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Christ's freedom: Anselm vs Molina

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Abstract: **Both Molinism and Anselmianism attempt to preserve libertarian freedom for created agents as well as robust divine sovereignty. The two issues intersect in addressing the puzzle of Christ's freedom: If God is necessarily good, how can God Incarnate be free? Anselm answers: while human agents need options for our choices to be up to us, Christ inevitably chooses rightly with *perfect* freedom. I defend Anselm's answer against a general criticism and then argue that Anselm's position is preferable to the Molinist solution which has recently been championed by Thomas P. Flint.**

Introduction

The freedom of Christ raises a puzzle: if God is necessarily perfectly good, how can God Incarnate be free? Here I spell out the answer which I take to be proposed by Anselm of Canterbury: while those of us who are not God need open options in order for our choices to be truly up to us, Christ inevitably chooses rightly due to His perfect freedom. (It will not affect the philosophical case if the 'Anselmian' view presented here misinterprets the historical Anselm, but a powerful textual case can be made that the interpretation here gets Anselm right (Rogers (2008) and (2015)). I defend Anselm's answer against a general criticism: if Christ does not have open, morally significant, options then He is not truly free and cannot serve as a role model for us mere mortals. And then I argue that Anselm's position is preferable to the Molinist solution to the puzzle of Christ's freedom which has recently been championed by Thomas P. Flint (Flint (2001a); *Idem* (2001b); *Idem* (2004); *Idem* (2011)).

There are other Christian philosophical systems that address the question of Christ's freedom, such as Thomism and Open Theism, but I see Molinism as the main foil to Anselmianism. Thomas, at least arguably, holds that God causes everything including every act of choice.[1] That thesis conflicts with the freedom that Anselm hopes to ascribe to created agents. Open Theists deny divine

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foreknowledge of future free acts and this, from the Anselmian perspective, limits God, in that He cannot exercise the power that knowing the future provides.[2] Both the Molinist and the Anselmian attempt to preserve robust divine sovereignty and libertarian freedom for human agents, and so it will be of special interest to compare the two on the question of Christ's freedom.

As a methodological point, it should be noted that Flint and I are both attempting to develop the positions of our respective masters in the contemporary idiom. Thus 'the Anselmian' and 'the Molinist' will make claims not found in the original texts. But I take it that Flint holds that he is developing the modern Molinist position, in the spirit, if not in the letter, of Molina himself. I leave it to Molina scholars to address the question of how historically grounded Flint's development of Molina actually is. Regarding the historical Anselm I am willing to go further. It lies outside the philosophical aim of the present article to present a lengthy defence of my interpretation as historically preferable, but I will include enough citations to Anselm's own work to suggest that he would very likely subscribe to the positions I label 'Anselmian', were he confronted with the Molinist approach.[3]

Anselm on freedom in general

A brief outline of Anselm's theory of free will is in order.[4] Anselm's definition of free will develops from what he takes to be the most fundamental question about free will: what is free will *for*? Or, to put it in a more Anselmian way: why did God give us free will? In answering this question Anselm defines free will as, 'the ability to keep rightness of will for its own sake'.[5] He explicitly denies the suggestion that free will should be defined as the ability to choose morally well or badly. If that were the definition of free will, he argues, the unwholesome consequence would follow that God, the good angels, and the blessed in heaven are not free. So Anselm constructs his definition around the purpose of freedom, which is that the agent should be able to conform willingly to the good.[6] But it must be the *agent himself* who willingly conforms to the good. That is, the agent must choose the good *a se*, from himself. Aseity is at the core of Anselm's theory. God is free in that He exists in absolute independence. Unlike created agents, He *exists a se*, and so whatever He wills, He wills absolutely from Himself.[7] The good angels and the blessed are free because they have it 'from themselves' that they can no longer choose badly.[8] But created agents need morally significant, libertarian freedom – the freedom to choose morally well or badly – at some point in their history in order to choose *a se*. (On the Anselmian account, neither Christ, nor the human body and soul of Christ should be referred to as a 'created agent', for reasons that will become clear below.)

But how does morally significant, libertarian freedom work, according to Anselm? (It is only choices with moral significance that interest Anselm.[9]) Having open options, or simply not being causally determined, is not enough for aseity and for Anselm's sort of free will. Brute indeterminacy of choice is not

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the purpose of free will, which is why the ability to choose indeterminately is not part of Anselm's definition. So, for example, that a choice is caused by the non-determinate 'bouncing' of a subatomic particle would not be enough to secure its freedom.[10] The choice must come from you, the conscious agent, in some ultimate way that could ground your responsibility. Anselm writes:

> [The good] angels are not to be praised for their justice due to the fact that they were able to sin, but rather due to the fact that, in a way, they have it from themselves that they are [now] unable to sin; in this they are, to some extent, similar to God, who has whatever He has from Himself (*a se*).[11]

