be sure: whatever thick objects compose the chair come to exemplify properties that

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[13] Lombard 1976, 92–104. Motion obviously represents a difficulty for this account, and Lombard has a proposal for how to understand motion as a non-relational change and therefore as an event; he concludes his discussion, however, by saying "I leave the topic of motion in this not terribly satisfactory state" (102). Rather than pursuing these difficulties further in the literature on events, I offer in what follows a way of understanding M's passing R as a non-event that does not require any particular analysis of motion or indeed of events.

[14] I am grateful to Trenton Merricks for impressing upon me the considerations that follow.

they did not exemplify before. But not all change is change with respect to existence, and in the case described, the thick objects that compose the chair do not change with respect to existence, and the properties exemplified by those thick objects do not change with respect to existence. The thick objects change with respect to exemplifying certain properties, and certain properties change with respect to being exemplified by certain thick objects; but no new object is added to the world. Analogously, then, perhaps Rogers means something like this. When M passes R, no new thing comes into the world: M comes to exemplify a new relational property with respect to R, and R comes to exemplify a new relational property with respect to M, but M, R, and the relevant properties do not change with respect to existence.[15]

This proposal does offer an intelligible way to deny that M's passing R adds any new object (event or otherwise) to the world, but its deflationary tendencies are too strong for it to serve Rogers's purposes. She needs an account on which M's passing R does not add anything new to the world, but M's running and R's running do; otherwise, she will not have a model for the distinction she proposes between the uses of the will, which are supposed to be things of some kind, and choice, which is not. But M's running does not add anything new to the world either: M comes to exemplify the property *running* for some period of time, but neither M nor the property *running* changes with respect to existence. And the same, of course, goes for R's running.

If Rogers includes actions in her ontology, however, in addition to objects and properties, she could have exactly what she needs. When M runs, something new is added to the world, because the action *M runs* changes with respect to existence. When R runs, something new is added to the world, because the action *R runs* changes with respect to existence. But when M passes R, nothing changes with respect to existence; nothing new is added to the world.

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[15] Note that this proposal will not work in an ontology that has individual accidents or tropes. It seems clear to me that Anselm does have individual accidents in his ontology: the justice of the good angel's will seems to be treated as an individual accident, rather than as the angel's exemplifying the property of justice. The justice of the good angel's will is, after all, described as something; and the bad angel is said to lose something when he abandons (his) justice. But Anselm's metaphysics is underdeveloped to an extent that makes me reluctant to put too much weight on this consideration.

This proposal is ad hoc, but it seems intelligible. So let this serve as a model for her claims about the footrace. Does that save her case for the "thinness" of choice? It does not, because the analogy of the footrace fails precisely as an analogy. If M's passing R *were* nothing over and above M's running and R's running, it would not be relevantly analogous to the devil's primal unjust choice. Recall that M's running and R's running are supposed to be uses of a power. They are meant, then, as analogous to what Rogers thinks are the two uses of the will in the conflicted angel: the occurrent desire for rectitude and the occurrent desire for benefit. M's passing R would be analogous only if the angel's fall were simply a matter of one desire's "winning out" over the other. But Rogers rightly takes herself to task for having used such language in *Anselm on Freedom*: "This is infelicitous in that it could suggest that it is somehow the desire, rather than the agent, that is responsible for bringing it about that one desire is pursued rather than the other. It is not that desire somehow acts in the agent—if that were the case then the agent could not be praised or blamed—rather the agent desires and chooses" (191). This is exactly right: but given that it's exactly right, how can the footrace provide an analogy? The footrace has two agents, their two powers, and their two uses of power; the situation of the primal choice has one agent, two affections, and two uses of a single power that is characterized by those two affections. M's passing R is (we will concede *arguendo*) not something any agent does; but the devil's choice *is* something the devil does, as Rogers herself acknowledges.[16]

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[16] Though she backslides: "The choice is the success of one desire over the other," she says two pages later—though she immediately adds "and is entirely up to the agent." The two halves of the formulation do not sit well together.

