EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTIQUITY

Fabio Dalpra / Anders-Christian Jacobsen (eds.)

Explorations in Augustine's Anthropology

23

What is a human being according to Augustine of Hippo? This question has occupied a group of researchers from Brazil and Europe and has been explored at two workshops during which the contributors to this volume have discussed anthropological themes in Augustine's vast corpus. In this volume, the reader will find articles on a wide spectrum of Augustine's anthropological ideas. Some contributions focus on specific texts, while others focus on specific theological or philosophical aspects of Augustine's anthropology. The authors of the articles in this volume are convinced that Augustine's anthropology is of major importance for how human beings have been understood in Western civilization for better or for worse. The topic is therefore highly relevant to present times in which humanity is under pressure from various sides.

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Volume 23

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Explorations in Augustine's Anthropology

PETER LANG

European
Commission

Content

Preface

The present volume *Explorations in Augustine's Anthropology* is the outcome of a long and comprehensive cooperation between scholars from Brazil and Europe. The editors of this volume received a grant from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support cooperation between three institutions, *Aarhus University*, *Federal University of Juiz de Fora*, and *Federal Institute of Science and Technology of Southern Minas Gerais*. The theme of the cooperation was Augustine's anthropology. One of the results of this was two workshops. The first workshop was hosted by the Núcleo de Estudos Agostinianos (NEA-UFJF) and took place in March 2017 at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil. This workshop brought Brazilian and Danish scholars together. The second workshop took place at Aarhus University in March 2018. This workshop was organized in cooperation with the research project *The History of Human Freedom and Dignity in Western Civilization* and included once again researchers from Brazil and several European countries. We wish to express our gratitude towards The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission (Marie Skłodowska-Curie programme) who funded the network activities and the workshops.

The workshops had a broad approach to Augustine's anthropology. The volume therefore includes contributions which address a wide range of topics related to Augustine's anthropology.

Introduction

Augustine of Hippo's views are entirely embedded in the domains of anthropology. In relation to his personal pursuit of truth, as poignantly described in the *Confessiones*, the meaning of the human existence is examined throughout his writings under a variety of perspectives. Thus, anyone willing to grasp the features of his anthropological thoughts needs to be prepared to track a winding path. A path that is simultaneously devious and marvelous in its manifold expressions.

Generally, it can be said that such a multifaceted anthropology is the outcome of both Augustine's distinctive biography and the philosophical and theological conflicts in which he was involved from youth to old age. Such concrete events profoundly shaped his understanding and his experience of what it means to be human.

Even with the definitive episode of his conversion into Christianity, the pursuit for the most fundamental questions on human being did not diminish. Quite the opposite, it only amplified his eagerness towards understanding the human existence as deeply as possible, under impression of the Christian faith. Henceforth, he would come to deal with the foremost themes of Christianity at that time, such as creation, incarnation, Trinity, resurrection, the free will, original sin, so as to uncover these themes' significance for the comprehension of the human being.

Thus, the task of reflecting on Augustine's anthropology demands a relentless effort. In fact, the complexity and the manifoldness of its expressions bring about almost insurmountable difficulties to anyone who intends to attain a systematic account of it. The divergences which result both from the maturation of his thoughts and from the different theological themes and conflicts he had to handle cannot be set aside. It is the breeding ground of his anthropology. Therefore, in order to unveil the intersecting point which allows us to connect the several faces of such an anthropology, one needs to embrace the richness of its manifold expressions.

Not surprisingly, this diversity is mirrored in the wide range of themes brought to the table by the authors in this volume.

First, Fabio Dalpra investigates the Platonic influence on one of the cornerstones of Early Christian anthropology, i.e., the concept of participation as it is expressed by Origen of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo.

In sequence, shedding light on the anthropology in Augustine's early works, Ivan Bilheiro reflects on the effect of the skeptical doubt on human existence according to Augustine's first extant work, *Contra academicos*; Lenka Karfikova investigates the meaning and function of the soul in the

dialogue *De quantitate animae*; and Humberto Quaglio discusses Christ's role as in *De magistro*. These articles all show how intensively Augustine in the first years after his conversion and baptism strives to formulate Christian theology including theological anthropology by use of philosophical traditions especially Platonism.

Moving into a reflection on free will and human freedom, Morten Møller argues for the influence of Origen's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* on Augustine through the analysis of themes such as baptism, free will, and original sin; Anders-Christian Jacobsen studies Augustine's understanding of human freedom and free will and the significance of these for his theological anthropology; and Eva Elisabeth Vrangbæk examines Augustine's account of the will of human beings before and after the fall according to *De civitate Dei*. The question of human freedom and free will occupied Augustine from the beginning to the end of his career as philosophical and theological author.

The next three articles focus on Augustine's late writings. Fabio Dalpra analyses the anthropology in *De Trinitate* by using the theory of human beings as *images of God* as a unifying theme in the treatise. Monnica Klöckener analyses the human relationship with God in *Tractatus in Iohannem 15*, where Augustine interprets the Johanine story about the woman at the well in the Gospel of John 4:1–42. Margrethe Kamille Birkler and Anders-Christian Jacobsen deal with the issue of the resurrection of the human body, while having in mind two major works of Augustine: *Enchiridion* and *De Civitate Dei*.

At last, concluding the volume, Antonio Henrique Campolina debates the reception of Augustine's anthropology in the early stages of Western Monasticism.

Fabio Dalpra

The Reception of the Concept of Participation in Early Christianity: Origen's *On First Principles* and Augustine's *On the Trinity*.[1]

Abstract: By attending to the main features of Plato's concept of participation, this work aims to shed light on its reception in Early Christianity via Origen's *On First Principles* and Augustine's *On the Trinity*.

1. Introduction

The first and fundamental reference to the concept of "participation" is found in Plato. Generally speaking, he makes use of this concept to explain the relation between the Forms/Ideas and the sensible things. As such, it is a theoretical cornerstone of so-called Platonic dualism. According to Brochard, "la théorie de la participation est, comme celle de la démonstration de l'existence des Idées, et autant qu'elle, la partie essentielle du système de Platon."[2]

Plato conveys the idea of participation by way of two verbs: μεταλαμβάνειν and μετέχειν.[3] Inasmuch as sensible things *receive* reality from Ideas by *partaking* in them, there exists a qualitative difference between the domain of the Ideas, eternal and unchangeable, and the domain of the sensible things, finite and changeable. As Plato writes, "consider then, he said, whether you share my opinion as to what follows, for I think that, if there is anything beautiful besides the Beautiful itself, it is beautiful for no other reason than that it shares in [scil. μετέχει] that Beautiful, and I say so with everything."[4]

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1 This paper and the research behind it would not have been possible without the support of IFSULDEMINAS through the concession of a work leave. I also express my gratitude to Aarhus University for having hosted me during the process.

2 V. Brochard, *Études de philosophie ancienne et de philosophie moderne*, Paris 1912, 113.

3 P. Cardinali, *La participación y la mística en las Enéadas de Plotino*, in: Epimeleia 7 (1995), 58–59. According to her, Plato does not offer a clear distinction between the terms though, cf. Cardinali, 1995, 58. The nouns μετάληψις, μέθεξις and μετουσία derive from the two verbs. It is also worth emphasizing their semantic resonance with the concepts of κοινωνία (cf. Pl., Cri. 119c, Pl., Symp. 188c, Pl., Phd. 100d, Pl., Prm. 152a) and συμπλοκή (cf. Pl., Soph. 262c, Plt. 281a).

4 Pl., Phd. 100c: Ἀλλὰ μήν, ἔφη ὁ Κέβης, ὡς διδόντος σοι οὐκ ἂν φθάνοις περαίνων. Σκόπει δή, ἔφη, τὰ ἑξῆς ἐκείνοις ἐάν σοι συνδοκῇ ὥσπερ ἐμοί. φαίνεται γάρ μοι, εἴ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ δι᾽ ἓν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει

On the one hand, there is Beauty itself: the single, fundamental idea of Beauty. On the other hand, there are beautiful things, which receive their beauty from the Idea. Just as beautiful things participate in Beauty, sensible things take part in the full range of seminal Ideas. So, participation is a principle that undergirds the constitution of reality as such. This conception expresses what can be called the *common grammar* of Plato's theory of Ideas and participation. We find it expounded across several dialogues: *Cratylus*, *Symposium*, *Republic*, *Phaedrus*, *Phaedo*, *Timaeus*.

It is reasonable to suppose that such a "grammar," like any other, demands logical regulation. And, indeed, in the *Phaedo*, one encounters a foundational principle of this logic. After a long debate concerning the relation between opposite Ideas, e.g., *oneness* and *twoness*, *smallness* and *bigness*, *hot* and *cold*, Plato argues, "not only does the opposite not admit its opposite, but that which brings along some opposite into that which it occupies, that which brings this along will not admit the opposite to that which it brings along."[5] Here we find the famous principle of non-contradiction.

So far, then, the formal logic of the *common grammar of participation* comprises the union of three basic principles:

a) the uniqueness and separateness of the Ideas in relation to the sensible things
b) the qualitative difference between the absoluteness of the Ideas and the relativity of the sensible things which partake in them
c) the non-contradictory relation between opposite Ideas.[6]

Be this as it may, Plato's reflection on the theory of Ideas and participation constitutes an unfolding dialectical process that is not so straightforward as it might first appear. In fact, his own theory would become the object of critical scrutiny in the dialogues *Parmenides* and *Sophist*.

In the *Parmenides*, Plato subjects his own theory to piercing interrogation. In this work, he acknowledges the urgent demand for a more indepth understanding of the connection between the linked concepts of Idea and participation. The character Parmenides, while confronting a Socrates depicted as immature,[7] posits several apparent contradictions related to the

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έκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ· καὶ πάντα δὴ οὕτως λέγω. (J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1900, retrieved from TLG). Here and henceforth, the English translations of Plato's works are taken from J. M. Cooper (ed.), *Plato*, *Complete Works*, Indianapolis 1997.

5   Pl., Phd. 105a: ὃ ἂν ἐπιφέρῃ τι ἐναντίον ἐκείνῳ, ἐφ᾽ ὅτι ἂν αὐτὸ ἴῃ, αὐτὸ τὸ ἐπιφέρον τὴν τοῦ ἐπιφερομένου ἐναντιότητα μηδέποτε δέξασθαι. (Burnet, 1900).

6   Such precepts make up, to a great extent, the so-called *classical definition of Theory of Ideas*, cf. Brochard, 1912, 167.

7   Pl., Prm. 135d-e.

participation of the many sensible things in their corresponding Ideas.⁸ As a result, the second part of the dialogue is full of aporias which, according to Parmenides, reveal the fragility of the theory of Ideas and the concept of participation.

The debate extends into the *Sophist,* where Plato reflects upon the contradictions exposed in the *Parmenides*. In order to address the problem of incoherence, he smooths out the contradictions between *one* and *many*, and *being* and *non-being*, by working out a conception of reality as a complex intersection of Ideas no longer taken as *opposite*, but *different*.⁹ From this point on, he appends an additional logical layer to the basic Idea of participation.

In order to clarify the *Sophist*'s theoretical purpose, it is worth citing the passage where the "visitor," proposes to enact a metaphorical parricide, explaining: "in order to defend ourselves we're going to have to subject father Parmenides' saying to further examination, and insist by brute force both that *that which is not* somehow is, and then again that *that which is* somehow is not."¹⁰ Here, we can see Plato rethinking the binary opposition between two foundational concepts of his philosophy, i.e., being and non-being. The ensuing dialogical sequence shows the vulnerability of the concept of participation to the idea of *change*. According to Plato,

> so it has to be possible for *that which is not* to be, in the case of change and also as applied to all the kinds. That's because as applied to all of them the nature of *the different* makes each of them not be, by making it different from that which is. And we're going to be right if we say that all of them *are not* in this same way. And on

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8   It is possible to see this when Parmenides, in taking account of how hard it had been for Socrates to explain whether an Idea is wholly or partially present in its partaker, asks: "Socrates, in what way, then, will the other things get a share of your forms, if they can do so neither by getting parts nor by getting wholes?" Pl., Prm. 131e: Τίνα οὖν τρόπον, εἰπεῖν, ὦ Σώκρατες, τῶν εἰδῶν σοι τὰ ἄλλα μεταλήψεται, μήτε κατὰ μέρη μήτε κατὰ ὅλα μεταλαμβάνειν δυνάμενα. (J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 2, Oxford, 1901, retrieved from TLG). Socrates will henceforth acknowledge the incapacity of defending participation without abandoning a fixed dualism between the Ideas and the sensible things, cf. Pl., Prm. 135c-d.

9   The replacement of *opposition* with *difference* is important in the *Sophist*; cf. "it seems that when we say *that which is not*, we don't say something contrary to *that which is*, but only something different from it" Pl., Soph. 257b: Ὁπόταν τὸ μὴ ὂν λέγωμεν, ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐκ ἐναντίον τι λέγομεν τοῦ ὄντος ἀλλ' ἕτερον μόνον. (Burnet, 1900). Cf. also I. Bocayuva, *Entre o Parmênides e o Sofista de Platão*, in: Anais de filosofia clássica 16 (2014), 62–72 (67 f).

10   Pl., Soph. 241d: Τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς Παρμενίδου λόγον ἀναγκαῖον ἡμῖν ἀμυνομένοις ἔσται βασανίζειν, καὶ βιάζεσθαι τό τε μὴ ὂν ὡς ἔστι κατά τι καὶ τὸ ὂν αὖ πάλιν ὡς οὐκ ἔστι πῃ. (Burnet, 1900).

the other hand we're also going to be right if we call them beings, because they have a share [scil. μετέχει] in that which is.[11]

From here on, he will assume that *participation should be able to bring about a unity between Ideas previously seen as opposite*. So, through an analysis of the most fundamental oppositional Ideas, that is, *being* and *non-being*, *same* and *different*, *rest* and *change*, Plato comes to defend the possibility of a union without confusion.[12] In other words, he demonstrates how opposing Ideas can remain themselves while, at the same time, cohering both in each other and in their sensible correlates, by surpassing the limits of non-contradiction. The logical basis of the idea of participation is expanded in order to resolve the aporia that seemed to arise from the encounter of two opposite Ideas existing in a single reality.[13]

Taking this development into account, it is reasonable to surmise that the grammar of Plato's concept of participation is not bound by univocal logic. The *Parmenides* and the *Sophist* expand this grammar by appending an additional logical layer. It is not so much a negation of the prior mode of reasoning, but rather a novel combination of two logical insights to make the concept of participation more capable of dealing with an increasingly demanding ontology.

Thanks to the amendment of its logical structure, the idea of participation would now be able to encompass relations which surmount, on the one hand, qualitative and hierarchical differences between partaker and partaken, and, on the other hand, the principle of non-contradiction. In this manner, the constant and simultaneous co-inherence of Ideas in themselves, as well as the participation of sensible things therein, suggest a conception of reality as a tangled junction of differences.

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11 Pl., Soph. 256d-e: Ἔστιν ἄρα ἐξ ἀνάγκης τὸ μὴ ὂν ἐπί τε κινήσεως εἶναι καὶ κατὰ πάντα τὰ γένη· κατὰ πάντα γὰρ ἡ θατέρου φύσις ἕτερον ἀπεργαζομένη τοῦ ὄντος ἕκαστον οὐκ ὂν ποιεῖ, καὶ σύμπαντα δὴ κατὰ ταὐτὰ οὕτως οὐκ ὄντα ὀρθῶς ἐροῦμεν, καὶ πάλιν, ὅτι μετέχει τοῦ ὄντος, εἶναί τε καὶ ὄντα. (Burnet, 1900). The same can be seen in other passages, such as, Soph. 241d; 249d; 257a; 258d-e.

12 Cf. Pl., Soph. 255e. Notwithstanding, he admits that the Ideas of *rest* and *change* are especially challenging. On this difficulty in the *Sophist*, cf. Brochard, 1912, 143–144.

13 To some extent, it can be said that this solution had already been foreseen by Plato at the end of the *Parmenides*: "let us then say this - and also that, as it seems, whether one is or is not, it and the others both are and are not, and both appear and do not appear all things in all ways, both in relation to themselves and in relation to each other" Pl., Prm. 166c: Εἰρήσθω τοίνυν τοῦτό τε καὶ ὅτι, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἓν εἴτ' ἔστιν εἴτε μὴ ἔστιν, αὐτό τε καὶ τἆλλα καὶ πρὸς αὑτὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα πάντα πάντως ἐστί τε καὶ οὐκ ἔστι καὶ φαίνεταί τε καὶ οὐ φαίνεται. (Burnet, 1901).

This is the theoretical ground from which the concept of participation was transplanted into the thought world of Early Christianity. Indeed, as I argue below, in order to understand the role of the concept of participation in Origen and Augustine, one must pay attention to the slippery and multivalent logic set up by Plato, mainly in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*. As a matter of fact, *it is rather in the logical syntax than the conceptual layer that the concept exerted a lasting influence*.[14]

2. The Concept of Participation in Origen's *On First Principles*

In its basic formulation, the concept of participation in Origen is connected to the idea of a *hierarchy of beings*.[15] It can be detected in several passages of *On First Principles*. For instance, in Book 1, Origen argues

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14 Surely, a study of the Plotinian mediation would also be relevant to the reception of the concept in Early Christianity. Cardinali argues that Plotinus makes use of the verbs μεταλαμβάνειν and μετέχειν in a more precise way than Plato. According to her argument, he relates them with the movements of procession and return to the One. Thus, μεταλαμβάνειν refers to the way that the reality of the One is downwardly received by the beings that take part in it. In turn, μετέχειν designates the upward participation of the beings in their return to the One. However, regarding the extension of the influence of Plotinus on Origen and Augustine, two remarks should be made. Firstly, the Christian conceptions of God and creation would demand some crucial changes to the core of Plotinus' philosophy, that is, the movement of procession and return to the One. Secondly, with regard to the Latin Fathers, the distinction between μεταλαμβάνειν and μετέχειν would be shorn off by the translation into Latin as a single word, *participare*. This only strengthens our argument that the logical structure of participation is more relevant than a conceptual analysis when it comes to its reception in Early Christianity. For this debate, cf. Cardinali, 1995, 61 f.

15 The concept of *hierarchy of beings* was articulated by Balas in his classical article on participation in Origen's thought: "thus, as in the Platonic tradition, in Origen's works, too, participation expresses the relationship of a lower degree within the hierarchy of beings to the higher." D. Balas, *The Idea of Participation in the Structure of Origen's Thought*, in: *Origeniana. Premier colloque international des études origéniennes* (Montserrat, 18–21 Septembre 1973), Bari 1975, 261. Even the more recent study by Dimitri Biriukov, with its defense of the possible influence of Aristotle on Origen's conception of participation, does not break away from the interpretative model of Balas and its one-sided commitment to the logic which underlies the idea of a *hierarchy of beings*, cf. D. Biriukov, *Paradigms of Participation in Origen,* in: Scrinium 13 (2017), 277–290. It only gives support to the argument that the perspective presented by the dialogues *Parmenides* and *Sophist* has not been sufficiently considered. On the hierarchy of beings in Plotinus, cf. M. Smalbrugge, *La notion de la participation chez Augustin.*

that the work of the Father and the Son is both in saints and sinners is clear from this, that all who are rational beings are partakers of the Word of God, that is, Reason, and in this way, as it were, bear certain seeds, implanted within them, of Wisdom and Justice, which is Christ. And in him who truly exists, who said by Moses, *I am who I am*, all things that are have participation, which participation in the God and Father extends to all, the righteous and sinners, rational and irrational beings, and absolutely everything that exists.[16]

This argument is complemented by the idea that human sanctification is derived from participation in the absolute sanctity of the Holy Spirit.[17] For Origen, the Father's activity provides *being* to partakers; the Son's activity provides *reason*; and the Holy Spirit's activity provides *sanctity*. In each case, the partakers are allowed to possess, in a relative way, what the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit possess absolutely.[18] Despite the trinitarian vocabulary, this conception bears evident traces of the Platonic hierarchy between the ideas and the sensible things.

Quelques observations sur le rapport christianisme-platonisme, in: B. Bruning / M. Lamberigts / J. Van Houtem (eds.), *Collectanea Augustiniana. Mélanges T. J. van Bavel*, Leuven 1990, 335.

16 Or., De princ. 1.3,6: *Quia autem operatio patris et filii et in sactis et in peccatoribus sit, manifestatur ex eo quod omnes, qui rationabiles sunt, uerbi dei, id est rationis, participes sunt et per hoc uelut semina quaedam insita sibi gerunt sapientiae et iustitiae, quod est Christus. Ex eo autem, qui uere est, qui dixit per Moysen: Ego sum qui sum, omnia quae sunt participium trahunt; quae participatio dei patris peruenit in omnes tam iustos quam peccatores et rationabiles atque irrationabiles et in omnia omnino quae sunt.* The discussion extends into De princ. 1.3,7–8. Here and henceforth, the Latin texts and the English translation of On First Principles are taken from Origen, *On First Principles*, edited and translated by John Behr, Oxford 2017.

17 Cf. "and although many saints participate in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit cannot on that account be thought of as a kind of body that, divided into bodily parts, is partaken of by each one of the saints; but he is rather a sanctifying power, in which all, who have deserved to be sanctified by his grace, are said to have a share" Or., De princ. 1.1,3: *Sed et cum de spiritu sancto multi sancti participant, non utique corpus aliquod intellegi potest spiritus sanctus, quod diuisum in partes corporales percipiat unusquisque sanctorum; sed uirtus profecto sanctificans est, cuius participium habere dicuntur omnes, qui per eius gratiam sanctificari meruerint.*

18 The hierarchy of the participation finds different expressions in *On First Principles*. For example, in De princ. 1.3,8, Origen refers to participation as *paulatim et per parte*; in De princ. 1.6,2, as *diversos ordines pro merito* which are established *pro mentis ac propositi motibus*; in De princ. 2.6,3, in reference to the participation in Christ, he mentions gradual degrees dependent on the *amor* or *dilectio* given to him. All of them reproduce the idea according to which the partaker receives the reality of the partaken in different degrees.

Even so, it is worth noting that Origen offers a new perspective by adding to the debate the modifying grammar of *essence* (*substance*) and *accident*. As he says, "for in this Trinity alone, which is the author of all things, does goodness exist essentially; others possess it as an accident and something that can be lost; and only then are they in blessedness, when they participate in holiness and wisdom and in divinity itself."[19] In this case, the relation between partaken and partaker implies a "substantial" possession in the former and "accidental" possession in the latter. Thus, despite a partial deviation from the Platonic lexicon in favor of the Christian one, the inherited logic of the hierarchy of beings remains.

The structure of the participation of creatures in the trinitarian persons, each one providing a specific attribute to their partakers (being, reason, and sanctity), also prevails in the theme by direct participation (by diverse degrees) in God,[20] and the participation of the λόγοι in the λόγος.[21] Nonetheless, while such a logical scheme is undeniably relevant to Origen's conception of participation, it does not exhaust his use of the term. He plays a different tune when describing the mutual inner participation of the three divine persons, and the incarnation of the Word.

Concerning the trinitarian issue, Origen affirms that "nothing in the Trinity can be called greater or less, for one fount of divinity upholds the universe by his Word or Reason and by the Spirit of his mouth [...]. This is most clearly pointed out by the Apostle Paul when explaining that the power of the Trinity is one and the same."[22] If, when it comes to the Trinity, no person can be said to be *greater* or *less*, and if divine power is one and the same, then the mutual participation between the Father, Son, and Spirit would cast off the hierarchy of its terms. Reinforcing the particularity of the logic required to ground trinitarian participation, Origen makes clear that the inner relation of the Trinity neither modifies substantially any one of the persons, nor adds or cuts off accidentally any of their inherent possessions. This results in an intriguing situation wherein the trinitarian persons,

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19 Or., De princ. 1.6,2: *In hac enim sola trinitate, quae est auctor omnium, bonitas substantialiter inest; ceteri uero accidentem eam ac decidentem habent, et tunc sunt in beatitudine, cum de sanctitate et sapientia ac de ipsa deitate participant.* Cf. also De princ. 1.5,5; 1.8,3.

20 Cf. Or., De princ. 4.4,9.

21 Cf. Or., De princ. 1.3,6. Cf. also Biriukov, 2017, 281 f.

22 Or., De princ. 1.3,7: *Porro autem nihil in trinitate maius minusue dicendum est, cum unus deitatis fons uerbo ac ratione sua teneat uniuersa, spiritu uero oris sui [...]. Quod manifestissime indicat apostolus Paulus, unam eandemque uirtutem trinitates.*

in partaking of each other, participate in a different reality without any substantial or accidental change.

Participation in the sanctity of the Holy Spirit displays even more clearly how the concept demands a complex relation between apparent opposites. According to Origen, "although many saints participate in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit cannot on that account be thought as a kind of body that, divided into bodily parties, is partaken of by each one of the saints."[23] Even though the "sanctity" of the Holy Spirit is present in many saints, it cannot be materially divided among them. Thus, Origen concludes that, inasmuch as it is one and many at one time, "the Holy Spirit is an intellectual being and subsists and exists distinctly."[24] The use of the term *distinctly* (*proprie*) reveals a fundamental feature of the question. Distinctive beings require distinctive logical expressions. Therefore, the idea of participation requires a theoretical basis which is broad enough to cope with genuine distinction.

The logical demand of such distinctive beings becomes still more evident when Origen, relying on Paul (1 Cor 12:4–7 and 1 Cor 12:11), claims that the specific activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist without excluding the unitary action of God. As he says, "this is most clearly pointed out by the apostle Paul, when explaining that the power of the Trinity is one and the same, in the passage where he says, *there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but it is the same God who works all in all.*"[25] Here, participation needs to bring together the ideas of *variety* and

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23 Or., De princ. 1.1,3: *Sed et cum de spiritu sancto multi sancti participant, non utique corpus aliquod intelligi potest spiritus sanctus, quod diuisum in partes corporales percipiat unusquisque sanctorum.*

24 Or., De princ. 1.1,3: (...) *quod sanctus spiritus subsistentia est intellectualis et proprie subsistit et extat.* It would be impossible to disregard the similarity between this discussion and the passage in the Parmenides where Plato questions whether the ideas would be wholly or partially present in their partakers, cf. 131a-e. However, even more striking is the likeness between the answers offered to the problem. In order to face the difficulties imposed by participation, Origen emphasizes the non-materiality of the partaken, a *subsistentia intellectualis*; Plato does the same. Through the character Socrates, he affirms, "maybe each of these forms is a thought [...] 'and properly occurs only in minds' ", Pl., Prm. 132b: Ἀλλά, φάναι, ὦ Παρμενίδη, τὸν Σωκράτη, μὴ τῶν εἰδῶν ἕκαστον ᾖ τούτων νόημα, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ αὐτῷ προσήκη ἐγγίγνεσθαι ἄλλοθι ἢ ἐν ψυχαῖς.

25 Or., De princ. 1.3,7: *Quod manifestissime indicat apostulus Paulus, unam eandemque uirtutem trinitatis exponens in eo cum dicit: Diuisiones autem sunt donorum, idem autem spiritus; et diuisiones sunt ministeriorum, idem autem dominus; et diuisiones sunt operationum, idem autem deus, qui operatur omnia in omnibus.*

sameness. The distinct actions pertaining to each of the three persons cannot not be incongruous with the uniqueness of God's unified action.

A similar structure is also present in Origen's Christology. In a debate concerning the presence of the Word of God in those who partake in it—through attributes such as Truth, Righteousness, Life, Redemption, Wisdom—he concludes that it "[...] is confined to no place, in no place, on the other hand, is it understood to be absent."[26] What is at stake is the need to reconcile the presence of a singular Truth, Life, Wisdom, and so on, in many partakers. Participation in the Word of God is a challenging phenomenon to explain inasmuch as it cannot be confined to any single place or body. After all, the Word is wholly present in each one without being absent from the others.[27]

The matter becomes even more complex, when Origen discusses the incarnation of the Word of God. As he says, "it is shown that the son of God was both wholly present in the body and also present everywhere."[28] It is here necessary to harmonize the majesty of his divinity (*deitatis eius maiestas*) with the tininess of his body (*corporis brevitatem*). Origen will not accept a restraining of the Word's divinity as a consequence of its participation in one body. Rather, the Word's incarnation can be said to be, at one and the same time, in a single body, and also in all others.

Given these examples, it is possible to argue that, while Origen makes use of the concept of participation vis-a-vis the logic of hierarchy between the partaker and the partaken, this logic does not exhaust the use of 'participation' in his thought. As we have seen, the distinctiveness of the Trinitarian and Christological issues demanded a specific grammar and logic suitable to their profound complexities. With theses issues, the way Origen makes use of the concept of participation to encompass different forms of participation—some of them completely engulfed in the mists of aporia—parallels the manifold logical framework founded by Plato.

3. The Concept of Participation in Augustine's *On the Trinity*

Considering the well-documented influence of Platonism on Augustine of Hippo, both through direct influence and via Middle and (Neo)Platonism, it is natural to expect that one of its most important concepts—*participation*—should play a leading role in his thought. And, indeed, even a brief look

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26 Or., De princ. 4.4,2: *a nullo loco concludatur, in nullo rursum deesse intelligitur.*
27 Cf. Or., De princ. 4.4,1–2.
28 Or., De princ. 4.4,3: *Vnde ostenditur quia et in corporate totus et unique totus aderatus filius dei.*

at his writings confirms this hypothesis.[29] It is therefore intriguing that the theme has drawn so little attention from scholars.[30] When it has received attention, it has, for the most part, been marginally addressed in works dedicated to adjacent themes, such as God's creation,[31] the image of God in human beings,[32] and the Trinity.[33] With respect to the presence of participation in Augustine's early works, the sole article by David Mecone is a solid and encouraging contribution. More than simply raising the question, he also identifies the basic conceptual vocabulary and theoretical premises associated with participation. He claims that, in the early period of Augustine's thought, the concept influenced two major categories; first, *ontology*, regarding the participation of creatures in their Creator; second, *anthropology*, in reference to the theory of illumination and 'deification,' i.e. participation in the life of God.[34] As with the lack of attention paid to participation in Augustine's early writings, so too has his mature work been neglected. For this reason, an analysis of *On the Trinity*, which I provide below, will help to fill in an academic lacuna.[35]

So, arguing in favor of the relevance of participation for *On the Trinity*, it can be pointed out that the concept is technically present in eleven of the fifteen books of the treatise—absent only from books 2, 9, 11, and 12. As one would expect, the significance of these varies according to context. It is

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29 Juan Pegueroles argues that "la participación platónica es el alma de la filosofía de San Agustín, el centro unificador de donde salen y adonde convergen las grandes líneas del sistema.", cf. J. Pegueroles, *La participación en la filosofía de San Agustín*, in: Espíritu 31 (1982), 47–66 (47).

30 For a comprehensive picture of that lack of balance, cf. D.V. Meconi, *St. Augustine's Early Theory of Participation*, in: Augustin. Stud. 27 (1996), 79–96 (79–81). Cf. also V.J. Bourke, *Augustine's View of Reality*, Villanova 1964, 117.

31 Cf. Bourke, 1964, 24–25.

32 Cf. for example A.-G. Hamman, *L'homme, image de Dieu. Essai d'une anthropologie chrétienne dans l'Eglise des cinq premiers siècles*, Paris 1987, 238–277; R. Teske, *The Image and Likeness of God in St. Augustine's De Genesi ad litteram liber imperfectus*, in: Augustinianum 30 (1990), 441–451.

33 Cf. for example L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, Cambridge 2010, 166–170.

34 Cf. Meconi, 1996, 79–81. Such an interpretation has been upheld in the few works published after Meconi's. For instance, Juan Pegueroles' article, while covering a wider timespan than Meconi's, is restricted to the ontological dimension, cf. Pegueroles, 1982.

35 Smalbrugge provides some valuable remarks on the Christological content of books 4 and 14 of *On the Trinity* in his work on the concept of participation in Augustine. Nonetheless, it is almost exclusively focused on a claimed transformation of the concept carried out by Augustine vis-a-vis Neoplatonism, cf. Smalbrugge, 1990, 334 f.

worth noting that certain features attached to the concept in the early works are still present in *On the Trinity*. This persistence is evident in two important topics: deification, and the relation between creatures and Creator. With respect to deification, Augustine sets up its basic expression in Book 1:

> for life everlasting can scarcely be mortal and subject to change, and thus the Son of God, being life everlasting, must also be meant with the Father by the words who alone has immortality. After all, it is by becoming partakers in his life everlasting that we in our little measure have been made immortal, though the life everlasting we have been made partakers of is one thing, and we who shall live forever by partaking of it are another.[36]

In this passage, he ties the Son to the Father. If the Son is eternal life (*uita aeterna*) and the Scriptures refer to the Father as the one possessor of immortality,[37] then the Son must be with the Father; that is, they must be together in the same essence. The passage is also relevant insofar as it makes clear the function of participation in the process of deification. Human beings are made immortal by partaking in the immortality of the Son. Howbeit, the difference between eternal life per se, that is, God, and eternal life attained by participation, cannot be disregarded.

In considering the qualitative difference between the immortality of the Son and the immortality available to creatures, we can begin to discern one of the core features of Augustine's theology: God's attributes must be assumed *essentially*. As such, they are absolutely different from creaturely attributes, which result from the participation in another (higher) reality. In Book 5, Augustine sheds light on this idea by way of reflecting on the Trinity:

> just as we do not say three beings, neither do we say three greatness or three great ones. In things that are great by partaking of greatness, things where being one is one thing and being great another, like a great house and a great mountain and a great heart, in such things greatness is one thing and that which is great with this greatness is another [...]. God however is not great with a greatness which he is not himself, as though God were to participate in it to be great. [...] he is great with a

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36 Aug., Trin. 1.6,10: *Neque enim ipsa uita aeterna mortalis est secundum aliquam mutabilitatem; ac per hoc filius dei, quia uita aeterna est, cum patre etiam ipse intellegitur ubi dictum est: Solus habet immortalitatem. Eius enim uitae aeternae et nos participes facti pro modulo nostro immortales efficimur. Sed aliud est ipsa cuius participes efficimur uita aeterna, aliud nos qui eius participatione uiuemus in aeternum.* (CCSL 50, 39). Here and henceforth, the English translation of *De trinitate* is taken from Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, translated by Edmund Hill, New York 2017.

37 Augustine makes reference to 1 Tim 6:16.

greatness by which he is himself this same greatness. [...] for God it is the same thing to be as to be great.[38]

On the one hand, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, "*keep unity of the spirit in the bond of peace* (Eph 4:3), not in virtue of participation of their own very being."[39] On the other hand, creatures can only exist, be wise, or be good, by participating in being, wisdom, and goodness themselves. Consequently, Augustine thinks of the mutability of creatures as a consequence of their status as partakers. After all, by weakening or breaking off their participation they can diminish or lose their beneficial acquisitions. From the opposite perspective, the *immutability* and *simplicity* of God derive from the absence of participation in a reality which could be said to be distinct from itself.[40]

In these passages, it is possible to notice a hierarchy and opposition between a relative partaker and an absolute partaken. Nevertheless, this logical structure does not exhaust the use of participation by Augustine.[41] In Book 4, he brings new elements into the discussion. In an extended reflection on the incarnation of the Word and its salvific power, participation is taken as the cornerstone of his argument.

First, Augustine connects the theory of illumination to participation: "our enlightenment is to participate in the Word, that is, in that *life which is the*

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38 Aug., Trin. 5.10,11: *Sicut ergo non dicimus tres essentias, ita non dicimus tres magnitudines neque tres magnos. In rebus enim quae participatione magnitudinis magnae sunt quibus aliud est esse, aliud magnas esse sicut magna domus et magnus mons et magnus animus, in his ergo rebus aliud est magnitudo, aliud quod ab ea magnitudine magnum est, [...]. Deus autem quia non ea magnitudine magnus est quae non est quod ipse ut quasi particeps eius sit deus cum magnus est. [...] ea igitur magnitudine magnus est qua ipse est eadem magnitudo. [...] hoc est enim deo esse quod est magnum esse.* (CCSL 50, 217–218). On the equality of truth with greatness in the Trinity, cf. Trin. 8.1,12 (CCSL 50, 269–270).

39 Aug., Trin. 6.5,7: *Sintque non participatione sed essentia [...] seruantes unitatem spiritus in uinculo pacis* (CCSL 50, 235).

40 Cf. "But wisdom is both wise and is wise in itself. Every soul becomes wise by a participation in wisdom; and if it again becomes foolish, still the wisdom remains itself, nor does it undergo a change when the soul has been changed into folly. [...] because there indeed is the highest simple essence, and consequently there, to be and to be wise is one and the same" Aug., Trin. 7.1,2: *Sapientia uero et sapiens est et se ipsa sapiens est. Et quoniam quaecumque anima participatione sapientiae fit sapiens, si rursus desipiat, manet tamen in se sapientia; nec cum fuerit anima in stultitiam commutata, illa mutatur. [...] quia uere ibi est summe simplex essentia; hoc ergo est ibi esse quod sapere.* (CCSL 50, 248–249).

41 Bourke claims that Augustine speaks about participation in at least two ways, cf. Bourke, 1964, 120.

light of men (Jn 1:4)."[42] This means that illumination, which enlightens the darkness of the human mind, is absolutely necessary. For, on our own, "we were utterly incapable of such participation and quite unfit for it, so unclean were we through sin, so we had to be cleansed."[43] According to Augustine, sin endarkens human beings, preventing them from partaking in the Word of God. Consequently, they need the divine brightness of the Word to infuse them with light. Such purifying illumination, in turn, lays the foundation for the assimilation of another logical framework into the idea of participation. As Augustine affirms:

> to contemplate God, which by nature we are not, we would have to be cleansed by him who became what by nature we are and what by sin we are not. By nature we are not God; by nature we are men; by sin we are not just. So God became a just man to intercede with God for sinful man. The sinner did not match the just, but man did match man. So he applied to us the similarity of his humanity to take away the dissimilarity of our iniquity, and becoming a partaker of our mortality he made us partakers of his divinity.[44]

The Word assumed human nature, but not human sin, so as to purify human beings, making possible the contemplation of God. Above all, this event allowed humans *to participate in God's divinity while God participated in their mortality*.

At first glance, it would seem that both forms of participation are equivalent, but further investigation reveals their fundamental unlikeness. Regarding the participation of human beings in the Word of God, the hierarchy between partaker and partaken is maintained. As mentioned above, there is a great distance between immortality, wisdom, and goodness themselves, and the approximations of these that come from participation.[45]

By contrast, the participation of the Word of God in humanity supersedes the hierarchy between divinity and humanity insofar as both are joined

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42 Aug., Trin. 4.2,4. *Inluminatio quippe nostra participatio uerbi est, illius scilicet uitae quae lux est hominum* (CCSL 50, 163).

43 Aug., Trin. 4.2,4: *Huic autem participationi prorsus inhabiles et minus idonei eramus propter immunditiam peccatorum; mundandi ergo eramus* (CCSL 50, 163).

44 Aug., Trin. 4.2,4: *Ut ad contemplandum deum quod natura non sumus per eum mundaremur factum quod natura sumus et quod peccato non sumus. Deus enim natura non sumus; homines natura sumus; iusti peccato non sumus. Deus itaque factus homo iustus intercessit deo pro homine peccatore. Non enim congruit peccator iusto, sed congruit homini homo. Adiungens ergo nobis similitudinem humanitatis suae abstulit dissimilitudinem iniquitatis nostrae, et factus particeps mortalitatis nostrae fecit participes diuinitatis suae.* (CCSL 50, 164).

45 On the participation in the Wise, cf. Trin. 3.2,8 (CCSL 50, 133–135) and 7.1,2 (CCSL 50, 248–249); in the Good, cf. Trin. 8.3,5 (CCSL 50, 273–274).

together in the incarnation. Consequently, a specific logical apparatus is required to encompass the singularity of this event.

Firstly, there is an incongruence between the *simplicity* of God and the *twofoldness* of human being. The participation of the Word in humanity sets up a relation in which simplicity does not dissolve human twofoldness, nor human twofoldness simplicity.[46] Rather, the *simple* matches (*congruit*) the *double*, according to Augustine.

Still in reference to Christ, Augustine stresses another difficulty. After addressing a reprimand to proud men, he adds, "they are not prepared to consider how it can be that the Word of God abides totally unchanged in himself and yet by taking on a lower nature can suffer what is proper to that nature, which an impure demon cannot suffer because he does not have an earthy body."[47] The Word of God, by taking part in a lower nature, has experienced all the changes that afflict corporeal beings, but without incurring harm to his immutability.

So, the participation of Christ in humanity requires a conciliation between discrepant ideas like *mortality* and *immortality*, *humanity* and *divinity*, *simplicity* and *duplicity* (*twofoldness*), *mutability* and *immutability*. Only by stretching out the logical basis of the idea of participation—i.e., assuming it as a principle of conciliation between opposite attributes, such as Plato articulated in the *Parmenides* and the *Sophist*—is it possible to deal with the complexity of the incarnation of the Word of God.[48]

To conclude, it is worth mentioning the synthesis carried out by Augustine in Book 14, wherein he ties together the different aspects of participation scattered across *On the Trinity*. In order to sum up the argument of the treatise, he reveals how the diversity of relations expressed by the term *participation* corresponds with the diversity of perspectives on the fulfillment of a single unique

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46 Cf. "as for our present concern, what has to be explained as far as God permits is how the single of our Lord matches our double, and in some fashion enters into a harmony of salvation with it" Trin. 4.3,5: *Verum quod instat in praesentia quantum donat deus edisserendum est, quemadmodum simplum domini et saluatoris nostri Iesu Christi duplo nostro congruat et quodam modo concinat ad salutem,* (CCSL 50, 165). Such a debate extends afterwards into the theme of the single death of Christ and the double death of the human being.

47 Aug., Trin. 4.13,18: *Nec sic uolunt considerare quam fieri potuerit ut in se manens nec per se ipsum ex ulla parte mutabile uerum dei per inferioris tamen naturae susceptionem aliquid inferius pati posset quod immundus daemon quia terrenum corpus no non habet, pati non possit.* (CCSL 50, 185).

48 On how the idea of *complexity* overlaps the theological concept of *mystery,* regarding the divine participation in humanity, cf. Bourke, 1964, 121.

divine activity.[49] The difficulty of framing these into a unified picture is due to the fact that human beings look at them from a perspective narrowed by their limited capacity. Thus, the participation of God in his creation through the likeness borne by his creatures, and its interruption by human sin; the restored participation of the Word of God in humanity; and lastly, the participation of humanity in the life of God as a result of the process of deification; all are unified in the overarching work of a God who creates, maintains, and saves. In order to express this manifold act, one must have an equally manifold principle. Augustine found just such a principle in the concept of participation.

4. Conclusion

We began by arguing for the non-univocality of the logical framework supporting the grammar of participation in Plato's thought. In this respect, the dialogues *Parmenides* and *Sophist* were shown to represent a turning-point in his theory. Across their pages, Plato expands the logic underlying the concept of participation in order to address the contradictions which arise from the relation of the Ideas to sensible things, and to one another. Even so, the historical reception of the concept has prioritized the logic based on the hierarchy between partaker and partaken, and the supposed non-contradictoriness of ideas, creating the paradigmatic expression of Platonic participation. Unfortunately, such a flat and one-sided perspective does not do justice to its mature formulation.

In sequence, we argued that Origen's *On First Principles* and Augustine's *On the Trinity* provide adequate evidence of the fact that their use of the concept of participation parallels the flexibility that can be found in Plato's works. It was argued that such a *reception does not take place on the conceptual plane, but in the logical layer*. As a matter of fact, *both carry out a comprehensive use of the concept, squaring its manifold logical bases with the requirements of the theological issues at hand*. If, on the one hand, human beings and other mortal creatures can be fit into a concept of participation based on plain logical precepts; on the other, God, the Trinity, and the incarnation of the Word, demand a logic of participation that can cope with a nexus of seemingly opposite ideas in one and the same reality.

Based on the evidence, it is possible to see how Plato's modification of the concept of participation, primarily in the *Parmenides* and *Sophist,* granted it extraordinary logical flexibility. As the writings of Origen and Augustine attest, further modifications of this fundamental concept made it possible to resolve many of the most difficult (theo)logical aporias of Early Christianity.

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49 Cf. especially Aug., Trin. 14.4,6; 14.8,11; 14.12,15 (CCSL 50a, 428–429; 435–438; 442–443).

Ivan Bilheiro

A Man Victimized by Doubt: Skepticism as an Antropological Problem for Augustin in *Contra Academicos*

Abstract: The article deals with Augustine's efforts to overcome the challenge posed by Skepticism, namely, that truth as such is unattainable. By analyzing the work *Contra academicos*, we will discuss Augustine's personal relationship with skepticism, his understanding of the main skeptical arguments, and lastly, the contours of his response.

1. Introduction

The intention of this essay is to analyze Augustine of Hippo's overcoming of the skeptical challenge in order to understand (1) his *perspective* on the problem—here taken as a matter of anthropology—and (2) the *expected results* of such overcoming. It is first of all necessary to stress the importance of reason in the Augustinian path, i.e. the path he proposes for human flourishing. This involves, among other things, a battle against that which threatens to undermine the rationality of Christian faith (and indeed reason as such). For Augustine, one such threat was academic skepticism. This then is the issue under scrutiny: how does the skeptical challenge affect human beings according to Augustine, and why must it be overcome? How does he frame skepticism as an anthropological problem?

During the philosophical-spiritual retreat at Verecundus' Villa in Cassiciacum, dedicated to the debates recorded in *Contra academicos*, Augustine announced his intention to defend the possibility of apprehending truth. To this end, he argues that philosophy is the only way by which truth can be reached. As I will demonstrate, insofar as overcoming the skeptical challenge opens the possibility of knowing truth, it also opens the possibility of knowing God. For Augustine, this possibility is confirmed by Christianity. Indeed, it is from a Christian perspective, and from personal faith, that he confronts the thesis posed by the skeptics—namely, that truth is unreachable. The lasting importance of this theme is assured by the fact that the struggle against skepticism is present even in Augustine's late works.[1]

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1   G. Matthews, *Augustine*, Oxford 2005, 21.

In order to fill out Augustine's thinking on the issue, one must take into account the richness of his oldest remaining writing, *Contra academicos*. It is essential for understanding the role of Christianity at the beginning of his path. The period of Augustine's life that dates from his disillusion with Manichaeism and culminates in his conversion to Christianity is pervaded by a *relation* with Skepticism. Even after his conversion to Christianity—during his *otium philosophandi* (philosophical idleness)[2] or *christianae vitae otium* (christian life idleness) in Cassiciacum[3]—the arguments of the skeptics leave a vivid impression on Augustine's mind, in such a measure that he feels compelled to refute them using his already solid religious background.[4] As a matter of fact, the so-called *Cassiciacum retreat* refers to an episode whose apprehension is crucial to grasping the first steps of his thought. According to the division of the Augustinian corpus, it corresponds with the frame of the *early writings* or *philosophical period*.[5] The themes of that period mostly encompass the struggle against the challenge posed by Skepticism: "[...] truth, happiness, order, the immortality and magnitude of the soul, the existence of God, the freedom of the human being, the problem of evil, among others."[6] Consequently, it is important to gain a thorough understanding of the challenge faced by Augustine at this stage in his career.

2. The Historical and Philosophical Context of Skepticism

Generally, Skepticism is understood as a philosophical position menacing the attempts by several alternative philosophies to attain knowledge/truth.[7]

Skepticism has had a long and complex history since its inception in Ancient Greece via Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360 – 270 BC). Indeed, the skeptical challenge has been present since the first Pyrrhonic reflections, in both its epistemological and moral aspects. Danilo Marcondes Souza Filho has displayed a synthetic scheme of the historical trajectory: firstly, a general outline of skeptical ideas can be found implicitly in the thought of several pre-Socratic philosophers in 6th-5th century BC. Secondly, it is it explicitly

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2   S. Agostinho, *Contra os acadêmicos, A ordem, A grandeza da alma, O mestre*, São Paulo 2008, 10.

3   Aug., Retract. 1.1,1. In Ord. 1.2,4, Augustine uses the expression *liberali otio* to describe the retreat.

4   P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*: a biography, Los Angeles 2010, 70–71.

5   Cf. Agostinho, 2008, 9; G. Catapano, *Il concetto di filosofia nei primi scritti Agostino: analisi dei passi metafilosofici dal Contra academicos al De uera religione,* Roma 2001, 9.

6   Cf. Agostinho, 2008, 9.

7   J. Dancy, *Epistemologia contemporânea*, Lisboa 2002, 19.

formulated in the thought of Pyrrho of Elis. Next, the skeptical period of Plato's Academy (also known as Academic Skepticism) is ushered in and advanced by Arcesilaus (316/5 – 241/0 BC) from 270 BC until the period of his successor Carneades (219 – 129 BC). Lastly, Pyrrhonic Skepticism is revived by Aenesidemus in the first century BC, culminating in the elaboration of one of the main sources of the Pyrrhonic Skepticism: Sextus Empiricus' *Hypotyposis Pyrrhonicorum* in the second century AD.[8] The dawn of Skepticism begins from this point onward. Souza Filho also hypothesizes that Augustine's influence was responsible for the surprising lack of interest in Skepticism during the Middle Ages. The definitive refutation of Skepticism in *Contra Academicos* was, in his opinion, responsible for the fact that "references to the Ancient Skepticism and discussions on skeptical questions are absent, with very few exceptions, from the Medieval Philosophy."[9]

Skepticism does not constitute a philosophical school *per se,* since it lacks a theoretical *corpus* of its own. It is more appropriate to approach the skeptical position as a *philosophical problem* or, to use my preferred rendition, a *philosophical challenge*. The Latin word for *challenge* is *disfidare*: a juxtaposition of *dis-*, meaning *departure*, *to put a distance between*, and *fides*, the word for *faith*, *trust* or *belief*. Therefore, *disfidare* means a movement of *putting a distance between something and the trust in it*. Thus, to understand Skepticism *as a challenge* is to understand it as an element causing disturbance in the human being, an estrangement from certainty demanding a rational effort to be defeated. In summary, the challenge relates to its potential to unhinge prior certainty or willingness to search for truth.

It is essential to notice that Skepticism conveys this aspect of challenge from its very origins. In a broader perspective, Paul Tillich speaks of Skepticism as the *negative end of Greek philosophy*.[10] With this diagnosis, he indicates the feature of the Skeptical challenge that Augustine would have faced: "the heroic Greek attempt to build a world on the basis of philosophical reason came to a catastrophic end in Skepticism. The attempt to create a new world in terms of a doctrine of essences ended in Skepticism."[11] Therefore, according to Tillich, Skepticism steered ancient philosophy towards a kind of epilogue. This is the legacy of the philosophical tradition with which Augustine would deal at the beginning of his writing career, leading him toward a

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8   D.M.S. Filho, O *ceticismo antigo: pirronismo e nova academia*, in: RCH 85 (1994), 85–95 (87–88).
9   Filho, 1994, 99.
10 P. Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, London 1968, 108–109.
11 Id., 1968, 121.

confrontation with the Skeptical challenge. In short, such a *tremendous clash* is the background of *Contra academicos*.

Considering Skepticism's wide-ranging history, one should also make explicit the specific variety of Skepticism against which Augustine took his stand. According to Victor Brochard[12] and Jean-Paul Dumont,[13] Augustine's portrait of Skepticism is quite distinctive and appears to overlap, for the most part, with the thought of the Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero. For the purposes of this investigation, it is assumed that Augustine had in mind the Academic Skepticism when he referred to Skepticism, an assumption that is justified by the text of *Contra academicos*.

3. Augustine and Skepticism

As argued above, Skepticism is ultimately *a challenge*—it disturbs reason's aspirations to reach, and adhere to, the truth. This challenge reaches the gates of the Medieval world and Christian philosophy through Augustine. But, if Skepticism is a challenge, why is it specifically challenging for Augustine? Why is it *an anthropological problem*?

Two perspectives must be taken into consideration regarding this problem. First of all, *Augustine's personal experience with Skepticism*; here, it is worth discussing the features of his contact with Skepticism, including the question of whether he really considered himself a skeptic. Secondly, one must analyze *how Skepticism is depicted in his writings*; in other words, how he understood the skeptical challenge.

In order to grasp the import of the skeptical challenge for Augustine, one needs to consider part of his history. As a young man, he made acquaintance with Cicero's *Hortensius*, which was responsible for inspiring his turn toward philosophical investigation. However, according to *Confessiones*, Augustine eventually came to regret the lack of Christ in the thought of the Roman philosopher. To fix this lack he began to read the Christian Scriptures for the first time. However, Augustine was also disappointed with the Scriptures[14] due to their ungainly style, and their unsatisfying answers to his rational desire for truth.[15] At this point in time, he would embrace Manichaeism. Such adherence would last until his own doubts made him cut ties with that sect. The advertised possibility of finding a purely rational

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12 V. Brochard, *Les sceptiques grecs*, Paris 1923, 115–116.

13 J.-P. Dumont, *Ceticismo*, [s.l.] 2013, 5. Available on <http://conte.prof.ufsc.br/txt-dumont.pdf>.

14 P. Boehner / E. Gilson, *História da filosofia cristã*, Petrópolis 2012, 143.

15 Aug., Conf. 3.5,9.

truth had not been fulfilled by Manichaeism. Augustine's frustrations here moved him closer to Skepticism.

But would he in fact have embraced the title of Skeptic? Misiara provides us with a doubly-rich resource, asking and answering this question. First, he evaluates opposing stances toward the question, enumerating, for analytical purposes, some Augustinian passages that engage with Skepticism.[16] Judging by fragments from *Confessiones* and *Retractaciones*, among other writings, Misiara comes to the conclusion that Augustine was never a Skeptic. He argues that Augustine always kept his faith in truth, making it impossible for him to adhere to any doctrine other than Christianity.[17] Nonetheless, he also draws our attention toward the psychological condition identified by Augustine as *desperatio inveniendi veritatis*, the despair to find the truth. Misiara interprets this as a stage of *dismay* caused by Augustine's disappointment with the Manichaean sect. This allows us to surmise that the allure of Skepticism was felt strongly by Augustine, even if he stopped short of embracing the skeptical philosophy.[18]

Boehner, Gilson,[19] and Maurice Testard,[20] all agree that, during this period, Augustine took certain assertions as true, a stand incompatible with Skepticism. However, as with Misiara, these authors also recognize this period as a phase of increased association with Skepticism. The latter argues that Augustine resigned himself to skeptical argumentation, allowing for an interpretation that admits an adherence, even if provisory, to the skeptical position.

Anthony Kenny,[21] for his part, holds a subtler position. According to him, Augustine's conversion to Christianity was facilitated by his attraction to skeptical argumentation.[22] This perspective aligns with the interpretation of, for example, Jean-Paul Dumont,[23] who maintains that Skepticism pushed Augustine towards the acceptance of Christian truth. In short, both are inclined to deny a skeptical 'phase' in Augustine's life— such as would make of him a professing Skeptic—while still acknowledging academic interest in Skepticism.

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16 A.P. Misiara, *As "Confissões"*, in: *Atualidades de Santo Agostinho*, Sorocaba 1955, 12 f.
17 Id., 1955, 13.
18 Id., 1955, 14–15.
19 Cf. P. Boehner / E. Gilson, 2012, 147 f.
20 M. Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron: Cicéron dans la formation et dans l'œuvre de Saint Augustin*, Paris 1958, 93 f.
21 A. Kenny, *Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 2, Oxford 2005, 156 f.
22 Id., 2008, 183.
23 Cf. Dumont, 2013, 16–17.

Victorino Capánaga[24] claims, in accordance with a common view, that Augustine abandoned his academic doubt following his Christian conversion. He denies the presence of academic doubt from conversion until Augustine's ordination in 391. Even so, Capánaga does not take a direct position regarding a possible adherence to Skepticism prior to conversion. He does, however, acknowledge the psychological suffering that contact with the Skeptical challenge afflicted upon the philosopher. Capánaga's focus is mainly on Augustine's evident rupture with academic doubt (regardless whether he would have adhered to Skepticism or simply experienced psychological suffering because of it) from his conversion in 386 onwards.

Peter Brown[25] rejects Augustine's adherence to Skepticism. According to him, "the Academics had seemed to him to deny that the human mind could ever reach the truth. Augustine never adopted this radical view wholeheartedly."[26] For Brown, there was only a period of doubts spurred by disappointment with Manichaeism, a time in which the Skepticism presented by Cicero offered some "intellectual respectability" to Augustine. He highlights the need to understand this tenure; while it is one of the less known periods of Augustine's life it is, at the same time, of fundamental importance for comprehending his intellectual evolution.

Gareth Matthews[27] likewise denies the existence of an effective skeptical phase in Augustine's personal trajectory, claiming that the evidence suggests, at most, a hesitant interest.

Lastly, Pereira Júnior speaks of Augustine as a "former adept of Skepticism."[28] Indeed, he asserts that disappointment with Manichaeism pushed Augustine toward Academic thought wherefrom he was "pervaded by the skeptical spirit."[29] Pelayo Palacios[30] does not go so far as to claim that Augustine was ever a genuine skeptical philosopher. However, he does speak of an "overcoming of Skepticism", suggesting some sort of liaison.[31] Edilezia Simões[32] adopts a clearer posture by categorically denying that Augustine

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24 S. Agustín, *Contra los académicos*, Madrid 2009, 10 f.

25 Cf. P. Brown, 2010, 70 f.

26 Id., 2010, 70.

27 Cf. Matthews, 2005, 15.

28 A.P. Júnior, *Agostinho e o ceticismo: um estudo da crítica agostiniana ao ceticismo em Contra academicos*, Natal 2012, 111.

29 Id., 2012, 65.

30 P.M. Palacios, *O estamento da Verdade no Contra academicos de Agostinho*, São Paulo 2006.

31 Id., 2006, 159.

32 E.F. Simões, *O critério da Verdade no Contra academicos, de Agostinho*, Vitória 2012.

ever embraced Skepticism. She quotes passages from the *Confessiones* in which a mistrust of Academicians is clearly articulated by Augustine.[33]

This survey of scholars who have worked on the theme—or have at least faced it to some extent—allows us to see that most claim that Augustine never actually adhered to Skepticism, while there is a consensus that the skeptical challenge did affect him during a certain stage of his life. Scholars also emphasize the persistence of Augustine's commitment to the attainability of truth(s),[34] and note that, in his writings, he never identifies himself as a former Skeptic, but only as a *man victimized by skeptical doubt*. Apparently, Augustine's contact with Skepticism put him in an *anxious situation of hopelessness*. If he would have turned into a Skeptic, he would have expressed satisfaction with the state of mind provided by *epokhé*, which seems not to be true.

The preview analysis allows us to reach the following conclusion: Skepticism is a challenge with which Augustine grappled during a certain span of his career, without becoming an adherent thereof. As a matter of fact, the skeptical interpellation put him into an *anxious state of desperation of truth*.

Thus, we must inquire further. As a philosophical position in the orbit of Hellenism, Skepticism claims to offer a way of reaching happiness (*eudaimonia)* and tranquility of soul (*ataraxia)*. However, Augustine's descriptions indicate a state of suffering and disturbance of the soul resulting from his contact with Skepticism. How should one understand this discrepancy?

Sextus Empiricus affirms, in his *Hypotyposis Pyrrhonicorum*, that, by suspending judgment, the skeptic achieves tranquility of the soul—*ataraxia*. Nonetheless, Renata Krempel[35] raises the following question: would it not be possible to imagine other consequences stemming from the suspension of judgment than tranquility of the soul? In her opinion it is entirely possible to hold the opposite hypothesis; namely, that suspension causes *disturbance* rather than *tranquility*.

Such a debate supposes an existential reckoning with Skepticism rather than treating it as a mere topic in the field of epistemology. As soon as the impossibility of adherence to truth is discerned, and the suspension of judgment is embraced, a profound uneasiness may arise from the impossibility of finding criteria for action, even for the simplest practical decisions. It is undeniably possible that, when faced with the skeptical challenge, philosophers, as 'lovers of truth,' might become desperate, anguished, desolated,

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33 Cf. id., 2012, 26.

34 Cf. Misiara, 1955; P. Boehner / E. Gilson, 2012; Matthews, 2005.

35 R.A. Krempel, *Equipolência, suspensão de juízo e tranquilidade no ceticismo pirrônico*, in: Primeiros escritos 1 (2009), 251–265 (252).

and lost, having been diverted from that which was previously the goal of their life's quest.

For Augustine, Skepticism is framed precisely as such a disturbing experience. From the moment he entered into contact with Skepticism, he was embittered, as Palacios describes.[36] He was intimately unsettled and inhibited—still earnest in his questioning, but profoundly discouraged.

Besides illuminating his personal experience, Augustine's evaluation of Skepticism has considerable relevance for a proper understanding of *Contra Academicos*. Jean-Paul Dumont[37] draws attention to this feature, claiming that Augustine's experience with Skepticism, and his late reflections upon it, reveal a new way of thinking about the despair of truth. At first, Dumont says, doubt is experienced existentially, which gives Skepticism its power over ordinary life. Such doubt can open the gate to a despair that is truly anguishing. On the other hand, as a mode of experience, skeptical anxiety can be understood as a despair that eventually *strengthens the value of one's encounter with truth, which, in turn, acquires an aspect of salvation vis-a-vis one's previous situation.*[38]

So Augustine's understanding of Skepticism as an experience putting the human being into a mode of *despair of finding truth,* is what allows us to see it as *an anthropological problem.* For Augustine, it is necessary to fight Skepticism in order to clear the way towards truth. As Gilson[39] says:

> It is well worth noting that the refutation of skepticism was this new Christian's first preoccupation. The "despair of finding truth," which he had just conquered in himself, is also the first enemy he would overcome in others. At last, Augustine possessed truths that were certain: certitude, therefore, was possible: by saving the mind from despair, the *Contra Academicos* cleared the threshold of philosophy and set its door ajar.

