

THE ROLE OF THE PHYSICAL
IN AUGUSTINE'S RETURN TO GOD IN THE *CONFESSIONES*

by

Justin Wolff

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
November 2018

© Copyright by Justin Wolff, 2018

For Katie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Chapter 1. Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1.1. Anselm: <i>Cur Deus Homo</i>	2
Chapter 1.2. Iamblichus: <i>De Mysteriis</i>	4
Chapter 1.3. Bonaventure: <i>Itinerarium Mentis in Deum</i>	7
Chapter 1.4. Augustine: <i>Confessiones</i>	10
Chapter 2. Invoking the divine-human mutuality.....	15
Chapter 2.1. Creation from nothing: God’s unlikeness.....	19
Chapter 2.2. Conversion as motion: unification and differentiation.....	21
Chapter 2.2.1. The conversion to wisdom.....	23
Chapter 2.3. The physical trinity: measure, number, and weight.....	24
Chapter 2.4. The infant: lactation as physics.....	26
Chapter 2.5. The child: <i>vestigium secretissimae unitatis</i>	28
Chapter 3. Outward and forward into corporeality: <i>amore amoris tui</i>	34
Chapter 3.1. The greatness of the rational creature: <i>defluo</i>	34
Chapter 3.2. The pears: physical imitation of God.....	37
Chapter 3.3. The theatre: projecting into images.....	39
Chapter 3.4. The Manicheans: projecting into unreal bodies.....	41
Chapter 3.5. The friend: breaking the projection.....	43
Chapter 3.5.1. The need for “another light”.....	47
Chapter 4. Knowing body rightly: the way inward and upward.....	50
Chapter 4.1. The sceptical soul: method of comparison.....	51

Chapter 4.2. Conversions of mind: <i>platoniorum libros</i>	53
Chapter 4.2.1. First Platonic ascent: ascending and descending (<i>Confessiones</i> , 7.10.16)	54
Chapter 4.2.2. Second Platonic ascent: mutual returns (<i>Confessiones</i> , 7.17.23)	56
Chapter 4.2.3. Third Platonic ascent: God's Wisdom (<i>Confessiones</i> , 9.10.23- 9.10.25)	58
Chapter 4.3. Conversion of will: <i>interpretans divinitus</i>	59
Chapter 4.4. Recreation of the physics: spiritual exchange through bodies	63
Chapter 5. Invoking the outside power of soul: <i>memoria</i>	68
Chapter 5.1. Spiritual senses: uncovering physical sensation inwardly	71
Chapter 5.2. Fourth Platonic ascent: infinitizing the physical (<i>Confessiones</i> , 10.8.12- 10.24.35)	73
Chapter 5.3. The life of virtue and temptation: mortification	79
Chapter 6. Confessing the <i>superiora</i> of Scripture	80
Chapter 6.1. Comparing temporal and divine speech	81
Chapter 6.2. The assimilation of time and the mind	85
Chapter 6.3. The gathering of thought: <i>cogito</i> and <i>conligo/colligo</i>	90
Chapter 6.4. Knocking upon Genesis: the nearly-nothing	93
Chapter 6.5. The Prior Good and the poverty of creation	100
Chapter 6.6. Method of allegory: the divine-human aspect	108
Chapter 7. Conclusion	113
Bibliography	114

Abstract

The role of the physical in the Trinitarian cosmos of the *Confessiones* demonstrates the natural capacity of the human to return to God by, and with, physical bodies. The physical is the relative basis and beginning of movement at every stage of the return (*exteriora, interiora, superiora*). Simultaneously, the human and the physical mutually return to God by, and with, His prior self-return in the increasing expansion and power of the human converting to the divine-human aspect, the sixth day of creation in *Genesis*, wherein God's work and rest is in the human's working and resting.

Acknowledgments

To those whose life, hospitality, and support were foundational to this study, I am perpetually grateful and indebted to: the parish of St. George's Round Church and the Trinity House community, for Susan, Matthew, Amy, and Gus; my grandparents Anne and Peter, Neil and Marie, my parents Jeff and Connie, and my Maritime in-laws Ken and Denise; my teachers Brian, Rhoda, Sean, Joel, Olive, Clive, Jamie, Dean, Susan, David, Eric, Dustin, Michael, Emily, Peter, Eli, Christopher, Gary, and Nicholas; and Josh and Kelsey, whose gracious presence in our home quickly brought this thesis to its end.

To Katie, my best friend and kindred spirit, by whose nature full of stars (φύσεις ἀστεροειδεῖς ἀγαλατοφοροῦντα)¹ I was led from Saskatchewan to the Maritimes, I owe more than I can give or say. To Flora Anne and the growing life borne in Katie, I give more than I can comprehend.

I am especially grateful to Donna Edwards and the Dalhousie Classics Department for their continual support over the last three years as a student and a new parent. I would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Dalhousie Faculty of Graduate Studies.

I must express my gratitude to Drs. Eli Diamond and Michael Fournier for their useful comments and corrections of this work.

Above all, this thesis would have never seen, and have been made to see, the light without the advice, support, and encouragement of my supervisor Dr. Wayne Hankey.

The Feast of Saint Martin

November 11, 2018

¹ Leopold Cohn, *Philonis Alexandrini Libellus De Opificio Mundi*, Breslauer Philologische Abhandlungen 4.4 (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967), 27.82.

Chapter 1. Introduction

In a crucial state of suspension in Book V of the *Confessiones*, Augustine uses the sceptical method of comparison to equally place (*comparabam*)² the false fables of the Manichean account of nature next to the *philosophos*' and his own bodily examinations of real physical bodies. Set side by side, in and by Augustine's knowing, a difference emerges. By observation of real physical bodies with the senses, the human perceives and discovers the reason (*ratio*) inherent as their structure, whose difference expands human knowing with the new probability and greater certainty of real physical bodies over and above the unreal and imaginative bodies of the Manicheans.

I used to recall many true observations made by them [the *philosophos*] about the creation itself. I particularly noted the reason (*ratio*) behind numbers, the order of times, the visible evidence of the stars. I compared these (*conferebam*) with the sayings of Mani who wrote much on these matters very copiously and foolishly. I did not notice any reason (*ratio*) of solstices and equinoxes or eclipses of luminaries nor anything resembling what I had learnt in the books of wisdom at that time (*saecularis sapientiae*).³

This method of comparing real physical bodies with the bodily senses becomes a basis of movement generally in the structure of return in the *Confessiones*. What the *Confessiones* demonstrates overall is how this physical basis of comparison becomes the inward and superior comparison of mind and Truth under an intellectual understanding that depends upon and is relative to the physical. Relative to Truth concealed and

* This thesis is inspired and was partially developed during my studies of Augustine's *Confessiones* under Dr. Wayne J. Hankey in 2015 and 2018. In particular, I depend upon his paper, "Augustine's Trinitarian Cosmos" presented on June 22nd 2017 to the 37th Annual Atlantic Theological Conference, "God Everyday and Everywhere," held at the University of King's College, Halifax, Nova Scotia, published in *Dionysius*, 35 (2017): 63-100. I refer to Dr. Hankey's seminar PowerPoint slides by name, date, and slide. Relative to the Latin text of the *Confessiones*, I follow J.J. O'Donnell, *Confessions*, 3 Vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) available online (<http://www.stoa.org/hippo/index.html>). For other works of Augustine used in this thesis, I follow the Latin texts of the *Patrologia Cursus Completus*, Series Latina, ed. J.P. Migne 178 Vols (Paris, 1844-64) available online (<https://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm>). All works of Augustine are cited by their full Latin titles. All Latin and Greek translations are mine unless otherwise stated. Finally, this thesis is not a complete treatment of the subject, but it is based on a complete reading of the *Confessiones*.

² *Confessiones*, 5.3.3.

³ *Confessiones*, 5.3.6: "Multa tamen ab eis ex ipsa creatura vera dicta retinebam, et occurebat mihi ratio per numeros et ordinem temporum et visibiles attestaciones siderum, et conferebam cum dictis Manichaei, quae de his rebus multa scripsit copiosissime delitans, et non mihi occurrebat ratio nec solistitorum et aequinoctiorum nec defectuum luminarium nec quidquid tale in libris saecularis sapientiae didiceram."

revealed in *Genesis* in Book XII, the nature of Truth above the mind (*supra mentes*)⁴ self-differentiates (*diversitate*)⁵ as the multiplicity of truths and their contradictions (*vera et diversa*)⁶ in the human's interpretations of the Word and creation in *Genesis*. By comparisons, the human judges and orders these contrary accounts relative to their unity in, and by, the Truth, forming more and more true and differentiating accounts of the superior reality from which, and by which, they derive: "I gathered these truths and joined them together" (*haec conligo atque coniungo*).⁷ Comparison, then, is a mode of differentiation and unification by gathering and equalizing contrary accounts of nature, by, and with, one another.

With this comparative mode, by situating the *Confessiones* within a small array of perspectives of God and nature and their relation, the focus of this thesis will become "more and more" clear and expansive relative to their emerging differences of approach towards the same conclusion of divine necessity, from which derives the need and power of the human to descend from, and ascend to, the divine by way of its likeness, difference, or both. By a brief comparative analysis of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis*, and Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, we shall see that the structure of return in the *Confessiones* is always relative to, and from, the unlike nature of physical bodies through the mutual conversion of the human and the physical to the near complete assimilation in and with God.

Chapter 1.1. Anselm: *Cur Deus Homo*

For Anselm, a close reader of Augustine and the last of the Latin fathers, the constitution of the creature depends on its just relation to God, entirely derived out of, through, and by the prior necessity of God's just relation to Himself. God is His own Justice, He is His own honour to Himself (*ad honorem suum seipsum sibi*).⁸ That is, the perfect self-communication of Himself is and satisfies His nature. This "self-honoring,"

⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.25.35.

⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.30.41.

⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.30.42.

⁷ *Confessiones*, 12.15.18.

⁸ F.S. Schmitt, *Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946), *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.18.

or “propitiation” of Himself to Himself, of the Son to the Father, is the prior unifying and self-differentiating movement of both Himself and the creature as the *Deus homo*.

Crucially, Anselm arrives at this conclusion through the natural freedom and end of created rational nature to discern and realize by necessary reasons its inherent happiness in God’s own Justice (*probat rationibus necessariis*).⁹ By reason of God’s nature, all things are just and in their proper place (*in rerum universitate ordinem suum*),¹⁰ so that created rational nature is just “in order for it to be happy by enjoying Him (*ut illo fruendo beata esset*).”¹¹ It is through its own nature, then, that the human must be able to enjoy Him without frustration. The human must be simultaneously constituted in, and satisfied by, its own nature, since God’s own nature demands that He did not create the human in vain (*frustra*).¹² The human is both rational, because it was created just, and just, because it is created rational as a discriminating movement between what is just and unjust (*ut discernat*).¹³ Rational nature is, and enjoys, its own state of justice, realizing and discerning its proper place in the prior Good in comparison to other created goods, “loving and choosing the Supreme Good above all other things . . . for its own sake and not for the sake of another (*non propter aliud sed propter ipsum*).”¹⁴

In this way, sin is not a frustration of nature or God, for God necessarily resolves the human “debt” in virtue of His self-satisfying nature. For Anselm, the *Deus homo*, or the divine-human mutuality, is the necessary and complete satisfaction of God and the human: “If only God can do this (*potest facere nisi Deus*) and only a human ought to do it (*debet nisi homo*), it is necessary that the *Deus homo* do it (*ut eam faciat Deus homo*).”¹⁵ By necessity of this mutual power in its prior satisfaction, the whole order of natures is happy and just in God’s superior and eternal nature of self-differentiation and unity, for on account of His self-mediation as the source and end of the creature, the *Deus homo* is necessarily inherent in, contains, and orders the creation for the sake of the divine nature.

⁹ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, Preface.

¹⁰ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 1.15.

¹¹ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.1.

¹² Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.1.

¹³ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.1.

¹⁴ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.1.

¹⁵ Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 2.6.

Chapter 1.2. Iamblichus: *De Mysteriis*

For Iamblichus, this divine-human mutuality arrived at by reason and likeness alone is opposed by the “indissoluble principle of love” (ἔρωτός τε ἀδιάλυτον ἀρχὴν) and “indivisible mutuality” (τὴν ἀλληλουχίαν ἀδιαίρετον) of the gods and the human,¹⁶ by which the soul descends and ascends relative to the divine essence through the unlikeness of matter. For the source and end of soul, the Good, is entirely above being and knowing (τὸ κατ’ οὐσίαν ὑπάρχον).¹⁷ Proclus is clear in the last proposition of his *Elements of Theology*: “every particular soul, when it descends into generation (εἰς γένεσιν), descends entirely (ὅλη). There is not a part of it which remains above (ἄνω) and a part which descends (τὸ δὲ κάτω).”¹⁸ The whole soul, including its intelligence, or rational nature, is not capable of moving relative to the likeness of its contemplation of the Good. The soul must descend and ascend through difference, generation, matter, and physical bodies.

Emphatically, on account of the identity of the Good, the gods are disposed towards themselves with friendship through difference in, and through, the cosmos from outside it (ἔξωθεν).¹⁹ The gods are not moved as from an external source or by force (οὐκ ἄρα ὡς ἔξωθεν οὐδ’ ὡς κατὰ βίαν)²⁰ since they are pure intellect (τοὺς καθαρὸς νόας ἀπορεῖς)²¹ above and containing all things within themselves (περιέχουσι πάντα ἐν ἑαυτοῖς).²² It is in accordance with their essence (ὡς ἐπὶ θεῶν γίνονται),²³ or, according to their good out of necessity (ὡς τὰγαθὸν ὠφελεῖ ἐξ ἀνάγκης),²⁴ or, according to their causal principle (τῇ κατὰ αἰτίαν ὑπεροχῇ),²⁵ that the divine contains all things within it as

¹⁶ John M. Dillon, Jackson P. Hershbell, and Emma C. Clarke, *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis*, Writings from the Greco-Roman World 4 (Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 1.6.

¹⁷ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.5.

¹⁸ Proclus, *The Elements of Theology: A Revised Text*, 2nd edition, translated by E. R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 185, proposition 211.

¹⁹ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.9.

²⁰ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.14.

²¹ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.15.

²² Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.8.

²³ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.14.

²⁴ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.14.

²⁵ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.9.

their transcendent source and end from above. In this way, the divine both remains in itself (ἐν αὐτῷ τε μονίμως), and from outside constitutes, illuminates, and brings together the furthest degrees of its own procession to their end and beginning in it (πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ τὰ τέλη ταῖς ἀρχαῖς συνάπτει).²⁶

The soul moves in virtue of the prior Good from outside itself, both at once as a differentiating descent into generation and matter, and as a purifying, participating, and unifying ascent through and with physical bodies, for there is no “contradiction between the descents of souls and their ascents (οὔτε μάχονται αἱ κάθοδοι τῶν ψυχῶν καὶ αἱ ἄνοδοι).”²⁷ This double tendency of the soul as a single movement is both innate and beyond it, facilitating its move through physical bodies by, and with, the power of the gods from above and within the divine and its incarnation as corporeal symbols (σύμβολα). For the prior Good is simultaneously inherent in the nature of soul (ἔμφυτος), constituting its being (συνυπάρχει γὰρ ἡμῶν αὐτῇ τῇ οὐσίᾳ), uniting soul to its principle (συνήνωται τε ἐξ ἀρχῆς πρὸς τὴν οἰκειάν αἰτίαν), and at the same time is entirely outside the soul, so that the soul is “an essential striving” towards the Good beyond it (τῇ πρὸς τὰγαθὸν οὐσιώδει τῆς ψυχῆς ἐφέσει).²⁸ In this way, the being and nature of physical bodies, including the human, participate in the divine through their possession of the gods possessing them from outside, for “physical things (τὰ δ’ ἐπὶ γῆς) possessing their being (ἔχοντα τὸ εἶναι) in the totalities of the gods (ἐν τοῖς πληρώμασι τῶν θεῶν), whenever they become a participation in the divine, immediately possess (εὐθύς ἔχει) the gods pre-existing in them (ἐν αὐτῇ) prior to their own proper essence.”²⁹

Fundamentally, the prior self-mediation of the Good is irrational and properly works through physical symbols and the claim that these have upon the gods. In one way, the gods work entirely by themselves through physical bodies.

Hence it is not even chiefly through our intellection that divine causes are called into actuality . . . but the things which properly arouse (ἐγείροντα) the divine will are the actual divine symbols. And so the attention of the gods is awakened by themselves (ὑφ’ ἑαυτῶν ἀνακινεῖται).³⁰

²⁶ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.9.

²⁷ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 8.8.

²⁸ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.3.

²⁹ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.8: “τὰ δ’ ἐπὶ γῆς ἐν τοῖς πληρώμασι τῶν θεῶν ἔχοντα τὸ εἶναι, ὅποταν ἐπιτήδεια πρὸς τὴν θεῖαν μετοχὴν γένηται, εὐθύς ἔχει πρὸ τῆς οἰκειᾶς ἑαυτῶν οὐσίας προϋπάρχοντας ἐν αὐτῇ τοῦ θεοῦ.”

³⁰ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 2.11.

At the same time, this divine work from above is worked from within, naturally given to, and used by, the human, such that the theurgist invokes and commands the demiurgic powers themselves. For through physical symbols, the human is empowered both to ascend to union with the superior powers of the cosmos, and to descend relative to their differentiation of order and classes. In virtue of its constitution to move in this way, soul “seems to have in itself (ἐν ἑαυτῇ) all kinds of being and activities, all kinds of principles, and forms in their entirety,” so that “while the soul is always limited to a single, definite body (καθ’ ἓν τι), it is, in associating itself with the superior guiding principles, variously allied to different ones (αἰτίοις ἄλλοτε ἄλλοις).”³¹ In this way, soul is enabled and assumes the power of the divine, working and commanding the entire order of beings through the σύμβολον.

The whole of theurgy is a double aspect (διττόν ἐστι πρόσχημα). On the one hand, it is performed by men (παρ’ ἀνθρώπων) and observes our order of nature (ἡμετέραν τάξιν ὡς ἔχει φύσεως) in the universe. But on the other, the human controls the divine symbols, and through them (δι’ αὐτῶν) is raised up (ἄνω) to unite with the higher powers and direct itself harmoniously relative to their dispensation (διακόσμησιν), which naturally empowers it (δύναται εἰκότως) to assume the character of the gods (τὸ τῶν θεῶν σχῆμα). On account of this difference then (διαφορὰν), naturally, [the human] both calls upon (καλεῖ) the powers above the universe, inasmuch as the one calling is a man, and in turn orders them (ἐπιτάττει), since it is encompassed (περιβάλλεται) with the hieratic character of the gods by the ineffable symbols.³²

In this way, theurgy prepares and purifies the human to participate more and more in the identity (τὴν ταυτότητα) of the Good beyond itself by exercising its outside power by, and with, the divine, in order to assume the power above which works and unites the cosmos through otherness and multiplicity (τὴν ἑτερότητα καὶ τὸ πλῆθος), proceeding

³¹ Iamblichus, *De Mysterioris*, 2.2.

³² Iamblichus, *De Mysterioris*, 4.2: “Τῆς ὅλης θεουργίας διττόν ἐστι πρόσχημα, τὸ μὲν ὡς παρ’ ἀνθρώπων προσαγόμενον, ὅπερ δὴ τηρεῖ καὶ τὴν ἡμετέραν τάξιν ὡς ἔχει φύσεως ἐν τῷ παντί, τὸ δὲ κρατυνόμενον τοῖς θεοῖς συνθήμασι καὶ ἄνω μετέωρον δι’ αὐτῶν τοῖς κρείττοσι συναπτόμενον, περιαγόμενον τε ἐμμελῶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκείνων διακόσμησιν, ὃ δὴ δύναται εἰκότως καὶ τὸ τῶν θεῶν σχῆμα περιτίθεσθαι. Κατὰ τὴν τοιαύτην οὖν διαφορὰν εἰκότως καὶ ὡς κρείττονας καλεῖ τὰς ἀπὸ τοῦ παντὸς δυνάμεις, καθόσον ἐστὶν ὁ καλῶν ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐπιτάττει αὐταῖς αὐθις, ἐπειδὴ περιβάλλεται πως διὰ τῶν ἀπορρήτων συμβόλων τὸ ἱερατικὸν τῶν θεῶν πρόσχημα.”

from and contained by the same divinity.³³ The soul's end is complete union (ἔνωσις) with the divine through its full exercise of the divine powers in its unity and multiplicity of beings and their mediation, "so that the theurgic soul is perfectly (τελέως) established in the activities and the intellections of the demiurgic powers. Then, indeed, it deposits the soul in the bosom of the demiurgic god as a whole (ἐν ὄλω).³⁴

Chapter 1.3. Bonaventure: *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*

Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* assimilates the approach from identity in Anselm and difference in Iamblichus. The journey of mind begins relative to the unlikeness of the physical creation and bodily perception, by which its knowing is moved inward towards its own likeness of mind, through which it is empowered to rise upward beyond itself into God who is above thought and being, through and beyond contemplation of His Being and Goodness.

Through a series of mediations between God and Himself and the human in God, Bonaventure begins the *itinerarium* by calling upon (*invoco*) the First Beginning in the Beginning (*in principio primum principium*), that is, calling upon the Father, through the Son, before, above, and present within the creation. This calling forms, and is through, the intercession of God's Mother and Saint Francis, so that "He might give illumination to the eyes of our mind to direct our feet in the way of that peace, which surpasses all perception (*exuperat omnem sensum*)."³⁵ Through Saint Francis, then, Bonaventure recalls the saint's vision of the "winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified" in the particular place it occurred on Mount Alverno.³⁶ This Seraph "makes others burn" and is the structure and means of moving desire beyond itself into God, for the Seraph's participation in the immediate and ceaseless revolution of the divine purifies and assimilates others to, and with, the divine love.

³³ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 1.19.