But if aseity is what counts, why say that Anselm is a libertarian? Anselm argues that, in order for the *created* agent to choose with aseity, he must confront open options. In Anselm's classical theist universe everything that has genuine ontological status is made to exist and is kept in being from moment to moment by God. But if everything about us, including our ability to choose and our motivations, is from God, how can we have anything from ourselves? The short version of Anselm's answer is this: God sets things up so that created agents can have conflicting, morally significant motives. A created agent can be in the 'torn condition' (my terminology), debating between morally significant options A (let's say) and B. Both A and B must be occurrently desired such that the agent is 'struggling' to pursue each one, but cannot succeed in realizing both.[12] Every element of the torn condition may come from God. ('May', since earlier *a se* choices can form your character such that you, yourself, have had some input into your presently being in the torn condition (Rogers (2015), 117–126).) But the opting for A over B, or for B over A, is *absolutely* up to the created agent.[13]

God constructs the will of the rational creature to allow a space for something to come from the agent himself. It isn't much – just the choice for this over that. And yet it is a morally significant choice with enough aseity to ground responsibility and to allow the created agent to contribute, in however limited a way, to becoming a better creature. That there should be any space in the classical theist universe for created aseity is quite amazing. Augustine (at least the later Augustine) and Thomas certainly denied it. God causes everything that exists and everything that happens, they said. Anselm's thesis is that God causes everything that *exists*, but He does not cause everything that *happens*. The act of choice is ontologically dependent on the will and its motives in such a way that, although the choice is up to the created agent, it does not produce some*thing ex nihilo* which adds to the sum of entities in the universe (Rogers (2012), 183–197; *Idem* (2015), 81–100).

Created agents, at some point in their careers, must possess morally significant, libertarian free will – the ability to choose well or badly – if they are to choose with aseity and be able to realize the purpose of freedom. But the created agent, by making *a se* choices, can create in himself a character such that he leaves the torn condition behind. The good angels and the blessed in heaven can no

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longer choose badly. But they are free since they find themselves in this condition because of past *a se* choices.[14] Anselm, then, subscribes to what is today labelled 'tracing': responsibility for a character-determined choice may be 'traced' through the character to earlier *a se* choices that produced the character. (The damned, for their part, can no longer choose well. They are 'free' in the sense that their *power* to choose well has not been destroyed, but they have made themselves so that they cannot possess a *motive* for the good.[15])

So there are two important ways in which 'free will' can be exercised, both rooted in aseity. There is 'morally significant freedom', the ability of the created agent to choose morally well or badly *a se*. And then there is 'perfect freedom', the ability of an agent to will only the good, where he has this ability *a se*. A created agent can have perfect freedom if he gave it to himself by making the virtuous *a se* choices when he had morally significant freedom. God has perfect freedom not simply through *conforming* perfectly and with aseity to the good, but because His very nature *is* the standard for all good. 'Rightness' in Anselm's definition of free will means conformity to the will of God.[16] And God's will is His being. God inevitably does the best.

One might suppose that God could at least choose between two equally good options, but Anselm himself never suggests such a move, and chances are he would not see any importance to proposing that kind of Buridan's Ass, 'coin toss' choice.[17] Such an ability to choose would have value neither for God nor for creatures. It is not the ability to choose otherwise, but aseity, that grounds freedom, on Anselm's account. Created agents must be able to choose between morally better and worse options in order to help in their own self-creation, but God exists *a se*. Unless one is wedded to the thought that freedom requires options, one will see no value at all in a divine ability to toss a coin between equally good options. And we will see below that, as demonstrated by considering the case of Christ, it demeans God to suppose that He has *morally significant* freedom. Anselm grants that if He could will badly, God would have the power to do whatever He willed. But it is simply impossible that He should will badly.[18]

So Anselm understands someone's having morally significant freedom to mean that he might actually find himself in the torn condition, genuinely desiring to do the morally better thing and to do the morally worse thing, where he cannot pursue both desires, and so must opt for one over the other. Indeed, the created agent *cannot* engage in *a se* choice unless he is previously in the torn condition. He must be actively debating within himself between morally significant options.[19] He must recognize that both options cannot be realized, and he must believe that each option could possibly be realized. If he believed some option to be impossible to achieve, he could not rationally debate about choosing to pursue it. And all of this means that the agent must be rational and understand, at least to some degree, what his choice entails.[20]

Further, what torn condition an agent can find himself in depends upon his pre-existent character and his situation. The agent in the torn condition confronts

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options that are genuinely viable for him – options for which he has strong, occurrent motivations. In the torn condition, a viable option is one which the agent would pursue inevitably if there were not a conflicting desire in play.[21] And what sort of desires you can entertain is relative to you, the agent.

Here it is well to note an important entailment of Anselm's insistence on aseity. Indeed, with regard to created agents, it may be just a different way of stating the aseity requirement. Call it the 'grounding principle': if a created agent's choice is *a se*, then the truth of propositions concerning the choice, and the knowledge of anyone, including God, concerning the choice, is absolutely and solely dependent upon the actual choice of the actual agent. To rephrase the point, if it is wholly and only up to an agent which option he chooses in a given situation – that is what aseity means in this context – then it is the *actual* choice that constitutes the ultimate source of the truth and the knowledge.[22] (For 'dependent upon' feel free to substitute your favourite relationship between propositions and what makes them true, and between knowledge and its source.)

