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How Anselm Separates Morality from Happiness

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Abstract. Contemporary scholarship is divided over whether Anselm maintains a version of Eudaemonism. The debate centers on the question of whether the will for justice only moderates the will for happiness or, instead, provides a distinct end for which to act. Because of two key passages, various scholars hold that Anselm maintained elements of medieval Eudaemonism. In this article, I argue that Anselm separates morality from happiness, and I provide a sketch of his alternative view. First, I argue against some recent perspectives that Anselm maintained Eudaemonism. To do so, I provide a non-Eudaemonist reading of the two key passages and show how Eudaemonist readings are lacking in different respects. Second, I examine what this argument means for Anselm's understanding of happiness and moral obligation. While there are some Eudaemonist themes in Anselm's thinking, he flatly denies and revises aspects of the system.

Key Words: Anselm, Justice, Happiness, Morality, Eudaemonism, Will, Ethics.

I. Introduction

Contemporary scholarship is divided over whether Anselm maintains a version of Eudaemonism. The debate centers on the question of whether the will for justice only moderates the will for happiness or, instead, provides a distinct end for which to act. In *De casu diaboli* (*DCD*)¹⁴, Anselm seems to claim that the will for justice provides a distinct end for which to

act.¹ Elsewhere in *DCD* 12, Anselm appears to claim that whatever a rational agent wills, it wills for the sake of happiness. Because of these two key passages, various scholars hold that Anselm maintained elements of medieval Eudaemonism. In this article, I argue that Anselm separates morality from happiness and I provide a sketch of his alternative view. To do so, I first argue against some recent perspectives that Anselm maintained Eudaemonism. I provide a non-Eudaemonist reading of the two key passages and show how Eudaemonist readings are lacking in different respects. Second, I examine what this argument means for Anselm's understanding of happiness and moral obligation. While there are some Eudaemonist themes in Anselm's thinking, he flatly denies and revises aspects of the system.

I shall proceed by outlining several relevant claims that are standard in Medieval Eudaemonism. I then outline Anselm's relevant positions and examine why some authors consider him to be a Eudaemonist. After objecting to these readings, I turn to examine precisely how Anselm separates morality from happiness. While the two arguments are complementary, the first aim of showing that Anselm was not a Eudaemonist is not dependent upon the second aim of providing a fuller sketch of his system.

II. Medieval Eudaemonism

In this section, I will address several aspects of Eudaemonism that are relevant to the present discussion. While there are perhaps additional theses to this way of thinking, and

¹ All translations of Anselm are my own from F.S. Schmitt, ed., *S. Anselmi: Opera Omnia.*, Electronic, vol. 1–5, 6 vols. (Charlottesville, Virginia: InteLex Corporation, 2002). In order, I cite Anselm's book and chapter followed by Schmitt's book and page number.

while each Medieval author might take these up in different ways, the following rough sketch of Eudaemonism will suffice to discern whether Anselm adhered to this position.² These are:

Eudaemonist Principle: That everything we will, we ultimately will for the sake of our own happiness;

Realization of Kind-nature: That happiness/flourishing is coextensive with fulfillment or realization of one's kind-nature;

Moral Obligation: That the fulfillment of one's kind-nature is coextensive with fulfilling one's moral obligation.

A word on each of these. The first thesis that all individuals only will their own happiness is generally known as the "Eudaemonist principle."³ The *Eudaemonist Principle* is not merely the claim that everyone desires to be happy at some point in time and in some fashion. This much is uncontroversial. The *Eudaemonist Principle* rather claims that everything a rational agent wills, it wills for the sake of its own happiness. There is exactly one final end for which to act, and that end is one's own happiness. Other objects might be willed as a means to some

² For an overview of this system and some adherents, cf. Bonnie Kent, "The Moral Life," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy*, ed. A.S. McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 231–53; Jeff Steele, "Happiness," in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics*, ed. Thomas Williams, Cambridge Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 127–49; Jeffrey E. Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 222–56.

³ Kent, "The Moral Life," 235.

further end, such as food for health. Yet, on pain of regress, there must be some ultimate or final end for which to act. Happiness is just such an end that is willed for its own sake.⁴ Whether it be food, sex, play, or study, each of these activities or objects is eventually willed for the sake of the individual's own happiness. On this view, it is hard to imagine that someone could act because he believes that the action is right or because he loves another individual for that same individual's sake.

The second thesis, *Realization of Kind-Nature*, clarifies the content of happiness. On this view, all created individuals are members of a kind and exemplify a kind-nature. Exemplifying a kind-nature implies that one has a certain end or telos associated with being a member of the kind. Additionally, one has corresponding capacities to achieve the prescribed end. When an individual actualizes her capacities and reaches the prescribed end, this is understood as fulfilling her kind-nature. So, to use a standard example, a token knife exemplifies the kind-nature of being a knife. It exemplifies this by having a purpose or end, to cut things, and has corresponding capacities to achieve this end, such as the capacity to be sharp. When this knife is sharp, it exemplifies its kind-nature well and achieves its end to a certain degree. Crucially, an entity can exemplify a kind-nature to a greater or lesser degree. A sharp knife will exemplify its kind-nature and achieve its end well, whereas a dull knife will fail to achieve its end as well. The same applies to human beings. When a human acts rationally and pursues happiness and virtue (for example), the human realizes her kind-nature better than a human who is irrational and full of vice. The human being has corresponding capacities such as the intellect and will to achieve this

⁴ Eudaemonists will also normally maintain that happiness is 'complete' and cannot be willed for another end. Such a qualification is not presently salient. Cf. Steele, "Happiness," 128–9.

end. In actualizing the capacities properly, the human being realizes her kind-nature. On this view, then, to truly pursue one's happiness and flourishing is coextensive with pursuing one's self-actualization.