Surely, before one can reach the truth, one must first believe that there is such a thing, and that it is possible to access, contrary to the Academicians'.[40] In two passages from *Contra academicos*' book 2, Augustine clarifies the relation between the search for the truth and the need to fight against Skepticism:

> "Therefore," I continued, "don't you know that up to now there is nothing I perceive to be certain? I'm prevented from searching for it by the arguments and debates of the Academicians. [...] Accordingly, I had become lazy and utterly inactive, not daring to search for what the most ingenious and learned men weren't permitted to

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36 Cf. Palacios, 2006, 35.
37 Cf. Dumont, 2013, 15.
38 Cf. Dumont, 2013, 16.
39 E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine,* New York 1967, 38.
40 Cf. Simões, 2012, 88.

find. Unless, therefore, I first become as convinced that the truth can be found as the Academicians are convinced that it cannot, I shall not dare to search for it. I don't have anything to defend.[41]

It is worth noting the *apathy* to which Augustine seems to have resigned himself after acknowledging that truth cannot be found. He did not believe that truth was accessible. Academic Skepticism, for Augustine, not only made truth difficult to access; it completely prevented it.

Another important passage reveals the same impulse towards confrontation with Skepticism. When questioned about the Skeptical position, Augustine affirms that life itself is at stake, the constitution of the soul willing to know truth so as to facilitate the return to God.[42]

After all, his Skeptical experience had driven him to confront the despair of truth. Since Skepticism was experienced as suffering, he decided to overcome it and convince others of its falsehood. So, his goal in *Contra Academicos* is *salvation from the skeptical doubt*—escape from the despair it yields. Pelayo Palacios defines the focus of the work considering a double sense:

> [...] *Contra Academicos* seems to have a twofold goal: besides fighting against the arguments of the Academicians in order to take them away from his soul, it takes into account and mentions explicitly those which remain captives of arguments that withdraw the hope of finding the truth. Such double preoccupation could be called respectively individual and personal, and collective and common. It will be also displayed, throughout the book, by two great movements: an interior one, towards himself, and an exterior one, towards the others. The movement towards the others will lead him out but not away from himself. It aims to evoke in others an encounter with themselves. In practice, Augustine is proposing a philosophical exercise: to connect with himself so as to find the truth that inhabits the interior of the human being. That is the road taken by his soul; a route and a discovery which he wants somehow to make engraved forever.[43]

So with *Contra academicos*, Augustine seeks to propagate the possibility of escaping from the disturbance of the skeptical challenge and, in turn, to be saved from doubt:

> Indeed, the discussion about academicians' doubt is not a mere scholastic exercise; on the contrary, it takes into consideration the attraction that Skepticism had exercised, at a certain point, over Augustine. One can notice that it was a serious and truly capital matter, both for faith and philosophy, and Augustine is right when he says that, concerning this theme, happiness is involved.[44]

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41 Aug., C. acad. 2.9,23. English edition: Augustine, *Against the Academicians and the Teacher*, translated by Peter King, Indianapolis 1995.
42 Aug., C. acad. 2.9,22.
43 Cf. Palacios, 2006, 10.
44 R. Jolivet, *San Agustín y el neoplatonismo Cristiano*, Buenos Aires 1941, 118.

4. The Discussion on Skepticism in *Contra Academicos*

As noted above, *Contra academicos* is key to the study of Augustine's relation with Skepticism. The dialogues and prologues that constitute its three parts are not only an impetus toward philosophy but also outline his understanding of Skepticism and his prescribed way of fighting against it.

4.1 The Skeptical Challenge in Book 1 of *Contra Academicos*: Happiness at Stake

From the previous analysis, it is possible to understand how the question dates back to the earliest of Augustine's writings. In Book 1 of *Contra academicos*, the debate between two young men—Trigetius and Licentius—takes place with brief interventions by Augustine. The debate begins with a proposition from Augustine: "do you have any doubt that we ought to know the truth?"[45] In face of the negative answer given by his interlocutors, Augustine asks again with a different orientation: "[...] if we can be happy while not apprehending the truth, do you consider the apprehension of the truth to be necessary?"[46] Such a twist sets the tone of the discussion in book 1.

The problem posed concerns the possibility of reaching the truth and its necessity for human happiness. If the truth is dispensable to the attainment of happiness, Augustine wants to know why we nevertheless continue to search for it. However, as we will see, the debaters do in fact regard truth as indispensable to human happiness. They do disagree, however, about how best to conceive the relation between human being and truth regarding the assurance of happiness.

The discussion goes on, in summary, as follows. The young Trigetius, using a Ciceronian axiom, asserts that everybody wants to be happy; if happiness were possible without truth, the question would be meaningless. Augustine, however, asks again whether happiness is in fact possible without truth. Licentius, for his part, answers in the affirmative. This prompts Trigetius to request a definition of *the happy life*, drawing an answer from Augustine: the happy life is lived in accordance with that than which nothing in the human being is better; namely, that part of the soul which all the other parts must obey—mind or reason.[47]

Reaffirming the legitimacy of his question, Augustine urges the debaters to take a stand on the problem. For Trigetius, happiness is not possible without

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45 Aug., C. acad. 1.2,5.
46 Aug., C. acad. 1.2,5.
47 Aug., C. acad. 1.2,5.

the possession of truth. Licentius, in turn, admits it must be possible to obtain insofar as one searches for it. This controversy is important and must be well understood. Trigetius assumes that the possession of truth grants happiness and that without it human beings cannot be happy; Licentius says that it is not the possession of truth that brings happiness—and his argument will be clarified during the discussion—but the quest to find it.

Licentius' first contribution is to question why one who searches for truth cannot be happy, even when failing to obtain it. Trigetius replies by arguing that only the wise and perfect human is happy, and that wisdom is inconceivable without the possession of truth. His opponent recalls a passage by Cicero in which the Roman philosopher claims that the wise must search for truth, but cannot know anything for sure; their happiness consists in diligently searching the truth without giving assent to anything less. Only so are the wise free from error, since everything is uncertain.[48]

The discussion continues until the end of book 1 without explicit mention of Skepticism. It is nevertheless adumbrated by Licentius' speech when he says that the role of the wise, for the Skeptics, is to avoid accepting theories that may be false, suspending judgment without suspending investigation. That is the skeptical definition of tranquility: to deny what is probably false and to keep the search alive.

Trigetius holds his ground, pressing Licentius to admit that the one who is still in search for the truth lacks perfection. Since his interlocutor refuses to do so, he demands justifications. According to Licentius, only God knows the truth or, perhaps, the soul once freed from the body. While it seems like one who has not yet obtained truth cannot be perfect, one must take into consideration the incompleteness of human beings and understand that their purpose is the pursuit, not the possession, of truth. This is the only possible perfection for humanity. Trigetius interposes: if one does not reach what is so ardently desired, it is not possible to be happy. For him, human beings can be happy if they live in accordance with reason. Licentius, in turn, reiterates that those who diligently search for the truth, living in a way that is suitable to the human purpose, are happy. To deny this would be madness, he adds.[49]

At this point, the challenging orientation of Skepticism begins to show its disturbing face in Licentius' defense. The young man claims that the power to reach the truth is not given to human beings; they are naturally prevented from doing so. Human purpose is summed up in the tireless search for what is, in principle, inaccessible. Trigetius points out a dilemma: according to

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48 Aug., C. acad. 1.3,7.
49 Aug., C. acad. 1.3,9.

his opponent, it appears that the one who is in error is happy since he who does not find truth is in error. In his answer, Licentius indicates that he who searches is not in error, because he searches precisely in order to avoid erring. Trigetius insists again that he who does not find what he searches for is in error.

Here Augustine intervenes, requesting a definition of error. Trigetius says that error is to search without finding. Licentius remains pensive and the first discussion is suspended.[50]

When the controversy resumes, another day, Licentius defines error as holding falsehood as truth. So, the one who pursues truth without asserting the veracity of his results may be happy. By not giving assent to anything, one avoids the risk of confusing truth with its opposite. Consequently, the one who acts this way cannot be considered erroneous. This reflects a skeptical position since the suspension of judgment ensures happiness according to Skepticism.

Taking a different approach, Trigetius introduces the question of wisdom. He asks if his interlocutor would acknowledge the definition of wisdom as a straight path of life. His opponent agrees, but soon retreats, claiming that there are straight paths that are not wise.[51] Trigetius reconfigures his definition, claiming that wisdom is the straight path that leads to truth. At first, Licentius questions the definition, but realizes that such a definition is favorable to his own cause. If wisdom is the straight path that leads to truth, the one who seeks the truth takes this path (wisdom), and the one who makes use of wisdom is wise. If no wise person is unhappy (as per Licentius' axiom), whoever seeks the truth is happy even if he does not find it.[52] At this point, the discussion is suspended again.

Augustine resumes the debate by presenting a definition of wisdom (likely borrowed from Cicero) as the science of human and divine things.[53] Afterward, Trigetius amends the science of human and divine things, but only vis-a-vis the happy life. Licentius seems to agree but observes that wisdom is not only the science of, but also the diligent search for, human and divine things concerning the happy life. He associates the science with God and the search with human beings, asserting that each is happy in its own wisdom. With this, Licentius equates wisdom with the diligent search for truth, reaffirming that science—true knowledge—belongs to God alone.

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50 Aug., C. acad. 1.4,11.
51 Aug., C. acad. 1.4,13.
52 Aug., C. acad. 1.5,14
53 Aug., C. acad. 1.6,16.

The dispute circulates back to the point at which Trigetius wonders whether the wise man, in the definition proposed by Licentius, works in vain, since he does not find what he seeks. Licentius insists that he is wise precisely because he seeks and attends to the very goal of human being, ensuring happiness. In this search, the wise one disconnects himself from the body, as much as humanly possible, and connects himself to God, enjoying present happiness and preparing to achieve divine happiness at the last day of his life.[54]

In this fashion, the discussion portrayed in book 1 of *Contra academicos* comes to an end. Augustine summarizes the debate, setting up the discussion which will take place the following day. He underlines Licentius' definition of human wisdom as the search for the truth, which gives birth to happiness and tranquility of soul.[55] Augustine notes that it is an Academic Skeptic's argument. He intends to debate it and prompt Licentius to prepare his case again.[56]

In short, all the discussions in book 1 of *Contra academicos* revolve around the human relation to truth and the connected possibility of happiness. On the one hand, there is a denial of the possibility of obtaining truth. On the other, there is an assertion that only such possession can assure happiness. This picture is not removed at all from the dilemmas that disturbed Augustine upon coming into contact with Skepticism. Were the skeptics right, truth would not be accessible to human beings. However, Augustine did not accept that a diligent quest for the truth, paired with the suspension of judgment, could assure tranquility of soul—this, we should note, reinforces the argument that he never truly embraced Skepticism.

4.2 The Challenging Conception of Skepticism in Book 2 of *Contra Academicos*: Understanding the Skepticism's Doctrine

When the debate resumes in Book 2, Licentius asks Augustine to contradict the whole doctrine of the Academicians.[57] From this point on, he offers a proper analysis of Skepticism, maintaining that the discussion in book 1 was bound up with the discussion of the pursuit of happiness. Augustine's personal journey resonates with this movement from the happiness question to the facing of Skepticism as such. Initially, he was taken by skeptical doubt and experienced desperation inasmuch as he felt his longing to grasp the truth and live happily being shaken up. Only after this disturbance did

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54 Aug., C. acad. 1.8,23.
55 Aug., C. acad. 1.9,24.
56 Aug., C. acad. 1.9,25.
57 Aug., C. acad. 2.4,10.

he dedicate himself to an in-depth understanding of Skepticism, in a concentrated effort to know, and thus overcome, it.

Augustine argues, following Carneades, that, from a skeptical perspective, human beings cannot achieve perfect knowledge in philosophy; they can, however, achieve relative wisdom as long as they seek the truth without ultimately assenting to anything, thereby avoiding the risk of believing something that is false.

The Skeptics' position, adds Augustine, also seems to derive from the definition of truth given by the Stoic philosopher Zeno, since the Academicians claim that signs of truth are unidentifiable.[58] For Zeno, only that which yields a representation beyond the reach of falsehood can be considered true.[59]

The Academicians, by denying the possibility of recognizing the truth, were, Augustine tells us, accused of advancing a sort of *apraxia*. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that they maintained the existence of a guiding rule, a criterion for action—i.e., the rule of *verisimilitude* (similarity) or *probability*—which allowed for wise action.[60] If this criterion were valid, the skeptics could act. Even if they admitted that they could not reach the truth, they still had a compass: *verisimilitude*. In other words, if the skeptical criterion for action is connected to the concept of *probability* or *similarity*, then there is, despite their protests, a reference to the truth in their philosophy.

With this in mind, Augustine asks Licentius whether the Academicians seem to speak the truth. Licentius is initially hesitant, but responds "probably yes."[61] From then on, Licentius is replaced by Alipius in the discussion as a defender of the Academics' position.[62] Next, Augustine suggests that the Academicians are ridiculous insofar as they claim to be following the truth of similarity without knowing the truth.[63]

At this point, Alipius questions Augustine's mode of confronting the skeptical challenge. He implies that the problem is a mere matter of words. Accordingly, the criticism addressed to the use of similarity as a truth-reference is unfruitful because it only concerns a semantic issue. That said, Augustine, perceptibly inflamed, denies that the problem can be reduced to a mere matter of words:

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58 Aug., C. acad. 2.5,11.
59 G. Real / D. Antiseri, *História da filosofia: Antiguidade e Idade Média*, São Paulo 2012, 254 f.
60 Aug., C. acad. 2.5,12.
61 Aug., C. acad. 2.7,16.
62 Aug., C. acad. 2.7,17–18.
63 Aug., C. acad. 2.7,19.

> The matter at hand concerns our life, morality, and spirit. The spirit will return more safely to Heaven since it supposes that it will overcome the dangers of all fallacious arguments; triumph over the passions in returning to the region of its origin, so to speak, once truth has been apprehended; and exercise its rule once it has been wedded to moderation in this fashion.[64]

With this answer, Augustine implies that the doctrine of the Academicians can do to others what it did to him; that is, to instill despair and discouragement of finding the truth. Augustine, rejecting their arguments, claims that it is, in fact, possible to find the truth.[65]

So, in Book 2, Augustine provides a portrait of Skepticism and considers its doctrines, mainly, the negation of the possibility of accessing the truth and the criterion of probability or similarity. It is worth concluding by reaffirming that such an idea was drawn by Augustine from Cicero.

5. Conclusion

In this article we have exposed some elements that allow to glimpse the way that Academic Skepticism influenced Augustine's life and thought, resulting in the image of a *man victimized by doubt*.

Our first question related to the historical context of Skepticism, understanding how Ancient Greek philosophy ended with skeptical questionings and deterrents against the rational development of knowledge. Augustine inherited this dilemma. However, his approach to the issue, bringing out a Christian feature, gave a new breath to philosophy as an organ of truth. His confrontation with Skepticism took place during a retreat at Verecundus' estate in Cassiciacum. At that time, Augustine, already a convert to Christianity, tried, and made use of, the philosophical tools available to him, especially those of the Platonic schools, in order to rationally comprehend that which faith had already revealed to him.

In Cassiciacum Augustine composed the three books of *Contra Academicos*, wherein he detailed his understanding of Skepticism. This understanding has much in common with Cicero. In the first of the three books, he displays how Skepticism is in fact an existential challenge to happiness. After all, if the possibility of reaching the truth is denied, Skepticism becomes an obstacle to happiness, which can only be experienced via truth. In *Contra Academicos'* Book 2, he exposes the doctrine of the Academicians, mocking them for accepting as a criterion of action the similitude to truth, even while this very truth remains unknown.

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64 Aug., C. acad. 2.9,22.
65 Aug., C. acad. 2.9,23.

In summary, Skepticism is, for Augustine, the negation of the possibility of the apprehension of truth. Therefore, inasmuch as Augustine's thought is directed toward the truth, Skepticism represents, above all, a strong challenge. The human being victimized by doubt becomes lost, disturbed, and desperate. In face of this existential crisis, it is anthropologically necessary to overcome the skeptical challenge so as to unblock the path towards truth, happiness, and God.

Lenka Karfíková

The Soul in Augustine's Dialogue
De quantitate animae

Abstract: Augustine's early dialogue *De quantitate animae* deals with six questions related to the human soul: (i) where the soul originates, (ii) what it is like in its quality, (iii) what it is like in its quantity, (iv) why it was given to the body, (v) what it becomes like after entering the body, and (vi) what it becomes like after leaving it. The most part of the dialogue is concerned with the "quantity" of the soul, which allows for three meanings: local extension, the capacity of the soul, and the "number" of souls. Following the Neoplatonists, Augustine denies that the soul is both extended and localised in space. To demonstrate his idea of the soul not being localised even in the body it animates, Augustine analyses sense perception, i.e. "bodily experience which of itself does not escape the soul", according to his definition. The capacity of the soul is divided into seven degrees or activities: vegetative, perceptive, and rational faculties, as well as "virtue", "tranquillity", "ingression", and "contemplation". Finally, as far as the number of souls is concerned, Augustine prefers, again with the Neoplatonists, the idea of the soul being both one and many. In conclusion, Augustine's interest in the Socratic question of care for the soul is mentioned.

1. Introduction

Augustine's dialogue *De quantitate animae* was composed in Rome circa 388, placing it among his earlier writings.[1] Chronologically, and developmentally, it marks a transition between Augustine's philosophical dialogues from Cassiciacum in 386 (*Contra Academicos*, *De beata vita*, *De ordine*, *Soliloquia*), and his later dialogues from Rome/Africa (*De libero arbitrio*, *De musica*, *De magistro*), written prior to his ordination as a priest in 391.[2] The form of the philosophical dialogue was known to Augustine chiefly through

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1   Aug., Retract. 1.8,1 (CCL 57, 21).

2   On the difference in genre between both groups, see H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris 1938, 309–311; B. R. Voss, *Der Dialog in der frühchristlichen Literatur*, München 1970, 197–199. 277–281; T. Fuhrer, *Augustinus*, Darmstadt 2004, 66–68; G. Catapano, *The Epistemological Background of Augustine's Dialogues*, in: S. Föllinger / G. M. Müller (eds.), *Der Dialog in der Antike. Formen und Funktionen einer literarischen Gattung zwischen Philosophie, Wissensvermittlung und dramatischer Inszenierung*, Berlin 2013, 107–122.

the works of Cicero, and the topics of his early writings seem, at least in part, to follow Cicero's example.[3]

Augustine's unfinished draft *De immortalitate animae* from 387, intended as the third book of his *Soliloquia*, comes very close to *De quantitate animae* in its articulation of the soul. Here he describes the soul as both participating in *Ratio*,[4] and sustaining the body, without being localised therein.[5] In many respects, *De quantitate animae* is also connected to Augustine's later dialogue *De libero arbitrio*. In both works he strives to discern the origins of the soul, albeit from two different angles. In *De quantitate animae*, Augustine examines the origin of the soul (*unde*) under two aspects: first, viz. its country of origin; and second, viz. the parts or elements of which it is composed.[6] In *De libero arbitrio*, by way of contrast, he focuses on the origin of individual souls, seeking to uncover whether they are (i) transmitted from parents; (ii) created together with individual bodies; (iii) sent as preexistent into bodies by God; or (iv) entering bodies spontaneously.[7] Up until the end of his life, Augustine never arrived at a definitive answer to this question, going so far as to declare the answer impossible to find. He was, however, able to limit the alternatives to two: traducianism and creationism, i.e. (i) and (ii) above.[8]

The connection between *De quantitate animae* and *De libero arbitrio* is further accentuated by the fact that they share a common collocutor, Augustine's compatriot Evodius.[9] This young man, a member of Augustine's

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3 On Augustine's place in the genre of philosophical dialogue, see V. Hösle, *Der philosophische Dialog. Eine Poetik und Hermeneutik*, München 2006; N. Cipriani, *I dialoghi di Agostino: Guida alla lettura*, Roma 2013, 65–76. On Augustine's inspiration from Cicero and his reactions and replies to Cicero's writings, see M. Foley, *Cicero, Augustine, and the Philosophical Roots of the Cassiciacum Dialogues*, in: REAug 45 (1999), 51–77 (62–76); J. Trelenberg, *Augustins Schrift De ordine: Einführung, Kommentar, Ergebnisse*, Tübingen 2009, 3 f. 16. 21–23.

4 Aug., Imm. 6.10–11 (CESL 89, 110–112).

5 Aug., Imm. 16.25 (CESL 89, 127 f.).

6 Aug., Quant. an. 1.2 (CSEL 89, 133).

7 Aug., Lib. 3.20,56,188–58,199: (i) *una anima facta est, ex qua omnium hominum animae trahuntur nascentium*; (ii) *singillatim fiunt in unoquoque nascentium*; (iii) *in Dei aliquo secreto iam existentes animae mittuntur ad inspiranda et regenda corpora singulorum quorumque nascentium*; (iv) *alibi animae constitutae non mittuntur a Domino Deo, sed sua sponte ad inhabitanda corpora veniunt.* (CCL 29, 307–309).

8 On this topic, see my book *Grace and the Will according to Augustine*, Leiden 2012, 214–224.

9 The names of the partners in the dialogue are different in different manuscripts; see G. Catapano, *Agostino, Sull'anima. L'immortalità dell'anima; La grandezza dell'anima*, Milano 2003, 349, n. 1. However, in his letter Ep. 162.2, Augustine remembers his dialogues with Evodius.

community of friends in Milan,[10] would later enter his "monastery of philosophers"[11] in Thagaste, and eventually share his theological combat as bishop in Africa.[12] From his surviving correspondence with Augustine[13] we can surmise that, even as a bishop in Uzali, Evodius preserved a keen interest in the soul and its relation to the body. In *De quantitate animae*, Evodius asks six questions about the soul, remarkably similar in form and content to those of his pagan and Christian predecessors.

2. Evodius' Questions

Catalogues of questions pertaining to the soul were widespread in Late Antiquity, as we can judge, for example, from Seneca's Letter to Lucilius:

> There are countless questions concerning the soul alone: whence it comes, what is its nature, when it begins to exist, and how long it exists; whether it passes from one place to another and changes its habitation, being transferred successively from one animal shape to another, or whether it is a slave but once, roaming the universe after it is set free; whether it is corporeal or not; what will become of it when it ceases to use us as its medium; how it will employ its freedom when it has escaped from this present prison; whether it will forget all its past, and at that moment begin to know itself when, released from the body, it has withdrawn to the skies.[14]

Augustine's Christian predecessor Origen provides a similar list. In his commentary on the Song of Songs, he wonders whether the soul is corporeal or incorporeal, simple or compound, and, if the latter, of how many parts.

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10 Aug., Conf. 9.8,17 (CCL 27, 142 f.).

11 Marrou, 1938, 167.

12 M. A. McNamara, *Friendship in Saint Augustine*, Fribourg 1958, 112–117; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie de l'Afrique Chrétienne (303–533)*, I, Paris 1982, 366–373.

13 Evod., Ep. 158. 160. 161. 163; Aug., Ep. 159. 162. 164. 169 (CSEL 44, 488–541 and 611–622). See V. Zangara, *Exeuntes de corpore. Discussioni sulle apparizioni dei morti in epoca agostiniana*, Firenze 1990; B. Bakhouche, *Évodius d'Uzalis et la « question » de l'âme*, in: C. Bernard-Valette *et alii* (eds.), *Nihil veritas erubescit. Mélanges offerts à Paul Mattei par ses élèves, collègues et amis*, Turnhout 2017, 159–184 (171–184).

14 Sen., Ep. 88.34: *Innumerabiles quaestiones sunt de animo tantum: unde sit, qualis sit, quando esse incipiat, quamdiu sit, aliunde alio transeat et domicilia mutet in alias animalium formas aliasque coniectus, an non amplius quam semel serviat et emissus vagetur in toto; utrum corpus sit an non sit; quid sit facturus cum per nos aliquid facere desierit, quomodo libertate sua usurus cum ex hac effugerit cavea; an obliviscatur priorum et illinc nosse se incipiat unde corpori abductus in sublime secessit.* (ed. L. D. Reynolds, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales*, I, Oxford 1965, reprinted 1969, 320). English translation by R. M. Gummere, Seneca, *Epistles*, II, Cambridge 1920, 315.

Moreover, Origen raises the question of whether the soul is created. If so, how? Is its substance contained in corporeal seed and transmitted in principle with the germ of the body; or does it enter the body, prepared in the pregnant womb, as an external perfection? If the last of these, one is faced with the question of whether each soul is created at the moment its assigned body is prepared to receive it—created, as it were, for the sake of vivifying its host—or whether, on the other hand, it was created long before. If long before, it remains unclear why souls should ever become incarnate at all. Again, it can be asked whether each soul puts on a body once, or several times; and, after taking the body off, whether (and how) it will obtain another.[15] Finally, we would have to consider the existence of other rational or irrational spirits, which might very well share the same substance as the soul.[16]

In this catalogue we find questions that come very near to Augustine's respecting the nature and origin of souls. As early as his Cassiciacum dialogue *De ordine*, Augustine raises comparable questions about the soul: "(1) where the soul originates; (2) what it does here; (3) how much it differs from God; (4) what its property is that enables it to alternate both natures; (5) to what extent it dies; and (6) how its immortality can be demonstrated."[17]

In *De quantitate animae* we find a slightly modified version of this catalogue, likewise divided into six questions. Here, the question of the soul's likeness to God becomes a question of its quality as such, and the fact of its immortality is presupposed. Furthermore, the question of the double character of the soul is no longer addressed; it seems probable that this concern evolved into a query pertaining to what the soul becomes upon entering a body. The rather unclear question "what does the soul do here?" is replaced by an inquiry into the reason behind its incarnation per se. Additionally, a question concerning "quantity" makes an appearance, marking a major development.[18] The new catalogue listed at the beginning of *De quantitate animae* by Evodius stacks up against its predecessor as follows:

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15 Or., comm. in Cant. 2.5,24 (SC 375, 368).

16 Or., comm. in Cant. 2.5,18–26 (SC 375, 364–370).

17 Aug., Ord. 2.5,17: *Anima vero unde originem ducat quidve hic agat, quantum distet a Deo, quid habeat proprium, quod alternat in utramque naturam, quatenus moriatur et quomodo immortalis probetur…* (BA 4/2, 210). If not otherwise indicated, the translation is my own.

18 Aug., Quant. an. 1.1: *Quaero igitur, unde sit anima, qualis sit, quanta sit, cur corpori fuerit data, cum ad corpus venerit qualis efficiatur, qualis cum abscesserit?* (CSEL 89, 131).

De quantitae animae	De ordine
(i) Where the soul originates,	(1) Where the soul originates,
(ii) what it is like in its quality,	(3) how much it differs from God,
(iii) what it is like in its quantity,	
(iv) why it was given to the body,	(2) what it does here,
(v) what it becomes like after entering the body,	(4) what property it has that enables it to alternate both natures,
(vi) what it becomes like after leaving the body	(5) to what extent it dies,
	(6) how its immortality can be demonstrated

In the first chapters of *De quantitate animae* we encounter Augustine's short responses to the questions of origin and quality, (i) and (ii) respectively. Let us proceed to examine them.

Concerning the soul's origin (*unde*) (i), Augustine provides two answers, correspondent with two possible meanings of the word. If by origin is meant homeland, then the answer is God, who is responsible for the creation of souls. If by origin is meant constituent parts or elements, one must answer that the soul does not consist of parts or elements at all, but has rather its own simple (i.e. indivisible) substance which is not a compound of corporeal elements (earth, water, air, fire).[19] This two-pronged question of the soul's origin (*origo*) was also familiar to Cicero, as can be seen in his *Tusculanae disputationes*.[20]

Augustine answers the question of the soul's quality (ii) by emphasizing its similarity to God, particularly its likeness to God's immortality. However, similarity ("image", cf. Gen 1,26 f) is not, for Augustine, equal to identity.

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19 Aug., Quant. an. 1.2 (CSEL 89, 132 f.); 13.22 (CSEL 89, 157 f.).

20 Cic., Tusc. 1.27,66 "No earthly origin can be found for souls; for there is in souls nothing that is mixed or compounded, or that seems to be of earthly birth or fabrication, nor indeed anything that partakes of the nature of water, or of air, or of fire. ... The soul, then, has a certain nature and power of its own, distinct from these natures within our familiar knowledge." *Animorum nulla in terris origo inveniri potest; nihil enim est in animis mixtum atque concretum, aut quod ex terra natum atque fictum esse videatur, nihil ne aut umidum quidem aut flabile aut igneum. ... Singularis est igitur quaedam natura atque vis animi, seiuncta ab his usitatis notisque naturis.* (ed. M. Pohlenz, Stuttgart 1957, 90). English translation

The soul must be seen as created, not as having the ability to create immortal things by itself.[21] In *De quantitate animae* we thus encounter Augustine's first explicit description of the soul as created, signaling his gradual departure from Neoplatonic ideas.[22] That said, he may very well have been engaging polemically with Cicero, who, in *Tusculanes disputations*, presents the soul not only as immortal, but even eternal (*aeternum*) and divine (*divinum*), describing the human mind as though it were of the same nature (*eadem e natura*) as God.[23] Engaging with Evodius, Augustine takes rather a sceptical opinion concerning the soul's "eternity," although he does not elaborate his position in great detail.[24]

The major part of the dialogue is devoted to the *quantity* of the soul (iii), from which the work takes its name. The English translations "The Magnitude of the Soul"[25] or "The Greatness of the Soul"[26] do not capture the full meaning of the Latin *De quantitate animae*,[27] which connotes not only local extension

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by A. P. Peabody, Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, Boston 1886 (digitised by the Internet Archive in 2007).

21 Aug., Quant. an. 2.3 (CSEL 89, 133 f.).

22 Cf. R. Ferri, Agostino di Ippona, *La grandezza dell'anima. De quantitate animae*, Palermo 2004, 167, n. 2.

23 Cic., Tusc. 1.27,66.

24 Aug., Quant. an. 20.34: *... aeternitatem autem eius, si ulla est.* (CSEL 89, 174).

25 St. Augustine, *The Magnitude of the Soul*, translated by John J. McMahon in: L. Schopp et alii (eds.) *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, Washington 1947 (reprinted 1977).

26 St. Augustine, *The Greatness of the Soul*, translated by Joseph M. Colleran in: J. Quasten et alii (eds.), *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, New York 1950 (reprinted 1978).

27 Aug., Retract. 1.8,1. On the title of the dialogue, Augustine makes a remark in his "Revisions": "In the same city [i.e. Rome], I wrote a dialogue in which many questions are raised and discussed about the soul – namely, where the soul originates, what it is like in its quality, what it is like in its quantity, why it was given to the body, what it becomes like after entering the body, what it becomes like when it leaves the body. But because its quantity was discussed very carefully and in very great detail, with the result that we showed, as much as we could, that it had no bodily quantity and was still something great, the entire book took its title from this one investigation, so that it is called *On the Quantity of the Soul*." (*In eadem urbe scripsi dialogum, in quo de anima multa quaeruntur ac disseruntur, id est „unde sit, qualis sit, quanta sit, cur corpori fuerit data, cum ad corpus venerit qualis efficiatur, qualis cum abscesserit". Sed quoniam quanta sit diligentissime ac subtilissime disputatum est, ut eam, si possemus, ostenderemus corporalis quantitatis non esse et tamen magnum aliquid esse, ex hac una*

(*spatium*) and "greatness" in the sense of admirable traits (*quantum valeat*),[28] but also "number": the singularity and/or multiplicity of the soul. Augustine addresses the question of number (also included in Aristotle's category of quantity)[29] only briefly, although (or perhaps because) it seems far less clear than the previous features of quantity he expounds.[30] Nevertheless, from the answer he sketches we can see that Augustine has a Neoplatonic doctrine in mind, insofar as he presupposes that soul(s) are, at the same time, one and many.[31]

Following the Neoplatonists, Augustine also denies both that the soul has local extension (*caret spatio*) and that it is localised in space (*non loco animam contineri*).[32] As we will see below, Augustine goes so far as to argue that the soul is not localised in the body it animates. He has to refute two objections raised by Evodius against this non-intuitive doctrine: first, that the soul seems to grow with age; and second, that because it is capable of sensing through any part of the body, the soul can be said to exhibit localisation.[33] In his answer Augustine emphasizes that, with age, the soul does not grow, but rather comes gradually to perfection; it manifests more fully as itself to the degree that it attains virtue[34] or learns language and other skills.[35] Not even the increase of stature and force in the body demonstrate the growth of the soul. As determined by the seminal structure of the body[36] and exercise[37] respectively, these (stature and force) are simply tools, controlled by the soul via nerves/

inquisitione totus liber nomen accepit, ut appellaretur „De animae quantitate" (CCL 57, 21 f.).

28 Aug., Quant. an. 3.4 (CSEL 89, 134); 32.69 (CSEL 89, 216 f.).

29 Arist., Cat. 6.4b20–5a1.

30 Aug., Quant. an. 5.7 (CSEL 89 139 f.); 32.69 (CSEL 89, 217).

31 See below, n. 120.

32 Aug., Quant. an. 31.64 (CSEL 89, 212); 14.23 (CSEL 89, 159). In his polemic against Plato's *Timaeus*, Aristotle, too, denies that the soul has any quantity; cf. de An. 407a3 (ed. D. Ross, Oxford 1956, reprinted 1986, 13): τὸ λέγειν τὴν ψυχὴν μέγεθος εἶναι. On the Neoplatonic doctrine of the soul as not localised in space, see below, the chapter "The Soul not Localised in the Body".

33 Aug., Quant. an. 15.26 (CSEL 89, 162 f.).

34 Aug., Quant. an. 16.27–28 (CSEL 89, 163–165).

35 Aug., Quant. an. 18.31–32 (CSEL 89, 168–171).

36 Aug., Quant. an. 17.29 (CSEL 89, 166).

37 Aug., Quant. an. 21.35–36 (CSEL 89, 174–176).

sinews.[38] Consequently, size and growth can only be attributed to the soul metaphorically.[39]

We shall return below to Augustine's fascinating analysis of sense perception.[40] In the context of the whole dialogue, this *excursus* underlines Augustine's position that the soul is not localised in the body because it also perceives there where the body is not located (e.g. seeing is only possible in the case of objects that are not directly in contact with the eye).[41]

Evodius' last three questions receive only a very brief reply at the end of the dialogue. As to why the soul was given to the body (iv), Augustine responds that it was "to rule and administer it, because the magnificent and divine order of things could not have been better linked together".[42] He probably means that, in the order of the universe, the soul holds an intermediary position between God—to whom it is subordinated—and the body, which it is expected to rule.[43] According to Augustine's definition, the soul is "a substance sharing in reason (*rationis particeps*), adapted to rule the body" (*regendo corpori adcommodata*).[44] As such, it mediates between the divine *Ratio* and the body.

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38 Aug., Quant. an. 22.38–40 (CSEL 89, 178–181). The expression *nervi* allows for translations both as "nerves" (see P. de Labriolle, *BA 5*, Paris 1939, 305. Catapano, 2003, 211) and as "sinews" (see C. J. Perl, Aurelius Augustinus, *Die Grösse der Seele*, Schöningh, Paderborn 1960, 56; McMahon, 1947, 101. Colleran, 1950, 59). Ferri, 2004, 99, even translates it as "muscles", though not very convincingly. In the sense of "sinew", the term νεῦρον is to be found in, e.g., Pl., Ti. 74a7–b7; 74d2–e1; 75c8–d5; 77d6–e6; 82c7–d5; 84a1–b2; 84e2–7; Plotinus, Ennead 3.2(47),7,10. However, Plotinus also knows it as the "motor nerve", e.g., Ennead 4.3(27),23,9–14; probably also Ennead 4.4(28),34,32 (on the ambiguous usage of the expression νεῦρον in Plotinus, see J. H. Sleeman / G. Pollet (eds.), *Lexicon Plotinianum*, Leiden 1980, 676). The motor nerves had been known since the 3rd century BC thanks to Herophilus and Erasistratus, cf. F. Solmsen, *Greek Philosophy and the Discovery of the Nerves*, in: F. Solmsen, *Kleine Schriften*, I, Hildesheim 1968, 536–582 (569–575). Augustine might have drawn his medical knowledge from the famous physician Vindicianus, of whom he speaks in Conf. 4.3,5 (CCL 27, 42) and 7.6,8 (CCL 27, 97); see also G. Bardy, *Saint Augustin et les médecins*, in: Année théologique augustinienne 13 (1953), 327–346 (329–331). He could also have used the encyclopaedic works by Varro, Cornelius Celsus, and others; see Marrou, 1938, 141–143; P. Agaësse / A. Solignac, *Notes*, in: BA 48, Paris 1972, 710–714.

39 Aug., Quant. an. 17.30 (CSEL 89, 166 f.); 19.33 (CSEL 89, 172 f.).

40 Aug., Quant. an. 23.41–30.58 (CSEL 89, 181–205).

41 Aug., Quant. an. 30.59–60 (CSEL 89, 206 f.).

42 Aug., Quant. an. 36.81: *... quod agendo atque administrando corpori anima data sit, cum tantus et tam divinus rerum ordo connecti melius non possit.* (CSEL 89, 230).

43 Aug., Quant. an. 36.81 (CSEL 89, 229).

44 Aug., Quant. an. 13.22 (CSEL 89, 158).

In their formulation, Evodius' questions seem to presuppose the pre-existence of the soul as articulated in the Platonic tradition. Platonic philosophy, however, finds no easy answer to the question of why souls should incarnate at all. The discrepancies in Plato's statements on this issue[45] have been pointed out by, e.g., Plotinus,[46] who, in his treatise Περὶ τῆς εἰς τὰ σώματα καθόδου τῆς ψυχῆς ("On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies", *Ennead* IV,8 [6]) considers several possibilities. The soul can incarnate willingly (ἑκοῦσα), under compulsion (ἀναγκασθεῖσα), or in any other way.[47] Augustine also admits his uncertainty regarding this question in his early dialogue *De beata vita*: "For God, nature, necessity, our will, or some of them jointly, or even all of them – it is namely a very unclear question ... – cast us out casually and at random, as it were, into this world, as if in the tempestuous open sea …"[48] In his dialogue *De quantitate animae*, Augustine seems to answer this "very unclear question" in a sense of the third hypothesis from *De libero arbitrio* mentioned above: "having existed at a secret place of God, souls are sent to animate and lead the bodies of every individual coming to be born."[49]

Evodius' fifth question (v) is also concerned with the incarnation of the soul: "what does it become like, after entering the body?" Augustine answers as follows: "Who will think it to be worth doubting what the soul becomes like in this mortal and frail body, since it is thrust together into death deservedly as a result of sin, but virtue enables it to raise itself up even in this life?"[50] This formulation allows for different interpretations. One is that the soul is "thrust together into death" (*in mortem ... contrusa*) by its incarnation into the mortal body. In this case, Augustine would appear to view the sin of the soul as a prelude to incarnation, the assignment of flesh

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45 Cf. Pl., Phd. 62b3–6; 67c6–d2; Cra. 400c1–9; Phdr. 246b6–c6; 248c5–8; R. 514a2–b6; 619d1–7; Ti. 34a8–35a1.

46 Plotinus, Ennead 4.8(6),1,23–50. Here and elsewhere, Plotinus' Enneads are quoted according to the *Editio minor* (ed. P. Henry – H. R. Schwyzer, *Plotini Opera*, I-III, Oxford 1964–1982, reprint 1991–1992) referring to the treatise, chapter and line(s).

47 Plotinus, Ennead 4.8(6),2,5–6. Cf. A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Treismégiste*, III, Paris 1953, 63–96; E. Bréhier, *La philosophie de Plotin*, Paris 1928, 78–82.

48 Aug., Beat. 1.1: *Cum enim in hunc mundum, sive deus sive natura sive necessitas sive voluntas nostra sive coniuncta horum aliqua sive simul omnia – res enim multum obscura est ... – velut in quoddam procellosum salum nos quasi temere passimque proiecerit...* (CCL 29, 65).

49 Aug., Lib. 3.20,57,193: *... in dei aliquo secreto iam existentes animae mittuntur ad inspiranda et regenda corpora singulorum quorumque nascentium.* (CCL 29, 308).

50 Aug., Quant. an. 36.81 *[Quis] quaerendum putet, qualis in hoc mortali et fragili corpore [anima] efficiatur, cum et in mortem propter peccatum iure contrusa sit et virtute hic etiam possit excellere.* (CSEL 89, 230).

being a form of punishment. Another interpretation is that souls are not
merely assigned flesh, but moreover, because of their own sin, thrust into
mortal punishment (without losing their immortality)[51] insofar as they fall
short of virtue. Or, finally, the idea of the soul thrust together into death
"deservedly as a result of sin" (*propter peccatum iure*) may refer to the sin
of Adam, by which every (human) soul is punished;[52] at least to the extent
that these souls fail to mitigate the penalty through virtue proved in this life
(or by a "consecration" in the case of infants).[53] Augustine's later theological
reflections will develop along this last line.[54] However, in our dialogue, and
in other of Augustine's early works, the idea that all humans are included in
Adam's transgression finds no support. Rather, Augustine's double emphasis
on the freedom of will, and the reward or punishment of souls in accordance
with their behaviour,[55] would seem to point toward the first or second alter-
natives above.

   Augustine's reply to the last query (vi) posed by Evodius—"what the soul
becomes like after leaving the body"—is also unclear: "[Who will think it to
be worth doubting] what the soul becomes like after leaving the body, since
the penalty of death must necessarily remain if sin remains, while for virtue
and piety God Himself, that is, Truth itself, is the reward?"[56] In his wording,
Augustine emphasizes the penalty for sin and the reward for virtue, without
addressing the issue of duration: how long sin, and its concomitant penalty,
lasts; whether eternally—as Augustine's later eschatology will presuppose,

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51 On the death of the soul left by God and the death of the body left by the soul,
    see Aug., Ciu., 8.2 (CCL 48, 385 f.). Ciu. 8.12 (CCL 48, 394 f.). For this idea,
    Augustine refers to the biblical testimonies Matt 10:28; Rev 2:11. 21:8. See
    Catapano, 2003, 380, n. 283.

52 In this sense, Colleran, 1950, 220, n. 124.

53 Aug., Quant. an. 36.80: *puerorum infantium consecrationes* (CSEL 89, 230).
    As P. de Labriolle (1939, 394, n. 1) observes, the question concerning the ben-
    efit of infant baptism appears rather abruptly in Augustine's dialogue. In Lib.
    3.23,67,227 (CCL 29, 314), Augustine assures his readers that small children who
    die shortly after their baptism cannot profit in their knowledge from this sacra-
    ment, but they do profit from the faith of the adults who have them baptized.

54 According to Augustine's later doctrine of grace, the baptism removes the guilt,
    not the consequences of the hereditary sin. I dealt with this issue in my book *Grace
    and the Will*; see esp. 176–178. 204–207. 217. 221 f.

55 Aug., Quant. an. 36.80 (CSEL 89, 229).

56 Aug., Quant. an. 36.81: *... qualis post hoc corpus futura sit, cum et poena mortis
    necessario manere debeat manente peccato et virtuti pietatique sit deus ipse, id est
    ipsa veritas, praemium?* (CSEL 89, 230 f.).

referring to Matth 25:31–46[57]—or just a very long time, as e.g. his prede-cessor Origen maintained, interpreting 1Cor 15:28.[58] The question, asked by Tertullian, and of interest to Evodius, concerning whether the soul will keep its present shape after leaving the body[59] receives no answer in *De quantitate animae*. Evodius (not to mention, the reader of the dialogue) should prob-ably have understood that the soul is incapable of possessing a corporeal shape. The question might rather have been articulated as the problem of the resurrected body and its transformation; but, then again, neither is this issue addressed.[60] In another passage of the dialogue Augustine states that, while the resurrection of the body is at first difficult to accept, it is in fact possible to become certain of it. Just as we are certain that the sun, which sets before our eyes each night, will rise again in the morning, so too might we become certain that human body will rise again.[61]

3. The soul not localised in the body

The technical framework of Augustine's dialogue can make it difficult to access the important and stimulating ideas contained therein. Like Evodius himself, readers are liable to find themselves confounded by Augustine's long and drawn-out exhortations concerning the soul, which, in his under-standing, has no spatial extension, and is not localised in the body.

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57 Cf. Aug., Ciu., 21 (CCL 48, 758–805). On Augustine's eschatology, see B. E. Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*, Cambridge 1991, 131–150.

58 Cf. Or., princ. 1.6,1–2 (SC 252, 194–196). 3.6,5 (SC 268, 244); Jo. 1.32,234–235 (SC 120bis, 176). 6.57,295–296 (SC 157, 352–354). 10.39,267 (SC 157, 546). 13.8,49 (SC 222, 58). 20.7,48 (SC 290, 180). 32.3,26–39 (SC 385, 198–204); comm. in Rom. 5.10,12 (SC 539, 518–520). 9.41,7 (SC 555, 234). On Origen's idea of apocatastasis, see H. Crouzel, *L'Apocatastase chez Origène*, in: L. Lies (ed.), *Origeniana Quarta. Die Referate des 4. Internationalen Origeneskongresses (Innsbruck, 2.–6. September 1985)*, Innsbruck / Wien 1987, 282–290; I. Ramelli, *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis: A Critical Assessment from the New Testament to Eriugena*, Leiden 2013, 137–215.

59 Aug., Quant. an. 5.7 (CSEL 89, 139). According to Tertullian, the soul shares the shape of the body, which it is connected to, and it even keeps this shape after leav-ing the body, cf. de An. 9.7–8 (CCL 2, 793 f.). Plotinus also mentions this idea, together with that of the soul possessing a spherical shape, Ennead 4.4(28),5,13–20. See G. Catapano, 2003, 353 f., n. 37.

60 In his later eschatology, Augustine presupposes that resurrected bodies will grow to reach their full measure, not according to the corporeal mass they had in this life, but according to the seminal structure they are endowed with (*in ratione, non mole*); see Aug., Ciu. 2.14 (CCL 48, 833 f.).

61 Aug., Quant. an. 33.76 (CSEL 89, 225).

As we know from his *Confessiones*, the young Augustine—like Evodius—had supposed the soul to be corporeal.[62] Besides Stoic philosophy, he would have found auxiliary support for this idea in the work of his Christian predecessor Tertullian (and, less convincingly, in the African Manichees, whose community Augustine joined for nine years).[63] Indeed, it was Augustine's exploration of the "books of the Platonists"[64] that exposed him to the idea of an incorporeal and non-extended soul. This idea, however, is not easy to follow; not least of all because it eludes our imagination, which is better acquainted with corporeal objects.

In order to teach Evodius, and the readers of his dialogue, to think without corporeal support, Augustine includes a very long *excursus* dealing with geometrical objects. If the soul is able to think of a surface without height; a line without width; and a point without length—none of which can be seen with the corporeal eye—it will presumably be more willing to concede the existence of things that are not only incorporeal, but also not-extended (even if geometrical objects, excepting a point, are extended). In the same vein, Plotinus, following Plato, speaks about the mathematical training which enables the soul to deal with incorporeal objects.[65]

In his exposition, Augustine proceeds by two steps.[66] First, he brings Evodius to accept the reality of things without any spatial extension, such as

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62 Aug., Conf. 3.7,12 (CCL 27, 33). 4.15,24 (CCL 27, 52). 5.10,20 (CCL 27, 69).

63 On Tertullian's idea of a corporeal soul drawing from Stoicism, see Tert., An. 5.5–6 (CCL 2, 787). Alex. Aphr., *De anima mantissa* (ed. I. Bruns, *CAG* supplementum II/1, Berlin 1887, 117,9–11). Cf. H. Karpp, *Probleme altchristlicher Anthropologie. Biblische Anthropologie und philosophische Psychologie bei den Kirchenvätern des dritten Jahrhunderts*, Gütersloh 1950, 41–91; P. Kitzler, *Nihil enim anima si non corpus. Tertullian und die Körperlichkeit der Seele*, in: Wiener Studien 122 (2009), 145–169. On the Manichean doctrine of the soul as luminous nature close to the divine substance, see C. G. Scibona, *The Doctrine of the Soul in Manichaeism and Augustine*, in: J. A. van den Berg *et alii* (eds.), *In Search of Truth. Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism: Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*, Leiden 2010, 377–418, here 383 and 391. The accusation of materialism against the African Manichees does not seem to be fair, cf. F. Decret, *L'Afrique manichéenne (IVe-Ve siècles): Étude historique et doctrinale*, Paris 1978, I, 305–322. II, 246–257.

64 Aug., Conf. 7.9,13 (CCL 27, 101); 8.2,3 (CCL 27, 114).

65 Plotinus, Ennead 1.3(20),2,5–7; cf. Pl., R. 525a-527c.

66 Aug., Quant. an. 3.4: "First of all, then... I shall show you that there are many things which you cannot call nothing, although you cannot find in them any such extension as you are looking for in the soul. ... In the next place, we shall see whether it [i.e. the soul] really has none of these properties." *Prius ergo... ostendam tibi multas esse res, quas non possis dicere nihil esse, nec tamen in eis invenire aliqua huiusmodi spatia, qualia in anima requiris... Deinde utrum vere*

righteousness.[67] Then he attempts to demonstrate that the soul is best understood in this category of being. It cannot be corporeal, because it is able to know incorporeal things.[68] Nor is it extended; not even in the body it vivifies. To support this last statement, Augustine provides three reasons: by its memory or imagination the soul is able to contain things much bigger than the body it vivifies;[69] the soul is capable of abstracting dimensions from geometrical objects;[70] the soul is able to know itself as non-extended, and even *is* this self-knowledge.[71]

The idea of the soul as non-extended and non-localised in the body came to Augustine by way of his Neoplatonic predecessors, referred to as "very learned men" throughout his discussion with Evodius.[72] Porphyry—whose lost treatise on the connection of the soul to the body is supposed to be a direct inspiration for Augustine's dialogue[73]—also emphasizes that only corporeal things are localised in space,[74] while incorporeal things transcend spatial categorization, being rather omnipresent.[75] Furthermore, incorporeal things are not present in corporeal things locally, but rather by relation, will, or inclination.[76] In this way, the soul is present to the body without spatially "descending" into it. It is difficult to imagine such a connection, and Porphyry, according to his own testimony, spent three whole days discussing it with his master Plotinus.[77]

It was almost certainly Plotinus who first introduced the idea of the soul as incorporeal and non-localised[78] into the history of philosophy. In so

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nihil horum [anima] habeat, videbimus. (CSEL 135 f.). English translation by Colleran, 1950, 17.

67 Aug., Quant. an. 4.5 (CSEL 136 f.).

68 Aug., Quant. an. 13.22 (CSEL 89, 157 f.).

69 Aug., Quant. an. 5.8–9 (CSEL 89, 140–142).

70 Aug., Quant. an. 6.10–13.22 (CSEL 89, 142–157).

71 Aug., Quant. an. 14.24 (CSEL 160 f.).

72 Aug., Quant. an. 32.68: *doctissimi viri* (CSEL 89, 216).

73 Cf. J. Pépin, *Une nouvelle source de saint Augustin: Le ζήτημα de Porphyre sur l'union de l'âme et du corps*, in: Revue des études anciennes 66 (1964), 53–107 (reprinted in: J. Pépin, « *Ex Platonicorum persona* ». *Études sur les lectures philosophiques de saint Augustin*, Amsterdam 1977, 213–267, here 56–70 (= 216–230). 84–86 (= 244–246). 89–92 (= 249–252)). See also G. Madec, *Le spiritualisme augustinien à la lumière du De immortalitate animae*, in: G. Madec, *Petites études augustiniennes*, Paris 1994, 105–119.

74 Porph., Sent. 1 (ed. L. Brisson et alii, I, Paris 2005, 308).

75 Porph., Sent. 2 (Brisson I, 308).

76 Porph., Sent. 3 (Brisson I, 308).

77 Porph., Plot. 13.10 f.

78 Plotinus, Ennead 4.9(8),1,5 f.; 4.3(27),20,10–15. Omnipresence is also analysed in Plotinus' double treatise Ennead 6.4–5(22–23), called "On the presence of being,

doing, he ascribed the nature of "ideas," as treated in Plato's *Parmenides*,[79] to the soul. However, it seems to be especially difficult to explain how an omnipresent soul is connected to a local body. In Plotinus' opinion, or perhaps according to his mystical experience, the soul is rooted in the divine Intellect,[80] acting in the body through its radiation[81] or image,[82] "as a face reflects in many mirrors".[83]

The particular difficulty of this doctrine is further attested by the length of Plotinus' treatise on the issue, which Porphyry divided into no less than three and edited them as Περὶ ψυχῆς ἀπορίαι ("Difficulties about the Soul I–III", *Ennead* IV, 3–5 [27–29]). It is of interest for our purposes that the last part of this exposition (*Ennead* IV, 5 [29]) deals with sight, just as Augustine does (at length) in *De quantitate animae*. Both authors emphasize that sight, unlike touch, cannot operate without a certain distance from the objects it aims to perceive.[84] However, their general purposes in addressing the topic are different. While Plotinus, in analysing perception, highlights a cosmic sympathy based on the idea of the world *qua* living being,[85] Augustine explores the nature of sight to demonstrate the (Neoplatonic) idea that the soul is not localised in the body it vivifies. His analysis of sense perception is the next topic to attract our interest in *De quantitate animae*.

4. Sense Perception

According to Augustine's definition, sense perception (*sensus*) is "bodily experience which of itself does not escape the soul" (*passio corporis per seipsam non latens animam*).[86] The word "experience" translates the Latin *passio* ("suffering"), the category of "being acted upon", i.e. indicating

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One and the same, everywhere as a whole I–II" (Περὶ τοῦ τὸ ὂν ἓν καὶ ταὐτὸν ὂν ἅμα πανταχοῦ εἶναι ὅλον) by Porphyry. Plotinus speaks repeatedly of the omnipresence of the incorporeal, not extended and not divided into parts; cf. Ennead 6.4(22), 2,43–49. 3,23–31. 8,1–9. 12,48–13,6. 13,14–19; 6.5(23), 3,19–30. 4,5–6. 9,37–41. 12,1–7.

79 Cf. Pl., Prm. 131b1–2.

80 Cf. Plotinus, Ennead 4.8(6),8,2–3. 4.1(21),1,12–13. 4.3(27),12,5.

81 Plotinus, Ennead 6.4(22),3,1–23.

82 Plotinus, Ennead 5.2(11),1,19–21. 4.5(29),7,44–52. 6.2(43),22,33–35.

83 Plotinus, Ennead 1.1(53),8,17–18: μένουσα μὲν αὐτή, εἴδωλα δὲ αὐτῆς διδοῦσα, ὥσπερ πρόσωπον ἐν πολλοῖς κατόπτροις.

84 Plotinus, Ennead 4.5(29),2,55–57. Aug., Quant. an. 23.43–44 (CSEL 89, 184–186).

85 Plotinus, Ennead 4.5(29),3,15–21.

86 Aug., Quant. an. 25.48 (CSEL 89, 193).

that something is the object of an action. The specification "of itself" (*per seipsam*) is added in order to exclude the case in which the soul learns about a bodily experience otherwise than via the experience itself, e.g., when, from the increasing length of fingernails, it deduces that they must have grown without its knowledge.[87] The wording "not escape the soul" (*non latens animam*) does not necessarily connote rational knowledge, given that animals, lacking reason, still possess sensation.[88]

In addition, Augustine's definition implies that the body is the sole locus of sensory experience, while the soul is only ever aware of it. A very similar formulation can be found in Plotinus' treatise Περὶ εὐδαιμονίας ("On Well-Being", *Ennead* I, 4[46]), where he states: "if they mean by sensation that experience does not escape (τὸ πάθος μὴ λανθάνειν) [the soul]..."[89] It is, to be sure, an account of someone else's opinion,[90] but Plotinus does say that the soul's perceptive part "perceives the experiences in the body by its own agency".[91] Thus, the soul is not acted upon. It does not "suffer" anything, but rather acquires, through its own initiative, the images impressed upon the sensory organs:

> We say that sense perceptions are not affections but activities and judgments concerned with affections; affections belong to something else, say, for instance, to the body qualified in a particular way, but the judgment belongs to the soul, and the judgment is not affection.[92]

Physical objects, to be sure, cannot affect the incorporeal soul, but only the sensory organs that transmit information to the soul in the form of incorporeal images.[93] Sensation is hence a judgment and activity concerning these images; the soul is not acted upon, but acts, even when processing

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87 Aug., Quant. an. 25.48 (CSEL 89, 192 f.).

88 Aug., Quant. an. 30.58 (CSEL 89, 205).

89 Plotinus, Ennead 1.4(46),2,3–4: εἰ μὲν γὰρ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι τοῦτο λέγουσι, τὸ τὸ πάθος μὴ λανθάνειν...

90 Unfortunately, it is not quite clear which opponents Plotinus has in mind here, but probably the Aristotelians or Epicureans. Nor is it evident whether or not the definition of sense perception should be considered a part of the rejected position. See A. Linguiti, *La felicità nel tempo. Plotino, Enneadi, I 4 – I 5*, Milano 2000, 101 f., n. 9.

91 Plotinus, Ennead 5.3(49),2,6: τῶν γὰρ ἐν τῷ σώματι παθημάτων ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ αἰσθάνεται.

92 Plotinus, Ennead 3.6(26),1,1–4: Τὰς αἰσθήσεις οὐ πάθη λέγοντες εἶναι, ἐνεργείας δὲ περὶ παθήματα καὶ κρίσεις, τῶν μὲν παθῶν περὶ ἄλλο γινομένων, οἷον τὸ σῶμα φέρε τὸ τοιόνδε, τῆς δὲ κρίσεως περὶ τὴν ψυχήν, οὐ τῆς κρίσεως πάθους οὔσης... English translation by A. H. Armstrong, *Enneads*, III, Cambridge 1980, 211.

93 Plotinus, Ennead 1.1(53),7,9–12.

information coming "from the outside".[94] In order to manage these images, the soul makes use of internal structures, preserved as traces from the Intellect (probably recollections thereof).[95]

An impact of Plotinus' idea can also be found in one of Augustine's later dialogues, *De musica*, where these images are described as Pythagorean numbers, structures, or rhythms (*numeri*).[96] In this dialogue it is denied that the soul is affected by the body as matter by an artificer (*fabricatori corpori materiam quoquo modo animam subdere*).[97] The soul is aware of the motions and/or troubles of the body because it actively pays attention (*intentio* or *attentio*), not because it is passively exposed to them.[98] The soul

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94   Plotinus, Ennead 4.3(27),26,1–9: "If, then, the composite living thing is involved in actual sense perceptions, perception must be something like boring holes and weaving – that is why it is called 'common' – in order that the soul may be in the position of the workman in perceiving and the body in that of the tool; the body experiences and serves, and the soul receives the impression made on the body, or the impression which comes through the body, or the judgment which it made as a result of the experience of the body." (Εἰ μὲν οὖν τὸ ζῷον τὸ συναμφότερόν ἐστιν ἐν ταῖς αἰσθήσεσι ταῖς κατ' ἐνέργειαν, δεῖ τὸ αἰσθάνεσθαι τοιοῦτον εἶναι—διὸ καὶ κοινὸν λέγεται—οἷον τὸ τρυπᾶν καὶ τὸ ὑφαίνειν, ἵνα κατὰ μὲν τὸν τεχνίτην ἡ ψυχὴ ᾖ ἐν τῷ αἰσθάνεσθαι, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ὄργανον τὸ σῶμα, τοῦ μὲν σώματος πάσχοντος καὶ ὑπηρετοῦντος, τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς παραδεχομένης τὴν τύπωσιν τὴν τοῦ σώματος, ἢ τὴν διὰ τοῦ σώματος, ἢ τὴν κρίσιν, ἣν ἐποιήσατο ἐκ τοῦ παθήματος τοῦ σώματος). English translation by A. H. Armstrong, *Enneads*, IV, Cambridge 1984, 115–117. Cf. also *Ennead* 4.3(27),23; 4.4(28),23; 4.5(29); 2.8(35); 4.6(41),1–2. On Plotinus' theory of sense perception, see G. H. Clark, *Plotinus' Theory of Sensation*, in: The Philosophical Review 51 (1942), 357–382; H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology. His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul*, The Hague 1971, 67–79; H. J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Adaptation of Aristotle's Psychology: Sensation, Imagination and Memory*, in: R. Baine Harris (ed.), *The Signification of Neoplatonism*, Norfolk 1976, 41–58 (reprinted in: H. J. Blumenthal, *Soul and Intellect. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism*, Aldershot 1993, Nº VII) (45–51); E. K. Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study*, Cambridge 1988, 184–190; R. Chiaradonna, *Plotinus' Account of the Cognitive Powers of the Soul: Sense Perception and Discursive Thought*, in: Topoi (on-line 20.11. 2011), part 1–2.