The grounding principle entails that there are two sorts of necessity which conflict with *a se* choice. If a choice is causally necessitated by something or someone, other than the agent making the *a se* choice, then the choice is not *a se*, and the truth or knowledge about it could follow from truth or knowledge about the causal necessitation. Any causal necessity not coming ultimately from the agent himself conflicts with the aseity, and hence the freedom, of a choice.[23] And one way to express this requirement for ultimate aseity is to insist that the actual choice is the only thing that can ground truth and knowledge about the choice. And, following from the grounding principle, causal necessity is not the only necessity that conflicts with *a se* choice. There is 'external, non-causal (ENC) necessity' (Rogers (2015), 12–13). That is, if there is something ('thing' in a very broad sense) – other than the agent making an actual *a se* choice – that makes it the case (albeit non-causally) that the agent chooses as he chooses, then the choice is not *a se*.[24] And so to the freedom of Christ.

Anselm on the Freedom of Christ

By 'Christ' I mean God the Son, or Word, Incarnate, as described by the Council of Chalcedon. Christ is

> truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and a body; consubstantial with the Father as regards his divinity and the same consubstantial with us as regards his humanity; like us in all respects except for sin; . . . the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being; . . .[25]

Christ, then, is a single person with two natures, and the *person* that Christ is is the Second Person of the Trinity. This Person has 'assumed', somehow joined with Himself, a human nature, that is a human soul and body. But this human soul and body is not an individual person in its own right. Indeed, it is not something

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that first exists distinct from the Son and then is added on. It comes into being as the human soul and body of the Word, according to the Chalcedonian claim that Christ is 'acknowledged in two natures which undergo . . . *no separation*' (my italics). I understand Chalcedon to mean, not that the two natures just happen not to be separated, but rather that, while the Son can exist without the human nature, the human nature which is *Christ's* human nature does not and cannot exist without the Son.[26]

There is only one person in Christ, which entails that there is only one genuine agent in Christ, understanding 'agent' to mean a person – minimally a rational individual – who acts.[27] Christ, with two natures, divine and human, has two intellects and two wills, divine and human. We might say that Christ does this or that qua human, nevertheless the human nature per se is not an agent (Rogers (2013)). It is the Word, as the Person who has assumed the human nature, Who is the agent identified with Christ. Thus, although Christ's human soul and body are created, I do not refer to Christ as a 'created agent'. In manifesting or expressing Himself through His human nature the Word works with and through His human soul and body, His human intellect and will. But they are still *His*. The human intellect does not think thoughts or make choices that are not His thoughts and choices.

The question of Christ's freedom arises for Anselm several times in the course of his *Cur Deus Homo* (mainly in Book 2, Chapters 10 and 17). The argument of the work is that God 'must' become incarnate. Only God can pay the debt incurred by sin, and only man owes the debt. God does not abandon His projects and so must become a God-man. Anselm's argument supports the Chalcedonian statement that the divine and human nature constitute *one* person. The person who pays the debt needs to have the wherewithal to pay it, but he also needs to be one who owes, or who is appropriately united to those who owe, the debt. The thing won't work if there are two individuals, one who has the wherewithal and another who is united to the debtor, but neither of whom meets both requirements. The unity of the God-man is real and non-negotiable. Christ, who is unified with us, being literally of the same biological family, *freely* volunteers – out of love for us – to pay our debt.

There are volumes to be written on Anselm's atonement theory, but our concern here is his insistence that Christ freely chooses to do whatever He does, including to die for us, when the point of the *Cur Deus Homo* is that God 'had to' do things this way. If the Incarnation and death 'had to' happen, they happened necessarily. In Book 2, Chapter 16 Anselm sets up the subsequent discussion of Christ's freedom with a charming example of backwards causation entailing the necessity of Christ's saving passion and death. It is most fitting, says Anselm, that Christ should be conceived within a woman who is free from sin. But, since the Blessed Virgin is born of fallen humanity (Anselm is writing before the Immaculate Conception becomes doctrine), isn't she mired in original sin? Anselm answers that she is purified by her faith in Christ's saving work, including

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His death. But then, as his student points out, in order for Christ to be *born*, His future death is necessary. So how can it be said that it was 'a death He freely accepted'?

Anselm's answer (as he had already sketched in Book 2, Chapter 10) is that, although created agents require morally significant freedom in order to choose *a se*, Christ is different in that He is God. Anselm writes in Chapter 10 that in God '*a se* necessity' should not be called 'necessity' at all (although elsewhere – as in the title to Chapter 17 – he will allow the term):

> On this account, since God has perfectly from Himself (*a se*) whatever He has, He is most to be praised for those goods which He has and preserves, not by any necessity, but . . . through His own, eternal immutability. And thus That Man who would be that very same God, because every good which He Himself has, He has from Himself, not necessarily but freely, and He is just from Himself, therefore He is to be praised. Although to be sure the human nature has whatever it has from the divine, nevertheless He has that same Self from Himself (*idem tamen ipse a se ipso*) because the two natures are one person.[28]

Christ is God Incarnate, and God is the standard for good. So Christ cannot fail to will and do the good. He does not have morally significant freedom. And yet He is free since His 'choices' flow from Himself, the Person Who is the Son. How the human and the divine will interact is a puzzling issue beyond the scope of the present article and perhaps beyond the powers of the (merely) human mind. But Anselm's understanding is that Christ's human will is the human will of God the Son and so both the human will and the divine will will in perfect accord and with perfect freedom.