An important implication of the first two theses is that true happiness is not subject to the whims of desire or reducible to personal preference. While each individual only ever wills something for the sake of happiness, this individual might be mistaken about what will genuinely contribute to her happiness. For example, one might believe that eating several pints of ice cream in one sitting will contribute to her happiness, though she is objectively mistaken. The criterion for any object or activity to contribute to one's happiness is whether the object or activity will contribute to one's overall flourishing or well-being (*Realization of Kind-Nature*). One may very well be mistaken, but in being mistaken she is still willing something for the sake of happiness.

Finally, the third thesis claims that fulfilling one's kind-nature exhausts one's moral obligations. There is exactly one moral obligation, and that moral obligation supervenes upon fulfilling one's nature and the actions that promote one's own happiness and self-actualization. One could make this thesis a bit milder and maintain that all other moral obligations (if there are any) are fulfilled only if the agent simultaneously fulfills this moral obligation to actualize one's kind membership. This weaker position would allow room for the view that God is the *summum bonum* while claiming that one can will God and will the actualization of one's kind-nature. I will address this possibility below in the final section. However, to provide a stark contrast, *Moral Obligation* will presently involve the stronger claim. Much like the *Eudaemonist Principle*, *Moral Obligation* also makes it difficult to imagine someone acting exclusively or mainly for the love of another or for the sake of duty.

If Anselm subscribes to Eudaemonism, then he would subscribe to many if not all of

these claims. Of key concern is whether Anselm maintains that happiness is the only end for which to act (*Eudaemonist Principle*) and whether a human being only has one moral obligation that supervenes upon the actions that promote one's well-being and self-actualization (*Moral Obligation*). Anselm states ideas that are similar to these theses. I argue that, while Anselm retains some elements of the Eudaemonistic picture such as a general view of *Realization of Kind-Nature*, he denies the *Eudaemonist Principle* and *Moral Obligation*.

III. A Thought Experiment and Two Problematic Passages

Most of the debate over whether Anselm was a Eudaemonist centers on the question of whether the will for justice merely moderates the will for happiness or, instead, provides a distinct end. If the will for justice merely moderates the will for happiness, then Anselm would maintain that there is only one end for which to act, and further, that one's moral obligation supervenes upon this will for happiness. This would construe Anselm as a Eudaemonist. In contrast, if Anselm denies that happiness is the only end for which to act, then he at least denies the *Eudaemonist Principle* if not also *Moral Obligation*. After all, justice would be a clear candidate for the disposition that one is morally obliged to follow. To become clear about this debate, I shall introduce Anselm's concept of the will and the thought experiment in which it occurs. There are two problematic passages that I shall address in this thought experiment.

Anselm proposes a unique thought experiment in his treatise *De casu diaboli* where the teacher asks the student to imagine God constructing an angel part by part. The thought experiment begins in *DCD* 12 and roughly ends with the close of *DCD* 14. *Inter alia*, Anselm asks the students to imagine God creating an angel part by part to understand how the will operates and, further, what it takes for a rational agent to commit free and morally significant

actions.⁵

In this thought experiment, God has given the angel under construction the power or faculty to will something but has not yet given it a motivational disposition. Without this motivational disposition, the angel cannot begin to will something. Anselm writes, “Whatever moves itself to will something first moves itself to move.” (*DCD* 12; SI, 254) Despite the angel being “apt to will,” the angel cannot move itself to will anything if the angel is not disposed to will something. One might think that, if the angel under construction has the power to will, the angel simply needs to initiate a volition. However, Anselm reasons, specific and occurrent volitions cannot initiate movement here without a vicious regress. Imagine that the angel has the power of the will and a volition to have another occurrent volition for some object. Has the angel moved itself? The angel would have to have a second volition for that first volition, and yet a third volition for the second volition, *ad infinitum*. Anselm concludes this first portion of the thought experiment with the following: “The one who wills nothing, therefore, can in no way move itself to will.” (*DCD* 12; S I 254) So, only when the angel has a basic disposition to will something, such as happiness, can the angel have a discrete volition.

Anselm has not yet articulated the names for the neat distinctions of will that he is relying upon in *DCD* 12 which he later articulates in *De concordia (DC)* 3.11. In the later dialogue, he articulates that there are three senses to the term ‘will’: the faculty, the *affectiones* or dispositions, and the specific volitions or uses of the will. The faculty just is the power and

⁵ While Anselm is clear that an action is morally significant only if it is free (or spontaneous), he also holds that persons who are born with original sin are accountable. For more on this, cf. *De Conceptu Virginali (DCV)*.

instrument by which the agent moves, just as reason is the instrument for reasoning and sight the instrument for seeing. We use these respective instruments when we see, reason, and will. The *affectiones* are the basic inclinations and motivations towards particular ends. These dispositions allow us to have volitions (the uses of the instrument). Anselm writes, “The affection (*affectio*) of this instrument is that by which the instrument itself is so disposed to will something—even when it is not thinking about what it wills—that if the thing comes to mind, the instrument wills it just then or in the proper time.” (*DC* 3.11; *SII*, 279) These dispositions are not occurrent desires for any particular object; rather, they are basic desires toward an end which dispose an individual to have volitions and respond to specific objects of desire. For Anselm, we can ultimately explain every action or desire in terms of these basic inclinations. Like the power of the will, these dispositions are present even though a person does not have a specific volition. Anselm uses the example of a just person sleeping who is still disposed to will justice. Finally, the use of the will just is a volition that aligns with the end of the disposition. Given this taxonomy, there is good reason to believe that Anselm is distinguishing in *DCD* 12 between the instrument of the will and the notion that it does not yet have a disposition to act for anything.⁶ The angel has been made with a will as a power but is not yet apt to will anything. It follows that the angel cannot yet *use* the will.

