**Gradations of Volition in St. Anselm's Philosophical Psychology:**

**An Essay in Honor of Father Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R.**

“Student: Why does (a man) will? Teacher: Only because he wills. For (the) will has no other cause by which it is forced or attracted, but it is its own efficient cause, so to speak, as well as its own effect.”

St. Anselm, *On the Fall of Satan*

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**Introduction**

 I demonstrate here that St. Anselm”s understanding of free will fits neatly into an Aristotelian conceptual framework. Aristotle”s four causes are first aligned with Anselm”s four senses of “will”**.**[[1]](#footnote-2) The volitional hierarchy Anselm”s definition of free will entails is then detailed, culminating in its reconciliation with Eudaimonism.The *summum bonum* turns out to be the apex of that series of actualizations or perfections.[[2]](#footnote-3)I conclude by explicating Anselm’s teleological understanding of sin by reference to his analog of Aristotle’s essence-accident distinction.

**Anselm’s Four Significates of ‘Will’**

 Anything generated, according to Aristotle, will exist because of four causes or principles: matter, form, purpose, and agency.[[3]](#footnote-4) His paradigmatic applications of this etiology are to the coming to be of organisms and artifacts- substantial change- and their accidental, physical alterations. I shall extend it here to cover the accidental changes that occur mentally during the deliberations that Aristotle himself posits as antecedent to our voluntary behavior. Choices are said to be “made,” no different in this regard than substances such as an apple, so the complex question must also be asked of them: from what, by what, through what, and for what do they arise? We should be able to learn how a human agent became willing to take a certain course of action, or ill or good willed, by determining such accidental compounds”material, efficient, teleological, and formal causes.[[4]](#footnote-5) Seen from the perspective of Aristotles assertion that “The stick moves the stone, the hand moves the stick, and the man moves the hand,” my contention is that the four causes enable us to analyze the power and process by which a man deliberates and chooses prior to voluntarily acting.

Anselm, for his part, asserts that ‘will’ must be taken as having four interrelated “significates” or denotations.[[5]](#footnote-6) These distinctions correspond to those just adumbrated; a good sign of the Aristotelian background of the Father of Scholasticism”s thinking here. ‘Will’ signifies firstly the soul as “instrument-for-willing” or agent (will**a**): its power to (rationally) determine its own course of action- “will” in a second signification, will**c**, (commonly referred to as “choice”). Will**a**, thus, exercises “motive power,” posited by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* as the source of contingency in Nature.[[6]](#footnote-7) In *De Anima*,[[7]](#footnote-8) will**a** is what renders one a “human agent,” manifesting “rational, appetitive power.” Finally, as the agent-cause of will**c**, will**a** acquires moral responsibility for its existence and effects in behavior and, thence, upon others.

In serving as will**c**”s “efficient cause,” will**a** performs its characteristic act, *deliberation*, that is, exercising the Intellect so as to produce reasons for preferring one object of desire rather than another and the most efficient means thereto. Here we have the third, **verbal**, significate of “will”, will**e**: the actualizing of will**c**. (The difference between the three significates, Anselm says, corresponds to that between one”s visual apparatus, the sights it yields to one”s mind when active, and its operation so as to produce those visualizations.[[8]](#footnote-9)) From this basic mental act ensues the willingness**c** to pursue one axiological object rather than another, for reasons that justify that choice (without, *eo ipso*, being its causes): the will “as its own effect.”[[9]](#footnote-10) That is to say, will**a** is that power of the soul whose exercise- will**e**- brings will**c** into being ‘out of’ (the actualizations of) “will” in its fourth axiological *cum* motivational signification: will**a”s** divinely instilled, dualistic receptivity to the objectified values, justice and happiness **(**will**rj** andwill**rh).[[10]](#footnote-11)** The source of will**a**’s activity is its assimilation of those goods as desires, will**dhi** / will**dhi**, upon their beingintellectually recognized.[[11]](#footnote-12) This necessarily innate potency is, thus, the foundation of the volitional hierarchy about to be detailed.[[12]](#footnote-13) (We note in passing another remnant of Aristotelianism: realism regarding universals: justice and happiness, axiological transcendentals present in various apprehendable, material guises.[[13]](#footnote-14))

The Aristotelian background of Anselm’s thought here is even made terminologically manifest. In *OFD* 12, the genus will**r**, is said by Anselm to be “actuate(d)” with “determinate volition(s)” by receptivity to those specific goods. That is, will**r**, as receptivity to value in general, is treated as potential of focused attractions.Thus, will**rj** and will**rh** may be construed, as passive potencies, *a la* the Intellect in the case of categorical universals**.** Thence volitionally ensconced, upon relay from the Intellect, an axiological universal becomes will**di**- the *desire* for the instantiation whence it arose.Will**dhi** /will**dji** is, thus,will**rh** / will**rj** reduced to act, perfected.

Anselm deemed a dualistic conatus a prerequisite of moral responsibility.[[14]](#footnote-15) His insistence upon an axiological distinction within will**r** makes him an early, medieval proponent of what is now known as the Principle of Alternative Possibilities (PAP): an agent, to qualify as either praiseworthy or blameworthy, must be able to will**e** incommensurable types of goods.[[15]](#footnote-16) Were we incapable of willing**e** both happiness and justice, willing**r** but one, we could hardly be said to be responsible for the willing**e** of our *idee fixe*: the resulting will**c** would be a *fait accompli*, that is, no will**c** at all! The weighing of dichotomous alternatives, during the deliberations of will**a**, is, thus, deemed by Anselm a prerequisite of moral agency.