Responses to a general criticism

Some, including the Molinist, find this unsatisfactory. If Christ Incarnate does not have morally significant freedom, they argue, He is not truly free. He is not a man, 'like us in all respects except for sin', and cannot serve as the role model for us. There are several responses to be made. If the opponent holds that God Himself must have morally significant freedom, then his god is so distant from the God of the classical Christian tradition that we do not have a shared basis for discussion. I take it that most who defend Christ's morally significant freedom say that God the Son is necessarily morally perfect, but that Christ's human nature (CHN to use Flint's acronym), although it does not sin, has the ability to sin. In some sense CHN has morally significant freedom, although it does not exercise that freedom to sin. That is the Molinist's (or at least Flint's) position.

This view apparently entails that, besides two natures in Christ, there are two distinct *agents*. If agent X has a power of willing which agent Y lacks, then X and Y look to be distinct agents. A single person with two natures, one divine and one human, is a difficult doctrine. Two natures, constituting two distinct agents,

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who are yet only one person, is even harder, and suggests Nestorianism. If there are two agents at work, the unity of the person is undermined.

Can't we make the 'qua' move with regard to the wills of Christ, as we do with other attributes of Christ? Christ is in space and time qua human, Christ is ubiquitous and eternal qua divine. Christ is omniscient qua divine, but limited in knowledge qua human. Could we say that Christ is necessarily perfect qua divine and yet can sin qua human? (The Molinist might rephrase this as: 'Could we say that Christ the Son is necessarily perfect qua divine, but Christ's human nature can sin?' But that reinforces the claim that the Molinist makes too great a separation between the Son and CHN.)

Anselm would argue that 'the ability to sin' is unlike other properties that can be attributed to Christ qua human. There is no contradiction in saying that Christ's human body and soul is 'at' a place and time, while the Son Who has assumed that body and soul is not spatially or temporally limited. There is no contradiction in saying that God in His omniscience associates with and entertains the thoughts of a limited human intellect (though not *only* those thoughts).[29] But, at least on Anselm's account, to sin is to will what God wills that you not will. It is logically impossible that God sin or cause anyone else to sin.[30] Attributing to CHN an ability to sin is to attribute an ability to choose contrary to the will of God. Thus using the qua move to attribute to Christ an ability to sin entails that some 'part' of Christ – the human will? – though it happens not to sin, has the ability to will *against* the will of the Person who is Christ. The unity of the two natures as one person is undermined.[31]

Moreover, on the Anselmian account of morally significant freedom, it is inconceivable that Christ in the Gospels is making morally significant choices. Take Christ choosing to die. In order to make a morally significant libertarian choice, the agent must first be in the torn condition. He must be debating between open options, sincerely believing that either option is a live possibility for him, and he must have a genuine desire towards each such that, were there not a conflicting desire, he would follow the one extant desire inevitably.

In the Garden of Gethsemane is Christ 'tempted' to excuse Himself from the impending death? In one sense, yes. As a human being, He can feel fear, the increased heart rate, the knot in the stomach. He can wish He did not have to go through the pain that He will feel qua human.[32] The question is, is Christ in the torn condition? Does He believe that He might choose to flee rather than to die, and does He want to flee – 'want' in the sense that it is truly a live option for Him? Surely not. First, if Christ is in the torn condition then He is irrational. From what He says in the Gospels, He *knows* He is going to die, and when and how. (And He knows He will rise in three days.) He has explained all this to His disciples. He understands the Prophets to have said as much. If you are *sure* you are going to do X and not Y, you cannot rationally be in the torn condition debating between doing X and doing Y.

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And second, Christ would have to be less than exemplary, if He could entertain – in the way required by the torn condition – the thought of fleeing as a serious option. No loving parent would abandon their child to torture forever, or even just for a finite time, in order to avoid a few hours of pain. If Christ is in the torn condition in Gethsemane, then He is *seriously* considering abandoning us. He really wants to do it, although He also wants to save us. Even if, in the final analysis, He does the right thing, someone with these sorts of motivations is hardly the God of love that Christians are taught to believe in.

Or take the temptation in the desert. Anselm will say that Christ was 'tempted' in that, for example, He was hungry and might wish He had something to eat. But anyone who can seriously consider becoming a Satan-worshipper for food (especially knowing you are not going to starve) or power is just not very nice. The insistence that Christ have morally significant freedom paints Christ as an unattractive person. He happens to do the right thing, but frequently wants to behave badly. (Is only CHN in the torn condition, possessing the never-to-be-exercised ability to choose wickedly, an ability which is logically impossible for the Son to possess? Then, again, Christ's unity is undermined.) Anselm holds that we humans sometimes have to be in the torn condition. Otherwise we could not choose the good from ourselves. But Christ Incarnate's 'self' is the Son, Who exists *a se*. His freedom does not require options.