Now, for Anselm, there are two basic *affectiones* of the uncorrupted will: one for

⁶ This is the standard consensus. Cf. Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm, Great Medieval Thinkers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 180; Katherin A. Rogers, “Anselm on the Ontological Status of Choice,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2012): 183–97, at 192.

happiness (*commodum*), and one for justice (*iustitia*) (DC 3.11). The will for happiness is the disposition to goods that will serve to increase the agent's happiness and flourishing (whether perceived or actual). The will for justice, which is also known as rectitude, is the disposition to will rectitude of will for its own sake and the will that one ought to follow (more below). Notice that the wills are structured such that they orient an agent toward an end—they provide a reason for action. Of course, one of the claims under consideration is whether there are two separate ends or one single end for which to act.

Continuing the thought experiment, the teacher asks the student to consider whether, once God has given the angel the *affectio* for happiness, the angel can will anything other than happiness. The answer is 'no.' Since the angel can will nothing aside from happiness, anything it would will would be for the sake of happiness.

Anselm's position does not mean that the angel would necessarily will any object that is presented to it and that would increase its happiness. Rather, his position means that even if the one-willed angel were to deny the object, it would have to be for the sake of happiness.⁷ Otherwise, whenever the agent perceives something as good, it would immediately and necessarily will it. With few exceptions, even animals do not act like this. Though a horse may perceive that eating grass is good, it does not entail that the horse will necessarily eat grass should it encounter the grass. So too if a human agent with only the will for happiness is presented with additional food after a meal, say, a bagel (x). She can genuinely will $\sim x$ if she perceives this would achieve greater happiness. For Anselm, nevertheless, the one-willed angel is

⁷ For an argument to the contrary, see Tomas Ekenberg, "Voluntarism, Intellectualism, and Anselm on Motivation," *Philosophical Topics* 44, no. 1 (2016): 59–74.

under a type of necessity insofar as an action can only be done for the sake of happiness. The one-willed angel refrains from the object only if it is for the sake of happiness.

In line with this point about the necessity of willing when the angel only has one *affectio*, Anselm distinguishes between the end and the specific object of desire that will achieve this end. (*DCD* 13; *SI*, 256) When some object *x* presents itself to the angel, and the angel knows it will produce happiness, the angel can yet choose $\sim x$ on the condition it perceives $\sim x$ is equally or more conducive to happiness.⁸ The ‘necessity’ that the angel is under is the necessity to will things for happiness, a necessity of a final end.⁹ For present purposes, Anselm’s point is that the angel-under-construction is neither willing freely nor willing in a morally praiseworthy way. Since the angel only has what God has given it to will, it is merely acting according to its nature and no differently than a horse that grazes grass.

Anselm classifies the necessity of the one-willed angel as a type of determination based on the nature of the object in question, an antecedent necessity. Since all non-rational entities act according to the natures God has given them, there is a type of external compulsion involved in the actions. As Visser and Williams note, “Anselm can think of the natural activity of creatures as exhibiting compulsion, and thus antecedent necessity, because that natural activity is a

⁸ I am presently assuming that rational agents do not choose a lesser goods among others, all things being equal, though such an assumption is not necessary.

⁹ On this dilemma, especially as Scotus understands and develops Anselm, cf. Tobias Hoffman, “Intellectualism and Voluntarism,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Robert Pasnau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 414–27, at 424–5.

consequence of the nature of those creatures—and that nature was received from God.”¹⁰ This applies as much to the horses grazing and the heavens revolving (Cf. *CDH* 2.17) as it does to the one-willed angel. For this reason, Anselm repeatedly remarks that the angel simply must will what he has “received the power to will,” and that this one will is “the work and gift of God.” (*DCD* 13; *SI*, 257) A free action (something Anselm calls spontaneous), in contrast, is not fully explained with reference to the angel’s nature but one in which the agent is the genuine source of action.

While Anselm is still considering the one-willed angel, he states something that sounds very similar to the *Eudaemonist Principle*. For ease of reference, I will call this the HAPPINESS PASSAGE:

No one is compelled to will something either by fear or the idea of something disadvantageous (*incomodi*), or excited by the love of something advantageous (*comodi*), unless he first has the natural will (*naturalem voluntatem*) of shunning the disadvantageous or of having the advantageous, by which the will moves itself to other volitions.... Now he cannot be happy unless he wills to be happy (I am not speaking now of the happiness (*beatitudinem*) in accordance with justice, but rather the happiness that everyone wills, even the unjust). After all, everyone wills his own well-being... we commonly speak of two goods and two evils that are contrary to these. One good is that which is called ‘justice,’ whose contrary is the evil of injustice. Another good is what, it seems, can be called ‘the advantageous’ (*commodum*), and the evil opposed to this is the ‘disadvantageous’ (*incommodum*). Not everyone wills justice and not everyone flees

¹⁰ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 152.

injustice, whereas not only every rational nature, but everything that is aware of it wills the advantageous and avoids the disadvantageous. For no one wills something unless he regards it as advantageous for himself in some way. In this way, everyone wills well-being for himself, and no one wills ill-being (*male esse*) for himself. (*DCD* 12; *SI*, 254–5)

Notice several aspects of the HAPPINESS PASSAGE. First, Anselm reaffirms that the angel needs a disposition or affection to have a discrete volition and act. This comes as no surprise since the passage is midway through the thought experiment when the angel has only the will for happiness. Second, Anselm ties together advantage with happiness, and further ties together happiness with perceived or actual well-being. Third, Anselm appears to affirm the *Eudaemonist Principle* near the end of the passage when he claims that “no one wills something unless he regards it as advantageous for himself in some way.” Next, despite this apparent affirmation, Anselm distinguishes between the happiness that comes with being justice and natural happiness. That is, there might be an additional end that comes with justice because the happiness to which this corresponds is not equivalent to natural happiness. Indeed, near the beginning of the passage, Anselm classifies the will for happiness as ‘natural’ and makes no such specification for the will for justice.

