

# DEONTOLOGY AND TELEOLOGY IN MORALITY OF ANSELM OF CANTERBURY\*

## DEONTOLOGIA E TELEOLOGIA NA MORAL DE ANSELMO DE CANTERBURY

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to present the fundamental lines of the ethical thought of Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) developed in the trilogy of treatises dedicated to the study of Holy Scripture, *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* and *De Casu Diaboli*, as well as try to indicate the nature of his ethics: whether deontological or teleological-eudaimonist. To this end, I will first give a brief outline of Anselmian ethics and show how difficult it is to categorize it. In a second moment, I will list both arguments that allow categorizing it as deontological and arguments that allow categorizing it as teleological-eudaimonistic. In the end, I show that, although it does contain what we could call a theory of happiness, Anselmian ethical thought seems to be essentially deontological insofar as it is based on the concept of righteousness of the will or justice.

**Keywords:** Deontology. Teleology. Righteousness of the will. Happiness.

**Resumo:** O presente trabalho tem como objetivo apresentar as linhas fundamentais do pensamento ético de Anselmo de Cantuária (1033-1109) desenvolvido na trilogia de tratados dedicados ao estudo da Sagrada Escritura, *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* e *De Casu Diaboli*, bem como tentar indicar qual a natureza de sua ética: se deontológica ou se teleológico-eudaimonista. Para tanto, inicialmente, faremos um breve esboço da ética anselmiana e mostrarmos o quão difícil é categorizá-la. Em um segundo momento, arrolaremos tanto argumentos que permitem categorizá-la como deontológica quanto argumentos que permitem categorizá-la como teleológico-eudaimonista. Ao final, mostramos que embora não deixe de conter o que poderíamos chamar de uma teoria sobre a felicidade, o pensamento ético anselmiano parece ser essencialmente deontológico na medida em se fundamenta no conceito de retidão da vontade ou justiça.

**Palavras-chave:** Deontologia. Teleologia. Retidão da vontade. Felicidade.

Received: 10/04/21

Accepted for publication: 18/04/21

Published: 26/04/21



\* [N.T. JTS] O presente artigo é uma tradução autorizada pelos organizadores dos Anais do II Congresso Internacional de Filosofia Moral e Política, realizado em 2011, a saber: MONTES D'OCA, F. Deontologia e Teleologia na Moral de Anselmo de Cantuária. In: II Congresso Internacional de Filosofia Moral e Política, 2011, Pelotas. *Anais do II Congresso Internacional de Filosofia Moral e Política*. Pelotas: UFPel, 2011. p. 1-21. Disponível em: <http://cifmp.ufpel.edu.br/anais.php>

## I. Anselm's ethics and the problem of its nature

Notably recognized for the so-called ontological argument, which made history in the tradition of theoretical philosophy studies, Anselm of Canterbury, or of Aosta, 1033-1109, known as the Magnificent Doctor, left a legacy also to practical philosophy, particularly to ethics. Anselm's contribution to ethical thought is diffused throughout his *corpus*, but mainly in what he himself called a trilogy of treatises devoted to the study of Holy Scripture, written between the years 1080 and 1086: *De Veritate (DV)*, *De Libertate Arbitrii (DLA)* and *De Casu Diaboli (DCD)*.

In the so-called trilogy, composed in the format of a dialogue (above all because of the strong Augustinian influence in his thought), the Magnificent Doctor investigates fundamental concepts for the establishment of his ethics: truth, righteousness (of the will), justice, freedom, and grace, and deals with themes that since Augustine (354-430) are quite complex: the problem of the morally evil act, sin, and its origin and the doctrine of the fall. In general terms, while in the treatises *DV* and *DCD* Anselm is concerned with dealing with freedom, sin and its origin, and the fall of the Devil, in the first treatise of the trilogy, the *DV*, Anselm's goal is clearly to lay foundations for his ethics.