What of the Chalcedonian statement that He is 'like us in all respects except for sin'? Must the Council mean that if most human agents have morally significant freedom, then Christ must have had it? No, this reading goes far beyond what the text or historical scholarship will support.[33] The Council cannot have meant that Christ is very similar to the rest of us. For one thing, He is fully God as well as fully man. Christ is a very, *very* unusual sort of person. How is He like us? Well, He has a human nature. Christ's humanity is not just a human body which He animates. Nor is it a kind of illusion. At the time of Chalcedon various theories were abroad which, arising from a distaste for the material, denied that Christ was fully human. The claim that He is 'like us' may be a response to these rejected theories without entailing that He entertained a live desire to do bad things.

But isn't having morally significant freedom an aspect of human *nature*? After all, Anselm has argued that (merely) created agents must confront morally significant options in order to choose from themselves. He is, however, quite clear that the blessed in heaven, while remaining human, no longer choose with morally significant freedom. So one can be human, one can confront only the good as an option to will, and yet one can be free.[34] All non-assumed human beings who choose *a se*, must, at some point, confront morally significant options. But this is not a necessary property of human nature per se.

Can Christ be a role model? It helps to know that He understands human hunger and fear and pain and suffering 'from the inside'. But do we need a model who is truly torn between good and bad? According to Anselm, the role at which we can

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and should aim is the achievement of perfect freedom, the state of not wanting to do bad things. Christ can be the model at which we should aim, without being, Himself, weak enough to want to do bad things. So there are good reasons not to insist that Christ – or the human 'part' of Christ – has morally significant freedom.

Why reject Molinism?

Thomas P. Flint suggests that Molinism offers the most satisfactory account of Christ's freedom. And I agree with Flint's criticisms of Thomism and Open Theism. The former holds that God is the primary cause of *all* choices, while the latter holds that, if Christ is free, then God cannot foreknow what He will choose. The Anselmian cannot accept either of these conclusions. Having eliminated these contenders, Flint implies that Molinism is the best theory left standing. The Anselmian finds the Molinist view of Christ's freedom deeply problematic for a number of reasons. I will first mention a key problem the Anselmian finds with Molinism in general, and then focus on the Molinist doctrine of Christ's freedom.

Molinism holds that there exist, independently of the will of God, contingent truths about what any possible human (or other created) agent would freely choose in any possible circumstances – 'counterfactuals of creaturely freedom' (CFs) – where the freedom in question is said to be libertarian freedom. Possessing knowledge of all these CFs, included in God's 'middle knowledge', God can decide which possible world, with which individuals and circumstances, to actualize. And having chosen what world to actualize – our world, as it happens – He can know beforehand how any actual individual will freely choose in the actual situations that arise, and so He can guide the unfolding of the created universe. The great virtue of Molinism, according to Flint, is that it preserves both human libertarian freedom and divine sovereignty.

The Anselmian, on the contrary, holds that the grounding principle entails that if a choice is ENC (externally non-causally) necessitated then it is not an *a se* choice. Molina's CFs exist independently of the actual human agents (Flint (1998), 123–124). Yet the human agent cannot fail to choose in accord with the CF. He is not *causally* necessitated, but he must choose with a necessity rooted in the metaphysical nature of the universe and not produced by his actual choosing.[35] There can be no CFs of *a se* freedom.[36]

The Molinist might argue that he does preserve a stronger doctrine of divine sovereignty than Anselm's. Both theories hold that there are contingent truths about free choices independent of the divine will. Molinism, since it allows God to survey all the worlds He might actualize, might be said to grant more scope for the divine creative power. God knows exactly what He is going to get *before* (at least logically) He makes a world. On Anselmianism, God always knows what the agent chooses at any time, and can see to it that the best world is actualized, consistent with the actual *a se* choices of free creatures. Nonetheless God cannot

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know what the created agent will choose until (logically) He has created it and 'seen' it choose. Of course, the Anselmian will hold that the Molinist has bought increased sovereignty at the cost of *a se* freedom. And if created aseity can be sacrificed to preserve divine sovereignty, why not just go the more elegant Thomist route? Creatures are free with compatibilist freedom and God is absolutely sovereign.

Moreover, although Anselm's God does incur a risk in creating free creatures, this limitation is one He freely imposes on Himself in order to achieve the great good of created agents who can choose with aseity. The existence of Molinist CFs imposes limitations on God which He has not chosen at all, much less chosen for a purpose. God is simply and brutely limited by something contingent existing completely independent of Himself.[37] Thus, it is not clear that Molinism really has the edge on the issue of divine sovereignty.

What about the Molinist view of Christ's freedom? The puzzle, as Flint sees it, is to preserve the morally significant freedom of Christ's human nature, CHN, while holding that in fact CHN does not sin, and also maintaining the traditional view that God is necessarily perfectly good. As I noted above, even casting the issue this way is problematic in that it seems to assume that CHN is an agent distinct from the Son which *could* will in opposition to God. And this undermines the personal unity of the Word Incarnate.