³⁴ Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 10.6.

³⁵ Philotheus Boehner and Zachary Hayes, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum: Latin Text from the Quaracchi Edition* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Saint Bonaventure University, Franciscan Institute Publications, 2002), Prologue 1.

³⁶ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Prologue 2.

With Dionysius the Areopagite, and so with Proclus, Bonaventure proceeds with prayer, “lead me, O Lord (*deduc me, Domine*),”³⁷ seeking illumination from outside “to know the steps of the divine ascent (*ad cognoscendum*).”³⁸ In this way, from likeness, the human has the capacity to discern the steps of the ascent towards and into God above itself. As well, it is on account of the human’s natural, physical, and temporal condition (*secundum statum conditionis nostrae*) that the physical and spiritual creations are the “ladder” and means of transcending beyond them into God (*universitas sit scala ad ascendendum in Deum*).³⁹ Through and by the six wings of the Seraph (*per senas alas illas*),⁴⁰ the mind is enflamed from outside to return to God through the order of the physical and spiritual creation relative to its own forms of knowing, becoming more and more a reflexive movement of triads through and above the structures of both the objective creation and itself. As a mirror (*speculum*) relative to the mind, the creature both reflects its proper nature and the First Principle beyond it, so that the mind sees in and by God through the mirror of creation from God’s unlikeness.

Necessarily then, from unlikeness, the mind begins at the bottom of the physical creation (*in imo*).⁴¹ In prayer, by its own natural power, mind’s ascent begins “by setting the whole sensible world before us as a mirror (*ponendo totum istum mundum sensibilem nobis tanquam speculum*), through which we may pass over to God (*per quod transeamus ad Deum*).”⁴² By discerning, and so also reflecting God in, the structure of bodies through the senses, the mind discovers both the inherent and superior source of the physical structure of measure, number, and weight, and its own triadic and expanding powers of perception relative to the physical creature.

From the physical, mind is led to re-enter itself (*ad nos reintraremus*) and discover within the divine image.⁴³ Reflecting upon itself, it uncovers the capacity of memory to contain both the physical and innate principles.⁴⁴ As a similitude of God’s

³⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 1.1.

³⁸ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 1.2.

³⁹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 1.2.

⁴⁰ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Prologue 3.

⁴¹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 1.9.

⁴² Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 1.9.

⁴³ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 3.1.

⁴⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 3.1.

eternity, differentiating mind must be purified and collected from temporal and physical things which disperse it (*distracta*), so that it can return to and through itself (*intrat ad se per memoriam*) as a polished mirror which reflects, and reflects with, God's likeness in it.⁴⁵

Thus far, through the unlikeness of physical bodies the mind returns into itself, and now it must be reformed through likeness. Given within from outside, and sought for with desire, the mind possesses innate virtues and spiritual senses which order the soul in imitation of the angelic, or intellectual, hierarchy, so that it moves towards God through itself in pure contemplation, since, "filled with all these intellectual lights (*repleta*), our mind like the house of God is inhabited by Divine Wisdom."⁴⁶

Being raised through and by the Seraph, purified mind moves through and above itself to arrive at the Cherubim gazing across the mercy seat as two modes of pure contemplation of God's name as One (Being) and Trinity (the Good).⁴⁷ By gazing upon Being Itself, mind reflects the supreme Oneness of God as the "self-embracing principle of all diversity," the prior and pervading cause of all essences.⁴⁸ By gazing upon the Good Itself, mind reflects the supreme self-diffusion⁴⁹ of God through the supreme reciprocity (*per summam circumincessionem*)⁵⁰ of the Trinitarian persons as the coincidence of opposites.⁵¹

By comparison (*per comparationem*),⁵² the mind simultaneously, and equally, reflects both Cherubs and unites them as the divine-human mutuality in their downward gaze towards the Mercy Seat as, simultaneously, the union and differentiation of Being and the Good through their mutual union and differentiation in the human as the unity and difference of God and the human in Christ. In and through the inter-mirroring of the Incarnation, which mind now reflects, the Cherubs are encompassed by the Seraph to

⁴⁵ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 4.1.

⁴⁶ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 4.8.

⁴⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 5.1.

⁴⁸ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 5.7.

⁴⁹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6.2.

⁵⁰ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6.2.

⁵¹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6.3.

⁵² Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6.4.

look down at the unions and differentiations of God in and through the physical and temporal body of the human.

From the perspective of Being in this mutual and downward gaze, mind reflects the union and differentiation of the prior, eternal, and superior cause through and with the temporal, inferior, and physical creation.⁵³ From the perspective of the Good, mind reflects the mutual reciprocity of the Trinitarian Persons, the plurality of idioms in their consubstantial nature, in and through its ultimate coincidence of union and differentiation through and with the physical body of Christ.⁵⁴

The burning Seraph, then, having assimilated the mind to become like and reflect the Cherubim and their inter-mirroring gaze of the divine-human mutuality, now draws the mind beyond itself by the crucifixion of desire.⁵⁵ The Seraph surpasses and encompasses the Cherubim by its form of the Crucified, that is, the full divine-human mutuality, enabling mind from outside it with the transfer of its total desire (*affectus totus transferatur*) beyond its end and limit of being and knowing into God to be transformed into God (*transformetur in Deum*).⁵⁶ Similar to the assimilation of the theurgic soul and the demiurgic powers in the *De Mysteriis*, the ἔνωσις of mind in God is at once in His Being and Goodness, in and through their union and differentiation in the Christ. Consequently, the contradictions of mystical knowledge from Dionysius are the culminating end of the mind in its perfect assimilation beyond itself into the superessential gleam of the divine darkness.⁵⁷ It passes over itself into the incomprehensible peace which contains and surpasses it.

Chapter 1.4. Augustine: *Confessiones*

Relative to the *Confessiones*, a similar structure of return into, and of, the divine-human mutuality has its basis in the comparative reading of Plato's *Timaeus* with, and in,

⁵³ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6.5.

⁵⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 6.6.

⁵⁵ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 7.1.

⁵⁶ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 7.4.

⁵⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, 7.5.

the Greek translation of the Septuagint *Genesis* in Philo Judaeus.⁵⁸ By this comparison, the creator God revealed to Moses in Exodus 3:7, 14 is Being itself (Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν), read as, and with, the same Being of Greek Metaphysics in Plato (ὁ ὢν).⁵⁹ Pelikan writes,

As Philo put the counterpoint between the two cosmogonies concerning creation, “its cause is God” (both *Timaeus* and *Genesis*), “its material the four elements” (*Timaeus*), “its instruments the word of God” (*Genesis*); and “the final cause of the building is the goodness of the architect” (*Timaeus* read into *Genesis*).⁶⁰

Emerging from the comparisons of these accounts of nature assimilated under an onto-theology, under the principle of God as Being and the Good, derives the *Hexamaeron* tradition of Basil, Ambrose, and Augustine.⁶¹ In a series of homilies on the six days of creation, which are formative for Ambrose, and so for Augustine, Basil follows Philo by opening his *Ἐννέα ὁμιλῖαι εἰς Ἑξαήμερον* with the purifying life of Moses in the desert contemplating Being itself (τῆ θεωρία τῶν ὄντων).⁶² Similarly, Ambrose open his *Hexamaeron* with Moses who relativizes God and created matter in *Genesis* 1:1, in order to demonstrate that God is the prior and incorporeal cause of matter.⁶³ Together with Basil, God is superior and immaterial as the “intelligent cause” of matter (αἰτίαν ἔμφορα).⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Jaroslav Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem? Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint*, Thomas Spencer Jerome Lectures 21 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 67-87.

⁵⁹ Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem*, 70.

⁶⁰ Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem*, 71.

⁶¹ Pelikan, *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem*, 111-132; Marie-Anne Vannier, “Creatio”, “Conversio”, “Formatio” chez S. Augustin, *Paradosis* 31 (Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions Universitaires, 1997), 63-82.

⁶² Basil of Caesarea, Ὅμιλία θ' εἰς τὴν ἑξαήμερον in *Tou en agiois patros emoon Basileiou, archiepiscopou kaisareias kappadochias, ta eyriskomena panta = Sancti patris nostri Basilii Magni, caesareae Cappadociae archiepiscopi, opera omnia. Quae exstant, vel quae eius nomine circumferuntur, ad mss. codices gallicanos, vaticanos, florentinos & anglicos, necnon ad antiquiores editiones castigata, multis aucta: nova interpretatione, criticis praefationibus, notis, variis lectionibus illustrata, nova sancti doctoris vita & copiosissimis indicibus locupletata / opera et studio domini Juliani Garnier, presbyteri et monachi benedictini e Congregatione Sancti Mauri, Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca 39, edited by Jacques-Paul Migne (Garnier: Paris, 1857-1866), 1.1.*

⁶³ Ambrose, *Exameron* in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 32.1, edited by Karl Schenkl, Heinrich Schenkl, Michael Petschenig, Otto Faller, and Michaela Zelzer (Pragae / Vindobonae: F. Tempsky; Lipsiae: G. Freytag, 1897), 1.2.5: “initium rerum, auctorem mundi, creationem materiae comprehendens, ut deum cognosceres ante initium mundi esse vel ipsum esse initium universorum.”

⁶⁴ Basil of Caesarea, Ὅμιλία θ' εἰς τὴν ἑξαήμερον, 1.1-2.

From this philosophical conclusion of God and the cosmos, the role of *Hexaemeron* is to purify and raise the mind above images and bodies to return to God by understanding the procession of the corporeal and incorporeal within and from their eternal and abiding cause in the divine mind (*mens sola divina*).⁶⁵ This spiritual interpretation of *Genesis* draws the human beyond its physical understanding of a corporeal God creating bodies in time and space outside of Himself, and converts it to the eternal and prior creative power of the Word present as the Beginning of the Septuagint *Genesis* and *κατά Ιωάννην* (ἐν ἀρχῇ / *in principio*).

Significantly, for the Latin Fathers this necessity of God's incorporeal nature as the source and cause of matter develops among a small group of *platonici* in Milan under Ambrose. That is, the life and power of the Creator without a body opposes the prevailing imagination of an anthropomorphic God among Christians.⁶⁶ This corporealism is true of the Manicheans in Books III-VI of the *Confessiones*, but is crucial for understanding that Augustine's conversion and entrance into the Milanese church is partially worked through the spiritual homilies of Ambrose in Book V, and is completely worked by contact with Being itself through the *platoniorum libros* in Book VII.

In this history of comparative readings of cosmogonies in the midst of widespread anthropomorphisms, Augustine writes five *Hexamaerons*.⁶⁷ In this tradition that seeks to understand the Word in *Genesis* through the life of Moses, Books XI-XIII of the *Confessiones* are included, in which, and towards which, Augustine demonstrates the fundamental return of God in the human through the human's correlation to the objective creation of physical and spiritual matter in the "six days" of creation. In this way, the *Confessiones* is an *itinerarium* both of the creature towards the Beginning of creation, and of the Beginning towards God as His own creative power through creation, through another. The human's becoming is at the same time God's prior conversion in the human's natural movement towards Him. What Anselm distills as the *Deus homo*, is for

⁶⁵ Ambrose, *Hexameron*, 1.2.7: "advertit enim vir plenus prudentiae quod visibilium atque invisibilium substantiam et causas rerum mens sola divina contineat."

⁶⁶ Carl W. Griffin and David L. Paulsen, "Augustine and the Corporeality of God," *The Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002): 105-107; Roland J. Teske, "Saint Augustine as Philosopher: The Birth of Christian Metaphysics," *Augustinian Studies* 23 (1992): 19-20.

⁶⁷ Roland J. Teske, "Genesis Accounts of Creation," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Fitzgerald, Allan, and John C. Cavadini (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 379-381.

Augustine the mutual relation of God and the human in the return of both through the physical. This movement constitutes the human as its superior end and characterizes its nature as one of expansion and renewal through God's own self-return in it: "The house of my soul is narrow, so that You to come to it (*quo venias ad eam*). May it be enlarged [stretched, extended] by You (*dilatetur abs te*). It is fallen: restore it (*ruinosa est: refice eam*)."⁶⁸ The journey of the *Confessiones* initiates, prepares, and extends the human to receive and call God's own power into it from outside: "I call upon You . . . I call You into my soul (*invoco te in animam meam*) which You are preparing to receive You through the desirous longing which You have inspired in it (*quam praeparas ad capiendum te ex desiderio quod inspirasti ei*)."⁶⁹

The structure of the *Confessiones* is a triformal scheme of ascent moving from outer bodies, turning inward into incorporeal nature, and upward into the eternal *superiora*. In this structure, the *exteriora* are the first step of the return as a whole and are also the first steps at each complete level of the *interiora* and *superiora*. Crouse writes,

The discussion moves from the phenomenal description of biography (Books I-IX) to psychology (Book X), and thence to theology (Books XI-XIII). Each of these three divisions is complete on its own level, and each contains within itself the triformal pattern of the whole work.⁷⁰

Under this triformal scheme of *exteriora*, *interiora*, and *superiora*, the individual levels of ascent are as follow:

1. Biography (Books I-IX): 1) outward social, religious, intellectual experiment, 2) inward turn into incorporeal mind towards Being itself through the *platoniorum libros*, 3) upward rise to eternal Wisdom present in and above all things as the source and "food" proper to the human.

⁶⁸ *Confessiones*, 1.5.6. Following A. Solignac, ed., *Les Confessions*, 2 vols., *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*, Oeuvres de Saint Augustin 13 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1962), 283, *quo* here is taken as result: "Bien étroite est la maison de mon âme pour que tu viennes y loger : qu'elle se dilate grâce à toi!" The human is "small" so that God may prepare and dwell in it. Henry Chadwick, ed., *Saint Augustine, Confessions*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 6, emphasizes the narrow state of the human relative to God: "The house of my soul is too small for you to come to it. May it be enlarged by you."

⁶⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

⁷⁰ R. D. Crouse, "Recurrrens in te unum: The Pattern of St. Augustine's *Confessions*," edited by E.A. Livingstone, *Studia Patristica* 14 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Berlin, 1976): 390.

2. Psychology (Book X): 1) activities of soul *ad extra*, 2) inward turn into *memoria* and the human infinity, 3) upward rise to inward and superior Truth.
3. Theology (Book XI-XIII): 1) creation in temporal succession, 2) creation's abiding formal reality in the "heaven of heavens," 3) creation's rest in differentiation and unity of divine activity, wherein motion and rest are identical.

By emphasizing the physical as the prior and necessary step of returns, the difference of the *Confessiones* relative to Anselm, Iamblichus, and Bonaventure is the return of the divine-human mutuality through, and with, the relation of human knowing and physical bodies. Within the triformal scheme of ascent, the mutuality of the physical and the human differentiates as i) real and more certain bodies known under an outward bodily relation (*corpus*); ii) the images of real bodies known under the inward relation of superior Truth (*rerum sensarum imagines*); and iii) physical matter known relative to, and mirroring, the *superiora* (*materies corporalis*). Even at the level of *interiora* and *superiora*, Augustine always begins from, and relative to, the unlikeness of the physical matter and formlessness as a comparative move towards their life, likeness of form, and source, beyond themselves in God. Simultaneously, as the end of Book XIII shows, the *itinerarium* of the human and the physical is God's proper "work" and "rest" in the human's creation and recreation on "the sixth day." In this way, the divine-human mutuality returns in tandem through and with the human's relation to the physical.

Chapter 2. Invoking the divine-human mutuality

The prologue of Book I opens the fundamental relation of God and the human. The human praises the greatness, great power, and infinite wisdom of God: “Great are You, Lord, and greatly praiseworthy (*laudabilis valde*). Great is Your power and Your wisdom is immeasurable [without number] (*non est numerus*).”⁷¹ Structurally, below God, is the human, through whom praise to God is physically spoken and heard, through and with the psalmist in scripture temporally prior to Augustine. Fundamentally, the human naturally desires to praise God (*laudare te vult homo*), created and distinguished as one part, or “some portion,” of God’s creation (*aliqua portio creaturae tuae*).⁷² Evident in the priority of the text, beginning with words of praise and the created desire moving behind and through them, is the human dependence upon God above it, both as its source, “Your creature (*creaturae tuae*)”, and its desired end, “the human desires to praise You (*laudare te vult homo*).”⁷³ Through the order of the text, praise of and desire for the infinite power and wisdom above the human is in virtue of its superior cause and end which transcends it. For, the human praises God (*laudare*) who is greatly praiseworthy (*laudabilis valde*).

The repetition of the human’s character and its specification as a creature praising and desiring its source and end emphasizes that it is itself a praising and desiring thing for God in spite of itself.

The human desires to praise You, some portion of Your creation, and the human bears around its own mortality, it bears around the witness of its own sin and that You resist the proud. Nevertheless, the human desires to praise You, some portion of Your creation.

*et laudare te vult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae, et homo circumferens mortalitatem suam, circumferens testimonium peccati sui et testimonium quia superbis resistis; et tamen laudare te vult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae.*⁷⁴

The repetition of *circumferens* emphasizes the circular movement of desire for God as its beginning and end, in that the circularity of the human ‘bearing around’ its own mortality and sin is encompassed by its own natural and prior desire for God. The emphasis of the

⁷¹ *Confessiones*, 1.1.1.

⁷² *Confessiones*, 1.1.1.

⁷³ *Confessiones*, 1.1.1.

⁷⁴ *Confessiones*, 1.1.1.

text falls on the repetition of desire above itself, particularly on the *tamen*, for the human bearing around its own mortality and sin is not desiring something other than God outside Him, for the human nevertheless (*tamen*) desires God despite its sin and mortal condition.

Moving from the perspective of created desire for God, there is a reversal of perspective between God and the human. On the side of the human, the human desires God above it, and now on the side of God, He arouses the human so that it delights to praise Him. In this way, the desire for God is on account of God stirring it to praise Him. “You excite [awaken, stir, arouse, kindle], so that [the human] takes pleasure [is enticed, allured] to praise You (*tu excitas ut laudare te delectet*).”⁷⁵

The reason (*quia*) for God stirring desire for Himself is particularly significant and dependent upon the rendering of the prepositional phrase *ad te*. English translations are generally ambiguous and do not explicitly identify the relation of the human and God with regard to the directional meaning of *ad*. Translating *ad te* as, “because You have made us for Yourself (*ad te*)” implies with a vagueness that either God needs His creation, or that the human’s constitution is designed for God’s purpose and use. Following the literal translation of E. Tréhorel and G. Bouissou, *ad te* is an ontological relation between the human and God above it: “C’est toi qui le pousse à prendre plaisir à te louer parce que tu nous as faits orientés vers toi.”⁷⁶ In this sense, God stirs the human to delight in Him “because He has made it oriented towards Himself” (*quia fecisti nos ad te*),⁷⁷ so that the fundamental status of the human is a *relation* to, and in virtue of, God as a desire for, from, and oriented towards, its source and end in God. On account of its nature, the role of desire, praise, or confession, is the interpenetration of God above, in, and with the created human’s desire for Him who penetrates the human from outside.

Arriving at the end of the *Confessiones*, Book XIII opens and draws the human into its prior mutuality with God and His eternity. The human again calls upon God who inflames its desire from outside to receive Him. “I call upon You . . . I call You into my soul (*invoco te in animam meam*) which You are preparing to receive You through the

⁷⁵ *Confessiones*, 1.1.1.

⁷⁶ A. Solignac, *Les Confessions*, 273.

⁷⁷ *Confessiones*, 1.1.1.

desirous longing which You have inspired in it (*quam praeparas ad capiendum te ex desiderio quod inspirasti ei*).⁷⁸ From this end of the *Confessiones*, the human calling God into it is simultaneously encompassed and penetrated by His prior eternity. “Before I called to You, You were there before me (*priusquam invocarem*) . . . From far off I heard and was converted and called upon You as You were calling me (*vocantem me invocarem te*).⁷⁹ By its nature, the human’s preparation, formation, and conversion is always present to it from outside in God’s simultaneity through its own recollection of God’s prior “calling” in it. In this way, the beginning and end of the *Confessiones* demonstrates the interpretive mode of the human’s own journey towards its prior and superior life in God’s return in it.

The complexity of this divine-human mutuality culminates in the Holy Spirit, God’s Willing or Loving. God’s Will is “itself sufficient to itself and in itself” (*voluntas tua ipsa in se sibi sufficiens*),⁸⁰ so that God does not need the human *for* Himself, but that the individual creature has being, goodness, and beauty on account of God’s Goodness which “goes out” prior to, above, and through the creature (*ex bonitate tua praeveniente*).⁸¹ The Spirit is also God’s rest, who does not rest on creatures as if they supported Him (*in eis requiesceret*), but rather, when the Spirit rests on creatures, He “makes them rest in Himself (*hos in se requiescere facit*).⁸² God’s rest, then, is the human resting in God’s rest in it. For, the Spirit is the self-diffusion of God’s Love in the human: “Your Love is diffused [poured out] in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (*caritas tua diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum*,).⁸³ As God’s self-diffusion and stable rest, the Spirit is the preeminent ground and motive behind and above human desire for God: “Certainly, [God] is loved in that which He made, who is not loved except through the Spirit which He has given (*nisi per spiritum quem dedit*).⁸⁴ This is a conclusion of the *Confessions* found at its written end in Book XIII, to which, and

⁷⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

⁷⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

⁸⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁸¹ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

⁸² *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁸³ *Confessiones*, 13.7.8; 13.31.46.

