

# Reconciliation by Symbolic Compensation

*A Re-Interpretation of the Satisfaction Theory of Anselm of Canterbury*<sup>1</sup>

*Ulrike Link-Wieczorek*

We live in an obviously unhealed reality of violence, and as theologians we are challenged to focus attention specifically on the experience of being over against God and to confront the proclamation of the Good News of the Gospel with this reality. This can be understood as a key test for the theological reflection of the religion, in whose centre, stand the symbols of cross and resurrection.

The cornerstone of the Christian credo is formed by the thesis: Reconciliation is a gift of God. But how do we want to understand that with this once for all coming of Jesus, salvation and forgiveness of sins for all humankind has come? And is there a connection of gift and task, in which the work of reconciliation of Christians is connected to the divine gift of reconciliation? Is it that God's gift of reconciliation becomes a gift only, when people accept it as their task? How can we avoid that our talk of God's gift is either too abstract or becomes a deification of human action?<sup>2</sup> It seems to me that it is about this issue when the churches of the South accuse those of the North, that their theology is moving in an abstract, academic glass bead game, and vice versa, the churches of the North against the theology of the churches of the South are sceptical about whether this

<sup>1</sup> Main parts of this paper have been published as *Divine Reconciliation and Human Restitution in a Broken World: Revisiting Anselm's Satisfaction Theory*, in: ANDREA BIELER / CHRISTIAN BINGEL / HANS-MARTIN GUTMANN (eds.), *After Violence. Religion, Trauma and Reconciliation*, Leipzig 2011, 219–238.

<sup>2</sup> For the theological adoption of the gift-metaphoric in German discussion see VERO-NIKA HOFFMANN (ed), *Die Gabe. Ein »Urwort« der Theologie?* Frankfurt 2009; ID., *Skizzen zu einer Theologie der Gabe. Rechtfertigung – Opfer – Eucharistie – Gottes- und Nächstenliebe*, Freiburg i. Br. 2010; ID. / ULRIKE LINK-WIECZOREK / CHRISTOF MANDRY (eds.), *Die Gabe. Zum Stand der interdisziplinären Diskussion*, Freiburg i. Br. 2016.

work of God and people's work could merge too much. Both positions will hopefully be able to understand and communicate in a stronger eschatological re-vision of the once-for-all of the Christ event, in which redemption is understood more as a process than as an event, a process which has its beginnings with creation. We could focus that in the image of shalom. Salvation then has not only to do with forgiveness, but simply to enable fullness of life, the gift of life itself.

In this framework, we could concentrate more deeply on the connection between reconciliation and justice. Does this context not too quickly lose sight, particularly if theology is merely raised by the doctrine of justification from grace alone? My question: Don't we have to connect the doctrine of justification more explicitly with the credo of the last judgement and combine it – as Fernando Enns shows – with a vision of reconciliation, specifically the indispensability of justice?<sup>3</sup> Enns votes for a theology of reconciliation which is held by the model of restorative justice as the image of God's justice. This justice does not aim at a staggering statement, but rather on enabling the common future of victims and perpetrators in a process of restoration. However, this does not exclude the process of discovering truth, but rather includes it. Exactly this is illustrated by the *image* of the Last Judgement that clearly makes the process of the separation of good and evil visible for our inner eyes.

We need a dynamic concept of reconciliation in which the relationship of the experienced difficulties of interpersonal reconciliation (including a concept of righteousness that takes into account the different perspectives of victims and perpetrators) and God's proclamation of salvation is clear. In search of such a dynamic theology of reconciliation one would also have to find out whether the theological tradition might have as yet undiscovered treasures in store. In this part of the task I would like to tackle this contribution and focus our attention on looking anew at a very traditional and much criticised soteriology: the satisfaction theory by Anselm of Canterbury. This might at first surprise, because it is exactly Anselm's doctrine of the inevitable restoration of God's honor that has been damaged against

<sup>3</sup> FERNANDO ENNS, »Wie durchs Feuer hindurch«: Theologische Herausforderungen für eine behutsame Rede vom Gericht Gottes – unter Einbeziehung sozial-ethischer Implikationen, in: JOHANNA RAHNER / ANDREA STRÜBIND (Hrsg.), *Begegnungen – Entgegnungen. Beiträge zur modernen Gottesfrage, kontextuellen Theologie und Ökumene* (FS Link-Wieczorek), Leipzig 2015, 23–41. For a new reflection of the motive of the Last Judgement see also HEINRICH BEDFORD-STROHM (Hrsg.), »Und das Leben der zukünftigen Welt«. *Von Auferstehung und Jüngstem Gericht*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2007.

by sin which, whilst it signifies an explicit connection between the mercy and the righteousness of God, would, however, generally be taken for a plea for a rather rigid and distributive sense of God's righteousness, in which finally there remains no room at all to consider God's mercy. This impression appears furthermore to be reinforced by the fact that at the end the death of Jesus as »God-Man« should suffice for that demand for God's righteousness. And finally, the satisfaction theory stands for a soteriology that – in its concentration on the relationship of God and humanity – offers a dual dramaturgy in pure culture: God appears as a victim of sin: there seems to be no one else who also had been damaged and the victims of human violence totally fade away – out of sight. In this sense anyway, this doctrine became *the* determinative soteriological model in the orthodox Western Church – though not in the Eastern Church. Even the Reformation theologians did, as we know, not despise it – although we ought to say that Martin Luther did not use it too often; he resorted to other models instead.<sup>4</sup> In Reformed theology as well as in Protestant Orthodoxy, it played a large role and today the satisfaction theory is experienced as an expression of the New Testament atonement theory in Europe's evangelical circles, more especially in the USA. Admittedly, not only this may be taken as a challenge to look into it anew and free it from one-sided interpretations.