The Molinist solution to the puzzle allows that CHN might or might not be assumed by God. If it is actualized, and not assumed, it is a person in its own right. If it is actualized and assumed, it is not a person. And CHN might or might not be assum*able* depending on the circumstances. God's middle knowledge allows Him to know in what circumstances CHN could be assumed. Flint proposes the following CFs:

> (1) If CHN were placed in lifelong freedom-retaining circumstances C, CHN would freely sin.
> (2) If CHN were placed in lifelong freedom-retaining circumstances D, CHN would freely refrain from sinning.

Flint explains that: 'In knowing (1) God would know that He could not create CHN, assume CHN, and place CHN in C. In knowing (2), though, God would know that He could create and assume CHN and place CHN in D' (Flint (2001b), 310; *Idem* (2001a)). The critic raises a problem: For His saving work, God cannot assume a human nature which sins. So if CHN is assumed and placed in D it is a necessary truth that CHN cannot sin in D. But then it seems that CHN cannot have morally significant freedom.

In response Flint proposes a principle: '(P) Necessarily, if an individual human nature is assumed in freedom-retaining circumstances such that, had it been in those circumstances but not been assumed, it would have freely done X, then

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the individual human nature freely does X' (Flint (2001a), 15). But this proposal is puzzling. Take the following proposition:

(3)(A) If CHN were placed in lifelong freedom-retaining circumstances D, and not assumed, CHN would freely refrain from sinning.

On Flint's account, if (3)(A) is true, then God knows He can assume CHN and place it in lifelong freedom-retaining circumstances D, and CHN will freely refrain from sinning. So the following proposition is true:

(3)(B) If CHN were placed in lifelong freedom-retaining circumstances D, and assumed, CHN would freely refrain from sinning.

I take it that (3)(B) is not a CF, since it is a necessary truth that the assumed CHN does not sin. Hence Principle P. But (3)(A) is a CF, and, according to Principle (P), this allows the claim that *assumed* CHN in (3)(B) *freely* refrains from sinning.

But this seems incoherent. Mustn't lifelong freedom-retaining circumstances D (D for short) in (3)(A) and D in (3)(B) be the same circumstances?[38] But in (3)(A) CHN is not assumed and in (3)(B) CHN is assumed. How can CHN which is not the human soul and body assumed by the Son and CHN which *is* the human soul and body assumed by the Son be in the same circumstances? The differences in their status vis-à-vis the divine nature would seem to make that impossible. Call CHN in (3)(A) CHN-A and CHN in (3)(B) CHN-B. And assume that the world described in (3)(B) is the world God actualizes, our world. CHN-B is the human nature of Christ. CHN-B is not a person, since there is only one person in Christ, and that is the Son. CHN-B is the assumed body and soul of that divine person. CHN-A is a person and is a mere mortal. Can CHN-A and CHN-B be in the same circumstances?

Out of the mouth of CHN-B come such claims as that He and the Father are one, that He existed before the creation of the world, and that salvation involves ingesting His body and blood. But if CHN-A says such things they are wildly, bizarrely false. The circumstances in which CHN-B is involved include being tried and executed for blasphemy. The charge comes about due, at least in part, to these first-person utterances. Christ accepts this unjust death qua CHN-B. I use 'qua' because only the human nature can die. (Death, at least at the time of Chalcedon, was the wrenching apart of soul and body, which ought to be joined.) And the death is 'unjust' because – *ex hypothesi* – Christ really is God.

Can CHN-A be in the same circumstances as CHN-B? Do the offending first-person utterances pass his lips? If not, he cannot be in the same circumstances as CHN-B. If so, and he is *not* morally culpable, then he must be mad, acting, or some such thing. But we are supposing that CHN-B is not mad, an actor, etc. If CHN-A says these things and he *is* morally culpable, then he is sinning. But CHN-B is not engaged in wickedness and the CF about the unassumed CHN-A was that he does not sin in D. If CHN-A does say such things, then, whatever

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one thinks about capital punishment for blasphemy, at least the charge against CHN-A is true. He claims to be the Christ, but is not. So he does not face the same choice regarding an unjust execution that Christ does. Principle P is incoherent in that it is incomprehensible that a merely human person should find himself in the *same* circumstances as the human soul and body of God Incarnate. But without (P), given that it is a necessary truth that assumed CHN does not sin, CHN's morally significant freedom is not preserved.

Flint extends his Molinist approach to include a series of what he grants are 'radical' hypotheses towards which Molinism 'tends'. The Anselmian takes this 'tendency' to provide more reason to reject Molinism. For example, Flint suggests the possibility that anyone – Bill Clinton! – might, under the right circumstances, be sinless and assumed by God (Flint (2001b), 312). The argument above applies in this case, too. Our Clinton is a person, while the assumed Clinton is not. Further, trans-world identity is puzzling, and it is difficult to see how Bill Clinton can be Bill Clinton and assumed. That counterpart Bill is so unlike our Clinton that it seems bizarre to write as if 'Bill Clinton' in the actual and the possible world referred to the same being.