The present analysis suffices to show that the HAPPINESS PASSAGE can be used in favor of Eudaemonist readings.¹¹ Below, I will argue that the HAPPINESS PASSAGE does not

¹¹ Some authors take passages in *CDH* as representative of the claim that happiness is the only end for which to act. However, the passages (*CDH* I.10 & II.1) do not clearly state this position, so I choose the present passage as representative. Cf. Katherin Rogers, “St. Anselm of Canterbury on God and Morality,” *The Monist* 105, no. 3 (June 14, 2022): 309–20, at 314.

mean that Anselm subscribes to the *Eudaemonist Principle*. Before doing so, I shall detail the second passage in which Anselm seems to subscribe to Eudaemonism.

Anselm reverses the thought experiment about the angel with only the will for happiness: would the angel be morally praiseworthy and act freely if it were only given a will (*affectio*) for justice? Since the angel could not refrain from willing something only for the sake of justice, it would also be under a type of necessity. Anselm writes:

Therefore, the angel would have neither a just nor an unjust will. Just as when the angel had only received the will for happiness and the will would not be unjust if it were to will something unfitting since it was not able to *not* will this, so too if the angel were only given the will for justice and it were to will something fitting, the will would not be just since he had only received this will and was not able to will anything else. (*DCD* 14; *SI*, 258)

Just as when the angel only had the will for happiness, the angel with only the will for justice is under a type of necessity. For this reason, Anselm maintains, the angel does not commit free and morally significant actions in either of these states.

How does the addition of the second *affectio* allow the angel to have a volition spontaneously, of itself, and without external compulsion or reference primarily to the nature?

Another who would use the present passage is, for example, Ekenberg, who maintains that, for Anselm, rational agents are “benefit maximizers.” Tomas Ekenberg, “Anselm and the Place of Happiness in Ethics,” in *New Readings of Anselm of Canterbury’s Intellectual Methods*, ed. Eileen Sweeney and John T. Slotemaker, vol. 6, *Anselm Studies and Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 166–79, at 173.

When God gives the angel under construction two *affectiones*, it can moderate the will for happiness and generate a choice that is not entirely determined by its nature. Anselm writes what I will call the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE:

Therefore, since he cannot be called just or unjust for only willing happiness or for only willing what is fitting when he wills in such a way out of necessity, it is necessary that God creates both wills in him such that he both wills to be happy and wills justly. This added justice tempers (*temperet*) the will for happiness, so as to cut off the will's excess, though it does not eliminate the power to exceed. (*DCD* 14; *SI*, 258)¹²

This is the second key passage on which interpreters diverge in their readings. As one can see, there is room for debate over whether the added will for justice *merely* tempers the will for happiness and does not add a new end for which to act. If this were the case, two conclusions would follow. First, Anselm would subscribe to the *Eudaemonist Principle*. For the wills for justice and happiness exhaust the motivational dispositions. Since only happiness supplies an end for which to act, then all rational agents only ever act for the end of happiness. Second, Anselm would maintain *Moral Obligation*. On Anselm's view, the will for justice is the will on which a moral obligation supervenes. Since happiness (i.e., the fulfillment of one's kind-nature) would be the only end, it would follow that the fulfillment of one's kind-nature is coextensive with

¹² Thomas Williams adds 'wills *it* justly', referring back to the 'beatius,' though the Latin contains no direct object, only '*recte velit*.' Anselm, *Basic Writings*, ed. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2007), 195. Rogers takes the adverb to be "crucial," but it is not clear that such a reading, even if the adverb refers to willing happiness justly, rules out the thesis that justice is a distinct end. Cf. Rogers, "St. Anselm of Canterbury on God and Morality," 315.

fulfilling one's moral obligation.

IV. How Anselm Separates Morality from Happiness

Some authors think that the addition of justice only allows for the angel to will happiness correctly and does not add a separate end for which to act.¹³ These authors, such as Tomas Ekenberg and Katherin Rogers, argue that happiness is the only end for which to act. To support this position, Rogers maintains that there can be a conflict between the will for justice and benefit, but whenever humans will the will for justice, humans will it *as* benefit. In other words, justice is willed because it is a benefit.¹⁴ Similarly, Ekenberg argues that if justice is “itself a good thing and in itself beneficial to its possessor, then saying that we want justice because it is beneficial seems to convey little more than an expression of the goodness of justice.”¹⁵ That is, willing justice for its own sake seems to be convertible with willing it as a benefit.

While interesting, there are two reasons that this argument is unsound. First, this interpretation would collapse any real distinction between the will for justice and the will for happiness. It would require us to translate “willing rectitude of will for its own sake” as “for the

¹³ In addition to the cited literature, cf. Rogers, “St. Anselm of Canterbury on God and Morality”; Thomas Williams, “Anselm on Free Choice and Character Formation,” *Faith and Philosophy* 34, no. 2 (2017): 223–34; Eileen Sweeney, “Anselm on Evil and Eudamionism,” in *New Readings of Anselm of Canterbury's Intellectual Methods*, ed. Eileen Sweeney and John T. Slotemaker, vol. 6, Anselm Studies and Texts (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 180–92.

¹⁴ Katherin Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 67.