95   Plotinus, Ennead 5.3(49),2,2–14.

96   Aug., Mus. 6.5,8 (BA 7, 376–378).

97   Aug., Mus. 6.5,8 (BA 7, 376).

98   Aug., Mus. 6.5,9 (BA 7, 380). A possible inspiration of this idea is supposed to be Plotinus' treatise "On sense-perception and memory", cf. Ennead 4.6(41),2,2–9: "This is a matter of power, not of being affected in some way but of being capable of and doing the work to which it has been assigned. This is the way, I think, in which a distinction is made by the soul between what is seen and what is heard, not if both are impressions, but if they are not by nature impressions or affections, but activities concerned with that which approaches [the soul]. But we men do not believe that each particular power [of perception] can come to know

animates the body by its "intention", and therefore no disruption of its operations is unknown to the soul.[99]

In *De quantitate animae*, we hear about different kinds of attention: that paid by the mind to difficulties[100]; to objects in the world;[101] and even the attention Augustine's reflections require of Evodius.[102] Sense perception (especially touch) is also, we learn, made possible by the intention of the soul (*intendit se*).[103] In analyzing vision, however, Augustine does not speak of attention. He rather borrows the Stoic image of sight stemming from the

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its object unless it is struck by it, and make it be affected by the object near it instead of coming to know it, though it has been appointed to master it, not to be mastered by it."(τοῦτο γὰρ δυνάμεως, οὐ τὸ παθεῖν τι, ἀλλὰ τὸ δυνηθῆναι καὶ ἐφ' ᾧ τέτακται ἐργάσασθαι. Οὕτως γὰρ ἄν, οἶμαι, καὶ διακριθείη τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τὸ ὁρατὸν καὶ τὸ ἀκουστόν, οὐκ εἰ τύποι ἄμφω, ἀλλ' εἰ μὴ τύποι μηδὲ πείσεις, ἀλλ' ἐνέργειαι περὶ ὃ ἔπεισι πεφύκασιν. Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀπιστοῦντες, μὴ οὐ δύνηται, ἐὰν μὴ πληγῇ, τὸ αὐτῆς γινώσκειν δύναμις ἑκάστη, πάσχειν, ἀλλ' οὐ γινώσκειν τὸ ἐγγὺς ποιοῦμεν, οὐ κρατεῖν δέδοται, ἀλλ' οὐ κρατεῖσθαι.) English translation by Armstrong, 1984, 325. See S. Vanni Rovighi, *La fenomenologia della sensazione in Sant'Agostino*, in: Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica 54 (1962), 18–32 (21); C. Di Martino, *Il ruolo della intentio nell'evoluzione della psicologia di Agostino: dal De libero arbitrio al De Trinitate*, in: REAug 46 (2000), 173–197 (183 f). For Augustine's theory of sense perception, cf. also G. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, London 1987, 80–105; M. A. I. Gannon, *The Active Theory of Sensation in St. Augustine*, in: The New Scholasticism 30 (1956), 154–180; M. R. Miles, *Augustine on the Body*, Missoula, Montana 1979, 9–39. For his idea of intentionality, see U. Pizzani, *Intentio ed escatologia nel sesto libro del De musica di S. Agostino*, in: L. Alici (ed.), *Interiorità e intenzionalità in S. Agostino. Atti del Iº e IIº Seminario internazionale del Centro di studi agostiniani di Perugia*, Roma 1990, 35–57 (43–45. 49); V. Caston, *Connecting Traditions: Augustine and the Greeks on Intentionality*, in: D. Perler (ed.), *Ancient and Medieval Theories of Intentionality*, Leiden 2001, 23–48 (40 f).

99 Aug., Mus. 6.5,10:... *videtur mihi anima cum sentit in corpore, non ab illo aliquid pati, sed in eius passionibus attentius agere, et has actiones sive faciles propter convenientiam, sive difficiles propter inconvenientiam, non eam latere: et hoc totum est quod sentire dicitur. ... Cum autem adhibentur ea quae nonnulla, ut ita dicam, alteritate corpus afficiunt; exserit attentiores actiones, suis quibusque locis atque instrumentis accommodatas: tunc videre, vel audire, vel olfacere, vel gustare, vel tangendo sentire dicitur.* (BA 7, 382).

100 Aug., Quant. an. 35.79 (CSEL 89, 228).

101 Aug., Quant. an. 27.53 (CSEL 89, 199).

102 Aug., Quant. an. 22.40: ... *totus intendo* (CSEL 89, 181). Cf. also 33.71 (CSEL 89, 219).

103 Aug., Quant. an. 33.71 (CSEL 89, 219).

eye, in the form of a stick, to reach the objects of its perception.[104] According to the Stoic idea, adapted from Plato's *Timaeus*,[105] a ray of sight (a "visual pneuma")[106] is shot forth from the eye. Upon striking an external object, this ray generates a cone of air, which, in turn, pushes back against the pupil.[107]

For the Stoics, the pressure of the air called συνέντασις or *intentio* was material,[108] but Augustine modulates it into the "intention" or "attention" of the soul, thus favoring the Neoplatonic conception. Accordingly, when it comes to sensation, the soul is not acted upon but rather acts. Vision is defined as the soul perceiving, by means of a ray of sight, objects located elsewhere than the immediate vicinity of the eye. Contrary to the Stoics, Augustine does not imagine the "stick" of sight as a pressure exercised by a cone of air upon the eye—in this form, the Stoic theory had already been rejected by Plotinus[109]—but rather as an activity of the soul. As mentioned

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104 Aug., Quant. an. 23.43 (CSEL 89, 185). Cf. Gal., De plac. 7.7,20,1–2: Μὴ τοίνυν ὡς διὰ βακτηρίας τοῦ πέριξ ἀέρος ὁρᾶν ἡμᾶς οἱ Στωϊκοὶ λεγέτωσαν. (ed. Ph. De Lacy, *Corpus medicorum Graecorum*, V,4,1,2, Berlin ²2005, 474,8 f).

105 Pl., Ti. 45b–d. 67c–68a. The process of seeing is explained here as the coalescing of the inner fire emanating from an eye together with the external light into a homogenous beam that transfers the motion of the objects it collides with into the very soul.

106 *SVF* 2.866 (from Aëtius).

107 Alex. Aphr., *De anima mantissa*: Εἰσὶν δέ τινες, οἳ διὰ τῆς τοῦ ἀέρος συνεντάσεως τὸ ὁρᾶν φασι γίνεσθαι. νυττόμενον γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆς ὄψεως τὸν συνάπτοντα τῇ κόρῃ ἀέρα σχηματίζεσθαι εἰς κῶνον. τούτου δὲ οἷον τυπουμένου κατὰ τὴν βάσιν ὑπὸ τῶν ὁρατῶν τὴν αἴσθησιν γίνεσθαι, καθάπερ καὶ τῇ ἁφῇ διὰ βακτηρίας. (Bruns 130,14–17 = *SVF* 2.864).

108 Cf., e.g., *SVF* 2.871 (from Aulius Gellius): *Stoici causas esse videndi dicunt radiorum ex oculis in ea, quae videri queunt, emissionem aerisque simul intentionem. SVF 2.863 (from Calcidius): Stoici vero videndi causam in nativi spiritus intentione constituunt, cuius effigiem coni similem volunt. Hoc quippe progresso ex oculorum penetrali, quod appellatur pupula, et ab exordio tenui, quo magis porrigitur, in soliditatem optimato exordio, penes id quod videtur locatam fundi omnifariam dilatarique visus inlustrationem.* Cf. R. B. Todd, Συνέντασις *and the Stoic Theory of Perception*, in: Grazer Beiträge 2 (1974), 251–61; H. G. Ingenkamp, *Zur stoischen Lehre vom Sehen*, in: Rheinisches Museum für Philologie 114, (1971), 240–246. On Augustine's spiritualising the Stoic doctrine, see J. Rohmer, *L'intentionnalité des sensations chez Augustin*, in: *Augustinus Magister. Congrès international augustinien*, I, Paris 1954, 491–498 (493).

109 Plotinus, Ennead 4.5(29),4,38–46: "But if the soul stays in its own place, but needs light like a stick to reach the object with, then the apprehension would be a violent business, with the light stretched out and pushing against the object of perception, the colour as colour, itself pressing back: for this is how sensations of touch occur through a medium. And [on this hypothesis] the object was formerly close [to the sensory organ], and there was nothing then between them: for

above, only at the end of the dialogue, and in his later writings, will Augustine call this activity "intention" or "attention".[110]

In *De quantitate animae*, the "intention" or "attention" of the soul is only implied by a negative formulation: it "does not escape the soul". As we know, Augustine's analysis of sensation is an *excursus*, which aims at demonstrating the soul's non-local relation to the body. I am undecided about whether or not sight is a pertinent argument for this idea, but, in any case, the *excursus* is surely among the most interesting passages of the dialogue. Not only does Augustine present the soul as incorporeal (differently from the air, which, in Evodius' eyes, comes close to it)[111] and non-extended (like a point among geometrical objects) but further emphasizes that it is not localised in space (unlike a point).

5. The Divisibility of the Soul?

In order to explain the strange phenomenon of a dissected centipede, whose severed parts continue to move—an example that, in Augustine's mind, appears to jeopardize his theory of the non-localised soul[112]—he procures a parallel example of dissected words.

According to this example, sound (*sonus*) and its signification (*significatio*) together make a name (*nomen*), just as the body and the soul together make a living being. Sound can be divided into phones, while signification cannot; nor is it contained in the sound locally.[113] However, some words continue to signify even when divided (such as *Luci-fer*),[114] in the same way that some animals continue to live, even when dissected.[115] The divided sound

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this is the way in which touching through a medium causes knowledge, as if by memory and, still more, by a process of reasoning: but as things are [seeing] is not like this." (Εἰ δὲ μένει μὲν ἡ ψυχὴ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς, φωτὸς δὲ δεῖται ὥσπερ βακτηρίας πρὸς τὸ φθάσαι, ἔδει τὴν ἀντίληψιν βίαιον καὶ ἀντερείδοντος εἶναι καὶ τεταμένου τοῦ φωτός, καὶ τὸ αἰσθητόν, τὸ χρῶμα, ἢ χρῶμα, ἀντιτυποῦν καὶ αὐτὸ εἶναι· οὕτω γὰρ διὰ μέσου αἱ ἁφαί. Εἶτα καὶ πρότερον ἐγγὺς γέγονε μηδενὸς μεταξὺ ὄντος τότε· οὕτω γὰρ ὕστερον τὸ διὰ μέσου ἅπτεσθαι ποιεῖ τὴν γνῶσιν, οἷον τῇ μνήμῃ καὶ ἔτι μᾶλλον συλλογισμῷ· νῦν δὲ οὐχ οὕτως.) English translation by Armstrong, 1984, 297–299.

110 See above, n. 98. Besides Aug., Mus. 6.5,8–9 (BA 7, 376–380), see also Gen. imp. 12.20,42: *... in sede cerebri, unde ipsa dirigitur intentio sentiendi* (BA 49, 398); Trin. 11.2,2 (CCL 50, 334–336).

111 Aug., Quant. an. 4.6 (CSEL 89, 138).

112 Aug., Quant. an. 31.62–63 (CSEL 89, 209 f.).

113 Aug., Quant. an. 32.66–67 (CSEL 89, 213 f.).

114 Aug., Quant. an. 32.67 (CSEL 89, 215).

115 Aug., Quant. an. 31.62 (CSEL 89, 209 f.). As Augustine explains, this case is still different from the cut-off tail of a lizard which continues to move, since fire and

does not diminish spatially, but temporally; nor is its significance extended in time.[116] In this context, Augustine introduces the opinion of some "very learned men" (i.e. the Platonists) that "the soul can in no way be divided in itself, but only by reason of the body".[117] Thus, the soul operates in different ways in different parts of the body, not having any parts in itself.

Since, in the example of divided words, the significance present in these words plays the part of the soul, and, moreover, since Augustine understands the significance as inter-subjective,[118] it can surely be asked whether the soul, too, is shared, i.e. present not only in every part of a body but as one in several bodies. This idea does not seem completely off kilter, as Augustine actually continues his analysis by asking the Neoplatonic question of whether the soul is one, multiple, or both (the third seeming the most promising):

> As to the number of souls, however, – seeing that you thought this relevant to the problem in hand – I do not know what answer to give you. I would be more inclined to say that the question should not be brought up at all or at least that you should postpone it for the time being rather than that I should say that number and multitude have no connection with quantity, or that I am presently equal to the task of solving such an involved problem for you. For if I should tell you that there is only one soul, you will be at sea because of the fact that in one it is happy, in another unhappy; and one and the same thing cannot be both happy and unhappy at the same time. If I should say that it is one and many at the same time, you will smile; and I would not find it easy to make you suppress your smile. But if I say simply that it is many, I shall have to laugh at myself, and it will be harder for me to suffer my own disapprobation than yours.[119]

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air, connected to the moist and cold body thanks to the soul, start to leave and thus produce jerky movements in the tail, cf. Quant. an. 31.62 (CSEL 89, 208 f.). This last phenomenon is also mentioned by Plotinus, Ennead 4.4(28),29,6–7. On the life of animals that have been cut in two, see also Arist., de An. 1.4, 409a9–10; 1.5, 411b19.27; Lucr., De rerum natura 3.652–669, and Tert., An. 15.2 (CCL 2, 801).

116 Aug., Quant. an. 32.68 (CSEL 89, 215 f.).

117 Aug., Quant. an. 32.68 (CSEL 89, 216). Cf. Plotinus, Ennead 4.1(21),1,20–22: "For it gives itself to the whole body and is not divided in that it gives itself whole to the whole and is divided in that it is present in every part." (Εἰς ὅλον γὰρ τὸ σῶμα δοῦσα αὑτὴν καὶ μὴ μερισθεῖσα τῷ ὅλη εἰς ὅλον τῷ ἐν παντὶ εἶναι μεμέρισται.) English translation by Armstrong, 1984, 23. Similarly, Ennead 6.4(22),1,27–29. 4,26–34. IV,2(4),1,69–76. Porphyry sums this doctrine up in Sent. 5.1–2: The "soul is a sort of intermediary between the indivisible essence and the essence which is divided about bodies." (῾Η μὲν ψυχὴ τῆς ἀμερίστου καὶ <τῆς> περὶ τὰ σώματα μεριστῆς οὐσίας μέσον τι (Brisson I, 308)). English translation by J. Dillon, in: Brisson II, 796. This idea is based on Pl., Ti. 35a.

118 Aug., Quant. an. 32.66 (CSEL 89, 213).

119 Aug., Quant. an. 32.69: *De numero vero animarum, nescio quid tibi respondeam, cum hoc ad istam quaestionem pertinere putaveris; citius enim dixerim non*

According to the Neoplatonists, the soul is one and many at the same time; neither does its multiplicity come about by reason of the body. The soul(s) are already one and many *before* their incarnation, together creating a specific unity approaching the unity of parts featured in the divine Intellect.[120] As we can surmise from the queries Evodius puts to Augustine later on in their correspondence, the idea of the soul being one and many was not so confounding to Evodius as Augustine seems to have feared (although it is true that Evodius did not accept it either).[121]

6. The Care for the Soul

The soul, which, in Augustine's eyes, "brought every art with it" at birth "so that what we call learning is nothing else than recalling and remembering",[122] still requires special care in order to maximally develop its abilities. One concrete example of such care is Augustine's dialectical engagement with

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esse omnino quaerendum aut certe tibi nunc differendum quam vel numerum ac multitudinem non pertinere ad quantitatem vel tam involutam quaestionem modo a me tibi posse expediri. Si enim dixero unam esse animam, conturberis, quod in altero beata est, in altero misera nec una res simul et beata et misera potest esse. Si unam simul et multas dicam esse, ridebis; nec mihi facile, unde tuum risum comprimam, suppetit. Sin multas tantummodo esse dixero, ipse me ridebo, minusque me mihi displicentem quam tibi perferam. (CSEL 89, 217). English translation by Colleran, 1950, 97.

120 On the unity of souls, see Plotinus, Enn. 4.9(8) "If all souls are one"; Enn. 4.3(27),4,14–21; Porph., Sent. 37 (Brisson I, 354–356). Cf. on this topic, H. Dörrie / M. Baltes, *Der Platonismus in der Antike*, 6/1 (*Von der „Seele" als der Ursache aller sinnvollen Abläufe: Bausteine 151–168: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar)*, Stuttgart / Bad Cannstatt 2002, 285–292; M. Andolfo, *L'ipostasi della „Psyche" in Plotino. Struttura e fondamenti*, Milano 1996, 17–42; F. Karfík, *Parts of the Soul in Plotinus*, in: K. Corcilius / D. Perler (eds.), *Partitioning the Soul: Debates from Plato to Leibniz*, Berlin 2014, 107–148 (110–112). On the other hand, N. Cipriani (Roma 2013, 149) interprets this question as an allusion to Tertullian's doctrine on one (corporeal) soul transmitted in the human race from Adam's soul, cf. Tert., An. 27.8–9 (CCL 2, 824); 36.1,4 (CCL 2, 838 f.). See P. Kitzler, *Ex uno homine tota haec animarum redundantia. Ursprung, Entstehung und Weitergabe der individuellen Seele nach Tertullian*, in: VigChr 64 (2010), 353–381; above, n. 63.

121 Cf. Evod., Ep. 158.5: *... anima effecta ex multis* (CSEL 44, 492). From the simile of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22–26), Evodius surmises that souls differ both in their state and place, and that is why they must have a body made of very delicate material even after they left the earthly body. Cf. Ep. 158.11 (CSEL 44, 496).

122 Aug., Quant. an. 20.34: *... omnes artes secum adtulisse videatur nec aliud quicquam esse id, quod dicitur discere, quam reminisci et recordari* (CSEL 89, 173).

Evodius, as he states explicitly at the beginning of *De quantitate animae*. Their discussion opens with Evodius' remarks about self-knowledge, which he deems appropriate to human beings, in contrast to an inappropriate curiosity which longs to know things beyond human understanding: "What have we to do with what is above us?"[123] This sentence, ascribed to Socrates (probably as a result of comments by Xenophon[124]), was known to Eusebius of Caesarea and several Latin Christian authors.[125] According to Evodius, Augustine himself quoted it on several occasions to help steer his friend toward self-knowledge and care for the soul.

Augustine returns to the issue later on in *De quantitate animae*, claiming, "if we care about (*curae sumus*) ourselves, we have to care for (*curare*) the human soul as our only concern".[126] This play on the words *curare* ("care for") and *curae esse* ("care about") is surely an allusion to Socrates' concern about caring for one's own soul.[127] Augustine, however, includes in the care for the soul the idea that souls can be imagined in seven degrees (or levels), which, besides three Aristotelean faculties—vegetative, perceptive, and rational (*animatio, sensus* and *ars*)—also encompass four (perhaps Neoplatonic) levels of virtue. These last levels are labeled as "virtue", "tranquility", "ingression", and "contemplation" respectively (*virtus*, *tranquillitas*, *ingressio, contemplatio*).[128]

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123 Aug., Quant. an. 1.1: *Quod supra nos, quid ad nos?* (CSEL 89, 132).

124 Xenophon, Memorabilia 1.1,11–12; 4.7,6 (ed. E. C. Marchant, *Opera*, II, Oxford 1901, reprint 1949).

125 Cf. Eus., p. e. 15.62,10: ὅθεν ὀρθῶς εἶπε Σωκράτης καὶ λίαν καλῶς, ὅτι τῶν ὄντων τὰ μὲν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς εἴη, τὰ δὲ οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς· εἶναι γὰρ τὰ φυσικὰ μὲν ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς, τὰ δὲ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον οὐδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, μόνα δὲ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα. Stobaeus reports on Ariston dividing philosophical questions into those "concerning us" (πρὸς ἡμᾶς), i.e. ethics, those "not concerning us" (μηδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς), i.e. dialectics, and finally, those "above us" (ὑπὲρ ἡμᾶς), i.e. physics; cf. Stobaeus, Anthologium 2.1,24 (ed. C. Wachsmuth, Berlin 1884, II, 8,12–18). In a Latin version (*quod supra nos, nihil ad nos*), this sentence of Socrates is known to Minutius Felix, Octavius 13,1 (ed. J. Beaujeu, Paris 1964, 18); Lact., Inst. 3.20,10 (CSEL 19, 246); Epit. (32)37,3 (CSEL 19, 708); very similarly also Hier., Ruf. 3.28 (SC 303, 290). However, Tertullian, mistakenly, attributes it to Epicurus; cf. Tert., Nat. 2.4,15 (CCL 1, 47). For more details, see A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, Leipzig 1890, 335 (N° 1714).

126 Aug., Quant. an. 33.70: *... de humana [scil. anima], quam solam curare debemus, si nobismetipsis curae sumus*. (CSEL 89, 218).

127 Pl., Ap. 30b1–2.

128 Aug., Quant. an. 33.70–35.79 (CSEL 89, 218–228). On this passage, see F. Cayré, *La Contemplation augustinienne: Principes de spiritualité et de théologie*, Paris 1954², 69–75. The Aristotelian (i.e. Varro's) and Neoplatonic inspiration, respectively, for this passage were surmised by O. Schissel von Fleschenberg

Augustine later admits that the first three degrees are borrowed from Varro.[129] As for the last four, the inspiration is supposed to be Porphyry's hierarchy of virtues, which likewise includes four levels: (i) civic virtues concerning coexistence in human society; (ii) virtues purifying the soul from being bound to the body; (iii) the virtues of those who, as purified, reach contemplation; and (iv) the virtues of the divine Intellect itself.[130] The last level is a kind of model to be imitated by the soul; the second and the third are linked together as effort and achievement, where purification is a negative prerequisite for the rise to contemplation. Porphyry's exposition on the topic, presented in his *Sentences 32*, finds its inspiration in the treatise I, 2 (19) Περὶ ἀρετῶν ("On Virtues") by Plotinus, although the fourfold hierarchy of virtues seems characteristic of Porphyry alone.[131]

(see *Marinos von Neapolis und die neuplatonischen Tugendgrade*, Athens 1928, 81–94), followed by other interpreters; see O. du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin. Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391*, Paris 1966, 257–260; N. Cipriani, *L'influsso di Varrone sul pensiero antropologico e morale nei primi scritti di S. Agostino*, in: *L'etica cristiana nei secoli III e IV: eredità e confronti*, Roma 1996, 369–400 (388–396). Other possible Neoplatonic sources of this passage were considered by O'Daly, 1987, 13–15; B. Neil, *Neo-Platonic Influence on Augustine's Conception of the Ascent of the Soul in De quantitate animae*, in: P. Allen *et alii* (eds.), *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, II, Brisbane 1999, 197–215. On the impact of the Neoplatonic hierarchy of virtues on Augustine's other writings, see R. Dodaro, *Political and Theological Virtues in Augustine, Letter 155 to Macedonius*, in: Augustiniana, 54 (2004), 431–474.

129 Cf. Aug., Ciu., 7.23 (CCL 47, 204), where Augustine refers to Varro for three degrees (*gradus*) of both the human soul and the world soul: vivifying (*ad vivendum valetudo*), sense perception (*sensus*), and mind (*animus*).

130 Porph., Sent. 32 (Brisson I, 332,1–5).

131 Plotinus does not consider Porphyry's last degree, i.e. the virtues of the divine Intellect. Similarly, Augustine does not mention the virtues of God Himself but rather the soul dwelling with God. On Porphyry's *Sentences* 32 as the first Platonic systematization of virtues in four degrees, see H. D. Saffrey *et alii*, *Introduction*, in: H. D. Saffrey *et alii* (eds.), *Proclus ou sur le bonheur*, Paris 2001, lxix-c (on Plotinus and Porphyry, lxxiii-lxxviii); A. Linguiti, *The Neoplatonic Doctrine of the Grades of Virtue*, in: Ch. Pietsch (ed.), *Ethik des antiken Platonismus. Der platonische Weg zum Glück in Systematik, Entstehung und historischem Kontext*, Stuttgart 2013, 131–140 (134 f.). On the polemic of both Plotinus and Porphyry against Stoic ethics and their emphasizing the connection of the soul to the Intellect, see L. Brisson, *La doctrine des degrés de vertus chez les Néoplatoniciens. Une analyse de la Sentence 32 de Porphyre, de ses antécédents et de ses conséquences*, in: Études platoniciennes 1 (2004), 271–286 (280).

It might be this fourfold scale especially that leads interpreters of Augustine's dialogue to consider Porphyry a probable inspiration. As to content, Augustine develops his seven degrees from the hierarchy of body-soul-God, where the last four degrees seem to indicate effort and achievement on the level of the soul (the fourth and fifth degree) combined with effort and achievement in the contemplation of God (the sixth and the seventh degree). As Augustine explains, the seven degrees are activities (*actus*) (i) concerning the body (i.e. animation), (ii) exercised through the body (i.e. sensation), (iii) about the body (i.e. the rational art), (iv) concerning the activity of the soul towards itself (i.e. virtue), (v) resting in itself (i.e. tranquility); and (vi) related to God (i.e. ingression) and (vii) dwelling with God (i.e. contemplation).[132]

Respecting the soul's self-knowledge, Augustine includes not only the soul's awareness of its aptitude for intellectual insight,[133] but also its awareness of the task of animating the body,[134] and its dependence on God, who, being elevated above the soul, is alone worthy of veneration.[135] In Augustine's eyes, to know oneself means to be aware of the entire scale of the soul, beginning with its role in the corporeal world and continuing unto its "homeland" in God. The six questions concerning the soul, posed by Evodius in the dialogue, can thus be understood as a more detailed articulation of Augustine's personal desire, famously expressed in his *Soliloquia*: "I desire to know God and the soul. And nothing more? Nothing whatever."[136]

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132 Aug., Quant. an. 35.79: *de corpore, per corpus, circa corpus, ad seipsam, in seipsa, ad deum, apud deum*. (CSEL 89, 228).

133 The self-knowledge of the soul in a moment of "intellectual insight" is very rare, according to Augustine, cf. Quant. an. 14.24: *Sed paucis licet ipso animo animum cernere, id est, ut ipse se animus videat; videt autem per intellegentiam.* (CSEL 89, 160).

134 Aug., Quant. an. 36.81 (CSEL 89, 230).

135 Aug., Quant. an. 34.77–78 (CSEL 89, 225–227).

136 Aug., Solil. 1.2,7: *Deum et animam scire cupio. – Nihilne plus? – Nihil omnino.* (CSEL 89, 11). English translation by Rose E. Cleveland, *The Soliloquies*, Boston 1910, 24.

Humberto Araújo Quaglio de Souza

Being, Human Being, and Truth in Augustine's *De Magistro*: A Christian "Ontoanthropology" of the Self

Abstract: It is not uncommon to find studies about Aurelius Augustine's thought that strongly emphasize the similarities between his ideas and the doctrines developed in the context of the Greek philosophy, especially those inspired by Platonism. Despite clear similarities, Augustine's thought and Platonic philosophy diverge on some very important points. This paper intends to demonstrate how the thoughts of Augustine of Hippo puts forward a specifically Christian "ontoanthropology," a conception of being human that is clearly distinct from the Platonic model.

1. Introduction

The present investigation[1] will mount a respectful refutation of Pattison's[2] arguments concerning the extent of the Platonic influence over Augustine of Hippo.[3]

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1 The ideas developed in this text were firstly presented in- the author's doctoral dissertation (H. Araújo Quaglio de Souza, *Tempo, eternidade e verdade: pressupostos agostinianos da ideia de Paradoxo Absoluto em Kierkegaard*, Juiz de Fora 2017) and in the lecture given by the author at Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret on Københavns Universitet in May 27th of 2016 and posteriorly published as an article (*Søren Kierkegaard under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus and Aurelius Augustine on Time, Eternity and Truth*, in: Filosofia Unisinos 9 (2018), 131–139, available at <http://revistas.unisinos.br/index.php/filosofia/article/view/fsu.2018.192.03>).

2 G. Pattison, *Johannes Climacus and Aurelius Augustinus on Recollecting the Truth*, in: R. L. Perkins, *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Philosophical Fragments and Johannes Climacus*, Macon 1994, 245–260.

3 The argument developed here was inspired by George Pattison's pioneer work on Kierkegaard's relations to Augustine. In 1994, this important theologian and Kierkegaard scholar published a book chapter for the International Kierkegaard Commentary referred in the previous note, in which he presents a reflection on Kierkegaard and Augustine by comparing two works: *Philosophical Fragments*, written by Kierkegaard under the pseudonym Johannes Climacus, and *On the Teacher*, by Augustine. Pattison is a pioneer in pointing out significant intersections between the problems approached by Kierkegaard and Augustine in these two books. Both writings instigate the reader to reflect upon philosophical-theological problems such as the truth and the possibility of a specific Christian theory of knowledge in the history of the western thought. However, beyond

Pattison, it should be noted, defends a conclusion that is far from unanimous among readers and interpreters of Augustine's work and thought. It relates to the theory of knowledge and perpetuates a common, but controversial, assumption in the history of philosophy, i.e., that Augustine was a "Christianizer" of Platonism. This, in turn, is taken to preclude any strong or fundamental distinction between the Platonic doctrine and Augustine's own ideas; rather, it is argued, his theory of knowledge amounts to a hybrid version of Plato's philosophy and the Christian faith. According to Pattison, the Bishop of Hippo: "[…] is wanting to have it both ways: both that the mind "remembers" God in such a way that it is able to recognize him when it "finds" him (so that, to say, the moment lacks decisive significance) and that God transcends the mind in such a way that only he can provide the condition whereby the subject can come to know him."[4]

In order to present an antithesis to Pattison's argument, I will engage in an analysis of several of Augustine's texts, especially *De Magistro*, with the purpose of upholding the hypothesis that his views on ontology, anthropology, and gnoseology are in accordance with a Christian anthropology that is distinct, in many regards, from the Platonic alternative.

2. Truth and the Inner Teacher

The Teacher (*De magistro*) was written around the year 389, just after Augustine had returned to his homeland in North Africa, according to *Retractationes*.[5] The dialogue was therefore conceived in the period between his baptism and priestly ordination. It reproduces a dialogue between Augustine and his son Adeodatus. In order to set the stage for our examination of *De Magistro* it will be fitting to quote from the *Retractationes*:

> at the same time, I wrote a book whose title is *On the Teacher*. In this, there is a discussion, an investigation, and the discovery that there is no teacher who teaches man knowledge except God, according to what, in truth, is written in the Gospel: 'One is your Master, the Christ.' This book begins thus: 'What do we seem to you to want to accomplish when we speak?'[6]

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the most evident gnoseological similarities, both books can also inspire reflections upon questions in the fields of ontology and anthropology, revealing their inseparableness.

4   Pattison, 1994, 252.

5   Aug., Retract. 1.11 (CSEL 36, 56–57).

6   Aug., Retract. 1.11: *per idem tempus scripsi librum, cuius est titulus de magistro. in quo disputatur et quaeritur et inuenitur magistrum non esse, qui docet hominem scientiam, nisi deum secundum illud etiam, quod in euangelio scriptum est: unus est magister uester Christus. Hic liber sic incipit: Quid tibi uidemur efficere uelle, cum loquimur?* (CSEL 36, 56–57). English translation by M. Inez Bogan, *Augustine of Hippo*, *The Retractations*, Washington 1968.

These few lines are all that Augustine dedicates to *De Magistro* in *Retractationes*. He records no reservations or rectifications concerning the arguments thereof. It would appear that the elderly Bishop of Hippo did not see anything wrong with the arguments made by the young Augustine who, at the age of thirty-four, had not even received the sacrament of the order. We can thus say that *De Magistro* presents ideas which, by the author's own admission, are in conformity with the entirety of his thought. Such, at least, was the verdict of his last recorded self-assessment. These few lines also allow us to highlight two important points. One is a theme present in *De Magistro* from its beginning: the role of language. Augustine poses a question raising the theme, to which his adolescent son responds: "*aut docere, aut discere*",[7] to teach, or to learn.[8] Indeed, the major themes of the dialogue are language and *scientia*, or knowledge. Another important point stems from the quotation of Matt 23:10, and this is certainly the core of the entire dialogue. Only Christ teaches, only Christ is the Teacher, only Christ brings knowledge. Moreover, throughout his dialogue with Adeodatus, Augustine constantly associates Christ with truth itself, especially in the final parts of the text. So, it can be noted from the start that the teacher must be truth itself; only such a teacher can effectively bring truth to the subject.

But how does Augustine's dialogue lead the reader to this conclusion? His point of departure, as mentioned above, is a question about the act of speaking. According to Gareth Matthews, the way Augustine directs the dialogue following Adeodatus' first answer reveals his intention to resolve a disjunctive purpose of the "either/or" kind into a single purpose.[9] Augustine argues that the act of asking a question is ultimately a way of teaching one's interlocutor that which one wants them to learn. He reduces Adeodatus' "either/or" to a common denominator: "I think that even then we simply want to teach. Now I am inquiring of you whether you ask a question for any other reason than to teach the person asked what it is you want to know."[10]

From this point on, however, Adeodatus begins to present various objections to the exclusive role that Augustine assigns to language. The first

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7   Aug., Mag. 1.1 (CCSL 29, 157). English translation by R. P. Russell, *Augustine of Hippo*, *The Teacher,* Washington 2004.

8   Russell, 2004, 7.

9   Cf. G. Matthews, *Augustine*, Oxford 2005, 26.

10 Aug., Mag. 1.1: *etiam tunc nihil aliud quam docere nos uelle intellego, nam quaero abs te, utrum ob aliam causam interroges, nisi ut eum quem interrogas doceas, quid uelis.* (CCSL 29, 157).

objection is the fact that when one sings, one does not intend to teach any-
thing. To this objection, Augustine responds that the act of singing can also
be used to "recall something, whether to others or to ourselves,"[11] which,
in turn, can be placed in the category of teaching. Therefore, from the very
beginning, the dialogue addresses the idea of recollection, of memory, in
association with the idea of teaching. But Adeodatus' next objection estab-
lishes a more difficult problem, presenting the hypothesis that prayer could
be understood as a way of teaching God, or of evoking some recollection in
Him, which would be absurd. Augustine, however, explains to his son that
prayer, even when enacted without "spoken word" or "sonant words"[12] but
in the silence of thought, is formed by words that bring "to mind the realities
themselves which have words for their signs."[13]

Here, several problems are established that will be developed throughout
the text: words are signs [*signa*], but can they themselves teach anything per
se? In other words, is it true that words have the role of teaching? Most of
the remaining dialogue between Augustine and Adeodatus develops into an
examination of the role, or the reach, of words and signs in general, in com-
municating knowledge, initiating recollection, and facilitating the process
of learning. This development progressively reveals the limitations of words
and signs as means of obtaining knowledge, building toward a drastic con-
clusion that appears to reverse the first lines of the text, namely, that words
can, of themselves, teach nothing: "by the sound of words, we do not even
learn the words."[14]

Moacyr Novaes approves the division of *De Magistro* into two main
parts, in line with previous scholarship. According to this model, part one
consists of a discussion about language and part two deals with the theme
of Christ as the inner teacher.[15] The first part is the more extensive, and its
conclusions about the limitations of language are necessary for Augustine to
present his analysis of how learning and knowledge-acquisition work. While
the second is more important for my investigation vis-a-vis an Augustinian
Christian "ontoanthropology," it is appropriate to dwell on some relevant
points from the first.

The line of inquiry that follows the initial hypothesis in *De Magistro*, i.e.
that the purpose of signs is to teach or evoke recollections, leads Augustine
and Adeodatus to ponder whether all signs effectively mean something. At

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11 Aug., Mag. 1.1: *ut commemoremus uel alios uel nos ipsos*. (CCSL 29, 157).
12 Aug., Mag. 1.2: *sonantibus uerbis*. (CCSL 29, 159).
13 Aug., Mag. 1.2: *uenire in mentem res ipsas quarum signa sunt verba*. (CCSL
    29, 159).
14 Aug., Mag. 11.36: *uerbis uero auditis nec uerba discuntur*. (CCSL 29, 194).
15 Cf. M. Novaes, *A razão em exercício*, São Paulo 2009, 42.

first glance, it seems possible to say that every sign refers to some real thing. However, when they examine a verse by Virgil, the interlocutors come across terms like "if" [*si*], "nothing" [*nihil*] and "from" [*ex*],[16] that apparently fail to indicate anything that could be categorized as such, namely as a sort of thing. The discussion surrounding these terms is not pursued in further depth, but some paths related to the question are revealed, since "nothing" can mean "a certain state of mind when, failing to perceive a reality, the mind nevertheless finds, or thinks it finds, that such a reality does not exist."[17] The interlocutors thus find themselves confronted with the problem of explaining something to someone without making use of the sign(s) that refer to that very thing, i.e. the problem of the possibility of teaching something without making use of another word that has the same meaning.

This difficulty leads Augustine and Adeodatus to what scholars like Matthews call "ostensive learning"[18] or "ostension":[19] the act of showing a thing itself without the use of signs. For example, to point to an object, like a wall, with a finger can show someone the thing itself with gestures rather than words. These gestures, however, can also be considered signs, and Adeodatus, for his part, wonders if this expedient would not be limited to material things. As the dialogue proceeds, the interlocutors realize that gestures can express things beyond the corporeal, since there are many examples of people who are capable of communicating and even expressing complex narratives and ideas through gesture alone. Yet in some situations, the thing itself can be shown directly, such as the act of walking when someone asks what is indicated by the word "walk", even if such demonstrations are not free of difficulties, e.g. distinguishing between the simple act of walking and the act of walking fast.

The discussion about the relations between words and signs, between signs and things signified, goes deeper, raising several problematic cases along the way; for example, signs that refer to the same things (like different words in different languages that designate the same thing), synonyms, and words that designate other signs (the word "word", for instance). Noting that it is difficult to imagine the communication or teaching of something without the use of signs, Augustine and Adeodatus still cannot avoid the conclusion that signs are merely accessory or instrumental to the things they signify, even if one can think of situations where a sign is more valuable

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16 Aug., Mag. 2.3. (CCSL 29, 161–162).

17 Aug., Mag. 7.19: *ipsam mentis affectionem, cum rem, quam quaerit, non esse inuenit.* (CCSL 29, 178).

18 Matthews, 2005, 29.

19 Cf. Matthews, 2005, 30.

than the thing signified. We see this in the contrast between the word for the mud, *coenum*, and the word for the sky, *coelum*, which only differ by one letter but signify things of vastly different value (after all, words themselves are more useful than the mud). Nevertheless, the word exists as a function of the thing signified, and not the contrary: "the latter [sign] exists for the sake of the former [the knowledge of the thing], not the former for the sake of the latter."[20] When they approach the end of this first, specific section about language (and its limits), the interlocutors turn their attention once more to the signs "which signify, not other signs, but the things we call signifiable."[21] If words exist because of things, and not vice versa, some conclusions can be derived therefrom. Words or signs, in general, cannot teach when they are detached from the things they signify. If a word is spoken to one who completely ignores it, or one who has never heard it before, the thing it signifies must show itself by other means in order for the listener to recognize what it refers to. If the explanation of this unknown word is given by other words, still the listener must know the things designated by these others. The example given by Augustine involves the word *sarabare*, a kind of ornament people would use to cover their heads.[22] If the listening subject hears the word *sarabare* for the first time and has no idea of its meaning, he will only understand the further explanation if he knows the meaning of the words it is contextually related to, like "cover" or "head":

> You may insist that we cannot really know what those head-coverings are except by seeing them, since the name is only a sound for us, and that we can know no more about the name itself unless we know what the realities are. And yet, we do accept as true the story of those boys: how their faith triumphed over the king and the flames, how they sang a hymn of praise to God and were found worthy to receive honors even from their very enemy. Have we learned all this otherwise than by words? I shall reply by noting that we already knew everything that those words signified. What is meant by "three boys," "furnace," "fire," "king," and, finally, "unharmed by fire," as well as the other things signified by those words, this I already knew. On the other hand, the names Ananias, Azarius, and Misael are just as much unknown to me as the *saraballae*. These names did not help me at all to know them, nor could they possibly do so.[23]

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20 Aug., Mag. 9.26: *nisi quia illud propter hanc, non haec propter illud esse conuincitur.* (CCSL 29, 185).

21 Aug., Mag. 8.22: *signis non alia signa significantur, sed ea, quae significabilia nominamus.* (CCSL 29, 180–181).

22 Aug., Mag. 10.33. (CCSL 29, 185).

23 Aug., Mag. 11.37: *quod si dixeris tegmina quidem illa capitum, quorum nomen sono tantum tenemus, non nos posse nisi uisa cognoscere neque nomen ipsum plenius nisi ipsis cognitis nosse, quod tamen de ipsis pueris accepimus, ut regem ac flammas fide ac religione superauerint, quas laudes deo cecinerint, quos*

At this point, when they realize that words and signs cannot really teach anything, part one of the dialogue ends, and part two begins, which will culminate in the conclusion that only in interiority can one find the primordial source of all knowledge, that is, the inner Teacher. The inner Teacher, the one who genuinely teaches the truth, is truth itself. This quality of being truth itself, and so qualitatively and infinitely superior to both the signs that designate things and the things themselves, was already established in the first part of the dialogue when the limitations of words and signs were still being considered. There, Augustine says to his son:

> And yet, if I assert that there is a happy life, and one that is everlasting, and that I desire that we should be led to it by God, Who is Truth itself, as our Guide, by stages adapted to our faltering steps, I fear I may seem ridiculous for having first embarked upon so long a course with a consideration of signs rather than of the realities they signify. You will pardon me then if I engage in some preliminary play with you, not for the sake of playing, but to exercise and sharpen our mental powers. This will enable us not only to endure, but also to love the warmth and light of that region wherein is found the happy life.[24]

In this passage, Augustine clearly indicates that all the profound reflections on language through which he leads his son are ultimately of less importance than truth itself. Indeed, the theme of truth is the climax of the argumentation developed in the dialogue. Language, however, is one of the possible access ways, one of the entrance doors, so to speak, leading to considerations about truth itself. But words are inferior even to the things they represent, and these things, in turn, are qualitatively and infinitely inferior to their Creator who, according to Augustine, is "ipsa ueritas." The dialectical exercise that father and son undertake in *De Magistro*, as we read in the passage above, has an instrumental and preparatory role. It enables

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honores ab ipso etiam inimico meruerint, num aliter haec nisi per uerba didicimus? Respondebo cuncta, quae illis uerbis significata sunt in nostra notitia iam fuisse. Nam quid sint tres pueri, quid fornax, quid ignis, quid rex, quid denique illaesi ab igne ceteraque omnia iam tenebam, quae uerba illa significant. Ananias uero et Azarias et Misahel tam mihi ignoti sunt quam illae sarabarae, nec ad eos cognoscendos haec me nomina quicquam adiuuerunt aut adiuuare iam potuerunt. (CCSL 29, 194–195). It is a reference to Dan 3.

24 Aug., Mag. 8.21: *et tamen, si dicam uitam esse quandam beatam eandemque sempiternam, quo nos deo duce id est ipsa ueritate gradibus quibusdam infirmo gressui nostro accomodatis perduci cupiam, vereor, ne ridiculus uidear, qui non rerum ipsarum, quae significantur, sed signorum consideratione tantam uiam ingredi coeperim. Dabis igitur ueniam, si praeludo tecum non ludendi gratia, sed exercendi uires et mentis aciem, quibus regionis illius, ubi beata uita est, calorem ac lucem non modo sustinere, uerum et amare possimus.* (CCSL 29, 180).

their initiation into higher considerations about truth itself without being blinded or burned by the intellect's sudden exposition to the light of eternity. Augustine's statements here may sound somehow Platonic in form, since the exercise of philosophy, for Plato, has among its features an ascendant movement of the mind towards the highest spheres of the Hyperuranion with the goal of reaching The Good, the highest level of all reality. However, there is nothing exceptional in this observation. Augustine's mode of doing philosophy, or theology, is clearly inspired by Plato's manner of exposing ideas, which the latter had established almost eight centuries earlier. The dialogic form, the ascension of the mind starting from the simplest questions and proceeding to the most complex ones, these remain valid aspects of Augustine's philosophical method across his corpus, especially in the works of his youth. But Augustine does not intend to claim that the human mind is capable of reaching and fully encompassing The Good, at least not in the sphere of temporal human existence. On the contrary, he readily acknowledges the limited reach of philosophy in this respect.

At the point where, according to the referenced secondary literature, part one of the dialogue ends and part two begins, Augustine makes a brief, but important reflection concerning the acts of believing, understanding, and knowing. Quoting the prophet Isaiah,[25] Augustine says:

> For the Prophet says: "Unless you believe, you shall not understand," which he really could not have said if he thought that there was no difference between the two. Hence, what I understand, that I also believe, although I do not also understand everything I believe. Also, everything I understand, I know, though I do not know everything I believe. Nor do I for that reason fail to see how useful it is also to believe many things which I do not know, including also this account of the three boys. Accordingly, while there are a great many things that I am unable to know, I do nevertheless know how useful it is to believe them.[26]

The limitation of human understanding is thus established by the philosopher prior to his exposition of the doctrine of the inner Teacher. Augustine realizes that he cannot deal with truth at the level of understanding every time. Yes,

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25 Isa 7:9. The biblical text is slightly different from Augustine's quotation. The Vulgate says: *"si non credideritis non permanebitis."* The New Revised Standard Version says: "If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all."

26 Aug., Mag. 11.37: *ait enim propheta: "Nisi credideritis, non intellegetis", quod non dixisset profecto, si nihil distare iudicasset. Quod ergo intellego, id etiam credo; at non omne, quod credo, etiam intellego. Omne autem, quod intellego, scio; non omne, quod credo, scio. Nec ideo nescio, quam sit utile credere etiam multa, quae nescio; cui utilitati hanc quoque adiungo de tribus pueris historiam. Quare pleraque rerum, cum scire non possim, quanta tamen utilitate credantur, scio.* (CCSL 29, 195). It is another reference to Dan 3.

there are aspects of truth that are accessible to the understanding or intellect and thus knowable; however, just as one cannot look directly at the Sun without harming one's eyes, neither can one grasp the truth entirely with the intellect. There are things that human beings (and each human being individually considered) do not know, but believe, and this is a legitimate epistemological problem: how is it possible to demarcate the limits between what one actually knows and what one believes one knows? When one speaks of belief, it is normal to imagine a religious motif. According to Augustine, however, belief extends beyond religion. People believe in multiple "truths" that form their worldviews: existential perspectives, evaluations of interpersonal relations ("Does she love me? I believe so…"), political opinions, and so forth. All these beliefs play an important role in everyday life, and many decisions are taken based on them. Hence, Augustine's considerations concerning the roles of belief and understanding, and the relations of these with knowledge, should not be seen as frivolous or less important than the arguments about language that he develops during the first part of the dialogue.

The passage that immediately follows the last block quote is one of the most important sequences in the whole book. It deserves to be transcribed in its entirety here, for its premises undergird Augustine's argument about Christ as the truth and the inner Teacher:

> But as for all those things which we "understand," it is not the outward sound of the speaker's words that we consult, but the truth which presides over the mind itself from within, though we may have been led to consult it because of the words. Now He who is consulted and who is said to "dwell in the inner man," He it is who teaches, namely, Christ, that is to say, "the unchangeable Power of God and everlasting wisdom." This is the Wisdom which every rational soul does indeed consult, but it reveals itself to each according to his capacity to grasp it by reason of the good or evil dispositions of his will, and if the soul is sometimes mistaken, this does not come about because of any defect on the part of the truth it consulted, just as it is not through any defect in the light outside us that our bodily eyes are often deceived. We acknowledge that it is this light which we consult with regard to visible objects so that it may manifest them to us according to our capacity to perceive them.[27]

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27 Aug., Mag. 11.38: *de uniuersis autem, quae intellegimus non loquentem, qui personat foris, sed intus ipsi menti praesidentem consulimus ueritatem, uerbis fortasse ut consulamus admoniti. Ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus, id est incommutabilis dei uirtus atque sempiterna sapientia, quam quidem omnis rationalis anima consulit, sed tantum cuique panditur, quantum capere propter propriam siue malam siue bonam uoluntatem potest. Et si quando fallitur, non fit uitio consultae veritatis, ut neque huius, quae foris est, lucis uitium est, quod corporei oculi saepe falluntur, quam lucem de rebus uisibilibus consuli fatemur, ut eas nobis, quantum cernere ualemus, ostendat.* (CCSL 29, 195–196).

The allusions to the virtue of God and the eternal Wisdom derive from 1 Cor 1:24. In the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, we find "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It is, however, interesting to note that in the text of the Vulgate it is written "*Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam*." The Latin term *virtus* can be translated as force or strength, but also literally, as virtue, which would seem to equate the problem of learning virtue with the problem of learning the truth. This is not a simple coincidence or fortuity since the association between the ideas of virtue, truth, and power can easily be established. It is also important to mention that *virtus* and *vir*, the Latin terms for, virtue and man (male) respectively, have the same etymological root and that, for Christians, truth is a man, God incarnate. It is interesting to notice that Augustine himself uses the word *virtus*[28] to illustrate the errors into which words can lead listeners, showing how one word can signify multiple things. Nevertheless, the several meanings to which this particular word refer, understood in Augustinian terms as the product of the inner Teacher, guide the reader toward an association between the axiological and anthropological meanings of the term.

As for the inner man that Augustine writes about, this is a reference to Eph 3:16, in which the apostle tells of God and "His Spirit in the inner man." Now, in the third chapter of Ephesians, Paul talks about the possibility of comprehending Christ's Love, deep, large, high, and extensive, a love "that surpasses knowledge."[29] Paul says that this comprehension is "rooted and grounded in love"[30] and that "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith."[31] The words of Paul, repeated by Augustine, make reference to faith but can also be seen from an intellectual perspective. If God is infinitely superior to the human being, and if God is Christ, a man born of woman, the limited understanding of humanity can never encompass the totality of this One Who is truth itself. Faith, God's gift, is a precondition for any relationship with the truth, even if the understanding also plays a (limited) role. This relation between the human being and the truth is, moreover, intersubjective. It is a relationship that a human establishes with Christ, another subject, the Teacher that Augustine talks about, but simultaneously a Teacher who is truth itself and virtue itself.

What relevance do these reflections have for our comprehension of Augustine's arguments about the inner Teacher? Returning to part one of

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28 Cf. Aug., Mag. 13.43. (CCSL 29, 200–201).
29 Eph 3:19 (NRSV).
30 Eph 3:17 (NRSV).
31 Eph 3:17 (NRSV).

the Augustinian dialogue, one sees that it begins with questions related to a theory of language and knowledge, of learning and teaching. However, what begins as a purely intellectual and philosophical exercise leads the interlocutors, and the reader, to problems whose resolution leads down the only possible path for a Christian thinker like Augustine: contemplation of the fundamental role played by the One who is accepted and identified as knowledge itself, truth itself, and virtue itself. For this reason, one cannot separate ontological, axiological, and gnoseological questions at this stage of the treatise.

From this point on (the beginning of the second part of the book), one can no longer treat the dialogue between Augustine and Adeodatus as an exclusive investigation into the philosophy of language, as many 20th Century thinkers have attempted, especially those linked to the analytical tradition that "rediscovered" *De Magistro*. On the contrary, throughout the second part, the "childish and trifling questions," as Augustine himself calls them,[32] related almost exclusively to philosophy of language and theory of knowledge, give place to reflections about theological fundamentals surrounding the idea of truth. How, he asks, is it possible for the human being, a being of limited understanding, to know and understand truth?

Augustine begins to speak about the distinction between intelligible and sensible things, and the different ways we can apprehend them. It is, undoubtedly, a theme of strong Platonic "flavor" and the hierarchy between sensible and intelligible is preserved. Indeed, Augustine refers to the senses as mere "interpreters"[33] that serve the mind in the knowledge of material things. But ultimately what teaches is always the inner truth. The chief action of the mind is the consultation thereof, especially regarding intelligible things: "[…] we use our reason to consult that inner truth for the things that we understand."[34] Augustine notes and accepts an equivalence between the terms established by the Greek philosophical tradition and the terms established by the Christian Scriptures (making reference to the Paulinian terminology once again): "For everything we perceive, we perceive either by the bodily sense or by the mind. We call the former, sense objects, the latter, intelligible objects; or, to appropriate the terminology of our own inspired Writers, we call the first carnal, the second, spiritual."[35]

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32 Aug., Mag. 8.21: *puerilibus quaestiunculis*. (CCSL 29, 180).

33 Aug., Mag. 12.39: *sensusque ipsos, quibus tamquam interpretibus ad talia noscenda mens utitur*. (CCSL 29, 196).

34 Aug., Mag. 12.39: *de his autem, quae intelleguntur, interiorem ueritatem ratione consulimus*. (CCSL 29, 196).

35 Aug., Mag. 12.39: *namque omnia, quae percipimus, aut sensu corporis aut mente percipimus*. (CCSL 29, 196).

As the discussion goes on Augustine turns toward the way humans recollect sensible, or carnal, things. Impressions caused by sensible things are recorded in the mind where the subject is able to contemplate them, indeed know them, at a later date via recollection. This is because at some moment—in the past—they were perceived and recorded. It is important to highlight that, while Augustine speaks about the relevance of recollection, he is clear that what one recollects has its origin in time, in temporal existence, when the senses captured the memorized, recollected thing. Augustine says that those things "we see and perceive,"[36] exist in the past, rather than the present, and, furthermore, a past that is part of time, not eternity. As for the intelligible things, with which he deals next, Augustine delves deeper into the explanation of what belongs to his well-known "Doctrine of Illumination." It is very important that this part be examined with close attention, for it is here that some readers and commentators of Augustine sense a closer affinity between his thought and the Platonic doctrine of recollection. It is here again convenient to quote the full text under scrutiny:

> But when it is a question of things which we behold with the mind, namely, with our intellect and reason, we give verbal expression to realities which we directly perceive as present in that inner light of truth by which the inner man, as he is called, is enlightened and made happy. But, here again, if the one who hears my words sees those things himself with that clear and inner eye of the soul, he knows the things whereof I speak by contemplating them himself, and not by my words. Therefore, even when I say what is true, and he sees what is true, it is not I who teach him. For he is being taught, not by my words, but by the realities themselves made manifest to him by the enlightening action of God from within. Consequently, he could also answer questions about these things if he were asked.[37]

One can see why many readers associate the thought of Augustine with Platonic reminiscence or recollection. There are similarities, indeed; nor are

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36 Aug., Mag. 12.39: *cum vero non de his, quae coram sentimus, sed de his, quae aliquando sensimus, quaeritur, non iam res ipsas, sed imagines ab eis impressas memoriaeque mandatas loquimur, quae omnino quomodo uera dicamus, cum falsa intueamur, ignoro, nisi quia non nos ea uidere ac sentire, sed uidisse ac sensisse narramus.* (CCSL 29, 197).

37 Aug., Mag. 12.40: *cum vero de his agitur, quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur, quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce ueritatis, qua ipse, qui dicitur homo interior, illustratur et fruitur, sed tum quoque noster auditor, si et ipse illa secreto ac simplici oculo uidet, nouit quod dico sua contemplatione, non uerbis meis. Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo uera dicens uera intuentem; docetur enim non uerbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis: itaque de his etiam interrogatus respondere posset.* (CCSL 29, 197–198).

they superficial. However, I would argue, they manifest accidental, rather than fundamental, points of Augustinian thought. Firstly, Augustine admits that one person cannot teach the truth to another. The things perceived by a subject are, indeed, located in his interiority, because it is there that one searches "the inner light of truth." He who enjoys this truth is the "inner man." When one subject speaks to another, the listener learns not by means of words, whose limited reach was clearly established in the first part of the book, but because the listener consults with his inner light and learns the things from "God that reveals them interiorly." Even so, I maintain, these similarities between the Socratic-Platonic and the Christian-Augustinian points of view, while evident and clear, refer primarily to accidental features. What then is the fundamental aspect that distinguishes the exposition made by Augustine from Platonic reminiscence? The most simple and direct answer is the statement that the inner light is God himself, who is truth itself, and as such cannot be confounded with man. Could such an answer, given so lightly, satisfy the reader impressed by the many similarities between *De Magistro* and Platonic doctrine? No, likely not, considering the number of people who emphasize precisely these similarities. Keeping this in mind, other points of argument in *De Magistro* must be consulted.

In the paragraph just quoted above, Augustine appears to evoke Socratic maieutic. Without mentioning Socrates, he speaks of how one learns by a process that includes interrogation, just like Socrates interrogating his interlocutors. If the one interrogated "is brought around to this by the words of his questioner, the words still do not teach him, but only propose questions in a way suited to his capacity to learn from his inner light."[38] Here there is a remarkable and undeniable similarity with the Socratic method. No doubt about it. But it must always be emphasized that such similarity, however remarkable, relates to an accidental aspect of Augustinian philosophy. For Augustine, several lines later, makes very clear the role of 'the Teacher' in the process of learning: "I would have to frame the question in a way suited to your capacity to hear that Teacher who teaches from within."[39] The source of knowledge is not the subject's soul itself, but the Teacher who is encountered in the subject's interiority. If one were committed to defending the position that the Augustinian perspective is Platonic from this point on, it could still be argued that since the Teacher inhabits personal interiority, and

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38 Aug., Mag. 12.40: *quo si uerbis perducitur eius, qui interrogat, non tamen docentibus uerbis, sed eo modo inquirentibus, quo modo est ille, a quo quaeritur, intus discere idoneus.* (CCSL 29, 198).

39 Aug., Mag. 12.40: *quaerere oportuit, ut tuae sese uires habent ad audiendum illum intus magistrum.* (CCSL 29, 198).

since the Teacher is the truth, then it is ultimately truth that inhabits personal interiority, just as in the Socratic-Platonic perspective. The trouble with this objection is that it does not consider the fact that while truth, from a Platonic perspective, is part of the subject himself, is part of his substance and essence, this is not the case in the Augustinian perspective. If the inner Teacher is God, and if the human being is not composed of the same substance as God according to Augustine, one must conclude that the truth which inhabits our interiority is not composed of the same substance as the "inner man" who relates to this truth. The truth is a distinct subject: substantially and essentially distinct from the subject who intends to learn. And here begins the radical and absolute distinction between Platonic anthropology and Augustinian/Christian anthropology.

3. The Consistency of Augustine's Christian Perspective

Until now, the arguments we have considered belong exclusively to the text of *De Magistro*; these become clearer when juxtaposed with other of Augustine's texts that reinforce the points highlighted above, especially those concerning the distinction between the divine and the human, and those dealing directly with Platonism. But let us stick with *De Magistro* a while longer. Following the arguments we have already examined, Augustine confronts the relative limitation of signs vis-a-vis the illumination by the inner Teacher who is truth himself. According to Augustine this limitation is evident in "those who lie and deceive,"[40] who use words to hide their thoughts. It is also evident in the case of polysemic words (like the example given above of the word *virtus*), and even words that, when translated from one language to another, signify different things for different persons, including those who are fluent in both.

At the end of the dialogue, Augustine reaffirms his conclusion that the one who teaches humans is not another human being, but God Himself. However, Augustine also acknowledges that not every person will realize this because many continue to assume that their learning comes from earthly teachers:

> Do teachers ever claim that it is their own thoughts that are grasped and retained, rather than the branches of learning themselves which they purport to transmit by their speaking? What foolish curiosity could ever prompt a man to send his child to school in order to have him learn what the teacher thinks? But when teachers have made use of words to explain all those branches of learning which they profess to be teaching, including even those dealing with virtue and wisdom, then those who are known as pupils reflect within themselves whether what has been said is true,

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40 Aug., Mag. 13.42: *mentientes atque fallentes*. (CCSL 29, 199).

contemplating, that is, that inner truth according to their capacity. It is then, therefore, that they learn. And when they discover within themselves that what has been said is true, they praise their teachers, unaware that they are not so much praising the teachers as they are praising those who have been taught, provided, however, that the teachers also know what they are saying. But men make the mistake of calling people "teachers" when they are not that at all, because there is generally no interval of time between the moment of speaking and that of knowing, and because their coming to learn from within follows quickly upon the suggestive force of the speaker's words, they think that they have learned externally from him who spoke those words.[41]

Yet another connection with Socratic-Platonic thought can be traced across these lines. Those who are mere human beings, as mortal as the apprentice himself, are erroneously judged to be teachers. In fact, the knowledge this apprentice acquires does not come from human tutors, but from the inner Teacher. Socrates raised the same point: he claimed to teach nothing, convincing his interlocutors to rather attend to the truth inside themselves. So far, then, several conclusions can be established concerning the human role in educational dialogue: no one teaches anything to anyone, neither Socrates, nor Plato, nor Augustine. In this regard, all of them, the two pagans and the Christian, agree. Another point of agreement would be the conviction that the search for truth and learning effectively begins when one turns inward, towards interiority. This idea can likewise be found in the writings of Socrates, Plato, and Augustine.

These similarities, however, obfuscate the fundamental difference between Christianity and Socratism-Platonism, leading some readers to devaluate the crucial distinction. But one cannot deny at least one clear point of divergence: in the Socratic-Platonic perspective there is no teacher, neither human nor divine, for all the truth is already, since eternity, engraved upon the subject's soul, whereas in Christianity there is a Teacher, one Teacher alone, and this Teacher is truth itself, of whom Augustine admonishes his readers

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41 Aug., Mag. 14.45: *num hoc magistri profitentur, ut cogitata eorum ac non ipsae disciplinae, quas loquendo se tradere putant, percipiantur atque teneantur? Nam quis tam stulte curiosus est, qui filium suum mittat in scolam, ut quid magister cogitet discat? At istas omnes disciplinas, quas se docere profitentur, ipsiusque uirtutis atque sapientiae cum uerbis explicauerint, tum illi, qui discipuli uocantur, utrum uera dicta sint, apud semetipsos considerant interiorem scilicet illam ueritatem pro uiribus intuentes. Tunc ergo discunt, et cum uera dicta esse intus inuenerint, laudant nescientes non se doctores potius laudare quam doctos, si tamen et illi quod loquuntur sciunt. Falluntur autem homines, ut eos qui non sunt magistros uocent, quia plerumque inter tempus locutionis et tempus cognitionis nulla mora interponitur; et quoniam post admonitionem sermocinantis cito intus discunt, foris se ab eo, qui admonuit, didicisse arbitrantur.* (CCSL 29, 202).

to become disciples: "But anyone who is able to perceive them is an inward disciple of the truth and an outward judge of the speaker, or better, a judge of what he is saying."[42] With the assertion "we should not call any man on earth a teacher,"[43] the Socratic perspective may well agree. But the assertion "there is One in heaven who is the Teacher of all"[44] would surely sound extraordinary to Greek ears. Nor is the role of other human beings in the learning of truth despised by Augustine, who says: "What is meant by "in heaven" is something that will be taught us by Him who directs us even through human agencies and external signs to turn inwardly to Him for our instruction."[45] At the end of the dialogue, Adeodatus reaffirms the secondary, but undeniable, role of the words, signs, and other human beings as "*stimuli*" for learning:

> I myself have come to learn through the suggestive power of your words that words merely stimulate a man to learn, and that the words of the speaker seldom reveal his thoughts to any great extent. But as to the truth of what is said, I have also learned that He alone teaches who made use of external words to remind us that He dwells within us. With His help, I shall now love Him all the more ardently as I advance in learning.[46]

One must always emphasize the role of the inner Teacher, Who inspires the title of Augustine's book. This is a role well highlighted by Moacyr Novaes:

> We know that the Augustinian philosophy is Christocentric. Already in the discussion of the creaturely path, the discrepancy with Platonism was precisely the importance of the Mediator, unknown to its adherents [scil. the Platonic philosophers]; [...] the Mediator Christ will make all the difference between Platonism and Augustinianism. Here, the analysis of language results, after nine chapters, in frustration: signs teach *nothing*. Who teaches? Only the Christ (*mag.* XI 38). [...] this is not an abrupt solution, fracturing the unity of the dialogue.[47]

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42 Aug., Mag. 13.41: *quisquis autem cernere potest, intus est discipulus ueritatis, foris iudex loquentis uel potius ipsius locutionis.* (CCSL 29, 199).