This endeavour occurs by no means in isolation to the rest of theological research. Because one must, in astonishment, take notice that Anselm's concept in the last 30 years once more has become subject of serious academic exercise – in spite of manifold critique. This happened particularly intensive in Anglo-Saxon, but recently also in German theology and philosophy.<sup>5</sup> On the whole one should say: Anselm is being protected against

<sup>4</sup> For an adoption in reformation perspective see GEORG PLASGER, *Die Not-Wendigkeit der Gerechtigkeit. Eine Interpretation zu »Cur Deus homo« von Anselm von Canterbury* (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge, Bd. 38), Münster 1993, 17–33.

<sup>5</sup> Out of the many new publications see: HANSJÜRGEN VERWEYEN, *Anselm von Canterbury, 1033–1109. Denker, Beter, Erzbischof, Regensburg 2009*; JAN-OLAV HENRIKSEN, *Desire, Gift, and Recognition. Christology and Postmodern Philosophy*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge 2009, 269–294; GILES E. M. GASPER/HELMUT KOHLENBERGER (eds.), *Anselm and Abaelard. Investigations and Juxtapositions*, Toronto 2006; BRIAN DAVIES/BRIAN LEFTOW (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm*, Cambridge 2005; SANDRA VISSER/THOMAS WILLIAMS, *Anselm*, Oxford 2009; DAVID E. LUSCOMBE/GILLIAN R. EVANS (eds.), *Anselm. Aosta, Bec and Canterbury. Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop 25 September 1093*, Sheffield 1996; J. DENNY WEAVER, *The Non-*

his reception, both against his critics as well as his evangelical defenders. Here, he is accorded recognition that his concept entails more references to biblical testimony than has been acknowledged hitherto.<sup>6</sup> Especially, his concept of *ordo* is now being considered as an element of a theology of creation. By this insight, the direction of traditional reception has been changed dramatically. Anselm is now found already operating with something very similar to the concept of shalom which Fernando Enns mentions as an element of a theology of reconciliation.<sup>7</sup> So, the recent perception sees Anselm by no means concentrating only on God and humankind in cold abstraction, but – in the midst of strife in the first Investiture Controversy – on a world which is threatening to fall out all bounds as a result of the sin of humankind and which had to be rescued through God's concern for salvation. Consequently important to him is especially the connection between the interpersonal reconciliation and the relationship between God and humankind.

But also, an interest in a concept of restorative justice can be brought to light in Anselm's work. I would like to do that in the following passages under reference to the particularly despised theory of restitution which is included in the model of satisfaction. The traditional interpretation understands it as an abstract compilation of acts and results of damaging. But are we, however, not aware – more especially out of the experience of interpersonal reconciliation-work – of perhaps tentative or hinted retribution, right up to the debates on reparation payments after historical conflicts? Can there be reconciliation without that the wish of restitution at least be articulated? Could it be so totally impossible that even Anselm at that point had thought of interpersonal conflicts – similar to his experiences in spiritual welfare and as brotherly friend in monastery-life? In the following passages, therefore, I wish to examine whether the essential aspect of Anselm's *satisfactio*, restitution (German: Wiedergutmachung), could not

violent Atonement, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2001, 180–188: »The Defenders of Anselm«.

<sup>6</sup> See MARTIN BIELER, *Befreiung der Freiheit. Zur Theologie der stellvertretenden Sühne*, Freiburg i. Br. 1996; GERHARD GÄDE, *Eine andere Barmherzigkeit. Zum Verständnis der Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury*, Würzburg 1989; HELMUT STEINDL, *Genugtuung. Biblisches Versöhnungsd Denken – eine Quelle für Anselms Satisfaktionstheorie?* Freiburg/Schweiz 1998; GEORG PLASGER, *Not-Wendigkeit*.

<sup>7</sup> See FERNANDO ENNS, *Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Just Peace at the Conclusion of the »Decade to Overcome Violence«*, in: ANDREA BIELER / CHRISTIAN BINGEL / HANS-MARTIN GUTMANN (eds.), *After Violence. Religion, Trauma and Reconciliation*, Leipzig 2011, 198–218.

even be conceived as an aspect of *restorative justice*. Could it be considered earnestly as an imperative practice of reconciliation within which it could be tried to lay foundations for a mutual future both for victims and perpetrators of violence?<sup>8</sup>

This question stands in the centre of this article. However, I shall skip over the numerous critical objections against Anselm's doctrine which of course, beginning already in his life up to today, have to and have had to be raised – namely: whether the inner logic of this doctrine is comprehensible, whether it is not based on a too rigid idea of God's sovereignty that covers the love of God and its specific possibilities, and whether – more especially – Anselm indeed finally seems to lack the awareness of the fact that the deed of restitution explicated by him, consists in the horrific death of a human being.<sup>9</sup>

### *1. Satisfaction for the Sake of Victims: An Attempt of Re-Interpretation*

On the trail that now has to be followed, we find already the catholic theologian Piet Schoonenberg, who writes about Anselm's doctrine:

»The intention, however, which particularly by the juridic presentation is expressed in a confusing way, becomes clearer, when one ponders and recalls, on whom sin focuses. *Not only* on God. The violation, the destructive violence of sin above all attacks the creatures. It attacks God in so far as they are His creatures and His children.«<sup>10</sup>

Through this explanation, a decisive change of perspective occurs. The interpersonal level comes into the front and with it the »destructive violence of sin« that can be felt *here*, that which »above all attacks the creatures«. Can this really be found in Anselm's work?