⁸⁴ *Confessiones*, 13.31.46.

through which, the divine-human mutuality rest in one another in the prior Love of the Spirit, the proceeding cause and stability of desire: “There also You will rest in us (*in nobis*), just as now You work in us (*in nobis*). Your rest will be through us (*per nos*), just as now Your works are done through us (*per nos*).”⁸⁵

Thus, the character of Spirit is the gravitation of all desires, loves, and wills. All things seek and are drawn by their beginning into the preeminent Goodness, being stable in its prior rest and differentiated in creation: “See, I exist, a result of Your goodness (*ex bonitate tua*), which goes before all (*praeveniente totum*) that You made me to be, and all out of which You made me . . . To You I owe my being and the goodness of my being.”⁸⁶ In this way, the tendency of human desire relative to God in Spirit is fundamentally characterized as weight, by which all creatures move towards their cause in the Good. The Spirit, both supereminently above as the inherent and given ground of the creature, is the true *locus* in which the creature rests (*in dono tuo requiescimus*), for “our rest is our place (*requies nostra locus noster*).”⁸⁷

Not merely by analogy, the Spirit is the relative weight of every physical creature. Emphatically, the Spirit is the weight, place, and motion of physical bodies.⁸⁸

A body by its weight (*pondere suo*) strives towards its proper place (*ad locum suum*). The weight’s movement is not necessarily downwards, but to its own place (*ad locum suum*). Fire tends to move upwards, a stone downwards. They are moved by their respective weights (*ponderibus suis aguntur*), they seek their own place (*loca sua petunt*). Oil poured under water (*infra*) is drawn up to the surface on top of the water (*super*). Water poured on top of oil (*supra*) sinks below the oil (*infra*). They are acted on by their respective densities (*ponderibus suis aguntur*), they seek their own place (*loca sua petunt*). Things which are less ordered are restless. Once they are ordered, they are at rest.⁸⁹

By the Spirit, every physical thing seeks its own order and rest in God according to their natural and given weight in and from God. The repetition of “by their own weights they are moved, they seek their own place (*ponderibus suis aguntur, loca sua petunt*)” in the context of order and rest in and by the Spirit, emphasizes this fact, that a physical body

⁸⁵ *Confessiones*, 13.37.52: “etiam tunc enim sic requiesces in nobis, quemadmodum nunc operaris in nobis, et ita erit illa requies tua per nos, quemadmodum sunt ista opera tua per nos.”

⁸⁶ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1: “et tamen ecce sum ex bonitate tua praeveniente totum hoc quod me fecisti et unde me fecisti.”

⁸⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.9.10.

⁸⁸ See Wayne J. Hankey, “Augustine’s Trinitarian Cosmos,” *Dionysius* 35 (2017): 74.

⁸⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.9.10. cf. *De Genesi ad Litteram* 8.20.39; 8.21.41.

moves toward God through and in virtue of its given nature, place, and motion relative to other bodies in and by the Spirit. This inherent structure from without is evident by perceiving a bodily thing's weight, density, and place. Oil poured under water and its rising above the water is its order and rest in God by its position above the water.

Relative to the human, its weight is its desire, that which opens the *Confessiones* through the mutual invocation of the human in God, and God in the human. By its nature then, the human's natural desire leads and is led from without towards Gods, so that the difference of its work (differentiation) and rest (unification) relative to God's working (self-differentiation) and resting in it (self-sufficiency) inflames and draws the human towards Him. "My weight is my love (*pondus meum amor meus*). Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me. By Your gift we are set on fire and carried upwards: we grow red hot and ascend."⁹⁰ In this way, God's Unity and Trinity "goes forth" (*exitus*) and "returns" (*reditus*) in and through the human's *exitus* and *reditus* in and by Him, which draws the human by its proper weight to work and rest in God's working and resting in it. A high form of this recollection is in Book XIII in the context of the human's *exitus*, or "falling from" God (*defluere*). It cannot cleave to its outside life, God's life, without God moving in it. God's return in the human's return is clear: "My God, give Yourself to me, return Yourself to me (*da mihi te, deus meus, redde mihi te*)."⁹¹

Chapter 2.1. Creation from nothing: God's unlikeness

That the divine-human mutuality moves through difference is on account of the supreme identity of God's Unity and Trinity, or identity and self-differentiation.⁹² For, on account of the supreme and equal communication of the Father and the Son, creation must be from nothing, or, God's unlikeness (*dissimilitudinem tuam*).⁹³ In Book XII, Augustine's confession of the *superiora* in *Genesis* raises him to confess by, and with, the superior and inward Truth, moving beyond the literal words of scripture with

⁹⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.9.10: "pondus meum amor meus; eo feror, quocumque feror. dono tuo accendimur et sursum ferimur; inardescimus et imus." Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 278. Cf. *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 4.8.

⁹¹ *Confessiones*, 13.8.9.

⁹² Cf. Werner Beierwaltes, *Identität Und Differenz*, 2nd Edition, Philosophische Abhandlungen, Bd 49 (Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 2011), 75-96.

⁹³ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

understanding, to confess that the “invisible and unorganized” earth is the “unformed matter” of the Book of Wisdom. This formless matter is an “almost-nothing” not entirely without being, yet outside of created time before the formation and differentiation of the physical and intellectual creations.

Before You formed and divided that ‘unformed matter’ (*informem materiam*), there was nothing . . . Yet, it was not entirely nothing (*non tamen omnino nihil*). It was a kind of formlessness without any form (*erat quaedam informitas sine ulla specie*).⁹⁴

Seeking the nature of formless matter, Augustine confesses that God created it and that its distance from God and form is not spatial, but ontological. “Where could this come from except from You (*abs te*) . . . But the further away from You, the more it is unlike You (*dissimilius*), though this is not a place.”⁹⁵ On account of God’s likeness to Himself, then, formless matter is unlike God. It is not created as identical with Him, for, the supreme identity and Trinity of God (*idipsum et idipsum et idipsum*) “made something even out of nothing (*fecisti aliquid et de nihilo*)” and not from Himself (*non de te*).⁹⁶ The Selfsame communicates Itself in simple equality to Itself, and since unformed matter is not made from anything else other than God, yet is not God, it must be made from God’s unlikeness: “[T]here was nothing other than You out of which You could make them (*aliud praeter te non erat*) . . . That is why You made heaven and earth from nothing (*de nihilo*) . . . You were, the rest was nothing.”⁹⁷ Similarly, in Book XIII, the prior formlessness of matter in God tends towards His unlikeness: “For in that place [God’s wisdom] depended even embryonic and formless things, all of which in their own spiritual or physical category move to excess and to Your far-removed unlikeness (*in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam*).”⁹⁸

This formless matter of creation made from nothing defines the unstable constitution of the creature relative to its source in the self-sufficiency of Being. Relative

⁹⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.3.3.

⁹⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.7.7.

⁹⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.7.7.

⁹⁷ *Confessiones*, 12.7.7. Cf. Werner Beierwaltes, “Augustins Interpretation Von Sapientia 11:21,” *Revue Des Etudes Augustiniennes*, 15 (1969): 51-52.

⁹⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2: “ut inde penderent etiam inchoata et informia quaeque in genere suo vel spiritali vel corporali, euntia in immoderationem et in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam.”

to and from Being, the creature is a mixture of being and non-being, not entirely-being since God is Being Itself, nor entirely non-being since there is nothing but God and His Being. This is discovered and revealed through the first Platonic ascent in Book VII.

You raised me up so that I could see that what I saw is Being (*esse*), and that I who saw am not-yet-being (*nondum me esse*)⁹⁹ . . . I considered the other things below You (*infra te*), and I saw that they were not entirely being nor entirely non-being (*vidi nec omnino esse nec omnino non esse*).¹⁰⁰

The creature is not inherently stable in, and by, itself as a mixture, but is given being and stability from outside in its supreme source of Being. It is not self-sufficient as a becoming thing. This is the principle of mutability and corruption which Augustine will discern in Book XII through physical examination alone.

At the same time, the creature is given and receives a trinitarian structure in virtue of the reciprocity of the Trinitarian Persons. By its own comparison, the human triad of being, knowing, and willing is known relative to the highest Trinitarian structure of God's Being, Knowing and Willing in Book XIII.¹⁰¹ As its inherent structure, the creature moves towards, by, and with God's self-relation in it. Succinctly, Hankey writes,

God's being is that by which we are, God's knowing is that by which we know, and God's love is that by which we love. The inverse is also true and is made plain. God's being is our being, God's knowing is our knowing, God's loving is our loving.¹⁰²

Chapter 2.2. Conversion as motion: unification and differentiation

On account of God's self-relation through His difference in the creation, the creature is a moving relation of "not entirely-being" and "not entirely non-being," in virtue of, and relative to, God in and above it. The necessary inequality and unlikeness of the creation from God's own equality and likeness constitutes the creature in this way. Books VII, XII, and XIII demonstrate that the cosmos is not self-sufficient, but rather moves as both a diversifying tendency towards formlessness, God's unlikeness, and as a unifying tendency towards its form in God's likeness, the Word. The creature is two

⁹⁹ *Confessiones*, 7.10.16.

¹⁰⁰ *Confessiones*, 7.11.17.

¹⁰¹ *Confessiones*, 13.11.12.

¹⁰² Hankey, "Augustine's Trinitarian Cosmos," 69.

tendencies in one motion,¹⁰³ towards differentiation and unification of form: “For in that place [God’s Wisdom] depended even embryonic and formless things, all of which in their own spiritual or physical category move to excess and to Your far removed unlikeness (*in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam*).”¹⁰⁴ Moreover, since it is the Spirit’s prior rest which draws the creature to naturally rest in Him, it is in Spirit that both tendencies of the creature coincide. For, “Your creation subsists from the fullness of Your Goodness (*ex plenitudine quippe bonitatis tuae creatura tua substitit*).”¹⁰⁵

It is as a conversion that the creature is constituted and subsists in God,¹⁰⁶ moving into and towards God’s Unity and Trinity. God grants and empowers from above and within the creature’s *reditus* and *exitus* by His prior *reditus* and *exitus* of Trinity. A summation of the creature as a conversion is given in Book XII, that it is “formed through Your likeness, running back to You, the One (*recurrens in te unum*), according to an ordered capacity, as much as is given to each thing in its own genus.”¹⁰⁷

By conversion, then, as the differentiation and unification of the creature towards, by, and with God, formless matter is created and formed from outside it through its conversion to the Word.

So formless things are dependent on Your Word unless by that same Word they are recalled to Your Unity (*revocarentur ad unitatem tuam*) and receive a form from You, the One (*ab uno te*), the supreme Good.¹⁰⁸

This conversion from formlessness and unlikeness to God’s Unity and Trinity is further articulated in *De Genesis ad Litteram* in terms of conversion to, and imitation of, the form of the Word. In the equality of the Father and the Word, the Word adheres to the Father who speaks through it with His begotten Wisdom. This eternal speech is the prior *exitus* and *reditus* of the Father to the Son, in whose reciprocity they relate through the difference of the *exitus* and *reditus* of creation in the Word. For the supreme identity of

¹⁰³ Cf. Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine’s Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 94, 181-182; Robert J. O’Connell, *St. Augustine’s Confessions: The Odyssey of Soul* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 159.

¹⁰⁴ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2: “ut inde penderent etiam inchoata et informia quaeque in genere suo vel spiritali vel corporali, euntia in immoderationem et in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam.”

¹⁰⁵ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

¹⁰⁶ Vannier, “Creatio”, “Conversio”, “Formatio,” 133-134.

¹⁰⁷ *Confessiones*, 12.28.38: “formaretur per similitudinem tuam recurrens in te unum pro captu ordinato, quantum cuique rerum in suo genere datum est.”

¹⁰⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

the Word adhering to the Father necessarily proceeds and returns through its difference in the creation. The creature is given and receives its own inherent form of divine imitation from outside it. By the creature's natural and proper imitation of the Word, its *exitus* and *reditus* are through the prior recollection of the Word in and above it. The creature is both not entirely complete, nor entirely not-complete, as a converting thing which necessarily tends towards formlessness and form.

Incompleteness does not imitate [the Word] since it is unlike that which supremely and originally is. By its very formlessness, it tends towards nothing (*ad nihilum*). But then it imitates the form of the Word (*imitatur Verbi formam*), which always and immutably cleaves to the Father, when by conversion (*conversione*) to that which truly and always is it receives form and becomes a complete creature according to its own kind. This is [a conversion] to the Creator of its own substance.¹⁰⁹

It is important to maintain and emphasize the nature of conversion, that the creature's conversion is at the same time God's prior conversion in the human's natural movement, by whose weight of love or desire the human is led and leads. Put another way, the human subsists in God as a conversion that God works and preserves in Himself through the human's own nature. Conversion is worked from outside and within through the effort of the human.

Unless the human subsists, having converted (*conversus*) to the unchangeable Good which is God, it cannot be formed so that it is just and happy. Yet, through this same God who creates the human to be human, He works (*operatur*) and preserves (*custodit*) the human, so that, even now (*etiam*), it is good and happy.¹¹⁰

Chapter 2.2.1. The conversion to wisdom

Structurally, Augustine's conversion to immortal wisdom in Book III through Cicero's exhortation of philosophy in his *Hortensius* demonstrates the fundamental character of Augustine's conversions in the *Confessiones*. In tandem, the book of the *Hortensius* is given from outside, and Augustine desires to study it for its style and rhetoric. By reading it, Augustine is utterly changed by the content. His previous

¹⁰⁹ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 1.4.9: "non imitatur imperfectio, cum dissimilis ab eo quod summe ac primitus est, informitate quadam tendit ad nihilum; sed tunc imitatur Verbi formam, semper atque incommutabiliter Patri cohaerentem, cum et ipsa pro sui generis conversione ad id quod vere ac semper est, id est ad creatorem suae substantiae, formam capit, et fit perfecta creatura."

¹¹⁰ *De Genesi Ad Litteram* 8.10.23: "nisi ad incommutabile bonum, quod est Deus, conversus substiterit, formari ut iustus beatusque sit, non potest. Ac per hoc Deus idem qui creat hominem, ut homo sit, ipse operatur hominem atque custodit, ut etiam bonus beatusque sit."

affections, prayers, and hopes are transformed in comparison to a new form of inflamed desire for wisdom. Desire is raised beyond itself, heightened and amplified by, and for, the universal wisdom discovered and revealed by a physical book. By Cicero's Roman Stoicism, then, Augustine rises to God (*ad te*).

Truly, that book changed my affections (*mutavit affectum meum*), it changed my prayers (*mutavit preces meas*) to You Yourself (*ad te ipsum*), O Lord, and it made other things (*fecit alia*) my hopes and desires. Suddenly, every vain hope became worthless to me, and I lusted with incredible heat of the heart the immortality of wisdom. And I began to rise up to return to You (*surgere coeperam ut ad te redirem*).¹¹¹

The character of this conversion to wisdom in Book III recalls the divine-human mutuality invoked in the prologue of Book I. God excites the human's desire for Him, working from without in the nature of the human. This conversion also demonstrates that, even at the level of corporeal understanding in Books II-VI, Augustine is raised beyond himself to seek this wisdom, even in a corporeal way. The emotional and torrid language of his conversion is emphatic of his preliminary and corporeal relation to God and the creation. Converted to wisdom which is "itself everywhere" (*ipsam quaecumque esset sapientiam*),¹¹² desire becomes an endlessly expanding search to completely grasp its natural and superior end in the temporal-spatial world.

I lusted (*concupiscebam*) with an incredible heat of the heart (*aestu cordis incredibili*) for the immortality of wisdom.¹¹³ . . . How I burned (*quomodo ardebam*), my God, how I burned (*quomodo ardebam*) . . . This book kindled (*accendebant*) my love . . . I prized [philosophy], sought it, pursued it, grasped it, and strongly embraced it. I was aroused (*excitabar*) by that speech and was enkindled and burned (*accendebar et ardebam*).¹¹⁴

Chapter 2.3. The physical trinity: measure, number, and weight

Returning to the constitution of the creature as given and receiving being and trinitarian structure, a result of a "creation from nothing" is the interpenetrative move of

¹¹¹ *Confessiones*, 3.4.7: "ille vero liber mutavit affectum meum, et ad te ipsum, domine, mutavit preces meas, et vota ac desideria mea fecit alia. viluit mihi repente omnis vana spes, et immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu cordis incredibili, et surgere coeperam ut ad te redirem."

¹¹² *Confessiones*, 3.4.8.

¹¹³ *Confessiones*, 3.4.7.

¹¹⁴ *Confessiones*, 3.4.8.

God in and through the structures of all creatures towards their end and source. Recalling the weight of the creature in Book XIII, this movement is true of the physical body in its structure of measure, number, and weight (*mensura, numerus, pondus*).¹¹⁵ In the *De Genesi ad Litteram*, God is the supreme form and distribution of measure, number, and weight in Himself (*in te*), constituting and enabling the physical body in its own proper movement. The ground, form, and movement of all physicality, then, is given in God from outside, granting the necessary physical structure of the creature as its capacity of returns.

In what manner are these things [measure, number, and weight] God Himself? For neither is God measure, number, or weight, or all these things. In so far as we know measure in the things which we measure, and know number in the things which we number, and know weight in the things which we weigh, God is not these things. In so far as measure affixes a mode of being to all things, and number supplies the form to all things, and weight draws all things to rest and stability, He is those things, firstly, truthfully, and singularly. He limits all things, forms all things, and ordains all things. Are we to understand that by the words ‘You have distributed all things in measure, number, and weight’ nothing else was said but that ‘You have distributed all things in Yourself’ (*omnia in te disposuisti*)?¹¹⁶

In this way, the physical trinity is a limit, form, and end of its superior source of “measure without measure (*mensura sine mensura*),” “number without number (*numerus sine numero*),” and “weight without weight (*pondus sine pondere*).”¹¹⁷ God is the supreme measure, number, and weight which limits, differentiates, and stabilizes every

¹¹⁵ Hankey, “Augustine’s Trinitarian Cosmos,” 74; Jared Ortiz, *You Made Us For Yourself: Creation in St. Augustine’s Confessions* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2016), 24-25; Vannier, “Creatio”, “Conversio”, “Formatio,” 127-128; J.J. O’Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions Commentary on Books 1-7*, Vol 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 293-295; Carol Harrison, “Measure, Number and Weight in Saint Augustine’s Aesthetics,” *Augustinianum* 28 (1988): 591-602; Beierwaltes, “Augustins Interpretation Von Sapientia 11:21,” 51-61; Olivier Du Roy, *L’Intelligence De La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin, Genèse De Sa Théologie Trinitaire Jusqu’en 391*, (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966), 279-281; W. J. Roche, “Measure, Number, and Weight in St. Augustine,” *New Scholasticism* 15 (1941): 350-376.

¹¹⁶ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 4.3.7: “Et quomodo illa ipse? Neque enim Deus mensura est, aut numerus, aut pondus, aut ista omnia. An secundum id quod novimus mensuram in eis quae metimur, et numerum in eis quae numeramus, et pondus in eis quae appendimus, non est Deus ista: secundum id vero quod mensura omni rei modum praefigit, et numerus omni rei speciem praebet, et pondus omnem rem ad quietem ac stabilitatem trahit, ille primitus et veraciter et singulariter ista est, qui terminat omnia et format omnia, et ordinat omnia; nihilque aliud dictum intellegitur, quomodo per cor et linguam humanam potuit: Omnia in mensura, et numero, et pondere disposuisti, nisi: Omnia in te disposuisti?”

¹¹⁷ *De Genesi ad Litteram*, 4.4.8.

physical thing in Him, so that the physical trinity lives by and relative to its ineffable source and outside power.

Chapter 2.4. The infant: lactation as physics

It is with this brief understanding of the physical that we return to Book I, in which, after opening the divine-human mutuality in the prologue, Augustine confesses the physical trinity of the infant: “You command me to praise You (*laudare*) in these things and to confess to You (*confiteri tibi*).”¹¹⁸ The given bodily constitution of the infant and its inherent coherence is its physical structure of measure, number, and weight.¹¹⁹ The infant’s body and life are given by God, and its wholeness and preservation is an internal living impulse which protects and constitutes its bodily senses, physical limbs, and outward beauty.¹²⁰

You, Lord my God, have given (*dedisti*) life and a body to the infant. As we see, You have endowed it with senses, joined it together with limbs, adorned it with beauty, and for its entirety and preservation (*proque eius universitate atque incolumitate*) You have put in it all the impulses of a living thing (*conatus animantis insinuasti*).¹²¹

From the visible composition of the infant, and its internal tendency to protect itself through physical perception and bodily unity, the language of measure, form, and order indicate that the order and rest of the infant is its remaining and guarding itself as a living instinct.¹²²

¹¹⁸ *Confessiones*, 1.7.12.

¹¹⁹ Hankey, “Augustine’s Trinitarian Cosmos,” 76.

¹²⁰ See Sarah Catherine Byers, “Augustine’s Debt to Stoicism in the *Confessions*,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition* edited by John Sellars (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 56-69, esp. 57-59 and note 9, for an examination of Stoic influence in Augustine’s articulation of the child’s self-preserving constitution.

¹²¹ *Confessiones*, 1.7.12: “tu itaque, domine deus meus, qui dedisti vitam infanti et corpus, quod ita, ut videmus, instruxisti sensibus, compegisti membris, figura decorasti proque eius universitate atque incolumitate omnes conatus animantis insinuasti.”

¹²² Gary Wills, *Saint Augustine’s Childhood: Confessions Book One* (New York: Viking, 2001), 102, makes explicit this connection between the living impulses of the infant and the Spirit: “the third endowment of the baby is a coordinating unity in all its different components’ actions, the binding together in love that is a prerogative of the Third Person of the Trinity.”

Most High (*altissime*) . . . Omnipotent and Good . . . O One, from whom is every measure (*modus*), Most Beautiful, who forms (*formas*) all things . . . and orders (*ordinas*) all things.¹²³

This relation between self-preserving desire and the Spirit recalls physical weight in Book XIII. The appropriate weight of the infant, that is, its instinctive relation to God as its superior source, structure, and movement within it, rests in God by way of physical bodies appropriate to the infant's desire. The weight and instinctual desire of the infant is its bodily self-preservation through another. The infant is given and receives its body and life by other physical bodies in and by bodily generation: "by whom [Patricus] and in whom [Monica] You formed me in time."¹²⁴ As a physical trinity, proper to the infant is its ignorance (*nescio*)¹²⁵ and utter dependence upon other physical bodies for sustaining its life. The infant lives by drinking milk from the woman's lactating breast, which is filled by God with food appropriate to the infant by the order of the woman's physical body to give and receive milk. In this way, both the lives of the infant and the woman correlate in their mutual desire through each other's bodies. Both find their good in and from God through the other, for God moderates the infant's need for what is given, and also stirs the instinct, or ordered desire (*ordinatum affectum*), of the woman to give to the infant what she receives from God.