 By extension, a being who has had his *character* bestowed upon him by His Creator, in the form of a monistic will**r**, cannot be responsible for the type of person that he is. Such accountability would require that he exhibit that character *rather than* one featuring an opposed set of priorities- something that he could have also ended up adopting, given his basic conatus. And the satisfaction of the desire to be responsible for one”s character is necessary aspect of creaturely freedom.[[16]](#footnote-17)

Deliberative dissonance provides a moral challenge for will**a** to meet on its own- a serious matter to resolve for credit- requiring it to decide between the mutually exclusive objects of two wills**d**. The material cause of a meritorious will**e** of will**a**- the basic act upon which all responsibility is founded- as well as the resulting willingness**c**, could only be opposed wills**d**. It is, then, a virtue of will**a** that it can stand in need of adjudication by itself, occasionally finding itself willing**d** more than one available good, while unable to remain indefinitely so suspended. Such a power renders character a matter of having sometimes to regain volitional integrity, *via* becoming one sort of agent rather than another. Being required in some situations to give pride of place in will**c** to a pre-ordained priority(as specified below) of will**r**’s objects, while abjuring the other,is what makes will**a** a fit object of approbation/reprobation.[[17]](#footnote-18) Anselm presents along these lines the case of a man agonizing over lying or being executed: an agentdesperately trying to resolve (become willing**c**) to do something for the sake of justice that promises, at least temporarily, not happiness, but great sorrow.[[18]](#footnote-19)

To reformulate, then, inlight of this dualistic understanding of motivation, Anselm’s third, active sense of “will”: will**e** is the reduction of will**dhi** /will**dji** to the willingness**c** to pursue the object thereof: will**chi** /will**cji**. That is, will**a**”s characteristic act is the application of the form willingness**c** to (the matter that is) one of its wills**d**. In so doing, will**a** becomes either will**chi** orwill**cji**.[[19]](#footnote-20) To answer, then, three of the four questions posed above, will**a** functions as the mental analog of Nature”sgeneration of organisms *via* seeds or parents: willing**e** will**cji /** will**chi** out ofwill**dji /** will**dhi**.

*Sans* such a reduction of itself, will**a** must remain in abeyance, having neither willed**e** nor (even) nillede any axiological object of which it is desirous.In other words, until such time as it brings about such a change in itself**,** based upon the intellectually supplied reasons in its favor, it remains contingent what it will become volitionally as will**c**. Will**a**, thus, completely controls itself, no other power or agent (nor even its own innate preference, stated below) can cause it to will**e** something should it be unwilling**e** to do so on its own. Anselm is rightly adamant that should will**a** be overcome by a particular temptation, the fault cannot lie in will**a** itself, which is intrinsically indomitable.[[20]](#footnote-21) No, the cause of sin (as teleologically explicated above) could only be a failure to fully exercise will”s**a** power to resist temptation. It is always self-induced *akrasia*, in the form of other illicit volitional attachments, that leads to giving in here:[[21]](#footnote-22) e.g., inordinate pride, in the case of Satan”s fall. Intellect would only rank axiological alternatives, goods or courses of action leading thereto, according to their conduciveness to the objects ofwill**r.** The actual imposition ofwill**c** upon any one of them- will**e**- is solely the prerogative of will**a**. Even Grace- will**djG-** is inefficacious until assimilated bywill**a** aswill**c** thereof**.[[22]](#footnote-23)**

Rational, self-caused reduction of will**dhi** /will**dji** to will**chi** /will**cji** is the “basic act,” sought by Arthur Danto and other philosophers, from which ultimate responsibility for resulting neural processes, bodily movements, activities and states of affairs is derived.[[23]](#footnote-24) Its performance renders will**a** an unmoved mover. Call this understanding of volitional autonomy the Principle of Absolute Self-Control/PASC.[[24]](#footnote-25) Vesting this originative power in agents themselves, rather than mental events of which they are merely subjects, makes Anselm, in contemporary terms, an “agent-causalist,” which, as alluded to above, is yet another element of Aristotle’s philosophical psychology.[[25]](#footnote-26)

 As with cognition, in will**d** there is accidental identification of a particular mind and a universal of which it is act. But, unlike cognition, in will**c** there is *self*-incorporation of said universal: by will**a** as object thereof. The former is, thus, a passive, the latter an active, power. This distinction reflects the necessary connection between causation and responsibility, which Anselm must account for in order to justify eternal reward and punishment. Aristotle’s own discussion of voluntary behavior had already posited this affinity, albeit only in the case of temporal affairs.[[26]](#footnote-27) An agent is only responsible for that over which he has complete control, that is, he can bring about on his own, voluntarily.Were will**a** not *causa sui* of will**e**, the former as human agent could never be the sole author of will**c**. Given responsibility’s entailment of originative power, no appetitive agent could, then, be capable of initiating/willing**e** a series of morally significant mental acts and/or bodily movements forming an activity or project.[[27]](#footnote-28) For this reason, Anselm concurs once again with Aristotle, firmly rejecting any attempt to find a deeper explanation of volitional activity.[[28]](#footnote-29) In the case of Satan”s fall, there is said to be no other cause of his will**c** to rebel than his will**a**: hence, his complete culpability for his damnation.