In this work, dedicated to dealing with truth, by analyzing its various seats, and justice (a kind of truth), Anselm defines truth as “the righteousness perceptible only by the mind” (*DV* XI, 191, 19s)<sup>1</sup>, and this by means of the connection he proposes between the concepts of *veritas* (truth) and *debitum* (debt), between the concepts of *debitum* and *rectitudo* (righteousness or correction), and finally between the concepts of *rectitudo* and *veritas*. For Anselm, when someone affirms what is from what is, he does nothing but what is due<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> “[...] *veritas est rectitudo mente sola perceptibilis.*” (*DV* XI, 191, 19s). Throughout the text, whenever quotations from Anselm's works appear, the following will be done: in the body of the text, the quotation in Portuguese and, in a footnote, the text in Latin, according to the critical edition by Francisco Salesio Schimitt, published by Thomas Neslon et Filios, Edinburgh, 1946 and reproduced in *L'Oeuvre d'Anselme de Cantorbéry*, Paris, Cerf, 1986-1994, under the direction of Michel Corbin. Quotations from Anselme's works that complete the meaning of the text will be made only in notes as follows: first the quotation in Portuguese and then the quotation from the Latin text

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *DV* II, 178, 8-12: “MASTER: What is a statement for? DISCIPLE: To signify that it is what it is. M: Therefore, it must? D: By all means. M: Therefore, when it means that it is what it is, it means what it must.” / “MAGISTER: Ad quid facta est affirmatio? DISCIPULUS: Ad significandum esse quod est. M: Hoc ergo debet. D: Certum est. M: Cum ergo significat esse quod est, significat quod debet.”

and when he does what is due, he does it with rectitude<sup>3</sup>, after all, right is nothing but what God Himself wills, for “nothing is right or convenient but what He Himself wills” (CDH I, XII, 70, 8)<sup>4</sup>, and since duty is nothing but the fulfillment of the divine will, it follows that if something does what it should, it also does it rightly.

Being a kind of rectitude or correctness, truth occurs not only with regard to the scope of theory, but also with regard to the field of practice and with regard to everything created by God, since all things owe something to the One who is the reason for their existence, from the fire that heats to the man who acts justly (cf. DV V, 181-182; XII). Therefore, besides there being truth in enunciation and thought, there is also truth in action (rational or otherwise), in the will, as well as in the essence of things. Among the various seats of truth investigated by the Magnificent Doctor in order to define truth, the one that is dealt with most extensively is truth in the will, which is nothing more than justice itself, presented by Anselm in a specific chapter, shortly after defining truth.

Broadly speaking, justice is about the righteousness of the will (*rectitudo voluntatis*), it is about the will that wills what it ought – “[a] justice, therefore, is not the righteousness of science nor the righteousness of action, but the righteousness of the will” (DV XII, 193, 12s)<sup>5</sup>. But he who wills must: (i) knowing what it wants, after all Anselm is thinking of a will that is rational (DV XII, 192, 30 - 193, 5), and never in a merely accidental way (DV XII, 193, 19-22); (ii) truly wanting what it ought, independently of any external coercion (DV XII, 193, 24-27); and, most importantly, (iii) willing what is due for what is due itself, and not because of something else, and this because in addition to willing something, *quid*, every rational act of the will wills that because of something, *propter quid*, which means that

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. DV II, 178, 13-26: “MASTER: But when it means what it ought to, it means righteously. DISCIPLE: So it is. M: When, therefore, it means righteously, the signification is straight. D: There is no doubt. M: Therefore, when it means that it is what it is, the signification is straight. D: So it follows. M: Likewise, when it means that it is what it is, the signification is true. D: Truly it is straight and true, when it means that it is what it is. M: Therefore, it is the same for it to be straight and true, i.e. , to mean that it is what it is. D: Truly it is the same thing. M: Therefore, there is no other truth for it but righteousness. D: I see clearly that truth is that righteousness.” / “MAGISTER: At cum significat quod debet, recte significat. DISCIPULUS: Ita est. M: Cum autem recte significat, recta est significatio. D: Non est dubium. M: Cum ergo significat esse quod est, recta est significatio. D: Ita sequitur. M: Item cum significat esse quod est, vera est significatio. Vere et recta et vera est, cum significat esse quod est. M: Idem igitur est illi et rectam et veram esse, id est significare esse quod est. D: Vere idem. M: Ergo non est illi aliud veritas quam rectitudo. D: Aperte nunc video veritatem hanc esse rectitudinem.”

<sup>4</sup> “[...] et nihil sit rectum aut decens nisi quod ipse vult.” (CDH I, XII, 70, 8).

<sup>5</sup> “Ergo non est ista iustitia rectitudo scientiae aut actionis, sed rectitudo voluntatis.” (DV XII, 193, 12s).

the rational act of the will comprises two moments: the what, *quid*, and the why, *cur*, and this *cur*, in the will being upright, is only justified if it is in function of nothing but its own duty and its own righteousness (DV XII, 193, 28 - 194, 26).