So the consolations of human milk sustained me. Neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts, but You gave infant food to me through them (*per eas dabas*) in accordance with Your institution and the riches distributed unstintingly to the bottom of things (*usque ad fundum rerum*). You also gave to me not to wish (*nolle*) for more than You were giving, and You granted to my nurses the desire (*velle*) to give me what You gave them. They wanted to give food to me through an ordained desire (*ordinatum affectum*), by which they have an abundance [of milk] from You. For, my good from them was a good for them, which was not from them (*ex eis non*), but was through them (*per eas*). Indeed every good comes from You (*ex te*).¹²⁶

¹²³ *Confessiones*, 1.7.12.

¹²⁴ *Confessiones*, 1.6.7.

¹²⁵ *Confessiones*, 1.6.7.

¹²⁶ *Confessiones*, 1.6.7: "exceperunt ergo me consolationes lactis humani, nec mater mea vel nutrices meae sibi ubera implebant, sed tu mihi per eas dabas alimentum infantiae secundum institutionem tuam et divitias usque ad fundum rerum dispositas. tu etiam mihi dabas nolle amplius quam dabas, et nutrientibus me dare mihi velle quod eis dabas: dare enim mihi per ordinatum affectum volebant quo abundabant ex te. nam bonum erat eis bonum meum ex eis, quod ex eis non sed per eas erat. ex te quippe bona omnia."

This reciprocal good of lactation from and by God in and through bodies is the physics of the *Confessiones*. It is the causal and formative life of physical bodies received and given from outside and within them through the mutual reciprocity of God and the physical creature. The infant receiving its good, in virtue of its own given physical structure to eat, receives its good from God through the breast full of milk. Simultaneously, the woman receiving her good, in virtue of her own given physical structure to lactate, receives her good from God through the nursing infant. Instinctual preservation is on both sides from above, so that the infant and the woman tend to the goods appropriate to them through bodies as their natural tendency towards God. This is the good, movement, and life of bodies, whose physical structures are able to give forth goods and receive them. The physical trinity, then, rests in the interrelation of bodies seeking their proper place in God through its order and rest from other physical bodies.

Chapter 2.5. The child: *vestigium secretissimae unitatis*

Confession of the physical trinity moves from its infancy towards the self-conscious child at the end of Book I.¹²⁷ The child is a threefold structure of being (*eram*), life (*vivebam*), and perception (*sentiebam*), and like the infant, it tends to its own preservation.¹²⁸ In both accounts, self-preservation (*incolumitatem*) is characteristic of the given and protective bodily instinct of the infant and the child. For the physical and increasingly rational child, it naturally takes care of its bodily senses by an inner sense of physical and rational protection and coherency. The child's delight in truth and desire to avoid being deceived is a development of that inward impulse from its infancy, so that it naturally preserves both its physical and rational character. In this way, the given integral self-preserving nature of the child is the impetus of its own growth.

For at that time I existed (*eram*), I lived (*vivebam*) and thought (*sentiebam*) and took care for my self-preservation (*incolumitatem*) (a mark of your profound latent unity whence I derived my being). An inward instinct (*interiore sensu*) told me to take care of the integrity of my senses, and even in my little thoughts about little matters I took delight in the truth. I hated to be deceived, I developed a good

¹²⁷ Hankey, "Augustine's Trinitarian Cosmos," 76.

¹²⁸ *Confessiones*, 1.20.31.

memory, I acquired the armoury of being skilled with words, friendship softened me, I avoided pain, despondency, ignorance.¹²⁹

Crucially, this self-preservation of the child's physical and increasingly rational structure is a mark, or trace (*vestigium*), of that "most secret unity." The Latin phrase *vestigium secretissimae unitatis ex qua eram* is positioned relative to the *incolumitatem* as its character,¹³⁰ so that it is the child's inward self-preservation which is the mark of its hidden source: "a trace of the most secret unity from which I exist."

Unity recurs again in the context of the human triad in Book XIII. In a process of comparison, having discerned the mutuality of the Spirit's rest and the creation, the highest Trinitarian structure of God appears to Augustine in the enigmatic image of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*ecce apparet mihi in aenigmate trinitas*).¹³¹ In comparison to the human's trinitarian structure of being, knowing, and willing (*esse, nosse, velle*), the superior structure of Trinity is discerned above the human as immutable Being, Knowing, and Willing (*quod est incommutabiliter et scit incommutabiliter et vult incommutabiliter*).¹³² Through difference, the Supreme Trinity is discovered and revealed as the mutual coincidence of Trinity in its Unity, and the Unity in its Trinity:

In a wondrous way It exists in simplicity and multiplicity as infinity (*infinito*), in Itself the limit to Itself (*in se sibi fine*), by which It is (*est*), is known to Itself (*sibi notum est*), and is sufficient to Itself (*sibi sufficit*), unchangeably the Selfsame in [or by] the abundant magnitude of Unity (*unitatis*).¹³³

From the ablative phrase *copiosa unitatis magnitudine*, Unity and Trinity, or Oneness and Multiplicity, are in and through the other, yet encompassed "by the magnitude of God's Unity (*unitatis*)." In this context of God's Unity, the instinctual and rational desire of the child is the physical form of God's self-embracing Oneness of His own Infinity.

¹²⁹ *Confessiones*, 1.20.31: "eram enim etiam tunc, vivebam atque sentiebam meamque incolumitatem, vestigium secretissimae unitatis ex qua eram, curae habebam, custodiebam interiore sensu integritatem sensuum meorum inque ipsis parvis parvarumque rerum cogitationibus veritate delectabar. falli nolebam, memoria vigebam, locutione instruebar, amicitia mulcebar, fugiebam dolorem, abiectioem, ignorantiam." Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 22.

¹³⁰ *Confessiones*, 1.20.31. Chadwick, *Confessions*, 22, maintains this syntactical relation by situating the phrase in parenthesis: "(a mark of your profound latent unity whence I derived my being)."

¹³¹ *Confessiones*, 13.5.6.

¹³² *Confessiones*, 13.11.12.

¹³³ *Confessiones*, 13.11.12: "miris modis simpliciter et multipliciter infinito in se sibi fine, quo est et sibi notum est et sibi sufficit incommutabiliter idipsum copiosa unitatis magnitudine."

This notion of God's hidden Unity and its bodily form as the physical trinity is especially crucial for Augustine's defense of the goodness and structure of the physical creation. In *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*, Augustine argues that the Manichean position of a corporeal creation, made from God's arbitrary and divided will to create things for Himself, is the result of a strict material and imaginative reading of *Genesis*. Augustine, here, uses the comparative method (*conferebam*) he learned from the *philosophos*.¹³⁴ By bodily examination and rational observation of physical bodies themselves through the senses, one sees the inherent structure and movement of physical bodies towards their source and constitution in Unity and Trinity beyond them.

I do not reflect upon the body and members of any living thing where I do not discover measures, numbers, and order pertaining towards harmonious unity (*ad unitatem concordiae pertinere*). I do not understand from where all these derive, except from the supreme measure, number, and order, which abide in the very unchanging and eternal sublimity of God.¹³⁵

Continuing in this way against the Manicheans, the objective physical creation exists and is good relative to its differentiating parts and unifying totality as a whole in God. The physical creature is good on account of its individuating structure of, and from, God's Unity and Trinity, and it is "very good" when perceived at once as a universal whole (*omnia simul id est ipsa universitas*) collected in unity (*in unum*).¹³⁶

Importantly, this language of parts and their entirety as a whole has its place in the integrity of the human body. Individual body parts are beautiful, and their particular beauties confer beauty to the entire body (*totum corpus*).¹³⁷ Physical bodies themselves demonstrate this truth through the beauty of their parts and wholeness in Book XIII.

All beautiful bodies utter this (*hoc dicunt*), since a body, which is composed by separate members, all being beautiful, is far more beautiful than those individual members, the entirety (*universum*) of which is completed by a most ordered

¹³⁴ *Confessiones*, 5.3.6.

¹³⁵ *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*, 1.16.26: "Non enim animalis alicuius corpus et membra considero, ubi non mensuras et numeros et ordinem inveniam ad unitatem concordiae pertinere. Quae omnia unde veniant non intellego, nisi a summa mensura et numero et ordine, quae in ipsa Dei sublimitate incommutabili atque aeterna consistunt."

¹³⁶ *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*, 1.21.32.

¹³⁷ *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*, 1.21.32.

harmony (*ordinatissimo conventu*), although those members are also beautiful when taken individually.¹³⁸

These parts and whole of the physical creature pertain to its conversion and imitation of God's Oneness, so that its beauty is not merely revelation but its own mode of *exitus* and *reditus*. In Augustine's contemporaneous work, *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et De Moribus Manichaeorum*, the creature is a conversion to Being (*esse*) by imitation of God's simplicity through the diversity of its parts and their order. As composite and corruptible substance, not entirely being nor entirely non-being, the creature strives towards simple Being by means of its own ordered physical body.

Now things which tend towards Being tend towards order, and, having pursued [order] (*consecuta*) they pursue Being itself (*consequuntur*) as far as the creature is able to reach it (*consequi*). For order "forces back" that which is ordering to a certain symmetry (*ad convenientiam*). To be is nothing other than to be one (*unum esse*). Thus, so far as each thing arrives at unity (*unitatem*), so far it exists. For the operation of unity is symmetry and harmony, by which composite things exist as far as they are. Simple things exist through themselves, for they are one. But things not simple imitate unity by the harmony of their parts (*concordia partium imitantur unitatem*), and so far as they attain this (*assequuntur*), so far they exist.¹³⁹

In a similar context of Being and composite natures, the Platonic ascent to Being in Book VII of the *Confessiones* demonstrates the symmetry and harmony (*convenientia*) of the physical creation. Converted by reading the *platoniorum libros*, Augustine ascends to Being above the mind (*supra*), and now sees composite beings below (*infra*), that is, he sees individuating bodies and their unity relative to their superior source in simple Being. In comparison to Being, Augustine comes to see and know the distinction and definition of changeable creatures and the unity above their apparent incongruency.

¹³⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.28.43: "hoc dicunt etiam quaeque pulchra corpora, quia longe multo pulchrius est corpus quod ex membris pulchris omnibus constat quam ipsa membra singula quorum ordinatissimo conventu completur universum, quamvis et illa etiam singillatim pulchra sunt."

¹³⁹ *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et de Moribus Manichaeorum*, 2.6.8: "haec vero quae tendunt esse, ad ordinem tendunt; quem cum fuerint consecuta, ipsum esse consequuntur, quantum id creatura consequi potest. Ordo enim ad convenientiam quamdam quod ordinat redigit. Nihil est autem esse, quam unum esse. Itaque in quantum quidque unitatem adipiscitur, in tantum est. Unitatis est enim operatio, convenientia et concordia, qua sunt in quantum sunt ea quae composita sunt, nam simplicia per se sunt, quia una sunt; quae autem non sunt simplicia, concordia partium imitantur unitatem et in tantum sunt in quantum assequuntur."

But in the parts of this [Your whole creation (*universae creaturae tuae*)], there are certain elements which are thought evil because they do not come together in harmony (*non conveniunt*). These elements do harmonize (*conveniunt*) with other elements, and they are both good and good in their very selves. All these elements, which are not congruent (*non conveniunt*) with one another in themselves, are congruous (*conveniunt*) with the inferior part of things, which we call earth. Its heaven is cloudy and windy, which is fitting for it (*congruum*).¹⁴⁰

It is the apparent incongruency, or differentiation, of physical bodies that is in fact their means of ordering harmony and imitation of God. The parts of the lower physical creation convene together as a harmonious whole appropriate to its divided and temporal nature. Each individual physical body is good and is a part of the objective harmony of the physical creation.

From this, the physical creature is a conversion, formation, and imitation of God's unity through its bodily order and harmony, being a unifying and differentiating movement towards its source in God's Unity and Trinity through another's body. One conversion of the physical is its uniting wholeness of disparate bodily parts, so that the unity of its bodily structure is its imitation of God. The divine imitation of the infant is in virtue of its inherent sense of bodily self-preservation. Its innate impulse protects the coherency of its senses, limbs, and beauty given from outside it through another physical body, and this pertains to the concord of its bodily parts in imitation of God's Oneness and Multiplicity. This instinctual wholeness of the physical trinity differentiates and unifies the physical body relative to its hidden unity.

Relative to the physics of lactation, the individual physical body is given and situated within the objective order of the physical creation and the cosmos, so that the creature receives itself, its goods and order, parts and wholeness entirely through the universal harmony of the physical. This is manifest in the relation of goods acquired between the infant and the nursing woman. For the infant, its good and gift is the milk it receives through another's physical body. The good of the infant is at the same time the good of the woman through whom the milk is given. As a composite and becoming thing, the infant and the woman are given, nourished, and pertain to their unity through one another. Significantly, then, the mutual and preeminent order of creation is a basis of

¹⁴⁰ *Confessiones*, 7.13.19.

physical returns individually and universally through the definition and unity of physical bodies. In this way, individual physical creatures pertain to their own divine imitation in and by the universal physical creation.

As a harmony from outside, the composite physical body imitates what is simple and diffusive through its tendency towards the order of its parts. In this way, physical creatures receive their multiplicity of goods, their very selves, in and by the Good through its inherent and protective unity.

Returning to the phrase *secretissimae unitatis* with these comparative reflections of the unity of God and the physical, the self-preserving instinct of the child is a form of God's Oneness, the supreme and encompassing Unity of God's own Multiplicity within and beyond the creation, by which the objective creation is a whole in virtue of its unifying totality of individual parts and their own unity. In this way, the child is a form of that Unity by which the creature is a conversion as it differentiates according to its natural tendency towards bodily unity within the objective differentiation and order of the physical creation: "Such is the force and power of completeness and unity (*integritatis et unitatis*), that there are many good things (*multa*) which are only pleasing when they come together and fit into a whole (*universum*)."¹⁴¹ From this objective order, the subjective is given and receives its very self through physical bodies: "All these are gifts of my God: I did not give them to myself. They are goods, and all these things are what I am (*et bona sunt et haec omnia ego*)."¹⁴² In this way, the child is a unity and differentiation of goods within the unity and differentiation of the physical in virtue of the superior self-encompassing Unity of Multiplicity in and above them. This physical structure of the child as God's unity, in, and by God's wholeness, concludes Book I and is that by which confession begins and proceeds outwardly.

¹⁴¹ *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*, 1.21.32.

¹⁴² *Confessiones*, 1.20.31.

Chapter 3. Outward and forward into corporeality: *amore amoris tui*

Book II opens with the fundamental principle of movement of the divine-human mutuality from Books I and XIII. In confession, Augustine recalls his outward and forward movement into corporeality with, and by, his inherent desire for God: “it is by love of Your love that I make the act of recollection (*amore amoris tui*).”¹⁴³ To reemphasize, the “love of God’s love” is both the prior movement of desire and its leading principle which moves desire as both departing (*exitus*) and returning (*reditus*) to God in virtue of His Trinity, His own *exitus* and *reditus* of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in and through the creation. Book II, then, contextualizes Augustine’s own *exitus* and *reditus* in Books II-IX. In this way, the instinctual and preliminary desire of the infant and child in Book I is a differentiating and unifying motion relative to physical bodies, becoming more and more its own downward tendency with strict bodily relations under its natural and physical understanding: “My sin consisted in this, that I sought pleasure, sublimity, and truth not in Himself but in his creatures, in myself and other created beings.”¹⁴⁴

At the same time, Book II emphasizes that, in confession, the differentiating tendency of the human relative to its natural and physical relation to bodies is a positive motion of “going forth” from God under its innate desire for Him in the goods it receives through other physical bodies. For confession draws with and by its own outside power in God its own diversification relative to physical bodies, so that “by love of God’s love” the human is unified in confession: “You gathered me from disintegration (*conligens me a dispersione*) in which I had been divided into pieces (*frustatim discissus sum*), while, having turned away from You, the One, I vanished into many things (*dum ab uno te aversus in multa evanui*).”¹⁴⁵

Chapter 3.1. The greatness of the rational creature: *defluo*

The character of Books II-VI is the human’s “turning away from” the One and “vanishing” into the multiplicity of “the many,” that is, in individual and composite

¹⁴³ *Confessiones*, 2.1.1.

¹⁴⁴ *Confessiones*, 1.20.31: “hoc enim peccabam, quod non in ipso sed in creaturis eius me atque ceteris voluptates, sublimitates, veritates quaerebam.”

¹⁴⁵ *Confessiones*, 2.1.1.

bodies in time, their images, and *phantasmata* under the physical relation of Book I. This has biographical form as Augustine’s pubescent and adult life, wherein Augustine’s instinctual desire increasingly draws him towards God under a corporeal and imaginative understanding of bodies, himself, and his natural end in God. Here, the human’s tendency towards God through a bodily relation provides a context for the “weight” of love at this preliminary stage of the *itinerarium*, that its prior desire for God leads the human unknowingly towards Him under its natural and physical understanding given from birth: “Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me.”¹⁴⁶

To reemphasize, the weight of the human is its intrinsic desire for, and from, God, being granted in, and with, His Spirit by raising the creature into Him as its proper place by its proper weight of love. In this way, the weight of the human is in God, for it desires Him by His Spirit working in it. It is in the Spirit, then, that conversion is two tendencies towards God’s likeness and unlikeness. The composite nature of the human in tandem with its inherent weight requires that it is both tendencies, by which it tends towards both formlessness and its formation beyond itself, towards unlikeness and likeness in God. The “weight of cupidity” (*pondere cupiditatis*) draws the human into the abyss, and the “lifting up of love” (*sublevatione caritatis*) orders and restores it.¹⁴⁷

The human, then, is inherently capable of rising and falling in, by, and with the Spirit. The fall is true of the spiritual creation in general: “The angel fell (*defluxit*), the human soul fell (*defluxit*), and thereby revealed the abyss of the whole spiritual creation in deep darkness.”¹⁴⁸ Having fallen from its prior form, the rational creature is stripped of its former likeness (*nudatas veste luminis tui*).¹⁴⁹ Their fall towards unlikeness and formlessness, then, is a movement away from their own likeness relative to their form. On account of this, Augustine claims: “You show how great a thing is the rational

¹⁴⁶ *Confessiones*, 13.9.10.

¹⁴⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.7.8.

¹⁴⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.8.9: “defluxit angelus, defluxit anima hominis et indicaverunt abyssum universae spiritalis creaturae in profundo tenebroso.” See also *Confessiones*, 10.29.40: “By continence we are collected together and brought back to the One from which we flowed into multiplicity (*conligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus*);” *Confessiones*, 11.29.39: “I have leapt apart into times (*in tempora dissilui*) whose order I do not understand. The storms of incoherent events tear to pieces my thoughts (*dilaniantur*), the inmost entrails of my soul, until that day when, purified and molten by the fire of Your love, I flow together in You (*in te confluam*).”

¹⁴⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.8.9.

creature You have made (*quam magnam rationalem creaturam*).¹⁵⁰ In this way, the greatness of the rational creature is its capacity to fall away from its own form and to rise to receive it. Since the creature is created as a mixture of not entirely-being and not entirely non-being, it is neither self-sufficient to itself as its own rest (*[sufficit] nec ipsa sibi*), nor, having fallen towards formlessness, does it completely retain its own likeness of form in the Prior Good.¹⁵¹ Its departure and return, and so its greatness, is its capacity to move towards both formless matter and its own form by its recollection and conversion in the Word.

Since, then, the human moves as a co-relation of its own form and formless matter, of likeness and unlikeness, the “fall” (*defluo*), or “pouring from,” or “turning away,” is its own self-projection into the endless differentiation of physical matter: “I thrust myself outward (*proiciebat se foras*).”¹⁵² In this way, the inherent desire and weight of the human begins at the level of physical bodies, so that its rational and incorporeal nature also begins relative to the physical, projecting itself into the multiplicity of temporal and spatial bodies. In this way, Spirit moves the human to seek its rest in Him from below relative to physical bodies and its tendency towards formlessness, so that the human’s becoming in genesis correlates to God’s prior love moving in its desire for Him through the physical.

What Books II-IX demonstrate is the great fall and return of the human relative to its biographic journey within the hierarchy of being, knowing, and the certainty which belongs to them.¹⁵³ This hierarchy is already present in Book III, wherein the order of *phantasmata*, images of bodies, physical bodies, soul, and God serve to demonstrate the unreal character of the Manichean *phantasmata* and the descent of the human relative to its true end in God.

How far removed You are from those *phantasmata* of mine, *phantasmata* of bodies are entirely nothing! Relative to these, the images of bodies (*phantasiae corporum*) which do exist are more certain. Above these, real bodies are more certain (*certiora corpora*), in comparison to which You are not a body. But

¹⁵⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.8.9.

¹⁵¹ *Confessiones*, 13.8.9.

¹⁵² *Confessiones*, 3.1.1.

¹⁵³ See Giovanni Catapano, “Augustine,” in *A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity*, edited by Anna Marmodoro and Sophie Cartwright (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 343-344.

neither are You soul, which is the life of bodies (for this reason the life of bodies is better and more certain than the body), but You are the Life of souls, the Life of lives. Living, You are Yourself, and You do not change, life of my soul.¹⁵⁴

The human in the *Confessiones* descends and ascends this hierarchy, and Books II-IV specifically demonstrate that the human projects itself in imitation of God under the physical relation it has, and is, as an infant. The adolescent and adult forms of desire naturally strive towards God, but in physical imitation. Augustine first projects into physical bodies themselves through the theft of the pears (2.2). He then descends into the less real images of real physical bodies at the theatre (2.3) and descends further still into the *phantasmata* of false bodies under the Manicheans (2.4). At this point, the natural end and destruction of physical bodies in the death of the friend prompts a crucial encounter of Augustine with his wounded projected self (2.5).