 It will be objected, however, that Aristotle treats efficient causes as external to that upon which they operate, viz., material causes. Agent and patient are never the same thing. But externality/internality is categorically relative, just as its logical correlate, unity. Aristotle and Anselm agree on this ontological principle.[[29]](#footnote-30) W**a** and will**d** are one in power or faculty, the former containing instances of the latter as states, but distinct as causes or principles thereof. Thus, they are external as causes while internal instrumentally: principles of a single, but multi-faceted, self-contained, self-determined system. That is to say, there is a sense in which agent and patient are one here and another one in which they are not. W**a** and will**d** are of the same faculty- they are both volition. (To be more specific, the latter is contained in the former as motivation.) Yet they are distinct as causes therein, to wit, that which actualizes versus that which is actualized: becoming one in the actualizing of will**c**. As Aristotle asserts in *On Generation and Corruption* Chapter 6, “Agent and patient are neither absolutely identical, nor sheerly distinct. They must be contrasted species of the same genus, opposed formations of the same matter.”[[30]](#footnote-31) Both causes, here, are generically volitional power; specifically they are potential versus actual will**c**, will**a** containing the latter as its form. As carpenter is carpentry in act, having in himself as skill what unformed wood lacks, but is receptive to; so will**a** may incorporate justice and happiness, as manifested in various material guises, as will**c** thereof

 Returning to our explication, will**a**, as self-exercising, rational power, is free in the sense of satisfying PASC and PAP- yet, according to Anselm, there is more to the essence of freedom of the will**a** than such ability. Something by way of a *teleos* or final cause must further perfect will**a** so that becomes morally significant. That is to say, though such a power would qualify as free, given many contemporary philosopher’s tendency[[31]](#footnote-32) to reduce volitional liberty to choice and sovereignty, it would be deemed incomplete, according to Anselm, for lacking a normative element by which to morally judge it issuances- will**c**.

*Sans* a pre-deliberative, divinely infused prioritizing of the objects of will**r**,any will**c** of the will**di** of one rather than the other would be arbitrary: lack justification.[[32]](#footnote-33)And, if we are to be moral agents, praiseworthy/blameworthy for our choices, the preferred good here would obviously have to be justice. Thus, unrankedwill**r** is perfected by (its supervenient property of) being naturally more receptive to justice than happiness. That is, will**rj** is more acute than will**rh** (will**rj>**will**rh** or will**u**, for short). This innate preference is will**a**’s “rectitude” or “uprightness.”[[33]](#footnote-34) It is an object of inherent self-knowledge and, as such, the basis of conscience.

Free will, Anselm then tells us, is the will’s**a** ability to reaffirm that divinely established motivational hierarchy, thereby realizing its (divinely instilled, intellectually inherent) purpose.[[34]](#footnote-35) That is, will**a**’s freedom is its power to realize the teleological perfection itself by willing**e** will**cji**$ \rightarrow $**j** on any occasion of will**dji** andwill**dhi**, that is, a divided will**d**. Will**cji**$ \rightarrow $**j** is true or authenticwill**cji**,as distinguished from the appearance thereof,will**cji**$ \rightarrow $**hi,** *a la*Plato. For Anselm, truth is use in accordance with purpose**.** Will**a**’s freedom is, thus, a form of truth. It is justice being willed**e** for its own sake, rather than instrumentally, as required bywill**u.** Thathierarchy meanswill**a** is meant to be just in itself, not as a means to its other value. Again, if ends or purposes are treated in the Aristotelian manner as being *states,[[35]](#footnote-36)* free will iswill**a** wholeheartedly willing**e,** thewill**c**,to remain in the statewill**u,** that is,in accord with its nature**.** Sin is, thus,will**ch>j** or will**cji**$ \rightarrow $**hi**, which, as St. Anselm notes, are really the same will**c**. Either one is the nill/will**~c** of will**u.**[[36]](#footnote-37)Therefore, original sin justly resulted in human nature”s loss ofwill**u** (which Christ’s self-sacrifice miraculously restored).[[37]](#footnote-38)

A particular will**c** may be affirmed or regretted upon reflection. A decision may come to be seen retrospectively as wise or foolish**.** Will**a** is, thus, also the faculty enabling one to form one’s *character*, that part of one’s identity[[38]](#footnote-39) for which one is responsible. For consistent willingness**c** is of the commitments andprojects, as well as the intended means to securing whatever ends they entail, that morally characterize one as a person (along with the things one is routinely unwilling**c** to do). Will**a**, in sustaining the diachronic unity of our long-term activities, thus, imposes upon them the formal cause, which Aristotle denotes “habit,”[[39]](#footnote-40) that substantiates them as motivational constants.

Stabilized *via* consistent reaffirmation, character or habitisa suitable object of approbation and reprobation: virtue or vice.[[40]](#footnote-41) That is to say, will**v**isthe form or “perfection” of will**c**, made up of second-order choices or wills**c2** of wills**c,** as well as renunciations thereof (wills**c2~**, that is, wills**c2** of wills**chi** instead ofwills**cji** or vice-versa). As will**d** is the material cause of will**c**, so the latter is potential will**v.** In strengthening/attenuating will**rh/**will**rj** and, thus,will**dh/**will**dj**, will**v,** in turn,influenceswill**c,** increasing the tendency of will**a** to will**c** in conformity to its most resolute wills**c2**.Character development is, thus, will**v** andwill**c,** amplifying each other, unto personhood: moral responsibility for that part of one’s identity will**a** has brought about. The virtuous or just will**a** wills**v** will**cj**$ \rightarrow $**j;** the wicked or unjust man fails to develop that will**c2**.