<sup>8</sup> Essential stimuli for this interpretation I found in: DOROTHEA SATTLER, »Erlösen durch Strafe? Zur Verwendung des Strafbegriffs im Kontext der christlichen Lehre von Heil und Erlösung«, in: *Aufgebrochen. Theologische Beiträge*, Mainz 2001, 11–35.

<sup>9</sup> See for example WEAVER, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 179–224 and HENRIKSEN, *Desire*, 273–275 and 275–278 (to Weaver).

<sup>10</sup> PIET SCHOONENBERG, »Tod des Menschen und Tod Christi«, in: *Auf Gott hin denken. Deutschsprachige Schriften zur Theologie*, ed. WILHELM ZAUNER, Freiburg i. Br. 1986, 225–243, here 223 (emphasis: U. L.-W.).

Schoonenberg refers with his remark to Anselm's concept of *ordo* as is presented in *Cur Deus Homo* I,15. Both in the violation of God's will as well as that of God's honor the destruction of the world order is at stake.<sup>11</sup> In the words of both Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams: »Reflecting our purpose he suggests that rectitude of will consists in loving God for his own sake; reflecting on our place suggests that rectitude of will consists in maintaining, so far as it lies within our power, the fitting order that God has established in the universe as a whole.«<sup>12</sup> Anselm sees in the order a guarantee for the beauty of creation as well, which for Visser and Williams is an argument for the interpretation that for him the command theory is not merely for its own sake.<sup>13</sup> That, however, means: If God's will and God's glory stand for the order of the world that makes life possible, the history of human sin is concerned not of an isolated violation and reconciliation of God. In Anselm's words:<sup>14</sup>

»When it (the creature) wills what it ought to will, it honors God – not because it bestows something on him, but because it willingly submits itself to God's will and direction, and keeps its own place in the universe of things, and maintains the beauty of that same universe, as far as in it lies. But when it does not will what it ought, it dishonors God, as far as it is concerned, since it does not readily submit itself to his direction, but disturbs the order and beauty of the universe, as far as lies in it [...]« (I.15; 124).

In keeping God's will the human being is respecting not more and not less than the valuable work of creation. This insight has significant consequences that constitute the cornerstone of the new Anselm-research. It changes the impression of a narcissistic God into that of a caring one; it converts the interpretation of the process of reconciliation modelled as a commercial transaction into one of relationship.

<sup>11</sup> PLASGER, Not-Wendigkeit, 91; see also GIBBERT GRESHAKE, Erlösung und Freiheit. Zur Neuinterpretation der Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury, in: Theologische Quartalsschrift 153 (1973): 323–345, here 328; RAYMUND SCHWAGER, Der wunderbare Tausch. Zur Geschichte und Deutung der Erlösungslehre, München 1986, 168; HÖDL, Anselm, 775.

<sup>12</sup> VISSER AND WILLIAMS, Anselm, 196.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. See also VERWEYEN, Anselm von Canterbury, 118.

<sup>14</sup> The English translation of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* is taken from: EUGENE R. FAIRWEATHER, ed. and trans., A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockam, London 1956, 100–183: Why God Became Man. Page numbers in brackets after the quotations refer to this edition.

»It is true that the breadth of meaning of these words (*debere* and *debitum*, U.L.-W.) allows Anselm to switch back and forth between the language of commercial transactions and the language of justice and obligation, but we should not be tempted to think that Anselm regards justice as a kind of commercial exchange in which God acts as a rather obsessive auditor who insists that the books be balanced down to the last farthing. Rather [...] it is better to say that for Anselm, debt is a species of obligation and can therefore serve as an illuminating analogy for our relationship to God.«<sup>15</sup>

In the newly aroused attention to this issue, old questions become loud again, namely whether in the case of Anselm, as catholic theologian Gisbert Greshake suggests, one should rather assume a conscious recourse to Germanic legal systems of thought. In this regard, in the feudal system the prestige of the king stands representatively for the maintenance of the societal »order for freedom, law and peace«. <sup>16</sup> What is at stake here is not merely insult against God, but it is the order of life represented by God. However, in this context one would consider not only Germanic law, but Roman law would just as well have a similar drive. <sup>17</sup> And for Anselm as spiritual advisor in a monastery, an orientation on biblical terminology would have been more probable than the traditional reception assumes. This on the other hand leads to bringing the recent Anselm research in connection with the equally recent reflection on the biblical terminus of the *glory of God*, hebr. *kavot*, greek *doxa*. <sup>18</sup> For all these concepts is true that they have a relational »aura« and that the bearer comes to stand in a representative function for the whole. The recent theological research on the biblical concept of the glory of God shows clearly how urgently espe-

<sup>15</sup> VISSER AND WILLIAMS, Anselm, 224/225. See thereto also HENDRIKSEN, Desire, 270 about Anselm's »relational understanding of sin«.

<sup>16</sup> GISBERT GRESHAKE, »Erlösung und Freiheit. Zur Neuinterpretation der Erlösungslehre von Anselm von Canterbury«, in: GISBERT GRESHAKE, Gottes Heil – Glück des Menschen. Theologische Perspektiven, Freiburg 1983, 80–104, here 89.