This reflection on the concept of *rectitudo voluntatis* is at the core of Anselm's moral thought. On it Anselm bases, e.g., his entire reflection on freedom in the treatise *DLA*, so that free is the one who has the power not to sin, i.e., the one who has the power to preserve the righteousness of his will (*DLA* I, III). But more curious than the concept of freedom, because it is prior to and the foundation for the development of Anselmian ethics, is the concept of righteousness of the will (or justice). In fact, this concept has lent itself to approximations with the moral of duties that Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) would propose only seven centuries after Anselm. To any reader of Kant, the idea that an act, in order to be moral, must be performed by its own moral duty sounds very familiar. But does the fact that it is based on the concept of righteousness of the will make Anselm's morality a morality of duties, a morality of a deontological character? Apparently yes, especially when, besides taking into account the *DV*'s treatment of the concept of righteousness of the will, we take into account what Anselm says, in the treatise *DCD*, about the Devil having wanted what he did not have and what he should not have (at that moment), and not what he should have and what he already had, i.e., about having chosen happiness over justice. This is historically relevant, since the last medieval philosopher, John Duns Scotus (1265/66-1308), is typically credited with developing, unlike the other medieval philosophers, a non-Aristotelian, duty-based conception of morality<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Unlike medieval eudaimonists such as Thomas Aquinas (1221-1274), who took the will as an intellectual appetite and understood that morality and the guarantee of freedom was due only to the (intellectual) appetite for an object taken as a good, John Duns Scotus understands that the intellectual appetite for happiness is neither free nor moral, in a relevant sense, because freedom involves openness to opposites, i. e., *multiple options at the moment of choice and not only the choice of what is advantageous or happiness-promoting. Freedom involves openness to opposites, i.e., multiple options at the moment of choice, and not just the option of choosing what is advantageous or happiness-promoting.* According to Duns Scotus, there are two fundamental inclinations of the will: the *affectio commodi*, or affection for the advantageous, identified by Duns Scotus with the intellectual appetite, and the *affectio iustitiae*, or affection for justice, thought by Duns Scotus to be the affection capable of guaranteeing the morality of actions, since it is the desire for justice that leads to the observance of the moral law. And this is because, unlike the medieval eudaimonists, Duns Scotus does not think that the norms of morality are defined in terms of their relation to happiness, nor does he agree that human beings have a natural inclination to a good that determines the content of morality. Duns Scotus, therefore, with his theory of the two affections, rejects the concern with happiness, the *affectio commodi*, and attributes everything that is properly moral to another affection, the *affectio iustitiae* (cf. *Ordinatio* II, d. 6, q. 2; II, d. 39, q. 2; III, d. 17, q. un.; and III, d. 26, q. un.).

However, it is necessary to further qualify the answer to the question whether Anselmian morality can be understood as deontological. Indeed, Anselm seems to anticipate Kant's morality of duties, yet one should not lose sight of the fact that Anselm's philosophical context is eminently eudaimonistic.

Anselm's predecessor morals (such as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Boethius, to mention only the most influential) are markedly teleological, that is, they are based on the ideas of happiness or beatitude, and not on the idea of a pure and simple moral duty. Moreover, there is certainly more compatibility of teleology than deontology with Christian thought, since it is the desire for a future union with God, and not exactly a moral duty, that is configured as the foundation and ultimate end of each and every moral act. And in addition to all this one cannot fail to keep in mind that in Anselmian thought itself there is room for an eudaimonism, both in specific places in the *corpus* and as a whole, which includes, besides the ethical context, the Christological and anthropological contexts of discussion. Indeed, we find in Anselm passages of what we might call a doctrine of beatitude in *Proslogion* XXIV-XXVI and *Monologion* LXIX-LXXI, as well as references to the notion of happiness scattered throughout the *corpus*. In the same way, then, as other medieval eudaimonists, Anselm devotes attention to the nature of happiness, latterly identified with a form of union with God, and argues that right action necessarily leads ultimately to happiness.