But the fact that the metaphysic I have proposed on Rogers's behalf does not save her analogy does not mean that it, or some version of it, could not have saved Anselm from his radical conclusion. (I owe this point to a referee.) A full response to this question is not possible within the confines of this paper, but I shall sketch my reason for thinking that the answer is no. Suppose Anselm has only objects and properties in his ontology. Then the primal angelic choices involve no change with respect to existence, to be sure: neither the good angels nor the evil angels change with respect to existence, and the property of justice likewise does not change with respect to existence. (There is, of course, no property of *injustice*, for injustice is purely privative.) But there is still an *explanandum*: at the very least, Anselm needs an explanation for the evil angels' failing to exemplify the property of justice. He will not want to explain it by saying that God brings it about that the evil angels fail to exemplify the property of justice; even if one is not convinced that Anselm wants to attribute good choices to creatures, it is certainly uncontroversial that he does not want to attribute the badness of bad choices (or of bad wills) to God. So the *explanans* will have to be something about the creature: what the creature does (or fails to do), where that action (or

Rogers makes another deflationary argument based on Anselm's claim in *De casu diaboli* that the devil fell because he did not persevere, where perseverance is a matter of "willing to completion" (*pervelle*). She writes:

> What is telling here is the point that to "complete" an act of willing is described, not as some new and different performance, a terminating act of choice. No, what happens is that the original willing . . . is simply carried through to completion. What exactly that completion consists in would presumably differ from specific desire to specific desire, but what is important for our purposes is that it does *not* entail a new action. So far there seems to be no dilemma of created agency and divine omnipotence. The creature wants what God makes it want. It either wills to completion, *pervelit*, or not, but either way the created agent does not add to the sum of things. (192)

But this is straightforwardly contrary to the texts. The devil did not merely fail to will justice to completion: "he abandoned that will *by willing what he ought not*" (*DCD* 3, I: 240, 176).

God Is Not the Creator of All That Is

The "thin event" account of choice does not work, either philosophically or as an interpretation of Anselm. So there is good philosophical reason, and overwhelming textual evidence, for affirming that Anselm regards free choices as having positive ontological status, as being indeed *something*. But then what of Rogers's argument that Anselm cannot consistently be a libertarian about free choices and, at the same time, uphold the traditional doctrine that God is the cause of everything that has being? She is quite right about that. Anselm denies the traditional doctrine. As I shall now show, he quietly but unmistakably affirms the radical view that God is not the creator of all that is.

One component of Augustine's privation theory of evil is his occasional recourse to what scholars have called "deficient causality." As John Rist explains,

> In a number of his middle and late works . . . [Augustine] suggests that in unfallen man there was no 'efficient cause' of moral evil, but a weakness, or 'deficient cause' or *declinatio*. The soul *qua* free created being . . . is just not strong enough to stand out. Its

refraining from action) is not attributable to God. That this *explanans* will (*ex hypothesi*) not be in terms of a change of existence on the part of some object or property simply highlights the fact that this parsimonious ontology does not, by itself, help Anselm solve the problem that he thinks faces him. (Even metaphysicians who do not have tables in their ontology still have carpenters. The carpenters' causal role is not to bring a new *thing* into existence, but they do have a causal role nonetheless.)

weakness, which is a weakness of the 'will' ('vita voluntario defectu deficiens', *True Religion* 11.21), is due to the very fact of its being created from that nothing to which all created existents tend and which forms for them, as it were, the localization of weakness. (Rist 1996, 105–106)

Anselm occasionally sounds like Augustine on this score. For example, we find this exchange near the end of *De casu diaboli* between the teacher, who is clearly Anselm,[17] and the student:

Student: So I ask this: from what source did the evil that is called injustice or sin first enter the angel who had been created just?

Teacher: You tell me: from what source does nothing enter something?

S: Nothing neither enters nor goes away.

T: Then why do you ask from what source injustice entered, given that injustice is nothing?