To complete our volitional hierarchy, then, we must treatwill**vji**$ \rightarrow $**j** as having as its purpose the Beatific Vision**-** Will**vj=h.**[[41]](#footnote-42)Only in this way, can we square Anselm’s definition of free will with the Eudemonism espoused by his fellow Doctor of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas, who rejects even the possibility of will**a** eschewing happiness. An Anselmian can accommodate this aspect of Aristotelian psychology, with which will**u** appears to be at odds, by maintaining that eternal happiness is actually the ultimate perfection of will**a.** Volition is to be exercised, in the way St. Anselm prescribes, so as to achieve the “purity of heart” receptive to moral perfection.Our ultimate end, thus, must be sought *via* the willingness**s** to forego temporal happiness should it be opposed to justice.[[42]](#footnote-43) Thus, we see further overlap between the two philosophies being discussed, since the admonition to seek happiness *via* other goods, such as moral virtue, is also to be found in Aristotle.[[43]](#footnote-44)

Thus, volition, like health and being, is analogical: a hierarchy of relatives; all causally related to a single, *relatum* that, as their essential “focus,” makes them what they are. The sharing of that entity, as essential subject and ultimate act, is the basis of its paronymic predication to them; its universality. Regular exercise is healthy because it promotes health; ditto rest, nourishment, physicians, and medicine. Will**a,** will**e,** etc. are all volition because oftheir participation inwill**vj=h**,as various causes thereof**.** But, like I AM, the apex of the analogy of being, in Whom existence is indistinct from essence, the summit of the volitional hierarchy is axiologically unified. In the divine Will, justice and happiness are, of course, one. This unity, thus, renders a corresponding virtual oneness in the Beatific Vision: obviating the distinction between will**aj** and will**ah**. Nothing attractive to one receptor is unattractive to the other; neither one is receptive to an object to which the other is averse. *Ipso facto*, the possibility of (will**dji** and will**dhi**), when (will**cji** and will**chi**)is not possible, is nullified. We shall now see what this circumstantial upgrade implies about the relationship between free will and sin.

**Free Will and Sin**

Those, like Nash-Marshall, who maintain that the ability to sin is no part of free will, are correct:[[44]](#footnote-45) The essence of free will**a** is given in Anselm”s complete definition- its being able to retain justice for its own sake- which says nothing about sinfulness. But, then, members of Church Militant, who *do* sin, either must not enjoy the same type of freedom as their saintly friends in Paradise do or not sin of their own free wills. The duality of will**r**, however, does not entail this dilemma. Instead, it means that the ability to sin is one of what medieval metaphysicians, following Aristotle, would have called free will’s “proper accidents”/”properties.” Thus, to apply one of Anselm”s own artfully drawn semantic distinction here, to say of free will that it is the ability to will**cji**$ \rightarrow $**j** is to signify it (bring it to mind) *per se*- as it is in itself. To maintain, on the other hand, that it is also able to sin- will**ch>j**- is to signify it *per aliud*, that is, according to something inessential to, but *attendant upon*, its essence.[[45]](#footnote-46) Sin, we should say, is the *incidental,* *unnatural use* of will**a**. It is, as Aristotle would aver, a violation of its *teleos*- just like any other misuse of power. We sin of our own free wills**a** by exercising our powers of choice andmoral autonomy- necessary, but mere aspects of free will, as if they were all that there is to the faculty. (Grace, on the other hand, is not given, for anything will**a** does, a will**e,** which would be Pelagianism; but for refraining from will**ch>j,** when willing**dhi** and willing**dji.** It sustains that unwillingness**, ~**will**vh>j,** preserving will**u.**

 Look at it this way: Let’s suppose that I use my expensive pen to open a door lock. Now it is obviously true that, in some sense, that object is responsible for producing said effect. But it did not bring it about as a pen *per se*; but as a pointed object: better to simply say that a pointed object was used to open the lock, specifically, a pen. Being a pen entails being able to inscribe paper, which, in turn, entails being pointed; so being a pen entails being able to open (some) locks. And while there would be nothing wrong with so using a pen in a pinch, regular such employment would be to treat it as a key, which it only is *per aliud***.**

In the same way, being a free will, that is, being a faculty able to preserve its own rectitude, entails being able to sin. For, as PAP indicates, without a dualistic conatus and self-control, there can be no temptations for a will**a** to resist, so as *preserve* its rectitude instead ofjust having it materially imposed, *via* motivational impoverishment**.** So, yes, we sin of our own free wills**a**; in fact, our sins *are* sins precisely because they are misuses of that faculty. But they are not committed by free will**a** as such, only the aspects of it that are being misused. Free will**a**, in sinning, is exercising itself as if it were a Nietzschean will-to-power.[[46]](#footnote-47) Thus, it is not acting integrally for disregarding the intellectually revealed, divinely imposed constraint placed upon its pursuit of happiness, will**u.**”

 Our free will itself, as Nash-Marshall rightly insists, can and will exist in Heaven *sans* the possibility of sin, for its owners lacking the *opportunity* to offend God, as a reward for their hard-won saintliness. It does not become therein a new power, but, as established above, is afforded a fortuitous change in circumstances, viz., full**,** rather than partial, participation in the life of God.[[47]](#footnote-48) Blessedness need not involve the loss of will**rh**, to insure against sin, volitional mutilation as it were. In Paradise there must rather be only the certainty that a conflict between two wills**d** can no longer arise as the opportunityto sin.[[48]](#footnote-49) Saints will simply no longer find themselves tempted to will**e** will**ch>j** in Eternity, while still possessing the dualistic conatus that made sin possible when such an opportunity arose here in Time. Becausethere, as St. Augustine assures us, our hearts (wills**a**) will finally have rest in Him within whom justice and happiness must be one*.*[[49]](#footnote-50)

**Conclusion**

We see that St. Anselm”s definition of free will**a** is based upon the Aristotelian notion of rational appetitive power. The former, I have further shown, may be elucidated in other Aristotelian *cum* Scholastic terms. Free will**a** is self-determinative, effectively free of the past and its circumstances. It acts upon a dualistic material cause, two primal attractions. It imposes, on any occasion of its exercise, volitional form upon one of those attractions in act as desire. This exercise is, like any other generation, a reduction of potency to act. To conform to itself as will**u,** it must forego happiness, should it preclude justice, never actualizingwill**ch>j,** which, given its satisfaction of PASC, is always avoidable**.** Free will**a**is, thus, the invincible power to actualize volitional justice for its own sake, unto eternal happiness.