43 Aug., Mag. 14.46: *ne nobis quemquam magistrum dicamus in terris.* (CCSL 29, 202).

44 Aug., Mag. 14.46: *quod unus omnium magister in caelis sit.* (CCSL 29, 202).

45 Aug., Mag. 14.46: *quid sit autem in caelis, docebit ipse, a quo etiam per homines signis admonemur foris, ut ad eum intro conuersi erudiamur.* (CCSL 29, 202).

46 Aug., Mag. 14.46: *ego uero didici admonitione uerborum tuorum nihil aliud uerbis quam admoneri hominem, ut discat, et perparum esse, quod per locutionem aliquanta cogitatio loquentis apparet; utrum autem uera dicantur, eum docere solum, qui se intus habitare, cum foris loqueretur, admonuit; quem iam fauente ipso tanto ardentius diligam, quanto ero in discendo prouectior.* (CCSL 29, 203).

47 Novaes, 2009, 43: "Sabemos que a filosofia Agostiniana é cristocêntrica. Já na discussão sobre o itinerário através das criaturas, o ajuste de contas com o platonismo foi precisamente a importância do Mediador, desconhecida por eles; [...] o Cristo mediador é que fará toda a diferença entre o platonismo e o agostinianismo.

Novaes draws attention here to the element of the Mediator, the Christ, strange to the Platonics and strange to Platonism. The midwife, Socrates, is not for Platonism what Christ is for Augustine or classical Christianity: the Word, the λόγος, Truth itself. Socrates is a man, and so mortal. Nor is he even a teacher, as Socrates himself acknowledged when speaking at his trial.[48] Nevertheless, Pattison claims the following: "the Augustinian tradition of Catholic Christianity (often said to be the most significant intellectual and spiritual strand within the complex event known as Western Christianity) seems to offer something remarkably akin to the doctrine of recollection."[49]

The similarities between the thought of Augustine and Plato, as I have underscored several times above, are indeed remarkable. They cannot be ignored. But is it possible to draw a limit, a frontier, that Augustine, who so often invoked the Greek tradition, did not cross? How far does Augustine's "Platonism" go? Pattison dares to coin a phrase that reveals his answer: "Christian doctrine of recollection."[50] Immediately after deploying this expression, the British author makes reference to *De Magistro,* asserting that the dialogue is a product of a particular period of Augustine's life, the years between his baptism and his priestly ordination when the then young philosopher was still under major influence of Greek philosophy. According to Pattison, *De Magistro* "[...] is the work of an Augustine still strongly influenced by the ideals of Platonism yet determinedly 'Christian'"[51] (and Pattison writes "Christian" within quotation marks).

Pattison next begins to explain some points of Augustine's dialogue, accurately presenting the conclusions reached by the philosopher and his son concerning the limitations of language: "language, then, as a mean of communicating the truth, depends entirely on the possibility of shared realms of experience."[52] When he begins to discuss the role of the Teacher in the following lines, Pattison makes reference to important points in Augustine's dialogue, e.g. the subject who does not learn from words when he hears them but only when he contemplates his own interiority, consulting the Teacher who effectively brings knowledge. Pattison, however, comes to the following conclusion: "As was the case in [...] the Socratic doctrine of recollection, the

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Aqui, a análise da linguagem resulta, depois de nove capítulos, numa frustração: os signos nada ensinam. Quem ensina? Apenas o Cristo (mag. XI 38). [...] essa não é uma solução abrupta, estranha à unidade do diálogo." Translated into English by the author.

48 Cf. Pl., Ap. 33a.
49 Pattison, 1994, 246.
50 Pattison, 1994, 246.
51 Pattison, 1994, 247.
52 Pattison, 1994, 248.

teacher thus becomes a mere occasion of the act of learning."[53] In so doing, Pattison clearly insinuates that the description of the role of the Teacher in Augustine is more similar to the Socratic-Platonic perspective than to the Christian perspective, a perspective I have argued is, in this regard, antithetical to the Platonic one. But how can this be? As we saw above, the Teacher in Augustine has a decisive and fundamental role. He brings truth to the subject. There is a moment when the subject goes from ignorance to knowledge, and the moment as such has decisive importance. In other words, and in line with what has been presented and reasoned above, in the Augustinian perspective there is, indeed, a Teacher, and he is indispensable to the process of learning. Without him, one cannot learn. In Augustine's *De Magistro*, what the subject finds inwardly is not the truth as part of his own substance, but the truth as another, as a Teacher who inhabits him and gives him the truth he did not possess before.

The most visible and relevant similarities between the Platonic doctrine and Augustine's exposition in *De Magistro* have been laid bare. But can Augustine's perspective truly be judged under the rubric of reminiscence? Can Socrates' arguments about the perfection and unchangeableness of the soul coexist with the Christian presupposition of sin, which Augustine himself assumed and reflected upon? Is the inner Teacher who Augustine talks about equivalent to the search for truth in the soul that Socrates presents in *Phaedo*?

When these elements in *De Magistro* are isolated and juxtaposed with Plato's *Phaedo*, one finds striking differences. The Christocentric aspect of the Augustinian dialogue that establishes the existence of another, even if interior, is clearly contrasting with the idea that the soul, in its extreme similitude with the divine, finds truth in itself alone. But this opposition between the Christian thought adopted by Augustine and the Platonic theory of reminiscence becomes even more evident when other of Augustine's texts are examined. Let us observe, for example, what he claims at the beginning of his *Retractationes* when commenting upon the book *Contra Academicos,* written in his youth:

> in another place when I was discussing the soul, I said: "It will return the more safely into heaven, "but I would have been safer in saying "will go" rather than "will return" because of those who think that human souls, having fallen from or having been driven out of heaven in punishment for their sins, are thrust into bodies here below. But I did not hesitate to say this because I said "into heaven" just as I would say "to God" who is its author and creator. [...] Unquestionably, then, the original region of the happiness of the soul is God Himself, who did not, indeed,

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53 Pattison, 1994, 248.

beget it from Himself but created it from nothing as He created the body from the earth.[54]

Of course, one might object at this point, saying that the ideas in *Retractationes* are an example of the old Augustine, the Bishop of Hippo, and thus different from the young, unbaptized Augustine who composed *Against the Academicians* in Cassiciacum, or the young author of *De Magistro*. But an attentive interpretation of the text does not yield any trace of substantial retraction. The old Bishop of Hippo merely regrets the bad choice of words that could lead to a misunderstanding. Nevertheless, he vehemently asseverates the creation of the soul from nothing, the Christian doctrine of *Creatio ex nihilo*. There is no reason to think that he would come to disagree with this doctrine after his conversion to Christianity, during the time he composed *De Magistro*. Nothing in the Cassiciacum texts or in *De Magistro* indicates that Augustine ceased to agree, from his conversion on, with the doctrine that God created everything, including souls, from nothing.

Another detail worth mentioning: the doubt Augustine carries into his old age concerning the moment of the creation of the soul. Enthusiasts of the strong association between Augustine and Plato might say that this hints at his acceptance of the pre-existence of the soul, a well-known Platonic doctrine. Nevertheless, it is clear that Augustine's doubt refers to the moment at which the soul is *created*. It is created indeed, and created at a moment in time. The only admissible pre-existence referred to is the possible existence of the soul before it enters the body, not, it should be noted, before the world and the first human have been created. As Augustine argues in other texts like the *Confessiones*, time itself was created before humans, and consequently, the soul was created after time and in time.

As for the other pillar of Socratic argument in *Phaedo*, namely, that the soul is unchangeable and the body decays, here too Augustine dissents. In his polemical text *De Natura et Origine Animae,* which he wrote in the context of his dispute against the Pelagians, Augustine shows that he is vehemently against the thesis that the soul is made of God's own substance, and thus unchangeable:

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54 Aug., Retract. 1.1: *alio loco, de animo cum agerem, dixi: securior rediturus in caelum. iturus autem quam rediturus dixissem securius propter eos, qui putant animos humanos pro meritis peccatorum suorum de caelo lapsos seu deiectos in corpora ista detrudi. sed hoc ego propterea non dubitaui dicere, quia ita dixi in caelum, tamquam dicerem ad deum, qui eius est auctor et conditor [...]. sine controuersia ergo quaedam originalis regio beatitudinis animi deus ipse est, qui eum non quidem de se ipso genuit, sed de nulla re alia condidit, sicut condidit corpus e terra.* (CSEL 36, 15–16).

> I will now proceed to point out what things are chiefly to be avoided in his conten-
> tious statement. He says that the soul was made, indeed, by God, but that it is not
> a portion of God or of the nature of God — which is an entirely true statement.
> When, however, he refuses to allow that it is made out of nothing, and mentions no
> other created thing out of which it was made; and makes God its author, in such
> a sense that He must be supposed to have made it, neither out of any non-existing
> things, that is, out of nothing, nor out of anything which exists other than God,
> but out of His very self: he is little aware that in the revolution of his thoughts he
> has come back to the position which he thinks he has avoided, even that the soul is
> nothing else than the nature of God; and consequently that there is an actual some-
> thing made out of the nature of God by the self-same God, for the making of which
> the material of which He makes it is His own very self who makes it; and that thus
> God's nature is changeable, and by being changed for the worse the very nature of
> God Himself incurs condemnation at the hands of the self-same God![55]

The anthropology Augustine presents here is clearly opposed to Plato's in the *Phaedo*. It is true that Christian thinking cannot explain how some-thing can be created from nothing, but the conclusion that temporal things, including human beings, were created from nothing, comes from a *reductio ad absurdum*, since an unchangeable, incorruptible, and perfect Creator could not create imperfect, changeable, and corrupt things from His own substance.

These examples from Augustine would alone suffice to sustain my thesis that the Platonic recollection is fundamentally different from the doctrine of the inner Teacher in *De Magistro*, for they attack the very pillars of the Socratic arguments presented in the *Phaedo*: the unchangeableness of the soul, its pre-temporal existence, and its transmigration. But other of Augustine's texts could also be consulted as examples of specific and direct criticisms of the central Platonic idea of reminiscence/recollection itself. Gareth Matthews, while discoursing on *De Magistro*, cites a text where Augustine criticizes Plato's *Meno*:

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55 Aug., Nat. et or. 1.4: *ut enim iam incipiam demonstrare, quae praecipue sint in eius disputatione uitanda, 'animam' dicit 'a deo quidem factam nec dei esse partem siue naturam', quod omnino uerum est: sed cum eam non uult ex nihilo factam fateri et aliam nullam creaturam unde sit facta commemorat atque ita illi dat auctorem deum, ut neque ex nullis exstantibus, id est ex nihilo, neque ex aliqua re, quae non est quod deus est, sed 'de se ipso eam fecisse' credatur, nescit eo se reuolui, quod declinasse se putat, ut scilicet nihil aliud anima quam dei natura sit ac sic consequenter et de dei natura fiat aliquid ab eodem deo, cui faciendo materia, de qua facit, sit ipse qui facit, ac per hoc et dei sit natura mutabilis et mutata in deterius eiusdem ipsius dei ab eodem ipso deo natura damnetur.* (CSEL 60, 305–306). English translation from Augustine of Hippo, *On the Soul and its Origin*, P. Holmes / R. E. Wallis (trans) and B. B. Warfield (ed.) Buffalo 1887.

Actually it is not quite accurate to say that Augustine's Doctrine of Illumination or his idea of "the inner teacher" is Platonic, since Augustine himself tried to distinguish his views from Plato's. In Book 12 of *On the Trinity*, after making a reference to Plato's story in his dialogue *Meno*, in which the slave-boy is able to figure out for himself how to construct a square with an area twice that of a given square, Augustine says this, with, I think, a touch of humor.[56]

Matthews then quotes the text of *De Trinitate* in which Augustine, with an ironic and even witty style, directly attacks precisely reminiscence, making a mockery of the argument presented in *Meno* and reaffirming the ideas that he had previously articulated in *De Magistro*. It is pertinent here to transcribe a long passage of Augustine's *De Trinitate,* since it strongly supports the hypothesis that he does in fact perceive a fundamental distinction between the Platonic and Christian gnoseology, and between the Platonic and Christian anthropology. After a passage dealing with the distinction between knowledge and wisdom, wherein he reflects upon how things are learned, Augustine says:

> This is why that noble philosopher Plato tried to persuade us that the souls of men had lived here even before they wore these bodies, and therefore learning things is more a remembering of things already known than a getting to know new things. He told the story of some boy asked goodness knows what questions about geometry and answering as if he were most learned in that science. He was of course interrogated step by step skillfully, and so he saw what was to be seen and said what he saw. But if this were recollection of things previously known, not everybody or practically everybody would be able to do the same if interrogated in that way; it is unlikely that everybody was a geometer in a previous life, seeing that they are such a rarity in the human race that it is a job even to find one. The conclusion we should rather draw is that the nature of intellectual mind has been so established by the disposition of its creator that it is subjoined to intelligible things in the order of nature, and so it sees such truths in a kind of non-bodily light that is *sui generis*, just as our eyes of flesh see all these things that lie around us in this bodily light, a light they were created to be receptive of and to match. It is not because the eyes already knew the difference between black and white before they were created in this flesh, that they can tell the difference now without being taught it.[57]

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56 Matthews, 2005, 60.

57 Aug., Trin. 12.15,24: *unde Plato ille philosophus nobilis persuadere conatus est uixisse hic animas hominum et antequam ista corpora gererent, et hinc esse quod ea quae discuntur reminiscuntur potius cognita quam cognoscuntur noua. Retulit enim puerum quendam nescio quae de geometrica interrogatum sic respondisse tamquam esset illius peritissimus disciplinae. Gradatim quippe atque artificiose interrogatus uidebat quod uidendum erat dicebatque quod uiderat. Sed si recordatio haec esset rerum antea cognitarum, non utique omnes uel pene omnes cum illo modo interrogarentur hoc possent; non enim omnes in priore uita geometrae fuerunt cum tam rari sint in genere humano ut uix possit aliquis inueniri. Sed potius credendum est mentis intellectualis ita conditam esse naturam ut rebus*

This passage from the book *De Trinitate*, written after *De Magistro*, addresses several points raised by Augustine in the other mentioned writings. Here the doctrine of illumination is clearly opposed to reminiscence, both in its Platonic and Pythagoric strands.

4. Conclusion

All these passages from across Augustine's corpus are useful for illustrating an internal coherence to his thought concerning some of the most important aspects of Christian doctrine. To say that there is such coherence is neither to claim a systematic perspective on Augustine's thought and work, nor to discount those points on which he seems to have changed his mind. What I do intend to claim is that there are certain elements in Christianity that remain basic premises for all subsequent philosophical and/or theological reflection by Christian intellectuals, such as cannot be put aside by authors (like Augustine) if they want to remain Christian per se. Among these are: the creation from nothing, the absolute distinction between temporality and eternity, and the acceptance of Christ as God who made Himself flesh. If Augustine were a genuine proponent of recollection, some fundamental points of his own Christian faith would require refutation, but concerning these points, Augustine has always been intransigent.

When these elements of Christian faith are taken as premises for philosophical and theological reflection, they condition the course of these reflections in several aspects. In this essay I have highlighted the anthropological aspect, since the problem of learning truth, for both Augustine and Plato, leads to enquires into the nature of the subject qua learner and the way they are constituted. The question about the possibility of learning the truth leads naturally to the question: what is a human being, who is the one who learns?

As we have seen, two different anthropologies emerge from this common question. One treats the soul as part of the sphere of the divine, whereas the other distinguishes the human soul from the divine in an absolute way. Questions regarding the theory of knowledge interweave with anthropological questions. But both presuppose an ontology because one cannot understand the human being, this learner, in isolation from the complete frame of creation and being. Augustine equates being with God Himself,

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intellegibilibus naturali ordine disponente conditore subiuncta sic ista uideat in quadam luce sui generis incorporea quemadmodum oculus carnis uidet quae in hac corporea luce circumadiacent, cuius lucis capax eique congruens est creatus. Non enim et ipse ideo sine magistro alba et nigra discernit quia ista iam nouerat antequam in hac carne crearetur. (CCSL 50, 377–378). English translation from Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, E. Hill (trans.) and J. E. Rotelle (ed.) New York 2017.

and God with eternity ("*aeternitas, ipsa Dei substantia est*"[58]), making reference to the text of Exodus.[59] So the different anthropologies, Platonic and Christian, are inseparable from their correspondent, and mutually exclusive, ontological perspectives, Platonic and Christian. We can conclude, then, that in Augustine there exists a single Christian "ontoanthropology" of the self, which is, in the end, divergent from the Platonic "ontoanthropology".

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58 Aug., Psal. 101.2,10 (CCSL 40, 1445).

59 Aug., Psal. 101.2,10 (CCSL 40, 1445). The Biblical text mentioned by Augustine is Ex 3:14. In the New Revised Standard Version: "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.' He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I am has sent me to you.'"

Morten Kock Møller

"Diabolum potius poneret": Augustine's reception of Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos in Epistle 157

Abstract: This article explores several possible echoes of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* in Augustine's *Epistle 157* to Hilary of Syracuse from 414. In this epistle, Augustine addresses a number of the central anthropological issues which were at stake in the Pelagian controversy. The eminent scholar Caroline Hammond Bammel has claimed that in *Epistle 157* Augustine makes use of elements of exegesis from Rufinus' Latin translation of Origen's commentary. But Bammel has not provided substantiation for her claim. This article picks up Bammel's suggestion and presents several possible instances of reception of Origen's commentary in *Epistle 157*. The majority of these instances have to do with the passage Rom 5:12–21 which was of central importance to Augustine's doctrine of original sin. He thus appears to have bolstered his controversial doctrine with arguments drawn from Origen. Augustine's *Epistle 157* subsequently came to play the role of an authoritative refutation of Pelagian anthropology in that it was employed as evidence against Pelagius at the synods of Jerusalem and Diospolis in 415. Paradoxically, Origen's exegesis of Romans thus came to be used against Pelagius who himself drew much inspiration from the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*.

1. Introduction

Augustine was hailed by his contemporary Jerome as a "second founder of the ancient faith" (*Catholici te conditorem antiquae rursum fidei uenerantur*[1]) due to his monumental efforts in combating the Pelagian heresy. To be sure, the fame of the North African bishop, and his impressive *Nachleben* in the western theological tradition, are unthinkable apart from Augustine's tireless labours in gainsaying the anthropological tenets of Pelagius, Caelestius, and their followers. Throughout these heated exchanges, Augustine never ceased to stress the utter helplessness of the human will without the aid of divine grace. As is well known, Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* played a decisive role in Augustine's anti-Pelagian arguments. Indeed, he leans heavily on the fifth chapter of the epistle (especially Rom 5:12–21) to support his doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of (infant) baptism for salvation. In this way,

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1 Hier*.,* Ep. 141 (CSEL 56, 290). English translation from W. Parsons, *Saint Augustine: Letters Volume IV (165–203)*, Washington 1981, 333.

Augustine's interpretation of Romans 5 provides an explanatory basis for the predicament of human incapacity outlined in Romans 7 (especially Rom 7:14–25).[2] Owing to the Fall of Adam, human nature has received a mortal wound, by means of which the human will has lost all capacity to achieve the good through its own powers.

It is perhaps less well-known that some important aspects of Augustine's anti-Pelagian exegesis of Romans appear to have been inspired by Rufinus' Latin translation of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* (traditionally dated to around 406 AD). It seems that Augustine cherry-picked several arguments and exegetical comments from this commentary for the purposes of sharpening his anti-Pelagian polemic—albeit, without explicitly naming his source of inspiration. While his appropriation of the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* is most often generative, at other times he censures Origen's exegetical decisions. This may be due to the fact that Augustine's opponents in the Pelagian controversy were themselves employing this commentary; or perhaps the mere threat of such employment was enough to give him pause.

The eminent scholar Caroline Hammond Bammel broke new ground with two insightful articles[3] addressing Augustine's reception of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* in his early anti-Pelagian treatises *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo paruulorum* (411–12) and *De spiritu et littera* (412–13), as well as the second sermon on Psalm 31 in *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (dated to 411 by Bammel).[4] Thomas P. Scheck[5] has continued Bammel's path of research with his analysis of *De fide et operibus* (412–13), where he also claims to detect the tacit influence of Origen's commentary.[6] Most recently, Dominic Keech[7] has made the case that Augustine received at least parts of the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* much earlier than Bammel had suspected, possibly as early as the 390s.[8] In the

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2   R. Morgan, *The Letter to the Romans*, 413, in: J.H. Hayes, *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation: K-Z*, Nashville 1999, 411–422.

3   C. P. Hammond Bammel, *Augustine, Origen and the Exegesis of St. Paul*, in: Augustinianum 32 (1992), 341–368; C. P. Hammond Bammel, *Justification by Faith in Augustine and Origen*, in: Journal of Ecclesiastical History 47, no. 2 (1996), 223–235.

4   Hammond Bammel, 1992; Hammond Bammel, 1996.

5   T.P. Scheck, *Origen and the History of Justification: The Legacy of Origen's Commentary on Romans*, Indiana, 2008.

6   Scheck, 2008, 86–103.

7   D. Keech, *Augustine, Origen, and the Exegesis of Romans 8:3: The Anti-Pelagian Christology of Augustine of Hippo, 396–430*, Oxford 2012.

8   Keech, 2012, 106–41. It is not my intention to deal with the difficult question of when exactly Augustine received Rufinus' translation of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*. Keech's speculative argument for a new dating of Rufinus'

present article, I will attempt to take the previous research a small step for-
ward by examining Augustine's *Epistle 157* to Hilary of Syracuse (from 414
AD). In the conclusion to her 1992 article, Bammel herself kindly suggested
this epistle as a possible site for further research into Augustine's reception of
Origen's commentary.[9] Despite the valuable efforts of the mentioned schol-
ars, there remains a great deal of uncharted territory in Augustine's anti-
Pelagian, and other late works, with respect to the question of reception. In
addition, several of the alleged instances of reception found in the previous
scholarship could, in my view, benefit from further analysis. In certain cases,
works other than Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* have
not been sufficiently considered as potential sources for Augustine, some of
which would plausibly account for the data.

In the recent reference-work *A Companion to Augustine*[10], Mark Edwards
questions the conclusiveness of Bammel's findings by claiming that they do
not "prove" Augustine was aware of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad
Romanos*.[11] Admittedly, it is an extremely difficult (if not outright impos-
sible) task to reach absolute certainty in such a matter. As with most ancient
authors, Augustine rarely names his sources, and, being the highly indepen-
dent thinker he is, is unlikely to have resorted to outright plagiarism.[12] We
should therefore not expect to find obvious verbal links between Augustine's
works and his sources, such as would prove literary dependence. However,
despite Edwards' skepticism, and a few caveats of my own, I believe the many
curious parallels between Augustine's anti-Pelagian works and Origen's
commentary (especially those found by Bammel) demonstrate, beyond rea-
sonable doubt, that Augustine did indeed know and make use of Rufinus'
translation in his anti-Pelagian writings. I hope to confirm this hypothesis
through my examination of Augustine's *Epistle 157*.

2. Background: Hilary's "Pelagian" Questions for Augustine (*Epistle 156*)

Augustine's *Epistle 157* is a response to a letter sent him by a layman: Hilary
of Syracuse. Luckily, Hilary's letter (known as *Epistle 156* in the collection
of Augustine's letters) has been preserved alongside Augustine's. With both

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work, while attractive in many ways, does not seem to be supported by sufficient
    evidence.
9   Hammond Bammel, 1992, 362.
10 M. Edwards, *Augustine and His Christian Predecessors*, 225, in: *A Companion
    to Augustine*, Oxford 2012.
11 Edwards, 2012, 215–226.
12 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 223.

portions of the correspondence intact, we find ourselves in an ideal position to ascertain which questions Augustine is striving to answer in *Epistle 157*. After giving Augustine a respectful greeting, Hilary gets straight to the point of his epistle, listing a series of propositions concerning Christian doctrine held by "certain Christians at Syracuse" (*quidam Christiani apud Syracusas*).[13] Hilary confesses his own ignorance on these points of doctrine, and asks Augustine to enlighten him. The propositions are as follows:

1) "It is possible for man to be sinless and to keep the commandments of God, if he wishes."
2) "An unbaptized infant cut off by death cannot justly be deprived of heaven because it is born without sin."
3) "A rich man who continues to live rich cannot enter the kingdom of heaven unless he sells all he has, and that it cannot do him any good to keep the commandments while keeping his riches."
4) "We ought not to swear at all."
5) "What is the nature of the Church of which it is written that it has neither wrinkle nor spot, whether it is the one in which we now gather or the one we hope for. Some have made out that it is this Church into which we now gather the people and that it cannot be sinless".[14]

Hilary is eager to know the extent to which these views ought to be held (*quatenus sentire debeamus*[15]) by Christians such as himself. In what follows, I will limit my examination to propositions 1 and 2, since Augustine appears to employ Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* exclusively in relation to these two points of dispute.

3. Augustine's Response to Hilary (*Epistle* 157)

Even though Hilary does not reveal the name(s) of those responsible for the propositions, Augustine has a very clear hunch with respect to their identity.

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13 Aug., Ep. 156 (CSEL 44, 448).

14 Aug., Ep. 156: *(…) dicentes posse esse hominem sine peccato et mandata Dei facile custodire, si uelit; infantem non baptizatum morte praeuentum non posse perire merito, quoniam sine peccato nascitur; diuitem manentem in diuitiis suis regnum Dei non posse ingredi, nisi omnia sua uendiderit, nec prodesse eidem posse, si forte ex ipsis diuitiis fecerit mandata; non debere iurare omnino; et de ecclesia, quae sit, de qua scriptum est non habere rugam neque maculam, utrum haec sit, in qua nunc congregamur, an illa, quam speramus; quidam autem posuit ecclesiam hanc esse, in qua nunc frequentamus populos, et sine peccato esse non posse.* (CSEL 44, 448–49). English translation from W. Parsons, *Saint Augustine: Letters Volume III (131–164)*, Washington 2008, 318–19.

15 Aug., Ep. 156 (CSEL 44, 449).

He informs Hilary that Caelestius has been convicted by a council of bishops in Carthage (held in 411) for teaching just such "heretical" views on infant baptism and original sin. Augustine fears that Caelestian disciples, and perhaps Caelestius himself, have made their way to Syracuse in an attempt to "disturb the faith" (*uestram fidem perturbare conatur*[16]) of local Christians. Here, Augustine makes a somewhat resigned comment about the spread of Caelestius' teachings; while he had hoped that Syracuse might be spared the Caelestian heresy, he now recognizes the vanity of this hope given the multitude of Caelestius' followers.

4. Augustine's Answer to Hilary's First Proposition

4.1 "Danihel sanctus" and the (Im)possibility of Human Sinlessness

In response to the first proposition recorded by Hilary, Augustine provides three scriptural arguments against the possibility of obtaining complete sinlessness in this earthly life. First of all, he points to 1. John 1:8 according to which that person is a liar who claims to have committed no sin. Such a person only deceives himself. Secondly, Augustine cites the Lord's Prayer, and specifically the petition "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors," to show that sin is a continuous reality in the life of a Christian. Even the Apostles themselves, "the very rams of the flock" (*etiam ipsis arietibus gregis*[17]), as Augustine calls them, were instructed by Christ to pray in this manner, which presupposes that even they must have had sins to confess. How much more, Augustine argues, will this be the case for later generations of Christians. If the latter times had really been able to produce virtuous and sinless Christians, Christ would surely had foreseen it, Augustine says, and taught them a prayer without the unnecessary words "forgive us our debts".[18]

Augustine's third scriptural argument against the possibility of sinlessness is the most interesting with respect to reception of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*.[19] It concerns the prophet Daniel, and his vicarious confession of the sins of Israel during the Babylonian exile[20] Without prior explanation, Augustine in *Epistle 157*, introduces the case of Daniel,

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16 Aug., Ep. 157 3.22 (CSEL 44, 471).

17 Aug., Ep. 157 1.2 (CSEL 44, 450).

18 Aug., Ep. 157 1.2.

19 Bammel mentions the case of Daniel's confession in a footnote but does not clearly state whether she considers Augustine's comments on the matter a reaction to statements in Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romans*. Hammond Bammel, 1992, 360 n. 80.

20 Cf. Dan 9:1–21.

decrying the idea that Daniel's confession was a case of "false humility" (*quasi humilitate fallaci*[21]). When the prophet made use of the first person plural ("we have sinned and done wrong", etc. (Dan 9:5 ff[22])) he did not do so as a mere show of solidarity in front of other humans (*coram hominibus*), all the while maintaining his own innocence. On the contrary, Augustine insists that the prophet Daniel, no less than his compatriots, was personally guilty of sin. His confession was uttered in front of God (*coram Deo*) and should therefore be seen as totally honest and sincere. Augustine uses the example of Daniel to rebuke the Christians in Syracuse, who claim that sinlessness is attainable in this life. Citing Ezech 28:3 (in the LXX version), Augustine asks them a rhetorical question: "Are you then wiser than Daniel?"[23] The answer is obviously no. These Christians should follow the example of the wise prophet and confess that they too have sinned.

It is not immediately obvious why Augustine would use the example of Daniel to support his case regarding the impossibility of human sinlessness. There are plenty of other characters in the Old Testament who could be deduced as examples of righteous sinners. It is clear, however, that Augustine considers Noah, Daniel and Job to be men of a special sanctity because of the divine testimony given to them in Ezech 14:14.[24] If even the supremely righteous Daniel could be shown to have sinned, then Augustine's argument would gain considerable heft.[25] I suspect, however, that there is an additional reason why Augustine chose to employ the example of Daniel. In Rufinus' Latin translation of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam in Romanos*, we find an interesting passage discussing the seventh chapter of Romans, wherein Paul describes a poignant inner conflict: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Rom 7:19[26]). Origen explains this passage with one of his favourite tools of literary analysis; namely, the *persona* or πρόσωπον.[27] Using this tool, Origen claims that Paul is not, as one might expect, describing a conflict within himself. The Apostle is rather putting on a "mask," and playing the role of a struggling sinner who does not have the strength to conquer his vices. In order to argue for this interpretation of the

21 Aug., Ep. 157 1.2 (CSEL 44, 450).

22 NRSV.

23 Ep. 157 1.2. English translation from W. Parsons, 2008, 318–19. Translation modified by the author himself, M. K. Møller.

24 Cf. Aug., peccat. merit. 2.12 (CSEL 60, 83).

25 Augustine gives a more comprehensive argument for the personal sinfulness of Daniel in peccat. merit. 2.13.

26 NRSV.

27 For a brief explanation of Origen's use of the literary tool of *persona*, see P. Martens, *Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life*, Oxford 2012, 58–59.

passage, Origen makes reference to the prophet Daniel and his confession on behalf of Israel. Origen finds it self-evident that Daniel's confession refers to the sins of his compatriots, rather than himself:

> Who can deny that in these words Daniel has taken on the *persona* of sinners, on whose account he seems to say these things as though on his own behalf? Thus it is fitting for us, when we read the things said by the saints, when we see something like this said by them, to interpret and understand that in themselves they are describing our passions and our sins; and the reason they weep is in order that we might be invited to shed tears by their weeping.[28]

Just prior to this passage Origen had argued that Daniel could not possibly be referring to his own personal sins, since no sins of his are recorded in the Scriptures.[29] Origen thus concluded that the prophet must have employed a *persona* in order to demonstrate solidarity with his fellow Israelites. Such an interpretation would have been offensive to Augustine who, as we have seen, was keen on demonstrating the universality of human sinfulness. If we take Origen's understanding of Daniel's confession into account, it makes good sense that Augustine would use precisely that Old Testament prophet to prove his point. In this way he could support his own argument about universal sinfulness while, at the same time, correcting what he would have perceived as a problematic element in Origen's exegesis. For Origen's remark about Daniel could easily have been appropriated by Pelagians, and their potential sympathizers in Syracuse, who were eager to argue for the reality of human sinlessness. By refuting the idea that Daniel had employed a *persona* and confessed in "false humility," Augustine would have effectively dismantled a potential Pelagian proof-text in Origen's commentary.

While it seems evident that, in *Epistle 157* (as well as in *De peccatorum meritis*), Augustine is reacting to a *persona* interpretation of Daniel's confession, it is possible that this idea reached him through sources other than Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*. In Cyprian's treatise *De lapsis*, the Carthaginian bishop provides relevant commentary on the Book of Daniel.[30] Cyprian presents the three youths, Ananias, Azarias,

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28 Or., comm. in Rom. 6.9,15–16: *Quis est qui in his uerbis negare possit personam peccatorum a Danihelo esse susceptam pro quibus tamquam pro se ipso haec dicere uideatur? Unde conueniens est nos legentes dicta sanctorum cum ab eis tale aliquid dici uidemus intellegere et sentire quia nostras in semet ipsis passions nostra peccata describunt; et propterea illi haec deflent ut illorum fletibus nos inuitemur ad lacrimas.* (SC 543, 190). English translation from T.P. Scheck, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, *Books 6–10*, Washington 2002, 43.

29 Or., comm. in Rom. 6.9,15 (SC 543, 188).

30 I would like to thank Jakob Engberg for making me aware of this fact during our seminar on Augustine's anthropology at Aarhus University in January 2018.

and Misahel—together with Daniel—as examples of righteous people who, despite having a "good conscience" (*bene sibi licet conscii*), do not cease to "retain their humility" (*humilitatem tamen tenere*) by making confession to God. Daniel himself is commended for his "innocence" (*Daniel quoque post fidei adque innocentiae suae multiplicem gratiam*), and at one point Cyprian directly cites his confession (Dan 9:4–7).[31] His point is to illustrate the great gulf between the "lapsed" Christians of his time, who refuse to offer repentance for their apostasy, and the saints of old (such as Daniel), who did not refrain from making confession, notwithstanding their personal innocence. We encounter a similar understanding of Daniel's confession in Jerome's *Commentarii in Danielem* (from 407 AD), where even the technical term *persona* is used.[32] When commenting on Dan 9:20, Jerome presents the possible explanation that Daniel confessed the sins of Israel "out of humility," even though he himself had not committed sin (*siue humiliter, cum peccatum ipse non fecerit; et se iungit populo peccatori, ut ex humilitate ueniam consequatur*).[33] Notably, Jerome mentions that Paul employs the same *persona* device in his *Epistle to the Romans* (*quod et apostolum in Epistola ad Romanos facere legimus*).[34] Jerome also gives Daniel's confession as an instance of προσωποποιία in his *Epistle* 121 to Algasia (from 406 AD) when answering an exegetical question concerning Rom 7:8.[35] The close parallel between Jerome's exegesis and Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* on this point probably reveals Jerome's heavy reliance on Origen in his biblical commentaries. It is evident that Jerome used the Greek original of Origen's commentary when composing his answer to Algasia.[36]

It is therefore difficult to tell whether Augustine's criticism of the *persona* interpretation of Daniel's confession is to be explained as a reaction to Origen's commentary in particular. As we have seen, both Cyprian and Jerome provide explanations of the confession in similar terms, and their conclusions would prove equally objectionable from Augustine's point of view. It is, of course, perfectly possible that Augustine's criticism is aimed at more than one of these interpreters.

Despite his firm insistence on Daniel's personal sinfulness (as opposed to sinlessness), Augustine makes it very clear that he does not consider this question

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31 Cypr., Laps. 31 (CCL 3, l. 618).
32 Hier., Dan. 3.9,5ᵃ (CCL 75A, 861).
33 Hier., Dan. 3.9,20 (CCL 75A, 863).
34 Hier., Dan. 3.9,5ᵃ (CCL 75A, 861).
35 Hier., Ep. 121.
36 C. P. Hammond Bammel, *Philocalia IX, Jerome, Epistle 121, and Origen's Exposition of Romans VII*, in: The Journal of Theological Studies XXXII, no. 1 (1981): 50–81 (59).

to be of ultimate importance. He is willing to accept that fellow Christians might think differently than him in claiming that, in addition to "the one saint of saints" (*unum sanctum sanctorum*[37]), Jesus Christ, there have indeed existed righteous men whose lives were free from sin. For Augustine, the more important question is the role of divine grace in the process of human salvation. He sees grace, rather than will, as being absolutely necessary. In *Epistle 157* he argues vehemently against those who "claim that man's free choice is enough to enable him to carry out the commandments of the Lord" (*dicunt sufficere homini liberum arbitrium ad dominica implenda mandata*[38]). Only with divine assistance, which is given through grace, is the Christian enabled to perform good works and keep sinful desires in check. In our present state of sin, human beings do not enjoy the freedom to achieve such feats through the exercise of the "powers of their own will" (*uiribus propriae uoluntatis*) or their faculty of "free choice" (*liberum aribitrium*).[39] Rather, Augustine maintains that human freedom is limited to calling upon God in order to petition divine help.[40]

5. Augustine's answer to Hilary's second proposition

5.1 The "Devil argument" Against Imitation (Rom 5:12)

The influence of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* is more obvious in Augustine's discussion of the fate of infants who die prior to receiving baptism. According to Hilary, the unnamed Christians in Syracuse had claimed that all infants are saved, with or without baptism. Augustine attempts to refute this claim by showing that human nature has been so injured by the Fall of Adam that every one of his progeny carries the weight of his sin, and are thus in need of salvation. Rom 5:12 is of special significance for Augustine's understanding of original sin.[41] In order to secure his own position, Augustine needs to negate a rival Pelagian reading of Rom 5:12 that understands the transmission of sin from Adam to his posterity solely in terms of "imitation" (*imitatio*). As Pelagius writes in his *Expositiones* on Romans, this Pauline verse refers to transmission "by example or by pattern" (*exemplo uel forma*[42]). Augustine counters this understanding of

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37 Aug., Ep. 157 2.4 (CSEL 44, 451).
38 Aug., Ep. 157 2.4 (CSEL 44, 451).
39 Aug., Ep. 157 2.4–5 (CSEL 44, 451).
40 Aug., Ep. 157 2.7 (CSEL 44, 453–54).
41 "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned" (NRSV).
42 Pel., Expositiones in 8 Epistularum Pauli Rom. 5:12: *Texts and Studies* vol. IX:2, 45. English translation from T. De Bruyn, *Pelagius's Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans*, Oxford 2002, 92.

Rom 5:12 with an argument that clearly seems to be drawn from Origen's commentary.

In his comments on Rom 5:12, Origen tries to explain why Paul traces the origin of sin to Adam and not to Eve or the Devil.[43] For the Devil was in fact the instigator of human sin, and Eve sinned prior to Adam by succumbing to the temptation of the serpent and tasting of the forbidden fruit (cf. Gen 3:1–6). So according to the chronological order of events, it would seem more natural for the Apostle to begin his account of sin with "the woman" or "the serpent":

> Well then, if the woman sinned before Adam, and the serpent sinned before the woman, and in another passage the Apostle says, "Adam was not seduced, but the woman was seduced," (1 Tim. 2:14) how can it seem that sin entered through one man and not rather through one woman? For the beginning of sin was from the woman, and before the woman from the serpent, or from the devil, of whom it is said in the Gospel, "He was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44).[44]

Origen responds to this conundrum by stating that Paul maintains the "order of nature" (*naturae ordinem*) in his description of the origin of human sin. According to this order, it is customary to assign "mortal posterity" (*mortalis posteritas*) and "physical descent" (*corporalis successio*) to the man instead of the woman.[45] Here, Origen employs Hebr 7:9–10[46] to illustrate how sin could be passed on from Adam to his posterity.[47] Just as Levi was present in the "loins of Abraham" (*in lumbis Abrahae*[48]) when the patriarch paid tithes to Melchizedek, so too Adam's descendants were "in him" (*in ipso*) when he was expelled from Paradise:

> And all men who were with him [Adam], or rather in him, were expelled from Paradise when he was himself driven out from there; and through him the death which had come to him from the transgression consequently passed through to them as well, who were dwelling in his loins; and therefore the Apostle rightly says,

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43 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,11 (SC 539, 364).

44 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,11: *Si ergo ante Adam mulier peccauit, et ante mulierem serpens, et in alio loco dicit apostolus quia Adam non est seductus mulier autem seducta est; quomodo per unum hominem et non magis per unam mulierem uidebitur introisse peccatum? A muliere enim initium peccati, et ante mulierem a serpente siue a diabolo, de quo dicitur in euangelio quia ille ab initio homicida erat.* (SC 539, 364). English translation from T.P. Scheck, 2001, 310.

45 Or., comm in. Rom. 5.1,11 (SC 539, 364).

46 "One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him." (NRSV).

47 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,12 (SC 539, 364–66).

48 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,12 (SC 539, 364).

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22) So then it is neither from the serpent who had sinned before the woman, nor from the woman who had become a transgressor before the man, but through Adam, from whom all mortals derive their origin, that sin is said to have entered, and through sin, death.[49]

Origen thus understands Rom 5:12 in terms of the "mystical" solidarity of all human beings with Adam in his transgression. Due to the sin of their forefather, all of humankind was "expelled from paradise" and incurred the punishment of death. Even though the Devil was the first instigator of sin, Paul did not trace the origin of sin back to him in Rom 5:12. Instead, Origen says, the Apostle wanted to emphasize our solidarity with Adam "from whom all mortals derive their origin" (*ex quo omnes mortales originem ducunt*).

In his *Epistle 157*, Augustine employs a curiously similar idea when expounding Rom 5:12. For the sake of argument, he grants that the descendants of Adam inherit sin through their imitation of his bad example. But, Augustine reasons, if Paul had taught that transmission of sin takes place through imitation, he would have presented the Devil, rather than Adam, as the originator of sin:

> If, as they say, the Apostle had made this statement to have us understand that sinners are the progeny of the first man because we sin by imitating him, not because we inherit sin by being born of him, he should rather have adduced the Devil, who was the first sinner, from whom the human race derives no inheritance of substance, but whom it has followed solely by imitation.[50]

Augustine here provides the same exegesis as Origen in order to prove that human beings inherit Adam's sin in a concrete "physical" manner, and not

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49 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,12: *(...) et omnes homines cum ipso uel in ipso expulsi sunt de paradiso cum ipse inde depulsus est; et per ipsum mors quae ei ex praeuaricatione uenerat consequenter et in eos pertransiit qui in lumbis eius habebantur. Et ideo recte apostolus dicit: Sicut enim in Adam omnes moriuntur ita et in Christo omnes uiuificabuntur. Neque ergo ex serpente qui ante mulierem peccauerat neque ex muliere quae ante uirum in praeuaricatione facta est sed per Adam ex quo omnes mortales originem ducunt dicitur introisse peccatum et per peccatum mors.* (SC 539, 364–66). English translation from T.P. Scheck, 2001, 311. Translation adjusted by MKM.

50 Aug., Ep. 157 3.21: *(…) nam si, quem ad modum illi dicunt, propterea ista commemorasset apostolus, ut intellegeremus ad primum hominem peccatores ideo pertinere, quia non delictum ex illo nascendo traximus, sed eum imitando peccamus, diabolum potius poneret, qui et prior peccauit et de quo nullam substantiae propaginem traxit genus humanum, sed eum sola imitatione subsecuta est (…)* (CSEL 44, 470). English translation from W. Parsons, 2008, 338.

through imitation alone. For, if human sin is merely the result of imitation, then Paul would not have traced it back to Adam but "rather have adduced the Devil" (*diabolum potius poneret*) who first incited the human race to disobey God. But the Apostle did not begin his lineage of sin with the Devil because the "human race derives no inheritance of substance" (*de quo nullam substantiae propaginem traxit genus humanum*) from him, since he is an angelic (or rather demonic) being. Augustine presents this "Devil argument" for the first time in *De peccatorum meritis* and uses it again in the anti-Pelagian *Sermo 294* (from 413 AD).[51] Bammel is probably right in considering this parallel idea to be an instance of the direct reception of Origen's commentary. The "Devil argument" appears abruptly in Augustine's exegesis, and at a time when we know for certain that Rufinus' Latin translation of the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* was in circulation. We do not find a discussion of the Devil in relation to Rom 5:12 in Augustine's *Expositio*, his early work on Romans, nor in other sources that may have been available to him (such as Ambrosiaster's *Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas*).

While there are no suspicious verbal agreements between Augustine's formulations of the "Devil argument" and Rufinus' Latin text, there are other indications of reception beyond the parallelism itself. In his original formulation of the argument in *De peccatorum meritis*, Augustine had cited 1 Cor 15:22[52] and 1 John 3:8[53] among the scriptural passages that help explain Paul's meaning in Rom 5:12.[54] In the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*, 1 Cor 15:22 and John 8:44 (which is similar in content to 1 John 3:8) are of central importance to Origen's exegesis of the same Pauline verse. In *Epistle 157,* Augustine makes a curious adjustment of his argument in that he now replaces 1 John 3:8 with an allusion to John 8:44 (*unde diceretur pater impiorum*[55]). He thus brings his exegesis in even closer alignment with Origen's.

Augustine's independence as a thinker is apparent from the fact that he does not simply copy Origen's exegesis of Rom 5:12 viz. the question of the Devil. Indeed, he appears to have developed the idea even further than Origen in the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*. Augustine draws the inference from Paul's Adam-Christ typology that if damnation comes

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51 Aug., Serm. 294 15.15.
52 "For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ." (NRSV).
53 "Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning." (NRSV).
54 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.8,8; 1.9,9.
55 Aug., Ep. 157 3.21 (CSEL 44, 470). We encounter the same adjustment of the "Devil argument" in Serm. 294.

through the imitation of Adam, as the Pelagians claim, then salvation would come through the imitation of Abel, the first righteous man:

> In the next place, if the Apostle mentioned the first man in this passage because he was the first sinner among men, and if he meant thereby that all men who are sinners belong to him, why did he not bring in holy Abel, who was the first just man among mankind, and claim that all just men belong to him through imitation of his justice? But he did bring in Adam, against whom he could set no one but Christ, because, as the first man attainted his posterity by his sin, so the God-Man saved His inheritance by His own justice; the one brought on corruption of the flesh, which the Devil for all his wickedness could not do; the other gave the grace of the Spirit, which Abel, the just, could not do.[56]

Augustine claims that Paul would have presented Abel as an antitype to Adam instead of Christ if salvation (and by extension damnation) were a result of imitation only. But since the Apostle consistently refers to Christ as the antitype of Adam in the passage Rom 5:12–21, it is clear that the Pelagian insistence on *imitatio* is untenable.

5.2 The Notion of "Law" in Origen's Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos (Rom 5:13 and 5:20)

Another credible instance of the reception of Origen's commentary is found in Augustine's exegesis of Rom 5:13[57] and 5:20[58]. Bammel claims that Augustine takes inspiration from Origen's explanation of the term "law" (*lex*) in these verses.[59] Throughout his commentary, Origen displays great sophistication in his treatment of Paul's multifaceted legal grammar. He is aware that the Apostle deploys it in a variety of different ways, giving this as a reason why Romans is so challenging to interpret.[60] Bammel points out

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56 Aug., Ep. 157 3.21: *Deinde si propter imitationem hoc loco apostolus commemoraret primum hominem, quia primus peccator in hominibus fuit, ut ideo ad illum omnes homines peccatores diceret pertinere, cur non sanctum Abel posuit, quoniam primus in hominibus iustus fuit, ad quem iusti omnes propter imitationem iustitiae pertinerent? Sed posuit Adam, contra quem non posuit nisi Christum, quia sicut ille homo delicto suo uitiauit posteritatem suam, sic iste Deus homo iustitia sua saluauit hereditatem suam, ille traiciendo carnis immunditiam, quod non poterat impius diabolus, ille donando spiritus gratiam, quod non poterat Abel iustus.* (CSEL 44, 470). English translation from W. Parsons, 2008, 338.

57 "Sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law." (NRSV).

58 "But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." (NRSV).

59 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 360–61.

60 Or., comm. in Rom. 1.1,6

that Augustine, in *De peccatorum meritis,* deviates from his earlier exegesis of these verses in that he now allows for the possibility that Paul could be referring to the "law of nature" (*lex naturalis*) in our conscience (instead of the Law of Moses). In a manner typical of Origen, Augustine now gives two interpretive possibilities without ultimately deciding between them. We find exactly the same approach to Rom 5:13 and 5:20 in *Epistle 157*. When commenting on the latter verse, Augustine is perfectly open to the idea that Paul is here referring to the moral law in our conscience:

> Clearly, we must understand by it either the natural law which was known in those ages among all who had the use of reason, or the written Law which was given by Moses, but which could not give life nor set man free "from the law of sin and death" (cf. Rom. 8:2) which came down from Adam; rather, it added an increase of transgression: "For where there is no law," says the same Apostle, "neither is there transgression."[61] (Rom 4:15)

Augustine apparently understands the "natural law" (*lex naturalis*) as a moral code written on the hearts of all human beings. In his view, this code consists in a moral teaching reminiscent of the "Golden Rule," albeit formulated negatively (*ne mali aliquid faciat quisque alteri, quod pati ipse non uult*[62]). All humans transgress this law, invariably adding to the guilt they inherit from Adam. The natural law is, moreover, to be found in all persons who have attained the age of reason (*quae est in usu rationis animae rationalis in aetate hominis iam ratione utentis*[63]). Augustine also gives natural law as a possible interpretation in his exegesis of Rom 5:13 in *Epistle 157*.[64]

It is quite plausible that the alternative exegesis of Rom 5:13 and 5:20 given in *De peccatorum meritis* and *Epistle 157* was inspired by Augustine's reading of Origen's commentary. For, indeed, the interpretation of "law" in these verses as *lex naturalis* is ostensibly unique to Origen. While Ambrosiaster generally shows great interest in the theme of natural law, he does not adopt this interpretation of *lex* when treating the verses in question; rather, he clearly understands the word as a reference to the Mosaic Law.[65]

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61 Aug., Ep. 157 3.15: *(…) legem quippe siue naturalem intellegamus, quae in eorum apparet aetatibus, qui iam ratione uti possunt, siue conscriptum, quae data est per Moysen, quia nec ipsa potuit uiuificare et liberare a lege peccati et mortis, quae tracta est ex Adam, sed magis addidit praeuaricationis augmenta; ubi enim lex non est, ait idem apostolus, nec praeuaricatio* (CSEL 44, 462–63). English translation from W. Parsons, 2008, 331.

62 Aug., Ep. 157 3.15 (CSEL 44, 463).

63 Aug., Ep. 157 3.15 (CSEL 44, 463).

64 Aug., Ep. 157 3.18 (CSEL 44, 467).

65 Ambrosiast., Commentarius in 8 Epistulas Paulinas Rom. 5.13; 5.20.

The case for reception of Origen's commentary is further buttressed by an example that Augustine provides in the context of discussing original sin in *De peccatorum meritis*.[66] In order to prove that infants are baptized due to the inherited contagion of original sin, Augustine is eager to show that they are incapable of committing sins of their own. He gives the concrete, and memorable, illustration of an infant striking its mother; hardly an instance of premeditated evil. According to Augustine, such little ones cannot be held accountable for personal sins until they reach the age of discretion, when their intellectual faculties have sufficiently developed. But precisely this example of a striking infant is used by Origen to prove a similar point in his exegesis of Rom 5:13.[67] Surely, this is no coincidence. Rather, it reveals Augustine's dependence on Origen's commentary.[68]

Bammel has claimed that Augustine, in his earlier work *De spiritu et littera,* "rejects Origen's methods of explaining Paul's use of the term 'law' and again reverts to his earlier interpretation of Romans"[69]. While it is correct that in *De spiritu et littera* Augustine appears to censure Origen's understanding of the term "law" in the context of 2 Cor. 3:6, *Epistle 157* clearly shows that Augustine was content to employ Origen's exegesis in Rom 5:13 and 5:20. This is one small indication that Augustine's "reaction against Origen" in *De spiritu et littera* is probably not as strong as Bammel imagines.[70]

5.3 Augustine as Textual Critic: The Divergent Readings of Rom 5:14

According to Bammel, it is likely that Augustine is also indebted to Origen when it comes to his discussion of the variant manuscript readings of Rom 5:14.[71] Augustine is aware that a negation is lacking in the clause "who have [not] sinned after the similitude of the transgression of Adam" in some of the biblical manuscripts.[72] Like Origen, Augustine does not draw a definite conclusion as to which reading of the verse should be deemed authentic. It is intriguing, however, that (unlike Origen) Augustine—both in *De peccatorum meritis* and again in *Epistle* 157—treats the presence of the negation as preferable.[73] The reason might be that this version, more obviously than

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66 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.35,66.
67 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,23 (SC 539, 378–380).
68 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 361.
69 Ead.
70 Ead.
71 Ead., 361 n. 84.
72 Aug., Ep. 157 3.19 (CSEL 44, 468).
73 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.11,13.

the other, appears to support Augustine's notion of original sin. He argues that death exercises dominion *even* over those who did *not* sin in the same manner as Adam, because his sin was inherited by his offspring: ""Death hath reigned even over them that have not sinned"—as if to make us know why it has reigned over those who have not sinned—"after the similitude of the transgression of Adam," (Rom. 5:14) that is, because there was in their members a similitude of the transgression of Adam."[74]

Augustine here states that the inherited "similitude" of Adam's sin was handed down to all of his descendants through their "members" (*membris*). The reading of Rom 5:14 with the negation could be seen as neatly underlining the fact that Adam's descendants are utterly inactive in contracting the guilt of their forefather's sin. Augustine is, unsurprisingly, very eager to secure this interpretation of Rom 5:14, seeing as it fits nicely with his understanding of original sin. However, he also safeguards himself against the potential issue of the variant reading (without the negation), arguing that even this reading would not upset his interpretation. If the variant were to be adopted instead, Augustine states that he could interpret "over them that have sinned after the similitude of the transgression of Adam" as referring to the notion that all human beings have actually sinned "in Adam" when their forefather committed the first sin. In this way, Augustine arrives at the somewhat surprising conclusion that both readings of Rom 5:14 (despite literally contradicting one another) support his theory of original sin.

As for Origen, we find his text-critical comments about Rom 5:14 in the fifth book of Rufinus' translation:

> If, on the other hand, as it reads in some manuscripts, "even in those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression," (Rom. 5:14) this death, namely that which was keeping souls bound in the underworld, is said to exercise dominion, then we shall understand it to mean that even the saints had fallen prey to that death certainly under the law of dying, even if not under the punishment of sin.[75]

Apart from this brief comment, Origen primarily discusses the interpretation of Rom 5:14 without the negation. The absence of a negation allows him to claim that death only exercised dominion over those who sinned in a manner

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74 Aug., Ep. 157 3.19: *Regnauit mors in eos, qui non peccauerunt, quasi nos moueret, quare in eos regnauit, qui non peccauerunt, adderet: In similitudinem praeuaricationis Adae, id est quia inerat in eorum membris similitude praeuaricationis Adae* (CSEL 44, 467). English translation from W. Parsons, 2008, 335–336.

75 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.1,36: *Si uero, ut in nonnullis exemplaribus habetur, etiam in eos qui non peccauerunt in similitudine praeuaricationis Adae mors ista, id est quae in inferno animas detinebat, regnasse dicatur, intellegemus et sanctos quosque sub ista morte etiam si non poena peccati at certe moriendi lege decidisse (…)* (SC 539, 394). English translation from T.P. Scheck, 2001, 324–25.

similarto Adam. He is therefore able to draw a clear distinction between those who were thoroughly dominated by the power of death, i.e. the "real" transgressors, and, on the other side, the holy men from the time of the Old Covenant, who, because of their virtue, were less grievously impaired by this power. These holy men had, according to Origen, only been "grazed with a certain light infection" (*leui quadam eos contagione perstrinxit*[76]). Such a distinction must have appeared as highly objectionable from the perspective of Augustine's anthropology.

Ambrosiaster also discusses the text-critical problem in Rom 5:14, and, furthermore, in greater detail than Origen or Augustine.[77] Contrary to the latter two commentators, Ambrosiaster takes a clear stand on the issue. He decides in favor of what he perceives to be the "Latin" textual tradition, which omits the negation. He believes that the "Greek" manuscripts that include the negation have been corrupted for polemical reasons. Ambrosiaster instead argues strongly for the "Latin" option, "which reason, history and authority all retain" (*quando et ratio et historia et auctoritas conseruatur*[78]). It seems probable that Augustine is drawing on both Ambrosiaster and Origen with regard to his text-critical comments on Rom 5:14, while remaining independent in his evaluation of the textual evidence. It is striking that Augustine is favorably disposed toward a reading which Ambrosiaster clearly rejects, and which Origen treats as a less important alternative. This may be yet another example of Augustine's "exceptional independence of thought".[79] Again, his motivation for disagreeing with the other commentators could be explained by the fact that his reading of Rom 5:14 more directly supports the notion of hereditary guilt:

> Therefore "death reigned from Adam unto Moses," in all who were not assisted by the grace of Christ, that in them the kingdom of death might be destroyed, "even in those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," that is, who had not yet sinned of their own individual will, as Adam did, but had drawn from him original sin (...).[80]

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76 Or., comm. in Rom. 6.32 (SC 539, 390).

77 Ambrosiast., Commentarius in 8 Epistulas Paulinas Rom. 5.14.

78 Ambrosiast., Commentarius in 8 Epistulas Paulinas Rom. 5.14 (CSEL 81:1, 177).

79 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 363.

80 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.11,13: *Ergo in omnibus regnauit mors ab Adam usque ad Moysen, qui Christi gratia non adiuti sunt, ut in eis regnum mortis destrueretur, ergo et in eis qui non peccauerunt in similitudine praeuaricationis Adae, id est qui nondum sua et propria uoluntate sicut ille peccauerunt, sed ab illo peccatum originale traxerunt (…)* (CSEL 60, 14). English translation from P. Holmes, *Saint Augustin: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, New York 1887, 20.

Augustine's reading of Rom 5:14 with the negation serves to underline the fact that Adam's descendants are utterly inactive in contracting the guilt of their forefather's sin. Of course, this happens to suit the purposes of Augustine's anti-Pelagian polemic very well.

Notably, in the earlier work *De peccatorum meritis* Augustine openly admits that he knows other interpreters of Romans (*quod etiam ipsum qui ita legunt*[81]) who adopt the reading of Rom 5:14 without the negation. According to Augustine, these nameless exegetes understand the import of the verse in the same way that he does (*ad eundem referunt intellectum*[82]), despite their preference for the variant reading. I find it likely that Augustine includes Ambrosiaster and Origen among the *ita legunt*[83] interpreters. As mentioned above, both authors clearly prefer the reading of Rom 5:14 without the negation. Furthermore, Augustine's description of the position of the unnamed interpreters (*qui in illo peccauerunt, ut ei similes crearentur, sicut ex homine homines, ita ex peccatore peccatores, ex morituro morituri damnatoque damnati*[84]) fits quite nicely with statements found in both Ambrosiaster's and Origen's commentaries. In both sources we can find passages that could be construed as supporting Augustine's doctrine of original sin. Moreover, Augustine's open-minded approach to the text-critical problem (*contra* Ambrosiaster's vehement insistence on his preferred "Latin" view) could well be inspired by Origen's reluctance to decide between the two conflicting textual traditions.

5.4 The Baptism of Infants: Origen as an Ally in Augustine's Argument for Original Sin (Rom 6:6 and 8:3)

In Augustine's view, the ancient practice of infant baptism clearly demonstrates that we are not born in a state of innocence. For, if this were the case, the baptism of infants would prove to be a totally superfluous act. It is quite possible that Augustine drew upon Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* as inspiration for this argument.[85] In Origen's exegesis of Paul's expression the "body of sin" (*corpus peccati*) in Rom 6:6, he explains that infant baptism has been instituted by the Apostles in order to wash away the sinful "defilement" (*sordes*) that is found even in newborns:

> It is on this account as well that the Church has received the tradition from the apostles to give baptism even to little children. For they to whom the secrets of

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81 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.11,13 (CSEL 60,14).
82 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.11,13 (CSEL 60,14).
83 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.11,13 (CSEL 60,14).
84 Aug., peccat. merit. 1.11,13 (CSEL 60,14).
85 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 359.

the divine mysteries were committed were aware that in everyone was sin's innate defilement, which needed to be washed away through water and the Spirit.[86]

In Origen's commentary, Augustine would also come across a theory about the way sin is transmitted from Adam to his descendants. According to Origen, human sin is not merely a consequence of following Adam's bad example, as Pelagius would have it. Rather, it is propagated via sexual intercourse, which invariably stems from the sinful impulse of "concupiscence" (*concupiscentia*). Paul's statement in Rom 8:3 that Christ came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (*in similitudine carnis peccati*[87]) is explained by Origen via his propagation theory. According to Origen, Christ is said to have only the "likeness" of the sinful body because of his miraculous conception from a virgin.[88] Given the fact that Christ's conception was unaffected by the impulse of concupiscence, he did not possess a normal "body of sin" like the rest of us. In his *Epistle 157*, it is possible that Augustine is making use of Origen's exegesis of Rom 8:3 in order to rebut the Pelagian claim that unbaptized infants are saved through their innate sinlessness: "Therefore, if these men have found an infant not begotten of the concupiscence of that first man [i.e. Adam], let them say that it is not subject to damnation and has no need of being delivered from that damnation by the grace of Christ."[89]

In Augustine's view, infants are subject to damnation because they have been propagated from Adam's seed, conceived by the impulse of sinful "concupiscence" (*concupiscentia*). Infants can only be released from this state through the sacrament of baptism.

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86 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.9,13: *Pro hoc et ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit etiam paruulis baptismum dare; sciebant enim illi quibus mysteriorum secreta commissa sunt diuinorum quia essent in omnibus genuinae sordes peccati quae per aquam et spiritum ablui deberent (…)* (SC 539, 498). English translation from T.P. Scheck 2001, 367.