Chapter 3.2. The pears: physical imitation of God

Augustine's initial projection, or descent, into bodies themselves is by his natural and physical relation to bodies as his true and natural end. Within the physics of lactation, the human here projects itself into bodies for its goods, its very self, in other physical bodies. The human is not yet raised to relate to its good beyond itself in God at the top of, and immanent throughout, the hierarchy of beings and goods in Book III. In this way, the human's instinct sustains and preserves the infant and the child, but also leads the developing rational adolescent towards formlessness and unlikeness by this same natural desire for God in physical bodies. Book II shows the correlation of the human's desire and its fall relative to the physical, that while it loves its own fall, it does not truly love the physical body by which it pursues its natural end in God: "It was foul, and I loved it (*amavi*). I loved to perish (*amavi perire*), I loved my fall (*amavi defectum meum*). I did not love that for which I was falling, but I loved my fall itself (*defectum meum ipsum amavi*)."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ *Confessiones*, 3.6.10: "quanto ergo longe es a phantasmatis illis meis, phantasmatis corporum quae omnino non sunt! quibus certiores sunt phantasiae corporum eorum quae sunt, et eis certiora corpora, quae tamen non es. sed nec anima es, quae vita est corporum (ideo melior vita corporum certiorque quam corpora), sed tu vita es animarum, vita vitarum, vivens te ipsa, et non mutaris, vita animae meae."

¹⁵⁵ *Confessiones*, 2.4.9.

Important to reemphasize is the prior divine-human mutuality, so that the human under this form of physical relation never ceases to love God, yet it “abandons” the goodness of its own unifying form by seeking its good in diverse and temporal bodies. That is, the Spirit moves in the human’s desire towards God under its preliminary and physical relation in spite of itself. Unknowingly, the human’s descent into lesser beings and goods never strays “outside” of its source and cause, the place of its rest and work always present to and within it.

The scene of the pears demonstrates this fact.¹⁵⁶ As a physical body, the fruit is beautiful and good, and its being is entirely derived from the Beautiful and Good above it: “Those fruits which we stole were beautiful, because they were Your creation, Most Beautiful of all, Creator of all, Good God, God the Highest Good and my true good.”¹⁵⁷ But Augustine did not desire the pears: “Those fruits were beautiful, but my miserable soul did not lust for them.”¹⁵⁸ Nor did Augustine desire the theft itself, for it was a nothing (*ipsum esset nihil*).¹⁵⁹ Rather, the theft of the pears is a “perverse,” or “lesser and divided” form of divine imitation to possess one’s own good physically, to be self-sufficient through the divided and inferior forms of physical goods.

Thus the soul fornicates when it is turned away from You (*avertitur abs te*) and seeks outside You (*extra te*) things which, being pure and clear, it cannot find unless when it returns to You (*redit ad te*). All perversely imitate You (*perverse te imitantur*) who put themselves at a distance from You and raise themselves against You (*adversum te*) . . . there is no place in which one is in every way (*omni modo*) withdrawn from You (*a te*).¹⁶⁰

This perverse imitation is the human’s immoderate inclination towards beautiful and composite bodies (*immoderata in ista inclination*),¹⁶¹ and recalls one side of the human’s natural tendency towards formlessness and unlikeness with “excess even to Your far-removed unlikeness (*euntia in immoderationem in longinquam dissimilitudinem*

¹⁵⁶ The scene of the pears is a positive movement. See Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, translated by Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 16.

¹⁵⁷ *Confessiones*, 2.6.12.

¹⁵⁸ *Confessiones*, 2.6.12.

¹⁵⁹ *Confessiones*, 2.8.16.

¹⁶⁰ *Confessiones*, 2.6.14.

¹⁶¹ *Confessiones*, 2.6.10.

tuam).”¹⁶² The unformed character of adolescence, here, remains under its natural, inferior, and physical relation to God in the hierarchy of beings and goodness.

This imitation of God through the physical not only emphasizes the imitation of God’s self-sufficiency, but also the imitation of His self-differentiation, or diffusion of His Spirit in and above the creation. For the relation between Augustine and his “disappearance into the many” (*in multa evanui*) takes place through his prior state of being “alone” (*solus*), and his *exitus* from himself by the physical group of his peers. The group intending to steal the pears draws Augustine away from solitude to seek his end in a physical body. Emphatically, Augustine says he would not have committed the theft alone:

Yet had I been alone (*solus*) I would not have done it (I remember my mind at that time), alone (*solus*) I would never have done it;¹⁶³ Alone (*solus*) I would not have done it, I would not have done it alone (*solus*) . . . Alone (*solus*) I would not have committed that crime . . . But had I been alone (*solum*), it would have given me absolutely no pleasure, nor would I have done it.¹⁶⁴

From *solus*, Augustine’s projection into bodies is a differentiating form of imitating the divine physically, by which he moves away from his prior solitude to become part of the evils of the group (*faciebat consortium simul peccantium*)¹⁶⁵ by corporeally imitating God with the group.

Chapter 3.3. The theatre: projecting into images

Naturally seeking his end in the multiplicity of physical bodies under a physical relation in Book II, Augustine begins Book III with the love of his own unsatisfied love that is dispersed and projected into many dividing and temporal bodies. Emphatically, desire seeks its end in itself: “I had not yet loved (*amabam*), and I loved to love (*amare amabam*) . . . I sought something I could have loved (*quaerebam quid amarem*), loving to love (*amans amare*).”¹⁶⁶ Similar to the love of his own fall in Book II, Augustine’s

¹⁶² *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

¹⁶³ *Confessiones*, 2.8.16.

¹⁶⁴ *Confessiones*, 2.9.17.

¹⁶⁵ *Confessiones*, 2.8.16.

¹⁶⁶ *Confessiones*, 3.1.1.

“loving of love” remains a positive movement through the physical, for the human necessarily continues to desire what is beyond itself while at the same time descending from it as a composite creature. In Book III, by “thrusting himself outward” (*proiciebat se foras*)¹⁶⁷ into physical bodies, Augustine now projects his self-love below real bodies and into their less real and less certain images. Under an imaginative relation, the human seeks God through the physical representation of its own unsatisfied longing.

Appropriate at this level of imagination, Augustine seeks satisfaction and rest in the theatre, intentionally seeking his own divided self-love by projecting it onto the stage through the bodily motions and words of the actors: “Theatrical shows seized me (*rapiebant*). They were full of images of my own miseries (*imaginibus miseriarum mearum*) and they fueled my fire.”¹⁶⁸ Here, the human’s projection is made visible to the human through physical bodies, by which its “loving to love” becomes a form of loving its own suffering and restlessness through its physical presentation: “I loved to suffer and I sought out occasions to suffer (*dolere amabam, et quaerebam ut esset quod dolerem*).”¹⁶⁹ The language of lust (*concupiscentiae*) and licentious longing (*libidinis*)¹⁷⁰ articulate the passionate mode of this unsatisfied appetite of self-love, seeking its own suffering in itself, so that “even tears are loved (*ergo amantur et dolores*).”¹⁷¹

The character of this self-entertaining and unyielding desire under an imaginative relation is the repetitive and emotional experiences of its own projections. It is a continuous cycle of the human to be “captured” (*cupiebam capi*) by its own love through physical images, returning to itself as its own form of bondage: “In secret, I attained the joy that enchains (*pervenit occulte ad vinculum fruendi*). I was glad to be in bondage (*conligabar laetus*), tied with troublesome chains, with the result that I was flogged with the red-hot iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fear, anger, and contention.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ *Confessiones*, 3.1.1.

¹⁶⁸ *Confessiones*, 3.2.2.

¹⁶⁹ *Confessiones*, 3.2.4.

¹⁷⁰ *Confessiones*, 3.1.1.

¹⁷¹ *Confessiones*, 3.2.3.

¹⁷² *Confessiones*, 3.1.1: “rui etiam in amorem, quo cupiebam capi . . . perveni occulte ad vinculum fruendi, et conligabar laetus aerumnosis nexibus, ut caederer virgis ferreis ardentibus zeli et suspicionum et timorum et irarum atque rixarum.” Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 35.

Unknowingly, then, the human becomes a spectator of its own heated projections into the less real images of bodies.

Chapter 3.4. The Manicheans: projecting into unreal bodies

Following Augustine's conversion to immortal and universal wisdom through Cicero's exhortation of philosophy in the *Hortensius*,¹⁷³ Augustine moves by, and with, his new and hot agitation for Truth everywhere in the corporeal world. Seeking this Truth in the Christian scriptures by which he was nourished from infancy, Augustine cannot penetrate their *interiora* under a physical or imaginative understanding (*acies mea non penetrabat interiora eius*).¹⁷⁴ He cannot make a comparison between the scriptures and the *Hortensius* (*compararem*)¹⁷⁵ and form an understanding beyond the images, style, and rhetoric of the text. Instead, Augustine's heightened and amplified desire moves him into the universal, missional, and book religion of the Manicheans,¹⁷⁶ who claim the same ubiquitous truth of salvation and redemption in the Christian scriptures.

This move into the Manicheans is another positive step relative to the physical, for the Manicheans' strict ascetic and ethical system dominates the passions and draws self-love away from itself towards a specified end in the long fables and rituals of corporeal purity and salvation. In this way, unyielding and broadening desire for universality has its limit and definition in the religious community of the Manicheans.¹⁷⁷

Relative to the rational hierarchy of Book III, Augustine's move into the Manicheans is a further projection below the images of the theatre into *phantasmata* below the images of real bodies.¹⁷⁸ They have less being, are least knowable, and are least certain compared to images and bodies.

More certain are the very bodies themselves (*corpora*) . . . We see these, and they are more certain than when we imagine them (*imaginamur*). Again, we imagine

¹⁷³ See Chapter 2.2.1. "The conversion to wisdom", 23.

¹⁷⁴ *Confessiones*, 3.5.9.

¹⁷⁵ *Confessiones*, 3.5.9.

¹⁷⁶ John J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind Up to His Conversion*. London (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954), 62. Cf. Blake D. Dutton, *Augustine and Academic Skepticism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2016), 9-11.

¹⁷⁷ See Andrea Piras, "Sealing The Body: Theory and Practices of Manichaean Asceticism," edited by Mohr Siebeck, *Religion in the Roman Empire* 4 (2018): 28-44.

¹⁷⁸ *Confessiones*, 3.6.10. Cf. Dutton, *Augustine and Academic Skepticism*, 208.

things more certain, by which we may regard other things grander, infinite, and entirely nothing (*omnino nulla sunt*).¹⁷⁹

The character of Manichean projection is the human's movement below real bodies and images as a differentiation into false bodies which imagination is able to generate for itself. The language of this unreal and corporeal relation is hunger and dreaming, for the human projecting below into false bodies seeks to be nourished by what is less real and good compared to real bodies. It seeks its end through false bodies which derive from, but have no relation to, real bodies: "Food pictured in dreams is extremely like food received in the waking state; yet sleepers receive no nourishment, they are simply sleeping."¹⁸⁰

The Manichean projection and imposition of imaginary bodies upon the physical produces a mythological account of nature that is limited by, but does not include, real physical bodies. Under a physical understanding, the human "descends" towards formlessness, and at the same time forms and defines an illusory and unsatisfying order of a completely fabricated cosmos. Importantly, this false cosmos depends upon an unreal physic that opposes the nature and laws of real physical bodies by perpetuating the widespread authority of these *phantasmata* under a salvific and cosmic prerogative.¹⁸¹

An example of this false physic is demonstrated by the eating ritual which redeems the divine and the human.¹⁸² Under an imaginative and dualistic corporealism, God is an endless series of light particles, some being entrapped in matter, others not. They become trapped in the body of a fig. God's corporeal liberation from the fig is through mastication. However, the fig and its mother tree weep when the fig is picked, and their suffering is a real sin against the one causing the harm. On account of this, the elect who eats the fig cannot pick it, lest the impurity of the elect's body fails to liberate the light particles of God in the fig's flesh. Rather, another bears the sin of picking the fig, so that the elect is free from the sin and is able to chew it, breathing out angels and

¹⁷⁹ *Confessiones*, 3.6.10.

¹⁸⁰ *Confessiones*, 3.6.10.

¹⁸¹ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press), 198: "The bodies of believers, if kept holy by continence, could play a role in nothing less than the redemption of the universe"; for Jason David BeDuhn, *The Manichean Body: In Discipline and Ritual* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 208, the elect are "physicians of the cosmos."

¹⁸² *Confessiones*, 3.10.18.

belching bits of God (*ructando*). Through this ritual, God, the elect, and the hearer who sins to pick the fruit are liberated through the bodily rescue of those particular light particles, being redeemed and released from the fig's flesh by the "purity" of the elect's digestive tract: "These bits of the most high and true God would have remained chained (*ligatae*) in that fruit (*in illo pomo*), if they had not been liberated (*solventur*) by the tooth and belly of that elect Saint."¹⁸³

Here, the Manichean projection into unreal bodies generates an imaginary and uniform physicality in which all things are redeemed or condemned relative to the physical purity of the human's own body. All those involved in the eating ritual, the fig tree, the fig, the person eating it, and God in the fig, share a uniform corporeality and consciousness. From this, the good of the fruit which contains the divine particles is, in fact, superior to the good of the human eating it. For, the fruit eaten by anyone other than the Manichean elect dies a real and unjust death (*capitali supplicio damnanda*),¹⁸⁴ since it shares a similar consciousness with God and the human. All things, then, the creation, its processes, and the Creator, are strictly corporeal and exist as a single form of matter.

Chapter 3.5. The friend: breaking the projection

The scene of Augustine and the friend further demonstrates the character of Manichean projection of uniform matter through the near identity of Augustine and the friend. The language of "equality" and "sameness" characterize their friendship as the mutual projection of one in the other's body. In their life together, Augustine enjoins his exceedingly dear friend (*nimis carum*) to be his equal (*comparaveram*) through the union of their shared desires (*societate studiorum*).¹⁸⁵ They are of equal age (*coevum mihi*), growing up together as children (*mecum puer*), attending the same school (*pariter*), and playing together (*pariter*).¹⁸⁶ The sensuous language of heat and desire further characterizes their near corporeal identity: "It was beyond sweet, baked by the heat of

¹⁸³ *Confessiones*, 3.10.18; Cf. 4.1.1.

¹⁸⁴ *Confessiones*, 3.10.18.

¹⁸⁵ *Confessiones*, 4.4.7.

¹⁸⁶ *Confessiones*, 4.4.7.

equal desires (*sed tamen dulcis erat nimis, cocta fervore parilium studiorum*).¹⁸⁷ Through their “heat” and “eager desire,” both are doubled in and through each other as a corporeal unity of two bodies, literally, “I was that other ‘he’ (*ille alter eram*),” or, “he was my ‘other self’.”¹⁸⁸ As the friend nearly dies and recovers through baptism, Augustine assumes that the projection of himself into his friend is more real than the physical baptism itself: “I presumed that his soul would retain what he had received from me (*a me acceperat*), not what happened to his unconscious body.”¹⁸⁹

In consequence of the human’s “descent” to project itself below real bodies and images into unreal bodies, it is by the changeable and fleeting nature of physical bodies themselves which breaks the Manichean projection. Through the death of real bodies, upon which the Manicheans derive and impose their *phantasmata*, the order of genesis itself grants to the human, from above the fabricated and false physis, a way between *phantasmata* and the projected self. For, after the death of the friend, the shared projection of corporeal unity between Augustine and the friend in each other’s body becomes for Augustine the death of half his friend and half of himself. In this way, Manichean projection becomes intensely problematic, since the death of real bodies under a Manichean projection is one’s own corporeal division and annihilation, so that Augustine’s bodily death becomes the complete death of both his and the friend’s halves that remain in Augustine’s body.

Through the death of real bodies, then, Augustine’s projected self is “wounded,” “lacerated,” and “cut off” from himself through the corporeal absence of himself in and through the death of the friend. Aware of his own negation, Augustine fears the total destruction of the friend and himself through his own physical death: “I did not wish to live with only half of myself (*dimidius*), and perhaps the reason why I so feared death was that then the whole of my much loved friend would have died (*totus ille moreretur*).”¹⁹⁰ Physical bodies themselves, then, are a means of self-encounter even under an imaginative understanding and self-relation. By “falling” into unreal bodies, the

¹⁸⁷ *Confessiones*, 4.4.7.

¹⁸⁸ *Confessiones*, 4.6.11. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 59.

¹⁸⁹ *Confessiones*, 4.4.8.

¹⁹⁰ *Confessiones*, 4.6.11.

projected self imposes upon, and is divided by, real bodies which begin and end according to their physical natures.

These things rise and fall, and by rising they begin to exist . . . when they rise and tend to Being (*esse*). . . the more they hasten towards non-being (*non sint*): thus is their limit . . . Let [my soul] not be fixed in them (*non in eis*) by glue, that is, love, through the bodily senses. For these go where they were going towards non-being (*non sint*), and they tear [the soul] to pieces with pestilential desires, because it desires to be and loves to rest in those things (*in eis*) which it loves.¹⁹¹

Confronted by the negation of himself through another's body, where there was once physical union, Augustine encounters himself as a vast problem: "I had become a great question to myself (*factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio*)."¹⁹² Crucially, then, the friend's death provides a point of comparison relative to Augustine's own body and self, so that, being doubled and halved, Augustine becomes aware of both his projected loss and remaining content. The laceration of the projected self, then, prompts Augustine to encounter his own wounded state as a question which can be addressed. Relative to Augustine's physical understanding, unknowing ignorance, or unreflexive thought, his proper form of knowing and certainty of himself is as a completely physical thing that cannot respond to him: "I interrogated my soul (*interrogabam animam meam*) why it was sad and why it greatly disturbed me, but it knew nothing with which to answer me."¹⁹³ Here, while Augustine is unable to respond to himself with the knowing and language proper to soul above bodies, the death of the friend is a crucial moment which breaks the projection by wounding and confronting the self at the level of *phantasmata*.

In Augustine's wretched state of doubling and negation, tears and groaning characterize the miserable condition of the projected self's quantitative gain and loss through the physical: "Only weeping was sweet to me (*solus fletus erat dulcis mihi*)."¹⁹⁴ In comparison to the tears of the theatre in Book III, in which desire is insatiable for its own suffering presented to itself through bodies, tears here in Book IV are for one's own missing projected self in another's body. Augustine now weeps through no outward

¹⁹¹ *Confessiones*, 4.10.15

¹⁹² *Confessiones*, 4.4.9.

¹⁹³ *Confessiones*, 4.4.9.

¹⁹⁴ *Confessiones*, 4.4.9.

representation other than himself and the awareness that he is his own problem: “I had become a great question to myself (*factus eram ipse mihi magna quaestio*).”¹⁹⁵ Here, the projecting human meets itself as the source of its loss, whose only recourse is to physically weep: “I had no hope that he would come back to life, neither did my tears beg this. I was merely suffering and weeping (*sed tantum dolebam et flebam*).”¹⁹⁶

Emphatically, physical weeping alleviates Augustine’s condition of projected loss, for compared to the halved projection of himself and his friend, real tears are efficacious for Augustine to find more stable respite above his projected loss: “In them alone (*in eis solis*) was there some slight relief.”¹⁹⁷ Even though he responds to his own suffering under a corporeal understanding, physical tears provide a means of comfort.

Why is weeping sweet when miserable? (*fletus dulcis*) . . . Unless we weep aloud to Your ears (*ad aures tuas ploraremus*) no remnant of hope would remain for us . . . Sweet fruit is picked by groaning and weeping and sighing and mourning (*gemere et flere et suspirare et conqueri*) . . . Is it the hope that You hear us which sweetens [the fruit of bitterness]? That is true of prayers, which express the desire to approach [You] (*desiderium perveniendi*).¹⁹⁸

Tears are also an impetus towards more certain and stable rest. Made aware of his own misery through its projection, differentiation, and annihilation in temporal and spatial bodies (*sentit miseriam*),¹⁹⁹ Augustine now seeks stability for his wounded self, so that from weeping there is a new yearning for rest. The visceral language of a detached “mutilated” and “bleeding” self characterizes its lack of, and desire for, stable rest in bodies: “I carried my lacerated (*portabam concisam*) and bloody soul (*cruentam*) when it was unwilling to be carried by me. I found no place where I could put it down.”²⁰⁰

Now tormented by its divided projections into temporal bodies, the futility of the human to move above *phantasmata* is characterized by the inescapable and horrifying return of the wounded self upon itself. The human twists and re-twists towards itself (*torquetur ac retorquetur*) in its projected and corporeal cosmos that has less stability

¹⁹⁵ *Confessiones*, 4.4.9.

¹⁹⁶ *Confessiones*, 4.5.10.

¹⁹⁷ *Confessiones*, 4.7.12.

¹⁹⁸ *Confessiones*, 4.5.10.

¹⁹⁹ *Confessiones*, 4.6.11.

²⁰⁰ *Confessiones*, 4.7.12.

than physical bodies and the human itself. In this way, the human falls upon itself as its own stable ground relative to its projections.²⁰¹

When I thought of You, You were not anything solid and firm to me. It was not You, but an empty *phantasma* (*vanum*) and my error was my God (*error meus erat deus meus*). If I attempted to put down my soul so that it might rest, it slipped through nothing (*per inane labebatur*) and in turn rushed upon me (*ruebat super me*). So I remained to myself an unhappy place (*ego mihi remanseram infelix locus*), where I was neither able to exist nor able from that place to withdraw . . . Where could I flee from my very self? (*a me ipso*) Where could I not follow myself? (*non me sequer*)²⁰²

This slippery language of the twisting self recurs in Book VI. Characteristic of the theatre, this restless state produces emotional and metaphorical language of its despair to move itself beyond itself.