As can be seen, the question whether Anselmian ethics is deontological is a difficult one. There are both indications that it is and that it is not, *e.g.*, not only that there is in Anselm a doctrine of beatitude but also that, when the *corpus* is taken as a whole, the deontic aspects of his ethics are subsumed in such a doctrine to the extent that the notions of justice and goodness seem to be identified. However, the possible answer to the following question may indicate a path to be taken in understanding what is the status of Anselmian morality: Is it moral to observe the righteousness of the will in view of enjoying the happiness of a future union with God? Not at first. And for three fundamental reasons: (a) even if it is in view of the noblest of ends, enjoying union with God, the righteousness of

the will, according to the *DV* treatise, must be observed if not for its own sake <sup>7</sup>; (b) according to *Monologion* LXX, it is not a matter of mere personal merit to enjoy happiness, but a matter of worthiness in the eyes of God; happiness is a reward that God in his justice grants to those who love him and conduct their lives diligently in the path of righteousness of will, and therefore it is practically vain and uncertain to pursue something that is not earned and that seems to be merely prospective in Anselmian morality, in the same way that, due differences being noted, the notion of happiness in Kant is merely prospective, and not foundational; and c) if it were a matter of personal merit to attain happiness, the righteousness of the will would never be observed for its own sake, but always in view of, which contradicts the lesson of chapter XII of *DV*. On the other hand, however, in favor of the morality of the will of the one who observes righteousness in view of being happy with God two reasons may be adduced: a) the desire to be united to God and the observance of the righteousness of the will are one and the same thing, and therefore the one who desires happiness with God desires nothing other than to do what is right or due; and b) as Anselm says in the treatise *Cur Deus Homo* (*CDH*): “it is certain that the rational nature was made for the purpose of loving and choosing the Supreme Good above all other things” (*CDH* II, I, 97, 14s)<sup>8</sup> one can infer that above the purpose of observing the righteousness of the will is the pursuit of the supreme good and that therefore there is no sense in splitting morality from happiness. But even if by a different route, one has again reached the impasse about whether Anselmian morality is deontological or not.

Faced with the recurrent difficulties of reaching a conclusion about the status of Anselmian ethics, one possible reading would be to take it as deontological, but with eudaimonist (teleological) elements. This peculiar way of understanding Anselm's morality is exposed by Jeffrey E. Brower, in the article *Anselm on Ethics* (2004). According to Brower, although many interpreters suggest that Anselm's treatment of ethical questions consists of little more than a recapitulation of the ethical principles implicit in Holy Scripture or

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. *DV* XII, 194, 18-20.26: “DISCIPLE: In fact, the just man, when he wills what he ought, observes the uprightness of the will, while he can be called just for no other reason than his own uprightness. [...] MASTER: Justice is therefore the righteousness of the will observed for its own sake.” / “DISCIPULUS: Iustus namque cum vult quod debet, servat voluntatis rectitudinem non propter aliud, inquantum iustus dicendus est, quam propter ipsam rectitudinem. [...] MAGISTER: Iustitia igitur est rectitudo voluntatis propter se servata.”

<sup>8</sup> “Ad hoc itaque factam esse rationalem naturam certum est, ut summum bonum super omnia amaret et eligeret [...]”(CDH II, I, 97, 14s).

handed down by Christian thinkers such as Augustine and Boethius, Anselm's contribution to medieval ethical theory is considerable. For Brower, there is scattered throughout the Anselmian *corpus* “something that moral philosophers today would recognize as a worked-out ethical theory - which includes a sophisticated moral metaphysics, a moral semantics, and a moral psychology” (2004, p. 222) - which is distinctively characterized by combining deontological elements, in that it separates morality from happiness and emphasizes the need for moral agents to be motivated by justice rather than happiness, and teleological, in that it incorporates central elements of medieval eudaimonist ethical theory (2004, p. 222).

However, even assuming that Anselmian ethical theory incorporates elements of medieval eudaimonist theory, Brower argues that it is “deontological in nature” due to two fundamental reasons, found in the *DCD*: (i) in his discussion of the ultimate end of human action, Anselm subordinates the end of happiness to that of justice (righteousness of the will); it is justice, not happiness, that is the goal or purpose to which agents must aim unconditionally; (ii) Anselm claims that the agent's right action can be disadvantageous (*incommodum*) to him - a thesis denied by the eudaimonists, who hold that right action and advantage are inherently linked.

Along the same lines as Brower, Martin Tracey, in the article *De Casu Diaboli and the Deontological Character of Anselm's Moral Thought* (2011), analyzes an Anselmian claim that contradicts the central premise of eudaimonism and that allows Anselm's ethical theory to be classified as deontological. The claim he analyzes points to the conflict that can exist between an agent's moral obligation and what is required for the pursuit of his well-being. Unlike medieval eudaimonists, who conceive of morality and happiness as amalgamated and not liable to conflict, Anselm operates a split between morality and happiness and conceives of the possibility of conflict, so that acting with moral correctness may be disadvantageous to the agent and acting in view of happiness in no way implies acting with moral correctness. Tracey identifies this typical deontological argument in the treatise *DCD*, amidst the Anselmian explanation of how the Devil's fall and misfortune was possible, even though he had been created so that he could not fall and could enjoy the happiness of union with God.