87 Or., comm. in Rom. 5.9,10 (SC 539, 496); Or., comm. in Rom. 6.12,4 (SC 543, 206).

88 For a detailed treatment of Augustine's anti-Pelagian exegesis of Rom 8:3 and its possible roots in Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*, see Keech, 2012. Keech claims that Augustine's specific exegesis of Rom 8:3 in terms of *concupiscentia* is inspired by Origen (p. 133). But he is unsure whether the general theory of transmission of sin through sexual propagation was an "idea already nascent in Augustine's thought" even prior to his reception of Origen's commentary.

89 Aug., Ep. 157 3.11: *(…) proinde isti, quem forte inuenerint infantem non ex illius unius hominis concupiscentia procreatum, ipsum dicant illi damnationi non esse obnoxium nec per Christi gratiam ab illa damnatione esse liberandum.* (CSEL 44, 457). English translation from W. Parsons, 2008, 326–327.

6. Aftermath: The Role of *Epistle 157* in the Pelagian Controversy

Augustine's *Epistle 157* to the layman Hilary of Syracuse might have remained relatively insignificant if Orosius had not brought it to Palestine.[90] This Spanish priest, who visited Augustine in 415, cited *Epistle 157* against the disputed teachings of Pelagius during the synod at Jerusalem held in July of the same year. In this way, Augustine's epistle came to be renowned as an authoritative refutation of Pelagian theology. *Epistle 157* was again employed as an anti-Pelagian resource by the bishops Heros and Lazarus when they composed their *libellus* against Pelagius, just prior to the Diospolis synod in December of 415.[91] We can thus say that the case against Pelagius at these important synods was partially inspired by Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos,* which, as we have seen, contributed to Augustine's *Epistle 157*. It is somewhat paradoxical, then, that Pelagius' interpretation of Romans was also informed by his reading of Origen's commentary.[92]

7. Conclusion

As I hope to have shown, the textual evidence corroborates Bammel's suggestion that *Epistle 157* shows "positive contacts with Origen."[93] Indeed, there are significant conceptual parallels between Augustine's *Epistle 157*, and the Latin translation of the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*. The sheer number of these, together with the remarkable overlap between certain of them, makes direct reception of the commentary the most plausible explanation. As in his earlier anti-Pelagian writings, *De peccatorum meritis* and *De spiritu et littera*, Augustine, in his epistle to Hilary from 414, again uses the commentary as a resource for his polemic against the idea of human sinlessness. Since Augustine largely bases his interpretation of original sin on Rom 5:12–21, it is not surprising to find that, when he draws upon elements of Origen's exegesis in *Epistle 157,* it is mainly in relation to these verses. The "Devil argument"; the notion of "law"; and the discussion concerning Latin and Greek biblical manuscripts, are all of relevance to Rom 5:12–21. The doctrine of original sin, in turn, forms the explanatory basis for Augustine's understanding of human incapacity. The weakness of the human will is ultimately ascribed to the sin of Adam, and our physical propagation from him. Augustine's understanding of Daniel's

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90 W.J. Collinge, *Saint Augustine: Four Anti-Pelagian Writings*, Washington 1992, 94.
91 Cf. Aug., De gestis Pelagii 11,23.
92 Scheck, 2008, 67–85.
93 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 362.

confession showcases his lack of confidence in the powers of the will. Even the most holy prophet is not able to avoid the consequences of his wounded human nature and so must confess his sins, together with his people. While in *Epistle 157* Augustine concedes the theoretical possibility of living a life without sin (obviously with the help of divine grace), he clearly believes that Christ alone has achieved such an existence.

My examination of *Epistle 157* adds another piece to the puzzle of Augustine's reception of Origen's *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos*. It demonstrates (admittedly on a small scale) that Augustine continued to employ the commentary as an anti-Pelagian instrument in the rising controversy. On the other hand, at certain points in *Epistle 157* Augustine seems to treat the commentary with caution, censuring Origen when his exegesis appears to contradict Augustine's views on Christian anthropology (provided that Augustine's criticism of the *persona*-interpretation of Daniel's confession is indeed aimed at Origen). In this fashion, Augustine selectively appropriates ideas and arguments from the commentary, not hesitating to reject those that do not serve his purposes.[94]

It might strike one as counter-intuitive that Augustine would employ Origen's commentary as a weapon against Pelagius, Caelestius, and their acolytes. Even in Rufinus' abridged and edited Latin version, the *Commentarii in Epistulam ad Romanos* is far from being an obvious proof-text for the anthropological views of the mature Augustine. On the contrary, the Latin commentary is full of statements that showcase Origen's less "pessimistic" anthropology, including his customary insistence on human freedom. It is therefore a remarkable achievement that Augustine (almost) succeeds in making Origen (in the guise given him by Rufinus) a proponent of his own doctrine of original sin. The fact that Pelagius also employed the commentary to support his understanding of Christian anthropology well illustrates the incredible richness of Origen's exegetical work, not to mention its inner tensions and apparent contradictions. It is curious that both Pelagius and Augustine managed to support opposite views of the human condition with arguments taken from one and the same source.

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94 Hammond Bammel, 1992, 363.

Anders-Christian Jacobsen

Augustine on human freedom and free will

Abstract: Taking its departure in the different phases in Augustine's theological and philosophical thinking this article argues that Augustine after having left Manichean determinism argues that human beings are free and have freedom of choice. These ideas about human freedom and free will inspired by Platonism were challenged by Augustine's intensive reading of Paul (c. 395) and are developed under influence of his conflict with the Pelagians from 410 onwards. During the last 20 years of his life, Augustine returns to a deterministic concept of human beings claiming that only those who are predestined by God to salvation have freedom and free choice to do good. Augustine thus ends where he began – with a deterministic and dualistic anthropology.

1. Introduction

In the following article, I explore how Augustine's changing understanding of human freedom and free will relates to his theological anthropology. This focus means that I will omit other important aspects of Augustine's theological anthropology, such as his understanding of the human body and human psychology.

The question of changing phases in Augustine's theology and philosophy has been raised many times, and from many different angles. The answers given are likewise diverse. This is a consequence both of different thematic foci and different interpretations of Augustine's various works. One helpful way to approach this question is to examine the various historical contexts and conflicts in which he was involved. Augustine's theology, as is well known, was largely developed in response to conflicts within himself (internal) or with his theological adversaries (external). Since this trajectory is familiar, I will provide just a brief sketch of its development in the first section.

To take a step further, we must ask what role the concepts of human freedom and free will played during these phases of Augustine's life and theology. Did his concepts of human freedom and free will remain consistent, or did they change? If the latter, then why and how? Admittedly, these questions have also been asked and answered before, most recently and noticeably by Lenka Karfíková in her important book *Grace and Will according to Augustine*. Nevertheless, I find it important to readdress these questions, and to trace and evaluate the consequences of their answers for Augustine's

theological anthropology, which he has passed on to future generations of theologians. Such, then, will be the main objective of this contribution.

2. Augustine's conflicts and contexts

Augustine was an adherent of Manichaeism for a considerable length of time—from about 373/74 to 383 (cf. *Confessions* 2–4). After his eventual break with the Manichaeans, they became his main antagonists, sparking a controversy that lasted from Augustine's conversion to Christianity and baptism in 386, until around 400, when a new conflict—this time with Donatism—came to the fore. The Donatist controversy, however, was not dominated by questions of the origin of evil, free will, and predestination; it was rather concerned with the unity of the Church and the use of the sacraments. For this reason, Augustine's anti-Donatist writings do not mark an important contribution to the theme of this article. In 411, a new conflict broke out with Pelagius and his followers. This conflict lasted until the end of Augustine's life in 430. During this so-called Pelagian controversy, Augustine's ideas about the origin of evil, human freedom, free will, and the divine predestination of humans to salvation or damnation found their final form. His writings pertaining to the Pelagian controversy are therefore of utmost importance for our theme. To this brief sketch of the phases of Augustine's theology, which focusses on his 'outer enemies,' we should also add the importance of his deep engagement with Pauline theology from 394/ 395 onwards. This renewed understanding of Pauline theology transformed Augustine's theological understanding of sin, free will, and grace. In fact, this is probably the most important background for his strong attacks on all forms of 'Pelagian' theology. Peter Brown's book *Augustine of Hippo*[1] has been extremely influential in the way most scholars understand these phases in Augustine's life and theology. His book is more or less structured according to the phases I have summarized above.[2]

3. The break with Manichaeism

Augustine was attracted by the Manichaean answer to the question of the origins of evil and the relation of evil to humanity. This question is important for

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1   P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, London 1967.
2   I am convinced by Brown's understanding of the phases in Augustine's theological, philosophical, and personal development, but as this understanding has become standard in Augustine research it should be questioned and 'shaken' from time to time. C. Harrison does this in her book, *Rethinking Augustine's early theology. An argument for continuity*, Oxford 2006.

any account of theological anthropology because the way that evil relates to human beings is decisive for how one conceives of human nature. According to Manichaeism, evil is an ontologically independent reality existing alongside God, who is good.[3] The perpetual struggle between the good and the evil principles takes place in all human beings, who thus become a battlefield for these powers. For a long time, these answers satisfied Augustine, but after having met and debated with the Manichaean bishop Faustus in 382, his doubts about Manichaean theology began to grow. In 383, Augustine finally broke with Manichaeism after his arrival in Italy.

His break with Manichaean dualism meant that Augustine could no longer locate the source of evil in an independent power, equal and opposite to God. The responsibility of evil had to be left with either God or humanity. Nor could the source of evil be found in matter or the material body, because Augustine, after renouncing Manichaeism, came to regard matter (including the human body) as God's good creation (cf. e.g. *On the Free Choice of Will* 1.11,23,79). The definition of evil had to be reconsidered. Having arrived in Milan, where he became the official city rhetor, Augustine received fresh inspiration from several different sources. Most importantly, he began to listen to Bishop Ambrose's sermons, which were grounded in the Old and the New Testaments, and in Platonism. Augustine had also received at this time several of the Platonists' manuscripts (*Confessions* 7.9). The combined influence Ambrose, the Bible, and the Platonic writings led Augustine in the direction of a more monistic ontology. Moving in this direction, a Platonic solution to the origin of evil presented itself: evil could be understood as a deprivation of good, and therefore without positive ontological status. Augustine adopted this concept of evil in his criticism of Manichaeism. This can be seen in his *On Genesis contra the Manichaeans* 1.4 where he comments on Genesis 1:3: "God said that light should come into being." This passage leads Augustine to claim that darkness, which was overcome by the light, is not something in and of itself, but rather the absence of something else, namely, light. Thus, he rejected the Manichaean idea of darkness as a substance per se, which encouraged them to claim that there is a 'nation of darkness' (cf. *On Genesis contra the Manichaeans* 1.4).[4] Inspired by his reading of the Pauline[5] letters, especially

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3   Concerning Augustine's Manichaean concept of evil, see Aug., Conf. 5.10,20, further H. M. Scerri, *Augustine, the Manichaean and the Problem of Evil*, in: Augustinian Panorama 5–7 (1988–1990), 76–86 (77–78).

4   In Conf. 7.3–8 Augustine describes his struggle with the question of evil, and in Conf. 7.12 and 7.16 he describes his new understanding of evil as the deprivation of the good. See further R. Williams, *On Augustine*, London 2016, 79–105 where he discusses Augustine's concept of evil.

5   Cf. Aug., Conf. 7.21.

the Letter to the Romans, Augustine's thoughts on the theme of evil developed still further. He leaned more and more toward the conviction that evil has its roots in human withdrawal from God's law. Human beings used their freedom to turn away from this law. Consequently, free will becomes important for the question of how evil is introduced into human existence.

In the first book of his *On the Free Choice of the Will* (387/388 – 391/ 395), Augustine claims that God does not commit evil, but punishes those who do. While the humans who suffer these punishments experience them as evil, this does not make them so. Indeed, God punishes justly. Therefore, in looking for the author of evil, God must be excluded from the start. Instead, Augustine points to humans as the true culprits: evil people are the authors of their own evildoing, he says (1.1,1,3). The reason why such people act evilly is that they turn away from the good they have learned. Evil is not itself something one can learn because it does not exist. It is a lack of good-ness, for goodness can be unlearned. This is a typically Platonic way of explaining evil as an absence or privation of being and goodness. According to Augustine, lust makes human beings turn away from the good (1.3,8,21), which nevertheless comes from their free will and free choice. Evil is the result of human beings' free will to choose between good and bad.

> We have established that what each person elects to pursue and embrace is located in the will and that the mind is not thrown down from its stronghold of dominance, and from the right order, by anything but the will. It is also clear that when a person uses something in an evil manner, the thing should not be blamed, but rather the person using it in that evil manner[6] (*On the Free Choice of the Will* 1.16,34,114, cf. the passage 1.11,21,76–1.16,34,114).

Augustine's conclusion thus stands in stark opposition to the Manichaeans'. He concludes, contra Manichaeism, that human beings possess freedom of the will. This free will, in turn, is the source of evil because it willfully turns humanity from the good toward its antithesis.

In *On Genesis Contra the Manichaeans* (388–390), we find, at least indi-rectly, the same argument against the ontological status of evil as we saw in the first book of *On the Free Choice of the Will*. *On Genesis Contra the Manichaeans* is an apology for Augustine's understanding of Genesis

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6   Aug., De Libero Arbitrio 1.16,34,114: *…satis aperteque distincta sunt, quid autem quisque sectandum et amplectendum eligat in uoluntate esse positum constitit nul-laque re de arce dominandi rectoque ordine mentem depone nisi uoluntate, et est manifestum non rem ullam cum eaquisque male utitur, sed ipsum male utentem esse arguendum.* (CCSL 29, 234). The English translation is from P. King (ed.), Augustine, *On the free choice of the will, On grace and free choice, and other writings*, Cambridge 2010. Cf. the passage 1.11,21,76–1.16,34,114.

1–3 set over against the Manichaeans. As is typical in apologies, it has a double addressee; namely, the Manichaeans and the uneducated Catholic Christians whom Augustine calls 'the small ones.' Given this dual audience, Augustine's arguments are most often quite simple, and, in many passages, he simply retells the creation story. Across the two books, he goes through Genesis chapters 1–3, rejecting Manichaean interpretations and deflecting criticism while presenting his own arguments. All of these arguments share a single aim: to show that God's creation is good and, as such, not the source or cause of evil. Evil came into the world when Adam and Eve transgressed against God's law. Evil is a matter of transgression, not nature. Not even the Devil is intrinsically evil, but only insofar as he is the ultimate transgressor (cf. 2:28). Human beings act out of their own will, not out of God's will and law. Without God, humans are naked (cf. Gen. 3:10–11). This state of affairs is, according to Augustine, passed down to all generations of humanity after Adam (cf. 2:8). Already here, we find traces of the idea of inherited sin.

4. New reading of Paul

In his book *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion. The Journey from Platonism to Christianity,* Brian Dobell claims that Augustine's conversion in 386 was more a conversion to Platonism than to Christianity. At this point Augustine became a 'Porphyrian.'[7] It was only his intensive study of Pauline theology from 395 onwards that made him a 'Christian.' I put 'Porphyrian' and 'Christian' in quotation marks, because Dobell would not claim that Augustine was not a Christian after 386 (probably even also before); rather, he believes there was an important shift for Augustine around 395 from a Platonic inspired Christianity to a Pauline inspired Christianity. Dobell follows Brown's understanding of Augustine's theological development, namely, that he lost faith in his Platonic inspired conviction of the human ability to continuously progress toward spiritual perfection.[8] In this state of mind Augustine began to lecture for his friends in Carthage on Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Brown writes:

> Augustine did not discover Paul at this time. He merely read him differently. Previously, he had interpreted Paul as a Platonist: he had seen him as the expo-nent of a spiritual ascent, of the renewal of the 'inner' man, the decay of the 'outer; and, after his baptism, he had shared in Paul's sense of triumph: 'Behold all things have become new.' The idea of the spiritual life as a vertical ascent, as a progress towards a final, highest stage to be reached in this life, had fascinated Augustine in

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7   B. Dobell, *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion. The Journey from Platonism to Christianity,* Cambridge 2012, 228–236.
8   Brown, 1967, 146–157.

the previous years. Now, he will see in Paul nothing but a single unresolved tension between 'flesh' and 'spirit'. The only changes he could find were changes in states of awareness of this tension: ignorance of its existence 'before the Law'; helpless realization of the extent of the tension between good and evil 'under the Law', a stage of utter dependence on a Liberator 'under grace'. Only after this life would tension be resolved, 'When death is swallowed up in victory.' It is a flattened landscape: and in it, the hope of spiritual progress comes increasingly to depend, for Augustine, on the unfathomable will of God.[9]

In Brown's interpretation of Augustine's new understanding of Paul, he cites Augustine's comment on his answer to Simplicianus from *Retractiones* 2.27 where Augustine says, quoting Paul: "Who has made you different? What have you got that you did not first receive? If you have received all this, why glory in it as if you had not been given it?"[10]

This quote clearly shows that the mature Augustine (writing in 426–427) understood his answer to Simplicianus as a new interpretation of Paul, entailing a new theological anthropology. Augustine seems to have recast human nature as fundamentally unfree, contrary to his earlier convictions, and so totally dependent on God's grace. One should remember, however, that this is the old Augustine looking back more than 30 years. In between his earlier writings and the *Retractiones,* which reflect his new understanding of Paul, the Pelagian controversy had taken place. This, of course, influenced Augustine's composition of the *Retractiones*. But, even so, Brown has convincingly demonstrated that this new understanding of sin, grace, free choice of the will etc. was not a product of the Pelagian controversy alone, but was already guiding Augustine when he wrote his *Confessions*.[11]

This Pauline-inspired shift is very important because it forms the basis for Augustine's strong anti-Pelagian theology from 410 onwards, where the ideas of inherited sin and predestination become more and more predominant in his theology and theological anthropology. He had been developing his negative anthropology already from 395, but it grew and flourished during his conflict with the Pelagians.

9　Brown, 1967, 151–152.

10　Aug., Retract. 2. 27: *Quis enim te discernit? Quid autem habes quod non accepisti? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis?* (CCSL 57, 90). English translation from P. Brown (ed.), *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, California 1967, 154.

11　Cf. Conf. 8,5–12 where Augustine describe his conversion in Milan. Even if Augustine describes his conversion in 386, the conversion is interpreted in the light of his experiences from 395 onwards. When he writes *Confessiones* in 397–400/401 he looks back on his earlier years, including his conversion, through his new interpretation of Paul, cf. Brown, 1967, 158–181.

5. The Donatist conflic

As mentioned above, the Donatist conflict is not especially significant for questions concerning the origin of evil, human sin, and human freedom because other topics were the main focus of controversy: the unity of the church, the right understanding and use of the sacraments, etc.[12] Only one element in Augustine's anti-Donatist theology is important for the theme of this article, namely, the idea that God predestinates human beings either to eternal salvation or to eternal damnation. In his anti-Donatist period, Augustine develops this idea as an answer to the Donatists' claim that the one true Church consists of Christians who do not sin. Against this assertion, Augustine claimed that all humans are sinners. Among them, God chooses some, and only some, to empower by grace to fight sin and who, moreover, will be granted eternal life in happiness after the final, universal judgment. Who belongs to which group, the saved or the damned, is hidden to people in this world. Until the end of the world, the Church must, therefore, be a mixed body (*corpus permixtum*) of sinners and saints, clean and unclean.[13] Later in Augustine's life, these ideas were further developed, becoming a matter of great importance in his theology and anthropology.

6. The conflict with Pelagius and his followers

The most important context for the latest development of Augustine's theological anthropology, including his understanding of the origin of evil, human sin, unfreedom, and predestination, is his conflict with the Pelagians. The conflict began in 411, when Pelagius and some of his followers arrived in North Africa after fleeing from the conquerors of Rome. Even if the ideas of Pelagius and his followers were not crystal clear—a situation made even more obscure by the subsequent transmission of their ideas and treatises— it is evident that they argued for a positive, optimistic concept of human nature and believed that one by imitation of Christ could live a holy life without sinning.[14] This provoked Augustine because, after his Pauline turn

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12 See however P. I. Kaufman, *Augustine, Evil, and Donatism: Sin and Sanctity before the Pelagian Controversy*, in: TS 51 (1990), 115–126 (125–126) who argues that Augustine's struggle with the Donatist claim of being sinless was a precondition for his struggles with the Pelagians.

13 See concerning Augustine's thoughts about predestination in his anti-Donatist period *Epistula ad Catholico*s (Ep. ad cath.) 9.23; further Brown, 1967, 221; 235–236.

14 Pelag., *Expositio in epistulam Pauli ad Romanos*. See especially Pelagius' comments on Romans chapter 5–8.

and his studies on Romans, he came to fundamentally mistrust the idea that human beings can live without sin.

During his conflict with the Pelagians, Augustine developed a number of theological ideas to explain the human condition: human beings are, he maintained, sinners caught up in the necessity of sinning. This is not because human nature is evil, as the Manichaeans suggested, but because human beings have inherited their sinfulness from Adam via human procreation. However, some of the Pelagians accused Augustine of having returned to Manichaeism because he used expressions which implied that human nature was transformed by sin from total good to total evil, a dualistic idea. Augustine further argued that the only way to escape the sinful condition was by the grace of God offered to humanity through Christ. Only the grace of God, through Christ, can heal human nature and make it possible to avoid sin and achieve goodness. In addition to the ideas of inherited sin and divine grace, Augustine also developed his theory of predestination during his conflict with the Pelagians. It was, he argued, God's election that predestinated some human beings to eternal salvation and others to eternal damnation. Only those who God elected to salvation would receive divine grace, which, in turn, made it possible to fight and overcome inherited sin. These strong trajectories in Augustine's anti-Pelagian theology made a huge impact on his concept of human being, including the question of human freedom and free will, because they imply that human beings are—in themselves—unfree. Only by grace can a human being become free, i.e. if God elects them. In the following section, I will analyze some of Augustine's important anti-Pelagian writings to see how he presents these ideas in concrete terms.[15]

6.1. Inherited sin

In his important treatise entitled *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* (418), Augustine rejects the theologies of Pelagius and one of his most important followers, Caelestius, who seems to have held more radical views on sin, freedom, and divine grace, than Pelagius himself. Caelestius had been summoned to a council in Carthage, held on 1 May 418, where he was asked to defend his theology. In Augustine's treatise, he refers to the proceedings of this council when he describes Caelestius' points of view. In *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* 2.2 Augustine references Caelestius' view in the following way:

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15 J. M. Rist, *Augustine on Free Will and Predestination*, in: JTS 20 (1969), 420–447 provides a very fine overview of this complex of ideas.

Caelestius, indeed, maintained this erroneous doctrine with less restraint. To such an extent did he push his freedom as actually to refuse, when on trial before the bishops at Carthage, to condemn those who say that Adam's sin injured only Adam himself, and not the human race; and that infants at their birth are in the same state that Adam was in before his transgression. In the written statement, too, which he presented to the most blessed Pope Zosimus at Rome, he declared with special plainness that original sin binds no single infant.[16]

Caelestius thus rejects the idea that Adam's sinfulness is transmitted to all human beings conceived and born after Adam. There is, according to Caelestius, no original sinfulness transmitted from Adam to all subsequent human beings. Infants are therefore not born into sin. They are, on the contrary, in the same situation as Adam before his transgression (cf. *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* 2.12). Augustine goes on to claim that Pelagius shares Caelestius' view:

> Everything good, and everything evil, on account of which we are either laudable or blameworthy, is not born with us but done by us: for we are born not fully developed but with a capacity for either conduct; and we are procreated as without virtue, so also without vice; and previous to the action of our own proper will, that alone is in man which God has formed.[17]

This short quotation, claimed by Augustine to be from a book on free will produced by Pelagius himself and sent to Rome to prove his orthodoxy, contains all the main points of the controversy between Pelagius and Augustine. The sinfulness and praiseworthiness of humans are not, according to Pelagius, innate, but a result of what individual human beings do. At the time of their birth, humans obtain a neutral condition. They can actualize both good and evil because their created condition is open to both, having been endowed with the freedom of will. All that is innate in newborn human beings comes from God, not Adam. Augustine holds exactly the opposite position on these

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16 Aug., Grat. Chr. 2.2: *Et Caelestius quidem in hoc exstitit errore liberior usque adeo, ut neque in episcopali iudicio apud Carthaginem damnare uoluerit eos qui dicunt 'quod peccatum Adae ipsum solum laeserit et non genus humanum et quod infants qui nascuntur in eo statu sint, in quo Adam fuit ante praeuaricationem'. Et in urbe Roma in libello suo, quem beatissimo papae Zosimo dedit, id asseuerauit expressius, 'quod paruulorum neminem obstringat originale pecccatum'; de gestis enim ecclesiasticis Carthaginensibus haec eius uerba descripsimus.* (CSEL 42). English translation from P. Schaff (ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series vol. V, Saint Augustin's Anti-Pelagian Works*, Michigan 1997, 237.

17 Aug., Grat. Chr. 2.14: *'Omne', inquit, 'bonum ac malum, quo uel laudabiles uel uituperabiles sumus, non nobiscum oritur, sed agitur a nobis; capaces enim utriusque rei, non pleni nascimur et ut sine uirtute ita et sine uitio procreamur atque ante actionem propriae uoluntatis id solum in honime est, quod deus condidit'.* (CSEL 42). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 241.

matters: sinfulness is an innate condition inherited from Adam. When they are born, human beings do not, for Augustine, enjoy a neutral condition and a God-given free will; nor are they empowered to choose between good and evil. On the contrary, human beings are sinful and corrupted at birth because they have inherited Adam's sinfulness. Sinfulness is not, according to Augustine, a consequence of individual humans misusing their God-given free will to enact evil. It is an inherited condition transmitted to them from Adam via sexual procreation (cf. *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* 2.17,19). The same point is made very clear in Augustine's *Enchiridion de fide* 42–52.

In *On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin*, the arguments against Pelagius' and Caelestius' position(s) are connected with the question of why infants should be baptized, an activity which both parties seem to endorse. Pelagius'/Caelestius' answer is that God only allows the baptized into his Kingdom. Augustine responds in a different way: he claims that infants must be baptized because, in baptism, inherited sin is washed away by the grace of God in Christ (*On the Grace of Christ and on Original Sin* 2.5,17,19). This point is clarified in *Enchiridion* 42–52 where Augustine, by the help of Paul's Adam-Christ typology, underlines that the sin of Adam can only be remitted through Christ. The grace of Christ, he claims, is transferred to human beings in the sacrament of baptism. By this process, not only is inherited sin washed away (that sin which is passed down through Adam and his progeny), but also those sins committed by the baptized themselves when they delay their baptism until later in life. It is thus clear that Augustine, by way of his conflict with Pelagius and his followers (from 411 onwards) develops and strengthens his idea about inherited sin and the grace of God through Christ as the only way to overcome the sinful condition.

6.2. Predestination

In the very late treatise from 428/429, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, Augustine treats the question of predestination. His argument is that faith in God and Christ, by which human beings are saved, is a pure gift from God, given without any preconditions. Faith and salvation are thus a direct result of God's grace. The logical next question is why God would give this faith and grace to only a few. Augustine's answer is unequivocal: God elects and predestinates some human beings to salvation and others to damnation, in accordance with his sovereign will. Human beings have no influence over this process whatsoever.

The first step in Augustine's argument is to explain how he reached the conclusion that belief in God is a pure gift from God (*On the Predestination*

1.3–7). On this theme, Augustine had changed his mind. Previously, he argued that humans were responsible for taking the initiative:

> It was not thus that the pious and humble teacher thought – I speak of the most blessed Cyprian – when he said that we must boast in nothing, since nothing is our own. And in order to show this, he appealed to the apostle as a witness, where he said, 'for what have you that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?' (1 Corinthians 4:7). And it was chiefly by this testimony that I myself also was convinced when I was in a similar error, thinking that faith whereby we believe in God is not God's gift, but that it is in us from ourselves, and that by it we obtain the gifts of God, whereby we may live temperately and righteously and piously in this world.[18]

Thus, Augustine at one point believed that human beings should take the first step themselves in believing and receiving the grace of God. However, at the beginning of his episcopate (395), he arrived at a different conclusion: faith and grace are God's pure gifts. In fact, he expressed this insight for the first time in his letter to Simplicianus, which dates to the beginning of his episcopate (*On Predestination* 1.8). He recalls how he desired to argue that humans have freedom to choose whether or not to believe, but could not harmonize this position with what he found written by Paul in 1 Cor. 4:7 (cf. the quotation above). Augustine was forced, by his own admission, to conclude that human beings had no freedom of choice in matters of faith:

> In the solution of this question I labored indeed on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God's grace overcame, and I could only reach that point where the apostle is perceived to have said with the most evident truth, 'For who makes you to differ? And what have you that you have not received? Now, if you have received it, why do you glory as if you received it not?' (1 Corinthians 4:7) [19]

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18 Aug., Praed. 1.3,7: *Non sic pius atque humilis doctor ille sapiebat: Cyprianum beatissimum loquor, qui dixit, «In nullo gloriandum, quando nostrum nihil sit» (Ad Quirinum, lib. 3, cap. 4). Quod ut ostenderet, adhibuit Apostolum testem dicentem, Quid autem habes quod non accepisti? Si autem et accepisti, quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis (I Cor. IV, 7)? Quo praecipue testimonio etiam ipse convictus sum, cum similiter errarem, putans fidem qua in Deum credimus, non esse donum Dei, sed a nobis esse in nobis, et per illam nos impetrari Dei dona quibus temperanter et juste et pie vivamus in hoc saeculo.* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 500.

19 Aug., Praed. 1.4,8: *In cujus quaestionis solutione laboratum est quidem pro libro arbitrio voluntatis humanae; sed vicit Dei gratia: nec nisi ad illud potuit perveniri, ut liquidissima veritate dixisse intelligatur Apostolus, Quis enim te discernit? Quid autem habes quod non accepisti? Si autem accepisti, quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis (I Cor. IV, 7)?* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 502. Cf. the quote above from Aug., Retract. 2.27.

According to Augustine's reading, Paul's aim was to humble human beings for the sake of exalting God (cf. *On Predestination* 1.9). In 1 Cor. 4:7, Paul asks, "who makes thee to differ?" From the context presented in the letter itself, it seems as if Paul means to argue that there are no real differences between the Corinthians. Augustine takes Paul's question in another direction; he thinks that Paul is asking a question about who creates the differences between the Corinthian Christians and humans in general. His answer is God. The *capacity* to love and have faith is given by nature, but the power to actuate love and faith is given by the grace of God alone. From here, he moves on to argue that God creates differences between humans by giving faith and grace to some but not others (*On Predestination* 1.10).

Having established this point, Augustine arrives at the theme of election and predestination. God elects certain people by preparing their will to believe and receive grace. This is an expression of his mercy. Others are not elected. They will therefore not believe, nor receive the grace of God. This is an expression of his just judgment. Augustine expresses it in the following way:

> Many hear the word of truth; but some believe, while others contradict. Therefore, the former will to believe; the latter do not will. Who does not know this? Who can deny this? But since in some, the will is prepared by the Lord, in others it is not prepared, we must assuredly be able to distinguish what comes from God's mercy and what from His judgment.[20]

And:

> Here is mercy and judgment – mercy towards the election, which has obtained the righteousness of God, but judgment to the rest, which have been blinded. And yet the former, because they willed, believed; the latter, because they did not will, believed not. Therefore, mercy and judgment were manifested in the very wills themselves. Certainly, such an election is of grace, not at all of merits.[21]

Judging by these words it would seem as though Augustine, in the evening of his life, has returned to the conviction that human beings possess a free

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20 Aug., Praed. 1.6,11: *«Multi audiunt verbum veritatis: sed alii credunt, alii contradicunt. Volunt ergo isti credere, nolunt autem illi.» Quis hoc ignoret? quis hoc neget? Sed cum aliis praeparetur, aliis non praeparetur voluntas a Domino; discernendum est utique quid veniat de misericordia ejus, quid de judicio.* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 503.

21 Aug., Praed. 1.6,11: *Ecce misericordia et judicium: misericordia in electionem quae consecuta est justitiam Dei; judicium vero in caeteros qui excaecati sunt: et tamen illi quia voluerunt, crediderunt; illi quia noluerunt, non crediderunt. Misericordia igitur et judicium in ipsis voluntatibus facta sunt. Electio quippe ista gratiae est, non utique meritorum.* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 503–504. Cf. also 1.8,14.

choice of the will—the freedom to choose for, or against, belief. This is true, but only with the very important caveat that God, by his grace in Christ, prepares the human will for one of these two choices. Thus, humans do not decide by themselves whether they will or will not believe. Their will is managed/prepared by the grace of God. According to Augustine, the reason why some are predestined to receive God's grace and salvation is hidden from human understanding (cf. *On Predestination* 1.11,14). It is not even proper for humans to question why some are elected and called to belief, while others are not. All men and women are caught up in sin, which they have inherited both from Adam and their own parents. For this reason, God would be acting justly even if he did not elect any to belief and its attendant salvation. However, he does elect and predestinate some humans to salvation. This shows that he is not only just, but also merciful. Augustine's ideas on this are summed up in *On Predestination* 1.8,16:

> Faith, then, as well in its beginning as in its completion, is God's gift; and let no one have any doubt whatever, unless he desires to resist the plainest sacred writings, that this gift is given to some, while to some it is not given. But why it is not given to all, ought not to disturb the believer, who believes that from one, all have gone into a condemnation, which undoubtedly is most righteous; so that even if none were delivered therefrom, there would be no just cause for finding fault with God. Whence it is plain that it is a great grace for many to be delivered, and to acknowledge in those that are not delivered what would be due to themselves; so that he that glories may glory not in his own merits, which he sees to be equaled in those that are condemned, but in the Lord. But why He delivers one rather than another – 'His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out' (Rom. 11:33). For it is better in this case for us to hear or to say, 'O man, who are you that repliest against God?' (Rom. 9:20) than to dare to speak as if we could know what He has chosen to be kept secret. Since, moreover, He could not will anything unrighteous. [22]

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[22] Aug., Praed. 1.8,16: *Fides igitur, et inchoata, et perfecta, donum Dei est: et hoc donum quibusdam dari, quibusdam non dari, omino non dubitet, qui non vult manifestissimis sacris Litteris repugnare. Cur autem non omnibus detur, fidelem movere non debet, qui credit ex uno omnes isse in condemnationem, sine dubitatione justissimam: ita ut nulla Dei esset justa reprehensio, etiamsi nullus inde liberaretur. Unde constat magnam esse gratiam, quod plurimi liberantur, et quid sibi deberetur, in eis qui non liberantur agnoscunt: ut qui gloriatur, non in suis meritis, quae paria videt esse damnatis, sed in Domino glorietur. Cur autem istum potius quam illum liberet, inscrutabilia sunt judicia ejus et investigabiles viae ejus (Rom. XI, 33). Melius enim et hic audimus aut dicimus, O homo, tu quis es qui respondeas Deo (Rom. IX, 20)? quam dicere audemus, quasi noverimus, quod occultum esse voluit, qui tamen aliquid injustum velle non potuit.* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 506.

The result of being elected and receiving the grace of God is the attainment of holiness. It is important for Augustine to clarify that human beings are not elected by God to receive grace *because* they believe or *because* they live holy lives. It is the other way around: those who are elected and receive God's grace will become believers; they will be able to live holy lives *because* they have received God's grace by election (*On Predestination* 1.34–37).

6.3. Human freedom and free will

It would be logical to conclude that the more Augustine develops his ideas about inherited sin and predestination, the less space he leaves for any ideas about human freedom and free will. This indeed seems to be the case in several of Augustine's works from the anti-Pelagian period, and it is obvious that this was how the Pelagians understood his position. However, in *On Grace and Free Will* from 426–427 Augustine forcefully defends the view that neither inherited sin nor God's grace exclude the human possibility of choosing between good and evil. Augustine points to a multitude of Biblical passages where prophets or apostles express divine prescriptions and proscriptions:

> Now, wherever it is said, 'Do not do this,' and 'Do not do that,' and wherever there is any requirement in the divine admonitions for the work of the will to do anything, or to refrain from doing anything, there is at once a sufficient proof of free will. No man, therefore, when he sins, can in his heart blame God for it, but every man must impute the fault to himself.[23]

Such precepts would be worthless if human beings were unable to follow them. If human beings could not follow such precepts, it would also eliminate their responsibility for breaking them. How can Augustine maintain his stance that all humanity is infected with the sin of Adam, and to that extent unfree, while—at the same time—holding that we possess the freedom to choose to follow God's precepts and do good? This is possible because of the grace given by God. God's grace heals sinful human beings, enabling them to follow his commandments (*On Grace and Free Will* 1.7). When God's grace acts upon sinners, both wills (God's and the sinner's) work together against the sin, thus fulfilling the divine precepts: "And thus,

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23 Aug., Grat. 1.2,4: *Nempe ubi dicitur, Noli hoc, et noli illud, et ubi ad aliquid faciendum vel non faciendum in divinis monitis opus voluntatis exigitur, satis liberum demonstratur arbitrium. Nemo ergo Deum causetur in corde suo, sed sibi imputet quisque, cum peccat.* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 445. Cf. also ch. 8.

neither was it the grace of God alone, nor was it he himself alone, but it was the grace of God with him."[24]

It is important for Augustine to avoid the mistaken view that God bestows grace upon humans according to their own merits. This is what the Pelagians claim. If it were so, however, grace would no longer be grace (cf. *On Grace and Free Will* 1.10–14). God's grace is a pure gift, which Christians nevertheless must pray for (*On Grace and Free Will* 1.9). So, even if a Christian life, according to the laws of God, is a result of cooperation between God's grace and the human will, the gift of grace comes first and provides/reactivates the freedom of the will. Everything thus rests on grace, not on human merit. Even so, the cooperative element helps explain why the Bible often says that salvation and eternal life are the result of good works. This is true, but the good works are only possible through God's preceding grace (*On Grace and Free Will* 1.19–20).

According to Augustine, the Pelagians claim that human beings receive God's grace not through Christ alone, but also through human nature and divine law (*On Grace and Free Will* 1.23–25). Augustine rejects this:

> Well, but if the law is not grace, seeing that in order that the law itself may be kept, it is not the law but only grace, which can give help, will not nature at any rate be grace? For this, too, the Pelagians have been bold enough to aver, that grace is the nature in which we were created, so as to possess a rational mind, by which we are enabled to understand – formed as we are in the image of God, so as to have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creeps upon the earth. This, however, is not the grace which the apostle commends to us through the faith of Jesus Christ. For it is certain that we possess this nature in common with ungodly men and unbelievers; whereas the grace which comes through the faith of Jesus Christ belongs only to them to whom the faith itself appertains. 'For all men have not faith' (2 Thess. 3:2)[25]

Concerning the grace given by God through Jesus Christ, the Pelagians claim that it only provides for the remission of past sins (*On Grace and Free Will*

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24 Aug., Grat. 1.5,12: *Ac per hoc nec gratia Dei sola, nec ipse solus, sed gratia Dei cum illo*. (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 449.

25 Aug., Grat. 1.13,25: *Si autem lex non est gratia, quia ut ipsa lex fiat, non potest lex adjuvare, sed gratia; numquid natura erit gratia? Nam et hoc Pelagiani ausi sunt dicere, gratiam esse naturam, in qua sic creati sumus, ut habeamus mentem rationalem, qua intelligere valeamus, facti ad imaginem Dei, ut dominemur piscibus maris, et volucribus coeli, et omnibus pecoribus quae repunt super terram. Sed non haec est gratia, quam commendat Apostolus per fidem Jesu Christi. Hanc enim naturam etiam cum impiis et infidelibus certum est nobis esse communem: gratia vero per fidem Jesu Christi eorum tantummodo est, quorum est ipsa fides. Non enim omnium est fides (II Thess. III, 2)*. (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 454.*

1.26). Having received by grace the forgiveness of these sins, humans are able—by nature and obedience to the law—to avoid sin and obtain goodness. Again, this perspective is rejected by Augustine. The grace given by Christ not only heals past transgressions, but also empowers us to avoid future sins and obtain future goodness. Grace is involved every step of the way. After the fall of Adam, human beings will never, in this life, be able to live according to God's will without the endowment of his grace:

> For it is certain that we keep the commandments if we will; but because the will is prepared by the Lord, we must ask of Him for such a force of will as suffices to make us act by the willing. It is certain that it is we that *will* when we will, but it is He who makes us will what is good, of whom it is said (as he has just now expressed it), 'The will is prepared by the Lord' (Proverbs 8:35)[26]

According to Augustine, human beings are captured and imprisoned by the sin they inherit from their ancestors—beginning with Adam—and by God's predetermination of each and every human destiny. This has left Western theological tradition in a troublesome situation, whose effect is still felt today. Here, at the end of this article, I will try to explain the substance of these troubles:

7. The theological consequences of Augustine's changing understanding of human freedom and free will

Augustine's theology inaugurated something new in the Western theological tradition: the idea of total discontinuity between created and fallen humanity. The Fall, according to Augustine, effaces the positivity of the image of God and annihilates the freedom of the will. There is nothing intrinsically good and positive left in human nature following Adam's transgression. Augustine wants to underline that human beings cannot do anything good, such as would secure salvation, without God's grace through Christ. He paints the human condition as something extremely negative in order to draw our attention to the necessity of God's grace. The consequence of this, however, is that human beings are left with no influence whatsoever over the process of their own salvation. Only God's grace in Christ can reestablish fallen human beings.

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26 Aug., Grat. 1.16,32: *Certum est enim nos mandata servare, si volumus: sed quia praeparatur voluntas a Domino, ab illo petendum est ut tantum velimus, quantum sufficit ut volendo faciamus. Certum est nos velle, cum volumus: sed ille facit ut velimus bonum, de quo dictum est, quod paulo ante posui, praeparatur voluntas a Domino (Prov. VIII, sec. LXX).* (PL 44). English translation from Schaff, 1997, 457. Cf. ch. 27.

This dichotomy between created and fallen humanity, on the one hand, and the insistence on a portion saved by God's grace in Christ, on the other, combine to single out Christians as possessing a unique 'second nature,' established by grace. Christians are a new creation. This leaves the rest of humanity behind as corrupted and dehumanized. It paves the way for Christians to behave in different ways towards non-Christians (or Christians of a 'wrong' opinion or life style): the first would be to consider non-Christians as objects for mission. This is a classical Christian approach to non-Christians, which can be practiced out of genuine love of the non-Christian neighbor, but can also devolve into violent coercion as history has shown. However, Augustine's idea of predestination makes such an approach impossible, because God—from eternity—has predestined some to salvation and others to damnation. It does not therefore make sense to try and convert non-Christians to Christianity. That said, an Augustinian counterargument would likely be that those whom God has predestined to salvation will fulfill their calling through the process of conversion. Another approach would be to construe non-Christians as non-human, or severely corrupted. This raises major ethical problems, of which Christian history is also rife. It also makes it impossible to consider Christian anthropology as the basis of a universal anthropology, or the foundation of universal human rights. In this case, Christian anthropology, which is based on Augustine's ideas of inherited sin and predestination, excludes non-Christians.

Furthermore, as a consequence of the idea of inherited sin, human beings cannot properly be held accountable for their individual sins. We are sinful because our ancestor, Adam, transgressed God's law. This would seem to make us passive in relation to God and other creatures, including fellow humans. It can also contribute to the ethical torpor mentioned above, because one can, with some justification, claim that they are unable to seek the good due to their fallen state. This passivity created by the fall and inherited sin might have been counter-balanced by the idea of grace, if Augustine had claimed that God bestowed his freedom-reviving grace to all, but the passivity of human beings in the process of salvation is accentuated by his theory of irresistible divine predestination. This leaves those who are predestinated to salvation without influence on the process of their salvation, and it leaves those predestinated to damnation without influence on theirs. And it leaves all without any theological reason to do good towards their neighbor.

The combination of these ideas leads not only to a very negative and paralyzing conception of human nature, but also to a very one-sided, or one-dimensional, understanding of God's acts of salvation through Christ and the Holy Spirit. The focus of salvation is restricted to Christ as the mediator of God's grace, which, in turn, delivers humans from the inherited sin. Other images of Christ's salvific work from previous traditions are marginalized,

such as images of Christ as a model for imitation, Christ as a pedagogue, Christ as a teacher, Christ as a healer, etc.

Finally, Augustine's concept of God is also one-sided and problematic because the idea of predestination unto either salvation or damnation depicts God as being good and evil at the same time. The consequences of Augustine's theories on the concept of God are, however, not the theme of this presentation.

It should be clear by now that the new theological anthropology that Augustine developed as a concequence of his reading of Paul and of his conflict with the Pelagians led him and the theological tradition that followed in his footsteps into servere problems: human existence was conceived as depraved and unfree.

Eva Elisabeth Houth Vrangbæk

The Fall of the Will: An Investigation of the Will of Man Before and After the Fall in De civitate Dei

Abstract: This paper examines Augustine's account of the will of man before and after the Fall in *De civitate Dei*. The aim is to illuminate Augustine's perspective on the human will and, more specifically, the coexistence of God's omnipotent will and the conditional will of man. The investigation will also explore how Augustine describes the pagan worldview, especially the pagan understanding of time, as a form of captivity, and how he overturns Cicero's idea of conflict between an all-knowing God and a self-willed humanity. It is concluded that, according to Augustine, the only reason it is possible to talk about 'free will' at all is due to God's omnipotence and absolute freedom. For Augustine, God is the only viable starting point. Only if God is completely free to create something new, it is possible for him to create a free humanity. The human being is created with a free will only insofar as it is created in the image of God. Though free before the Fall, when the human being chose to dissent from God its will became enslaved and its freedom was lost. True freedom of the will—the will that cannot sin—will be given in the world beyond: in the city of God.

1. Introduction

> I do not find any better name for the Lord's 'heaven of heaven' than your House. There your delight is contemplated without any failure or wandering away to something else. The pure heart enjoys absolute concord and unity in the unshakeable peace of holy spirits, the citizens of your city in the heavens above the visible heavens.[1]

In this quote from *Confessiones*, Augustine praises the heavens, which he also describes as God's 'house' and 'city.' But, we should note, this heaven is not, for Augustine, just a blessed location; it is a living community of holy angels and redeemed human beings. In the *Confessiones*, this theme is barely mentioned, but in *De civitate Dei*, despite multiple digressions and detours,

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1   Aug., Conf. 12.11: *Nec inuenio, quid libentius appellandum existimem caelum caeli domino quam domum tuam contemplantem delectationem tuam sine ullo defectu egrediendi in aliud, mentem puram concordissime unam stabilimento pacis sanctorum spirituum, ciuium ciuitatis tuae in caelestibus super ista caelestia.* (CSEL 33, 318). English translation is from H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine: Confessions. A New Translation by Henry Chadwick*, Oxford 1992.

it determines the primary structure of the book. In *De civitate Dei* Augustine forges a close link between the idea of *two cities* and the notion of *two wills*. The citizens who dwell in the *civitas Dei* possess a single, unified will directed towards God, whereas the several wills of the citizens of the *civitas terrena* are directed towards themselves.

The structuring theme of the two cities in *De civitate Dei* has led some to conclude that Augustine grafted his Manichaean past into his later Christian thinking. It is likely that the provenance of describing the heavenly kingdom and the community of the lost souls as two cities or communities does indeed derive from the dualism of Manichaean thinking, as Van Oort has argued.[2] But here it is crucial to keep in mind that, in Augustine's thinking, the dualism between the heavenly and the earthly city is what we might call superficial, or earthly. The dualism between the two communities is not a cosmic dualism. In Augustine's thinking, there is no such thing as two equal and opposite ontological principles, as the Manichaeans taught, because, strictly speaking, evil does not exist. There is, for Augustine, only the good God and his good creation. Ultimately, there is no dualism in what *exists*, but only in the opposing choices of rational creatures. Dualism does not lie in what exists, for God created everything good, but rather in the *will* ('*voluntas*') of his creation. The choice that belongs to creatures, both angels and human beings, is the choice between the city of God, which will remain eternally, and the earthly city, which will be destroyed on the Final Day.[3]

In my analysis of the will, I will make use of three central and mutually dependent concepts, which are nevertheless distinct from one another: will, choice, and freedom ('*voluntas*', '*arbitrio*', '*libertas*'). In secondary literature, and certain translations, these are often treated almost interchangeably. But in Augustine's thinking, especially concerning *De civitate Dei*, it is important to keep an eye on the different aspects these words signify. For Augustine, freedom of will is not synonymous with power of will, i.e. having the power to enact what the will wants. Freedom is not the same as having something to choose between, i.e. having a choice. To have a choice is not the same as having a free will. And again, freedom does not necessarily mean the freedom to do evil.

The purpose of this paper is to investigate Augustine's view on the condition of the will before and after the Fall in *De civitate Dei*. The main

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2   Most prominently J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon - a study into Augustine's City of God and the sources of his doctrine of the two cities*, Leiden 1991; See also J. van Oort, *Civitas dei-terrena civitas: the concept of the two antithetical cities and its sources*, in: C. Horn, *Augustinus De civitate Dei,* Berlin 1997.

3   B. D. Larsen, *Indledning*, in: B. D. Larsen, *Om Guds Stad af Augustin*, Aarhus 2002, 33.

question I am asking is this: how does Augustine understand the connection between the human and the omnipotent divine will? In the first half of the paper, I will analyse Augustine's view on the condition of the will before and after the Fall. In the second half, I will discuss Augustine's attempt to harmonize the relations between the human will, the possibility of choice, the will of God, and divine omniscience. I will also examine his account of the shortcomings of freedom in the heathen world view.

2. Deed and Will

According to Augustine, Genesis 3, where the first humans offend God by eating the forbidden fruit, records the first evil deed of humankind. The story contains several circumstances and actors, which he proceeds to interpret and expound upon. He emphasizes, first and foremost, the devil—the first of the angels—who in pride turned away from God. Generally, the angels play an important role for Augustine. He sees them as having their own creation and Fall, and, like human beings, counts them among God's rational creatures, albeit higher in rank. The devil, Augustine claims, lapsed before the first human beings were placed in Paradise, and the foundation to the earthly city was subsequently laid by him and his legions. In his fallen state the devil was, and is, filled with envy towards humankind.[4] In his malice, he took the form of a snake, and used this form as a tool to seduce the first human couple. The devil, in the snake's slough, played on the credulity of the woman and persuaded her to eat of the fruit.[5] For Adam it was different. He did not believe the woman because of her credulity, but "complied with her wishes because of the closeness of the bond between them."[6] Through two different paths, both became "captured by sin and entangled in the snares of the devil"[7]

When dealing with Augustine's interpretations of such accounts, it is important to keep in mind that he does not regard biblical narratives as myths or protohistory. While he affirms their spiritual content, Augustine also maintains that all biblical stories are rooted in history. This, of course, is also the case with the story of the Fall from paradise: "No one, then,

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4   Aug., Ciu. 14.11 (CCSL 47–48, 418).

5   Aug., Ciu. 14.11.

6   Aug., Ciu. 14.11: *sed sociali necessitudine paruisse* (CCSL 47–48, 433). English translation from R. W. Dyson (trans.), *The City of God against the Pagans*, Cambridge 1998; see also W. S. Babcock, *The Human and the Angelic Fall: Will and Moral Agency in Augustine's City of God*, in: J. McWilliam (ed.), *Augustine from Rhetor to Theologian*, Waterloo 1992, 133–149 (133).

7   Aug., Ciu. 14.11: *peccando tamen ambo sunt capti et diaboli laqueis implicati.* (CCSL 47–48, 433). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

forbids us to understand Paradise according to these, and perhaps other, more appropriate, allegorical interpretations, while also believing in the truth of that story as presented to us in a most faithful narrative of events."[8]

For Augustine, Adam and Eve are our ancestors in a strict biological sense, which also becomes important to his notion of inherited sin. They physically walked around the garden of Eden, ate, drank etc. For this reason, it would be completely natural for Augustine to explain the transgression of the first human couple with a plausible pattern of human psychological behaviour.[9] Nevertheless, he does not do so. For Augustine, these social patterns cannot be the reason for the human Fall. Rather, the evil deed only serves to reveal that the Fall had already happened. The scenario described in Genesis is only the part of the Fall that Augustine designates the *open fall*, the evident disobedience.[10] A good tree does not bear evil fruits. The humans must have already been corrupted, otherwise the woman would not have trusted the serpent's word over God's, and Adam would not have loved the company of his wife more than God. It was human will as such that was first corrupted: "For they would not have arrived at the evil act had an evil will not preceded it."[11] The Fall is not constituted by the transgression against God, but by the free choice of the will to turn away from him.[12]

3. The Fall of the Will

Augustine emphasizes in his thinking the absolute distinction between the creator, who is eternal and transcendent, and the creation, which is created and cannot exist independently of its creator.[13] In Augustine's world view, evil does not 'exist.' Everything that is, is created by God and therefore good. He adopts the Neoplatonic notion of evil as a kind of non-being, or privation. God is good and created everything good, but he did not create out of his own substance. Rather, he created it out of nothing. Therefore, contrary to God, creation is changeable and corruptible.[14] The creation can

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8 Aug., Ciu. 13.21: *Haec et si qua alia commodius dici possunt de intellegendo spiritaliter paradiso nemine prohibente dicantur, dum tamen et illius historiae ueritas fidelissima rerum gestarum narratione commendata credatur.* (CCSL 47–48, 404). English translation from Dyson, 1998. See also Ciu. 17,3 and Larsen, 2002, 81.

9 Babcock, 1992, 133–134 and Aug., Ciu. 14.12.

10 Aug., Ciu. 14.13: *malum praecessit in abdito, ut sequeretur hoc malum quod perpetratum est in aperto*. (CCSL 47–48, 435).

11 Aug., Ciu. 14.13: *Non enim ad malum opus perueniretur, nisi praecessisset uoluntas mala*. (CCSL 47–48, 434). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

12 Aug., Ciu. 14.13.

13 Larsen 2002, 75; Aug., Ciu. 11.26.

14 Aug., Ciu. 11.26. See also Aug., Ciu. 11.22 and Larsen, 2002, 82.

only truly exist in relation to God, who is its creator and maintainer: "To that Nature which supremely is, therefore, and by Whom all else that is was made, no nature is contrary save that which is not; for that which is contrary to what is, is not-being. And so there is no being contrary to God, the Supreme Being, and the Author of all beings of whatever kind."[15]

The tension is between the God who *is* and that which *is not*. In the lapse from God, the will turned toward itself, i.e. towards non-being, since nothing exists without God.[16] Augustine often writes in dualistic terms, as e.g. God versus nothingness, but his underlying system of thought is built upon the Platonic idea of a hierarchy of being. Therefore, he can speak of "that Nature which supremely is," as in the quote above. God is, of course, the highest level of being—that which *is* in the highest sense—while the creation of God is lower on *the great chain of being*. But, contrary to Neoplatonism, Augustine maintains the absolute distinction between the highest and all lower levels, between the creator and the created.

According to Augustine, humans are created as a compound between soul and body, whereas God is simple in his essence.[17] In the realm of creation, human beings are distinguished by their relation to God.[18] They were created in the image of God and, as such, enjoy a special relation to divine love, reflecting the love found in the triune God.[19] Human beings were not designed as weak-willed beings, vulnerable to corruption by external factors like the devil in the serpent's slough. Rather, human beings were created as rational agents, equipped with a will that, at the dawn of creation, was turned freely towards God in a bond of love. Humans were created in and for this condition, but lacked the certainty of salvation that had been granted to the faithful angels.[20] Death was a consequence of the Fall. Although it is contrary to human nature to die, human beings were not created immortal.[21] In paradise it was in fact possible for human beings to avoid dying (*posse*

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15 Aug., Ciu. 12.2: *ac per hoc ei naturae, quae summe est, qua faciente sunt quaecumque sunt, contraria natura non est, nisi quae non est. Ei quippe, quod est, non esse contrarium est. Et propterea Deo, id est summae essentiae et auctori omnium qualiumcumque essentiarum, essentia nulla contraria est.* (CCSL 47–48, 357). English translation from Dyson, 1998. See also G. R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil*, Cambridge 1982, 91–111.

16 Aug., Ciu. 14.13.

17 See Aug., Ciu. 11.10.

18 Aug., Ciu. 12.24.

19 Aug., Ciu. 11.28: *Quoniam igitur homines sumus ad nostri creatoris imaginem creati, cuius est uera aeternitas, aeterna ueritas, aeterna et uera caritas, estque ipse aeterna et uera et cara trinitas neque confusa neque separate.* (CCSL 47–48, 348).

20 Aug., Ciu. 11.12. See also Larsen, 2002, 77.

21 Cf. Aug., Ciu. 13.15; 11.27.

non mori)[22] but, after the Fall, humans could no longer do so (*non posse non mori*). However, at the end of times, it will no longer be possible to die (*non posse mori*).[23] Human beings chose to sin and turn away from God, and, for this reason, human beings were subjected to death and sank into a lower level of being than God had initially determined.

Augustine emphasizes that God created both humans and angels with a free will; he wanted his rational creatures to love him freely, not under compulsion. A host of angels fell when, in their pride, they broke the bond of divine love, loving themselves more than their Creator. Another host remained faithful and so obtained salvation. By using their wills to love themselves, and not God, Adam and Eve plunged themselves and all their ancestors into sin. When the freedom of the will was used for self-love rather than love of God, the will was disconnected from its source and lost its freedom:

> This betrayal occurs as an act of free will. For if the will had remained unshaken in its love of that higher and immutable Good by Which it bestowed upon it the light by which it can see and the fire by which it can love, it would not have turned aside from this Good to follow its own pleasure. Consequently, the will would not have been so darkened and chilled as to allow the woman to believe that the serpent had spoken truly, and the man both to place his wife's wish above God's command.[24]

For Augustine, this voluntary fall betrayed the order of nature. How was it possible for the will to become distorted, and thereby self-corruptive? Because, Augustine notes, humans were created out of nothing: "Moreover, the corruption of that tree came about contrary to nature, because it certainly could not have happened without a defect in the will, and such a defect is against nature. But only a nature created out of nothing could have been perverted by a defect."[25] But why, and how, did the will lapse to such a wild degree from its order of creation? As we have seen, it was not the serpent, who, in a proper sense of the word, corrupted the will of Eve. The serpent

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22 Larsen, 2002, 82.

23 Aug., Ciu. 13.24 and Larsen, 2002, 84.

24 Aug., Ciu. 14.13: *Spontaneus est autem iste defectus, quoniam, si uoluntas in amore superioris immutabilis boni, a quo illustrabatur ut uideret et accendebatur ut amaret, stabilis permaneret, non inde ad sibi placendum auerteretur et ex hoc tenebresceret et frigesceret, ut uel illa crederet uerum dixisse serpentem, uel ille Dei mandato uxoris praeponeret uoluntatem.* (CCSL 47–48, 434). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

25 Aug., Ciu. 14.13: *Vt autem esset arbor mala, contra naturam factum est, quia nisi uitio uoluntatis, quod contra naturam est, non utique fieret. Sed uitio deprauari nisi ex nihilo facta natura non posset.* (CCSL 47–48, 434). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

and the deed only unveiled her corruption.[26] For Augustine, the origin of the wicked will is pure and simple: pride, or *superbia*. As he says:

> Moreover, what but pride can have been the beginning of their evil will? – for 'pride is the beginning of sin'. And what is pride but an appetite for a perverse kind of elevation? For it is a perverse kind of elevation indeed to forsake the foundation upon which the mind should rest, and to become and remain, as it were, one's own foundation. This occurs when a man is too well-pleased with himself; and he is too well pleased with himself when he falls away from that immutable good with which he ought rather to have been pleased than with himself.[27]

This quote provides us with valuable insight into more than one side of Augustine's thinking, but, we should ask, does it give a satisfactory answer to *why* the wicked will is? For what, then, is the source of pride? Augustine, at this juncture, declares that evil has no efficient cause, *causa efficiens*:

> Let no one, then, seek an efficient cause of an evil will. For its cause is not efficient, but deficient, because the evil will itself is not an effect of something, but a defect. For to defect from that which supremely is, to that which has a less perfect degree of being: this is what it is to begin to have an evil will. Now to seek the causes of these defections, which are, as I have said, not efficient causes, but deficient, is like wishing to see darkness or hear silence.[28]

Augustine here upholds the consequences of his view of evil as privation. As several critics have argued, this is, in a way, no explanation at all, but, we should note, this is exactly Augustine's point. Indeed, it is perhaps the only possible way to understand Augustine on this particular matter. Evil never entered the world. The darkness is not really 'there,' there is only more or less light. Humans are corruptible and, by misusing their free will, turned away from the source of all light. Evil only exists where the good is absent. But everything is created by God and thus good. Therefore, evil can only

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26 Aug., Ciu. 14.13.

27 Aug., Ciu. 14.13: *Porro malae uoluntatis initium quae potuit esse nisi superbia? Initium enim omnis peccati superbia est. Quid est autem superbia nisi peruersae celsitudinis appetitus? Peruersa enim est celsitudo deserto eo, cui debet animus inhaerere, principio sibi quodam modo fieri atque esse principium. Hoc fit, cum sibi nims placet. Sibi uero ita placet, cum ab illo bono inmutabili deficit, quod ei magis placere debuit quam ipse sibi.* (CCSL 47–48, 434). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

28 Aug., Ciu. 12.7: *Nemo igitur quaerat efficientem causam malae uoluntatis; non enim est efficiens sed deficiens, quia nec illa effectio sed defectio. Deficere namque ab eo, quod summe est, ad id, quod minus est, hoc est incipere habere uoluntatem malam. Causas porro defectionum istarum, cum efficientes non sint, ut dixi, sed deficientes, uelle invenire tale est, ac si quisquam uelit uidere tenebras uel audire silentium.* (CCSL 47–48, 362). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

arise if a creature in possession of rationality and free will decides, by itself, to turn away from God, henceforth becoming something lower, i.e. something with a lesser degree of being. All in all, it remains the case that evil cannot derive from God, cannot exist independently, and can therefore only be a deficiency that arose after the creation out of nothing. Evil cannot have an efficient cause.[29]

It is paramount for Augustine to emphasize that human beings are created with a free will; otherwise, evil in the world, including the Fall, could only be explained by compromising the goodness and omnipotence of God. Evil only entered the world with the corrupted will of creation, and the will of creation had to be free to choose either the good or the bad. If the will was not free, only God could be judged responsible for bringing evil into the world, an absurdity for Augustine's Platonic inspired thought. Human beings are responsible and rational creatures who, in pride, chose to break with God and lower themselves. But the problem for humans remains that it is God who is the ultimate source and goal of the free will. The breach with God can therefore only result in a loss of freedom: "The choice of the will, then, is truly free only when it is not the slave of vices and sins. God gave to the will such freedom, and, now that it has been lost through its own fault, it cannot be restored save by Him Who could bestow it."[30]

4. The Captivity of the Will

The condition after the Fall is, according to Augustine, completely different from the blessedness of paradise. In paradise it was possible for human beings to refrain from sin i.e. to maintain a right relation with God, with oneself, and with one's surroundings. This harmony of creation pointed towards the eternal salvation at which point the potential of death and sin will be extinguished. Unfortunately, human beings fell as a consequence of their own free decision, losing the possibility for salvation. In the wake of this decision, humanity lost its capacity for anything but sin, and death became inevitable. Humans turned away from their proper aim and origin,

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29 This topic is discussed widely in literature, see e.g. Babcock, 1992 (esp. 138–141); T. D. J. Chappell, *Aristotle and Augustine on Freedom – Two Theories of Freedom Voluntary Action and Akrasia*, New York 1995 (esp. 178–193); Evans, 1982; R.F. Brown, *The first evil will must be incomprehensible: A critique of Augustine*, in: Journal of the American Academy of Religion Vol. 46 (1978), 315–329.