1. Richard Sorabji, in his magisterial *Aristotle on Necessity, Cause, and Blame* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006, p. 26) cites W.D. Ross' (*Aristotle*, London: Meridian Books 1923, ch. 7) contention that “Aristotle comes closest to positing free will, without actually doing so, in Book 3, section 5 of the *Nicomachean* *Ethics*.” This statement begs an interesting question about which implications of a philosophy belong to it, which the present work will obliquely answer. Albrecht Dihle, in The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity (University of California Press, 1982, pp. 48-68) also concurs with the present author that Anselm's definition is at least consistent with the Aristotle's views on volition and rationality. Ditto E.J. Lowe, but for his denial of self-actualization on the part of the will (willing, according to him, being an undetermined, 'spontaneous' act on the part of the will). *Personal Agency The Metaphysics of Mind and Action*, Oxford University Press, 2008. Archibald Alexander treats him as an 'intellectual determinist', who still posits a distinct faculty of choice: *Theories of the Will in the History of Philosophy*, NY: Scribners, 1898. Calvin Normore has Anselm eschewing intellectual determinism in favor of a will empowered to choose one's reasons for a choice, nullifying all other considerations. “Freedom, Contingency, and Rational Power,” Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, volume 81, Issue 2, November 2007. Michael Frede (Will and Free Will in Antiquity, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, chs. 1 and 2) maintains that it is possible to account for Aristotle's belief in moral responsibility without saddling him with any notion of free will, a construct, in his opinion, of later antiquarian philosophers. Pamela Huby, in an exceedingly instructive article, echoes Frede in attributing a naïve “libertarianism” to Aristotle. She sees it as born of his failure to see the threat posed to freedom of the will, of the sort required to ground his belief in moral responsibility, by the deterministic aspects of his philosophy. "The First Discovery of the Freewill Problem," Philosophy, 42 (1967) pp. 353-62.