<sup>17</sup> See PLASGER, Not-Wendigkeit, 85–98.

<sup>18</sup> See RAINER KAMPLING (ed.), Herrlichkeit. Zur Deutung einer theologischen Kategorie, Paderborn 2008; WOLF KRÖTTKE, Gottes Klarheiten. Eine Neuinterpretation der Lehre von Gottes »Eigenschaften«, Tübingen 2001; MAGDALENE L. FRETTLÖH, Gott Gewicht geben. Bausteine einer geschlechtergerechten Gotteslehre, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2006, here esp. 57–150; VICTOR H. MATTHEWS (ed.), Honor and Shame in the World of the Bible, in: Semeia 68, 1996; DAVID ARTHUR DESILVA, The Hope of Glory: honour discourse and New Testament interpretation, Collegeville, Minnesota 1999; NICOLE CHIBICI-REVNEANU, Die Herrlichkeit des Verherrlichten. Das Verständnis der doxa im Johannes-Evangelium, Tübingen 2007.

cially here »God's connectedness with His counterpart« should be assumed. One could even suggest thinking of a relationship that entails a certain interaction similar to a pair of concepts like call and response or – recently also receiving some attention in theology – giving and (active) receiving. In the New Testament, a responsoric character is found in the understanding of the glorification of God.<sup>19</sup> Magdalene Frettlöh translates the corresponding Hebrew concept *kavod* as »giving God weight«, »considering Him seriously«:<sup>20</sup> In surveys of German theological works she illustrates how the concept of the glory of God reaches beyond aspects of ruling. Instead of that it gives account of God's impressive, irresistible, but also courting and enticing effect on the creatures which presses for an echo, an answer that is confirming, friendly and actively involved in promoting life.<sup>21</sup> Particularly monastic life might be imaged as inspired by this theology, and one would assume that this could have been Anselm's background when he talked of God's *honor*. Rightly so does George Plasger summarise: »But his *honor* radiates onto creation and asks for Man's answer, for the recognition of God as ruler.«<sup>22</sup> That – in turn – has consequences for the understanding of sin against God: It becomes transparent for those who as creatures have been *concretely damaged and violated*.<sup>23</sup> The violation of God through sin can, as it were, be understood to be a »substitutional« one. I shall be returning to that towards the end.

When one looks into the text of *Cur Deus Homo*, four observations as compared to the usual paraphrase of the satisfaction-theory are surprising:

1. Repeatedly Anselm states that it is »impossible for God to lose his honor« (I, 14, 123): »As far as God himself is concerned, nothing can be added to his honor or subtraced from it. For to himself, he himself is honor incorruptible and absolutely unchangeable.« (I, 15; 123). Ultimately Anselm says that the violation of God's honor caused by humankind were »non actual«, would anyway not hit in a way that would threaten God's »substance«. We may see here something like an apathy-axiom.<sup>24</sup> Even

<sup>19</sup> See for example: MARLIS GIELEN, »Von Herrlichkeit zu Herrlichkeit. Doxa bei Paulus zwischen den Polen protologischer und eschatologischer Gottebenbildlichkeit am Beispiel der Korintherkorrespondenz«, in: Herrlichkeit, ed. KAMPLING, 79–122, as well as the New Testament literature mentioned in footnote 18.

<sup>20</sup> FRETTLÖH, Gott Gewicht geben, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 57–121.

<sup>22</sup> PLASGER, Not-Wendigkeit, 98.

<sup>23</sup> See HENRIKSEN, Desire, 270: »Anselm implicitly points to how the compensation implied includes recognition of the violated [...].«

<sup>24</sup> See thereto SCHWAGER, Tausch, 169.

more interesting is it that the »non actual« violation is at all taken so seriously. Either God is in this case an unbearable stickler for His principles – that is how Anselm is understood by many critics – or »actually« something else is at stake. Would the »non actual« violation possibly stand for a concrete »actual« destruction on the creation-level? Since obviously there is a destruction against which punishment for the sake of God's righteousness *should* be executed. This, anyway, is Anselm's proposal: God won't lose his honor because he himself so to speak should let it automatically be »regenerated«, if it were violated against. It should be regenerated through punishment by God. Violated against would it be – doubtlessly! But also, punishment is in turn defined as related to the violation of creation: It consists of humankind not reaching its destination as creature, which is the eternal sanctity (*beatitudo*) (I,14).<sup>25</sup> This has to be prevented to happen! Anselm's argumentation in the terminology of compensation payments leads to the idea that it has to be prevented that humankind forfeits its life. Anselm's words:

»In this matter we should observe that, just as man in sinning seizes what belongs to God, so God in punishing takes away what belongs to man. For not only what a man already possesses is said to belong to him, but also what he has in his power to possess. Thus, since man was so made that he could obtain blessedness if he did not sin, when he is deprived of blessedness and every good on account of sin, he pays from his own property, all unwillingly, what he stole.« (I, 14, 123).

What is at stake is not a »retrieval« of God's honor, but the *rescue of humankind* facing the loss of its future in God's presence (= eternal holiness, *beatitudo*) instead.

2. Notwithstanding, all this is somehow »hypothetical« as far as Anselm is concerned.<sup>26</sup> He himself says that God's decision for the sanctity of humankind is irrefutable (I, 10; II, 1; II, 4). It stands therefore beyond doubt that Christ brings ultimately the only rescuing alternative which is

<sup>25</sup> See for the following: GÄDE, Barmherzigkeit, 94.