It appears that Anselm is following Augustine in using something like an appeal to deficient causality, or to the nothingness of injustice, to explain—or perhaps instead, to beg off explaining—the origin of moral evil; but the appearance is misleading. Anselm is actually objecting to the terms in which the student has formulated his question. Rather than saying that injustice or evil (which is nothing) entered the angel, we should instead say that justice (which is something) departed from the angel. It is better still to use a verb that locates the agency where it really belongs: the angel *abandoned* justice. He did so by willing what he ought not. The teacher clarifies:

T: In saying that he abandoned it by willing what he ought not, I indicate clearly both why and how he abandoned it. He abandoned justice *because* he willed what he ought not to will, and he abandoned it *by* willing what he ought not to will.

S: Why did he will what he ought not?

T: No cause preceded this will, except that he was able to will.

S: Did he will it because he was able to will it?

T: No, because the good angel was likewise able to will it, but he didn't. No one wills what he can will simply because he can, with no other cause, although no one ever wills anything unless he can will it.

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[17] In many cases it is a contentious interpretive issue whether a particular speaker in a philosophical dialogue is meant to stand in for the author, but not here: at the beginning of *DV* (I: 176, 119), the first in the trilogy of dialogues of which *DCD* is the third, the Student attributes the authorship of the *Monologion* to the Teacher.

S: Then why did he will it?

T: Simply because he willed it. For there was no other cause by which his will was in any way incited or attracted. Instead, his will was its own efficient cause, if I may put the matter that way, and its own effect. (*DCD* 27, I: 275, 211).

Note that Anselm does not merely attribute the origin of moral evil to a created will. By insisting that "there was no other cause by which [the angel's] will was in any way incited or attracted,"[18] he rules out any appeal to a primordial liability to fall that besets all things that were created from nothing, a sort of ontological counterpart to original sin. The angel's will to abandon justice is attributable entirely to the angel: nothing in his nature (as angel, or more generally as created *ex nihilo*), his power of will, or the circumstances of his creation can be blamed for his unjust choice.

Recall that a principal motivation for the privation theory of evil is the doctrine that whatever is something, whatever has being, comes ultimately from God. Saying that evil is nothing, that it lacks being, means that it need not be attributed to God. Anselm's argument that the angel alone is responsible for his abandoning justice reinforces the conclusion that evil is not to be attributed to God. But the same considerations that motivate the privation theory would seem to require a further conclusion: not only is the evil of the angel's choice (its injustice) nothing, but the evil choice itself is nothing. For if the angel's choice is something, and the angel's will is wholly causally responsible for that choice, then there is something that owes its being wholly to a creature and not to God.

Anselm sets the reader up to expect that he will uphold privation-theory orthodoxy on this point. At the beginning of *De casu diaboli*, the student brings up Paul's question in 1 Corinthians 4: 7, "What do you have that you have not received?" Paul clearly expects the answer "nothing," and the teacher initially gives the expected answer: "No creature has anything from itself" (*DCD* 1, I: 233, 169). But over the course of the dialogue Anselm clarifies what it means to say that the fallen angel has his evil volition from God: it means that God gave him the *power* of will by which he chose and permitted him to exercise that power as he pleased.

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[18] "incited or attracted" translates *impelleretur . . . aut attraheretur*. The idea is that the will was being neither pushed nor pulled toward injustice.

Thus, in the final chapter of the dialogue Anselm again affirms that the angel's willing "was from God, since whatever is something comes from God" (*DCD* 28, I: 276, 211–212), but now he explains how he understands the claim that the angel has his volition from God:

> Indeed, any given person has from God not only what God spontaneously gives him, but also what he steals unjustly with God's permission. And just as God is said to bring about (*facere*) what he permits to be done (*fieri*), so also he is said to give what he permits to be stolen. Therefore, since it was with God's permission that the angel stole his exercise of the power God had spontaneously given him, he had this exercise of power—which is nothing other than the willing itself—from God. For willing is nothing other than exercising the power to will, just as speaking is nothing other than exercising the power to speak. (*DCD* 28, I: 276, 212)[19]

God did not bring about the devil's volition; the devil did. And the devil's volition was something. So the devil brought about something, namely an unjust exercise of his free choice, that was not brought about by God—except in a Pickwickian sense: God brought about his power of free choice and permitted him to exercise it. And the devil had something that he did not receive from God—except, again, in a Pickwickian sense: God gave him the power of free choice and allowed him to "steal" this unjust use of that power.