30 Aug., Ciu. 14.11: *Arbitrium igitur uoluntatis tunc est uere liberum, cum uitiis peccatisque non seruit. Tale datum est a Deo; quod amissum proprio uitio, nisi a quo dari potuit, reddi non potest.* (CCSL 47–48, 432). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

God, who is the highest good, and so lost the freedom of the will (since this freedom comes from God).[31]

The nature of the first human couple suffered a fatal injury after the fall of the will. Augustine maintains that their nature was degraded into a lower form. Because human beings can only convey their own nature to their offspring, this transformation affected the whole human race:

> In the first man, therefore, there existed the whole human race which was to pass through the woman into her progeny when that conjugal pair received the divine sentence of its own damnation. And what man became, not when he was created, but when he sinned and was punished: this he propagated, so far as the origin of sin and death are concerned.[32]

All of humanity inherited this corrupted nature, and now lack the freedom to choose God. This is the 'original sin' which is passed on from generation to generation: "And what he himself had become as a result of his fault and punishment – that is, subject to sin and death – he reproduced in his offspring."[33] All human beings are henceforth caught in the web of evil will without any possibility of returning to God. The freedom they possessed in paradise, with which they were able to choose, is no more. The whole of humankind is bound in sin and death.

According to Augustine, both humans and angels were created by God with rationality and free will. For each species, the Fall was a result of the free will turning away from God. But angels are crucially different from human beings, because, he notes, they were created 'in one day.' Their creation, their choice of bliss or punishment, is like one day, framing their reality once and for all. Both angels and human beings received in their creation a preliminary bliss, the difference being that the angelic choice was definitive: immediately after their choice the angels were granted either eternal salvation or eternal punishment, depending on the direction of this choice.[34] To rephrase, the angels were/are created into eternity, so it makes no sense to number days or to count time as such. It is not possible to change one's opinion in eternity, since 'now', 'past,' and 'future' coexist in the same

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31 Aug., Ciu. 14.1.

32 Aug., Ciu 13.3: *In primo igitur homine per feminam in progeniem transiturum uniuersum genus humanum fuit, quando illa coniugum copula divinam sententiam suae damnationis excepit; et quod homo factus est, non cum crearetur, sed cum peccaret et puniretur, hoc genuit, quantum quidem attinet ad peccati et mortis originem.* (CCSL 47–48, 387). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

33 Aug., Ciu. 13.3: *atque ita id, quod uitio poenaque factus est, id est obnoxios peccato mortique generaret.* (CCSL 47–48, 387). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

34 Aug., Ciu. 11.13 and Larsen, 2002, 77.

endless moment. Here, there is no time of which to speak. In the case of humans, it is different. Human choice is not definitive. Time was created simultaneously with the world and so human beings can be said to have been created in time. Therefore, it is possible for God to initiate a salvation history on behalf of human beings, one which develops over time. The place of human beings in the heavenly or the earthly city is not decided until the Final Day, i.e. the end of time.

The total loss of freedom that humans experienced after the Fall is, for Augustine, perfectly just, but, because of his love for human beings, God decided to devise a history of salvation. Humans have not yet lapsed into eternal perdition, and, unlike the angels, history provides a possibility for humans to repair their relationship with God. But since the free will is lost, this can only happen with God's help.

5. Man and Woman in Paradise

Augustine believes that Adam and Eve lived a normal physical life in the Garden, including eating, drinking, and all activities that belong to human nature.[35] In Paradise, a harmony prevailed between the humans and their surroundings, but, even more importantly, they possessed an interior harmony between will and body. In the paradisal state of harmony, the image of God, which for Augustine lies in the soul, communicated itself to the body, which, in turn, obeyed the will.[36] This blissful harmony endured for as long as the human will was directed toward the highest good.

As long as the will was directed toward the good, so too were human actions good.[37] Therefore, Augustine can, contrary to many contemporary Christian thinkers, claim that, if they had not fallen, Adam and Eve would, as husband and wife, have had intercourse in paradise in order to procreate. The command of God to become manifold was issued before the fall, and the human couple were created as husband and wife. Augustine says: "If sin had not come into being, therefore, marriage, because worthy of the felicity of Paradise, would have produced children to be loved, but without the same of lust."[38] For that reason, we also see that Augustine, who lived in celibacy

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35 "Augustine refused to believe that Adam and Eve had fallen from an angelic into a physical state." from P. Brown, *The Body & Society - Men, Women & Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*, New York 2008, 405. cf. Aug., Ciu. 13.23.

36 Aug., Ciu. 14.23–24.

37 Aug., Ciu. 14.6.

38 Aug., Ciu. 14.23: *Et ideo illae nuptiae dignae felicitate paradisi, si peccatum non fuisset, et diligendam prolem gignerent et pudendam libidinem non haberent.* (CCSL 47–48, 445). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

after his conversion, opposed the ascetical currents of thinkers who looked down on marriage as a lower vocation.[39]

In paradise, matrimonial intercourse would manifest in the same manner as the fallen world, i.e. with genitals, which is, after all, why God created them. Augustine imagines that in paradise the genitals obeyed the will as much as any bodily appendage: "Why, then, with respect to the procreation of children, should we not believe that the sexual organs could have been as obedient to the will of mankind as the other members are, if there had been no lust, which arose in retribution for the sin of disobedience?"[40] After the fall, the harmony between the will and the body was damaged to such an extent that the movement of the genitals fell under the power of incontrollable desire.

According to the American scholar Peter Brown, Augustine is atypical concerning his ideas on Paradise compared to some of his important predecessors:

> Marriage, intercourse and Paradise were as incompatible, in their (red. Gregor of Nyssa, Ambrosius and Hieronymus) minds, as were Paradise and death. … This meant that sexuality, hence marriage and the creation of family, could only have followed the Fall of Adam and Eve. They were the result of a sad decline, by which Adam and Eve had lapsed from an "angelic" state into physicality, and so into death.[41]

Augustine does not deem sex itself a sinful act, but if the act is carried out by one whose will is not directed toward God and his commandments, it will, he thinks, invariably become a sinful and brutish phenomenon. Once human beings lost their God-given freedom by turning away from the creator, their wills began to toil slavishly for their desires. Such brutish and incontrollable desire is God's punishment, the due consequence, of a disobedient will. Augustine maintains that the will is mocked during each act of intercourse in the fallen world.[42] All conceptions take place under the influence of an incontrollable act, and, in this way, original sin is passed down from generation to generation.

Mary's conception is exempted from this general rule. Where Ambrose, according to Peter Brown regarded Mary's virginity as pivotal in "that

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39 Brown, 2008, 397.
40 Aug., Ciu. 14.23: *et non credimus ad opus generationis filiorum, si libido non fuisset, quae peccato inoboedientiae retributa est, oboedienter hominibus ad uoluntatis nutum similiter ut cetera potuisse illa membra seruire?* (CCSL 47–48, 445). English translation from Dyson, 1998.
41 Brown, 2008, 399.
42 Brown, 2008, 417.

her body had not been entered by a male penis, and that her womb had received no alien seed,"[43] for Augustine, on the contrary, the decisive was not the touching of the genitals as such, but the condition of Mary's will: "Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, Mary had felt not the slightest eddy of uncontrolled feeling at the moment when she conceived Christ. …. Mary's conception of Christ stood rather for an act of undivided obedience. It recaptured the ancient harmony of body and soul, in which the will was not the maimed thing that it so soon became."[44]

6. The Power of the Devil

All human beings exist under the shadow of the Fall. As such, they are automatically caught in original sin and can only be saved by the redeeming action of God. The writing where Augustine most clearly describes how this redeeming act takes place is perhaps his other comprehensive work, *De Trinitate,* part of which he wrote during the same timespan as *De civitate Dei.* According to Augustine's account in *De Trinitate XIII* the devil has a legal claim over humans, each of whom is bound to the sin of Adam, which, as we noted, is passed on from generation to generation via the irrational sexual desire present at conception. Human beings are caught in *vitiated carnal concupiscence*, but all who believe in Christ shall be born again spiritually by his immaculate grace (*"per ipsius immaculatam gratiam spiritalem regeneratos"*)[45] Augustine sums up this state of affairs as follows: "By the justice of God the whole human race was delivered into the power of the devil, the sin of the first man passing originally into all of both sexes, who were born through conjugal union, and the debt of our first parents binding all their posterity."[46]

   The salvation of human beings, then, must consist of a liberation from the power of the devil. Evil becomes here more concrete than a shadowy privation of the good, even if this notion is consistently upheld by Augustine. While it appears that he casts the devil as an independent actor, this is only true to a certain degree. Augustine does not see the devil as an equal and independent power, such as could pose a threat to God. The devil fell by

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43 Brown, 2008, 407.

44 Brown, 2008, 407.

45 Aug., Trin. 13.16 (CCSL 50, 412). English translation from G. B. Matthews (ed.), *On the Trinity: books 8–15*, Cambridge, 2002.

46 Aug., Trin. 13.12: *Quadam iustitia Dei in potestatem diaboli traditum est genus humanum, peccato primi hominis in omnes utriusque sexus commixtione nascentes originaliter transeunte et parentum primorum debito uniuersos posteros obligante.* (CCSL 50, 402). English translation from Matthews, 2002.

his own choice and thus became little more than an instrument of God. Augustine maintains that God, in his omnipotence, can turn evil into good. Death, for example, which was a divine punishment for human disobedience, is turned into something good through the holy death of the martyrs.[47] What the human being did was evil, but God is so omnipotent that even this evil only serves to accentuate his justice and power through the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. Such evil did not arise from God's will, but it can, according to Augustine, be turned into something good through divine omnipotence:

> For we are here clearly given to understand that there was no other cause of the world's creation than that good things should be made by a good God. If no one in this world had sinned, the world would have been adorned and filled with natures wholly good. Also, even though sin now exists, all things are not on that account full of sin; for by far the greater number of celestial beings are good, and preserve the proper order of their nature. And the sinful will, although it refused to preserve the order of its own nature, did not on that account escape the laws of the just God Who orders all things for good. For just as a picture is enhanced by the proper placing within it of dark colours, so, to those able to discern it, the beauty of the universe is enhanced, even by sinners, though, considered in themselves, theirs is a sorry deformity.[48]

Augustine thinks that liberation from the power of the devil could be accomplished in one of two ways: either by God's power, *potentia*, or by God's justice, *iustitia*. God could, in wielding his power, easily conquer the devil, but then the human sin would not manifest distinctly enough. Human beings imitate the devil, who loves power and hates justice, and, for this reason, the legitimate claim of the devil must be broken through justice.[49] Power as such is not negative in Augustine's thought, but he emphasizes good order, where justice comes first and power afterwards. The power of God is manifested in the resurrection of Christ. Christians are now weak and humble, as was the incarnate Christ, but on the Final Day they will receive the power of resurrection, just as Christ received it. God's justice is proven in the death of the

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47 Aug., Ciu. 13.4.
48 Aug., Ciu. 11.23: *nullam aliam causam faciendi mundi intellegi uoluit, nisi ut bona fierent a bono Deo. Vbi si nemo peccasset, tantummodo naturis bonis esset mundus ornatus et plenus; et quia peccatum est, non ideo cuncta sunt impleta peccatis, cum bonorum longe maior numerus in caelestibus suae naturae ordinem servet; nec mala uoluntas, quia naturae ordinem seruare noluit, ideo iusti Dei leges omnia bene ordinantis effugit; quoniam sicut pictura cum colore nigro loco suo posito, ita uniuersitas rerum, si quis possit intueri, etiam cum peccatoribus pulchra est, quamuis per se ipsos consideratos sua deformitas turpet.* (CCSL 47–48,342). English translation from Dyson, 1998.
49 Aug., Trin. 13.13.

sole human being who was not born *through conjugal union* and thus free of sin and undeserving of death. This righteous man is nevertheless killed by the devil, who therefore loses his legal claim over the Christian people: "So great a price did that blood have that he who slew Christ for a time by death that was not due should no longer detain anyone who has put on Christ in the eternal death that was due."[50]

Because Christ allowed himself to be born of a virgin, and because the conception occurred through spirit and faith rather than flesh and desire, he was able to avoid original sin. For this reason, humankind can be saved through him. As Augustine says: "For a man was born, I say, having no sin and not to have any sin at all, through whom those who were to be liberated from sin and who could not be born without sin would be born again."[51]

7. The Two natures of Christ

The specific details of Augustine's definition of the two natures of Christ are crucial to his soteriology, for it is exactly in the technical combination of these two natures, human and divine, in one person, that allows salvation through Christ. The incarnation of Christ is a counter-image of our salvation based on an interpretation of John 1,12–14: "For if the Son of God by nature became the son of man out of compassion for the sons of men – this is the meaning of 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us' men – how much more credible it is that the sons of man by nature become the sons of God by grace and dwell in God."[52]

Such counter-images play an important role throughout Augustine's Christology and soteriology. The act of divine salvation is the opposite of Adam's rebellion. Adam was proud, Christ was humble. Immortality is bestowed upon humans because Christ made himself mortal. Christ dwelled among humans so that humans could dwell in him, etc. Christ is the son of God by nature, *natura dei filius*, and becomes the son of man, *hominis filius*, out of compassion. He does this so humans can believe that, through him,

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50 Aug., Trin. 13.16: *Tanti ualuit sanguis ille, ut neminem Christo indutum in aeterna morte debita detinere debuerit, qui Christum morte indebita uel ad tempus occidit.* (CCSL 50, 410). English translation from Matthews, 2002.

51 Aug., Trin. 13.18: *Nascebatur, inquam, homo nullum habens, nullum habiturus omnino peccatum, per quem renascerentur liberandi a peccato, qui nasci non possent sine peccato.* (CCSL 50, 414). English translation from Matthews, 2002.

52 Aug., Trin. 13.9: *Si enim natura dei filius propter filios hominum misericordia factus est hominis filius (hoc est enim, uerbum caro factum est et habitauit in hominibus), quanto est credibilius natura filios hominis gratia dei filios dei fieri et habitare in deo.* (CCSL 50, 399). English translation from Matthews, 2002.

they too may become sons of God. Only by dwelling in God, as he dwelled among humans, it is possible to obtain immortality.

Augustine emphasizes an almost poetic justice in describing how the devil was conquered: "The conqueror of the first Adam, and the master of the human race, was conquered by the second Adam and lost the Christian race."[53] There is, however, a crucial difference between the first and the second Adam. *The first Adam*, who was conquered, was a human being, who wanted to be a God. *The second Adam*, who conquered, was both man and God.[54] It is by this combination of God and man that humans can regain their freedom.[55]

Besides salvation through, as it were, automatic justice, it is possible to trace a parallel current in *De trinitate*. This current operates by way of what we might call a 'subjective atonement' whereby Christ, in his absolute obedience unto death, functions as a role model for humans. The reward for consistent obedience to the divine will is seen in the resurrection. Pride deters humans from clinging to God, but this pride is cured by the humility of Christ in his incarnation and death. It reveals to human beings how far they have estranged themselves from God, and exposes their need for a mediator. This mediator is of course the God-man, Christ, who is fully God and fully man.[56]

In a polemic against the 'heathen philosophers,' Augustine argues that it had never been possible, not even for the most competent among them, to justify a happy afterlife for the soul and body through the exercise of reason. The Christian faith, on the contrary, promises that the whole human being, soul and body, will become immortal, and so truly happy. This promise will not be realized through human rationalizing, *argumentatione humana*, but by divine authority, *divina auctoritate*.[57] Augustine's notion is that the pre-existent Godson, is in all things like his father, adopted a human nature to

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53 Aug., Trin. 13.18: *Victor primi Adam et tenens genus humanum, uictus a secundo Adam et amittens genus christianum.* (CCSL 50, 414). English translation from Matthews, 2002.

54 Aug., Trin. 13.18.

55 Aug., Trin. 13.18: *Haec tanta dei dona … nisi uerbum caro fieret, nulla essent.* (CCSL 50, 414).

56 E. Mühlenberg, *Dogma und Lehre im Abendland, (excerpt), II § 2: Die abendländischen Rezeption der ostkirchlichen Dogmen*, in: C. Andersen / C. Ritter / A.F. Wessel / K. Mühlenberg / E. Schmidt, *Handbuch der Dogmen-und Theologiegeschichte; Band 1*, *Die Lehrentwicklung im Rahmen der Katholizität*, Göttingen 1982, 476–483 (478).

57 Aug., Trin. 13.9: *et ob hoc uere beatum, non argumentatione humana sed diuina auctoritate promittit.* (CCSL 50, 398).

redeem mankind while, at the same time, preserving his divine nature.[58] But it is important for Augustine to point out that Christ does not take a human *persona* upon himself, for he is himself *una persona*. It is human nature that the Godson adopts, not the life of a human person as such. Otherwise there would be four persons in the trinity, one of whom was human. Rather, the divine nature of the human Jesus is so potent that he becomes one person together with the Godson. Christ thereby becomes a divine person with two natures, the divine nature is connected to his divine person, which he possesses *by nature*, while he receives the human nature *of grace*. The two natures are, in this way, kept together by the doctrine of grace.[59]

8. The Will of God

The will of God is eternal and unchangeable. His will cannot be altered, nor does he change his opinion. Now and then, humans claim to observe changes in the will of God as e.g. in the Old Testament. However, Augustine maintains that such changes do not take place in God, but rather in our perception.[60] He further argues that it is only because God created the human being in his own image that humans possess free will and reason. In Augustine's thinking, the precondition for human freedom, reason, and will, of any kind, is that God himself possesses these same attributes. Therefore, knowledge of God, including the freedom of God's will, is of the utmost importance for Augustine. If the absolute freedom of God is in any way compromised, then the possibility of the human being possessing a free will is likewise compromised. It shows how closely theology and anthropology are related in Augustine's thinking.

The human race, however, submitted itself to bondage and became unfree. Pride allured the first humans with the promise that they could become like God: "That is why Adam was delighted when it was said, 'Ye shall be as gods.' "[61] Not until it was too late did human beings discover the emptiness of this promise. In Augustine's account, the human beings were not satisfied with a relative position vis-a-vis God, but wanted to be self-sufficient and independent of creation. Human beings forgot that God is the only absolute being, and that their existence is conditional. When human beings no longer wanted to be under the will of God, they fell away from freedom, which is in God alone, and became really and truly unfree. The free choice that

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58 Aug., Trin. 13.17.

59 Mühlenberg, 1982, 478–479.

60 Aug., Ciu. 22.2.

61 Aug., Ciu. 14.13: *Hinc enim et delectauit quod dictum est: Eritis sicut dii.* (CCSL 47–48, 435). English translation from Dyson, 1998. See also Aug., Ciu. 22.30.

humans had once possessed consisted in the freedom to choose freedom, i.e. to choose God. Here, there was no limitation, only freedom, Augustine argues. Because of the choice made, the human race became 'free' of God, and fell thereby into unfreedom, a condition from which it cannot free itself.

9. The Foreknowledge of God

In *De civitate Dei* book 5 Augustine dismisses Cicero's assertion that the notion of a God who has foreseen everything precludes the possibility of human free will: "It is not true, then, that, because God foreknew what would be within the power of our wills, nothing therefore lies within the power of our wills."[62] Augustine does not see any conflict between God's foreknowledge and the real freedom of human choices. For Augustine it is necessary that God should know everything. Otherwise he would be something less than the almighty and free God upon which all else rests. That God foreknows something does not change what he knows, Augustine says.

One of Cicero's arguments, which Augustine repeats, concerns chains of causation. As he paraphrases Cicero: "If, however, there is a certain order of causes by which everything that happens happens, then, Cicero says, all things that happen happen by fate. If this is the case, however, then nothing is in our power and there is no free choice of the will; and if we concede that, he says, then the whole of human life is undermined."[63] Augustine rejects this by saying that human will is one of the factors in the causal chain and therefore everything is not determined by fate. Augustine holds that Cicero, in denying the foreknowledge of the divine, de facto abolishes God, and that he is afraid of saying it outright.[64] Augustine says:

> Then clearly something lies within the power of our wills even though God has foreknowledge of it. We are, then, in no way compelled either to take away freedom of will in order to retain the foreknowledge of God, or (which is blasphemous) to deny that He has foreknowledge of things to come in order to retain freedom of the will …. Far be it from us, then, to seek freedom of the will by denying the foreknowledge of Him by Whose aid we are and shall be free.[65]

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62 Aug., Ciu. 5.10: *Non ergo propterea nihil est in nostra uoluntate, quia Deus praescivit quid futurum esset in nostra uoluntate.* (CCSL 47–48, 141). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

63 Aug., Ciu. 5.9: *si autem certus est ordo causarum, quo fit omne quod fit, fato, inquit, fiunt omnia quae fiunt. Quod si ita est, nihil est in nostra potestate nullumque est arbitrium uoluntatis; quod si concedimus, inquit, omnis humana uita subvertitur.* (CCSL 47–48, 137). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

64 Aug., Ciu. 5.9.

65 Aug., Ciu. 5.10: *profecto et illo praesciente est aliquid in nostra uoluntate. Quocirca nullo modo cogimur aut retenta praescientia Dei tollere uoluntatis*

It is not possible to think, as Augustine accuses Cicero of thinking, that human freedom is set over and against the freedom of God.[66] For Augustine, the will and freedom of God are not a threat to the freedom of human beings. On the contrary, God is its very source and foundation. Since God is free, creation can also be free, but only insofar as it remains in conformity with God, the creator. For some, this might sound like a lamentable limitation placed on human freedom. But to Augustine, the starting point of freedom is God, who is the one and only absolute being. That human beings must cling to God in order to maintain their freedom is not, for Augustine, a limitation. It is simply a logical consequence. The crucial point is that there exists only one being with absolute freedom, God. Augustine did not believe this conception could be found in the pagan worldview, where both gods and humans were equally bound by necessity.

10. Against the Pagans

A considerable part of *De civitate Dei* is dedicated to a polemic against the pagan worldview, which is anticipated in the full title of the book: *De civitate Dei contra paganos* (On the city of God against the pagans). In relation to his understanding of freedom, it is especially important for Augustine to distance himself from the conceptions of time and creation presented in the stoic and Platonic philosophies of his day. In particular, Augustine resists the idea of an eternal universe and a cyclical notion of time, repudiating those who would absorb these ideas into Christian thought. The notion of an eternal universe will inevitably compromise the idea of God, Augustine argues. If the universe is created out of eternal matter, then God cannot be its creator and master. Nothing created can have existed for eternity, since before its creation it did not exist. God cannot, as in Plato's *Timaios,* be reduced to a shaper. He is the ultimate creator and, as such, has created everything out of nothing. With the creation of the universe, God created something new, something which had not existed before.

Augustine reasons that if the universe were everlasting then the eternal return would be true, which would, he thinks, be most unfortunate for humanity. Even if there existed a salvation from such an endless cycle, it could never be a true salvation, because it would not be everlasting. Damnation and salvation would replace one another again and again in

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   arbitrium aut retento uoluntatis arbitrio Deum (quod nefas est) negare praescium futurorum … Vnde absit a nobis eius negare praescientiam, ut libere uelimus, quo adiuuante sumus liberi uel erimus. (CCSL 47–48, 141). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

66 Aug., Ciu. 5.9.

an endless circle. "For how can the soul be truly blessed when it has no assurance of being so for all eternity."[67] This is eternal repetition without end—without any real salvation. There is room only for false hope and the endless cycle.[68] Augustine believes that, in this scenario, necessity would be the prevailing principle. Nothing new could happen, and therefore freedom and salvation would be an illusion. He writes: "Who, I say, would listen to such things? Who can believe or bear them? If they were true, it would be more prudent to remain silent about them. Indeed – and I wish to say this as clearly as I can – it would be wiser not to know them at all."[69]

For Augustine, freedom in the Christian worldview is only possible because of God's omnipotence and eternality. Only if God has created time and the world from nothing is he able to stop the turning of the world, and, by his justice, raise humans to the eternal and true salvation. Christ died only once for humanity, not many times in an ever-returning cycle:

> On their view, for example, just as, during a certain period of time, the philosopher Plato taught in a town called Athens in a school called the Academy, so, during innumerable past ages, at long but fixed intervals, the same Plato, the same city, the same school and the same pupils existed repeatedly, and will exist repeatedly during innumerable ages to come. God forbid, I say, that we could believe this. For Christ died for our sins once, and 'being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him'.[70]

Augustine states that, as a Christian, one cannot accept the principle of necessity. For it lies within the power of God to create something new. In creation he gave free choice to humans and placed them in a linear timeframe, so that, in this way, they would know both a beginning and an end. In this context the human race fell. In order to save it, and eventually redeem it entirely, God sent Christ to die for the sins of mankind, once and for all. The unique

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67 Aug., Ciu. 12.13: *Quo modo enim vera beatitudo est, de cuius numquam aeternitate confiditur*. (CCSL 47–48, 367). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

68 Aug., Ciu. 5.8.

69 Aug., Ciu. 12.20: *Quis haec audiat? quis credat? quis ferat? Quae si vera essent, non solum tacerentur prudentius, verum etiam (ut quomodo valeo dicam quod volo) doctius nescirentur.* (CCSL 47–48, 375). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

70 Aug., Ciu. 12.13: *ut verbi gratia, sicut isto saeculo Plato philosophus in urbe Atheniensi et in ea schola, quae Academia dicta est, discipulos docuit, ita per innumerabilia retro saecula multum quidem prolixis intervallis, sed tamen certis, et idem Plato et eadem civitas et eadem schola idemque discipuli repetiti et per innumerabilia deinde saecula repetendi sint. Absit, inquam, ut nos ista credamus. Semel enim Christus mortuus est pro peccatis nostris; surgens autem a mortuis iam non moritur, et mors ei ultra non dominabitur*. (CCSL 47–48, 367). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ is, for Augustine, the definitive testimony that humans are not caught in the endless circulations of necessity.[71] This can also be seen, he says, in the promise of Christ's return on the Final day, when time will stop and humanity will be given true and everlasting freedom in the New Jerusalem; here everything will be truly new.[72]

11. The end of time

In this world, where God's city and the earthly city are mixed together, where death and sin reign, the baptized are not uplifted at once to eternal bliss. For this reason, the renewal of humans by grace must occur continually across the Christian life. Augustine argues that if humans were raised to blessedness immediately after their baptism, they would not be tested in their faith: "… if the sacrament of regeneration were followed immediately by the immortality of the body, faith itself would be weakened. For faith is only faith when it waits in hope for what is not yet seen in substance."[73] The final part of salvation is elevation to the heaven of heavens, for which Adam and Eve themselves were originally destined.

The human race will, on the Final Day, be divided among the two cities according to their respective convictions, at which point the difference between them will stand forth in full clarity. In the state of eternal bliss humans will also receive the definitive version of free will, which precludes the possibility of sin: "… man should first receive a free will by which he was able not to sin, and finally a free will by which he was not able to sin; … but because human nature sinned when it had the power to sin, it is redeemed by a more abundant gift of grace so that it may be led to the state of freedom in which it cannot sin.[74]

Augustine believes that in eternity humans will become truly free because they will become a part of God, and, since God cannot sin, neither will humans have any power or desire to sin. This new free will shall be greater than the

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71 Larsen, 2002, 80.

72 Rev 21:5; Aug., Ciu. 20.17: *Ecce noua facio omnia* (CCSL 47–48, 727). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

73 Aug., Ciu. 13.4: *si regenerationis sacramentum continuo sequeretur immortalitas corporis, ipsa fides eneruaretur, quae tunc est fides, quando exspectatur in spe, quod in re nondum uidetur.* (CCSL 47–48, 388). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

74 Aug., Ciu. 22.30: *ut primum daretur liberum arbitrium, quo non peccare homo posset, nouissimum, quo peccare non posset… Sed quia peccauit ista natura cum peccare potuit, largiore gratia liberatur, ut ad eam perducatur libertatem, in qua peccare non possit.* (CCSL 47–48, 863–864). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

first, for it will not contain the possibility of lapsing into unfreedom: "But this last freedom of will will be greater, in that it will consist in not being able to sin."[75] It may sound paradoxical that humans, in Augustine's thinking, are more free when they are unable to do something. Humans become freer by not being able to choose evil. For Augustine, however, this is not meant as a paradox. In eternity, humans are forever free; never again will they fall or be bound. The impossibility of unfreedom is, by Augustine's logic, a higher good than possessing the possibility of choosing sin again.[76]

12. Conclusion

There is no doubt that the will forms a cornerstone of Augustine's thinking in *De civitate Dei*. Without considering the freedom of the will almost nothing else in Augustine's conception of Christianity would make sense. Only by human freedom can the Fall, and thus evil, be explained. If the Fall of humans were not self-inflicted, then the sacrifice of Christ as an act of justice would be meaningless for Augustine. The Fall did not consist in the eating of the apple, but when the human being turned its will away from God. It was the corrupted will that inflicted the evil deed, not the other way around.

In Augustine's system of thought in *De civitate Dei* humans were created as free and rational creatures in the image of God. According to Augustine the Fall consisted in the corruption of the will. Human beings desired independence from God and creation, to be like God. Nevertheless, a creature cannot, in the proper sense, exist without its creator. In like manner humans cannot keep their freedom, when they remove themselves from the source of freedom: God. Human beings were created to remain with God, and so had no original experience of sin or death. Unfortunately, humans freely chose to turn their will toward that which was lower than God, becoming unfree. After the Fall, humans experienced the destruction of their freedom; their wills were twisted, and their inner harmony was destroyed. So Augustine

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75 Aug., Ciu. 22.30: *hoc autem nouissimum eo potentius erit, quo peccare non poterit; uerum hoc quoque Dei munere, non suae possibilitate naturae. Aliud est enim esse Deum, aliud participem Dei. Deus natura peccare non potest: particeps uero Dei ab illo accepit, ut peccare non possit.* (CCSL 47–48, 863). English translation from Dyson, 1998.

76 Aug., Ciu. 22.30: *Ibi uacantes uidebimus quoniam ipse est Deus; quod nobis nos ipsi esse uoluimus, quando ab illo cecidimus, audientes a seductore: Eritis sicut dii et recedentes a uero Deo, quo faciente dii essemus eius participatione, non desertione … A quo refecti et gratia maiore perfecti uacabimus in aeternum, uidentes quia ipse est Deus, quo pleni erimus quando ipse erit omnia in omnibus.* (CCSL 47–48, 865).

argues in *De civitate Dei*. But he also maintains that the omnipotent God can turn even the evillest of acts into something good. God sent his son, Christ, who, through his sacrifice, grants humans an opportunity for salvation by unjustly dying in our place. Through the incarnation, Christ enables the elevation of human beings and opens the path to their reunion with God in the eternal salvation, where humans will become truly free.

For Augustine there is nothing in the fact that God possess an omnipotent will that compromises human freedom. On the contrary, according to *De civitate Dei*, it is a precondition for the existence of freedom per se. If God was not the omnipotent creator who could make all things new, then humans and God alike would be caught in an endless cycle. Augustine argues that the reality of freedom presupposes an eternal God who has created everything out of nothing and who is therefore lord of time. True freedom, wherein the possibility of sin is absent, will not be granted to humans until the final salvation. Time, which began with creation, will reach its end on the Final Day when all just creatures will be uplifted into the city of God.

Fabio Dalpra

Augustine of Hippo's Anthropology in *The Trinity*

Abstract: This article reflects on the anthropological ideas expounded in Augustine of Hippo's *The Trinity* (*De trinitate*). Taking into account the creation of humanity after the image and likeness of God, it attends to Augustine's understanding of the human mind (*mens*) as a threefold structure, shedding light on the anthropology that arises from the dynamic interplay between memory, intelligence, and will.

1. Introduction

Augustine's thought is marked by a concern for anthropology. Throughout his corpus he returns, again and again, to the fundamental question of human being. Indeed, as he claims in his *Soliloquies*, he is, above all, interested in knowing God and the soul.[1] But one cannot speak of the intersection of these two realities without addressing what it means to be human. After all, Augustine reminds us, the nature of human existence can only be grasped once its relation to God has been properly discerned. Over the course of many years, and at the cost of many revisions, his work bears witness to a tireless anthropological endeavor.

Taking stock of Augustine's anthropological inclinations, we gain a useful perspective from which to regard one of Augustine's major works: *The Trinity*. Embedded within a theological-dogmatic discussion, there is a thorough investigation of human existence before the Trinitarian mystery. In fact, the treatise is much more concerned with the unveiling of human interiority, with humanity *as the image of God*, than it is with the divine essence of the Trinity, which Augustine deems unfathomable. Consequently, *The Trinity* is not simply another instance of his anthropological thought, but rather a privileged locus: the very culmination of Augustine's mature understanding of human nature. As we hope to demonstrate in this article, Augustine discovered, in the image of God theology, and in the subsequent analysis of the inner threefold structures of the mind, the keys to an in-depth knowledge of human being as such.

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1   Aug., Solil. 1.2,7 (CSEL 89, 11).

2. The *imago Dei* Theology

First, it should be noted that the anthropological reflections we find in *The Trinity* are rooted in the idea of human creation after the image and likeness of God. Considering Gen 1:26,[2] Augustine argues:

> 'Let us make man after our image and likeness'. 'Let us make' and 'our' are said in the plural, and ought not to be received except as of relatives. For it was not that gods might make to the image and likeness of gods, but that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit might make to the image of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in order that man might subsist as the image of God. But God is the Trinity.[3]

A number of meaningful anthropological implications stem from the understanding of human beings as image-bearers of God. For instance, since God is Trinitarian in nature—that is to say, both one and three—we should expect to find an analogous pattern in human nature. Augustine makes just such a claim at the very start of his thorough analysis in *The Trinity*.

Augustine intends to reveal the anthropological basis of the *imago Dei* theology by questioning the meaning of the formula *imago et similitudo dei* (image and likeness of God) and, moreover, asking where exactly in the human this image and likeness are located. In order to answer these questions, he fuses together a bipartite and tripartite conception of human being. So, as Augustine sees it, in addition to the corporeal aspect of our nature, we also possess a spiritual aspect. Moreover, this spiritual aspect includes an inferior part (*anima*), and a superior part, typically referred to as the *animus*, *spiritus,* or *mens*. It is important to note that this division does not imply a split of the soul in its substance,[4] but only a delimitation of its functions.[5]

The relation between the superior and inferior operations of the soul effects the relation between the material and spiritual components of the

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2   "Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness [...]'." Gen 1:26 (NRSV).

3   Aug., Trin. 7.6,12: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram. Et faciamus et nostram pluraliter dictum est et nisi ex relatiuis accipi non oportet, non enim ut facerent dii aut ad imaginem et similitudinem deorum, sed ut facerent pater et filius et spiritus sanctus ad imaginem ergo patris et filii et spiritus sancti ut subsisteret homo imago dei; deus autem trinitas*. (CCSL 50, 266). Here and henceforth, the English translation is taken from: Saint Augustine, *The Trinity*, translated by Stephen McKenna, The Fathers of the Church volume 45, Washington 1970.

4   Augustine claims, "as the mind, therefore, is a whole mind, so it lives as a whole. But it knows that it lives. Therefore, it knows itself as a whole." Trin. 10.4,6: *Sicut ergo mens tota mens est, sic tota uiuit. Nouit autem uiuere se; totam se igitur nouit*. (CCSL 50, 319).

5   In *The Trinity*, he mentions the two functions (*officia*) of the soul twice, cf. Trin. 12.3,3 (CCSL 50, 358); 12.4,4 (CCSL 50, 358).

human being; there is a continuity between body and soul concerning the knowledge of corporeal and incorporeal things, respectively. As Augustine argues, "[...] yet a part of our reasonable attention [*rationalis intentionis*], that is, a part of this same mind must be directed to the using of changeable and corporeal things, without which this life does not continue [...]."[6] Thus, on the one hand, the soul makes use of the bodily senses to understand corporeal things, while on the other, it employs reason or intelligence to know incorporeal realities.

Although this debate concerning the psychological morphology of the soul and its relation to the body constitutes an important moment in the discussion carried on by Augustine in *The Trinity*, it is reasonable to argue that this is only the first step in probing the anthropological question. Hereafter, his analysis turns to the understanding of how such debate relates to the theology of the image and likeness of God.

Taking into account the threefold constitution of human being (body, soul and spirit/mind), Augustine argues in book 11 of *The Trinity* that, "certainly, not everything in creatures, which is in some way or other similar to God, is also to be called His image, but that alone to which He Himself alone is superior [...]".[7] In this way, Augustine rejects the hypothesis that the image of God amounts to numerical three-in-oneness (tri-unity). This, in turn, leads him to deduce another hypothesis in book 15: "wherefore each individual man who is not called the image of God according to everything that pertains to his nature, but according to the mind alone, is one person and is the image of the Trinity in his mind."[8] If the quotation from book 11 presents the idea that the divine image must refer to something than which naught but God is higher, the quotation from book 15 posits an answer to the riddle. The image, Augustine tells us, is in "the mind alone" (*solam mentem*); for it cannot be in the soul (*anima*) or in the body at all.

It is worth pointing out that, by referring only to *image*, and omitting *likeness*, the argument here implicitly refers to the distinction between image (*imago*) and trace/vestige (*uestigium*).[9] For, while the *traces* of God are

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6   Aug., Trin. 12.13,21: *Quiddam uero rationalis intentionis nostrae, hoc est eiusdem mentis, in usum mutabilium corporaliumque rerum sine quo haec uita non agitur dirigendum*, (CCSL 50, 374).

7   Aug., Trin. 11.5,8: *Non sane omne quod in creaturis aliquo modo simile est deo etiam eius imago dicenda est, sed illa sola qua superior ipse solus est.* (CCSL 50, 344).

8   Aug., Trin. 15.7,11: *Quapropter singulus quisque homo qui non secundum omnia quae ad naturam pertinent eius sed secundum solam mentem imago dei dicitur una persona est et imago est trinitatis in mente.* (CCSL 50a, 475).

9   Cf. Aug., Trin. 6.10,12 (CCSL 50, 242); 12.5,5 (CCSL 50, 360). In two other sections, Augustine uses *effigies* as synonymous with *uestigium*, cf. Trin. 11.1,1

present in all creatures—which is why it is possible to say that all of them bear, to some extent, a *likeness* to God—only the highest point of creation, that is, the human mind, can be described as an *image* of God (as explicitly claimed in the passage from book 15.)

The comparison between *image* and *trace* yields still another potent idea for the argument worked out in *The Trinity*. According to Augustine, in order to strengthen the mind one should begin by considering those traces of the Trinity scattered throughout creation; having done so, one may begin to apprehend the image of God that exists in the mind alone.[10] As he writes, "when in our mind, therefore, we perceive the Creator through the things which have been made, we ought to recognize Him as the Trinity of which a trace appears, as is fitting, in the creature".[11]

If every creature bears a trace of the triune God, it is reasonable to conclude that there is no place in Augustine's argument for an insuperable opposition between body and soul, such as might give rise to a radical contempt for matter.[12] Even though he maintains that the uppermost activity of the mind is superior in valor to sensual experience, Augustine still considers the body a site of manifest importance. Indeed, not only does the body carry vestiges of the Creator within itself, but it also provides, through the senses, the means by which to understand material reality; and material reality, as

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(CCSL 50, 333) and 14.3,5 (CCSL 50a, 427). For a discussion about the correspondence between *uestigium* and *imago*, as well as their relation to the concept of *signum*, cf. V. Giraud, *Signum et vestigium dans la pensée de Saint Augustin*, RSPT 95, Paris 2011, 251–274.

10 The idea that all visible creatures manifest the invisible attributes of God can be ascribed to the enduring influence in Augustine's thought of Rom 1:20 ("Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. [...]" NRSV).

11 Aug., Trin. 6.10,12: *Oportet igitur ut creatorem per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspicientes trinitatem intellegamus cuius in creatura quomodo dignum est apparet uestigium.* (CCSL 50, 242). Cf. also, "pour lui [Agostinho], les *invisibilia Dei* sont les Idées de Dieu, de sorte que connaître Dieu à partir du sensible, c'est remonter des choses à leurs Idées; [...] l'itinéraire normal d'une preuve augustinienne va donc du monde à l'âme et de l'âme à Dieu," É. Gilson, *Introduction à l'étude de Saint Augustin*, Paris 1943, 22.

12 In *The Trinity*, Augustine frequently refers to the body in a positive context. For example, in book 15, he affirms: "but even if we so define man as to say: 'Man is a rational substance consisting of soul and body', there is no doubt that man has a soul which is not body, and a body which is not soul [...]" Trin. 15.7,11: *Quod si etiam sic definiamus hominem, ut dicamus: 'Homo est substantia rationalis constans ex anima et corpore,' non est dubium hominem habere animam quae non est corpus, habere corpus quod non est anima.* (CCSL 50a, 474).

we have seen, provides the training (*exercitatio*) that gives humans strength to attain knowledge of more complex realities.[13]

Altogether, it can be said that, for Augustine, the tangled relation between body and soul/spirit implies an *anthropological unity* (body and soul combine to make a single human being); a *substantial distinction* (neither the soul nor the body is reducible to the other); and a *functional continuity* (their different functions are epistemologically complementary). In addition, it is worth underlining Augustine's assertion that the mind constitutes *the core of human being* since it is the very image of God. The human being is the summit of creation because of that image, even if it does not capture the entirety of what it means to be human.

3. The Threefold Structure of the Mind

In order to identify the basis of the anthropology developed in *The Trinity,* it is necessary to dig deeper into two questions that sprout from the prior discussion: (1) what is the content of the image of God in the mind? (2) how does the relation of the *imago Dei* to the Trinity contribute to our understanding

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13 There are two important passages in *The Trinity* with regards to the subject of *exercitatio*. In book 13, he claims, "I wished, therefore, to ascend as it were by steps, and to seek in the inner man a trinity of its own kind, both in science and wisdom, as we previously sought it in the outer man, in order that we might come with a mind more developed by exercise in these lower things to the contemplation of that Trinity which is God, according to our own modest capacity, if we can do even this, at least in an obscure manner and through a mirror" Trin. 13.20,26: *Placuit quippe uelut gradatim ascendentibus in utraque requirere apud interiorem hominem quandam sui cuiusque generis trinitatem sicut prius apud exteriorem quaesiuimus ut ad illam trinitatem quae deus est pro nostro modulo, si tamen uel hoc possumus, saltem in aenigmate et per speculum contuendam exercitatiore in his inferioribus rebus mente ueniamus.* (CCSL 50a, 418). In book 9, "we are now endeavoring in one way or another to investigate this question in the human mind; and after the inferior image has responded as it were to our interrogation in language, with which our human nature itself is more familiar, we may be able to direct a better-trained mental vision from the illuminated creature to the unchangeable light [...]" Trin. 9.12,17: *Quod nunc in mente humana utcumque uestigare conamur ut ex inferiore imagine in qua nobis familiarius natura ipsa nostra quasi interrogata respondet exercitatiorem mentis aciem ab inluminata creatura ad lumen incommutabile dirigamus;* (CCSL 50, 308). In general terms, it is possible to claim that such idea comes from Plato (cf. Pl., Sop. 218c-d) and surely reached into the Patristic period through Neoplatonism. For a further discussion on the theme, cf. L. Ayres, *The Christological Context of Augustine's De Trinitate XIII: Toward Relocating Books VIII-XV*, Augustin. Stud. 29 (1998), 114–115; 134–139.

of human being in *The Trinity*? Let us proceed to examine these questions in order.

According to Augustine, whereas the image of God is located in the most eminent part of the soul—i.e. the mind—our primary task is to comprehend the mind's self-knowledge. It is, first of all, within the mind that humans perceive their existence as autonomous; irreducible to either the world, or the creatures around them. The mind must be present to itself so as to understand the uniqueness of its existence and the extension of its intellective capacity. This is the statement of an anthropological principle inasmuch as, among all creatures, only human beings enjoy this privilege.

As noted above, while the senses are necessary for coming to know corporeal things, only the mind can apprehend incorporeal realities. So, according to Augustine, "as the mind itself, therefore, gathers the knowledge of corporeal things through the bodily senses, so it gains the knowledge of incorporeal things through itself since it is incorporeal."[14] In this case, the mind achieves self-knowledge through an entirely inward process.

From the cognitive bending of the mind unto itself we are immediately able to distinguish two realities: (1) the mind, and (2) the knowledge (or self-awareness/*notitia*) it has of itself. For Augustine, this self-reflexive bending also signals an intensification of the love that the mind has for itself, which grows in direct proportion to self-awareness. Therefore, the mind's reflection upon itself involves both self-directed knowledge and self-directed love. Three realities—mind, knowledge, and love (*mens*, *notitia*, *amor*)—inhabit a single nature.

In addition to the immediate apprehension of its own reality, the mind's inner activity is responsible, in a second moment, for differentiating itself from both other minds[15] and the world at large. Augustine expresses the mind's transition from internal to external apprehension by connecting one mental triad—*mind, knowledge, love* (*mens, notitia, amor*)—to another: *memory, intelligence, will* (*memoria, intellegentia, uoluntas*). When the mind's attention is directed toward a thing outside itself, the first three realities (mind, knowledge, love) are extended to that thing in the form of memory, intelligence, and will. As Augustine says, "and furthermore, even in this point, there is a great difference, so that whether we speak of the mind in man and of its knowledge and love, or of the memory, understanding, and will,

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14 Aug., Trin. 9.3,3: *Mens ergo ipsa sicut corporearum rerum notitias per sensus corporis colligit sic incorporearum per semetipsam. Ergo et se ipsam per se ipsam nouit quoniam est incorporea.* (CCSL 50, 296).

15 On the problem of other minds in *The Trinity*, cf. G. Matthews, *Augustine*, Oxford 2005, 53 et passim.

we remember nothing of the mind except through the memory, nor understand except through the understanding, nor love except through the will."[16] In other words, the self-centered knowledge and love of the mind sets in motion the subsequent activity of memory, intelligence, and will, which are ultimately responsible for directing it toward the most transcendent (and innermost) reality: God.[17]

The threefold structure of the mind assumes, at this point, two complementary processes: the coordination of its internal activities; and the continuity between an *inward* and an *upward* movement. Thus, it is possible to see how an anthropological model is formed through the activities of *both the will and understanding*, which are first turned inward, to face themselves, and then upward, to God.

Were the mind restricted to the immediacy of its self-reflexive knowledge and love, human beings would find themselves trapped in the realm of their own mental activity. Consequently, they would not grasp the vestiges of God spread throughout the world; nor would they share their existence with other creatures who might offer deeper meaning to their lives. Worst of all, they would be deprived of openness to God.

From here, Augustine turns to the focal point of his anthropological discussion: the transition from memory, intelligence, and love of self (*memoria, intelligentia et amor sui*) to memory, intelligence, and love of God (*memoria, intelligentia et amor dei*). As he claims:

> hence, this trinity of the mind is not on that account the image of God because the mind remembers itself, understands itself, and loves itself, but because it can also remember, understand, and love Him by whom it was made. And when it does so, it becomes wise; but if it does not, even though it remembers itself, knows itself, and loves itself, it is foolish. Let it, then, remember its God, to whose image it has been made, and understand Him and love Him.[18]

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16 Aug., Trin. 15.7,12: *Itemque in hoc magna distantia est quod siue mentem dicamus in homine eiusque notitiam et dilectionem, siue memoriam, intelligentiam, uoluntatem, nihil mentis meminimus nisi per memoriam nec intelligimus nisi per intelligentiam nec amamus nisi per uoluntatem.* (CCSL 50a, 475).

17 Such reflection finds an important development in Trin. 14.8,11 (CCSL 50a, 436) where Augustine refers to the mind as capable of God (*capax dei*). Human being is capable of God insofar as the shift from the triad *mens*, *notitia*, *amor* to *memoria*, *intelligentia*, *uoluntas* allows for overcoming the sort of solipsism of the self-awareness (*notitia*) of the mind.

18 Aug., Trin. 14.12,15: *Haec igitur trinitas mentis non propterea dei est imago quia sui meminit mens et intelligit ac diligit se, sed quia potest etiam meminisse et intelligere et amare a quo facta est. Quod cum facit sapiens ipsa fit. Si autem non facit, etiam cum sui meminit seque intelligit ac diligit, stulta est. Meminerit*

As this quotation indicates, the volitional and cognitive activities of the mind are realized, firstly, in self-directed memory, intelligence, and love. However, the process of realization will not be complete until the mind arrives at the memory, intelligence, and love of God. It follows that the strengthening of the Trinitarian image is not restricted to the self-repose of the mind in remembering, knowing, and loving itself; rather, it is possible for the mind to transcend its own limitations, reaching toward the innermost presence of God. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Augustine assumes the necessity of divine assistance in ordering and perfecting the mind so as to straighten the will and purify the understanding.[19] It is only in this way that the human being will come to desire what it ought to desire, and know what must be known above all.

Augustine emphasizes the role of the interior master, Christ, in the process which begins with a movement from exterior to interior (*ab exterioribus ad interiora*) and then goes on from inferior to superior (*ab inferioribus ad superiora*). Through the reference to the mediation of Christ, it is possible to see how this encompasses an intellectual and religious movement whose aim of self-awareness develops into a bridging relationship with the Triune God.

Thus, the transition from mind to God (expressed in Latin by the use of the pronoun *sui* and the genitive *dei*) implies a crucial decision that *takes place in the own interiority of human being*. As Augustine affirms, a dual possibility unfolds therefrom: one can move by likeness to God (*ad deum*), or by unlikeness away from God (*ab deo*).[20] The two prepositions (*ad* and *ab*) manifest the *dynamic character of his anthropology*. It is from that choice (whether to move toward or away from the likeness of God) that human beings grant, or fail to grant, reality to their existence.

In short, the anthropological sign of *The Trinity* relates to dynamic creaturely existence. Human beings are defined by movement, by the act of going beyond themselves.[21] Consequently, there is no way, according to Augustine, that the existence and self-knowledge of the mind do not raise *ipse facto* a question concerning God. *The Trinity* links this self-knowledge to the increased understanding of our likeness to God. For that reason, it is not possible to dissociate the anthropological from the Trinitarian debate.

Let us move on, then, to the second question. As we have seen, it is possible to say that the human likeness to God is established through an interior

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itaque dei sui ad cuius imaginem facta est eumque intellegat atque diligat. (CCSL 50a, 442–443).

19 Cf. L. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, Cambridge 2010, 305.
20 Cf. Aug., Trin. 7.6,12 (CCSL 50, 266).
21 Cf. Aug., Conf. 10.17,26 (CSEL 33, 245–247).

image; an "Imperfect image, which is an image nevertheless," as Augustine puts it.[22] In assuming the image of God as the formal principle of his anthropology, Augustine is obliged to deal with the complex combination of theological and philosophical issues that derive therefrom; for this principle stands at the very crossroads of the Greek and Christian traditions.

The threefold structure of the mind is seen by Augustine as a fact from which it is possible to resolve the logical contradiction of being one, and three, at the same time. He argues that the human mind can be used to prove that triune realities in principle exist—for the reality of the mind *must be* triune insofar as it is the image of a triune God. The more we turn our attention and training toward understanding the threefold structure of the mind, the more we are able to perceive something of the Holy Trinity, albeit in a weak, mirrored state. Augustine thereby insists on the necessity of renewing this image—being faint and distorted by sin—as much as humanly possible.[23]

From this state of affairs it is possible to distinguish a dual endeavor: the perfecting of existence, and the perfecting of knowledge. These are forged into a mental unity inasmuch as perfection implies a total conversion of the will toward the source of existence and knowledge. Sensible/intelligible, temporal/eternal, creature/Creator, science/wisdom, finite/infinite—these pairs embody the wide range of potential conversions that take place in the mind.[24] As a matter of fact, the process relates more to a proper ordering of these than a mutually exclusive, either/or decision. For example, a decision in favor of wisdom should not entail the abandonment of science. Rather, it presupposes a correct understanding of their relative positions, that is, the primacy of wisdom over science. Augustine additionally defends the foremost role of the Christian religion in initiating such conversion, which

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22 Aug., Trin. 9.2,2: *impari imagine attamen imagine*, (CCSL 50, 294). Cf. also, Trin. 7.6,12 (CCSL 50, 266–267).

23 Cf. "for although it is a great nature, yet it could be corrupted because it is not the highest, and although it could be corrupted because it is not the highest, yet because it is capable of the highest nature and can be a sharer in it, it is a great nature" Aug., Trin. 14.4,6: *Quamquam enim magna natura sit, tamen uitiari potuit quia summa non est; et quamquam uitiari potuerit quia summa non est, tamen quia summae naturae capax est et esse particeps potest, magna natura est.* (CCSL 50a, 429). For further references cf. Trin. 7.6,12 (CCSL 50, 266) and L. Karfíková, *Grace and the Will According to Augustine*, Leiden 2012, 241–242.

24 On Augustine's conception of conversion, cf. A.-M. Vannier, *La conversion, axe de l'anthropologie de S. Augustin*, CPE 88, Bruyères-le-Châtel 2002, 34–48. It is reasonable to assume that the broadness of the mental conversion referred to by Augustine parallels the Hellenistic concept of μετάνοια.

depends on an *acto fidei*, pushing the mind toward the truth that is beyond human beings, in their innermost interior thought.[25]

In light of these observations, Augustine takes into account the uniqueness of human being vis-a-vis other creatures. Even though this theme is reshaped throughout his works from time to time, there is one idea that runs consistently through his argumentation; that is, the distinction between beings that exist; beings that exist and live; and beings that exist, live, and understand. Setting themselves apart from other creatures, human beings possess a mind by which they can understand not only themselves, but also inferior and, to some extent, superior realities. According to the decisions made by the will, the mind will either expand or contract its own existence/ knowledge. For this reason it is necessary for the human mind to understand its position among creatures, and to will itself toward the source of existence and knowledge. Not by chance, Augustine's proposed mental triads always exhibit a combination of *cognoscitive and volitive principles;* for example, *mens*, *notitia*, *amor* (mind, knowledge, and love);[26] *memoria*, *intelligentia*, *uoluntas* (memory, intelligence, and will);[27] *memoria*, *interna visio*, *uoluntas* (memory, inner vision, and will);[28] *memoria*, *scientia*, *uoluntas* (memory, science, and will).[29]

The continuity between being and knowing is entirely related to putting the proper weight on each one of the possibilities presented before the human being. The more the mind rises toward knowledge of eternal and intelligible realities, the more it exists according to the reason of its creation. Likewise, the more it applies itself to the expanding of its own existence, the more it knows what should be known above all. In a passage of book 9, Augustine argues: "wherefore, we are like God inasmuch as we know him, but we are not like Him to the extent of being His equal, because we do not know Him as He Himself knows Himself".[30] It is worth emphasizing the direct proportionality between *we know* (*nouimus*) and *we are* (*sumus*)—the more we know (or the more we want to know), the more we are, always in reference to God's being and truth. *It expresses the ontological, epistemological*

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25 Cf. H. C. de L. Vaz, *Ontologia e história*, São Paulo 1968, on how Augustine's anthropological model offers a joining between the *homo religiosus* and the *homo philosophicus*.

26 Cf. Aug., Trin. 9.3,3 (CCSL 50, 296).

27 Cf. Aug., Trin. 10.11,17 (CCSL 50, 329–330).

28 Cf. Aug., Trin. 11.3,6 (CCSL 50, 340).

29 Cf. Aug., Trin. 12.15,25 (CCSL 50, 379–380).

30 Aug., Trin. 9.11,16: *Quocirca in quantum deum nouimus similes sumus, sed non ad aequalitatem similes quia nec tantum eum nouimus quantum ipse se.* (CCSL 50, 307).

and volitive articulation that defines the outline of the anthropology in The Trinity. It derives—and I would insist on this point—from the fact that all of them share the same *locus*, that is, the *human mind or spirit*.

So the divine likeness borne by human beings (the mind being an *imago trinitatis*[31]) allows for the proper recognition of the mind as a threefold reality and, moreover, propels it at long last to its final destination: God. In this way are self-knowledge and knowledge of God bound together. In short, inasmuch as the mind's comprehension of itself denotes the understanding of its image/condition, human being should eventually steer from *memoria*, *intelligentia* and *amor sui* toward *memoria*, *intelligentia* and *amor dei*.

However, this surely does not imply the possibility of a direct and comprehensive knowledge of God. Human beings increasingly embrace the triune God to the extent that they are able to recognize, through the mind's self-knowledge, the same kind of unity and diversity shared by the Trinitarian persons. In other words, it is necessary to keep in mind that such knowledge, as precarious as it is, does not aim at knowledge of the Trinity in itself. Even so, it is still worth being pursued since a deeper relation with God may thereby be restored.

4. Conclusion

It remains for us to address the question of how *The Trinity* fits into the context of Augustine's anthropological thought in general. In short, it is possible to say that it offers both continuity and rupture vis-a-vis his previous efforts. There is continuity, in the sense that Augustine's understanding of human beings as creatures that exist *because of,* and *for,* God is upheld. If we assume anthropology as a word (*logos*) about human beings considered in their inward existence, *The Trinity* can be seen as yet another instance of Augustine's famous reliance on finding the source and goal of such existence in, above all, a living God.

However, there is more than one possible interpretation of the relation between the human and the divine. Augustine's works manifest a relentless endeavor to achieve precision in this matter—sometimes at the cost of profound revisions to his prior beliefs. So the question of the distinguishing anthropological features in *The Trinity* can only be faced by considering the broader context of his thought. Certainly, it is not a task to be fulfilled by a single article. So it is fitting for us, from this point on, to delineate the general contours of the issue in *The Trinity* and to drop some additional

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31 Cf. Aug., Trin. 7.6,12 (CCSL 50, 267); 9.12,18 (CCSL 50, 310); 15.22,43 (CCSL 50a, 520).

hints which, with luck, will find other minds and hands to move the debate forward.

One of the most important ideas to be emphasized here is the *tight relation between memory, intelligence, and will.* This particular dynamic definitely brings something new to the discussion. Although an incipient discourse on this topic can be found in other texts, *in no place but The Trinity does Augustine put such a relation at the center of his anthropological concern while, at the same time, providing such an extensive, systematic analysis.*[32]

On top of this, and following the main argument of this article, the anthropology presented in *The Trinity* articulates the intricate relation between memory, intelligence, and will *in connection with the imago Dei theology.* From this perspective, *memory, intelligence,* and *will* are seen as *equals* in composing the substance of the human mind. To reduce the mind to any one of these terms would lead to ignoring those *three which manifest separably, but whose operation is inseparable,*[33] making of them a true *imago trinitatis.* No activity of the mind prevails over the others. As Augustine argues:

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32 For example, in *On the free will* (cf. Lib. 2.19,51 (CSEL 74, 85–86)), Augustine refers to memory (*memoria*), reason (*ratio*), and will (*uoluntas*) in an apparently similar frame to *The Trinity*. As he claims, memory remembers itself through itself, reason understands itself through itself and will serves itself through itself. However, insofar as they work through themselves separately, there is no further elaboration on their mutual coordination. Rather, memory and reason are only brought to light under the reference of the will, which is assumed as the core of human life. The other mental activities are depicted, so to say, as subordinate realities. In *Confessions* (cf. Conf. 13.11,12 (CSEL 33, 352–353)), in turn, he mentions three things within the mind – to be (*esse*), to know (*nosse*) and to will (*uelle*) – whose inseparableness holds indeed some similarities to the structure of anthropology in *The Trinity*. Nevertheless, he refers to *esse, nosse* and *uelle* as activities through which the mind could exercise, examine and perceive how *different* (*longe*) from the Trinity it actually is. Besides, in spite of being possible to find in the text a couple of references to the *imago Dei* theme (cf. Conf. 3.7,12; 6.3,4; 13.22,32 (CSEL 33, 54; 117–118; 370–371)), in no place it is juxtaposed with those three activities. Considering its confirmation of the absolute incomprehensibility of God, with no attendant reference to human interiority as a threefold structure *similar* to the triune God, it can scarcely be said to prefigure the debate in *The Trinity*.