<sup>26</sup> See for this interpretation also RALF K. WÜSTENBERG, Die politische Dimension der Versöhnung. Eine theologische Studie zum Umgang mit Schuld nach den Systemumbrüchen in Südafrika und Deutschland (Öffentliche Theologie 18), Gütersloh 2004, 454; and PLASGER, Not-Wendigkeit, 122. He refers to the point, that the loss of *beatitudo* as consequence of sin in fact means mortality and death. So, the punishment for sin would be death. This means: It is a question of death or everlasting life, and in the end the liberation of humankind that is at stake.

thinkable as a voluntary deed of *satisfactio*. It is this form of arguing similar to »retracing« the Gospel which certainly is not sufficiently taken into account in the Anselm-interpretation. On the basis of the knowledge about the salvation pledge and the fact, that God has *already given* – and on the basis of the death of Jesus which, of course, has also already happened – Anselm reconstructs the deed of salvation hypothetically in its possible theories and plausibility.<sup>27</sup>

3. One other idea of Anselm is surprising: Would God try to forgive humankind without a deed of *satisfactio* that would damage humankind, because humankind would then stand as a beggar (*indigens*) before God. (I, 24; I, 11). It is known as one of points of discontent in the ecumenical discourse whether one should in this point follow Anselm or not. It is, however, clear: *Satisfactio does not occur to the advantage of God, but of the sinner.*<sup>28</sup>

4. Then the fourth observation: The concept of satisfaction, *satisfactio*, which in the paraphrase usually gets a so formalistic and narrowly corrective accent, seems, as far as Anselm is concerned, as a direct reflection of experiences of reconciliation that are juridically sound whilst, of course, remaining empirical. As examples, he refers to something like damage payment, a »restitution« in case of humiliation resulting from dishonor or in case of theft – a settlement beyond merely returning the stolen item:

»For it is not enough for someone who has injured another's health to restore his health without making some recompense for the pain and injury suffered, and, similarly, it is not enough for someone who violates another's honor to restore the honor, unless he makes some kind of restitution that will please him who was dishonored [...].« (I,11, 119).

The issue at stake – put in my words – is the infringement of somebody else's personal sphere. »... in view of the insult committed, he must give back more than he took away.« (I, 11; 119). The »kind of restitution« should »please [...] the dishonored« (I, 11; 119). It always must be *something more* than the theoretically thinkable pure reimbursement of the damage as a restitution *ad integrum*, a materially thinkable restoration of the former status. Why such petty stinginess? Obviously more has to be

<sup>27</sup> See also PLASGER, Not-Wendigkeit, 57–78.

<sup>28</sup> I contend: Anselm's emphasis on the dignity of the sinner in relation to God could fairly be equated to the reformatoric »On the Freedom of a Christian«.

reimbursed because what is at stake is a relationship destroyed through culpable infringement – *honor*. If one understands this concept, however, more than a reflex on the biblical terminology in connection with the talking about the glory of God, as outlined above, the aspect of a relationship becomes clearer. Apparently, the additional value of the *satisfactio* demanded is directed at recognition of the right of the damaged – expressed within the God-humankind-dramaturgy in the picture of the violation of God's glory.<sup>29</sup> Thereby, the question arises whether not more could be found behind the juridical terminology than abstract equation-thinking and corresponding to the persistence on the asymmetry of the *satisfactio*, more than only a rigidly hierarchical image of God.<sup>30</sup>

One must therefore say, that it is a reduction of Anselm's concept, if one looks at the »insult« levelled against God in isolation to the endangering of the world and if one compares its size only to the size, the greatness of God. On the contrary, Anselm sees a direct relevance of the non-acknowledgement of the will of God, the Creator, for the well-being of creation – even if he might articulate this in the 12th century and sees the well-being in creation mainly as conservation of the hierachical order it is based on. »There would arise a certain ugliness, derived from the violation of the beauty of the order« and »God would seem to fail in his direction of the world« (I, 15; 124). In the historical context of the investiture controversy and the struggle for the rights of the Church against the king this admittedly gains also a very concrete context. Foremost it becomes clear that the deed of satisfaction has to occur for the sake of the *peccator*. It serves not more and not less than the restoration of his dignity before God: Walking upright the human being should as a dignified partner of God be able to pursue striving towards the destination of its life as set in creation.

<sup>29</sup> The size of the restitution at stake is, according to Anselm, not held, as SCHOONENBERG assumes, to be in relation to the size of God's glory, but to the size of sin; of course, the »universal« size of sin as sin of universal humankind. Christ's death outshines »number and greatness of all sins« (II, 14; 163). Also, this equivalence-calculation is, of course, thinkable only on condition that the problem is actually already solved by God.

<sup>30</sup> Quite often not sufficiently differentiated in the reception is the definition of *satisfactio* as retaliation and therefore clearly a juridical term primarily for punishment or compensation with the intention of »restorative justice« in view of the future of the community concerned. That this inaccuracy could be observed already in connection with the interpretation of the respective biblical references is highlighted by STEINDL, Genugtuung.

One should realize what that means: Anselm is not saying that the disturbance of the glory of God brought about by sin would merely have *consequences* on the interpersonal or the creational part. The will of God stands here for all that which God »has in mind« with His creation generally and for humankind in particular: the *beatitudo*. His disregard is being accomplished, if one disregards the good sense of creation that the will of God directed to.