In creating the angel, God endowed him in view that he would be perfectly happy with two different kinds of will: the will for beatitude or happiness, *voluntas beatitudinis*, and the will for justice, *voluntas iustitiae*. With the first because, without it, it would not be possible for him to be happy, after all nobody can be happy unless he wants happiness - “nobody can be happy having what he doesn't want or not having what he wants” (DCD XII, 255, 14s)<sup>9</sup>. And with the second because, without it, it would not be possible for the angel to achieve perfect happiness, which includes the belief that one should have the happiness one possesses, *i.e.*, includes the belief of a personal merit, which in turn occurs only in the one who wills justice, who wills the ought - “nor should he be happy who does not will justice” (DCD XII, 255, 17)<sup>10</sup>. Both kinds of will are a condition for perfect happiness. In isolation neither of them would be able to make someone happy. Only the will to happiness would not be happy because whoever possessed it would lack the will to justice and, according to Anselm, nobody “can and should be happy unless he wants to be happy and wants it justly” (DCD XIV, 258, 20s)<sup>11</sup>. And, on the other hand, the will to justice alone would not make anyone happy because it would not make anyone just, after all someone who wanted only justice would want it out of necessity and therefore could not be called just or unjust<sup>12</sup>.

And endowed by God with the wills of happiness and justice was the Devil endowed both to be happy and to be just. However, it was because he did not want to be happy in a righteous way that the Devil fell. In effect, the Devil's sin occurred because instead of wanting what he should have and what he had, justice, he wanted what he should not have and what he did not have, happiness. According to Anselm, by wanting what he should have wanted and what he had, the Devil would not have sinned: “he [the Devil] certainly should have wanted what he received from God, and he did not sin in wanting it” (DCD IV, 241, 8ff)<sup>13</sup>. However, it was precisely by wanting what he should not have

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<sup>9</sup> “Nullus namque beatus potest esse aut habendo quod non vult, aut non habendo quod vult” (DCD XII, 255, 14s).

<sup>10</sup> “Nec beatus debet esse qui non vult iustitiam” (DCD XII, 255, 17).

<sup>11</sup> “[...] nec potest nec debet esse beatus nisi velit et nisi iuste velit [...]” (DCD XIV, 258, 20s).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. DCD XIV, 258, 18-20: “Thus, neither by desiring only happiness, nor by desiring by necessity only what was convenient could [the angel] be called just or unjust [...]” / “Quoniam ergo nec solummodo volendo beatitudinem, Nec solummodo volendo quod convenit cum ex necessitate sic velit, iustus vel iniustus potest appellari [...]”

<sup>13</sup> “Vere debebat velle quod a deo acceperat, nec hoc volendo peccavit” (DCD IV, 241, 8s).



wanted at that moment and what he had not yet received from God that the Devil sinned and fell. Thinking to be happy and wanting to increase his happiness the Devil “inordinately wanted to be like God” (*DCD IV*, 241, 29ff)<sup>14</sup> and preferred the good of happiness to the good of justice. Within the Anselmian ethical system, however, happiness and justice do not seem to be equivalent goods. If they were, the Devil would neither have sinned nor fallen, but hierarchical goods so that justice takes precedence over happiness and so that one is even required to sacrifice one's own happiness and personal well-being or advantage for the sake of moral correction and the establishment of what is right to be done.

Undoubtedly, the primacy of justice over happiness in Anselmian ethics, emphasized by Tracey, is characteristic of any model with a deontological bias. However, are there not eudaimonistic elements in the ethical thought of the Magnificent Doctor? Unlike Brower, Tracey is convinced that there are not. According to Tracey, although Anselm sometimes seems to speak as a eudaimonist, this is not his position at all. In *Monologion* LXVIII and *CDH II*, I, Anselm says that God created rational beings with the intention of making them happy through their enjoyment of Him, and indeed this perspective closely resembles that of a eudaimonist, who conceives of the purpose of rational creatures in terms of happiness and for whom correctness must be identified with goodness or happiness. However, Tracey argues that happiness and righteousness cannot be identified because then the Devil's fall could not be explained. For Tracey, no rational creature can enjoy God unless it first loves him in the right way. According to Tracey, when Anselm says in the *CDH* that rational nature is made to love and choose the Supreme Good above all else, he does not believe that happiness consists in the realization of this purpose as such, but that its realization is a precondition for which happiness is the reward.