¹⁵ Ekenberg, “Anselm and the Place of Happiness in Ethics,” 174.

sake of (willing) (appropriately) tempered happiness.”¹⁶ Yet, because Anselm is clear that a will is just only if it wills rectitude of will for its own sake and uses this precise language, such an interpretation misses the mark (*De veritate* 12). Second, in order to achieve the conclusion that justice is convertible with benefit, Ekenberg conflates the consequences of willing justice (that it can be beneficial for the individual) with the nature of the end, that justice is a good. Since the benefit is a consequence of willing justice, to will justice for its own sake does not mean willing it for its consequences (however necessary those consequences might be). While it might be the case that an agent must see justice as valuable in some way to have any type of motivation, this claim is not equivalent to Ekenberg’s claim that we will justice as a benefit and as the “*fulfillment* of self-interest.”¹⁷ Consequently, there is not a good reason to collapse the distinction between willing justice for its own sake and enjoying the consequential benefits.

Rogers offers a final reason to believe that the addition of justice does not add a separate end. She maintains that, just before the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE, Anselm does not reverse the thought experiment.¹⁸ On her view, Anselm does not envision an angel under construction with only the will for justice. Because the will for justice is meant to guide and temper the will for happiness, she reasons, Anselm continues building the angel and adds the will

¹⁶ Normore, “Goodness and Rational Choice in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Emotions and Choice from Boethius to Descartes*, ed. Henrik Lagerlund and Mikko Yrjönsuuri (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 29–47, at 39. Also, cf. Sweeney, “Anselm on Evil and Eudamonism,” 187.

¹⁷ Sweeney, “Anselm on Evil and Eudamonism,” 187.

¹⁸ Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom*, 69.

for justice to the angel that already has the will for happiness.

On Rogers's own admission, if Anselm were to consider an angel under construction with only the will for justice, this would singlehandedly guarantee the conclusion that there is a separate end for which to act. *Ex hypothesi*, the angel would have a motivational disposition to act and will *for* something, the end of justice. But Rogers protests: she claims that Anselm does not entertain this anywhere in *DCD* 14 or elsewhere.¹⁹ However, a quick look at both the chapter title and the first sentence demonstrates that Anselm is writing about an angel with only a will for justice. For example, Anselm's first sentence is the following: *consideremus ergo de iustitiae voluntate si daretur eidem angelo velle solum quod eum velle conveniret...* (*DCD* 14; *SI*, 258)²⁰ While Anselm goes on to ask whether the angel is just in the sense of being morally praiseworthy and upright—his answer is 'no' because the angel would be under the same antecedent necessity as when it only had a will for happiness—he clearly hypothesizes that the angel *only* has a will for justice. There is thus no doubt that Anselm considers an angel under construction with only a will for justice, and any suggestion otherwise is a sleight of hand. Therefore, there are two

¹⁹ Rogers, 69.

²⁰ The chapter title states the following: *Quod similiter sit, si sola accepta sit voluntas rectitudinis; et idcirco utramque voluntatem simul accepit, ut et iustus et beatus esset*. As Gregory Sadler maintains, the term 'fitting' (*conveniens*) is used across Anselm's texts as synonymous with 'justice.' However, such a conclusion requires the foregoing background that what is just is a species of fittingness. Cf. Gregory B. Sadler, "Interpreting Anselm of Canterbury as a Virtue Ethicist," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 14, no. 2 (2019): 97–116, at 99, fn. 3.

distinct ends for which to act.²¹

With this above conclusion in hand, notice that there are several ways to read the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE. First, when Anselm states that “it is necessary that God creates both wills in him so that he both wills to be happy and wills justly,” he could simply be addressing two ends. Willing justice need not refer to willing *happiness* justly, and instead could be read to mean that the angel wills justly when it wills justice for its own sake. Second, one could understand this phrase as “willing *happiness* justly” and it would prove no problem for justice being a distinct end. After all, if the will for justice adds a separate end for which to act, it is still possible that it tempers the will for happiness in a variety of ways. On the one hand, the will for justice could temper the will for happiness because it is a competing end for which the angel acts; the angel may choose this against the will for happiness. In this sense, the will for justice could temper the will for happiness by negating it and providing an alternative end that is sometimes exclusive to happiness. On the other hand, it is possible that, in virtue of having two basic motivational dispositions, one disposition can restrain the other. For example, if I have competing desires for chocolate and being physically healthy, my latter desire might constrain

²¹ For a similar argument, cf. Thomas Williams, review of *Anselm on Freedom*, by Katherin Rogers, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, February 11, 2009, <https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/anselm-on-freedom/>. Per Williams, because Rogers’ construal requires the angel under construction in *DCD* 14 to have a will for justice added to moderate the will for benefit, this makes the angel under construction in *DCD* 14 have the exact same ‘volitional makeup’ as the angel before the fall. But this prelapsarian angel is free, and the angel in *DCD* 14 is not.

the former. I would eat chocolate for the sake of being happy, and I would only eat a certain quantity of chocolate for the sake of being physically healthy.²² *Mutatis mutandis*, the will for justice can still provide a distinct end and reasonably temper the will for happiness, “though it does not eliminate its power to exceed.”

From the above argument that happiness and justice provide two separate ends, it follows that Anselm denies the *Eudaemonist Principle*. Moreover, because the will for justice is the will on which a moral obligation supervenes, it follows that Anselm denies *Moral Obligation*. The will for justice can conflict with the will for happiness by providing a separate end. While there is a plausible non-Eudaemonist reading of the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE, the Eudaemonist reading faces severe difficulties.