## 2. *Consequences for the Understanding of Restitution/Restoration*

If one were to take God for a substitutional advocate for His creation, the damaging of His honor occurs *in representation of* the damaging of creation. In this trend of thought it is fruitful to remember Anselm's dialectic of »actual« and »non-actual« violation of the glory of God. One could develop it further into a concept of God, in which His complex nature of relatedness could be expressed in the terminology of intercession, substitution and representation. In this language we can say: In its creator the damaged and threatened creation finds not only its mediating advocate, but also its prosecutor against its enemies as well as a judge who sorts out and regulates correctively in His intervention in the interest of righteousness. In this role one can see God also demanding »restitution« from humankind in the sense of Anselm— with the firmness as is necessary for the healing of wounds that occur on creation through the recurring demolition of life-perspectives. Anselm articulates this arguing: without *satisfactio* something remains in disorder in God's sovereignty (I, 12; 120). Thereby he is referring to the threatening dangerous constellation that through disregard of God, the life giving structure of creation is put out of order and the world could consequently be sailing towards its destruction. Following these considerations, I ask myself especially whether this would not ultimately put Anselm's demand for restitution, *satisfactio*, into a new perspective, so that it can be understood differently than hitherto. Could not Anselm hear God demanding *satisfactio* in representation *of the victims* of sin who thereby have to be reinstated in their rights? It would clearly emigrate out of the original confessional theological context in which it is generally understood as a process exclusively for the relief of the conscience of perpetrators. The demand for *satisfactio* could as such even be understood as a metaphor which is gained from the experience of interpersonal reconciliation-processes and has to be listened to in that context: As a matter of necessity to enable the victims to attain *satisfactio* – and as

an impossibility to be able to do this adequately. The concept would therefore to be heard in a bigger context of biblical terms concerning the deed of reconciliation, finally as a visible sign of *metanoia*.<sup>31</sup>

But the dramaturgy of reconciliation according to Anselm is even more complex: Above all it evolves towards God's deed of reconciliation in Jesus Christ who already has fulfilled the necessary *satisfactio*. Actually, the whole of humankind would be challenged to bring about this huge restitution. But as the damaged creation is represented by God Himself as its advocate, who lays charge about the damage, Anselm also sees here – together with the Christian tradition – the necessity of substitution: Humankind has to be represented by God respectively by Jesus as »God-Man« to bring forward restitution – otherwise adequate *satisfactio* is for them not possible. Brought forward by humankind it could only be incomplete.

In this dramaturgy one can therefore say: In Christ God Himself is at work – now as vindicator, who acquits the damager of creation, the sinner as perpetrator. In the framework of the dual of the Two-Natures-theory Anselm's soteriology presents us God Himself as the incarnate Christ as the one bringing forward the *satisfactio* in our stead. Doubtlessly he thereby combines the biblical atonement-theological metaphoric with a juridical metaphor. But exactly therein traces of an empirical context can be observed. Thereto in the last paragraph:

### 3. Symbolic »Satisfactio« in Reconciliation Processes

As an example for a possibly empirical frame of reference of contemporary experience of reconciliation which Anselm might refer to, one can quickly recall the recent German experience with the problem of reparation payments to the former compulsory labourers of the time of the so called »Third Reich«. Does it not lead to the realisation that adequate reimbursement would *absolutely not* be brought forward? How on earth could a damage-payment for forced labour to any degree ever manage to even correspond to the wording of its title?

<sup>31</sup> See RAYMUND SCHWAGER's ideas regarding the connection of *satisfactio* and repentance in his article: Logik der Freiheit und des Natur-Wollens. Zur Erlösungslehre Anselms von Canterbury, in: Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie 105 (1983): 125–155, here 146–147.

If restitution by reimbursement would obviously be inadequate, should one not totally refrain from it? Ralf Wüstenberg attended to this problem in his research on processes of dealing with guilt in South Africa and in Germany after the reunification.<sup>32</sup> He contends: reimbursement as an attempt of reparation payments plays a minor role in a process of reconciliation – both materially as well as juristically one soon reaches the limits of what could be settled by accurate calculations and weighing of charges and admissions of guilt. The concept could, as Wüstenberg suggests, therefore have relevance solely as a Christological mode of expression on a theological level on talking about God's reconciliation. More especially, it is not to be understood as *prerequisite* to concrete reconciliation.

Would that have been the only possibility to understand Wüstenberg's results of research, so the metaphor of Anselm's *satisfactio* admittedly would be deprived of its empirical connection. A very negative example seems to support this position, namely the truly horrible forms of punishment in the Middle Ages and also in early modern times, that have been used as equating and retaliative measures of restitution.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, as Joachim Zehner has worked out, one can realise a re-birth of the concept of »atonement« in many spheres of non-theological sciences. I refer here solely to criminal law where forms of sanctions like the perpetrator-victim-negotiations are discussed and realized.<sup>34</sup> Especially in juvenile criminal law an attempt is being made to confront the perpetrators with their victims, so that the perpetrators could realise the »hurting character of their conduct«. <sup>35</sup> In that connection also attempts to atone are acknowledged in terms of mitigating a sentence. In recent criminal law discussions in Germany a terminological differentiation is being evolved. By making a difference between material reimbursement and symbolic restitution it should be possible to consider also situations in which *satisfactio* beyond an individual level could be taken into account, for example concerning state or public institutions.<sup>36</sup> In German Political Science – another example – Gesine Schwan after careful consideration considers reimbursement also as means against »keeping silence over guilt« after historical political experiences with guilt.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> WÜSTENBERG, Die politische Dimension.