Flint suggests the possibility of multiple incarnations throughout history and 'The Theory of Final Assumptions': the thesis that all the beatified will be assumed just the way Christ's human soul and body are assumed (Flint (2011), 198–200). Regarding multiple incarnations, Christ *has* an excellent human soul and body which, Christian doctrine teaches, are with Him from His conception forever into the future. If He wants to put in a corporeal appearance in our physical universe anywhere, any time He already has the means to do so. Why should He add more souls and bodies? If He is 'like us except for sin' then one soul and body would seem to be the right amount in that none of the rest of us have multiple souls and bodies.

Regarding the thesis that all of the beatified are assumed, Flint holds that an individual human person's ceasing to exist as an ultimate *suppositum* is not a loss for that human being. But losing my individual existence entails that 'I' no longer serve as the ultimate subject of a proposition about my actions. 'I' *simpliciter* no longer do things, rather, the Word, perhaps with or through or as my body and soul, does things. That is a serious loss. The term that Chalcedon used, *hypostasis*, which we translate as 'person', does not have the psychologically and morally robust meaning which 'person' carries today. But it probably did mean at least, 'a particular individual . . . marked off as unique by a set of characteristics all its own. It was the kind of thing so unique and unrepeatable you could call it by name' (Daley (2002), 194). If my personhood involves my uniqueness, then I judge its loss to be the destruction of something real and valuable. In Christ the human nature is glorified, but no human person is extinguished. The beatific vision, more wonderful than eye has seen or ear has heard, can involve a presently unimaginable intimacy with God, without being improved if each of us were assumed as Christ's human nature is assumed.

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Flint's willingness to propose that each of us might lose our personhood with no harm done – which suggests that our personhood is unimportant or has little role to play in making us what we are – underlines again the problem with the thought that Christ's human nature has morally significant freedom, though the Son does not. It conflicts with the *unity of person* in Christ which Chalcedon insisted upon. If one supposes that personhood is not a powerful unifying and individuating element, then one may allow that there are two distinct agents with possibly simultaneously *opposing* wills in one person. But if 'person' signifies something real and important, the intimation that one person can 'be' two distinct agents with possibly opposing wills should be avoided.

The philosopher who suggests that losing one's being a person makes little difference (or is an advantage if one is assumed by God) might happily rethink the Trinity – God being three persons in one nature. It is a difficult doctrine, and if personhood doesn't mean much, why not deny the three persons, no harm done? But if one is committed to the Trinity, then one should not underestimate the importance of being a person. Flint's proposal that we may all be assumed – if indeed Molinism points towards such a view – provides more reason to reject Molinism.

The Anselmian approach to Christ's freedom preserves the unity of person that is Christ and ascribes to Him perfect freedom. True, it denies that Christ has morally significant freedom. But that possibility entails that Christ, though He happens to choose rightly every time, must actually have been in the torn condition, believing He could do evil, and *genuinely wanting to do it!* If we value aseity as the ground for freedom and responsibility, then we can hold, with Anselm, that Christ has perfect freedom and He is not diminished by seriously entertaining unwholesome motivations. Anselm's theory of Christ's freedom is preferable to Molina's, and this in turn suggests that Anselm's attempt to reconcile robust divine sovereignty, perfect divine freedom, and morally significant, libertarian freedom for created agents is overall more successful than Molina's.[39]

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Notes

1. For example see ST 1, Q.83, art 1, ad. 3 and SCG 1:68. Hugh McCann defends this view in a series of articles in *Faith and Philosophy*, starting with 'Divine sovereignty and the freedom of the will' (McCann (1995)). But note that Thomas's position is subject to debate, and it lies outside the scope of the present article to attempt a defence of this claim.
2. The Anselmian agrees with David hunt: while God cannot *change* the future, knowing the future allows Him great power in terms of *bringing about* the future (Hunt (1993), 398–399).
3. See also Rogers (2008), ch. 10.
4. Some of the arguments following have less force on different analyses of freedom, but those analyses would require defence on a case by case basis.
5. *De Libertate Arbitrii* 1. Translations are my own from the standard Latin text, *Anselmi Opera Omnia*, F. S. Schmitt (ed.), 6 vols (Rome and Edinburgh: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1938–1968).
6. *De Libertate Arbitrii* 1.
7. *Cur Deus Homo* 2.17.
8. *De Casu Diaboli* 25 (Rogers (2008), 76–78). Flint, too, emphasizes 'from oneself-ness' (Flint (1998), 26–29). Regarding the blessed, Flint mentions a different view from Molina's. The master holds that the blessed are not free since they can no longer reject God (Molina (1988), 271). Flint suggests that the blessed do retain morally significant freedom, and that the Molinist might want to see 'middle knowledge as significant not only in this life, but also in the next' (Flint (2011), 198).
9. *De Veritate* 12.
10. An uncharitable reading of Robert Kane's efforts to relate free choice to quantum indeterminacy might conclude that he has associated the free choice with the 'bouncing' in a way that undermines the 'ultimate responsibility' he hopes to insure (Kane (1996), 130).
11. *Cur Deus Homo* 2.10.
12. For the torn condition see *De Casu Diaboli* 13–14; (Rogers (2015), 90–92).
13. *De Casu Diaboli* 27.
14. *De Casu Diaboli* 18. Anselm does not seem to have Aristotelian habituation in mind. But perhaps this is because he is here talking about the angels. Nothing he says conflicts with the Aristotelian approach, and a case can be made that he adopts a eudaemonistic moral system (Rogers (2005)).
15. Couldn't God restore the good motive? Anselm says, 'No', for reasons the exploration of which would take us too far afield. *Cur Deus Homo* 1.17.
16. *De Veritate* 12–13. This is not divine command theory, since God's will is not separate from His nature.
17. This is not a claim for which the Anselm scholar can offer a text. Rather one has to peruse Anselm's entire body of work on free will to confirm the absence of such a view. To my knowledge Anselm never discusses the question of whether or not God might choose between two equally good options. But he does make it clear that it is not options per se that ground free will. In any case, Flint's Molinism proposes to argue that Christ has morally significant freedom, so the question of Buridan's Ass options lies outside the scope of the article.
18. *Cur Deus Homo* 2.10; (Rogers (2008), 185–200).