Regarding the HAPPINESS PASSAGE, there are several options. One might think that Anselm is simply inconsistent in his position—he might claim that justice is a distinct end in the above passage and nevertheless claim that happiness is the only end for which to act without qualification. There also might be an error in the above arguments about the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE. Finally, there might be a reading of the HAPPINESS PASSAGE that can reasonably deny or qualify Anselm’s affirmation of the *Eudaemonist Principle*. The first option is neither charitable nor entirely necessary, so I shall put this aside. This second option is

²² This is not to suggest that Anselm’s view is amendable to a Frankfurtian analysis. Rather, in this example, both wills are basic and not hierarchical. For a case against the Frankfurtian reading, cf. Thomas Williams, “Anselm: Free Will and Moral Responsibility” in *Debates in Medieval Philosophy: Essential Readings and Contemporary Responses*, ed. **Error! Main Document Only**. Jeff Hause, (Routledge, 2014), 61-72.

unlikely. The thought experiment that an angel can have only a will for justice guarantees that justice provides a distinct end. I shall consider the final option.

While Anselm apparently affirms the *Eudaemonist Principle* in the HAPPINESS PASSAGE, there are at least two reasons to believe that happiness does not exhaust a created agent's motivational ends. Recall that this passage is in the context of the angel who has only a will for happiness—Anselm is in the process of discussing what it means for a one-willed agent to will happiness, so one should pause before concluding that Anselm's statement in this context is exhaustive or universal.

More decisively, Anselm classifies the will for happiness as *natural*. For this reason, sentient creatures who are aware of it naturally avoid what is disadvantageous and pursue what is advantageous. What does it mean for a will to be “natural”? For Anselm, something is natural because it can be explained fully by the nature God has given it. God made sentient creatures with the end of pursuing their own well-being according to their kind-nature. As enumerated above, when an individual only has the will for happiness, this implies there is some sort of necessity of one's nature involved. Thus, happiness or flourishing with respect to one's kind-nature is the natural end of a sentient creature.

The will for justice is quite different: it is neither natural nor technically proper to a rational nature. On the one hand, the will for justice is “not natural” but “separable” and able to be lost both before the fall and for anyone after the fall who has justice. (*DC* I.6; SII, 256. Cf. *DC* 3.12 and *DCD* 12) Individuals cannot will things justly or naturally regain justice once they lose the disposition for justice. On the other hand, the inclinations of will differ insofar as the will for justice maintains that justice is the object as well as the end of its willing, whereas the will for advantage only provides an end (*DC* 3.12). Therefore, the will for justice is not

structurally identical to the will for advantage.

According to Anselm, justice is separable from human nature and differs from the will for happiness in that justice is the object of desire.²³ John Boler classifies justice as a “preternatural” property.²⁴ A preternatural property is a property that can be enjoyed in addition to—but is not beyond—human nature; it is a grace that perfects the abilities natural to a rational being. Without this, rational beings cannot achieve their appointed end. For instance, it is a preternatural grace to be immortal—a grace lost in the fall, though not completely foreign to the nature of rational creatures. For Anselm, then, it would be a preternatural property to will justice in addition to willing one’s own happiness. Humans have the instrument of willing, which is apt to have the disposition for justice, though this disposition for justice is added as a grace to the human being.

This preternatural grace is akin to a created grace and is to be distinguished from an uncreated grace. An uncreated grace is the grace of the Holy Spirit indwelling a person such that the agent is disposed, for instance, to love God. An uncreated grace and the effects on the agent are accounted for by the very indwelling of the Spirit. When the person has charity, then, the person just has the Holy Spirit.²⁵ Notice how, for indwelling of the Holy Spirit to be efficacious,

²³ John Boler, “The Inclination for Justice,” in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Robert Pasnau and Christina Van Dyke (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), I:484–92, at 486. Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, 142 also notes this.

²⁴ Boler, “The Inclination for Justice,” 487.

²⁵ On this distinction in contemporary theology, cf. Adonis Vidu, “The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit,” in *T&T Clark Handbook for Analytic Theology*, ed. James M. Arcadi and James T. Turner (London: T&T Clark, 2021), 260.

this does not technically need to work in concert with the individual capacities or nature in any sense. In contrast, a created grace works in concert with the nature of the individual (e.g., a disposition or faculty), something that is already present in the individual being.²⁶

When rational creatures lose justice, they lose the grace by which they can achieve their nature's proper end. Anselm maintains clearly that we retain the *ability* to be just. He asks rhetorically, "What prohibits us from having this power for preserving rectitude of will for its own sake, even in the absence of rectitude, when reason is in us by which we can know rectitude, and the will is in us, by which we can retain it?" (*De libertate arbitrii* 4; SI, 214) To use Anselm's analogy, this is akin to having the ability to see while lacking light or being blindfolded. Rectitude of will is thus obtained by grace and is a grace that works in concert with the nature present.

There is something about human nature that is present such that, if touched by grace, it can be perfected in its operation. As Boler notes, Anselm identifies the *power* of free choice as the ability to retain justice for its own sake. While the ability to moderate the will might be lost, the power to be just itself is not.²⁷ While the inclination or motivational disposition is lost, this basic ability is not lost even if it is inhibited: the power for justice remains though the motivation

²⁶ Vidu, 261. While this distinction of created and uncreated grace is used in context of how the Holy Spirit indwells created agents, it is not apparent that the preternatural grace would be an operation of the Father or Son. It is not, therefore, apparent that this distinction only applies to the indwelling of the Spirit, but more generally, to the ways we envision the modes in which we receive the Spirit's grace.

²⁷ Boler, "The Inclination for Justice," 488.

for this end is inhibited or absent such that the will for happiness always wins out. As the Augustinian would have it, the will is *incurvatus in se*.

Anselm uses the foregoing to claim that all actions without the disposition for justice will be done for the sake of happiness. This is the case even if it comes at the cost of justice. The moral worth of actions is, therefore, judged on account of the will for justice and not on account of the object of the action. For example, when considering almsgiving, Anselm maintains that one who lacks justice can give alms to the poor though the will would not be praiseworthy because it lacks justice (Cf. *DCV* 4).