Now it is tempting to argue that because unjust volitions are ontologically on a par with just volitions, Anselm must apply the same analysis to just volitions: the good angel brought about something, namely a just exercise of his free choice, that was not brought about by God—except in a Pickwickian sense: God gave him the power of free choice and permitted him to exercise it. But this is a more radical claim than the parallel claim about the devil, because it means affirming not just that a creature has something from himself, but that a creature has something *good* from himself. Anselm would have to say that the good angel *gave himself* justice.

And so he does:

> the one who remained steadfast in the truth in which he was made did not make himself not have justice, although he could have; and thus he both gave himself justice and

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[19] Similarly, at *DCD* 20 (I:265, 201–2) Anselm understands the claim that the devil's evil choice came from God as meaning no more than that God permitted the devil to exercise his power of free choice in that way: "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."

received all this from God. 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 way, give justice to themselves. For if there was no way in which they were able to take away justice from themselves, there was also no way in which they were able to give it to themselves. Therefore, the one who in this way gave himself justice received from God the very fact that he gave himself justice. (*DCD* 18, I: 263, 199)

Now that last sentence—along with the remark in the first sentence that the angel "received all this from God"—certainly reads as an attempt to make his radical conclusion quieter: the angel gave himself justice, but he received his giving himself justice from God. But there are two ways to read the claim that he received his giving himself justice from God. The less radical reading, in keeping with the Augustinian impulse to give God credit for everything good, is that God brought about the angel's giving himself justice. The more radical reading is that God brought about the angel's power to give himself justice, which the angel then exercised. The less radical reading seems untenable given the ontological parity of unjust and just volitions[20] as well as the parallelism in this very passage between the ability to take away justice from oneself and the ability to give justice to oneself. The more radical reading works in both respects.

There are two crucial points to be made about Anselm's use of expressions that attribute the causality of free choices to God (e.g., God brings about those choices, creatures have those choices from God). The first is that, without exception, Anselm glosses these attributions in the way that I have just discussed. That is, he invariably says that God brings about those choices *in the sense that* he brings about free wills and allows creatures to use them as they please; creatures have their choices from God *in the sense that* they have from God the power of will (with its characteristic affections) that creatures use in choosing either rightly or wrongly. In addition to the passages from *De casu diaboli* that I have already examined, we find the same pattern in Anselm's last completed work, *De concordia*. In *De concordia* 3.11 Anselm writes:

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[20] A referee objects: "There is a lack of parity: a will that acts unjustly cannot start acting justly of its own accord, whilst a will that acts justly can also act unjustly. One cannot will justice if one does not possess it (DC III.13)." True, but that is not the parity at issue here. There is an *ontological* parity between just and unjust volitions—an unjust volition is something, Anselm says, and no less something than a just volition—even though the motivational capacities of just and unjust *agents* are not on a par and neither are justice and injustice themselves.

Now the will as instrument moves all the other instruments that we employ of our own accord, both those that are in us (such as hands, the tongue, and sight) and those that are outside us (such as a pen and an ax), and it brings about all voluntary motions. In fact, it moves itself by means of its own affections. Hence, it can be described as an instrument that moves itself. I say that the will as instrument brings about all voluntary motions, but if we consider this attentively, it is truer to say that God brings about everything that is done by either nature or will, for God creates nature and the instrument for willing together with its affections, without which that instrument brings about nothing. (*DC* 3.11, II: 283–284, 390)

And similarly in 3.14, he writes,

It is also clear that God brings about good deeds solely through his own goodness, since he creates the will with free choice and gives the will the justice by which it acts, whereas he brings about evil acts solely through the fault of human beings, since he would not bring them about if human beings did not will to do them. Nonetheless, he does bring it about that evil deeds exist, since he is the creator of the will in human beings, which they employ apart from justice. (*DC* 3.14, II: 287–288, 394)

In both of these passages, Anselm identifies claims about God's causality with respect to free choices with claims about God's causality with respect to the will and its affections; the will is a self-moving instrument, but its motions can still be said to be brought about by God *in the sense that* God made the will a self-moving instrument and provided it with the justice that it could either freely abandon or freely preserve. It is surely telling that in every case in which Anselm considers God's causality of free choices, he understands it in precisely this way.