<sup>33</sup> See JOACHIM ZEHNER, »Sühne, Ethisch«, TRE vol. 32, 355–360; here 356.

<sup>34</sup> See JOACHIM ZEHNER, Das Forum der Vergebung in der Kirche. Studien zum Verhältnis von Sündenvergebung und Recht, Gütersloh 1998, 64–75.

<sup>35</sup> ZEHNER, Forum, 65.

<sup>36</sup> See CHRISTIAN LAUE, Symbolische Wiedergutmachung, Berlin 1999.

In view of these developments one would contend: Although retribution/*satisfactio* can neither be produced nor imagined as an adequate balancing of the deed-sequences, it, however, doesn't seem possible that one could totally do without it. Religiously it belongs to the sphere which is talked about in the language of atonement including remorse and repentance.<sup>38</sup> It appears especially necessary for the sake of the recognition of the victims – an aspect which in the classical theory of atonement does not explicitly receive attention, but hopefully comes to bear – rather in the application – implicitly. Retribution for that matter, of course, should be understood in a wider sense, namely as proof of the necessary recognition of the situation of the victims.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, Ralf Wüstenberg as well lays emphasis on the hint that it is a necessary element of the process of reconciliation that understanding is reached about »the basic needs of the victims concerning the recognition of their suffering«. <sup>40</sup> For political reconciliation it is for that matter necessary that their suffering be made known publically as mutually acknowledged »truth«. Consequently, Wüstenberg calls this moral restitution. But also in the interpersonal or criminal sphere reconciliation-processes cannot be successful in negation of the truth and not by keeping silent about the suffering of the victims.

Especially, the South African Truth Commission had this principle as its starting point.<sup>41</sup> Here, both the victims of the apartheid regime – fathers and husbands maimed through torture by police or women who had been raped or wounded – as well as perpetrators appeared and could speak. Perpetrators had to face the questions and verbal attacks by their victims. Even here ambivalences should not remain unmentioned – for example the question whether the commission was politically the least one could do but the only possibility of addressing South Africa's past. All the same, through the work of the Truth Commission one could gain insights about personal reconciliation processes in the context of historical guilt. Here, I

<sup>37</sup> GESINE SCHWAN, *Politik und Schuld. Die zerstörerische Macht des Schweigens*, Frankfurt 1997, 234f.

<sup>38</sup> See thereto SCHWAN, *Politik*, 29–34 and 63–68, who finds a secularised reliving of religious wisdom of reconciliation in the insight that there is a salutary necessity of atonement and penance also in punitive measures in terms of criminal law.

<sup>39</sup> One could sense this insight already even in Anselm's »more«, see above, 2., point 3.

<sup>40</sup> WÜSTENBERG, *Die politische Dimension*, 296 with regard to the situation in Germany, 133–136 and 202f. carefully in critical-constructive tone against romanticising with regard to the situation in South Africa.

<sup>41</sup> WÜSTENBERG, *Die politische Dimension*, 129–133, 141–173.

am concerned with the realisation that recognition of the sufferings of the victims should be articulated not only verbally, but that it should »happen«, here in the whole interrelationship of victims, perpetrators, commission-members and the audience in which the outcome on living together in the community could anticipatively be felt. Recognition cannot only be declared, it should take place. Wüstenberg points out that it must take place in a fragmental and fragile situation in which nothing else would be possible. Recognition of the sufferings of the victims can, of course, never mean that their suffering could ever be fully understood. Furthermore, this holds in a different manner for the participants in reconciliation processes – for the perpetrators differently than for the victims; furthermore differently for perpetrators who also had been or were victims or furthermore differently for example for indirectly involved like relatives a generation later. Torture, experiences of humiliation, participation in massacres, social crash of the family with consequences in many generations – all this in its outcomes in the person of the victim as well as in the entanglement of victims and perpetrators can only be comprehended and recognized in fragments. Since it should, however, be said: Also in broader sense restitution as recognition of the sufferings of the victims is actually beyond human possibilities, although it is inevitable and absolutely necessary. For the community as a whole this could mean that for it to hope for reconciliation means that it learns to live with fragmentary, unrealisable forgiving and with non-succeeding repentance. It is because of this fragmentary character that reconciliation depends on symbolic actions of restitution which have to be accepted in their actual impossibility. In societal transformation processes beyond the individual level one has therefore to develop a sensitivity for the »impossible possibility« of reconciliation and a function of symbolic restitution.<sup>42</sup>

The emphasis on the need for restitution – instead of punishment in Anselm! – can thus be understood as an analogical way of thinking which has its background in the interpersonal experience of unreconciled-ness and the »impossible possibility« of reconciliation generally. Satisfaction/restitution plays a big role here. Only externally it appears like compensation, for you know that there can't be a real balance. Nevertheless, the form of the compensation is still not senseless at all, because it forms the

<sup>42</sup> GESINE SCHWAN terms it a »lively consensus, [...] a *common sense*, [...] a civic ethical principle«, that calls for »magnitude of heart on this side of the victims«, »which one may neither demand, nor expect – ... which one may plead for, which one may hope for«. Politik, 235.

arduous and painful process of the recognition of guilt, victimhood and culprit's being. The fact that, actually, God alone can perform this compensation and that God wants this also, this seems to me to be the sense of any Christocentric soteriology which also Anselm develops. This sense of the Christian credo is promised to us in the justification message as an encouragement, to devote ourselves to the painful process of the compensation of justice in the interpersonal reconciliation which evolves in such a way that a mutual enablement of future as restorative justice comes into the view. The balancing is therefore not final, but rather a means to the purpose of the disclosure of truth, insight, recognition and thus eventually return/*metanoia*.