## II. The nature of Anselmian ethics: a brief discussion

Once the fundamental lines of Anselm's ethics are known and the problem about its nature is identified, we must now try to indicate whether his ethics is deontological or teleological-eudaimonistic in nature. To this end, we will list some arguments in favor of

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<sup>14</sup> “At cum hoc voluit quod deus illum velle nolebat, voluit inordinate similis esse deo” (*DCD IV*, 241, 29s).

each possible interpretation of the nature of Anselm's ethics and then try to indicate which one seems to capture the spirit of Anselm's thought.

In favor of a teleological-eudaimonistic interpretation we have the following fundamental arguments:

1. The just and the good cannot be separated, they are one and the same, so that to want the just is to want what is good, and vice versa.

2. Anselm, in the treatise *DCD*, talks about wanting happiness in the right way (wanting justice) and in the wrong way (abandoning justice)<sup>15</sup> and this seems to suggest that, ultimately, the foundation of the moral act resides in the notion of happiness, where this would consist in the *cur* (why) of the will (since every will besides having a *quid*, what, must also have a *cur*, why, after all we do not want anything but because we want it - *DV XII*, 193, 33 - 194, 4), and not in the notion of righteousness, so that to act with righteousness or justice is a means to achieve happiness, *i. e.*, it is a *quid in the will*, and not in the *will.e.*, it is a *quid in view of a cur which* is not identified with the *quid*, and not an act that by itself contains moral value.

3. There is, in Anselm, as in other medieval eudaimonists, a theory of happiness or beatitude, presented in *Monologion* LXIX-LXXI and *Proslogion* XXIV-XXVI, which points out that happiness or beatitude consists in the future union with God.

In favor of a deontological interpretation, on the other hand, we have the following arguments:

1. as in a standard deontological theory, Anselmian ethics assumes the primacy of the just over the good and separates morality from happiness.

2. As in a standard deontological theory, Anselmian ethics does not take as moral an action that is motivated by something other than the observance of the righteousness of the will or justice for its own sake, *i.e.*, the *quid* and the *cur* must be identified, not even if the motivating end of the action (*i.e.*, the *cur*) is the noblest of all: the desire for the future union with God.

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<sup>15</sup> "Nor should he be happy who does not want justice." / "Nec beatus debet esse qui non vult iustitiam." (*DCD XII*, 255, 17).

3. As in a standard deontological theory, to act correctly may mean to act sacrificing personal welfare (happiness), *i.e.*, to act correctly may be disadvantageous to the agent.<sup>16</sup>

Even if it were not implausible to suppose the identification between what is just and what is good, an identification that is recurrent among Anselm's predecessor philosophers, it does not seem possible to link what is just or right and what is good or advantageous in a way that identifies them. Indeed, if it were possible to do so, the Devil would never have sinned by wanting what he did not yet have: happiness. There is no bi-implication between what is just and what is good. Willing for justice and righteousness implies the happiness of the agent, however, willing for happiness does not imply the righteousness or rightness of the agent's actions. And this lesson becomes very clear in chapter IV of the treatise *DCD* when Anselm points out that the Devil sinned by wanting to be happy in the wrong way, wanting what he did not yet have and what he should not yet want, happiness, and not what he already had and what he should want, justice<sup>17</sup>.

And already this indication of the impossibility of identification between what is just and what is good seems to seriously compromise the possibility of taking Anselmian

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<sup>16</sup> This argument is adduced by Martin Tracey in favor of a deontological interpretation of Anselmian moral thought, as being the argument capable of defining whether a moral is deontological or teleological-eudaimonistic. As we have seen, for Tracey, Anselm arguably denies the basic premise of eudaimonism that to act correctly implies acting in a way that produces well-being and happiness, since the good and the just are not identified, when he points out that the Devil, in order to have acted correctly, should have put aside his desire for happiness, that is, should have given up the advantageous in view of the just.