 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The inspiration for this essay is Father Joseph Owens’ *Gradations of Being in Metaphysics E-Z,* South Bend, IN: St. Augustine Press, 2007. In this pellucid essay, Father Owens details the hierarchal analogy of being, showing how being *qua* being/Being is the ultimate perfection of the category of substance. Other beings are substantial to the extent to which they participate therein. It occurred to me that Anselm’s various senses of volition exist in the same manner: as gradations of the Divine Will. This essay is dedicated to his holy memory. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Aristotle posits these four causes of being in *Physics*, 194 b17–20 and *Posterior Analytics* 71 b9–11; 94 a20. All references to the Aristotelian *corpus* are taken from *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Edited by Richard McKeon. NY: Random House. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Though it is true, as Father Owens points, out that in so explaining accidents, powers, and events, we must conceptualize them as if they were substantial, o*p.cit.*, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *On Free Will* (*OFW*) section 7, in *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998 (henceforth *AC*).*Concordia* 3.11 draws a similar distinction. Also in *AC*. See also Jeffrey Brower, “Anselm on Ethics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*,edited by Brian Leftow and Brian Davies, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 33For explication of Anselm's use of the term 'significate' seePeter King,“St. Anselm's Philosophy of Language,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*,, pp. 84-110. Roughly, a significate is that which is brought to mind by a term. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. *Metaphysics*, Book 6, Chapter 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. *De Anima* 10 initially posits two 'sources of (human activity): appetite and (practical) mind.' The various objects of the former, in 'stimulating' the latter, are its origin. The two are then treated as a single power given their concomitant operations. Nevertheless, self-control and appetitive restraint are possible because mind can evaluate current appetite/'desire' based upon an atemporal 'principle of reason.' Appetite itself is then left to determine on its own which one's object is to be pursued. E. J. Lowe discusses the distinction Aristotle draws between natural and rational powers in *op. cit*., pp. 6-8, 149-51, 155-7 and 176-9. For a much more thorough presentation of Aristotle's views on free agency, see Sorabji, *op.cit*.. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. *OFW*, section 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. *On the Fall of the Devil* (henceforth *OFD*), section 27 in *AC*. Peter King also stresses this dichotomy in his article “Augustine and Anselm on Angelic Sin,” in *A Companion to Angels and Medieval Philosophy*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann. Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition. Leiden: Brill 2012, p. 280. See also E.J. Lowe, *op. cit.* pp. 188-90; 197-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. *C*, section 11. *OFD*, sections 12 and 13. See also Peter King, “Scotus' Rejection of Anselm: The Two-Wills Theory,” in *Archa Verbi* Subsidia 5 and Johannes Duns Scotus 1308-2008: Investigations into his Philosophy. Edited by Ludger Honnefelder, Hannes Mohle, Andreas Speer, Theo Kobusch, Susana Bullido Del Barrio. Munster: Aschendorff 2011, pp. 359-378**.** Theeudaimonic value here is also called by Anselm 'advantage' or 'well-being**.'** His other names for the potency itself are 'affection' and 'disposition'. Will**rj** should not be viewed as merely the 'second-order desire' to temper the will**rh**, *a la* Rogers. Though such a higher-order preference plays a critical role in free will, as discussed below, it simply could not be formed *sans* the first-order attraction to justice itself. See Karen Rogers*, Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) pp. 61-2. Will**rj** tempers will**rh** by becoming the concomitant desire for self-restraint upon will**rh** being elicited as an urge to secure an illicit good. Brower, *op. cit***.** p. 34, also has Anselm distinguishing between justice as the “habit’ of “self-regulation**”** and will**rj**. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Brower, ibid., p. 28: “Not surprisingly, (Anselm) says that reason is capable of making two main kinds of value judgment or discrimination, one corresponding to each of the two fundamental types of value he takes to exist in the world—namely, goodness and rightness. The will, in turn, is capable of responding to each of these types of value—or better, to objects presented by reason as possessing these types of value.” [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Anselm’s argument for the necessity of innate values is cast in Aristotelian terms: “An unactuated capacity cannot move itself to act.” Applied to volition: “Therefore, what wills nothing cannot move itself to will.” (*OFD*, 12) That is,, will**a** cannot will**e** will**c** *sans* will**r/d** - will**c**’s material cause. Thus, will**r/d** must be instilled in will**a**. Values cannot be chosen; only chosen *between*. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See Bernd Goebel, “Anselm's Theory of Universals Reconsidered,” *Insights*, volume 2, 2009, number 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Michael Frede, *op. cit*., lists Alexander of Aphrodisias as the first ancient proponent of PAP.He insists that no such notion is to be found anywhere in the Aristotelian corpus, but I would contend that it is at least implicit in the aforementioned distinction. between natural and rational powers: a rational power can issue contrarily to past effects in a particular sort of situation, as it would have to be able to do for reasons to be distinguishable from causes. Frankfurt, *op.cit*., has also occasioned a now 50 year old debate on the role of choice in human freedom. My contributions to it are: ... It should be unsurprising that PAP is biblical: “Who hath been tried thereby and made perfect? ... He that could have transgressed and hath not: and could do evil things and hath not done them.” *Ecclesiasticus*, 31: 10 I would add: Who sins? He who is capable of good, but eschews it in favor of evil. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. See Brower, *op. cit***.** pp. 22-3.As Brower puts the point, the requirements for rectitude maintenance by will**a** may “come apart from the conditions” under which human beings flourish in other ways, that is, fulfill the rest of their nature. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. See Richard Campbell, “Freedom as Keeping the Truth:The Anselmian Tradition,” p. 307; in J.C. Schnaubelt, T.A. Losoncy, F. van Fleteren, J.A. Frederick, eds. Anselm Studies II. Kraus International, White Plains NY, pp. 287-308. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Robert Kane treats this predicament as the occasion of what he calls “self-forming actions,” the performance of which are necessary and sufficient for moral responsibility. He takes the resolution of a volitional crisis, however, to be uncaused, despite the effort of the will it calls forth, instead of being an effect of the will itself, as below. See The *Significance of Free Will*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 74-9 **and my ... for commentary.** [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. *OFD* 12, 212. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Every will**chi** is *ipso facto*will**chi1>hi2 or** will**chi>ji;** everywill**cji** *is ipso facto*will**cji>hi,** orwill**cji1>ji2**. We can safely ignore these elaborations here except, as we shall see, the case of will**cji>hi**. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. *OFW*, 7, 8, and 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Sweeny, *op. cit*., p. 206. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. *Concordia* Section 3. Grace is given, not for anything done, but for refraining from sin. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. “Basic Actions,” Arthur C. Danto, American Philosophical Quarterly Vol. 2, No. 2 (Apr., 1965), pp. 141-148. As noted in 1 above, Lowe, *op. cit*., pp. 124, treats basic acts as 'spontaneous' choice formations by the will, uncaused volitional exercises resulting in intentions: Anselm's view minus willp as willing'se efficient cause. But given the close conceptual connection between responsibility and efficient causation, it seem philosophically undesirable to leave volitional exercise inexplicable. Richard Taylor, pp. 117-19, in Action and Purpose (New Jersey: Humanities, 1973) denies that there are “volitional acts” functioning as the origin of what he takes basic acts to be: simple bodily movements such as moving one's hand. See also “C. A. Campbell's Effort of Will Argument,” Phillip D. Gosselin, Religious Studies, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Dec., 1977), pp. 429-438, “Volition and Basic Action,” Hugh McCann, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 83, No. 4 (Oct., 1974), pp. 451-473, “Must There Be Basic Action?,” Douglas Lavin, Nous, [Volume 47, Issue 2](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14680068/2013/47/2), June 2013, pages 273-301, and “How Basic Are Basic Actions?,” Julia Annas, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 78 (1977 - 1978), pp. 195-213. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. PASC and PAP should be seen as distinct principles. The contemporary emphasis placed upon the latter suggests, to the contrary, that they are nowadays conflated, as if self-control was solely a matter of being able to do more than one thing, eliding the question of how one ability rather than another came to be exercised. For we can conceive of a creature having distinct abilities without being able to determine on his own which one is actually to be exercised, that being dependent upon other agents. We can conversely understand the possibility of someone enjoying complete control over only one potency. Having nothing but an attraction to happiness, say, out of which to form choices, but being the efficient cause of any willingness**c** on his part to seek that good in a certain form. We should say that he never has 'much of a choice'. He must end up being a veritable Epicurean of one stripe or another. Nonetheless, as the source of his willingness**c**, he would be in complete control of his will**p**. PASC is thus satisfiable *sans* PAP and vice-versa. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. Agent causalists take their cue from Aristotle’s famous example of a human unmoved mover, cited above: “The stick moves the stone, the hand moves the stick, but the man moves the hand.” Cf. Aristotle, *Physics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) bk. 8, ch. 5. Thomas Reid is most closely associated with this philosophy in modernity. Cf. Essays on the Active Powers of the Human Mind (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), Essay IV, ch. 1. The two best known contemporary advocates of it are Taylor, *op. cit*., p. 120 *ff*. and Roderick Chisholm: *Person and Object*, IL: Open Court, 1976, pp. 69-72. Randolph Clark surveys other recent versions of agent causalism in *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). See also John Bishop, “Agent-Causation,” *Mind* vol. 92 no. 365 (January 1983): 61-79, William Hasker, *The Emergent Self* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), and E.J. Lowe, *Personal Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Sorabji, *op. cit*, Chs. 14-18. Ignorance forecloses voluntariness, hence, responsibility precisely because one cannot cause that which one does not know. *Nicomachean Ethics*, III, V 8, and VII 1-10 explore the connections between voluntariness, responsibility, and knowledge, with the Ch. III discussion being considered by Sorabji definitive. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. To wit: “If we are responsible… then we have a prerogative which some would attribute only to God: each of us, when we act, is a prime mover unmoved. In doing what we do, we cause certain events to happen, and nothing—or no one—causes us to cause those events to happen.” Roderick Chisholm, “Freedom and Action,” in Derk Pereboom (ed.) *Free Will* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009) p.181. And St. Gregory of Nyssa: “All things subject to change and to becoming never remain constant, but continually pass from one state to another, for better or worse….Now human life is always subject to change; it needs to be born ever anew….But here birth does not come about by a foreign intervention, as is the case with bodily beings…; it is the result of a free choice. Thus we *are,* in a certain way, our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions.” *De vita Moysis,* II, 2-3; cited in *Veritatis splendor,* no. 71 and in William E. May's “Free Choice,” http://www.christendom-awake.org/pages/may/free-choice.htm. See also Peter van Inwagen's “A Definition of Chisholm's Notion of Immanent Causation,” *Philosophia*, July 1978, Volume 7, pp. 567-581. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. *OFS* 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Aristotle posits relative identity in. e.g.,*Topics*, *Bk. 1***,** *Physics I 7, 189b30-190a31, Generation and Corruption I 4 319b25-32, and Prior Analytics I 33, 47b29, Metaphysics VI 2.* In all, there are forty-one references in the Aristotelian corpus to the polyadic relation: identity in respect of C**1**, but diversity as C**2**, where C**1** and C**2** are categories of being or types of causes. See John Bowin, “Aristotle on Identity and Persistence,” *Apeiron* 41 (1):63-88 (2008) p. 69. Anselm discusses this relation in connection with the substantial unification of the three divine persons of the Holy Trinity**.** See *On the Incarnation of the Word*, in *AC.*See alsoChristopher Hughes Conn, “Anselm, the Holy Trinity, and the Relative Identity Thesis,”They are said by the relative identity theorist to be one God in the way that Nile source, stream and mouth are Nile River: not as parts, but as united, interactive, though relationally distinct, *per se* substantial entities therein. Peter Geach is the most prominent modern defender of the notion. See “Identity Theory,” in *Logic Matters*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972, pp. 238-47. See also Nicholas Griffin, *Relative Identity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977. Cf. David Wiggins, *Sameness and Substance Renewed*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, Ch.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. See also *Physics*, *op. cit.,* p. 256**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. Roderick Chisholm, in *Person and Object* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1976, pp. 53-84) is the most prominent example of a recent philosopher who stresses the importance of PAP and PASC for an understanding of free will, while overlooking that faculty's normative aspect.The soft-determinists Fisher and Ravizza, though eschewing PASC and positing an attenuated sense of PAP, are noteworthy for emphasizing the connection between human freedom and standards of reason. See *Responsibility and Control,* Chs. 1-3 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Susan Wolf is to be credited for forcing today's free will theorists to recognize not only this connection, but one between morality and free will. She unfortunately eschews PASC and controversially believes PAP applies only to blameworthy agents- her “asymmetry” thesis. See *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). **See also my ...** [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. *OFD***,** 14**.** See my **….** Cf. “Contrastive Explanations, the Structure of the Will, and Robert Kane's Dilemma,” *Synthese*. March 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. ‘When a will was initially given to the rational nature, it was, at the same time as that giving, turned by the Giver himself to what it ought to will—or rather, it was not turned but *created* upright. Now as long as that will remained steadfast in the rightness in which it was created, which we call “truth” or “justice”, it was just. But when it turned itself away from what it ought to will and towards what it ought not to, it did not remain steadfast in the original rightness (if I may so call it) in which it was created.’ *OFD*, 9. See also Brower, *op. cit.,* p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. *OFW*, Section 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. *OGC* 479**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. *OFD* pp. 214-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. *OFW*, Section 10; *Why God Became Man*, Book 2, Sections 1-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. For Anselm, one's identity is that which is signified by a definite description of the form “The human being born of Mr. & Mrs. A, in whom accidents a1, a2, a3, etc. inhere (some of these being of his own making, specifically the freely willed character traits discussed here). See *On the Incarnation of the Word*, section II. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. See*Nicomachean Ethics*, Chapters II and III for a long discussion of the relation between volition, habit, and virtue/vice. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. For a discussion of the role of reflective assent in character formationseeHarry G. Frankfurt's seminal article 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person,' The Journal of Philosophy Vol. 68, No. 1 (Jan. 14, 1971) pp. 5-20. The secondary literature on this piece is vast and would, of course, also be helpful here. A good place to start is: Contours of Agency: Essays on Themes from Harry Frankfurt, edited by Sarah Buss and Lee Overton, Cambridge, MA : MIT Press, 2002. See also Brower, *op. cit*., pp. 33-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. *Summa Theologica* I, Question LXXXII, Article 1 posits happiness as our sole end, the ultimate good for which human nature strives. He derives his axiological monism from *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 1, chs. 4-12. See C. R. S. Harris, “Duns Scotus and his Relation to Thomas Aquinas,”*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 25 (1924 - 1925), pp. 237-240. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. “For if he gives no reward to the one who loves him, he who is most just does not distinguish between the one who loves what ought to be supremely loved and the one who disdains it; nor does he love the one who loves him—or else it does no good to be loved by him. But all those things are incompatible with his nature. Therefore, he rewards everyone who loves him perseveringly.” *Monologion*, 70 and 80, in *AC*.