While all fallen agents lack justice in some respect, Anselm's clarification that fallen agents retain the *power* for justice allows him to say that these agents still have the power of free choice.²⁸ Anselm's claim that agents retain the power for justice includes the further claim that fallen creatures retain the ability to *know* justice. Recall in his rhetorical question that Anselm asks why we cannot say fallen creatures cannot be just, so long as "reason is in us by which we can know rectitude, and the will is in us, by which we can retain it?" As this indicates, the ability to know rectitude and right and wrong is, for all intents and purposes, untainted in the fallen state.²⁹

²⁸ Richard Cross, "Weakness and Grace.," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), I: 441–54, at 450. For more on Augustine's position, cf. G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 73–6. For more on Anselm's view of powers, cf. Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*, Topics in Medieval Philosophy (New York: Routledge, 1993), 73–5.

²⁹ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 203–7.

How does the foregoing help ease the tension within the HAPPINESS PASSAGE? Since Anselm maintains that the will for happiness is natural and the will for justice is a grace and separable, it follows that his apparent subscription to the *Eudaemonist Principle* is indeed apparent. Anselm's claim must be understood to mean that "no one *naturally* wills something unless he regards it as advantageous for himself in some way." The will for justice allows an individual by grace to will justice for its own sake, and this is a distinct end from the end of happiness. Therefore, Anselm does not maintain the *Eudaemonist Principle* in the HAPPINESS PASSAGE. Moreover, because justice is a distinct end that one is obligated to follow, Anselm also denies that the only moral obligation one has supervenes the will for happiness (*Moral Obligation*).

The present reading remedies the above two problematic passages and shows that the Eudaemonist reading has severe challenges. There is no doubt Anselm maintains that the will for justice is separable, a grace, and aims at justice. This reading fits well with the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE and the claim that the two wills supply distinct ends. Additionally, the present reading explains other claims within the HAPPINESS PASSAGE, for example, when Anselm distinguishes between the happiness (*beatitudo*) that comes with justice and the happiness that all sentient creatures naturally will. Neither of the above passages suggests that Anselm is a Eudaemonist. Rather, both of the above passages can be read perfectly well in non-Eudaemonist ways. Moreover, the Eudaemonist reading of both passages fails to appreciate that justice is unique. The Eudaemonist reading flattens the distinction between the wills being natural and non-natural and ignores parts of a thought experiment in the ADDITION OF JUSTICE PASSAGE.

Let us turn to the final question of how happiness and justice are related. This question

goes hand in hand with the question of how the fulfillment of one's nature is related to fulfilling one's moral obligation and, further, whether Anselm affirms *Realization of Kind-Nature*. Anselm sees everything in view of a robust teleology. For Anselm, every type of thing has a basic purpose for which it is created; everything is true or has 'rectitude' to the degree that it achieves this purpose. Anselm's own example is that of statements, such as "It is day." All statements, Anselm maintains, are true/correct/have rectitude when they achieve the purpose for which they are made. So, when someone utters, "It is day," there is a truth or rectitude to this statement insofar as it is achieving its purpose of signification, regardless of whether or not it signifies correctly at the point in time it is uttered. Anselm's view of all created things, statements included, is "fundamentally teleological."³⁰

Of course, Anselm's position means that statements that are false with respect to the specific use can be true with respect to achieving their purpose of signification. Anselm thus distinguishes between two senses of how a statement is true. He writes:

Indeed, it is not normal to call a statement true when it signifies what-is-not is; such a statement, however, has truth and rectitude, because it is doing what it ought to. But when a statement signifies what-is is, it is *doubly* doing what it ought to, since it not only signifies what it received the power to signify, and because it signifies according to the purpose for

³⁰ Visser and Williams, 43. For a fuller introduction to Anselm's philosophy of language, cf. Peter King, "Anselm's Philosophy of Language," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, ed. Brian Davies and Brian Leftow, Cambridge Companions to Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 84–110.

which it was made. (*DV* 2; *SI*, 179)³¹

The first kind of truth is “natural” and “invariable” in that the statement will always achieve this end.³² The second kind of truth is variable, depending on whether the sentence is uttered in the correct context. So, the statement “It is day” is true and has rectitude in the first sense when it is uttered at night and is false and lacks rectitude in the second sense. If it is day when the sentence is uttered, the sentence is true in both senses. One could analyze this concept in Anselm’s work as a distinction between sentence tokens and type. The sentence type is invariably and naturally true, though the sentence token is variably and accidentally true.³³

For our purposes, Anselm’s teleological view of sentence types is a paradigmatic example of how all members of a natural kind have a natural purpose to achieve. When they achieve this purpose, they are said to have truth or rectitude. The same is the case of angels and human beings with the qualification that rational creatures must choose to adhere to the end for which they are made. Where statements and other created beings, such as horses, achieve this naturally and to varying degrees, only humans and angels achieve this end rationally.

Rational creatures are just and have rectitude, in the sense of being morally praiseworthy, only when they have the will for justice. As we have seen, this justice is not reducible to a rational creature fulfilling its nature and seeking its own well-being. Anselm rather defines

³¹ Like Williams (121), I add ‘power’ and ‘purpose’ in the last phrase, though the Latin only reads, respectively, ‘acceptit significare’ and ‘ad quod facta est.’

³² For a small proviso on Freudian slips and misspeaking, cf. Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 44–5.