<sup>17</sup> "MASTER: Wanting therefore what he ought not yet to have, [the Devil] forsook righteousness, and so sinned. DISCIPLE: So it follows, but I ask what he wanted. M.: Whatever he should have wanted. D.: Really he should have wanted whatever he had received from God, and he did not sin in wanting it. M.: So he wanted something that he did not have what he had received from God, and he did not sin in wanting it. D.: Therefore, he wanted something that he did not yet have and nor should he have wanted it, just as Eve wanted to be like God before God wanted it. D.: I cannot deny that this also follows. M.: Undoubtedly, he could want nothing but justice or his well-being. Indeed, from well-being takes place happiness, which every rational nature wants. D.: This we can know for ourselves, that we want nothing unless we think it just or pleasant. M.: But wanting justice cannot sin. D.: That is true. M.: So you sinned by wanting something pleasant, which you neither had nor ought to want yet, and which, no doubt, could be useful in increasing your happiness." / "MAGISTER: Volendo igitur aliquid quod velle tunc non debeat, deseruit iustitiam, et sic peccavit. DISCIPULUS: Ita sequitur, sed quaero quid voluit. M.: Quidquid habebat, debebat velle. D.: Vere debebat velle quod a deo acceperat, nec volendo peccavit. M.: Voluit igitur aliquid quod non habebat nec tunc velle debebat, sicut Eva voluit esse similis diis, priusquam deus hoc vellet. D.: Nec hoc ita sequi negare quo. M.: Nihil autem velle poterat nisi iustitiam aut commodum. Ex commodis enim constat beatitudo, quam vult omnis rationalis natura. D.: In nobis hoc possumus cognoscere, qui nihil volumus nisi quod iustum aut commodum putamus. M.: Iustitiam vero volendo peccare non potuit. D.: Verum est. M.: Peccavit ergo volendo aliquod commodum, quod nec habebat nec tunc velle debuit, quod tamen ad augmentum illi beatitudinis esse poterat." (*DCD* IV, 241, 4-20).

ethics as teleological-eudaimonist, because the impossibility of identification between the righteousness of the will or justice and the happiness or well-being of the moral agent not only obliterates the acceptance of a basic premise of eudaimonism but also seems to imply the acceptance of a premise very dear to deontologies, namely, the primacy of the just over the good. In this way it already seems possible to identify the first argument in favor of deontology as Anselmian.

In fact, unlike teleologically oriented morals that conceive that the rightness or justness of action resides in the morality of the end in view, Anselmian ethics is totally alien to this thesis. The guarantee of rightness or justness of action resides in doing *p* under the justification that *p* is due, and not because *p* is a means to *q*. And this would be so even if *q* were a morally good end or even if it were the noblest of all ends: the future union with God. Differently, e.g., from Aristotle, the highest representative of teleologism, who conceives the morality of action linked to the morality of the end in view, to happiness, Anselm seems to operate a split between morality and happiness and, to this end, establishes the primacy of the just over the good, so that only what is just is morally good, what is right and just, and so that it may happen that acting justly or righteously is disadvantageous to the agent. And this is precisely why Anselm points out that the Devil wanted to be happy in the wrong way: by setting aside justice. There is, so to speak, a method to pursue happiness, but not even in this method is the desire for happiness included, because such a desire inevitably compromises the morality of the action.

And, in fact, if the first argument in favor of a deontological interpretation is an Anselmian argument, consequently the second and the third arguments will be as well, because they are nothing more than unfolding and consequences of a basic premise that proposes a split between morality and happiness, given the non-identity between what is just and what is good. As we have just shown, the primacy of the just over the good and the consequent sacrifice of one's own well-being for the sake of observing the righteousness of the will obliterates the possibility of wanting the due in view of. Therefore, morality resides in wanting the due because it is due and for itself, so that the *quid* and the *cur* of the will are identified, and not that one wants the *quid* because of a *cur* that is not identical to the *quid*, where the *quid* consists in the righteousness of the will. This is made very clear by Anselm in the *DV* treatise when he points out that whoever wants what he ought because

of vainglory does not act justly (*DV XII*, 193, 28-32)<sup>18</sup>, and indeed, if the form of the argument is valid *simpliciter*, as it seems to be, it puts under suspicion not only the morality of an action performed in view of a bad or vile end, such as the case of vainglory, but the morality of an action performed in view of a good or noble end. And not only that, but an action also performed in view of is an action that has its freedom compromised, since the freedom thought by Anselm, of a clearly normative and theological meaning, consists in the power to preserve the righteousness of the will or justice for its own sake, that is, the power not to sin (*DLA III*, 212, 19s, 22s)<sup>19</sup>.