But if—as I have been arguing—Anselm holds that free choices have being, and further that God does not bring about those free choices except in a Pickwickian sense, how can he consistently say (as he undeniably does say) that God brings about everything that has being? The answer to this question is the second crucial point to be made about Anselm's use of causal language: he consistently uses it much more broadly than contemporary philosophy uses it. Thus, for example,

It is not only someone who causes (*facit*) what-is-not to be, or causes what-is not to be, who is said to cause something to be or not to be. Rather, someone who can cause something not to be but refrains from doing so is also said to cause something to be; and someone who can cause something to be but refrains from doing so is also said to cause something not to be. (*DCD* 1, I: 234, 170)

Just as God is said to bring about (*facere*) what he permits to be brought about (*fieri*), so

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also he is said to give what he permits to be stolen. (*DCD* 28, I: 276, 212)

God "did not spare his only Son, but handed him over for our sake" simply means that God did not set him free. (*CDH* I: 9, II: 63, 257)

God is said to bring about the bad things that he does not in fact bring about, on the grounds that he permits them. (*DC* 2.2, II: 261, 373)

For the sake of clarity, we can distinguish three different senses in which Anselm speaks of God as "bringing about" things, events, and actions.[21] He brings about natures (with the powers and other attributes they possess), as well as any miraculous events, as immediate efficient cause. He brings about natural events—those actions and events that are the assured causal results of the natures he has created—as remote efficient cause. He brings about free choices in the way that we have seen: he creates natures that have the power to bring about (in the first sense: as immediate efficient cause) actions that are *not* the assured causal results of the natures as created, and he permits those natures to exercise that power. As I have shown, Anselm consistently identifies this as a kind of bringing about, and so by his own lights he is entitled to say—as he consistently does say—that God brings about everything that has being, that God is the creator of all that is, and that creatures have from God whatever they have.[22]

Conclusion

As I have argued elsewhere, Anselm's account of free choice is designed to secure the claim that creatures are genuinely agents, not merely inert conduits for divine agency.[23] In the ordinary efficient-causal sense of 'bring about,' creatures' free choices are brought about by creatures, not by God. Those choices—just and unjust choices alike—have being. Therefore, God

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[21] This division is suggested by Anselm's discussion of "three courses of events: miraculous, natural, and voluntary" in *DCV* 11 (II: 154, 342), and draws also on his account of remote causes in the *Lambeth Fragments* (Schmitt 1936; Williams 2007, 404–405, 413–414). Anselm's analysis of causal language in the *Lambeth Fragments* offers far more complexities than I have room to discuss here, but fortunately they do not affect the claim I am defending in this paper.

[22] So it is no objection to my claims (as one referee seems to think it is) to quote Anselm's affirmation in *Monologion* 37(I: 55, 45) that the supreme spirit and the Word are "the only Creator and only origin of all created things" or his claim in *Proslogion* 5 (I: 104, 83) that God "alone exists from himself and made all other things from nothing." Of course Anselm says these things, and he means them. But he also explains what they mean when applied to the choices of free creatures; and when he does so, he consistently interprets those claims in the way I have explained in this paper.

[23] See Visser and Williams 2009, 188–190.

does not bring about—again, in the ordinary efficient-causal sense of 'bring about'— everything that has being. Anselm is unflinching in drawing this radical conclusion. But because he is willing to use 'bring about' in a broader sense, he can salvage the traditional language of the views that he is rejecting, and thus he makes his radicalism as quiet as possible.

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