I was journeying through darkness and a slippery place (*per tenebras et lubricum*), and I was seeking You outside from myself (*foris a me*), and did not find the God of my heart. I had come into the depth (*in profundum*) of the sea, and I distrusted and despaired concerning the discovery of truth.²⁰³

Again, the human finds no rest in its own twisting and turning of itself. “Turned this way and that, on its back, on its side, on its stomach, all positions are uncomfortable (*versa et reversa in tergum et in latera et in ventrem, et dura sunt omnia, et tu solus requies*).”²⁰⁴

Chapter 3.5.1. The need for “another light”

Crucially, this restlessness pertains to the human’s physical and imaginative understanding relative to its inherent and instinctual desire for God Himself. The human is incapable of rising above itself into its end in God’s most certain stability and Being by way of its own physical understanding. In the hierarchy of Book III, the human’s physical relation to God is an inferior knowing relative to Him, and to its own incorporeal nature

²⁰¹ *Confessiones*, 4.14.23.

²⁰² *Confessiones*, 4.7.12: “ad te, domine, levanda erat et curanda, sciebam, sed nec volebam nec valebam, eo magis quia non mihi eras aliquid solidum et firmum, cum de te cogitabam. non enim tu eras, sed vanum phantasma et error meus erat deus meus. si conabar eam ibi ponere ut requiesceret, per inane labebatur et iterum ruebat super me, et ego mihi remanseram infelix locus, ubi nec esse possem nec inde recedere. quo enim cor meum fugeret a corde meo? quo a me ipso fugerem? quo non me sequer?”

²⁰³ *Confessiones*, 6.1.1.

²⁰⁴ *Confessiones*, 6.16.26.

of soul, above bodies. The human at this level of the physical needs outside power to attain its end above itself, so that God must break in from outside the human.

Emphatically, Book IV articulates the correlation of the human's noetic and ontological state in terms of "light" reminiscent of Plato's Cave and the Line. Under its preliminary understanding, the human correlates with its end in God physically, so that it is "facing outwardly" relative to the superior source of light, which is "behind" or "above" it. At the same time, the human's outward projection towards bodies has its back to the source of light which illumines the bodies themselves. In this way, the physical bodies which the human faces are illuminated by their source, that is, the human perceives physical bodies and their trinitarian form of measure, number, and weight. Physical bodies are illumined as conversion proper to their physical structure. It is the "descending" human of Books II-VI that is not yet turned away from its physical relation to bodies, itself, and God, and converted towards its source by illumination from without.

I had my back to the light (*ad lumen*) and my face towards the things which are illuminated (*inluminantur*). So my face, by which I perceived the illuminated things (*inluminata*), was not itself illuminated (*non inluminabatur*).²⁰⁵

Like the outside conversion and transformation of desire through Augustine's reading of the *Hortensius*, the human must be raised above itself towards higher and more certain forms of being and rest, so that the human "must be illuminated by a different [or another] light (*alio lumine*)."²⁰⁶ It must be raised from without, from "behind its back," in order to convert to what it faces outwardly. In this way, the greatness of the human's own capacious nature to fall and rise is a "great problem" to itself (*magna quaestio*),²⁰⁷ for its becoming, movement, and search for rest is dependent upon its outside power in God within and above it. This will be granted to Augustine by his reading of the *platoniorum libros* in Book VII.

At the same time, the "illumination" of physical bodies, their inherent form of conversion, is not lost on the "descended" human. For even at the level of imaginative thinking, the human is free to think the structure of physical bodies relative to their

²⁰⁵ *Confessiones*, 4.16.30: "dorsum enim habebam ad lumen et ad ea quae inluminantur faciem, unde ipsa facies mea, qua inluminata cernebam, non inluminabatur."

²⁰⁶ *Confessiones*, 4.15.25.

²⁰⁷ *Confessiones*, 4.4.9.

beauty. While under the Manicheans, Augustine argues he did think through the forms of physical bodies and differentiate forms of beauties and discern Beauty itself, despite his corporeal relation to them.

My mind was moving through corporeal forms (*ibat animus per formas corporeas*). Supported by bodily examples (*corporeis*), I set limits and made divisions of the beautiful and the apt, that which is pleasing through its very self (*per se ipsum*), and that which is pleasing as it corresponds to another (*ad aliquid*).²⁰⁸

Augustine returns to this form of corporeal knowing under the Manicheans in Book XII and maintains it was a positive knowing of the physical and its forms. For, while both he and the Manicheans did not understand, or intellect, matter itself, (*non intellegens ... non intellegent*) and could not think matter except in physical terms (*non eam cogitabam*), he was still thinking through its forms: “In a disturbed order, my mind revolved through foul and horrible forms, but nevertheless they were forms (*sed formas tamen*).”²⁰⁹ Part of the greatness of the rational creature then is its capacity to corporeally thinking the forms of physical bodies without being rendered inert or impotent by this inferior knowing. As Book V begins, the natural freedom of human knowing to arrive at accurate accounts of nature through bodily examination with the senses becomes the basis for the human’s and the physical’s mutual returns through one another.

²⁰⁸ *Confessiones*, 4.15.24: “et ibat animus per formas corporeas et pulchrum, quod per se ipsum, aptum autem, quod ad aliquid adcommodatum deceret, definiebam et distinguebam et exemplis corporeis adstruebam.”

²⁰⁹ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6: “foedas et horribiles formas perturbatis ordinibus volvebat animus, sed formas tamen.”

Chapter 4. Knowing body rightly: the way inward and upward

Book V opens and expands the divine-human mutuality of desire and praise in Books I and XIII: “Accept this sacrifice of my confession from the hand of my mouth, which You have formed and aroused (*excitasti*).”²¹⁰ On account of this mutuality of God and the human, Book V provides the means of return from *phantasmata* through the realization of the human-physical mutuality, whose relations in and through each other are returns of both, through, and with, each other relative to human knowing. For the physical creation praises God through the human’s knowing of it, whereby real bodies return to God through the human. The physical trinity is given form through the human’s knowing of it, even at the level of a completely corporeal understanding.

Your entire creation never ceases to praise You and is never silent, neither the spirit of every human through the mouth converted to You (*per os conversum ad te*), nor animals, nor physical things through the mouth of those who meditate them (*per os considerantium ea*).²¹¹

On the other side of this human-physical mutuality, the human wearying itself out depends upon the physical trinity for its own restoration and return. For,

from weariness our soul rises to You (*exurgat ad te*), leaning upon (*innitens*) that which You have made, and passing over to You (*adtransiens ad te*) who has wonderfully made these things.²¹²

Here, then, is the crucial role of the physical for its and the human’s return through knowing. Compared to *phantasmata*, real bodies are a more certain and real ground upon which the restless human has “traction” of self. By “leaning” upon the physical, human knowing “rests against” the physical, that is, human knowing begins to realize the inherent structure of real physical bodies above its familiarity with false imaginary bodies. Corporeal knowing, then, expands to include unreal and real bodies, finding a form of relief for its projected self above unreal bodies exclusively. Corporeal knowing of real bodies, then, is the first step to move beyond the broken projected self relative to its differentiation into unreal bodies.

²¹⁰ *Confessiones*, 5.1.1.

²¹¹ *Confessiones*, 5.1.1: “non cessat nec tacet laudes tuas universa creatura tua nec spiritus omnis hominis per os conversum ad te; nec animalia nec corporalia per os considerantium ea.”

²¹² *Confessiones*, 5.1.1: “ut exurgat in te a lassitudine anima nostra, innitens eis, quae fecisti, et adtransiens ad te, qui fecisti haec mirabiliter: et ibi refectio et vera fortitudo.”

Chapter 4.1. The sceptical soul: method of comparison

Crucially, the “outside” and fiery impetus of the *Hortensius* for universal and immortal wisdom, which first moved Augustine into the truth claiming group of the Manicheans, opens Augustine to include both Manichean projection and a new sceptical mode of wavering and suspending judgement (*dubitandum esse*).²¹³ This sceptical mode expands human knowing by way of comparison, that is, by containing and placing one thing fully equal to another (*comparabam*).²¹⁴ On account of this, comparison propels knowing above both sides without landing on either one (*aequabantur*),²¹⁵ so that by comparisons human knowing equalizes and expands as increasing degrees of difference and probability without having to project into either side.

Crucially, this comparison does not yield binary judgements, so that, Augustine is able to become more than his association with the Manicheans and their fabulous accounts of nature. In particular, Augustine’s comparison of the Manichean fables with the philosophers’ account of the world (*saeculum*) through bodily examination and sensation demonstrates that the latter is more probable relative to real bodies.

Since I had read many things of the philosophers and retained those things committed to memory, by these (*ex eis*) I compared (*comparabam*) certain things to those long fables of the Manicheans, and the latter seemed more probable (*probabiliora*) to me which they spoke.²¹⁶

The difference which the method of comparison produces between these accounts is the philosophers’ perception of reason (*ratio*) that is manifest in the physical structure of earthly and heavenly bodies. Relative to the physics of Book I, the philosophers’ sceptical method is capable of knowing the inherent structure and order of real bodies by means of their own bodily perceptions of those bodies.²¹⁷ By using bodily sensation to

²¹³ *Confessiones*, 5.10.19.

²¹⁴ *Confessiones*, 5.3.3.

²¹⁵ *Confessiones*, 5.14.24.

²¹⁶ *Confessiones*, 5.3.3.

²¹⁷ For an account of nature which opposes this natural freedom of knowing, see Jean Calvin, *Institutio Christianae Religionis* in *Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia: Ad fidem editionum principum et authenticarum ex parte etiam codicum manu scriptorum, additis prolegomenis literariis, annotationibus criticis, annalibus Calvinianis indicibusque novis et copiosissimis* 51, edited by Guiliemus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, Eduardus Reuss, Alfred Erichson, Paul Lobstein, Wilhelm Baldensperger, and Ludwig Horst,

examine the given structure of bodies and their coherency of parts and unity, their inherent structure of measure, number, and weight are plain to any who “measure the heavens, number the stars, and weigh the elements (*ensor caeli et numerator siderum et pensor elementorum*).”²¹⁸ In this way, comparisons between *phantasmata* and real bodies contains both and sets them equally against one another, demonstrating the substantial difference and hierarchy of real bodies over less certain and false bodies.

I used to recall many true observations made by them [the *philosophos*] about the creation itself. I particularly noted the reason (*ratio*) behind numbers, the order of times, the visible evidence of the stars. I compared these (*conferebam*) with the sayings of Mani who wrote much on these matters very copiously and foolishly. I did not notice any reason (*ratio*) of solstices and equinoxes or eclipses of luminaries nor anything resembling what I had learnt in the books of wisdom at that time (*saecularis sapientiae*).²¹⁹

Under this sceptical mode, by reading the philosophers’ accounts of nature, Augustine is expanded in his knowing relative to the structure of the real physical. By opposition, the authority of the Manicheans compared to Augustine’s wavering state of scientific examination further differentiates these two modes of thought from each other, increasing its comparison and revealing more and more the opposing differences of *phantasmata* and real bodies. The Manicheans produce and maintain an imaginary cosmos under a hierarchy of authority relative to corporeal purity, the philosophers perceive and contemplate the ordered structure of the real physical cosmos to discover its inherent reasons.

I was ordered to believe Mani. He did not agree with the reasons (*rationes*) I had examined with calculations and with my own eyes (*numeris et oculis meis exploratas*), and at length he opposed it.²²⁰

Corpus Reformatorum Volumen 30.2 (Brunsvigae: Apud C.A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863), 5.14: “In vain (*frustra*) do so many burning lights shine brightly in the works of the world for us, which illumine us on every side (*undique*), with the result that they cannot by any means (*nequaquam*) lead [us] through themselves onto the right path.” “Ergo frustra nobis in mundi opificio collucent tot accensae lampades ad illustrandam autoris gloriam: quae sic nos undique irradiant, ut tamen in rectam viam per se nequaquam possint perducere.”

²¹⁸ *Confessiones*, 5.4.7.

²¹⁹ *Confessiones*, 5.3.6: “Multa tamen ab eis ex ipsa creatura vera dicta retinebam, et occurebat mihi ratio per numeros et ordinem temporum et visibiles attestaciones siderum, et conferebam cum dictis Manichaei, quae de his rebus multa scripsit copiosissime delitans, et non mihi occurrebat ratio nec solistitorum et aequinoctiorum nec defectuum luminarium nec quidquid tale in libris saecularis sapientiae didiceram.”

²²⁰ *Confessiones*, 5.3.6: “ibi autem credere iubebar, et ad illas rationes numeris et oculis meis exploratas non occurrebat, et longe diversum erat.”

In sum, through the conversion of Book III, desire that is amplified for universal wisdom beyond itself is now under a sceptical mode of human knowing which equalizes its hot agitation through its comparison of real bodies and their reasons which are evident to the given structure of the knower's own body and senses. At the level of the physical alone, then, although the sceptical soul is not yet raised above its corporeal self-relation, it increases with new degrees of probability relative to its bodily knowing of the physical. It begins to consciously perceive the difference between opposing modes of knowing relative to each other. In human knowing, then, rational and physical trinities coincide and expand through and with one another at a corporeal level of thought, wherein the human possesses both Manichean *phantasmata* and real bodies. At the same time, human knowing becomes the ground for the differentiation and return of physical bodies through the human's increasing and enlarging knowing of it.

Chapter 4.2. Conversions of mind: *platoniorum libros*

In this context of mutual returns, Augustine now converts to, and by, "another light," turning to face the source, means, and cause of human knowing and physical bodies. This is done through and with the *platoniorum libros*, in which the method of Plotinian introspection stabilizes the wavering and sceptical soul relative to human knowing. The stabilization of wavering desire in its own outside and given virtue, or power, of continence will occur later in the garden of Book VIII. Similar to his conversion through the *Hortensius*, the *platoniorum libros* are given to Augustine from outside: "You acquired [those books] for me (*procurasti mihi*)."²²¹ In comparison to Augustine's fiery return to immortal and universal wisdom in Book III, God leads and empowers Augustine to turn inwardly into his incorporeal mind in tandem with Augustine's reading of the *platoniorum libros*: "I was admonished to return to my very self (*redire ad memet ipsum*), I entered into my innermost self with You leading (*duce te*), and I was given power (*potui*) because You had become my helper."²²²

²²¹ *Confessiones*, 7.9.13.

²²² *Confessiones*, 7.10.16: "et inde admonitus redire ad memet ipsum, intravi in intima mea duce te, et potui, quoniam factus es adiutor meus."

Relative to the broken projected self in Book IV, God empowers and draws the human into its unresponsive and wounded self which cannot think reflexively. The human attempting to convert to itself, by itself, under a physical self-relation cannot draw itself inward and upwards towards an intellectual understanding of its own incorporeal nature of mind. In this way, the *platoniorum libros* provide the method and power for Augustine to convert to himself.

I converted myself to the nature of mind (*converti me ad animi naturam*), but the false opinion which I had about spiritual things [or, intellectual matter] did not allow me to perceive the truth. The power of truth rushed in and forced itself into my [bodily] eyes (*inruebat in oculos ipsa*), but I turned my throbbing mind away from incorporeal substance (*avertebam . . . ab incorporea re*) toward lines, colours, and things bloated with magnitude. Since I could not see these [physical properties] in the mind, I thought that I was not able to see mind.²²³

Chapter 4.2.1. First Platonic ascent: ascending and descending (*Confessiones*, 7.10.16)

Inwardly from above, Augustine's language is given interior and intellectual form, whereby he is raised to see with the eye of his mind (*oculum animae meae*), and with that same vision to see the incorporeal and unchanging light above his mind (*supra mentem meam*). This superior light is very different (*aliud valde*), below which are the mind and the physical. Here, intellectual understanding is realized by God's work in the human's knowing of Him, so that empowered, the human is led into and above itself to encounter its own mixture of likeness and disparity, inferior to, and a result of, superior Being: "When I first knew You, You raised me up so that I could see that what I saw is Being (*esse*), and that I who saw am not-yet-being (*nondum me esse*)."

This ascent to Being is a return, unification, and assimilation of composite being to God's preminent and self-sufficient Unity, the entire motion led by God's prior working in the human's knowing of Him. In this way, the human's ascent is also a descent relative to God's self-differentiation working in it. That is, God's Unity and Trinity is realized in the human's ascending and unifying movement to Him. For in the

²²³ *Confessiones*, 4.15.24: "et converti me ad animi naturam, et non me sinebat falsa opinio quam de spiritalibus habebam verum cernere. et inruebat in oculos ipsa vis veri, et avertebam palpitantem mentem ab incorporea re ad liniamenta et colores et tumentes magnitudines et, quia non poteram ea videre in animo, putabam me non posse videre animum."

human's ascent to Being, Being self-differentiates in human knowing under the triadic form of Love, Truth, and Eternity: "The one who knows Truth knows it [Being], and he who knows it [Truth] knows eternity. Love knows it. Eternal Truth and true love and beloved eternity: You are my God."²²⁴ This triad of Being prepares the ground and opens the human for Augustine's following Platonic ascents. In the second ascent (*Confessiones*, 7.17.23), Augustine is enabled to behold Truth, relative to which he seeks the relation between his judgment and beautiful bodies. In the third Platonic ascent (*Confessiones*, 9.10.24), relative to superior Truth, Augustine and Monica seek the eternal life of the saints by means of their physical desires for, or love of, bodies. In the fourth Platonic ascent (*Confessiones*, 10.8.12-10.24.35), inward Truth is discovered above the memory, by which human knowing becomes the comparative basis of its own relation to Truth within and beyond its knowing.

Relative to the descent, the human is a differentiating motion whose knowing is illuminated and granted form to become a distinguishing and defining thing. One result is the dissolution of the human's prior projections into the imaginary and uniform corporeality of the Manichean cosmos relative to its newly raised capacity to know physical beings, incorporeal mind, and God. By ascending and descending, intellect is realized and exercised relative to Being, so that it begins to define and limit the beginning and end of composite beings. From this, the mind differentiates a hierarchy of being and goodness with new philosophical language which distinguishes and contains the difference of beings as a mixture of being and non-being relative to, and consequent of, Being itself.

And I considered the other things below You (*infra te*), and I saw that they were not-entirely-being nor entirely-non-being (*vidi nec omnino esse nec omnino non esse*). They are because they come from You. But they are not because they are not what You are. That which truly is (*vere est*) is that which unchangeably abides.²²⁵

A result of such philosophical language and understanding of the cosmos necessarily dissolves the *phantasmata* of a substantial evil.²²⁶ For there is no individual being that

²²⁴ *Confessiones*, 7.10.16: "qui novit veritatem, novit eam, et qui novit eam, novit aeternitatem; caritas novit eam. o aeterna veritas et vera caritas et cara aeternitas, tu es deus meus, tibi suspiro die ac nocte."

²²⁵ *Confessiones*, 7.11.17.

²²⁶ *Confessiones*, 7.12.18.

exists as an absolute privation of goodness, since it would entirely not exist, nor can it be absolute Goodness, since it would be God. Rather, creatures exist and are good relative to their given natures.

Chapter 4.2.2. Second Platonic ascent: mutual returns (*Confessiones*, 7.17.23)

By a second outside and intellectual conversion, the human's ascent and descent to God differentiates the very structure of knowing itself, beginning at, and relative to, its newly raised understanding of the physical creation. In this second Platonic ascent, the divine-human mutuality returns and enables the move, with the comparable difference that the human initiates the ascent by seeking inwardly, step-by-step (*graditum*), its outward relation to physical bodies: "I was seeking from where I approved the beauty of bodies (*quaerens enim unde approbarem pulchritudinem corporum*)."¹ Augustine's search draws him inwardly to see again the unchangeable and true eternity of Truth above his changeable mind (*supra mentem*), beholding superior Truth with the mind's eye in order to discover the relation between the physical and himself. In this relation exerted by the human, Augustine ascends and descends, dividing and expanding the rational structure of his own knowing, by which physical bodies are gathered inwardly through the outward senses, are transformed by reason, and then raised by, and with, intellect beyond itself into God.

In the first step, the human knows the physical through its own given body, relative to which the power of bodily sensation is distinguished in the soul relative to the physical body that the human outwardly perceives: "from physical bodies (*a corporibus*) to the soul sensing through the body (*per corpus*)."²

Second, the human's perception of the physical through its bodily senses (*sensus corporis*) moves inwardly to the interior power of soul itself (*interiorem vim*). By this interior power, the physical body gives and receives the human through the human's body, and is transformed and internalized by the human's incorporeal soul. These primary and initial forms of knowing, of sensation, internalization, and consumption of, and by, another, are common to physical creatures generally and belong to the natural and instinctual life of the physical trinity at the level of bodies.

From sensation, human knowing moves beyond this common power of physical creatures towards its power of ratiocination (*ad ratiocinantem potentiam*), or mutable reason (*mutabilem*). By changeable reason, human knowing judges (*iudicandum*) its own perception of physical bodies gathered through bodily senses (*a sensibus corporis*).

Fourth, the nature of reason is reflexive knowing which arouses and raises itself towards its own intelligence (*erexit se ad intellegentiam suam*), by which it leads thinking away from the habit (*a consuetudine*), or tendency, to project itself into imaginary *phantasmata*. In this way, reason is a medial form of knowing between perceiving the physical and understanding, or intellecting, its nature, so that reason freely moves between both dividing and unifying forms of knowing relative to, and beginning at, physical bodies. In this way, reason may fall below real bodies into false bodies, and may rise again towards and above bodies relative to its raised understanding and comparison of them. Hence the descent of Books II-IV and the comparative journey of the human relative to its end beyond itself thereafter.