### Summary

Anselm's argument according to which God had to become human and to die because only by this reconciliation with humankind could be brought about, doubtlessly has a mistake: The *satisfactio* which here is regarded as inevitable, consists of the death of a human being. One could regard this argument as having failed. The observations expressed here are not meant to be aiming at presenting an interpretation of the death of Jesus in terms of which he would have to be seen as a God-given sacrifice for restitution. Even Anselm himself tries everything in his argumentative power to prevent that impression. He resorts to argumentation that is complicated for us today, in which the voluntary giving-up of Jesus' human nature is presented in a model of an axiomatically constructed realistic Two-Natures-doctrine. This would no longer be easily comprehended in a post-medieval age ontology. The re-vision of Anselm's theory of reconciliation can only consist of appreciation of a *practice* of reconciliation beyond this theory. And this is only possible if we read his dual dramaturgy of the event of God and humankind as a formula with which God's salvation-bringing relationship to all the threatened creation is meant. In that moment in which we read Anselm socio-centrally in this way, theological gain for a theology »after violence« is possible: when we no longer read it only as an event between God and humankind, but as a dramaturgy of conservation and fulfilment of creation, which is still suffering of being threatened by interpersonal un-reconciled-ness. The core-terms of Anselm's argumentation would then be: *ordo*, will of God and glory of God as preservation of His magnificence (*kavod* and *doxa*) in favour of creation. The implicit theology of representation according to Anselm would theo-centrally mean: If God

is held to be the creation's counsel and vindicator, one could comprehend the idea concerning the representative restitution through Christ as a proclamation of reinstalling those who are being victimised in the midst of sinfulness of humankind through injustice, senseless violence or inactivity. Anselm's insisting on *satisfactio* in relation to God turns out to be a *satisfactio* which God demands for the un-reconciled life of creation. The fact that God Himself avails it in Christ, can then further be understood as God's proclamation that He will bring to completion also our fragmented deeds of reconciliation – and therefore as encouragement and challenge to us to keep on trying in the midst of the brokenness of creation.

*Translation from the German: Ben Khumalo-Seegelken*

### *Bibliography*

- MICHELLE BECKA, Strafe und Resozialisierung, Münster 2016.
- BRIAN DAVIES / BRIAN LEFTOW (eds.), The Cambridge Companion to Anselm, Cambridge 2005.
- FERNANDO ENNS, »Wie durchs Feuer hindurch«: Theologische Herausforderungen für eine behutsame Rede vom Gericht Gottes – unter Einbeziehung sozial-ethischer Implikationen, in: JOHANNA RAHNER / ANDREA STRÜBIND (Hrsg.), Begegnungen – Entgegnungen. Beiträge zur modernen Gottesfrage, kontextuellen Theologie und Ökumene (FS Link-Wieczorek), Leipzig 2015, 23–41.
- MAGDALENE L. FRETTLÖH, Gott Gewicht geben. Bausteine einer geschlechtergerechten Gotteslehre, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2006.
- GILES E. M. GASPER / HELMUT KOHLENBERGER (eds.), Anselm and Abaelard. Investigations and Juxtapositions, Toronto 2006.
- JAN-OLAV HENRIKSEN, Desire, Gift, and Recognition. Christology and Postmodern Philosophy, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K. 2009.
- CHRISTIAN LAUE, Symbolische Wiedergutmachung (Schriften zum Strafrecht, Heft 118), Berlin 1999.
- ULRIKE LINK-WIECZOREK, Wiedergutmachung statt Strafe: Zur versöhnungsethischen Aktualität der Satisfaktionstheorie, in: Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte 26, 2013/1: Identität nach dem Konflikt. Zur Rolle von Erinnerung und Stereotypen in Versöhnungsprozessen, 139–155.
- ULRIKE LINK-WIECZOREK, Divine Reconciliation and Human Restitution in a Broken World: Re-Visiting Anselm's Satisfaction Theory, in: ANDREA BIELER / CHRISTIAN BINGEL / HANS-MARTIN GUTMANN (eds.), After Violence. Religion, Trauma and Reconciliation, Leipzig 2011, 219–238.
- DAVID E. LUSCOMBE / GILLIAN R. EVANS (eds.), Anselm. Aosta, Bec and Canterbury.

- Papers in Commemoration of the Nine-Hundredth Anniversary of Anselm's Enthronement as Archbishop 25 September 1093, Sheffield 1996.
- GEORG PLASGER, Die Not-Wendigkeit der Gerechtigkeit. Eine Interpretation zu »Cur Deus homo« von Anselm von Canterbury (Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, Neue Folge, Bd. 38), Münster 1993.
- HANSJÜRGEN VERWEYEN, Anselm von Canterbury, 1033–1109. Denker, Beter, Erzbischof, Regensburg 2009.
- SANDRA VISSER / THOMAS WILLIAMS, Anselm, Oxford 2009.
- J. DENNY WEAVER, The Nonviolent Atonement, Grand Rapids, Michigan 2001.
- FRANK WINTER (Hrsg.), Der Täter-Opfer-Ausgleich und die Vision einer »heilenden Gerechtigkeit«, Worpswede 2004.