We can, therefore, say that the three basic premises of deontology seem to be present in Anselm's moral thought. But we still must analyze the last two arguments in favor of a teleological-eudaimonistic interpretation of Anselmian ethics, namely, the one that points out that happiness seems to be the foundation of the moral act, since every will has besides a *quid* a *cur*, and the one that deals with the existence of a theory of happiness or beatitude in Anselm.

Regarding the second argument in favor of a teleological-eudaimonistic understanding of Anselmian ethical thought, two reasons, already known, can be adduced to the contrary. The fact that every will has a why and that Anselm himself stresses that “we want nothing absolutely except because we want it” (*DV XII*, 194, 3s) does not<sup>20</sup> commit him in any way to accepting that this why is some notion of happiness. Really, the identification of a *cur* for the will would be a good start to identifying a teleology in Anselm. However, already in the first treatise of his trilogy, *DV*, Anselm obliterates any possibility that the *cur of the will* is identified with something other than the *quid of the will*, where the *quid* consists in the righteousness of the will or justice. The ever-recurring statement that

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<sup>18</sup> “MASTER: He who feeds a poor starving man because of vainglory, wills to will what he wills. Indeed, for that he is praised, because he wants to do what he must. However, what do you judge of this? DISCIPLE: His righteousness is not to be praised, and for that reason it is not sufficient to the righteousness we seek.” / “MAGISTER. : Qui cibatur pauperem esurientem propter inamem gloriam, vult se debere velle quod vult. Idcirco namque laudatur, quia vult facere quod debet. Quid itaque de isto iudicas? DISCIPULUS. : Non est huius rectitudo laudanda, et ideo non sufficit ad iustitiam quam quaerimus.” (*DV XII*, 193, 28-32).

<sup>19</sup> “[...] this freedom of will is the power to conserve the righteousness of the will by its own righteousness. [...] Therefore, it is already clear that free will is nothing other than the agency that can conserve the righteousness of the will by its own righteousness.” / “[...] illa libertas arbitrii est potestas servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem. [...] Iam ergo clarum est liberum arbitrium non esse aliud quam arbitrium potens servare rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem.” (*DLA III*, 212, 19s, 22s).

<sup>20</sup> “Omnino namque nihil volumus, nisi sit cur velimus.” (*DV XII*, 194, 3s).

the righteousness of the will or justice must be observed for its own sake seems not only to be a feature to emphasize the importance of observing the righteousness of the will or justice, but above all a clause that requires the observance of the righteousness of the will for the sake of nothing other than the righteousness of the will itself. This means, then, that it is not the notion of happiness that counts as the foundation of the moral act - on the contrary, as we shall soon see, it is only the deserved reward of the just - but no other than the righteousness of the will itself.

And let us look, finally, at the last argument put forward in favor of a teleological interpretation of Anselmian moral thought. As can be detected in *Proslogion* XXIV-XXVI, *Monologion* LXIX-LXXI, and sparse references throughout his *corpus*, Anselm does work with a notion of happiness, which is always ultimately identified with a form of union with God, and points out that the agent who retains the righteousness of the will or justice will consequently be deserving of the just reward dispensed by God: the enjoyment of happiness or beatitude. But in no way does the treatment of the concept of happiness as well as its link with the concept of righteousness as a just reward commit Anselm to a teleologism or place under suspicion the foundations of his articulate deontology erected around the concept of righteousness of the will or justice. In fact, the notion of Anselmian happiness is compatible with the proposed deontology. Anselmian happiness does not consist in the foundation of the moral act, but in the reward of which the just man is deserving, i.e., happiness is not foundational, but prospective in Anselm's proposed morality. If I do what I ought because I ought, then I can expect one day to be rewarded by the just dispenser of goods. Happiness is therefore a good which I can expect to receive, and never a good which I must pursue. The pursuit of happiness compromises the morality of action, because it inevitably causes the righteousness of the will or justice not to be guarded by itself.

From this brief passage through such arguments, then, we can indicate that Anselmian morality is deontological in nature, but with eudaimonistic elements. As Jeffrey Brower aptly suggests, Anselm proposes an ethics that is essentially deontological, but which is not dissociated from the medieval eudaimonist tendency. His ethics is not teleological or consequentialist, and not even in essence eudaimonist. It is deontological, and therefore by no means teleological or consequentialist, but it admits without encumbrance to its typical deontologism a notion of happiness or beatitude. The righteous

person may expect the reward of a happy life with God, but it is by no means permissible for him to base his morality on the pursuit of such a good. It is up to God, and God alone, to reward the righteous for their diligent life lived on the path of righteousness.



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