33 Cf. Aug., Trin. 1.4,7 (CCSL 50, 35–36); 1.5,8 (CCSL 50, 36); 4.21,30 (CCSL 50, 202). Cf. *Sermon 52* for a further discussion on that formula and its variations: s*eparabiliter proferantur, inseparabiliter operentur* (s. 52.15 (CCSL 41a, 70)); *separabiliter demonstrari, et inseparabiliter operari* (cf. s. 52.17 ; 18; 19; 20; 23 (CCSL 41a, 71; 73–74; 75; 79)); *separabiliter pronuntientur, inseparabiliter operentur* (cf. s. 52.17 (CCSL 41a, 73)) ; *separatim pronuntiari, inseparabiliter operari* (s. 52.19 (CCSL 41a, 76)); *separatim pronuntiaui, inseparabiliter cogitaui* (cf. s. 52.21 (CCSL 41a, 78)).

whatever else they are called in respect to themselves, they are called together, not in the plural but in the singular. But they are three in that they are mutually referred to each other. And if they were not equal, not only each one to each one, but each one to all, they would certainly not comprehend each other. For not only is each one comprehended by each one, but all are also comprehended by each one. For I remember that I have memory, understanding, and will; and I understand that I understand, will, and remember; and I will that I will, remember, and understand; and at the same time I remember my whole memory, understanding, and will. [34]

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the anthropological discussion in *The Trinity* can provide a fresh perspective on the faith/reason debate. For, while the mind is technically able to understand its threefold structure by its own effort, it is only faith, supported by the authority of the Christian tradition, which can properly mediate the mind's relation with the Trinity, whose image and likeness it represents. In other words, the relation between the image of God in the mind and the Trinity is indeed structured by the activities of memory, intelligence, and will, but it is up to faith to renew[35] this image, assuring us of our likeness to God. In this way, Augustine defends the religious ground of his anthropology in *The Trinity*.

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34 Aug., Trin. 10.11,18: *Et quidquid aliud ad se ipsa singula dicuntur etiam simul, non pluraliter sed singulariter dicuntur. Eo uero tria quo ad se inuicem referuntur. Quae si aequalia non essent non solum singula singulis sed etiam omnibus singula, non utique se inuicem caperent. Neque enim tantum a singulis singula, uerum etiam a singulis omnia capiuntur. Memini enim me habere memoriam et intellegentiam et uoluntatem, et intellego me intellegere et uelle atque meminisse, et uolo me uelle et meminisse et intellegere, totamque meam memoriam et intellegentiam et uoluntatem simul memini.* (CCSL 50, 331).

35 Cf. Aug., Trin. 12.7,12 (CCSL 50, 366–367). On the Christological accent of the discussion regarding the renovation of the image of God in the mind, cf. L. Ayres, 1998. Cf. also, O. Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon Saint Augustin*, Paris 1966, 442–443.

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Augustine's Anthropology in *tractatus in Iohannem* 15

Abstract: In tract. eu. Io. 15,[1] Augustine — who wrote no formal treatises on anthropology[2] — treats the encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4:1–42), reflecting on human nature in the process. He presents human beings as basically weak, albeit in strong relation to God, and strengthened by the incarnation. For the sake of human flourishing he prescribes the abandonment of lust, the cultivation of intellect, and the grounding of action in knowledge of God.

1. Setting of tract. eu. Io. 15

Augustine, as we know, preached on the entire Gospel of John. There are 124 tractates (i.e. homilies[3]) extant, of which tract. eu. Io. 20–22 are probably later additions,[4] meaning 121 are attributable to Augustine himself. While it is debated whether all were preached during church services, tract. eu. Io. 15 shows clear signs of an ecclesial setting.[5] Indeed, we have records of writers jotting down notes while Augustine preached.[6] The Gospel of John was probably read as *lectio continua*, setting it apart from Augustine's other

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1 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15 (CCL 36). The English translation of tract. eu. Io. is taken from E. Hill, *Augustine, Homilies on the Gospel of John 1–40,* A. D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *The works of Saint Augustine III/12*, New York 2009. The English translation of homily 15 is cited as tract. eu. Io. 15 (Hill, 275–296). Cf. M. Klöckener, *Die Frau am Jakobsbrunnen in altkirchlicher Johannesexegese. Erkenntnis, Pädagogik und Spiritualität bei Origenes, Johannes Chrysostomos und Augustinus*, Adamantiana 19, Münster 2021.
2 Cf. E. Feldmann, *Das augustinische Menschenbild*, in: G. Lange (ed.), *Was ist der Mensch? Aktuelle Fragen der Theologischen Anthropologie. Die Vorlesungen des Kontaktstudiums der Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultät der Ruhr-Universität Bochum im Wintersemester 1992/93,* Theologie im Kontakt 1, Bochum 1993, 49–72 (49).
3 Cf. M.-F. Berrouard, *Introduction aux homélies de Saint Augustin sur l'Évangile de Saint Jean*, CEAug. Série Antiquité 170, Paris 2004, 22; G.W. Doyle, *St. Augustine's Tractates on the Gospel of John compared with the Rhetorical Theory of De Doctrina Christiana*, Chapel Hill 1975, 2 f.
4 Cf. D.F. Wright, *The Manuscripts of St. Augustine's Tractatus in Euangelium Iohannis*: A Preliminary Survey and Check-List, in: RechAug 8 (1972), 55–143 (88–95).
5 Cf. H. Müller, *Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV (In –)*, in: AugL 3 (2004–2010), 704–730 (714).
6 Cf. Müller, 2004–2010, 714; Berrouard, 2004, 9.

homilies.[7] Tractates 1–16 were preached in Hippo in the years 406–407, and *tractatus* 15 between May 23rd and June 13th 407.[8] Here, Augustine addresses the passages read in advance of his homilies.[9] These passages and, indeed, his homilies, are organized according to thematic sections of John's gospel. Generally, Augustine first cites the verse he wants to expound upon, and then proceeds to interpret it. His interpretations vary in length, and are characterized by vivid rhetoric. He is in active contact with his audience and addresses them again and again.[10] The audience, we should note, was likely composed of both men and women, baptised and catechumens,[11] poor and rich; the poor, however, were probably not destitute, and perhaps even owned small estates.[12]

For Augustine's exegesis, the difference between carnal/literal and spiritual is very important: the biblical text, in his view, involves both.[13] His aim is to draw out the spiritual, and, by so doing, facilitate access to the mysteries that strengthen the souls of human beings.[14] This is why he chooses to interpret the gospel allegorically. Reading the scripture carnally would mean reading it literally, excluding the intention of the Holy Spirit.[15]

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7   Cf. Müller, 2004–2010, 716; A. Zwinggi, *Die fortlaufende Schriftlesung im Gottesdienst bei Augustinus*, in: ALW 12 (1970), 85–129 (129); M. Margoni-Kögler, *Die Perikopen im Gottesdienst bei Augustinus. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der liturgischen Schriftlesung in der frühen Kirche,* SÖAW.PH 810 = VKCLK 29, Vienna 2010, 581 f. 621.

8   Cf. Margoni-Kögler, 2010, 586 f.; Berrouard, 2004, 26; Müller, 2004–2010, 704–706 dates tract. eu. Io. 15 to Lent.

9   Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.1.

10 Augustine addresses them as "*fratres*" in tract. eu. Io. 15.7 f.; 15.18 f. He addresses each of them ("you") in tract. eu. Io. 15.4 (CCL 36, 151 f.); 15.6 f. (CCL 36, 152 f.); 15.9 (CCL 36, 153 f.); 15.12 (CCL 36, 154 f.); 15.16 (CCL 36, 156); 15.19 f. (CCL 36, 157 f.); 15.25 f. (CCL 36, 161). Cf. P.T. Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching*, Minneapolis 2014, 13; Doyle, 1975, 158.

11 Cf. V.H. Drecoll, *Liturgie bei Augustin*, in: id. (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, Theologen-Handbücher, Tübingen 2007, 224–232 (226).

12 Cf. Berrouard, 2004, 27 f.; Sanlon, 2014, 14 f.; R. MacMullen, *The Preacher's Audience (AD 350–400)*, in: JThs. NS 40,1 (1989), 503–511 (509).

13 E.g. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.6 or tract. eu. Io. 15.19.

14 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.1.

15 Cf. T. Toom, *Augustine's hermeneutics: the science of the divinely given signs*, in: T. Toom (ed.), *Patristic Theories of Biblical Interpretation*, New York 2016, 77–108 (105).

2. Augustine's Anthropology in tract. eu. Io. 15

Augustine begins his tract. eu. Io. 15 by speaking about John, the evangelist. We can assume that Augustine's audience would already be familiar with him, and at least part of his gospel.[16] Next, Augustine exhorts his audience to listen well because the evangelist speaks of "great mysteries and figures of great realities"[17] that feed the hungry and refresh the wearied soul.[18] Augustine wants to explain these mysteries in his homily.

2.1 The incarnation as strengthening mystery for human beings

After his introduction, Augustine proposes to talk about the strengthening mystery of the incarnation but does not address it immediately. He cites John 4:6, noting that it is here where the mysteries begin. These mysteries, we learn, lie in a textual meaning below the surface of the pure literal meaning.[19] As Augustine emphasizes:

> It is not for nothing that Jesus is tired, not for nothing that the strength of God is weary; not for nothing that the one by whom the weary are re-made is tired; not for nothing that the one whose absence wears us out, whose presence makes us steadfast, is weary. Still, Jesus is tired; he is tired from the journey and he sits down, and he sits down by the well, and it is at the sixth hour that, weary, he sits down. All these details are hinting at something, they want to suggest something; they are making us alert, they are encouraging us to knock. Therefore, may the one who was good enough to encourage us by saying, *Knock, and it will be opened to you* (Mt 7:7), open the door both to me and to you. For you was Jesus weary from the journey. We find a strong Jesus and we find a weak Jesus; Jesus is weak and strong […]. The strength of Christ created you, the weakness of Christ recreated you. The strength of Christ caused that which was not to be; the weakness of Christ caused that which already was not to perish.[20]

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16 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.1.

17 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.1 (Hill, 275).

18 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.1: *Dicta enim ibi sunt magna mysteria, et magnarum similitudines rerum; pascentes animam esurientem, reficientes languentem.* (CCL 36, 151).

19 Cf. F. van der Meer, *Augustinus der Seelsorger. Leben und Wirken eines Kirchenvaters*, N. Greitemann (trans.), Cologne ³1951, 465.

20 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.6: *Iam incipiunt mysteria. Non enim frustra fatigatur Iesus; non enim frustra fatigatur uirtus Dei; non enim frustra fatigatur, per quem fatigati recreantur; non enim frustra fatigatur, quo deserente fatigamur, quo praesente firmamur. Fatigatur tamen Iesus, et fatigatur ab itinere, et sedet, et iuxta puteum sedet, et hora sexta fatigatus sedet. Omnia ista innuunt aliquid, indicare uolunt aliquid; intentos nos faciunt, ut pulsemus hortantur. Ipse ergo aperiat et nobis et uobis […]. Tibi fatigatus est ab itinere Iesus. Inuenimus fortem Iesum, et inuenimus infirmum Iesum; fortem et infirmum Iesum […]. Fortitudo Christi te creauit,*

Augustine structures his language rhetorically to sharpen his focus. He repeats four times that nothing in the narrative happens without a purpose; indeed, does not happen 'for nothing'. In so doing, he underlines the mysteries below the literal meaning. He repeats three times that Jesus sits down, is weary,[21] weak, and strong. He equates Jesus and the strength of God when he twice forms a near identical sentence, supplanting "Jesus" with the "strength of God". He also uses contrast: Jesus' absence wearies us out; his presence makes us steadfast. The strength of Christ creates; his weakness recreates the listener. Augustine addresses his audience personally, including them in the biblical proceedings. He revisits the strength and weakness of Christ in the next sentence and again changes the second part, replacing "created you" and "recreated you" with "caused that which was not to be" and "caused that which already was not to perish". Consequently, he reformulates how Christ creates and recreates, viz. through his weak and strong aspects. In this formulation is a hidden mystery.[22]

Augustine compares Jesus to a mother hen nourishing her chicks.[23] One sees, when looking at the hen, that she has children to feed, and is, to that extent, weakened in her natural powers. Like this hen, Augustine presents Jesus as wearied from the journey of incarnation; that is to say, wearied in the flesh.[24] Augustine draws a parallel between "weary from the journey" and "weary in the flesh", showing that journey and flesh are interchangeable in the structure of his sentence. He explains this interpretation, again rhetorically, by noting that one cannot properly speak of Jesus 'journeying' somewhere if he is everywhere. He could only come to humankind by taking on the form of visible, space-bound flesh.[25] Ergo, one of the strengthening mysteries that Augustine spoke of at the beginning, and now explains, is

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infirmitas Christi te recreauit. Fortitudo Christi fecit ut quod non erat esset; infirmitas Christi fecit ut quod erat non periret (CCL 36, 152; Hill, 277 f.).

21 Cf. F.J. Weismann, *Cristo, verbo creador y redentor, en la controversia antidonatista de los 'Tractatus in Iohannis Evangelium' I-XVI de S. Agustin*, in: Strom. 42 (1986), 301–328 (322).

22 P. Agaësse, *L'anthropologie chrétienne selon Saint Augustin. Image, liberté, péché et grâce,* Paris 1986, 116 remarks that Augustine's anthropology, in presenting the redemptive incarnation, valorises at the same time divinity and humanity of Christ.

23 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.7.

24 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.7: *Sic ergo infirmus Iesus, fatigatus ab itinere. Iter ipsius est caro pro nobis adsumpta. […] Ideo fatigatus ab itinere quid est aliud, quam fatigatus in carne?* (CCL 36, 153).

25 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.7: *Quomodo enim iter habet qui ubique est, qui nusquam deest? Quo it, aut unde it, nisi quia non ad nos ueniret, nisi formam uisibilis carnis adsumeret?* (CCL 36, 153).

Jesus' live-renewing incarnation, and its effect on weakened humanity.[26] We now see that Augustine stressed Jesus' strength and weakness because they represent his divinity and humanity. Augustine next exhorts his audience to be strong in Jesus' weakness rather than wallowing in their own.[27] He does not explain what he means by being weak or strong as a human, but he must have some corresponding action in mind, or he could not admonish his listeners to act on this knowledge.

2.2 The water from the fountain and the living water read allegorically

Jesus promises living water (John 4:14). Augustine interprets this allegorically. He says, that "the water in the well is worldly pleasure in the dark depths", wherefrom people "draw it […] with the bucket of their lusts."[28] Augustine then describes human want in detailed observations[29] that humans "submit to lust so that they may attain the pleasure drawn up from the depths and may enjoy the pleasure which was preceded by the lust sent down to us".[30] According to Augustine, in order to obtain pleasure, human beings need first to dispatch lust.[31] He refers his interpretation to the biblical text and explains what he tacitly presupposed: "So then, take the bucket as being lust, the water from the depths as being pleasure; when anyone attains the pleasure of this world […] will he not get thirsty again? So, then, Jesus says *Whoever drinks of this water will get thirsty again;* but if he accepts

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26 Cf. N. Baumann, *Die Demut als Grundlage aller Tugenden bei Augustinus*, Pat. 21, Frankfurt 2009, 59. 70.

27 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.7: *sed noli tu infirmari; in illius infirmitate tu fortis esto* (CCL 36, 153).

28 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.16: e*tenim aqua in puteo, uoluptas saeculi est in profunditate tenebrosa; hinc eam hauriunt homines hydria cupiditatum* (CCL 36, 156; Hill, 283).

29 Cf. H. Karpp, *Probleme altchristlicher Anthropologie. Biblische Anthropologie und philosophische Psychologie bei den Kirchenvätern des dritten Jahrhunderts*, BFChTh 44,3, Gütersloh 1950, 247 f.

30 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.16: *Cupiditatem quippe proni submittunt, ut ad uoluptatem haustam de profundo perueniant; et fruuntur uoluptate, praecedente et praemissa cupiditate. Nam qui non praemiserit cupiditatem, peruenire non potest ad uoluptatem* (CCL 36, 156; Hill, 283). C. Mayer, *Prinzipien der Anthropologie Augustins*, in: id. (ed.), *Würde und Rolle der Frau in der Spätantike. Beiträge des II. Würzburger Augustinus-Studientages am 3. Juli 2004,* Cass. 39,3 = ResSig 3, Würzburg 2007, 15–29 (27) indicates the congruence between Augustine's anthropology and his biography. Cf. id., *Homo*, in: AugL 3 (2004–2010), 381–416 (407).

31 Cf. Feldmann, 1993, 57.

water from me, *he will never get thirsty again.*"[32] As possible pleasures of this world, Augustine lists drink, bath, show, and amour. In contrast to these worldly pleasures, which cause human beings to thirst again,[33] he elevates Jesus' water, which satisfies forever.

As Augustine often uses other biblical passages to reinforce his statements,[34] he here cites from the Psalms: "*We shall be satisfied,* says the Psalmist, *by the good things of your house*" (Ps 64:5 LXX).[35] He then asks what God will give if not the water of which it is said "For with you is the fountain of life" (Ps 35:10 LXX)? He concludes with a rhetorical question: "How, after all, will those ever get thirsty who *shall be made drunk on the abundance of your house*"[36] (Ps 35:9 LXX)? Augustine links the water that satisfies thirst forever to God, the fountain of life, and those who *shall be made drunk on the abundance of your house* to water in abundance. With this allegorical reading, Augustine presents a detailed picture of human want: whoever has wanted something once will want it again and again *ad infinitum*. Worldly pleasure is impermanent; only the water of God, interpreted as the Holy Spirit,[37] can quench future longing.

The interpretation of lust and pleasure as negatives is typical of Augustine's exegesis, as one can see when comparing his to Origen's. Origen's exegesis is also allegorical, but doesn't describe the water from the well as a pure negative, and refers the biblical situation not to lust and pleasure, but knowledge. Origen wrote his 13th book of the *Commentary on the Gospel according to John* in the 230s, perhaps 236, in Caesarea[38] with the aim of combatting the gnostic Heracleon.[39] For Origen, the water in the well represents uncertain

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32 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.16: *Pone ergo hydria, cupiditatem, et aquam de profundo, uoluptatem; cum peruenerit quisque ad uoluptatem saeculi huius, […] numquid non iterum sitiet? Ergo de hac aqua qui biberit, iterum, inquit, sitiet; si autem acceperit a me aquam not sitiet in aeternum* (CCL 36, 156; Hill, 283).

33 Cf. S.J. Duffy, *Anthropologie*, in: A. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Encyclopédie. Saint Augustin. La Méditerranée et l'Europe. IVᵉ – XXIᵉ siècle*, Edition française de M.-A. Vannier, Paris 2005, 45–57 (52).

34 Cf. Berrouard, 2004, 169–175; K. Froehlich, *"Take Up and Read". Basics of Augustine's Biblical Interpretation*, in: Interp. 58,1 (2004), 5–16 (10).

35 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.16 (Hill, 283).

36 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.16: *Satiabimus, inquit, in bonis domus tuae. De qua ergo aqua daturus est, nisi de illa de qua dictum est: Apud te est fons vitae? Nam quomodo sitient qui inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuae?* (CCL 36, 156; Hill, 284).

37 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.17.

38 Cf. R.E. Heine, *Introduction*, in: id., *Origen, Commentary on the Gospel according to John 1. Books 1–10*, FaCh 80, Washington 1989, 3–28 (15).

39 Cf. Chr. Markschies, *Valentin/Valentinianer*, in: TRE 34 (2002), 495–500 (495); A. Wucherpfennig, *Heracleon Philologus. Gnostische Johannesexegese im zweiten Jahrhundert*, WUNT 142, Tübingen 2002, 367.

teaching that does not bring real knowledge,[40] while Jesus' water represents a teaching that lifts one into eternal life. Jesus offers a teaching (ἔχο λόγον)[41] that acts as a spring toward eternity, carrying humans and their understanding (διάνοια)[42] up to a higher, eternal life. Origen also thinks it is good to first drink from the well in order to thirst, because only those longing for water can be saturated.[43] If it were not useful to drink water from the well, Origen says, Jesus would not have come to the well and would not have asked the woman to give him water therefrom.[44] Origen then equates drinking water from the well with reading the Scriptures.[45] So, reading the Scriptures is good, but Scripture does not contain all the mysteries of God.[46] The water that Jesus gives signifies all that is beyond Scripture (τὸ "ὑπὲρ ἃ γέγραπται").[47] For Origen, everything revolves around knowledge and its acquisition. In his favored interpretation, he cannot describe the water in the fountain as negative, because this would mean reading the Scriptures is negative. In Augustine's interpretation, we find the topics he is well known for, and which have left their indelible mark on history: the incessant longing of humans, lust, and the negative connotations of these.

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40 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.16 (GCS 10, 228). Greek edition: E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke. Der Johanneskommentar*, GCS 10, Leipzig 1903, cited as Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13 (GCS 10, 226–297). The English translation from the Commentary on the Gospel according to John is taken from R.E. Heine, *Origen, Commentary on the Gospel according to John 2. Books 13–32*, FaCh 89, Washington 1993. The English translation of book 13 is cited as Commentary on the Gospel according to John 13 (Heine, 69–165).

41 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.16 (GCS 10, 228).

42 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.16 (GCS 10, 228).

43 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.23.

44 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.24.

45 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.31: ἡ μὲν πηγὴ τοῦ Ἰακώβ […] ἡ πᾶσα εἶναι γραφή (GCS 10, 230).

46 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.27.

47 Cf. Or., Commentarii in euangelium Iohannis 13.31 (GCS 10, 230); S.J. Spangler, *"The Firstfruits of Our Activities": "Examination of the Gospel" and the Pedagogical Functions of Scripture in Origen's Prologue to the Commentary on the Gospel according to John,* in: C. Heidl / R. Somos (eds.), *Origeniana Nona. Origen and the Religious Practice of his Time. Papers of the 9th International Origen Congress. Pécs, Hungary, 29 August – 2 September 2005,* BETL CCXXVIII, Leuven 2009, 337–344 (342): "Jesus has also a pedagogic function: "leading to a 'spiritual', 'more mystical' kind of knowledge. The gospel points beyond itself to a higher meaning"".

2.3 The woman's husband as the ruling intellect enlightened by God

Augustine next raises questions about the intellect that should rule the soul and bodily senses once human beings become capable of reason. The intellect is enlightened by God and Christ.[48] If the intellect does not assume its proper place, error will reign, leading humans astray.[49]

Jesus asks the woman at the well to go call her husband, and then return (John 4:16). Augustine interprets this passage as follows: the woman cannot understand Jesus because she hears according to the flesh, while he speaks according to the Spirit. Again, Augustine works with repetitions (*carnem – carnem, loquor – alloquor*) and contrasts (*dono Dei – carnem, carnem – spiritum*) when he says: "*de dono Dei tibi loquor, tu autem carnem cogitas; secundum carnem sitire non uis, ego spiritum alloquor*".[50] In the first part of the sentence, he begins with the gift of God and ends with the flesh; in the second part, he turns it the other way around (chiasmus): beginning with the flesh and ending with the spirit. In so doing, he draws a parallel between "the gift of God" and "the spirit". Above, he had said that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit when he offers the living water and matched the Holy Spirit with the living water.[51] When Augustine spoke about the intellect or understanding of the woman in the passages above, he used *mens* or *intellectus*.[52] Now he uses *spiritus*.

Just as Augustine wants to reach the minds of his audience, whom he exhorts to listen attentively,[53] Jesus wants to reach the mind of the woman who does not yet understand him. This is why he asks her to call her husband, who Augustine interprets as her intellect, by repeating the biblical sentence and exchanging "husband" with "intellect": "*Voca uirum tuum,*

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48 Cf. F. van Fleteren / Red., *Illuminatio*, in: AugL 3 (2004–2010), 495–504 (498. 501); M.-A. Vannier, *La conversion, axe de l'anthropologie de S. Augustin*, in: CPEg 8 (2002), 34–48 (37); M.T. Clark, *Augustine on Person: Divine and Human*, in: J.T. Lienhard (ed.), *Augustine. Presbyter Factus Sum*, Augustinian Historical Institute, New York 1993, 99–120 (108).

49 Cf. Vannier, 2002, 36: "Seul le maître intérieur est garant de la vérité de la connaissance".

50 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (CCL 36, 157). Cf. G.J.P. O'Daly, *Anima, animus*, in: AugL 1 (1986–2004), 315–340 (316): "'Spiritus' […] is often identical in meaning with 'anima', though it can also be equated with 'mens'"; A.-G. Hamman, *L'homme, image de Dieu. Essai d'une anthropologie chrétienne dans l'Église des cinq premiers siècles*, Paris 1987, 252: *mens, intellectus, ratio* and *spiritus* "désignent 'la fine pointe de l'âme'".

51 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.17.

52 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.18 f. (CCL 36, 157).

53 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19.

praesenta intellectum tuum."[54] Only her husband, her intellect, can help the woman grasp what Jesus is saying. Augustine compares humans to animals: even animals have a soul,[55] but only humans have understanding.[56] If humans do not possess intellect, which for Augustine means do not *use* their intellect, they are reduced to an animal life. He plays again on words when he uses *non adhibere* to explain what *non habere* means: "*intellectum non habere, hoc est, non adhibere*".[57] He suggests that there is something animal in us that needs direction from the intellect,[58] which "directs from above the motions of the soul".[59] Augustine then explains his interpretation by asking whether the directing one, or the directed, should be called husband. With this rhetorical question he clearly means to express that the husband is the directing principle. Augustine can make this transference because both the husband and the intellect direct someone, or something: a husband directs his wife, the intellect rules the soul. The Samaritan woman thus becomes an image of the soul.[60] Augustine says that a life is well ordered when the understanding, that is, the intellect, rules the soul.[61] Hamman has argued that, when it comes to human nature, Augustine is only interested in the soul, and in the soul, only the intellect.[62] What we see here confirms this: first, the intellect is deemed part of the soul, and second, Augustine focusses his attention on the intellect.

Augustine compares the intellect, a part of the soul, to the eye, which is part of the flesh. The eye, alone among bodily members, can perceive light. The eyes are a part of the body and enjoy light for the sake of the body;

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54 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (CCL 36, 157).

55 Cf. E. Dinkler, *Die Anthropologie Augustins,* FKGG 4, Stuttgart 1934, 257; Chr. Horn, *Anthropologie*, in: V.H. Drecoll (ed.), *Augustin Handbuch*, Theologen-Handbücher, Tübingen 2007, 479–487 (484).

56 Cf. Mayer, 2004–2010, 386.

57 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (CCL 36, 157). Cf. A.J.H. van Weegen, *Preek en Dictaat bij Sint Augustinus. Syntactisch-stilistische studie over de tractatus in Ioannis Evangelium,* Nijmegen 1961, 99 f. for the connection of simplex and compositum; for *simplicia* and *composita* in the Augustinian sermons cf. Chr. Mohrmann, *Das Wortspiel in den augustinischen Sermones,* in: ead., *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, Rome 1959, 323–349 (338–340), first published in: Mn. 3,3 (1932), 33–61.

58 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19: *intellectu regendum est* (CCL 36, 157).

59 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (Hill, 285).

60 Cf. M. Comeau, *Saint Augustin exégète du quatrième évangile*, ETH, Paris 1930, 148.

61 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19: *cum ordinata uita est, intellectus animam regit* (CCL 36, 157).

62 Cf. Hamman, 1987, 277.

the intellect is the part of the soul that is enlightened by a higher light.[63] This higher light is, according to Augustine, God.[64] He proves this statement with a citation from the gospel of John, John 1:9: "*Iam superior illa lux […] Deus est. Erat* enim *uerum lumen, quod illuminat omnem hominem uenientem in hunc mundum*".[65] He then argues that Christ was just such a light.[66] By using John 1:9, Augustine replaces God, whom he first presented as the enlightening light, with Christ, who now enlightens the intellect.[67] He then takes up the encounter of John 4, inserting the light into the text of the gospel: "*Talis lux Christus erat, talis lux cum muliere loquebatur.*"[68] This interpretation is possible because he had previously defined Christ, who is speaking to the woman, as light.

Augustine repeats that the woman cannot understand Jesus; she cannot be enlightened because her intellect is absent. This, Augustine explains, is why Jesus asks her to call her husband, i.e. her intellect, by which she is taught and directed.[69] Here again, he presents an interpretation and elaborates upon it: "think of a soul without intelligence as a woman, of a soul which has intelligence as a man".[70] Augustine continues by noting that a man needs to be directed from above in order to rule his wife properly, citing 1 Cor 11:3: "For *the head of the woman is the man, while the head of the man is Christ*".[71] The analogous content is expressed by a syntactic parallel in the beginning of the sentences that end with a chiasmus in the word *uir* and *mulieris*, or *Christus*, respectively: "*Caput enim mulieris uir, caput autem uiri Christus.*"[72] Augustine revisits the encounter at the fountain when he says that the head of the man speaks to the woman without being physically present. In so doing, he reveals a gap in the chain of Christ directing the man/intellect, who directs the woman/soul. Augustine puts words into Jesus' mouth that illuminate the situation, together with all that may have been unclear pertaining to the woman, the husband, the intellect, Christ. He

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63 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19: *illuminatur luce superiore* (CCL 36, 157).

64 Cf. N. Fischer, *Foris – intus*, in: AugL 3 (2004–2010), 37–45 (37): Since Augustine "sich nach der Rückkehr in sein Inneres noch nicht am Ziel wußte, sah er sich genötigt, die Innerlichkeit der Seele auf Gott selbst hin zu übersteigen".

65 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (CCL 36, 157).

66 Cf. M. Comeau, *La vie intérieure du chrétien, d'après les "Tractatus in Joannem" de St Augustin*, in: RSR 20 (1930), 5–25, 125–149 (20).

67 Cf. Mayer, 2004–2010, 401: "Erkenntnis jedweder Art ist Sache des 'h. interior' […]. Sie erfolgt auf dem Weg der 'illuminatio' durch die 'lux interior ueritatis'."

68 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (CCL 36, 157).

69 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19.

70 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (Hill, 286).

71 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (Hill, 286).

72 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19 (CCL 36, 158).

says: "It is as if the Lord wanted to say, 'Bring along your head so that he might welcome his head'. So *call your husband and come back here* means 'Be present, be truly with me; [...] be present yourself, but not alone; be present with your head.'[73] Again, he uses many repetitions, underlining the demand to be truly present in Christ's presence. This request is not found in the biblical text. In John 4:16, Jesus asks the woman to go, call her husband, and come back to the well. Augustine modifies "come back" to "be present". Augustine's interpretation establishes Christ as the light that desires to enlighten the woman. This is only possible if her husband, i.e. her intellect, is present, because Christ and God enlighten the intellect. Therefore, Augustine explains why Jesus asks the woman to call her husband; namely, to achieve fuller presence.

Since the woman's husband is not there, she still thinks according to the flesh.[74] Jesus, the Lord, tracks her thought and speaks in mysteries:[75] he tells the woman that she spoke well in admitting that she has no husband. Augustine explains that the Lord knew she did not have a husband. In order to show her that he knew this by divinity, Jesus adds her five prior husbands and observes that the one she has now is not, in fact, her husband.[76] Augustine maintains that the text compels us to look at the five husbands. Some authors, he notes, think these husbands stand for the five books of Moses, because the Samaritans accepted these and followed the laws thereof. But Augustine deems this interpretation improbable given that the husband whom the woman now has is not, according to the text, her husband. Therefore, he considers it easier to interpret the five prior husbands – and he adds to the biblical text: the five husbands *of the soul* – as the five senses of the body.[77] When one is immature, before one is able to use intellect or reason, one is ruled by nothing else than the senses of the flesh.[78] In a little child, the soul follows the senses: it seeks or avoids what it hears, sees, smells, tastes, and perceives by touch. It seeks what pleases the five senses. It avoids what offends them. Desire pleases the senses. Pain offends

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73 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19: *adesto, praesens esto; [...] praesens esto, sed noli sola, cum uiro tuo adesto* (CCL 36, 158; Hill, 286).

74 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.20: *adhuc carnem sapit* (CCL 36, 158).

75 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.20: *Dominus sequitur, et mysteria loquitur* (CCL 36, 158).

76 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.20.

77 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.21: *uidetur mihi facilius nos posse accipere quinque uiros priores animae, quinque sensus corporis esse* (CCL 36, 158).

78 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.21: *antequam uti possit mente atque ratione, non regitur nisi sensibus carnis* (CCL 36, 158).

them.[79] Since the soul is ruled by these five senses, it lives according to their dictates.

Augustine next asks why the five senses are called husbands. As we saw, he has already explained that the ruling principle is called husband.[80] Now he says that the senses are named husbands because of their legitimacy. They are made by God, who has given them to the soul. Even so, the soul is weak insofar as it is ruled by the senses and acts according to their rule. But if, when she comes to the years of discretion, the soul accepts the discipline and teaching of wisdom, then the five husbands (the senses) will be followed by a true and legitimate husband; a better husband who rules to eternity, forms to eternity, and instructs to eternity.[81] Augustine maintains that the true and legitimate husband does not replace the five senses automatically, but only if a person has undergone proper formation. He repeats three times that the legitimate husband guides the soul to eternity and shows by this that the soul's proper orientation is towards eternity. The five senses, however, do not direct towards eternity but rather make us seek/avoid temporal things.[82] Only the weak soul requires the impressions of the senses, whereas the intellect makes the soul distinguish between just and unjust, good and evil, useful and useless, chastity and unchastity. It instructs the soul to love the first, avoid the second, and to seek love rather than hate.[83] Hence, the ability to differentiate between good and evil intellectually does not only concern knowledge. It also has practical consequences: humans are to love good and avoid evil; they shall act charitably.

If the intellect does not follow the five senses as ruler when the soul reaches rational maturity, error will dominate.[84] But, Augustine warns, error does not rule in the proper sense. It rather destroys. This is how he analyzes the situation of the woman at the well: it was not the intellect that followed her five senses as ruler, but error. No legitimate husband, but an adulterer.[85] This

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79 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.21: *Hos enim quinque sensus mulcet uoluptas, offendit dolor* (CCL 36, 158).

80 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.19.

81 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.21: *at ubi uenerit ad annos exserendae rationis, si eam susceperit optima disciplina et doctrina sapientiae, quinque illis uiris ad regendum non succedit, nisi uir uerus legitimus et illis melior, et qui melius regat, et qui ad aeternitatem regat, ad aeternitatem excolat, ad aeternitatem instruat* (CCL 36, 159).

82 Cf. H. Rondet, *L'anthropologie religieuse de saint Augustin*, in: RSR 29 (1939), 163–196 (172 f.); Fischer, 2004–2010, 41.

83 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.21; Karpp, 1950, 249.

84 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.22: *error dominatur* (CCL 36, 159).

85 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.22.

is how Augustine explains why Jesus says to the Samaritan woman that the man she has now is not her husband.

Augustine has Jesus command the woman to call her husband, rather than her adulterer, directing her to trust her intellect rather than her physical senses. Augustine explains that the woman erred because she had water in mind while the Lord, Jesus, was talking about the Holy Spirit.[86] Augustine asks a rhetorical question about the cause of her error: is it not due to the fact that she has an adulterer instead of a husband? He has Jesus command the woman to dismiss her adulterer and call her husband, to call him and return, for the sake of understanding.[87]

In the course of the conversation, Augustine shows how the woman uses her intellect more and more. According to Augustine, we can see that the woman's husband, i.e. the intellect, has begun to arrive – but just begun – when she recognizes Jesus as a prophet.[88] She doesn't err so much as she did before, having begun to call her husband and dismiss the adulterer.[89] She asks about the right place for adoration, and, in response, Jesus teaches her.[90] He says: woman, believe me (John 4:21). Augustine emphasizes that she now hears "woman, believe me" because her husband is present. He has Jesus say to the woman: in you is the one who believes, because your husband is present.[91]

A passage follows on the adoration on the Garizim and in Jerusalem, in spirit and in truth (John 4:20 f. 24),[92] in the temple and in the heart.[93] It also broaches the themes of (not) knowing what one worships, and salvation from the Jews (John 4:22 f.).[94] The woman, who had deemed Jesus a prophet, recognizes his words as surpassing prophecy,[95] telling him that she knows about the coming Messiah, the Christ, who will announce everything (John 4:25).[96] Augustine concludes that the woman knew in advance

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86 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.22: *Adhuc enim errabat mulier, quae aquam illam cogitabat, cum iam Dominus de Spiritu sancto loqueretur* (CCL 36, 159).

87 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.22.

88 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.23.

89 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.23.

90 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.23 f.

91 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.24: *Iam enim est in te qui credat, quia praesens est uir tuus* (CCL 36, 160).

92 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.24.

93 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25.

94 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.26.

95 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.27: *uidit talia dicere eum cum quo loquebatur, quae iam plus essent ad prophetam* (CCL 36, 161). Hill, 2009, 292, note 21 reads *plus essent a propheta* instead and translates "she saw that the man she was talking to was saying the kind of things that would be beyond a prophet".

96 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.27.

who would be able to teach her, and was thus worthy of having Jesus reveal himself.[97] Augustine cites John 4:25 f. and concludes that the woman has called her husband, that he has become her head, and that Jesus has become the head of this husband/intellect.[98] The immediate consequence of knowing Jesus' role as Messiah is a turn toward good actions.

2.4 Good action as consequence of knowing God

Augustine connects the knowledge gained about Jesus as Messiah with the turn toward good actions in the next part of his tractate: the woman is guided by faith to live a good life.[99] Having received Christ the Lord in her heart, she leaves her water jar at the well, and runs ("ἀπῆλθεν" in John 4:28) through the town to evangelize ("λέγει" in John 4:28).[100] Augustine interprets this as follows: she throws away lust and hurries off in order to announce the truth.[101] He associates "leave the water jar" with "throw away lust", and "evangelize" with "announce the truth". In his first parallel, he revisits the picture from paragraph 16, where he presented the vessel as lust. Augustine presents the woman as a role model by saying that those who desire to evangelize must learn to throw away the water jar at the well.[102] By so doing, he has combined each of the words for leaving the water jar at the fountain (*dimitteret* and *proiecit*) with the associated nouns (*hydriam* and *cupiditatem*): first, he says *hydriam dimitteret*, then *proiecit cupiditatem*, and finally *proiciant hydriam*. He does not formulate *proiciant cupiditatem*,[103] but his parallels reveal his intent. The woman no longer follows the corporal senses, but is ruled by her intellect, by the light of God, by Christ, whom she preaches successfully.

Not only does the knowledge of Jesus' role as Messiah have consequences for action, but so too the recognition of his prophetic vocation: the woman asks Jesus about proper worship once she realizes that he is a prophet (John 4:19 f.). Jesus answers that true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth because the Father, being spirit, desires such worshipers (John

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97 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.27.
98 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.28.
99 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.28: *Iam mulier ordinatur in fide, et regitur bene uictura* (CCL 36, 162).
100 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.30: *et receptor in cor Christo Domino, quid faceret nisi iam hydriam dimitteret, et euangelizare curreret?* (CCL 36, 162).
101 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.30: *Proiecit cupiditatem, et properauit annuntiare ueritatem* (CCL 36, 162).
102 Cf. Comeau, *La vie,* 1930, 140 f.
103 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.30 (CCL 36, 162).

4:23 f.). Augustine explains that the mountain and the temple are physical, whereas God is not; wherefore, he should be worshiped in spirit and truth.[104]

In this context, Augustine presents an ideal for human behavior that depends on recognizing God's proximity to the lowly. Augustine supposes that his audience may think of God as dwelling on high, observing humanity from a lofty place, and so insists that God looks kindly upon the lowly. Loving contrasts, Augustine argues in form of a fictional dialogue that God is near. He anticipates, and inserts, a possible question from his audience; namely, to whom is God near? Does his nearness have to do with personal loftiness or physical height?[105] Augustine's answer is a citation from Ps 33:19 LXX: "He is near to those who have crushed their hearts".[106] Augustine considers it wonderful that God dwells in the heights while, at the same time, being near the humble. He cites again from the Psalms (Ps 137:6 LXX): "He looks on the lowly, while he knows what is high up from afar".[107] Augustine concludes that God sees the proud from afar. He addresses each of his listeners, asking them if they are looking for a mountain, and prompting them to descend and dwell with God.[108] To justify this interpretation, Augustine cites Ps 83:6 f. LXX, noting that the mountains are in the heart, in the valley of weeping. Augustine explains that the valley is humility[109] or low-lying.[110] Therefore, everything should be done with humility or – depending on the translation – inwardness. Inwardness is not an improbable translation,[111] considering how Augustine continues: "So then, do everything within; and if perchance you are looking for some high place, some holy place, present the temple within you to God".[112] Augustine compares the lofty place with a holy place, and a holy place with the temple, based on 1 Cor 3:17. Therefore, his conclusion is that those who want to pray in the temple shall

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104 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.24.
105 Cf. Comeau, *La vie,* 1930, 18: "Aller à Dieu ne demande pas de longues recherches, un coûteux déplacement; c'est simplement tourner vers lui l'intelligence."
106 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25 (Hill, 291).
107 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25 (Hill, 291).
108 Cf. Baumann, 2009, 275.
109 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25: *Conuallis humilitatem habet. Ergo intus age totum* (CCL 36, 161).
110 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25 (Hill, 291).
111 Cf. E. Cassidy, *Per Christum Hominem ad Christum Deum: Augustine's Homilies on John's Gospel,* in: Th. Finan / V. Twomey (eds.), *Studies in Patristic Christology*, Dublin 1998, 122–143 (143); M. Comeau, *La rhétorique de Saint Augustin d'après les Tractatus in Ioannem,* Paris 1930, 96; Mayer, 2004–2010, 400.
112 Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25 (Hill, 291). Cf. Clark, 1993, 106: In "human interiority […] contact with Transcendence becomes possible."

pray first in themselves, and that, in so doing, they shall become a temple of God, who will surely listen.[113]

3. Conclusion: the strong relationship between God and human beings

We have uncovered four insights pertaining to Augustine's anthropological vision in tract. eu. Io. 15. First, there are biblical mysteries that lend strength to the weak. Augustine focuses on the mystery of Jesus' incarnation (Jesus' journey represents his incarnation), which renews human nature. In Jesus, humans find rest and strength. Without him, they are weak. Second, Augustine provides a detailed analysis of human longing and lust. He uses the image of the well to signify the dark depths of the world, gathered incessantly by the vessel of human lust. In other words, humans let down their lust into the depths of the world to obtain pleasure again and again. Only the water of God, interpreted as the Holy Spirit, can prevent further longing. Third, Augustine takes the five previous husbands, and a sixth adulterer, as images of the five senses, and error, respectively. The five senses are the ruling principle of the soul, favoring temporal things insofar as human beings have not developed their intellect (due to youth and/or inexperience). If/when the intellect does not follow the senses, error, an adulterer, takes its place, and leads one astray. Jesus asks the woman to call her husband, which in Augustine's interpretation means to use her intellect, i.e. the part of the soul that can conceive the light of God and discern between good and evil. Christ himself, being the light of God, rules the intellect. Finally, knowledge concerning Jesus as Messiah and the divine essence have consequences for one's actions: the woman is a role model, abandoning lust for the sake of evangelization. Augustine suggests that those who desire to preach should follow her example. As for knowledge of Jesus as Messiah, it has direct consequences for knowledge of the divine essence: because God is spirit, he should be worshiped in spirit and truth. Because God is near the lowly, Augustine calls his audience to pray within themselves rather than in lofty places, for they themselves can be holy temples of God.

All these aspects demonstrate a strong relationship between God and humanity: Augustine does not present the incarnation as an abstract datum, but rather implicates his listeners in salvation history. Jesus chooses weakness on their behalf. Humans, on their own, are bound to lust; only the Holy

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113 Cf. Aug., tract. eu. Io. 15.25; C. Couturier, *Sacramentum et mysterium dans l'oeuvre de Saint Augustin*, in: H. Rondet / M. Le Landais / A. Lauras / C. Couturier (eds.), Études Augustiniennes, Theol (P) 28, Paris 1953, 163–274 (256); Rondet, 1939, 180.

Spirit can release them. They must turn away from the senses and follow the intellect, which, in turn, must be guided by God. Hence, the relationship between human beings and God, with its accentuation of the internal, must also yield external action. Human beings have their own contribution to make (e.g. giving up lust and following the intellect), but they are ultimately dependent on God,[114] who enlightens their intellect and quenches their thirst.

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114 Cf. A. Solignac, *La double tradition augustinienne*, in: Anthropologie et humanisme. Les cahiers de Fontenay 39/40 (1985), 67–77 (67); Duffy, 2005, 46.

Margrethe Kamille Birkler, Anders-Christian Jacobsen

Augustine on Human Resurrection

Abstract: We begin this article by examining 1 Cor 15 as the starting point of Augustine's argumentation (I). Several elaborate passages in Augustine's later writings reveal that Paul's reflections on the essence of the resurrected body in 1 Cor 15 influenced Augustine's conception of human resurrection. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on two such passages; namely, *Enchiridion* 84–92 and *De Civitate Dei* 22.12–21. In each of these, 1 Cor 15 plays a significant role. In section II, we will identify the opponents of the Christian idea of resurrection who are contradicted by Augustine (especially in *De Civitate Dei*). Section III delineates the questions about, and objections to, the Christian belief in the resurrection of the body (such as are raised by these opponents). The next section (IV) looks closely at Augustine's responses to his opponents, which contain the most significant elements of his resurrection theology. His presentation centers on the destiny of the bodies of the righteous who are saved—the saints. However, Augustine claims that the condemned will be resurrected as well. The fate of these lost ones will be presented in section V. Section VI links Augustine's ideas concerning the resurrection to his dualistic theology and his well-known doctrine of sin and grace. The article ends with a summary and conclusion.

1. Introduction

This article on Augustine's understanding of human resurrection is a natural extension of Prof. Jacobsen's previous research on the topic, wherein he deals primarily with the early Greek theologians.[1] In this article, we concentrate on Augustine's treatment of human resurrection in two important writings from the latter part of his life: *Enchiridion* (enchir.) and *De Civitate Dei* (ciu.).[2]

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1 Cf. A.-C. Jacobsen, *Kødets opstandelse? Mennesket og målet hos Irenæus og Origenes*, Copenhagen 2002; A.-C. Jacobsen, *The nature, function, and destiny of the human body – Origen's interpretation of 1 Cor 15*, in: ZAC 23 (2019), 36–52.

2 *De Civitate Dei* was long on its way. Augustine began to write the work in 412 and finished in 426 or 427. One of the reasons for beginning this work was the fall of Rome in 410, which to Augustine and others was understood as a sign of the end of this world, cf. J. van Oort, *De Ciuitate Dei (Über die Gottesstadt)*, in: V.H. Drecoll, *Augustin Handbuch*, Tübingen 2007, 347–360 (349). The *Enchiridion* was written in 421 at the request of a person named Laurentius. Enchiridion is a kind of catechism explaining the most central elements of Christian faith—faith, hope and love, cf. for the dating P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, London 1967, 378–379.

In these later writings, the shift in Augustine's thoughts on the resurrected body is apparent. The view of the resurrected body in the younger Augustine is especially pronounced in the writing *De Fide et Symbolo* from 393, in which Augustine writes that in the resurrection there "will no longer be flesh and blood, but only body."[3] Building on 1 Cor 15:44, Augustine writes that the body in the resurrection will be subjected to the spirit in a way fitting for dwelling in heaven, by which all earthly fragility and pollution will have been changed and transformed into heavenly purity and stability.[4] Following Michael David Barbezat, this subjection to the spirit should be seen in relation to Augustine's tripartite anthropology according to which the human being is divided into three parts: *spiritus*, *anima*, and *corpus*. In the perfection, these three parts will be arranged hierarchically, resulting in the perfect harmony when *corpus* is subjected to *anima, anima* is subjected to *spiritus,* and *spiritus* is subjected to God.[5] According to Barbezat, Augustine here understands 1 Cor 15:52 to mean that not just the rational mind will rise at the resurrection but the body as well, however, a body that is purged of disorder. Following Barbezat this means, that "this formulation takes the body as an indispensable and constant part of personhood."[6] This body will, however, according to Augustine in *De Fide et Symbolo* not be made of flesh, because there will be no flesh at all in the heavenly things, but instead simple and shining bodies, which by some is called ethereal and by Paul spiritual.[7] The substance of the ethereal body will be radically different from the fallen human body. The human body will go through a process of refinement through which the ethereal body will be a corporeal body forged from our current bodies. Following Barbezat, this should not be understood as a transformation into spirit, but as a imagining of a type of body that could be perfect.[8] This refinement process originates according to Barbezat from book four of Origen's *De principiis* and the wheat grain metaphor found herein.[9]

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3   Aug., fid. et symb., 10.24,30: *Non iam caro erit et sanguis, sed tantum corpus.* (CCSL 41). The English translation is from E. P. Meijering (trans.), Augustine, *De Fide et Symbolo,* Amsterdam 1987, 150.

4   Aug., fid. et symb., 6.13,15–16.

5   Aug., fid. et symb., 10.23.

6   M. D. Barbezat, *Augustine on the flesh of the resurrection body in the De Fide et Symbolo: Origen, Manichaeism, and Augustine's developing thought regarding human physical perfection,* in: A. M. Scott / M. D. Barbezat (eds.), *Fluid Bodies and Bodily Fluids in Premodern Europe,* Amsterdam 2019, 175–192 (184).

7   Aug., fid. et symb, 10.24,31.

8   Barbezat, 2019, 185.

9   Id.., 186. It should be noted with Tarmo Toom that for Augustine the metaphor of the wheat grain in 1 Cor 15 did not sufficiently convey the discontinuity

Augustine had, however, become aware of the problematic implications of his statements in *De Fide et Symbolo* when he wrote *Retractiones* in 426–427. Here, he does not write that he was wrong in his younger years but seeks instead to clarify how his earlier statements should be understood. It is however quite clear, as Barbezat emphasizes as well, that Augustine in *Retractiones* reverses his earlier position and here arguments in favor of the transformation of the flesh.[10] Augustine writes that one should not misunderstand his earlier statements stating that in the resurrection there will only be body, and not flesh and blood, as meaning that human beings' current earthly body will be changed into a celestial body, which will have neither its members nor the substance of the flesh. This he finds supported by the resurrected body of Christ, which had the same members and were visible for the eyes and touchable by the hands.[11] Augustine does, however, still hold that the members and the substance of the flesh must undergo a necessary refinement process, which we also will find in *De Civitate Dei*. Thus, Augustine here, as Barbezat has noted as well, goes beyond Origen who believed that even though e.g. air cannot be grasped it is still a body. Augustine on the other hand now believed an aerial body to be too abstract and thus not an useable expression as it would represent a transformation into something that would no longer be human.[12]

Barbezat is therefore right in concluding, that "the route towards perfection charted by the young Augustine abstracts or spiritualizes the body to a high degree and would prove unacceptable to him in his old age".[13] Thus, the characteristics of Augustine's late theology understandably influenced his articulation of human resurrection including *Enchiridion* and *De Civitate Dei*. This also means, among other things, that the distinction between those

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alongside the material/formal continuity as mortal bodies rot – a process which the resurrected body is free from rather than a victim to. Thus, Augustine preferred the non-organic metaphors of re-cast statues and rebuilt ships, cf. T. Toom, *Totus Homo: Augustine on Resurrection,* in: K. D. Dyer (ed.), *Resurrection and Responsibility: Essays on Scripture, Theology, and Ethics in Honor of Thorwald Lorenzen*, Oregon 2009, 59–75 (69).

10 Barbezat, 2019, 186. This view is supported by e.g. D. G. Hunter, *Augustine on the Body,* in: M. Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine*, New Jersey 2012, 353–364 (361), and M. R. Miles, *Sex and the City (of God): Is Sex Forfeited or Fulfilled in Augustine's Resurrection of Body?*, in: Journal of the American Academy of Religion 73/2 (2005), 307–327 (315).

11 Aug., Retract., 1.17,53. Here, Augustine refers to Luke 24:39 as well.

12 Babezat, 2019, 187.

13 Id., 176.

who are 'saved,' and those who are 'lost,' is more pronounced in the late writings than in the early ones.[14]

2. Augustine's Point of Departure: 1 Cor 15

In *Enchiridion* 91, Augustine presents his understanding of the resurrected bodies of the saved—i.e. "the saints" (*sanctorum corpora*)[15]—as a paraphrase of, and commentary on, central passages in 1 Cor 15. Paul's epistle is a response to those Corinthians who deny the resurrection of the dead. Not only does it feature his arguments in defense of resurrection, but also in defense of its corporeal character. Evidently, this is perfectly suited to Augustine's purposes.

Having introduced the resurrection of the body earlier in the *Enchiridion*, Augustine provides a detailed analysis in *Enchiridion* 91. The resurrected bodies of the saints, we read, will be freed from all defects and deficiencies presently associated with the human body. The new bodies will be indestructible (*sine ulla corruptione*), and marked by ease (*facilitas*) and happiness (*felicitas*). For this reason, they are called spiritual (*spiritalia*), a phrase found also in 1 Cor 15:44. But, as Augustine explains, this does not mean that such bodies cease to be really and truly bodies. Their nature is preserved, but also transformed. According to Augustine, the resurrected body will shed the debilitating features of its carnal nature. Perishability, which causes earthly bodies to be heavy (*aggrauo*), and blemishing (*uitia*), which sets the flesh against the spirit, will no longer tyrannize bodily existence. In defending this assertion, Augustine cites 1 Cor 15:50a where Paul says that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. Augustine interprets this to mean that the resurrected bodies of the saints will remain carnal in the sense of being fleshly in nature, while, at the same time, rising above the imperfections that characterize earthly bodies of flesh and blood.[16] Augustine justifies this

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14 Concerning the question about continuity and discontinuity in Augustine's theology see C. Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's early theology. An argument for continuity*, Oxford 2006. Harrison argues for continuity between the younger and the older Augustine. Another point of view is presented by B. Dobell in his book *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion. The Journey from Platonism to Christianity*, Cambridge 2009. Dobell's thesis is, that Augustine's first conversion in 386 was an intellectual conversion to Porphyrian Platonism and only later on, around 395, did he convert to Pauline Christianity. Dobell's point of view is summarized in the conclusion of his book (228–236), entitled 'Augustine the Porphyrian'.

15 He turns to the resurrection of the lost in enchir. 92, which we shall also examine below.

16 Aug., enchir. 91: *Quantum autem attinet ad substantiam, etiam tunc caro erit.* The texts of *Enchiridion* and *De Civitate Dei* are cited from B. Dombart / A. Kalb

position by pointing out that, after his resurrection, Jesus' body was on several occasions described as being flesh, for example in Luke 24:39.

This distinction between different meanings of the words 'flesh' and 'carnal' is not an invention of Augustine. He is rather continuing a dialectic rooted in the early Greek patristic tradition. In this tradition, 1 Cor 15:50a had been interpreted through a distinction between 'flesh and blood,' understood as substances, and 'flesh and blood,' understood as qualities.[17] This distinction made it possible to assert that resurrected bodies will remain fleshly, while also rising above the defects, shortcomings, and weaknesses associated with the flesh in this life.[18] So, it is clear that Augustine is following a strong patristic tradition expressed for example by Irenaeus (and even stronger and more radically by Origen) when he affirms the resurrection of the flesh. Here Augustine's move from Platonism to Pauline Christianity which Dobell described becomes quite clear. In the context of Augustine's notion of the resurrection of the flesh, flesh is something transformed, perfected, and liberated from the heaviness of corruptibility. Here we find a strong anti-dualistic point, to which we shall return below.

The description of the nature of the resurrected bodies of the saints in *Enchiridion* 91 is more or less reiterated in *De Civitate Dei* 22.21. In this passage, Augustine confirms—by using words and concepts derived from 1 Cor 15—that all such bodies, in the wake of death, will be restored and transformed into spiritual bodies: clothed with immortality and incorruption.[19] In this future state, the spiritual flesh will be subject to the spirit, without thereby ceasing to be flesh. This corresponds with Augustine's interpretation in *Enchiridion* 91; namely, that resurrected bodies will surrender their carnal qualities (that is, their corruptibility) while remaining essentially carnal. In *De Civitate Dei* 22.21, Augustine adds the caveat that

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(eds.), *Opera*, CCSL 47–48, Turnholt 1955 (*De Civitate Dei*), and W.M. Green (ed.), *Opera*, CCSL 46, Turnholt 1969 (*Enchiridion*).

17 Cf. Iren., haer. 5.9–14 where he—by means of a distinction between flesh understood as substance and quality, respectively—carefully explains that it does not follow from Paul's statements in 1 Cor 15:50a that the body's carnal substance is excluded from salvation. For an interpretation of this passage, see Jacobsen, 2002, 68–81.

18 See further A. Nightingale, *Once Out of Nature: Augustine on Time and the Body*, Chicago 2011, 211–217, in which Nightingale holds that Augustine in e.g. ciu., 14.2 emphasizes that the works of the flesh cannot be identified with the body alone, why Augustine is using Paul's notion of the flesh as a moral category.

19 Aug., ciu. 22.21: *Restituetur ergo quidquid de corporibus uiuis uel post mortem de cadaueribus periit, et simul cum eo, quod in sepulcris remansit, in spiritalis corporis nouitatem ex animalis corporis uetustate mutatum resurget incorruptione atque inmortalitate uestitum.*

all statements concerning the resurrected, spiritual bodies of the saints pertain to something that no living person has experienced.[20] However, since Christians hope for and believe in a bodily resurrection, this circumstance should not, in Augustine's view, prevent us from further discussing the subject.

3. Identifying the critics of the Christian belief in bodily resurrection

In *Enchiridion*, Augustine does not explicitly declare that his description of, and arguments for, corporeal resurrection are made in response to non-Christian critics thereof. However, in *De Civitate Dei* he typically refers to 'scholars and wise men'[21] and, more specifically, Plato and Platonists (ciu. 22.11–12) as targets of his critique. Although we will retain Augustine's phrase 'Platonists' throughout this article, there can be little doubt that his quarrel is not with Plato *per se*. Nor is he overly concerned with Plato's philosophy being somehow (mis)used by later epigones against the idea of Christian resurrection. The problem is with still-later Neo-Platonic adaptation(s). It is such 'Neoplatonists' whom Augustine sees as the focal point of his criticism. While not overly critical of Plato's own philosophy (which actually had a great influence on him, as he himself admits), Augustine did not appreciate Neo-Platonic additions to, and interpretations of, Plato. In *De Civitate Dei* 22.11, he calls the critical Platonists 'book-keepers,' or 'accountants' (*ratiocinatores*), whose teacher (*magistro*) is Plato. In the context of philosophy, the term 'accountant' bears negative connotations. It suggests that, for Augustine, these Platonic accountants, who claim to represent Plato's views, do not have the necessary spiritual or philosophical insight to do so correctly. This indicates a development in Augustine's relation to Neo-Platonism since Augustine's conversion from dualist Manichaeism was strongly influenced by Neo-Platonic monism.[22]

In addition to identifying the critics alluded to in *Enchiridion* as belonging to the general circle of Neo-Platonists, Augustine specifically mentions Porphyry in *De Civitate Dei*. Thus, in *De Civitate Dei* 10.29 (a brief remark on resurrection) Augustine names Porphyry as a critic of corporeal

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20 Aug., ciu. 20.21: *Quae sit autem et quam magna spiritalis corporis gratia, quoniam nondum uenit in experimentum, uereor ne temerarium sit omne, quod de illa profertur, eloquium*. Augustine also discusses the bodily resurrection in many other texts apart from the two above-mentioned pericopes, e.g., Faust. 11.3; catech. 54; fid. et symb. 10; ciu. 23.19–20.

21 Aug., ciu. 22.4: *Docti et sapientes*.

22 Cf. B. Dobell, 2009.

resurrection. Porphyry had purportedly claimed that all corporeality should be avoided so the soul can achieve eternal happiness with God.[23] In response to this assertion, Augustine notes that the 'Platonist philosophers' following Porphyry hold that the universe is a living, animate being, both happy and eternal (ciu. 10.29), with reference to Plato (cf. ti. 30 f.). But, he argues, if one holds that the soul must divorce itself from all corporeality to achieve perfect happiness, then one must also hold that the soul and body of the universe should be divorced. This, however, is an impossibility for the Platonist 'accountants,' since they maintain that the universe is eternal. Thus, Augustine argues, Porphyry's idea that the soul must reject corporeality to obtain happiness does not match Plato's own statements on the matter.

Porphyry is mentioned again in connection with the same topic in *De Civitate Dei* 22.26. The starting point for Augustine's arguments in this passage is, again, Porphyry's idea that souls must escape corporeality if they want to achieve perfect happiness. He offers another solution, once again correcting Porphyry by referencing Plato. Augustine cites Plato's statement in Timaeus (ti. 41) where he describes how the highest God promised immortality to the lesser gods, whom he created. The highest God thereby demonstrates his will and ability to act against nature by promising created beings (by definition mortal and corruptible) that they should not die and dissolve. Thus, for Augustine, it is not, as the Platonic accountants think, impossible for God to clothe the souls of the righteous in an indestructible body at the resurrection. Accordingly, Porphyry's claim—that the only way for souls to achieve perfect and eternal happiness is to separate themselves from any form of corporeality—is incorrect.[24]

In *De Civitate Dei* 22.27, Augustine states that Plato and Porphyry would have been able to learn from each other had they only met half-way. If they had done so, both would have found the truth about the relationship between soul and body in the afterlife. Plato claims that even wise souls will return to bodies—though after a long time (re-incarnation)[25]—whereas Porphyry claims that a perfect soul will never return to this world of evil, once it has returned to God.[26] Augustine argues that, if Plato had learned

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23 According to Augustine, this is stated by Porphyry in a text entitled *On the Return of the Soul*.

24 In ciu. 13.17–18, Augustine lists the same references to Plato as arguments against the rejection of the idea of resurrection uttered by unnamed Platonists.

25 In Plato's view, the souls that are not wise or perfect will always return to bodies; thus, through the process of reincarnation, these souls will continuously acquire new bodies until they achieve perfection, cf. Phd. 70c–d; Phdr. 248–249, R. 10.614 f.

26 Porph., Marc. 33.

from Porphyry that souls do not return to the evil of this world, he would have reached a true understanding of the resurrection. Plato would then have realized that, even though souls will return to this world—that is, to the bodies they had in this world—they will not return to the evil that haunted these bodies. On the contrary, souls will return to cleansed and incorruptible bodies. Porphyry, in turn, could have learned from Plato that souls do indeed return to this world, i.e. to their bodies. This comparison between Plato and Porphyry is used by Augustine to demonstrate that both are mistaken about the relation between souls and bodies in the afterlife. Augustine is undoubtedly more critical of Porphyry's point of view because it involves a complete soul/body dualism. Nonetheless, the Platonic idea concerning the soul's return to the corruptible body is also unacceptable to Augustine, as we shall see below.