³³ Visser and Williams, 44. For more on this topic, cf. Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, 135–37.

justice of the will as “rectitude of will preserved for its own sake” (*DV* 12; *SI*, 194).³⁴ This definition of justice, of course, implies that both the intellect and will are involved for the agent to be just. Someone must both see the rectitude of will and will the rectitude for its own sake. Knowing what is right, and willing what is right because one knows it to be right, are “both necessary and sufficient for justice.”³⁵ Rectitude of will cannot be forced or compelled by some cause exterior to the agent—the individual who has justice must will it on his own. (*DV* 12) Similarly, the agent must will justice for its own sake and not for any extraneous reasons to be praiseworthy. After all, Anselm reasons, the individual who wills justice and is compelled or bribed is not just in the sense of being praiseworthy. Thus, unlike other creatures, rational agents are just and praiseworthy when they will rectitude of will for its own sake. It follows that Anselm denies the above understanding of *Moral Obligation*, for justice is the only will on which the moral obligation supervenes.

Anselm claims that to be rational just is to have the power to discern between what is right and wrong, “the true from what is not true, the good from what is not good, the greater good from the lesser good.” (*Monologion* 68; *SI*, 78) This claim illuminates how the end of rational nature is not merely the fulfillment of its natural capacities and pursuit of one’s well-being. Unless the rational creature directs itself to the love of God, its final purpose and *raison*

³⁴ For more on this point and a basic (though dated) outline to Anselm’s thought on justice, cf. John R. Sheets, “Justice in the Moral Thought of St. Anselm,” *The Modern Schoolman* 25, no. 2 (1948): 132–9.

³⁵ Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 173. For Anselm, as Visser and Williams note (196), the intellect is in the service of the will, though the will requires the intellect to see the good.

d'etre, its being rational is useless for it. I shall quote the passage in full because it expounds upon how the end of rational nature is external to the same nature:

But this ability is wholly useless for it [the rational creature], entirely vacuous, unless it loves what it discerns or reprovcs in accordance with the judgment of a true discernment. So, it is quite evident that every rational creature exists to love something more or less, or refuse it, according to how its rational discernment judges something to be more or less good or not good at all. Nothing is therefore clearer than the fact that the rational creature was made to love the supreme essence above all other goods, just as the supreme essence is the supreme good; no, on the contrary, that it might love nothing but him or anything which it loves for his sake because he is good through himself (*per se*), and nothing else is good except through him. (*Monologion* 68; SI, 78-79)

The rational capacity is given to rational creatures to discern the good and move toward it, to love it. It follows that willing rectitude of will for its own sake is interchangeable with fulfilling a rational creature's purpose. Here, as Jeffrey E. Brower notes, Anselm maintains that the telos of human nature is external to human nature and not merely explained in terms of fulfilling its natural kind. Brower writes, "In the case of all things other than the [rational] will, the end toward which their nature directs them is their own goodness or advantage—that is, their complete actualization. Hence in the case of all things other than the [rational] will, their rightness will be their goodness."³⁶ And for the rational creature, to will rectitude of will for its own sake is interchangeable with willing God. One's ultimate good is thus exterior to oneself.

³⁶ Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," 242; See also, Sweeney, "Anselm on Evil and Eudamonism," 188.

Indeed, Anselm iterates elsewhere that all rational creatures must love God for his own sake and not the sake of something else. (*CDH* II.1; SII, 97) Since God is justice, it follows that to will rectitude of will for its own sake is equivalent to willing rectitude of will for God's sake.³⁷

Anselm thus attempts to strike a balance between the claim that moral goodness is distinct from the rational creature's fulfilling its kind-relative goodness and the claim that one can be happy to the extent that a creature fulfills its kind-nature. On the one hand, the good that one ought to pursue and that provides an imperative is distinct from achieving one's natural end. The end and purpose of human nature to love God far exceeds the actualization of rational nature. And when a rational creature attains this state, it has justice, that rectitude unique to being a rational creature. This state of justice—obtained by grace—will result eventually in happiness. On the other hand, Anselm affirms that individuals are also good and happy to the extent they fulfill their kind-nature. After all, the rational agent is equipped with the will for happiness. For this reason, he affirms a general version of *Realization of Kind-Nature*.

One might object and claim that *Moral Obligation* is too stringent when it claims that fulfilling one's moral obligation is co-extensive with fulfilling one's kind-nature. One could instead allow room for the view that God is the *summum bonum* while claiming that one can will God and will the actualization of one's kind-nature. On this weaker view, *Moral Obligation** would maintain that one fulfills his moral obligation only if one simultaneously fulfills his kind-nature. However, Anselm diverges even from the weaker view. For he maintains that the will for justice provides a distinct end, which means that these two ends can conflict. While willing justice will eventually result in the fulfillment of one's kind-nature, Anselm maintains that one

³⁷ Brower, "Anselm on Ethics," 240–3.

can exclusively will justice for its own sake. Therefore, in contrast to willing all things for the sake of happiness, Anselm firmly maintains that a rational creature ought to will justice and God for their own sake.

V. Conclusion

In this article, I showed how Anselm separates morality from happiness. Specifically, I argued that there are two separate ends for which to act, and then constructed the larger picture of how happiness and justice relate to each other. To do so, I detailed a general picture of Eudaemonism and showed how two problematic passages can be read perfectly well in non-Eudaemonist ways. I showed that happiness is not the only end for which to act, and that one's moral obligation supervenes upon the will for justice. The attempted Eudaemonist reading fails to account for the relevant distinction between the natural and separable wills and flatly ignores the portion of the thought experiment in which Anselm claims that God gives the angel-under-construction only the will for justice. While Anselm denies the *Eudaemonist Principle* and *Moral Obligation*, I showed how he affirms a version of *Realization of Kind-Nature*. For rational creatures have a natural end of happiness and corresponding capacities to achieve this end. Nevertheless, Anselm, firmly maintains that the wills are irreducibly different and provides an alternative view of how to separate morality from happiness.