Fifth, reason raising itself above its projections towards its own intelligence discovers the superior light which floods it (*quo lumine aspargeretur*). Relative to Plato's Cave and the Line in Book IV, reason converts to face the light behind and above it. In tandem with the rational hierarchy of Book III, understanding, here, is a process of human knowing and its rise from its fall into *phantasmata*, moving towards and above bodies and incorporeal mind "to approach that which is" (*pervenit ad id, quod est*). Intelligence with and through the physical, then, declaim the ineffable and most certain nature of its source in superior Being.

This second ascent and descent of the human-physical mutuality, relative to the physics of Book I, shows that both the human and physical bodies depend upon the other's composite nature of body and bodily perception, so that, together, both the physical and the human rise by, and with, reason's incorporeal and erected form of intelligence, by which they are raised beyond themselves into God. In their shared *exitus* and *reditus*, mind more completely understands the physical, and in comparison to the physical is further unified and differentiated in, and with, their superior source. In this way, the physics of lactation is internalized and made rational in, and by, human knowing.

Chapter 4.2.3. Third Platonic ascent: God's Wisdom (*Confessiones*, 9.10.23-9.10.25)

The third Platonic ascent in Book IX proceeds by a similar exertion and step-by-step ascent relative to the physical. Together, Augustine and Monica extend themselves (*extenti*) and seek (*quaerebamus*) to think (*cogitaremus*) the eternal life of the saints “in the presence of Truth, which You are (*apud praesentem veritatem, quod tu es*).”²²⁷ Here the human enters more deeply, and is empowered by, the self-differentiation of Being of Love, Truth, and Eternity from the first Platonic ascent. The priority of Truth propels the ascent, again beginning at the level of bodies and the human's bodily relation to them, this time relative to the “pleasure of bodily senses (*carnalium sensuum delectatio*).”²²⁸ By making comparisons between the physical and the eternal relative to superior Truth, the difference is incomparable (*non comparatione*) and inflames the human “to raise itself by a more burning affection into the Selfsame (*erigentes nos ardentiore affectu in idipsum*).”²²⁹ More clearly now, the human moves beyond itself into God's identity relative to His Being from the first two ascents.

By the arousal of this comparative difference of bodily pleasure of physical things, the human moves “step-by-step through all physical things (*perambulavimus gradatim cuncta corporalia*),” ascending inwardly into the mind (*ascendebamus interius . . . venimus in mentes*), transcending the creation (*transcendimus*), and touching God (*attingeremus*).²³⁰ The end of this ascent is the human's arrival and the total strike of its affections (*toto ictu cordis*) in God's Wisdom as the region of His Truth and Life (*vita sapientia est*).²³¹ Here there are several resolutions for the human. Relative to the *Hortensius*, the hot agitation of philosophy has its complete end in God's Wisdom as the place and means of attaining its desire for universal and immortal wisdom. There is also a resolution to the first Platonic ascent, after which God becomes “food” for the human to eat, so that the human “eating God” becomes more like Him: “I am the food of the fully

²²⁷ *Confessiones*, 9.10.23.

²²⁸ *Confessiones*, 9.10.24.

²²⁹ *Confessiones*, 9.10.24.

²³⁰ *Confessiones*, 9.10.24.

²³¹ *Confessiones*, 9.10.24.

grown; grow and you will feed on me. And you will not change me into you like the food your flesh eats, but you will be changed into me.”²³²

Arriving at God’s Wisdom, then, as the place to become more like God, feeding on His Truth and Life, the human descends with a differentiating understanding of the inherent and superior Wisdom which speaks in and through the creation. Similar to the two previous ascents, the descent and differentiation of human knowing and desire follows from a “striking back” or “flash” in the human’s attainment of God striking back: “we extended our reach (*extendimus nos*) and in a flash of mental energy (*rapida cogitatione*) attained (*atingimus*) the eternal wisdom which abides beyond all things.”²³³ By means of this newly formed understanding from above, the human knows the inherent and given nature of the physical relative to its eternal source: “We did not make ourselves, but He made us who remains in Eternity.”²³⁴ Such intellectual perception of the physical will become the ground of the fourth ascent into *memoria* in Book X (*Confessiones*, 10.8.12-10.24.35). In silence, by comparisons through this raised understanding and distinction of the creation relative to Wisdom, Wisdom Itself speaks to the human through and above creation: “Him which we love in these things, we would hear Him without these things (*ipsum quem in his amamus, ipsum sine his audiamus*).”²³⁵ Relative to Book V, the praise of the physical and the human coincide under this distinction between the creation and Wisdom, for the human now discerns the “voice” and “praise” of the creature for its superior cause and source in Wisdom which speaks in and through the physical to the human.

Chapter 4.3. Conversion of will: *interpretans divinitus*

Following the first two Platonic conversions, the sceptical soul rests in the certainty of supreme Being. However, the human is stretched to a painful limit. On account of its ascents beyond itself, human will, or desire, is doubled (*duae voluntates*)²³⁶ relative to the conversion of mind, for it is now drawn between its dividing love of

²³² *Confessiones*, 7.10.16: “cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me. nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me.” Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 124.

²³³ *Confessiones*, 9.10.25.

²³⁴ *Confessiones*, 9.10.25.

²³⁵ *Confessiones*, 9.10.25.

²³⁶ *Confessiones*, 8.5.10.

temporal things, and between its new, but always present, unifying love for, and in, eternity which is inherent in and encompasses temporal goods.

Relative to the sceptical mode of Book V and its method to compare different things on an equal footing, so also is the human's will wavering with hesitation (*dubitabam*),²³⁷ or, suspends above (*suspendebat*)²³⁸ the human's multiplicity of different loves which rise and fall relative to the human's inherent desire and superior end. This multiplicity of desire is encountered in Book IV and demonstrates the precipitous character of the will hanging above the great depth of human desire: "Man is a vast deep (*grande profundum est ipse homo*) . . . it is easier to count his hairs than the passions and emotions of his heart (*affectus eius et motus cordis*)."²³⁹

Importantly, by being raised and touching Being, through which human knowing realizes and differentiates, so also the sceptical will realizes and differentiates by its new will relative to the unchanging Good and the corruptible goods in and below the Good. In this state, reminiscent of the doubling and halving of projections in Book IV, the human is willing, or loving, temporal goods and eternity at the same time (*in utroque*).²⁴⁰ Love of temporal things is instable, and their instability makes the pain of wanting to will eternity more acute. For, the sceptical will incompletely loves both the temporal and eternity (*tota non est*), since each of the two wills lacks what is in the other to be one will.²⁴¹ Consequently, unconverted will lacks the power not only to command itself to act, but also to be itself, "for if it was complete, it would not command that it exist, because it would already exist."²⁴² Like the preliminary physical understanding of Books I-VI, divided human willing cannot unite itself by its own divided willing. In this way, human willing is not able to wholly will itself (*non ex toto vult*),²⁴³ and fails to will and act at all (*ipsum velle iam facere erat*).²⁴⁴ Similar to the twisting and turning of the

²³⁷ *Confessiones*, 8.1.2.

²³⁸ *Confessiones*, 8.11.25.

²³⁹ *Confessiones*, 4.14.22.

²⁴⁰ *Confessiones*, 8.5.11.

²⁴¹ *Confessiones*, 8.9.21.

²⁴² *Confessiones*, 8.9.21.

²⁴³ *Confessiones*, 8.9.21.

²⁴⁴ *Confessiones*, 8.7.20.

wounded projected self in Books IV and VI, the lacerated and halved will fails to unite itself.

Not only to move, but also to go to there, was nothing other than willing to go, but by willing powerfully and completely, not as a half-wounded will (*semisauciam*) turning and shaking this way and that (*hac atque hac versare et iactare*), wrestling with one part rising up while another falls down.²⁴⁵

Importantly, the hot agitation (*aestus*) of the *Hortensius* in Book III remains the impetus and cause for willing's differentiation, intensifying the will's incapacity for stability as it "lusts to be in God (*in te esse cupiebam*)."²⁴⁶ Despite the conversion of mind to Being and its certitude of indestructible substance, the will still wavers to become stable in God.

Again, from outside, the conversion of desire is worked relative to physical bodies. At the level of bodies, the indirect and verbal report of God working in human desire to love Him in the examples of St. Antony and the courtiers moves Augustine inwardly to face his own divided and stretched will. Like God's empowering move in human knowing to turn inward and upward beyond its physical self-relation, God moves Augustine to turn him to himself. The language of position relative to what is ahead and behind recalls the state of knowing and its need for illumination in Book IV. In this way, conversion is worked from behind to draw Augustine to face himself as he is judged by God from above.

You twisted me to myself (*retorquebas me ad me ipsum*). You took me up from behind my back (*a dorso meo*) where I had placed myself. I did not wish (*nollem*) to observe myself, and You set me before my face (*ante faciem meam*) so that I should see (*viderem*) how vile I was, how distorted and filthy, covered in sores and ulcers. And I looked and trembled (*videbam et horrebam*), but there was no way of escaping from myself (*a me fugerem non erat*). If I tried to avert my gaze from myself . . . You once again set me against myself and forced me into my eyes (*impingebas me in oculos meos*).²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ *Confessiones*, 8.8.19: "nam non solum ire verum etiam pervenire illuc nihil erat aliud quam velle ire, sed velle fortiter et integre, non semisauciam hac atque hac versare et iactare voluntatem parte adsurgente cum alia parte cadente luctantem."

²⁴⁶ *Confessiones*, 8.1.1.

²⁴⁷ *Confessiones*, 8.7.16: "retorquebas me ad me ipsum, auferens me a dorso meo, ubi me posueram dum nollem me attendere, et constituebas me ante faciem meam, ut viderem quam turpis essem, quam distortus et sordidus, maculosus et ulcerosus. Et videbam et horrebam, et quo a me fugerem non erat. Sed si conabar avertere a me aspectum . . . et tu me rursus opponebas mihi et impingebas me in oculos meos."

Consequent to God's confronting Augustine with himself, the human is turned inward to see its divisive state of desire and by comparison to arouse itself: "that great strife of my interior dwelling (*interioris*) . . . I vehemently incited with my soul (*fortiter excitaveram cum anima mea*) in the chamber of my heart."²⁴⁸

A result of this great stirring of many wills and desires are tears. Relative to the recurrence of tears at the theatre and the death of the friend, tears here are a development of will turned inwardly to itself, for they are a result of knowing the divided state of its loves. It is sorrow for one's own divided condition. Unlike the theatre In Book III, these tears are not the reflection of desire's own suffering represented on the stage. Nor are they the tears of Book IV, shed simply for the lack of the projected self in another. These tears derive from inward reflections of the human's torn and conflicting wills, seeing its own differentiation in the multiplicity of bodies and matter, in virtue of which it is incapable of uniting itself in the stability of its new love in eternity. In this comparison of the temporal and eternal, physical tears are the means of inward contrition and penitence.

From a hidden depth (*a fundo arcano*) a profound self-examination had dredged up (*alta consideratio traxit*) the whole of all my misery (*totam miseriam meam*) and set it in the sight of my heart. That precipitated a vast storm bearing a massive downpour of tears (*lacrimarum*).²⁴⁹

In this context, the audible chant of the so-called "children" is the sole and efficacious means to unite Augustine's desires in God. Relative to the human-physical mutuality of Book V, it is these particular bodies, and Augustine's understanding of them, which facilitates his conversion and the stability of his desire for eternity. Crucially, appropriate to the level of bodies, the character of the "children" and the source of the chant "pick up and read" (*tolle lege*) is unknowability: "it might be a boy or a girl (I do not know) (*quasi pueri an puellae nescio*)." Unknowingly, Augustine spiritually interprets (*interpretans divinitus*) the command to pick up St. Paul's epistle to the Romans and opening it, as it were, "throwing the dice." The result is his immediate conversion of will through the given power of continence, by which his physical tears are immediately checked.

²⁴⁸ *Confessiones*, 8.8.19.

²⁴⁹ *Confessiones*, 8.12.28.

Suddenly I heard a voice (*audio vocem*) from the nearby house chanting as if it might be a boy or a girl (I do not know), saying and repeating over and over again ‘Pick up and read, pick up and read.’ At once my countenance changed (*mutato vultu*) . . . I checked the flood of tears (*lacrimarum*) and stood up. I interpreted it solely as a divine command to me (*interpretans divinitus mihi*) to open the book and read the first chapter I might find.²⁵⁰

Brought to another text from outside himself, Augustine returns through, and with, the physical in, and by, his new stability of affection in God: “it was as if a light of relief flooded (*luce securitatis*) into my heart. All the shadows of doubt (*dubitationis*) were dispelled.”²⁵¹

Chapter 4.4. Recreation of the physics: spiritual exchange through bodies

The conversion of will through the physical in Book VIII according to the efficacious and unknowing, or unreflexive, nature of physical bodies, characterizes the new life of conversion generally. Book IX opens with this ignorance: “Lord who is like You? (*quis similis tibi*) . . . who am I and what am I? (*quis ego et qualis ego*).”²⁵²

Relative to the life of the church at the end of Book IX, bodies and the laws of genesis are the means by which the human is born and drawn into the communion of the physical and the spiritual members of Christ. It is by Augustine’s physical parents and the unknowing mode of their bodies which first bears Augustine into time.

Monica, Your servant, and Patricus, her late husband, through whose physical bond You brought me into this life (*per quorum carnem introduxisti me in hanc vitam*) without my knowing how (*quemadmodum nescio*).²⁵³

Such ignorance recalls Book I, that the human enters into time through the unknowing mode of physical bodies and has no recollection of its life prior to birth: “I do not know from where I have come to this place (*nescio unde venerim huc*).”²⁵⁴

²⁵⁰ *Confessiones*, 8.12.29: “et ecce audio vocem de vicina domo cum cantu dicentis et crebro repetentis, quasi pueri an puellae, nescio: ‘tolle lege, tolle lege’ statimque mutato vultu . . . repressoque impetu lacrimarum surrexi, nihil aliud interpretans divinitus mihi iuberi nisi ut aperirem codicem et legerem quod primum caput invenissem.”

²⁵¹ *Confessiones*, 8.12.29.

²⁵² *Confessiones*, 9.1.1.

²⁵³ *Confessiones*, 9.13.37.

²⁵⁴ *Confessiones*, 1.6.7.

From birth, Monica begets Augustine both physically into time and spiritually beyond time into eternity: “[she] bore me both from the flesh (*parturivit et carne*) in time, and from the heart, so that I was born into eternal light (*in aeternam lucem nascerer*).”²⁵⁵ In this way, Augustine’s own generation and regeneration depends upon the body of his physical mother: “O Lord, I am Your servant, I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaiden (*filius ancillae tuae*).”²⁵⁶

Through physical bodies, then, Augustine emerges recreated in the new family of God, whose physical and spiritual relations form a new hierarchy relative to God the “Father” in comparison to the former hierarchy of the physical family: “my kith and kin under You, our Father (*sub te patre*), in our Mother the Catholic Church (*in matre catholica*), and my fellow citizens in the eternal Jerusalem.”²⁵⁷ In this family above and within the physical, Monica becomes not only the spiritual mother of Augustine, but also to all baptized believers: “We went to mother (*ad matrem*)”;²⁵⁸ Monica’s hope for physical grandchildren from Augustine (*de nepotibus carnis*) is changed by his conversion and continence;²⁵⁹ Alypius is Augustine’s “brother of his heart (*fratrem cordis mei*)”;²⁶⁰ “mother stayed close by us (*matre adhaerente nobis*) in the clothing of a woman, with a virile faith, an older woman’s serenity, a maternal love, and a Christian devotion”;²⁶¹ Monica is “a servant of Your servants,” and a “daughter of all (*ab omnibus genita fuisset*).”²⁶²

This new union of the physical and spiritual through their creation and recreation in and by physical bodies is similarly linked to the natural relations of Providence and the cosmos generally. Articulated in Book IV, there is an inherent power of lots (*sortis*) that is “everywhere diffused in the nature of things” (*in rerum natura usquequaque diffusam*), such that, from the human (*ex anima humana*), unknowingly (*nesciente*), there is a sympathy at work through its “superior instinct” (*superiore aliquo instinctu*).²⁶³

²⁵⁵ *Confessiones*, 9.8.17.

²⁵⁶ *Confessiones*, 9.1.1.

²⁵⁷ *Confessiones*, 9.13.37.

²⁵⁸ *Confessiones*, 8.12.30.

²⁵⁹ *Confessiones*, 8.12.30.

²⁶⁰ *Confessiones*, 9.4.7.

²⁶¹ *Confessiones*, 9.4.8.

²⁶² *Confessiones*, 9.9.22.

²⁶³ *Confessiones*, 4.3.5.

Augustine returns to this power in Book VII, and argues that the apparent art of forecasting derives from the order of Providence itself at work in and above the human relative to the superior and eternal reasons. God is at work in the interpreter and the interpretation of the physical creation, so it is properly not *sortis* which is deterministic, but the work of the divine-human mutuality at both ends of entreaty and response.

You Lord, most just controller of the universe by a hidden instinct (*occulto instinctu*), act on those who consult and those who are consulted, though they are unaware of it. So when someone consults, and he hears what he should hear, that is dependent on the hidden merits of souls (*occultis meritis animarum*) from the depth of Your just judgement (*ex abyssu iusti iudicii tui*).²⁶⁴

In this way, Book IX contains a new life of bodily and spiritual sympathy, in which physical bodies and acts are efficacious for spiritual returns, formation, and conversion appropriate at the level of ignorance and faith. That is, the physics of lactation in Book I returns in Book IX as the recreated life of the church to give and receive spiritual goods that are acquired before and after physical death. God promises an exchange of eternal goods through temporal bodies, whereby physical debt is returned with spiritual merit. Such is the case for Verecundus who, although not at the time a baptized Christian, receives forgiveness of his sins on account of his charity towards Augustine and his friends.

Faithful to Your promises (*promissor*), in return (*reddis*) for Verecundus' country estate at Cassiacum where we rested in You (*requievimus in te*) from the heat of the world, You rewarded him with the loveliness of Your evergreen paradise. For You forgave his sins upon earth (*dimisisti ei peccata super terram*).²⁶⁵

Likewise, in prayer, God's commandments are remembered and fulfilled in Monica by her character to desire and pray for Augustine's conversion: "Could you, who gave her this character (*cuius munere talis erat*), despise and repel from your assistance tears by which she sought of you."²⁶⁶ In this way, it is by Monica's given nature that Augustine is physically born in time and spiritually reborn into the eternal union of the physical and spiritual as the church.

²⁶⁴ *Confessiones*, 7.6.10.

²⁶⁵ *Confessiones*, 9.3.5.

²⁶⁶ *Confessiones*, 5.9.17. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 83-84.

The exchange of merit is reciprocal, that through Augustine's prayers for Monica her sins are forgiven after death (*pro peccatis matris meae deprecor te*).²⁶⁷ In this reciprocity of the physical and spiritual through bodies, physical and new spiritual tears are shed for Monica's bodily death and her spiritual condition of sin and need of mercy. Upon her death, Augustine does not weep in the group, but alone (*solus*)²⁶⁸ on his bed: "I was glad to weep in Your sight about her and for her, about myself and for myself (*libuit flere in conspectu tuo de illa et pro illa, de me et pro me*)."²⁶⁹ Deriving from these physical tears for the bodily death of Monica are another kind of tears (*aliud lacrimarum genus*) that are shed inwardly for her sins which condemn her after death. Tears and death are also recreated relative to the physical relation of the friend in Book IV. Augustine, then, weeps and entreats inwardly for the natural and given nature of Monica, who cannot claim any gift or merit other than what she is from God.²⁷⁰ Her sins must be prayed for by another in time.

Other instances of exchange occur for Augustine and Alypius prior to their baptisms. For Augustine, the complaint of a toothache is given and remedied by God through the supplications of his friends, whereby God completely heals the divine affliction (*deum salutis omnimoda*).²⁷¹ For Alypius, by the domination of his body he attains the virtue of humility proper to baptism. The debt, restraint, and mortification of the physical brings about a good habit and its power. This need for virtue will be deepened by the fourth Platonic ascent in Book X.

Alypius also decided to be reborn in You with me (*renasci in te*). He had already put on the humility that befits Your sacraments, and tamed his body with extraordinary boldness (*fortissimo domitori corporis*): he went barefoot (*nudo pede*) on the icy soil of Italy.²⁷²

Furthermore, the discovery of the concealed bodies of Protasius and Gervasius and their spiritual power demonstrates the sympathy of the spiritual and physical

²⁶⁷ *Confessiones*, 9.13.35.

²⁶⁸ *Confessiones*, 9.12.32.

²⁶⁹ *Confessiones*, 9.12.33.

²⁷⁰ *Confessiones*, 9.13.34.

²⁷¹ *Confessiones*, 9.4.12.

²⁷² *Confessiones*, 9.6.14.

members of the church through the physical members of the saints *post-mortem*. Hidden from corruption and produced by God through a vision (*promeres*), the physical bodies of these saints grant both spiritual protection to the Church of Milan from persecution, and physical healing through bodily contact.²⁷³

In this way, the biographic conclusion of the *Confessiones* has its end in the recreated physics of Book I, in which the physical and spiritual grant and receive merits through temporal bodies. One consequence is that physical walls do make Christians,²⁷⁴ and that the unification and differentiation of the physical members of the church is also the unification and differentiation of its spiritual members as the family of God. In time and eternity, the physical-spiritual mutuality transcends and works through the physical.

²⁷³ *Confessiones*, 9.7.16.

²⁷⁴ *Confessiones*, 8.2.4.

Chapter 5. Invoking the outside power of soul: *memoria*

A means and conclusion of the human's biographical *itinerarium* from Books I to IX are the mutual returns of the physical and rational trinities through and with one another in virtue, and by means of, God's prior leading and raising of the human. By comparisons, always through and beginning with physical bodies and bodily sense, the human and the physical move relative to human knowing, ascending and descending its rational structure towards God, fundamentally touching "that which is" beyond both.