In this section, we have identified the critics of the Christian idea of resurrection against whom Augustine argues both in *De Civitate Dei* and the aforementioned passage of *Enchiridion*. Even if Augustine does not explicitly name his opponents in the latter, he is undoubtedly addressing the same opponents as in *De Civitate Dei*. These critics are Platonists who completely reject the Christian idea of resurrection because they assert a sharp dualism between body and soul. Against these Platonic 'accountants,' who rigorously stick to their principles, Augustine cites their own teacher, Plato. While Plato's views may fall short of the truth, Augustine maintains that they are nonetheless on the right track, since Plato allows the creator to act against the order of nature in promising created beings eternal life.[27]

4. The Platonist criticism of the Christian belief in bodily resurrection

As mentioned above, Augustine holds that the Platonic philosophers' critique of the Christian belief in corporeal resurrection is based on too stark a dualism between soul and body. According to the Platonists, the soul is saved from the body by death and, consequently, will not rejoin it at the resurrection (as the Christians believe). In this objection to the Christian belief in bodily resurrection, Augustine identifies a number of concrete points of criticism, all of which involve the question of how something perishable and imperfect can be transformed into something perfect and indestructible. The

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27 See Dobell, 2009 concerning Augustine's criticism of these Platonists and specifically Porphyrius. As mentioned above, Dobell's thesis is that Augustine himself was an adherent of Porphyrius' Platonic philosophy from his philosophical or intellectual conversion in 386 until his Pauline conversion in 395. If this is correct, which we find plausible, Augustine is also fighting against his own previous views.

claim of the dualists is precisely that such transformations are impossible. In the following, we will further explore these specific criticisms. We will focus on *De Civitate Dei* 22.12 but also include the relevant passages in *Enchiridion*.

In *De Civitate Dei* 22.12, we learn that the Platonic criticism had something to do with the form of the perfect resurrected body and the relationship between the resurrected and the earthly body. This criticism was expressed in the form of several concrete questions:[28] what will the form of the resurrected bodies be? What size will they have? Will they be tall or short? Thick or thin? Will they be similar, or different? It seems likely that the Platonists had referred to specific biblical passages, playing them against each other, since Augustine refers to a selection of such problematic passages. He cites, and sets out to address Luke 21:18 ("Verily, I say to you, not a hair on your head shall be lost"), Eph 4:13 (that we will all reach the measure of the full age of Christ at the resurrection) and Rom 8:29 (those whom God has predestined will become likened to the image of his Son).[29] To the Platonists, such biblical passages cannot be reconciled—How can every resurrected body have the same size as Christ's without anyone having to add or remove body mass? If e.g. an aborted fetus is resurrected, it will need a great amount of body mass to reach the size of Christ (see enchir. 85–86). This is also the case for children and thin persons, whereas the tall, or fat, would need to diminish in size. How do these facts square with the statement that "not a hair of your head will perish"?[30] the critics of resurrection asked Augustine. And what about all the hair and nails that have been cut off across a lifetime? If these reappear as hair and nails at the resurrection, the resurrected bodies will lose their beauty; but if not, many hairs will obviously be lost (see enchir. 88–89).

Augustine recalls two additional objections that Platonic critics had raised against the Christian idea of resurrection. The first concerns the posthumous corruption (*corruptionibus*) and dissolution (*dilapsionibus*) of the human body. How can one think, the critics ask, that flesh—which dissolves after

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28 This format obviously served to expose the incredulity of the Christian beliefs, but it also illustrates the degree to which their dualistic thinking made it difficult for them to accept the idea of the body's transformation, as implied in the Christian idea of resurrection and expressed in, e.g., 1 Cor 15.

29 Luke 21:18, cited from ciu. 22.12: *Amen, dico vobis, capillus capitis uestri non peribit*; Eph 4:13, cited from ciu. 22.12: *[O]ccursuros nos omnes in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi* – Augustine assumes that Paul authored the Epistle to the Ephesians; and Rom 8:29, cited from ciu. 22.12): *[Q]uos praedestinauit conformes <fieri> imaginis filii sui*.

30 Luke 21:18 (NRSV).

death, evaporates, is eaten by wild animals, consumed by the fire or decays
in the sea—can be restored as the flesh of a resurrected body? For Augustine,
this is not the hardest question raised by the Platonists; the most difficult
rather concerns the resurrection of cannibalized human flesh. To whose
resurrected body does this digested flesh belong? Cannibalism is indeed a
pressing problem for the idea of bodily resurrection, because it means that
flesh from one human body can belong to more than one individual. We
also know from other writers[31] that this was an urgent problem for many
Christians in the early days of the faith—especially the so-called *simpli-*
ciores, who understood resurrection quite literally.[32] Augustine's reaction
to this problem seems ambivalent: on the one hand, he confirms that it is
indeed the most difficult question raised by critics; on the other, he suspects
that the question is simply asked in order to ridicule the idea of resurrection.
Even so, he returns to present his answer in *De Civitate Dei* 22.20.

As we saw above, the Platonists' criticism builds, in part, on a very lit-
eral understanding of bodily resurrection as represented in concrete biblical
passages. But their objections rest on misunderstandings—so Augustine
claims. Thus, the Platonists had encountered naive ideas about the resur-
rection of the flesh from unlearned Christians, *simpliciores,* who did not
take the Pauline expression of the transformation of the body at the res-
urrection into account. The Platonists had then borrowed these ideas in
their attempts to discredit the Christian idea of resurrection, presenting it
as absurd. Augustine's text aims to remedy this error by presenting the cor-
rect understanding of Christian resurrection. During this procedure he also
answers the Platonists' concrete questions one by one. Our next step is thus
to look at Augustine's response(s) to the Platonists' criticism.

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31 Cf., e.g., Athenag., res. 4–9. See further N. Kiel, *Ps-Athenagoras De Resurrectione.*
    Datierung und Kontextualisierung der dem Apologeten Athenagoras zug-
    eschriebenen Auferstehungsschrift, Leiden 2016, 208–390 who discusses this
    problem in relation to Athenagoras or Ps. Athenagoras treatise on the resurrection.

32 It is easy to smile at the early Christians' simplistic and literal interpretation of the
    resurrection, but some modern Christians still use this literal understanding as an
    argument against organ transplantation. See further C. W. Griffin / D. L. Paulsen,
    Augustine and the Corporeality of God, in: Harvard Theological Review 95/1
    (2002), 97–118, who believe the *simpliciores* who e.g. thought of God corporeally
    and anthropomorphically constituted a large part of the Christians at the time
    of Augustine. This view was expressed by Paulsen as early as in 1990, cf. D. L.
    Paulsen, *Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as*
    Reluctant Witnesses, in: Harvard Theological Review 83 (1990) 105–16, which
    has, however, been contested by Kim Paffenroth, cf. K. Paffenroth, *Notes and*
    Observations Paulsen on Augustine: An Incorporeal or Nonanthropomorphic
    God?, in: Harvard Theological Review 86/2 (1993), 233–239.

5. Augustine's response to the Platonic critics

Augustine's response to the criticism of the Christian belief in bodily resurrection, which he signals in *De Civitate Dei* 22.12, follows in 22.13–20.[33] In *De Civitate Dei* 22.13, Augustine presents his view on the resurrection of aborted fetuses (*abortius fetus*): if they have lived and died within their mother's womb, they can indeed, he submits, be resurrected (cf. enchir. 85–86). However, the crucial question in this context is how fetuses, children, and others who have perished in a diminutive body size, can be resurrected in the perfect shape, i.e., the size they would have reached had they not suffered premature death (ciu. 22.14). Where does the compensatory body-mass come from at the time of resurrection? As the first part of his reply, Augustine denies that the statement in Luke 21:18 ("not a hair on your heads will be lost") is an argument against the resurrection of fetuses and children. For, even though this passage expresses the continuity of present features at the resurrection, it does not follow that God cannot add new parts to resurrected bodies. That said, Augustine does not take the easy road by claiming that God, in His omnipotence, simply adds to the resurrected body whatever is lacking in size. Rather, he draws from a common pool of philosophical ideas to make his case. Augustine argues that, while the child who dies prematurely may not have reached its full (perfect) body size, it nonetheless carries this perfect size within itself as a potential to be unfolded. Behind this proposition lies the ancient theories of forms, known from Platonism, Aristotelianism, and Stoic philosophy.

According to Plato and the Platonists, the substance of any given phenomenon is determined by an idea (ἰδέα) or Form (εἶδος) that transcends it.[34] Aristotle and Plato are in basic agreement on this point, but there is a decisive difference: form, according to Aristotle, is intrinsic to phenomena, whereas, for Plato, Forms exist independently of phenomena, outside space and time. The Stoics, for their part, employed the concept of Logos. In Stoic theory, the cosmos consists of an active and a passive principle; the passive principle (ὕλη) is formed by the inherent active principle, which the Stoics called Logos (λόγος). This Logos exists as seeds, *logoi spermatikoi* (λόγοι σπερματικόι), disseminated throughout all individual beings and things, together with passive matter.[35]

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33 Aug., ciu. 22.13: *Ad haec ergo, quae ab eorum parte contraria me digerente mihi uidentur opposita, misericordia Dei meis nisibus opem ferente respondeam.*

34 Traditionally, only Plato's Forms are capitalized.

35 Concerning this forming (or formative) principle in ancient philosophy, see Jacobsen, 2002, 236–241; A.-C. Jacobsen, *Origen on body and soul*, in: B. Bitton-Ashkelony (ed), *Origeniana Duodecima. Origen in the Holy Land,* Leuven 2019, 589–601.

There is no doubt that Augustine draws on these philosophical theories when he (in ciu. 22.14) argues for a seminal principle in every substance containing the beginning of every existence. In other words, the perfect human being[36] is present from conception as a principle that unfolds inherent potentials, including (perfect) size.[37] Growth in the womb, as well as the birth and future life of the child, are to be understood as the realization of the always present form. By building his explanation on such ideas, Augustine substantiates his views vis-a-vis the resurrection of the body in at least two ways. Firstly, the idea of a form, or forming principle, allows him to postulate a continuity between the earthly body and the resurrected body. The resurrected body is the same as the earthly. Secondly, it allows him to emphasize the transformation of the body at the resurrection. Although it is the same body, with the same inherent form, it undergoes significant changes at the resurrection; namely, the change of the form of the body from a state of unrealized potential to a state of full realization—or, to use the vocabulary of Paul in Cor. 15, the change from an animal body into a spiritual body. Following Miles, this should be related to Augustine's use of the Pauline formula of 'now…then' (*nunc…tunc*), which both connects and contrasts the present and future experience. This is especially apparent in *De Civitate Dei* 22 when Augustine emphasizes that while the old animal body will be transformed into a new spiritual body, the capacities for e.g. pleasure found in the old body will be refined and transformed in the new body.[38] Augustine thus contradicts the Platonic dualism between soul and body by demonstrating that the body can be transformed through the resurrection.

Continuing his arguments, Augustine comes to face (in ciu. 22.15) an apparent dilemma in Eph 4:13; namely, that everyone will reach the "measure of the full age of Christ."[39] For both Augustine and his opponents, there is no doubt that Jesus' resurrected body remains the same size as his

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36 By using this expression, it is clear that we do not take account of Augustine's doctrine of original sin, which holds that human beings are always-already tainted by sin or errors from the time of conception.

37 The form, as well as every other trait, comes from the father. Like everyone else in antiquity, Augustine assumes that all genes are contained in the sperm since, at the time, it was not known that conception is a result of both egg and sperm cells.

38 Miles, 2005, 315–316. See furtheremore M. R. Miles, *From rape to resurrection: Sin, sexual difference, and politics,* in: J. Wetzel (ed.), *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide,* Cambridge 2012, 75–92, in which Miles discusses the practricing of the integrated wholeness charecteristic of the resurrection in our current lives. While Miles here maintaines that Augustine himself would not have accepted a colapse of the contrast expressed in the *nunc...tunc* formula, Miles herself believes that we are able to practice the resurrected bodies in the present.

39 *Donec occuramus omnes […] in uirum perfectum, in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi* (Eph 4:13 in Latin, which is the text Augustine used). The Greek text runs

earthly body at its point of death. But if the bodies of all human beings are to resemble the measure of the resurrected body of Jesus, many will have to shrink, which, according to Luke 21:18 is simply not possible. Further, this understanding does not square with Augustine's own postulate that all humans carry the seed of their own perfect size from conception. Therefore, we cannot understand Eph 4:13 to mean that all resurrected bodies will have the same size as the resurrected body of Christ. And what does 'the full age of Christ' mean in this context? Augustine finds the solution by proposing that, at the resurrection, every individual will assume the physical shape that corresponds to the perfect realization of the form inherent to their body. The closest a living human can come to the realization of this perfect form is the shape he/she takes at the beginning of adulthood—which, in antiquity, means approximately the age of thirty. So the 'full age of Christ' means that Jesus died when his vitality and character were at their peak. Similarly, everyone will re-appear at this most perfect stage of his/her life at the resurrection. Consequently, those who die as children or in their mother's womb (and therefore had not fully realized their inherent form), and those who die at an age above thirty (whose vital powers have therefore decreased), will arise as thirty year-olds, i.e., the 'full age of Christ.'[40]

In *De Civitate Dei* 22.17–18, Augustine reaches a similar conclusion regarding another apparent dilemma: the resurrection of female bodies. Some had allegedly raised this question based on the wording of Eph 4:13 and Rom 8:29, which seems to imply that human beings will be male after the resurrection.[41] What does this mean for women's resurrected bodies— will they arise as males, as some maintained? Surely not, Augustine assures us. Eph 4:13, which states that all shall at last become 'a perfect man,' is the easiest to deal with. After analyzing the context of the passage, Augustine concludes that we should understand both sexes to be included under the general term 'man.' Rom 8:29 is also a false lead. As Augustine explains, the female form is not a mistake, but natural, created by God: women will appear as women at the resurrection. That said, sexuality and sin, which characterize men and women alike, will be removed from all resurrected bodies. Female bodies will retain their body parts, but the 'female members' will no longer be adapted to the old use, i.e., sexual activity; nor will they

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as follows: μέχρι καταντήσωμεν οἱ πάντες εἰς […] ἄνδρα τέλειον, εἰς μέτρον ἡλικίας τοῦ πληρώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

40 As noted by Hunter, here Augustine is more concerned with the advancement of the resurrected body to perfection than with the reversal of the condition of the fallen body, cf. Hunter, 2012, 362.

41 Eph 4:13: *Donec occuramus omnes […] in uirum perfectum*; Rom 8:29: *[C]onformes imaginis filii Dei.*

continue to arouse desire in men. According to Augustine, the relationship between the sexes will then be perfect, just as before the Fall when the first humans walked about naked without enflaming each other's sexual desires. As Miles emphasizes, in Augustine's conceptual universe the resurrected bodies were affirmed more or less as we know them in our current state, however, with the sexual desires and acts subtracted. It does thus not make sense to ask whether sex is part of the punishment or part of the reward as the answer is both and neither. This is caused by Augustine sorting the present "punishment" of the human life from the beauty and pleasure that will be part of the resurrection "reward".[42] This is yet another demonstration that according to Augustine the corporeal transformation is a transformation unto perfection.

In *De Civitate Dei* 22.19, Augustine answers the question of what will happen to hair and nails removed from the body over a lifetime on earth. Since "not a hair of your head will perish"[43] resurrected bodies would lose their beauty if a life's worth of hair were restored to its place after the resurrection (so too with cut nails). But this 'ugliness' does not comport with resurrection life, when, as Augustine has previously argued, all shall be made perfect. The solution lies, once again, in his theory of a forming principle. It allows him to postulate a continuity between the earthly and resurrected bodies, as well as a transformation of the body at the resurrection. Thus, while 'they shall be changed into the same flesh,' the substantial qualities of individual parts will be altered. At the resurrection, body mass will be redistributed so that the harmony between limbs is made perfect (see enchir. 89–90). Likewise, neither the malformed, nor the skinny or fat, will inhabit a body with these disharmonies, but a body composed of the same mass, transformed into a harmonious balance (cf. enchir. 87). He compares the body to a vessel of clay that can be made into a new vessel without leaving any part unused: The portion of the clay, which had formed the handle, could be used to form the bottom of the new vessel and vice versa, thus preserving both the proportions and the material. In similar fashion, the substance of the resurrected body will be the same as the substance of the earthly body—namely, flesh—but its quality will be changed.

But how will it be possible, during the resurrection, to collect all the body mass scattered around, atomized, burned, dissolved in water, evaporated and eaten by wild animals—not to mention the human flesh eaten by other human beings? Augustine, rather unsuccessfully, tries to answer

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42 Miles, 2005, 320. It has been noted by Toom as well that beauty is the reason for the resurrected body's sexual characteristics, cf. Toom, 2009, 62.
43 Luke 21:18 (NRSV).

this question in *De Civitate Dei* 22.20 by invoking the omnipotence of the Creator (*omnipotentia Creatoris*). Resorting to this type of response must have frustrated Augustine, as well as the opponents of early Christianity. We have reports that non-Christians were quite annoyed when simple-minded Christians defended their belief in corporeal resurrection by referring to God's omnipotence.[44] It is indeed a sign of weakness to use God's omnipotence as an explanation because it reveals the absence of rationally demonstrable arguments. Even though we are also left with this impression when reading *De Civitate Dei* 22.20, it should be noted that Augustine expresses the belief that the creator of the material world is able to bestow eternal existence on material phenomena, including bodies. Thus, it may be reasonable to use such an argument against various forms of ontological dualism that deny the Creator those very powers.

Because God is omnipotent, he can collect all the flesh that has evaporated into the air and restore it to its rightful owner. When human flesh has been eaten by other humans—and this is Augustine's answer to the difficult question of cannibalism—it will be "restored to the man in whom it first became human flesh. For it must be looked upon as borrowed by the other person, and, like a pecuniary loan, must be returned to the lender." Augustine continues *De Civitate Dei* 22.20 by summarizing his answers to the other questions (posed in ciu. 22.13) surrounding the resurrection of the body and concludes, in *De Civitate Dei* 22.21, with a brief recap of the characteristics of the resurrected body of the saints as spiritual, indestructible, characterized by ease and happiness, and freed from all defects.[45]

Augustine's reflections in *De Civitate Dei* 22.12–20 on the resurrected bodies of the righteous might seem simplistic and, in some cases, even slightly amusing (e.g. the seriousness with which he discusses the eternal future of cropped hair and cut nails). In our opinion, it is nevertheless clear that Augustine is simply continuing a relatively-unbroken, centuries-old tradition of understanding the resurrection quite literally. This understanding of the resurrection is conditioned by a distinctly literal interpretation of the biblical texts. However, as we noted above, Augustine modifies this interpretation. He emphasizes that, even though the earthly and the resurrected bodies are substantially identical, the outer shape of the resurrected body will not be identical to that of the earthly body but will be perfected. This

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44 Cf. Or., Cels. 5.14.

45 Following Gerald O'Collins it should be noted here, that Augustine believed that the human hunger for happiness only finds its fulfillment in the participation in Christ's resurrection, which human beings will be able to behold thorugh the light provided by the Holy Spirit, cf. G. O'Collins, *St Augustine as apologist for the resurrection of Christ*, in: SJT 69/3 (2016), 326–340.

softening of the concrete understanding of the resurrection in favor of a more figurative interpretation is expressed, e.g., in Augustine's interpretation of Eph 4:13.

6. The resurrection of the los

Although Augustine tries to overcome the anthropological dualism between soul and body, which he found among the Platonists, he advances another dualism in the later part of his life; namely, a dualism between the saved and the lost.

We find his reflections on the latter group in both *Enchiridion* and *De Civitate Dei*. *Enchiridion* 92 states that those who are not saved from the mass of destruction (*perditionis massa*) must be raised in their own bodies—not to be included in eternal salvation, but to undergo eternal punishment together with the devil and his angels.[46] What will happen to the lost bodies, Augustine asks? Will they also be transformed so that their deficiencies and deformities disappear? Augustine declares that we cannot know anything about it and should not waste time considering such a silly question. What he does claim to know, however, is that the condemnation and punishment of the lost is eternal. What implications does this have for the question of immortality and incorruptibility? On the one hand, the resurrected bodies of the condemned must be eternal, i.e., immortal like the resurrected bodies of the saved, since they will be punished for all eternity. On the other hand, there cannot be true life (*uera uita*) and true incorruptibility (*uera incorruptio*) when bodies are subjected to pain and misfortune. If the misfortune of the convicted is unceasing, and their bodies (being immortalized) are not allowed to die, it follows that death and corruption will also last forever. Borrowing an expression from the Apocalypse of John 20:6.14, Augustine calls this state 'the second death.'[47]

This understanding brings him into conflict with a key statement in 1 Cor 15:25–28, where it is said that "Christ shall be king until God puts all

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46 Aug., enchir. 92: *Quicumque uero ab illa perditionis massa, quae facta est per hominem primum, non liberantur per unum mediatorem dei et hominum, resurgent quidem etiam ipsi, unusquisque cum sua carne, sed ut cum diabolo et eius angelis puniantur.*

47 Aug., enchir. 92: *Non enim est uera uita nisi ubi feliciter uiuitur, nec uera incorruptio nisi ubi salus nullo dolore corrumpitur. Vbi autem infelix mori non sinitur, ut ita dicam, mors ipsa non moritur; et ubi dolor perpetuus non interimit sed affligit, ipsa corruptio non finitur. Haec in sanctis scripturis secunda mors dicitur.* For a further analysis of this second death, see L. Ayres, *Augustine on Redemption,* in: M. Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine,* New Jersey 2012, 416–427 (425),

enemies under his feet; as the last enemy is death destroyed."[48] This is clearly not true of Augustine' proposed scenario. Moreover, there is a problem when 1 Cor 15:28 indicates that Christ, after the destruction of all enemies, will also be made subject to God so that "God may be all in all."[49] For, when God becomes all in all, there will be no room for, or need of, destruction and eternal punishment. While Augustine's formulations in *Enchiridion* 92 suggest that he is aware of this discrepancy, he dodges the problem and perseveres in upholding the eternal punishment of the damned.

Augustine did, however, as Tarmo Toom notes write in *Expositio Epistulae ad Galatas* that Paul in Rom 8:22 did not write *totam creaturam* but *omnem creaturam*, which Augustine interpreted as referring to the tripartite human being and not to the whole of creation.[50] Toom believes the reason for this interpretation to be Augustine's approach to eschatology being anthropocentric and not cosmocentric. However, as Toom notes as well, Augustine did not think of human beings and the cosmos as mutually exclusive categories, as both are said to await eschatological transformation and not eradiation because both are God's creation.[51] Thus, it is quite clear that Augustine's anthropocentric eschatology did not negate the salvation of the whole of creation, which groan for redemption.[52]

In *De Civitate Dei*, the question of the punishment of the lost is dealt with in more detail—in fact, the entire book 21 is devoted to this issue. Yet it is neither possible, nor necessary, to review all the details of this paragraph here, since its basic views correspond with the views expressed in *Enchiridion* 92: Augustine argues that the pain of lost ones will be eternal (ciu. 21.1–4.9.11), thus disagreeing with those who claim that the final punishment will terminate (ciu. 21.11.17.23).[53] He also argues against those who believe that punishment has a purgatorial effect, cleansing sin (ciu. 21.13), and against those who argue for different forms of moderating the punishment, e.g., that it may be mitigated by the mediation of the saints (ciu. 21.18.24). Augustine continues to address other dissenting views—wrong views, he would say—throughout book 21. Suffice it to say that his reflections in *De Civitate Dei* 21 on the eternal punishment of the damned track closely with those found in *Enchiridion* 92.

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48 1 Cor 15:25–26: δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν βασιλεύειν ἄχρι οὗ θῇ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ. ἔσχατος ἐχθρὸς καταργεῖται ὁ θάνατος.

49 1 Cor 15: 28 (NRSV).

50 Aug., gal., 63.5–7. See Toom, 2009, 73–75 for a further analysis of this.

51 See e.g. Aug., ciu., 20.14

52 Toom, 2009, 73–75.

53 Augustine accepts some temporary punishments after death (ciu. 21.13), but these take place before the final judgment.

7. Augustine's theological dualism

The dualism between saved and condemned is full-blown in Augustine's anti-Pelagian theology.[54] This is likely because several of the biblical texts that form his theological basis exhibit such a dualism. However, it truly stands out in his conflict with the Pelagians, where he also develops his doctrine of sin and grace—an essential part of the theology of dualism between saved and lost.[55] This doctrine plays a central role in Augustine's understanding of human resurrection: When human beings are saved and resurrected for eternal life in a perfected body, the sole reason for this is the sovereign grace of God. Likewise, it is solely by the will of God that others do not receive this mercy but face eternal punishment at the resurrection.[56] In other words, God saves whom he wants and condemns whom he wants; the latter group being the largest one, according to Augustine (enchir. 97).

Augustine maintains his sharp dualism between saved and lost even when it is abundantly clear from his exposition on the resurrection of the saints, who will arise as perfect, that their, and indeed all earthly bodies, are imperfect prior to resurrection. This is why he cannot accept the view of the unsophisticated Christians, who hold that the material body—insofar as it is God's creation—is essentially good, and will, for this reason, arise in exactly its earthly shape. Augustine assures us that the human body is not imperfect just because it is underdeveloped. If there were continuous and unbroken development of the bodily form unto completion, then fetuses and children

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54 One might ask whether this dualism between saved and lost, which is ultimately due to the will of God for both salvation and perdition, introduces a good vs. evil dualism into the very notion of Godhead— i.e., a dualism that very strongly resembles the Gnostic-Manichean dualism between two gods or divine principles.

55 In the period from 411 until his death in 430, Augustine wrote a large number of texts against Pelagius and the Pelagians, e.g. *De gestis Pelagii*, *De Nuptiis et Concupiscientia* and *Contra Julianum*. A large part of these writings centered on the understanding of sin and grace. This applies to, e.g., *De Natura et Gratia contra Pelagium*; *De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione, et de Baptismo Parvulorum*; *De Gratia Christi, et de Peccato Originali contra Pelagium*; *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*. Regarding the Pelagian heresy and the development of Augustine's teaching of sin and grace, see also G. Greshake, *Gnade als Konkrete Freiheit. Eine Untersuchung zur Gnadenlehre des Pelagius*, Mainz 1972, especially 47–157 (on Pelagius' doctrine of grace) and 193–274 (on Augustine's doctrine of grace, which was constructed as a response to Pelagius); J. Gross, *Entstehungsgeschichte des Erbsündsdogmas*, München 1960, 257–376 (on Augustine's doctrine of original sin).

56 For Augustine's assertion that God's grace is the only way to human salvation, see enchir. 98.106–107. See enchir. 95–97 for his claim that the will of God is the only reason that some people do not receive the mercy of God and are therefore lost.

would not die, old bodies would not decay, and female bodies would not ignite male desire. And yet, lack of development is not imperfection in the proper sense. According to Augustine, the human body is imperfect on a deeper level. But why? How? One might answer, with Augustine's opponents the Platonists (who also regard the human body as imperfect), that corporeality and death are related by nature. In this view, all corporeal beings are destined for destruction because they are imperfect and mortal by nature; only the soul endures forever. But Augustine rejects this dualism, maintaining that the body is not imperfect by nature. Therefore, he must find another reason for the link between imperfection and mortality. Augustine finds this in the biblical tradition: the imperfection and mortality of the earthly body is a consequence of sin.[57] Hence, the successful overcoming of the imperfection of the earthly body does not consist in the destruction of the body, but in the overcoming of sin. Toom is thus right in emphasizing two especially important reasons for Augustine's affirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as a necessary constituent of the resurrection of *totus homo*: that bodily resurrection is necessary for the preserving of personal identity, and that the affirmation is a necessary consequence of Augustine's theological anthropology. According to Augustine, it is God's plan that each person in the resurrection will preserve his or her own special features as well as a recognizable resemblance to his or her former self.[58] However, as Toom notes human beings will accordingly to Augustine not merely be resurrected with their previous bodily conditions, but will be changed into a qualitatively different mode of existence. This is related to Toom's second point – that the affirmation of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body as a necessary constituent of the resurrection of *totus homo* was a necessary consequence of Augustine's theological anthropology – because the *totus homo* according to Augustine is not merely the body nor merely the soul, but body as well as soul.[59] Even though the soul might be the better part of the human being and the body the inferior part,[60] the human being is a composite of both. As Toom emphasizes, none of these constituent elements can according to Augustine be eliminated without destroying the human being.[61] Augustine's understanding of the physical resurrection of humanity is thus

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57 Cf. Gen 3. For Augustine's understanding of sin, see the pericope enchir. 12–27 and especially 25–27 regarding the consequences of sin for the human body.
58 Aug., enchir. 23.90. As Augustine writes in ciu., 22.19, the Christian martyrs will have their scars in the resurrection as well as a badge of honor.
59 Aug., ciu., 13.24.
60 Aug., ciu., 19.3.
61 Toom, 2009, 66–71.

an expression of his rejection of the Platonic soul-body dualism in favor of a biblical monism.

8. Summary and conclusion

In this article, we have examined the teaching of Augustine on human resurrection, chiefly as expressed in two of his late writings; namely, *Enchiridion* 84–92 and *De Civitate Dei* 22.12–21. We illustrated how Augustine's ideas of the resurrection build on the sayings of Paul in 1 Cor 15, while also dismissing certain points. After having identified Augustine's opponents as Neo-Platonists pushing Plato's soul-body dualism too far, we went into detail regarding Augustine's response, including an analysis of his theology of the bodily resurrection of saved and lost human beings.

The resurrection theology of Augustine contains two main points of view. First, the almighty God can raise imperfect mortal bodies tainted by sin to eternal life and perfection, transforming these bodies from earthly into heavenly vessels, from animal to spiritual flesh. Second, God does not offer this perfection to all humans (although, being almighty, he obviously could if he wanted to)—some, even most humans, will be lost, meaning their bodies will arise without the gift of healing and perfection. Instead, the resurrected bodies of the lost are subject to eternal torment. This view is in stark contrast to the message of Paul, which, however, does not lead Augustine to alter his position.

According to Augustine—and he agrees with the Platonists in this matter—the earthly human body is imperfect. However, he strongly disagrees with the dualists regarding the consequences of this imperfection (the destruction of the body, as the Platonists claim, or a bodily transformation, as Augustine argues). Rejecting the Platonists' sharp dualism between soul and body, and their claim that the body is corrupt by nature, Augustine finds another reason for the imperfection and mortality of the earthly body in the Bible: sin. Augustine thus fights against one dualism—body vs. soul—while, at the same time, advancing another—saved vs. lost. Only the resurrected bodies of the saved will undergo a transformation that liberates them from the consequences of sin, whereas the bodies of the lost remain subject to these. This perpetuates the dualism between saved and lost.

Antonio Henrique Campolina Martins

The Influence of Augustine of Hippo on *The Rule of Benedict*'s Anthropology

Abstract: This article explores the influence of Augustine of Hippo's monastic writings on the anthropology of *The Rule of Benedict*. Augustine's influence is measured by comparing the distinguishing traits of his anthropology with another major inspiration for *The Rule of Benedict*, namely, *The Rule of the Master*.

1. Introduction

The definition of anthropology is not unanimous. It is often approached from different theoretical angles — psychological, social-cultural, metaphysical, biblical-theological etc. — and aimed at some sort of analysis/debate/deepening of human existence. Theological texts, for their part, typically feature a distinct anthropological terminology, forming an elementary "view on human beings". In Christianity, both Eastern and Western, such terminology has tended toward two main expressions: a *Hellenistic* one, either dichotomic or trichotomic (σῶμα–ψυχή, σῶμα–ψυχή–νοῦς), but always *essentialist* and *steadfast*; and a *biblical-Semitic* one,[1] stressing an anthropological unity (כהר–כפש) which is at once *historical*, *symbolic,* and *dynamic*.

When it comes to the Church Fathers, it is difficult to pin down a definite anthropology insofar as their thought involves complex philosophical and theological schemes, developed across a wide spectrum of historical conditions. Ancient monastic rules were written by authors living under diverse social, cultural, and ecclesiastical conditions; including bishops, presbyters, abbots, eremitic or cenobites monks, laypersons, etc. Moreover, the textual genre of *monastic rule* can be traced to many different times and places, frequently disconnected from one another and featuring unlike traditions and observances. This, then, is the context we must face in approaching the main subject of this article, *The Rule of Benedict* (*Regula Benedicti*).

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1   The concept *biblical-Semitic* is understood as the Hebrew unitary anthropological structure that sustains identity across time, despite evolving characteristics. The view on the human being expressed by the biblical model relates to the anthropological unity implied in expressions such as "flesh full of soul", "full of life" or "heart, tongue, hands and feet", intrinsically unified and articulated. It primes the ontic, psychological and moral integration of human beings as well as their social interaction with the world.

The first testimony of the life of the presumed author of *The Rule of Benedict* (RB) comes from Gregory the Great (d. 604 AD), in the second of the four books of his *Dialogues* (c. 593). There he writes about the life, image, and character of a certain *Benedictus*, who had earned special recognition in Italy some decades before. The *Rule*, written at the beginning of the sixth century, is generally considered the most important of the Latin monastic rules — no other writing of Christian Antiquity was transmitted through so many manuscripts. It legislates the life of cenobitic monks, i.e., those monks who live communally, as opposed to the eremitic variety. The *Rule* is at once a spiritual and legislative text; it features a prologue and seventy-three chapters, the last being an epilogue. The long prologue, and first seven chapters, are composed of many short theological-spiritual expositions, mostly of pragmatical nature. Originally, the work was left untitled. For this reason, the codices used to refer to it as *Regula Monachorum* or *Regula Monasteriorum*. Indeed, the text refers to itself using simple designations such as *Regula* or *Sancta Regula*. However, if the simplicity of these references might seem, to some extent, unexpected, the direction of life it represents is thoroughly cohesive. Rules and parenesis, theory and *praxis*, are combined by the strength of its biblical-Semitic anthropology.

This article aims to unveil, through the comparative study of its main monastic sources, how the author of *The Rule of Benedict* synthesized the preceding anthropological tradition to establish a definitive expression of Ancient monasticism. He did so by contrasting the anthropology of *The Rule of the Master* (*Regula Magistri*)[2] with the Augustinian monastic mentality expressed mainly in *The Rule of Augustine* (*Regula Augustini*)[3]; this,

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2   *The Rule of the Master* (RM) was written by the so-called *Master* in the region of Gaul between 500 and 525 A.D. There is no name to designate the author of the document, which was called *Regula Magistri* by Benedict of Aniane in his *Concordia Regularum* because of the way the author introduces chapters: a question made by the disciple followed by an answer of the Lord through the Master. It has a prologue and 95 chapters and represents a profoundly significant stage in the Western monastic law. It is strongly influenced by the Enneads' trichotomy as well as John Cassian's *Institutes of the Coenobia* and *The Conferences*. It is therefore related to the spiritual tradition of hesychasm, based on continuous vigilance, strength of patience, and severe, even excessive, asceticism.

3   *The Rule of Augustine* (RA) was written in 397 and its very short text is the oldest Western monastic rule. Nonetheless, the Augustinian monastic mentality transcends the text of his rule and finds expression in several other writings, e.g. *Letter 221*, *Sermons 355 and 356*, *Consortia monachorum*, *Regula Secunda* and *De vita eremitica ad sororem liber*. On Augustine's monastic mentality and the lasting influence of his rule, cf. G. Lawless, *Augustine of Hippo and His Monastic Rule*, Oxford 1990, and also V. Drecoll, *Augustin Handbuch*, Tübingen 2007, 565–570.

in turn, lead to the genesis of an abbey whose brethren were in complete harmony, coherence, and unity, with themselves, and with their God.

2. Anthropology in *The Rule of the Master*

Generally, we can say that the anthropology of *The Rule of the Master* is rooted in Egyptian verticality,[4] whose account of the divine-human relation derives from Plotinus' trichotomic anthropological model, outlined in *Enneads* IV. This Hellenistic anthropology had a significant influence on Latin monastic rules during the first centuries. It upholds the existence of two opposing poles, and an intermediate *logos* binding itself to one or the other. The two poles are the body-flesh and the spirit; the soul is the principle of freedom that ultimately decides upon one of these. Both the paradigmatic model (Plotinian) and the model of *The Rule of the Master* (*corpus-caro*, *anima*, *spiritus*) articulate an anthropology characterized by a principle of freedom, giving subsequent form to an *ethos*. In disregarding that *ethos*, and so the possibility of the soul's oscillation between the inferior, degrading element and the superior, sane element, one is left with no anthropological model at all.

The Rule of the Master's trichotomy is not so systematic as Plotinus'. It is rather disclosed in a *dynamic form*. The potential of the soul to bind itself to the body-flesh or the spirit is ascertained through the concrete actions of the monk, by his actual decisions. The morality[5] of *The Rule of the Master*

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4   *Egyptian verticality* is a way of expressing the spirituality and way of life which came into being with the dawn of monasticism. In the fourth century, a surprising and rapidly expanding social movement arose in Roman Egypt. Many Christians moved from cities to the desert due to a radical change in habit. Such a *conversatio morum* represents an inward search for Christian perfection by living out, and giving testimony to, baptism. To some extent they intended to follow the path of the first Christian martyrs by way of either an eremitic life (accordingly Antony of Egypt's ideal) or a cenobitic life (accordingly Pacomius' ideal and the first monastic rule). The movement, with its countless spiritual fathers, abbots, monks, all of them living in the desert (the desert fathers), produced many writings on vertical spirituality, i.e., the ideal of living solely for God's sake. It concerns the spirituality of the *lonely* Monk in face of the *only* God. Under such verticality were organized the first Coptic monks; having only God and the abbot figure – as a representative father, master and tutor – above them. It is also worth pointing out how the spirituality of Egyptian monasticism drew its influence to the West through Abbey Lérins' abbot, in the Roman Gaul, and his acquaintance with Origen's spirituality. Considering the connection between the semipelagianism of the Gaulish monasticism and Origen's synergism, it is possible to see why so many scholars have claimed that *The Rule of Benedict* would had been written in the south of Gaul.

5   We assume *morality* as the relation of man's free action to a moral norm. The concept of *norm* is assumed as *ordinatio*, as an indication of order and purpose.

consists in a choice between the spirit and the flesh, the former being encouraged. The salvation of the monk, and indeed the whole monastic community, depends on that decision, "for what the Lord commands us in the spirit is one thing, what the flesh has in mind to force upon us is another."[6]

Here, *ascesis* aids the salvation of the monk in a relentless struggle against the body, and in favor of the spirit. Salvation is, in this case, directly opposed to damnation/sin. For this reason, the theme of grappling with sin is present throughout the text of *The Rule of the Master*. The intensity with which its author illustrates this struggle derives from a keen awareness of the malefic power that the devil exercises in the contest between body and soul.[7] In every single moment and decision of a monk's life, the struggle is manifest; the devil incessantly strives to persuade him to compromise with the body-flesh-sin. The proper moral position therefore amounts to proclaiming open and ceaseless warfare against the devil's wiles.

Since the power of the devil over the body-flesh is a force that constantly tempts the soul towards compromise and apostasy, a third external force, i.e., *the continuous vigilance* of the abbot and his assistants, is justified. They must keep watch over the brethren in order to prevent them from falling under demonic influences: "by their careful supervision and alert vigilance they [scil. the deans] must ward off them [scil. the brethren] the devil's activity."[8] The whole gamut of monastic observances, seen through the lens of *The Rule of the Master's* trichotomy, has no value in and of itself. It is rather a means by which monks can spiritualize, and thus save, themselves. So long as this end is served, anything and everything is justified. The abbot exercises the *duplex doctrina* (twofold teaching) of the word and the example, the practice of domain and vigilance, together with other corrective expedients. In other words, the abbot should act "by declaring the Lord's commandments in words to disciples who can understand, but to the hard of heart and the simple-minded by demonstrating the divine

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Thus, considering the trichotomy of *The Rule of the Master*, the indication of order and purpose that determines a monk's action is the binding of the soul, the principle of freedom, to the spirit. The *moral action* must match the form that regulates it. So, the binding of the soul to the body or to the spirit has as consequence either a moral or an immoral decision. On the concept of morality, see F. Böckle, *Grundbegriffe der Moral*, Brescia 1977, 49.

6 RM 1.80: *Quia aliud nobis Dominus in spiritus imperat, aliud caro cogit in anima* (SC 105, 346). Cf. also RM 81.19. English C. Philippi, *The Rule of the Master*, Kalamazoo 1977.

7 Cf. RM 90.67–70.

8 RM 11.29: *Diligent sua obseruantia uel curioso intuitu diaboli ad eis debent actus conspecere* (SC 106, 14).

precepts by what he does."[9] So, one can see how the disciplinary element is conscripted into the moral dynamics of the trichotomy.

Another consequence of this trichotomic morality is the idea that the body is naught but soil and dust, even sin. It follows that anything composed of physical matter, being corruptible, is not only insignificant but also worthy of contempt because it stands against God's law. The soul will be held accountable for any and every compromise with the body at the Final Judgment. From this perspective, the act of conversion would set into motion a struggle against the body to secure a higher happiness.

Clarifying how the *ethos* of *The Rule of the Master's* trichotomy corresponds with its spiritual doctrine, Adalbert de Vogüé writes in the Introduction to *The Rule of the Master*:

> Manifestly, the great exposition of spiritual doctrine which fills chapters seven - ten does not consist of three independent treatises simply juxtaposed. Although obedience, taciturnity, and humility are brought up in their turn, these virtues are nevertheless all studied from the same viewpoint of the *fight against sin*. The last phrase of chapter ten sounds the tone which dominates throughout, *mundum a peccatis et vitiis*. From beginning to end, purification of the whole is the subject. Obedience puts an end to self-will and carnal desire; custody of the heart, custody of the eyes, and taciturnity all put a stop to sin in the most vulnerable faculties of the human constitution; humility accomplishes its task both by embracing the other virtues and by furnishing a specific remedy for the chief vice, pride.[10]

If, as A. de Vogüé says, the spiritual doctrine of the three virtues (obedience, taciturnity, and humility) is unified in the fight against sin, then it depicts, in a consequential, logical, and organic way, what we have so far claimed concerning the anthropology in *The Rule of the Master*.

Such disciplinary imperatives must be accepted inwardly since external enforcement is not sufficient. Therefore, the theology of obedience, taciturnity, and humility joins forces with the external reinforcements of the Master. The ascetic program links up with the punitive program, forming one great restraint against sin.[11] One can see, then, how *parenesis* and *law* are complementary. Along with the radical dualism of the disciplinary *praxis* of reprimand, correction, and punishment, there is a theory that inspires and props it up, i.e., the spiritual theology of the three virtues. It undergirds the repressive asceticism, which is instituted as a collective rule for monks in the context of *The Rule of the Master*. There is only one goal: to restrain the

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9   RM 2.12: *Intellegentibus discipulis mandata Domini uerbis proponere, duris corde ueronet simplicibus factis suis diuina praecepta monstrare* (SC 105, 354).

10 Philippi, 1977, 48–49.

11 Cf. Philippi, 1977, 47–48.

body-flesh-sin for the sake of the *spirit*. That is the distinguishing mark of its anthropology.

3. Anthropology in *The Rule of Augustine*

The most important source-text for *The Rule of Benedict* is, indubitably, *The Rule of the Master*. However, it has another influential predecessor: *The Rule of Augustine*.[12] We would add that, although of lesser importance than his *Rule*, other articulations of Augustine's monastic mentality – i.e., that which appears explicitly in his rules and implicitly in his spiritual writings, dogmatic speeches, and even the polemic works, sermons and letters – inform and inspire the author of *The Rule of Benedict*. The Augustinian influence makes a strong spiritual, anthropological, and moral impact; it is not simply a matter of a textual, mechanic, and direct dependency. Although some scholars have disagreed about features of Augustine's influence,[13] they are unanimous in accepting the presence of his monastic mentality in *The Rule of Benedict*.

In any case, among the Latin fathers, Augustine is the most important reference for *The Rule of Benedict*. This can be seen through a shared biblical antecedent. The Christian community's ideal, such as described in Acts 2:11–45; 4:32–35, is prototypical for both *The Rule of Augustine* and *The Rule of Benedict*. Augustine recommends that brethren aspire to unity in love, asking them to live unanimously in charity, keeping but one soul and heart. Harmony and love are the main precepts. This informs his vision of a humble and unified monastic community. So, *The Rule of Augustine* expresses, through its existential imagination, a horizontal communitarianism full of goodness, receptivity, and love. It is a biblical anthropological unity born of the Semitic tradition. In this respect, the ideal Augustinian monastery diverges from that of *The Rule of the Master*, where the emphasis is placed on individual performance, and the vertical, divine-human relation.

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12 Leclerc maintains that, to understand *The Rule of Benedict*, it is more important to read and study *The Rule of Augustine* than *The Rule of the Master*, cf. J. Leclerc, *Autour de la Règle de Saint Benoît*, in: CCist 37 (1975), 197–204.

13 Mohrmann does not defend the idea that Augustine had directly influenced *The Rule of Benedict*, but rather only through a common source; cf. C. Mohrmann, *La latinité de Saint Benoît. Étude linguistique sur la tradition manuscrite de la Règle*, in: Rev. Bénédict. 62 (1952), 108–139. Colombás, in his commentary on *The Rule of Benedict*, avoids assuming an assertive position regarding the direct or indirect influence of *The Rule of Augustine*; cf. G. Colombás, *La regla de San Benito*, Madrid 1979, 41–44. Nonetheless, we follow J. Leclerq's position, as exposed in the footnote n. 12.

It is worth analyzing *The Rule of Augustine*'s text so as to identify its main anthropological contours. However, as mentioned above, since the Augustinian monastic mentality is not governed by the rule alone, being rather the result of various ideas spread over different writings, we will take the text of *The Rule of Benedict* as a reference-point; specifically, those passages where the influence of Augustine's horizontality is fully present.

Initially, considering RB 72 and RB 64, on the good zeal of monks and the election of an abbot respectively, it is possible to detect an anthropology based on love among the brethren, just as recommended by Augustine: "the Lord grant that you may observe all these precepts in a spirit of charity, as lovers of spiritual beauty, and may spread abroad the sweet odor of Christ by a good life, not as slaves living under the law but as men and women living in freedom under grace."[14]

In RB 31, the cellarer is twice instructed to pay heed to those who ask for something; if the asker asks unreasonably, he should at least receive a good word in exchange.[15] In this way, the author of *The Rule of Benedict* introduces charitable fraternal advice. This parallels Augustine's exhortation: "if you notice in any of your brothers or sisters this wantonness of the eye, of which I am speaking, admonish them at once so that the beginning of evil will not grow more serious, but will be promptly corrected."[16] The same chapter 31 advises that necessary things be asked of the cellarer at prearranged times so as not to disturb or sadden anyone in the house of God.[17] It is connected with *The Rule of Augustine*'s principle according to which "books are to be requested at a fixed hour each day, and anyone coming outside that hour is not to receive them."[18]

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14 RA 8.48: *Donet Dominus, ut observetis haec omnia cum dilectione, tamquam spiritalis pulchritudinis amatores et bono Christi odore de bona conversatione flagrantes, non sicut servi sub lege, sed sicut liberi sub gratia constituti* (PL 32,1384). All of the English translations of RA is from J. Rotelle, *Augustine's Rule: A Commentary by Adolar Zumkeller*, translated by Matthew J. O'Connell, Villanova 1987.

15 Cf. RB 31.7; 13.

16 RA 4.25: *Et si hanc de qua loquor oculi petulantiam in aliquo vestrum adverteritis, statim admonete, ne coepta progrediatur, sed de proximo corrigatur* (PL 32, 1381). Cf. also Aug., Psal. 103.1,19.

17 Cf. "that nobody be disturbed and nobody embittered in the house of God". RB 31.19: *Ut nemo perturbetur neque contristetur in domo Dei* (PL 66, 536). All of the English translations of RB is from W. K. Lowther Clarke, *The Rule of St. Benedict*, London 1931.

18 RA 5.39: *Codices certa hora singulis diebus petantur; extra horam qui petierit, non accipiat* (PL 32, 1383).

In chapter 34 of *The Rule of Benedict*, a monk's deprival is justified by the example of the early Church. In this case, each brother is to be given that which they, in particular, require. There is no flat, equalizing measure. He who requires more, receives more; he who requires less, receives less. All transactions are to be made in humility so as to keep the charity.[19] This is closely connected with the content of chapter 3 of *The Rule of Augustine*, which also deals with the different needs of each person by considering their previous standard of life. He recommends that "if those in more delicate health from their former way of life are treated differently in the matter of food, this should not be a source of annoyance to others or appear unjust in the eyes of those who owe their stronger health to different habits of life."[20]

The recommendation of peaceable communitarian life can be found in other parallel passages of the two rules. Just as Augustine incites brethren to "chant only what is prescribed for chant; moreover, let nothing be chanted unless it is prescribed,"[21] *The Rule of Benedict* prescribes that "as soon as the Work of God is finished let all reverently leave the oratory, in complete silence, so that any brother who by chance wishes to pray individually may not be hindered by another's misconduct."[22]

In each of these instructions, one can see, explicitly, the Augustinian concern for the maintenance of a communitarian atmosphere vivified by mutual charity.[23] Moreover, considering the character of the influence of *The Rule*

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19 Cf. "as it is written: 'They used to divide to each singly according as for him there was need': and this we say not in order that there may be acceptance of persons, which be far from us, but consideration of infirmities. In the case of one who needs but little, let him give thanks to God and not be vexed; but as to him who needs rather more, let him be humbled on account of his infirmity and not puffed up on account of the consideration shewn him; and thus shall all the members be in peace." RB 34.1–5: *Sicut scriptum est: Dividebatur singulis prout cuique opus erat. Ubi non dicimus ut personarum quod absit acceptio sit, sed infirmitatum consideratio; ubi qui minus indiget agat Deo gratias et non contristetur, qui vero plus indiget humilietur pro infirmitate, non extollatur pro misericordia; et ita omnia membra erunt in pace* (PL 66, 563–564).

20 RA 3.16: *Qui infirmi sunt ex pristina consuetudine, si aliter tractantur in victu, non debet aliis molestum esse nec iniustum videri, quos facit alia consuetudo fortiores* (PL 32, 1380).

21 RA 2.13: *Et nolite cantare, nisi quod legitis esse cantandum; quod autem non ita scriptum est ut cantetur, non cantetur* (PL 32, 1379).

22 RB 52.1–3: *Oratorium hoc sit quod dicitur, nec ibi quidquam aliud geratur aut condatur. Expleto opere Dei, omnes cum summo silentio exeant, et agatur reverentia Deo: ut frater qui forte sibi peculiariter vult orare, non impediatur alterius improbitate* (PL 66, 717).

23 This is the reason why, concerning *The Rule of Benedict's* anthropology, even though the echoes of the latin fathers are widely regarded as sources of the

of Augustine, we can see why *The Rule of Benedict* is entirely based on the presence of an abbot who is more willing to serve than preside, more inclined to hate sin than sinners, and more desirous to be loved than feared.[24]

4. The Reception of the Two Anthropological Traditions in *The Rule of Benedict*

As we can draw from the previous discussion, *The Rule of Benedict* is at the crossroads of two traditions. Firstly, *The Rule of Augustine* and its fundamental requirement of the communitarian life: to share goods, distributing to each according to their needs, fomenting an indwelling spirit of charity. This is a communitarian mentality that aims to establish unity in diversity in the most profound sense. Brethren in possession of different characters and tempers must come to exhibit a single heart and soul. Secondly, *The Rule of the Master* whose author is not concerned with Augustine's basic precepts, but rather his renouncement of the world. This rule insists upon perseverance in ascesis: vertical obedience, humility, and taciturnity.[25]

From this point on, we will examine the profound effect that Augustinian anthropology made upon the text of *The Rule of Benedict*, setting it apart from some of the seminal anthropological precepts of *The Rule of the Master*. In this endeavor, we will compare the terminology of RB 5 and RM 7, RB 6 and RM 8–9, RB 7 and RM 10 – parallel passages dealing with the three virtues (obedience, taciturnity and humility) – which are responsible for establishing the anthropological core of both texts.

RB 5 deals with obedience, i.e., the external attitude of the monk (the internal adherence is naturally presupposed, as already mentioned). So, the rule prescribes: "so that not guiding themselves in life by their own judgment they obey not their own desires and wishes, but walking by the judgment and commands of another, pass their life in community and are more than content to have an abbot over them. [...] And with good-will should disciples yield it because it is the cheerful giver God loves."[26] In a parallel

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rule — e.g., Cyprian (d. 258), Jerome (d. 420), and Leo the Great (d. 461), are audible — they are not as loud as Augustine.

24 Cf. RB 64.8; 11; 15; RA 7.46; Aug., Serm. 340.1; Aug., Ciu. D. 19.19; Aug., Faust. 22.56.

25 In one case *The Rule of the Master* seems to depend on Augustine; that is, when the context of taciturnity is used to express the vertical relation between abbot and monk, cf. RM 8.37 and Aug., Serm. 211.5. Apart from this instance, it mostly leans toward disciplinary formation based on escape from sin, humility, and obedience to abbot and dean.

26 RB 5.12; 16: *Ut non suo arbitrio, viventes vel desideriis suis et voluptatibus obedientes, sed ambulantes alieno judicio et imperio, in cœnobiis degentes abbatem*

passage of *The Rule of the Master* it is written: "in the monastery their will is daily thwarted for the sake of the Lord, and in the spirit of martyrdom they patiently endure whatever commands they receive to test them."[27] Thus, it is possible to see how the frustration of the will in RM 7 is equivalent to martyrdom (bodily death), while in RB 5 the obedience must be practiced with goodwill and gladness since it is one of the cornerstones of communitarian life.

RB 6 deals with taciturnity. The chapter is, for this reason, dedicated to the word. One must not speak with the purpose of listening to the word:

> let us do what the prophet says: 'I said, I will watch my ways, that I transgress not with my tongue. I set a watch upon my mouth, I became dumb and humbled and silent from good.' [...] Wherefore, even though it is always for good and holy converse that tends to edification, let but rare leave to talk be granted to fully trained disciples, on account of the importance of silence.[28]

In this case, the precept seems, at first glance, negative. But it is not; silence is emphasized for the sake of the training of disciples. It is necessary to see how the entire chapter is related to Ps 38.2–3. Although dedicated to *silence*, it is linked to the term *word* in the perspective of the biblical anthropological model; it begins with the *word of the Prophet* and provides commentary thereon. As a result, RB 6, especially its introduction, is absolutely original, lacking any parallel in *The Rule of the Master*. In turn, RM 8,1–38, on which all the theology of taciturnity is based, is strongly negative. Accordingly, the term *word* is omitted. Instead, the argument is constructed around the term *soul*, and its relation with the struggle with the body. In short, if RB 6, despite mentioning sin, emphasizes learning, RM 8 makes sin the central point.

Finally, RB 7 deals with humility. Taking into account the ascensional and gradual process of attaining humility, it says:

> for that ladder set up is our life in this world which, when the heart has been humbled by the Lord, is set up to heaven. [...] when then the monk shall have ascended all these steps in humility, he will presently arrive at that love of God which, being

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sibi præesse desiderant [...] et cum bono animo a discipulis præberi oportet, quia hilarem datorem diligit Deus (PL 66, 349–350).

27 RM 7.59: *Amaricatur uoluntati eorum cottidie in monasterio pro Domino, et ad probationem quaeque iniuncta fuerint, sustinent uelut in martyrio patienter* (SC 105, 394).

28 RB 6.1–3: *Faciamus quod ait Propheta: Dixi, custodiam vias meas, ut non delinquam in lingua mea. Posui ori meo custodiam, obmutui, et humiliatus sum, et silui a bonis. [...] Ergo quamvis de bonis et sanctis et ædificationum eloquiis, perfectis discipulis propter taciturnitatis gravitatem, rara loquendi concedatur licentia* (PL 66, 353).

perfect, puts fear right outside; and by means of which all that formerly he could not observe but with much fearfulness he will begin to keep without any difficulty, as it were by habit become second nature, no longer through fear of hell, but for love of Christ and a certain good habit and delight in virtue, which the Lord will deign to manifest by the Holy Spirit to His labourer now cleansed from vices and sins.[29]

In this way, humility is put into relation with the anthropological term *heart*. In fact, to follow each one of the steps of humility – i.e., to see everything that happens in the Monastery with the fear of God, or as a gift of God's love; to be pure in thoughts and feelings; to set aside one's own will; to avoid negligence and indifference; to be patient, obedient, generous, open-hearted; to respect each brother and each thing, always looking for the last place without affectation and with all sincerity; to hate vulgarity, meanness, roughness, and arrogance – is the same as having a pure, delicate, clean, and transparent heart. So, RB 7 synthesizes RB 5–6. Within these degrees of humility, one can find a proposal for the fulfillment of human existence. Tongue, hands, and feet must be completely in tune with the heart. To be obedient, to be silent in order to listen, to be natural, to understand the most modest situations of our condition, to be transparent, sincere, clean, is to be truly human. That is the absolute *simplicity*, the radical and total simplicity that surpasses not only the *dualism* of the soul's struggle against the body but every single *duplicity* of *intention* and *action*, of *conjecture* and *actualization*, of *hidden thoughts* and *disguised externalization*. In this sense, *to be* and *to seem* constitute one *single reality* to the monk since his *heart*, his *tongue*, his *hands*, and his *feet* compose one single reality. The monk is depicted in *The Rule of Benedict* as *entirely simple* because he is *entirely one*. Therefore, simplicity and transparency must prevail in the heart of monks, expressed through respect and profound sensitivity to all people, culminating in *perfecta illa caritas*.

On the other hand, the master claims in RM 10 that

a soul such as this [cleansed from vices and sins], therefore, having gone up these rungs will, when life has ended, doubtlessly enter into the reward of the Lord to which the apostle refers when he says: 'what we suffer in this life can never be

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29 RB 7.8; 67–70: *Scala vero ipsa erecta, nostra est vita in sæculo: quae humiliato corde a Domino erigitur ad cælum. [...] Ergo his omnibus humilitatis gradibus ascensis, monachus mox ad caritatem Dei perveniet illam, quæ perfecta foris mittit timorem: per quam universa, quæ prius non sine formidine observabat, absque ullo labore velut naturaliter ex consuetudine incipiet custodire; non jam timore gehennæ, sed amore Christi et consuetudine ipsa bona et delectatione virtutum, quæ Dominus jam in operarium suum mundum a vitiis et peccatis, Spiritu Sancto dignabitur demonstrare* (PL 66, 371; 375–376).

compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us'. Such souls will receive that eternal life which abides in the rapture of everlasting joy and will nevermore know and end.[30]

According to this quotation, the theology of humility in *The Rule of the Master* arcs towards the incorruptibility of the soul and converges upon a sort of spiritualization that can only be attained in the afterlife; that is, when the soul is detached from the body. It is quite the opposite of RB 7 and its foretaste of *perfecta illa caritas* brought into reality on Earth.

In short, it is possible to see how the main elements of RB 5–7 do not find a parallel in the anthropological terminology of RM 7–10. Accordingly, one must understand RB 5–7 not only from the perspective of *The Rule of the Master* but, above all, under *the influence of the Augustinian monastic mentality*. After all, if the constant presence of the trichotomy and its emphasis on the struggle against sin in RM 7–10 cannot be seen in RB 5–7, it is reasonable to surmise the existence of a disagreement in *The Rule of Benedict* vis-a-vis the anthropology of *The Rule of the Master*. In this case, it is possible to interpret the spiritual theology of RB 5–7 as influenced by the moral dimension of the biblical anthropological model drawn from *The Rule of Augustine*.

5. Conclusion

We set out to argue in this paper that, in *The Rule of Benedict*, the individualistic and pessimistic accent of *The Rule of the Master*'s anthropology was attenuated by the influence of the more communitarian and optimistic Augustinian monastic tradition, summed up in *The Rule of Augustine*. Augustine's *Rule* is responsible for the transmission of values such as humanity and fraternity, directed toward an abbey of embodied brethren. It also provides a singular understanding of the sinful condition based on the recognition of the moral and psychological weakness of humanity, revealing Augustine's profound theological and historical awareness. As a result of his influence, we can also detect the role of grace as a support to the monk's fidelity and attainment of his spiritual goal. All of this is directed toward a salubrious communitarian conviviality, paying attention to mutual charity,

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30 RM 10.92–93: *Quibus ergo perascensis gradibus, post exitum uitae sine dubio talis anima ad illam retributionem Domini introitura est, quam demonstrat apostulus, dicens: Non sunt condignae passiones huius saeculi as superuenturam gloriam, quae reuelabitur in nobis. Illam uitam aeternam tales animae recepturae sunt, quae in sempiternae laetitia exultatione permanet et ulterius finiri non nouit* (SC 105, 440).

fraternal relation, and the value and dignity of human being in all its unity and diversity.

I submit that it is, therefore, the sway of the horizontal, communitarian Augustinian anthropology, in contrast to the pessimistic and vertical anthropology of *The Rule of the Master*, that establishes *The Rule of Benedict* as a unique text in Latin monasticism.

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Indices

Modern Authors

Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity

Edited by Anders-Christian Jacobsen,
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The series ECCA (Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity) seeks to publish monographs and edited volumes that take as their theme early Christianity and its connections with the religion(s) and culture(s) of antiquity and late antiquity. Special attention is given to the interactions between religion and culture, as well as to the influences that diverse religions and cults had on one another. Works published in ECCA extend chronologically from the second century B.C.E. to the fifth century C.E. and geographically across the expanse of the Roman empire and its immediate neighbors.

Die Reihe ECCA (Early Christianity in the Context of Antiquity) zielt auf die Publikation von Monographien und Sammelbänden, die sich thematisch mit dem frühen Christentum und seinen Beziehungen zu Religion(en) und Kultur(en) der Antike und Spätantike befassen. Dabei gilt das besondere Augenmerk den Wechselwirkungen, die Religion und Kultur aufeinander ausüben, sowie den Einflüssen, die die verschiedenen Religionen und Kulte aufeinander hatten. Zeitlich erstrecken sich die in ECCA publizierten Arbeiten auf das 2. Jh. v. Chr. bis zum 5. Jh. n.Chr., geographisch auf den Raum des Imperium Romanum und seiner unmittelbaren Nachbarn.