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19. For Anselm, it is not clear that a created agent might make *a se* choices without moral significance – Buridan's Ass type choices. In any case, it is only moral choices that concern him. *De Veritate* 12; *De Concordia* 1.6.
20. *De Casu Diaboli* 13–14.
21. *Ibid*.
22. See Anselm's discussion of the sort of necessity that attaches to divine knowledge, *De Concordia* 2.3; (Rogers (2008), 173–175; *Idem* (2015), 109–116).
23. The qualification about the necessity not coming from the agent himself is needed to take account of 'tracing' mentioned above, and also issues having to do with divine foreknowledge.
24. Anselm holds that divine foreknowledge does entail a kind of necessity regarding the future choices of created agents, but the necessity comes from the agent's act of choosing, and so is not *external* non-causal necessity. *De Concordia* 1.5; (Rogers (2008), 176–184).
25. Available at http://www.piar.hu/councils/ecum04.htm.
26. Flint disagrees, writing that Christ's human nature 'would itself have *been* a human person had it not been assumed by a divine person' (Flint (2011), 189).
27. Anselm's understanding of the Incarnation emphasizes the unity of the Word and the human nature. *Cur Deus Homo* 2.13.
28. S. II, p.108. ll. 6–12. This fairly literal translation demonstrates how central aseity is in the text. There is an understanding of 'necessity' which conflicts with freedom – thus God's goodness is not subject to anything outside Himself which makes Him to be as He is – and a 'necessity' which is consistent with divine freedom. God *must* be perfectly good, but this 'must' arises *a se* from His own nature and will. On this latter understanding there is nothing suspicious or puzzling in the claim that God is free and that He necessarily wills the good.
29. My argument here applies only to the divine and human *will* of Christ. It allows that the one person who is Christ might know through both a divine and a human intellect without that requiring two distinct knowers. Perhaps the knowledge possessed by the human intellect would simply be a subset of the divine knowledge, where the human intellect, though limited, can 'access' the divine knowledge (Rogers (2013), 264).
30. *De Libertate Arbitrii* 8. The possibility, expressed by Aquinas and Calvin, of two divine wills, an antecedent will and a consequent, 'all things considered', will, does not appear in Anselm's work.
31. Flint grants that 'what CHN does, the Son does' (Flint (2001b), 310), but also seems to find it a good thing that 'the tie between CHN and the Son has been loosened sufficiently [that a hypothesis raised in Flint (2001b)] begins to look less far-fetched' (Flint (2011), 194). That CHN and the Son are two things 'tied together' is problematic, much more so the thought that loosening the 'tie' is theoretically desirable.
32. *Cur Deus Homo* 1. 9.
33. For a cautionary discussion on reading Chalcedon see Coakley (2002).
34. In *De Libertate Arbitrii*, ch. 1 Anselm holds that God and the good angels are free, although they cannot sin. Chapter 14 makes it clear that the human blessed are part of that company enjoying true liberty.
35. The Molinist may respond that 'the truth of the relevant counterfactual tells one what S [some agent] will do, not what he has to do' (Flint, in correspondence). But the CF exists both temporally and logically before S exists, and S cannot fail to choose as the CF says he will choose. The 'cannot' does not refer to some lack of *causal* power on the part of S. So, S, in one sense, has the 'ability' to choose. But the truth of the CF entails an external non-causal necessity in that the actual agent does not bring about, and cannot 'budge', the truth of the CF. For a similar point see Hasker (1989), 49–52.
36. Flint (1998, 165) defends there being CFs of libertarian freedom, holding that, if we reject them because we cannot see how they are made true, then we must deny divine foreknowledge of future free choices. But that does not follow. On the Anselmian account God, to Whom all time is present, knows your future choice because He 'sees' you choose it. This involves a preceding necessity, but not ENC necessity, since the origin of the necessity is your *a se* choice.
37. If one grants these CFs ontological status then Molinism entails the abandonment of classical theism in which all that exists is either God or created by God.
38. My argument holds even if D in the two propositions represents merely sufficiently similar circumstances, but I think for Flint's point D needs to represent the same circumstances.
39. I thank Thomas P. Flint and an anonymous reviewer for this journal for helpful criticism leading to revisions.

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