“Thus, it is certain that rational nature was made for the purpose of loving and choosing the supreme good above all other things.” *Why God Became Man***,** 2.1, in *AC*.

As Brower (*op. cit*, p. 23-4) understands the matter:

“Rational creatures cannot possess, much less enjoy, God unless they first love him in the right way. Fulfillment of this purpose, however, is not to be understood as that in which happiness consists, but rather as a pre-condition for happiness. Indeed, to judge by passages such as the following, Anselm regards happiness as an external reward, something that a good God is simply constrained by his nature to bestow on creatures who love him We must not be misled by Anselm’s way of speaking here. Although it rightly emphasizes that creatures who receive happiness are worthy to receive it, and that their actually receiving it requires some action on God’s part, it also obscures the close connection that exists between the fulfillment of rational nature, on the one hand, and happiness on the other. According to Anselm, happiness partly *consists* in loving God, since enjoyment is just the possession of an object one loves. Moreover, once the rational creature loves God, and so is in a position to enjoy him, Anselm thinks that God is finally able to give what he intended to give it all along.” [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Nicomachean Ethics 1098a13, 1101a10. Wiggin**s, “**Deliberation and Practical Reason**,”** *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, Vol. 76 (1975 - 1976) pp. 29-51+viii, argues convincingly that Aristotle held that “specifying” Happiness in deliberation is a task of practical reason, in addition to efficiency discernment. Sadler, (unpublished, https://felicianethics.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/what-kind-of-moral-theory-does-anselm-hold.pdf ) for his part, establishes that Anselm treats virtues as volitionally stabilized forms thereof and guides thereto. That is, will**sji**$ \rightarrow $**j** is analogous to Will**sj=h**: pending sanctity. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. Nash-Marshall maintains that we mistakenly posit PAP satisfaction as a necessary condition upon a free being, asserting **“**that choice and alternate possible courses of action are necessary requisites of freedom, presuppos(ing) that there can be no such thing as a perfect free being ... (because we) do not define freedom through a perfect instance of freedom: the freedom of a perfect rational being.” Siobhan Nash-Marshall, “Free Will, Evil, and Saint Anselm,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 5.2 (Spring 2008) p. 23. But clearly Anselm *is* concerned to explicate our creaturely freedom, the type an agent must fervently strive to retain precisely because of his fallen nature and the Evil One's constant attempts to corrupt it, that we must exercise correctly under such trying circumstances in order to one day fully participate in perfect freedom as our just reward for that effort. Sweeney, on the other hand, holds that PAP is satisfied by 'finite/created' wills. Eileen Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word*, Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012, pp. 196-7. Frede (*op. cit*., pp. 81-2) following Chrysippus concurs with Nash-Marshall: “to say that an action is not necessitated, on their view, is only to say that it is inexplicable in terms of a 'natural law.” But this understanding of contingency in human affairs only begs the question: why wouldn't an agent acting independently of natural laws satisfy PAP? Despite this disagreement with Professor Nash-Marshall, I highly recommend her rigorous and insightful treatment of Anselm's work. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. See *De Grammatico* section 12 for this distinction, in AC. See also Peter King, “St. Anselm's Philosophy of Language”' in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, edited by Brian Leftow and Brian Davies, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 84-110 and Sweeney, *op. cit*. pp. 88-92. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. Nietzsche discusses his version of ethical egoism throughout his writings. It receives its most sustained treatment in *Beyond Good and Evil*. See also Brian Leiter, *Nietzsche's Morality*, London: Routledge, 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. See Gergely Klima, “The Primal Choice: An Analysis of Anselm's Account of Free Will,” 2004, *Sapientia et Doctrina,* Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. Klima writes “God rewarded (the Good Angel's) adherence to justice by making them so perfect in rectitude that there was nothing that they would want to will that they did not already possess.” *Ibid*., p. 13. I take myself here to be explaining this lack of opportunity on their part: the two things that they *do* willr will never be found apart and will be eternally enjoyed by them in the Beatific Vision of their common Source. See Sweeney, *op. cit*., p. 237. See also Brower, *op. cit*., p.32: “Anselm says that God made the good angels perfectly happy, and thus removed the possibility of their ever sinning again—since one can sin only by acting against justice, but one could never act against justice except by willing something advantageous that one does not already have … God did not thereby remove their freedom—rather he insured the continued uninterruption of their self-initiated will for justice.” [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. St. Augustine, *The Confessions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008; Chapter 1, paragraph 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)