Relative to the divine-human mutuality which begins and ends the *Confessiones*, in and above the composite being of the human and its divided knowing and loving is God's self-sufficient Being, Knowing, and Loving outside it, both unifying and differentiating its desire and knowledge by God's Oneness and Trinitarian structure through the mutuality of the physical and rational trinities. By the interdependent returns of the human and the physical in Book VII, human corporeal seeing and knowing is turned inward and transformed from outside to see with the mind the incorporeal nature of mind itself and its transcendent source beyond it. Knowing is illuminated by and with "another light" (*alio lumine*) above the creature, rectifying and granting its spiritual, or intellectual, vision of itself through contact with its source and cause in Being.

Drawn beyond its corporeal and imaginative understanding of incorporeal substance, by being raised through its own physical and rational structures towards its own intellect, physical seeing and knowing and their discrete content of bodies are raised to, by, and with, the unchanging light of superior Being itself. This movement of the divine-human mutuality through the human's gradual ascent of its own structure is the beginning of understanding, or intelligence, being also the formative movement of mutable reason, both unifying the human towards Unity and differentiating its knowing by the delineation of mind relative to Trinity. By this movement, the human is strengthened from outside through and with the physical, arriving at their formal constitution as a mutuality of knowing and physical bodies, simultaneously becoming more and more realized through their rise towards Wisdom.

Book X returns to, and deepens, this movement through the "greater," or "even more complete," rise and assimilation of the divine-human mutuality through the physical. Augustine begins by recalling the fundamental relation of God and the human

from Books I and XIII. Emphatically, the human self-relation knows and desires with new philosophical language its mutual power within and above in God: “May I know You (*cognoscam*), who know me (*cognitor*). May I ‘know (*cognoscam*) as I also am known (*cognitus sum*).’ Power of my soul, enter into it [my soul] (*intra in eam*) and fit it for Yourself.”²⁷⁵ Relative to the rational hierarchy of Book III, the human invokes into itself the prior and self-sufficient Life above and in the soul, so that the superior power of God enters into the human from outside it. Converted knowing, then, is given power and exercises it to call God Himself into it as the mutual and outside power they share. In this way, the human recalls God who is within and beyond it, mutually returning and assimilating both through the finite with, and by using, God’s own power.

Using this outside power, Augustine returns to himself and confesses the depth of the human. This recalls the vast profundity which Augustine’s halved and wounded self encounters in Book IV through the death of the friend. Through the Platonic ascents of Book VII, Augustine is led by God and is enabled to lead himself into and through the human’s rational structures of mind. Here in Book X, Augustine examines himself through the recollection of God in him, wherein Augustine examines his own naked and exposed nature relative to the superior infinity of God which the human ever desires and knows despite itself. Augustine confesses and enters into this communication of the human in God, and of God hidden above and within the human, so that what is given is always present to its superior source, and its source is always present to it from within.

Indeed, Lord, to Your eyes, the abyss of human consciousness is naked (*nuda est abyssus*). What could be hidden within me, even if I were unwilling to confess it to You? I would be hiding You from myself, not myself from You . . . If anything I say to men is right, that is what You have first heard from me. Moreover, You hear nothing true from me which You have not first told me.²⁷⁶

With this form of confession, a new language and standard of judgement are required for the mutual communication of the human and God. Through the outside

²⁷⁵ *Confessiones*, 10.1.1: “Cognoscam te, cognitor meus, cognoscam, sicut et cognitus sum. virtus animae meae, intra in eam et coapta tibi.”

²⁷⁶ *Confessiones*, 10.2.2: “et tibi quidem, domine, cuius oculis nuda est abyssus humanae conscientiae, quid occultum esset in me, etiamsi nollem confiteri tibi? te enim mihi absconderem, non me tibi . . . neque enim dico recti aliquid hominibus quod non a me tu prius audieris, aut etiam tu aliquid tale audis a me quod non mihi tu prius dixeris.”

power of soul, Augustine's confession requires a language that speaks with, and by, that interior and superior power:

I am not doing this merely by physical words and sounds, but by words from my soul (*verbis animae*) and a cry from my mind (*clamore cogitationis*), which is known to Your ear . . . Therefore, my God, my confession before You is both silent and not silent. It is silent from noise. It cries aloud with desire.²⁷⁷

Likewise, the standard of confession belongs to what is required and received from without. The human does not judge itself through itself, but rather its confession is granted, received, and returned by the superior power at hand and above: "But I do not judge myself . . . You, Lord, judge me."²⁷⁸ Human confession then is a speech that is both spoken by the enabling power of God within the human, and spoken towards, and with, that same source of power, so that human confession is also a listening to God, in whom confession is discovered by the human and already known. The divine-human mutuality here confesses and is confessed under a form of assimilation that requires what is already given by God, within and above the human.

This is the context of confession for Book X, the search of the finite for what is already given by and loved in, and with, the infinite. For, within the divine-human mutuality, desire returns and draws the human beyond itself towards God, the supreme certainty by which the human has always moved through its desire: "I love You (*amo te*), Lord, not with fluctuations but with conscious certainty. By Your Word You pierced my heart (*percussisti*), and I loved You (*amavi te*)."²⁷⁹ Crucially, desire for God begins and moves confession towards its difference relative to physical bodies in time: "Heaven and earth and everything in them (behold, on all sides!) tell me to love You. Nor do they cease to speak to all."²⁸⁰ Such is the beginning of the fourth Platonic ascent relative to the unlikeness of the physical creation under the newly formed understanding of the third Platonic ascent to Wisdom and its distinction within and above the creature in Book IX.

²⁷⁷ *Confessiones*, 10.2.2: "neque id ago verbis carnis et vocibus, sed verbis animae et clamore cogitationis, quem novit auris tua . . . confessio itaque mea, deus meus, in conspectu tuo tibi tacite fit et non tacite: tacet enim strepitu, clamat affectu."

²⁷⁸ *Confessiones*, 10.4.6; *Confessiones*, 10.5.7.

²⁷⁹ *Confessiones*, 10.6.8: "non dubia sed certa conscientia, domine, amo te: percussisti cor meum verbo tuo, et amavi te."

²⁸⁰ *Confessiones*, 10.6.8: "sed et caelum et terra et omnia quae in eis sunt, ecce undique mihi dicunt ut te amem, nec cessant dicere omnibus."

The human now distinguishes the “praise” of creatures from the Wisdom which speaks through and contains them. In tandem with the mutual returns of the human and the physical in Book V, the “speech” of the physical creation is its inherent trinitarian structure by which the human expands and makes comparisons between its own *phantasmata* with the increasingly more probable knowledge of real bodies. Knowing the difference between the given nature and structure of the physical, Augustine is moved by the physical to seek his desired end in God above them.

Chapter 5.1. Spiritual senses: uncovering physical sensation inwardly

Importantly, then, the human’s search for God begins with and through comparisons to physical bodies and bodily senses. Again, through physical examination and bodily sensation, the rise towards God begins at the level of bodies and the human’s relation to them. Similar to the recreated spiritual family of God deriving from, and in comparison to, the physical family, so also from the physical senses are derived recreated spiritual senses and desires for God. These inward and spiritual sensations and perceptions develop and grow by their difference in human knowing relative to the physical body. First, by distinction, the love of God is not for, or in, the physical body exclusively. Augustine’s desire is not limited by a physical relation, yet is always relative to bodies, bodily sense and delight.

But when I love You, what do I love? It is not physical beauty nor temporal glory nor the brightness of light dear to earthly eyes, nor the sweet melodies of all kinds of songs, nor the gentle odour of flowers and ointments and perfumes, nor manna or honey, nor limbs welcoming the embraces of the flesh; it is not these I love when I love my God.²⁸¹

Then by comparisons to the physical, Augustine uncovers interior language and spiritual senses received from without by the inward and superior power of his soul.²⁸² In this way, the human’s recollection of God has deepened, expanded, and fitted the human with inward desires from outside it, always developing relative to its physical body and senses.

²⁸¹ *Confessiones*, 10.6.8.

²⁸² See Martin Sastri, “The Influence of Plotinian Metaphysics in St. Augustine’s Conception of the Spiritual Senses,” *Dionysius* 24 (December 2006), 107-133, esp. 107-108.

By a different and incorporeal range of interior-physical sensations, the human rises inwardly with desire towards God above and with the physical.

Yet there is a light I love, and a food, and a kind of embrace when I love my God—a light, voice, odour, food, embrace of my inner man, where my soul is floodlit by light which space cannot contain (*non capit locus*), where there is sound that time cannot seize, where there is a perfume which no breeze disperses, where there is a taste for food no amount of eating can lessen, and where there is a bond of union that no satiety can part. That is what I love when I love my God (*hoc est quod amo, cum deum meum amo*).²⁸³

Fundamentally, the inward search of the human's spiritual desire for God is always relative to and derives from the physical. By seeking its love for God in the inherent beauty of physical bodies, the human moves beyond physical structures and forms of bodily knowing which belong to them relative to their source in God (*quaere super nos*).²⁸⁴ Converted mind, then, enabled to question itself, or is enabled to think reflexively, knows its outer and inner natures and their inherent hierarchy of knowing and certainty, relative to which, "what is inward is superior" (*sed melius quod interius*), so that incorporeal mind in comparison to the physical is a more certain form and means of knowing God.

All physical evidence (*nuntii corporales*) is reported to the mind which presides and judges of the responses of heaven and earth and all things in them . . . The inner man knows this through exterior administration—I, I the mind through the senses of my body (*ego, ego animus per sensum corporis mei*).²⁸⁵

In this way, mind seeks to understand Truth by the comparison of superior Truth, manifested above and through physical bodies, to that same Truth that is always inwardly present and speaking to, and with, the human: "[the physical] certainly speaks to all, but they understand it who, having received its voice from without (*foris*), compare it with the Truth from within (*intus cum veritate conferunt*).²⁸⁶ Mind, then, is its own basis for knowing Truth by the comparative relation of physical and temporal bodies with the inward and eternal reality of Truth present to the soul. This is a conclusion to the search

²⁸³ *Confessiones*, 10.6.8. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 183.

²⁸⁴ *Confessiones*, 10.6.9.

²⁸⁵ *Confessiones*, 10.6.9.

²⁸⁶ *Confessiones*, 10.6.10: "immo vero omnibus loquitur, sed illi intellegunt qui eius vocem acceptam foris intus cum veritate conferunt."

for God in Book X, that superior Truth is always present to the human from within: “O Truth, everywhere You preside (*ubique praesides*) over all who ask counsel of You. You respond simultaneously (*simulque respondes*) to all even though they consult You on contradicting matters (*diversa*).”²⁸⁷

Chapter 5.2. Fourth Platonic ascent: infinitizing the physical (*Confessiones*, 10.8.12-10.24.35)

Invoking what is without from within, the human’s new interior desires for God now lead the human beyond itself through another Platonic ascent: “I will, therefore, rise above (*transibo*) that natural capacity of my nature in a step by step ascent (*gradibus ascendens*) to Him who made me.”²⁸⁸ In virtue of the comparative nature of mind below God, desire for God must rise relative to, with, and above physical bodies and incorporeal mind towards their end beyond themselves. In this way, interior desire moves the human inward and upward towards God, gathering and passing over the physical and the incorporeal structure of mind itself.

Importantly, this inward movement of desire into the outside power which the divine-human mutuality share is both a return and a formation of the finite and the infinite in virtue of the mutual invocation of power at the beginning of Book X. That is, during the Platonic ascent towards God, the human is both uncovering and expanding its nature beyond its own comprehension, encountering and developing the inward and eternal life that it has, and is hidden from itself in God. Twice, emphatically, Augustine is astonished that the infinity he meets within himself is his very nature. First, having been raised through the endless images of physical bodies perceived by the mind, Augustine is confronted by the incomprehension of himself which contains an internal and infinite physicality.

This power of memory is great, very great, my God. It is a vast and infinite profundity (*penetrabile amplum et infinitum*). Who has plumbed its bottom? This power is that of my mind and it pertains to my nature, but I myself cannot grasp the totality which I am (*nec ego ipse capio totum quod sum*).²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ *Confessiones*, 10.26.37.

²⁸⁸ *Confessiones*, 10.7.11.

²⁸⁹ *Confessiones*, 10.8.15: “magna ista vis est memoriae, magna nimis, deus meus, penetrabile amplum et infinitum. quis ad fundum eius pervenit? et vis est haec animi mei atque ad meam naturam pertinet, nec ego ipse capio totum quod sum.”

Again, having been raised beyond images of the physical towards the incorporeal realities of the *superiora* themselves, Augustine shudders at the horrifying reality and capacity of memory, within which he can recall the eternal ideas of God given in him from outside.

Great is the power of memory, a horrible unknown (*nescio quid horrendum*), my God, a profound and infinite multiplicity (*profunda et infinita multiplicitas*). And this is mind, this is I myself (*et hoc animus est, et hoc ego ipse sum*). What then am I, my God? What is my nature? A life diverse and manifold and utterly immeasurable.²⁹⁰

Returning to the steps of the ascent into the power of memory, its recollection begins with and through physical bodies, which further deepens and emphasizes the mutual dependence of not only the human-physical relation, but also the divine-physical relation in consequence of the assimilation of knower and known at the beginning of Book X. In this way, the outside power of soul working inwardly, drawing desire beyond understanding towards itself, both from within and towards itself from above, moves, expands, and infinitizes the divine-human mutuality through the internalization and recollection of the physical in memory. In another way, the move of desire, or the role of memory, infinitizes the physical as the fundamental point of convergence for the divine-human mutuality and the delineation of memory's infinite nature. In this way, the physical is the medium for the infinite power which the human and the divine share both between them and above the human.

Following the human's ascent into memory towards God, the comparative mode of discovery and expansion begins with an encounter with the internalized and endless images of physical bodies: "I come to the fields and vast palaces of memory, where are the treasuries of innumerable images (*innumerabilium imaginum*) of all kinds of things brought in by the senses (*sensis*)."²⁹¹ The character of the physical in memory is that is

²⁹⁰ *Confessiones*, 10.17.26: "magna vis est memoriae, nescio quid horrendum, deus meus, profunda et infinita multiplicitas. et hoc animus est, et hoc ego ipse sum. quid ergo sum, deus meus? quae natura sum? varia, multimoda vita et immensa vehementer."

²⁹¹ *Confessiones*, 10.8.12: "transibo ergo et istam naturae meae, gradibus ascendens ad eum qui fecit me, et venio in campos et lata praetoria memoriae, ubi sunt thesauri innumerabilium imaginum de cuiusmodi rebus sensis invectarum."

given and received as a physical image formed from bodies through the perception of the physical senses. The physical bodies themselves do not enter into the memory.

Every one of them [perceptions of physical bodies] enters into memory, each by its own gate, and is put on deposit there. The [bodies] themselves do not enter (*nec ipsa tamen intrant*), but the images of the perceived [bodies] (*sed rerum sensarum imagines*) are available to the thought recalling them.²⁹²

Relative to the discovery and realization of mind's hierarchical structure of sensation, reason, and intellect in the second Platonic ascent, the physical body is first perceived in time and space, then internalized, raised, and returned with mutable reason to God. These images of physical bodies are recalled and seen inwardly, in which their physical structures are recalled in and by the infinity of memory.

“I could see inwardly in my memory (*intus in memoria mea viderem*) with dimensions just as great as if I were actually looking at them outside my mind (*foris viderem*). Yet when I was seeing them, I was not absorbing them in the act of seeing with my eyes. Nor are the actual objects present to me (*nec ipsa sunt*), but only their images (*sed imagines eorum*). And I know by which bodily sense a thing became imprinted on my mind.²⁹³

In comparison to these images of physical bodies, the human moves beyond the internalized physical to compare and discover the eternal and incorporeal *superiora* hidden in memory. The *superiora* are not bodies that are known with bodily senses, but are the innate ideas of mind which share the inward and superior reality of Truth. “I carry not the images but the very things themselves” (*nec eorum imagines, sed res ipsas gero*); I hid in my memory not their images but the realities (*non imagines earum, sed ipsas*).²⁹⁴ In this way, comparison expands the human infinity with the difference of the corporeal and incorporeal in memory, equally holding both the infinitized physical and the eternal reasons themselves.

Importantly, the fundamental key of intelligence returns and requires that the human rises in virtue of its prior recognition and power of the incorporeal *superiora* within. For, by the divine-human mutuality and its inward and upward push of desire, the human is illumined and empowered to recall these realities by comparing the internal

²⁹² *Confessiones*, 10.8.13.

²⁹³ *Confessiones*, 10.8.15.

²⁹⁴ *Confessiones*, 10.9.16; 10.10.17.

superiora with the ever abiding presence of Truth within and above the human. The *superiora* are first known in comparison to the physical, and their certainty is now recognized relative to Truth.

[W]ithin myself I recognized them and assented to their truth (*in meo recognovi et vera esse approbavi*) . . . Therefore, in what place or in what way, when they were spoken, did I recognize them and say “it is thus, it is true,” unless they were already in the memory? (*iam erant in memoria*)²⁹⁵

Rising further, above the *superiora* of memory, interior desire pursues God within and by the human’s infinite and profound depth. God above the memory is both the solution and problem of the search. Beginning under a spatial notion of memory (*loca*), desire inwardly seeks God inside memory, for “if I find You outside my memory, I am not mindful of You. And how shall I find You if I am not mindful of You?”²⁹⁶ Desire, here, depends upon God being recognizable within the confines of memory: “Unless I had it in my memory . . . I would not have found it because I would not have recognized it.”²⁹⁷ Seeking what is above from within on the inside of memory, the quest for God intensifies having passed through and over the physical and incorporeal contents of memory.

Significantly, the intensification of desire to have its end beyond itself takes on new and universal language about God. The search for God in the memory becomes the common and essential search for the happy life: “In what way, therefore, do I seek You, Lord? When I seek You, my God, I seek the happy life (*vitam beatam quaero*).”²⁹⁸ This change of the quest undergoes further distinction relative to the physical and the *superiora*. The happy life is not physical because it is not a body (*quia non est corpus*),²⁹⁹ nor does it correspond to an image in our memory. Rather, like the *superiora*, “we already have the happy life in our knowing (*habet in notitia*).”³⁰⁰ However, unlike the *superiora*, “we still wish to acquire it so that we may be happy (*tamen adhuc adipisci*

²⁹⁵ *Confessiones*, 10.10.17.

²⁹⁶ *Confessiones*, 10.17.26.

²⁹⁷ *Confessiones*, 10.18.27.

²⁹⁸ *Confessiones*, 10.20.29.

²⁹⁹ *Confessiones*, 10.21.30.

³⁰⁰ *Confessiones*, 10.21.30.

eam volumus, ut beati simus).³⁰¹ There must be a basis of inward knowledge of the happy life (*ex interiore notitia*),³⁰² or we would not desire it. We must already have certain knowledge of it (*certa notitia*), for all things are grounded in and with the single and ubiquitous desire for happiness (*beati prorsus omnes esse volumus*).³⁰³ For the sake of the creature, then, the happy life must already be present to it, though still desired to be possessed.

The quest and its terms continue to change, or, rather, how desire relates to its end beyond itself changes, so that with the happy life, desire now seeks “to rejoice unto You, from You, and on account of You (*gaudere ad te, de te, propter te*).”³⁰⁴ From the universal condition and dependence of happiness, the quest now expands to include the joy of truth: “The happy life is joy from truth. This is joy from You, O God, who are the Truth (*gaudium de te, qui veritas es, deus*).”³⁰⁵ This change of relation grants a further change of language, becoming more and more universal and philosophical in tandem with the human’s new relations to its knowledge of God as happiness, joy, and Truth. In this way, the human’s relation to God as Truth situates the human’s end of desire in memory, for “where I discovered the Truth, there I found my God, Truth itself, which from the time I learnt it, I have not forgotten.”³⁰⁶ Such recalls the preliminary and fiery conversion to universal wisdom through the *Hortensius* in Book III. At this point of the ascent, the return to God is internalized by situating God in the memory (*manes in memoria mea*) and not outside it (*non te inveni extra eam*).³⁰⁷

Crucially, the interior desire for God in the memory does not collapse God into the infinity of the human, but nevertheless seeks God beyond memory in virtue of God above it. By pursuing the philosophical search for happiness, joy, and Truth in the memory to find the *locus* of God, the human arrives at the insufficiency of memory to contain Him: “Where in my memory, Lord, do You remain, in what place to You remain?”³⁰⁸ Returning to the Truth to which Augustine was converted in Book VII, this

³⁰¹ *Confessiones*, 10.21.30.

³⁰² *Confessiones*, 10.21.30.

³⁰³ *Confessiones*, 10.21.31.

³⁰⁴ *Confessiones*, 10.22.32.

³⁰⁵ *Confessiones*, 10.23.33.

³⁰⁶ *Confessiones*, 10.24.35.

³⁰⁷ *Confessiones*, 10.24.35.

³⁰⁸ *Confessiones*, 10.25.36.

notion of spatial and discrete places of memory is overturned by recalling the unchanging nature of God above all things. By seeking a place for God in memory, God transcends memory entirely and transforms the divine-human mutuality.

But You remain immutable above all (*incommutabilis manes super omnia*), and yet have deigned to dwell in my memory since the time I learnt about You. Why do I ask in which place You dwell, as if there really are places there? (*quasi vero loca ibi sint*)³⁰⁹

Emphatically, ascending to God “in the memory” and recalling His transcendence under the comparison and impulse of Truth, memory as a spatial concept is transformed, revealing that there is “no place” between God and the human. The human and its knowing changes relative to God discovered above the memory on account of God’s superiority above and immanence in all things.

Where then did I find You so that I could learn of You, if not in You above me (*nisi in te supra me*)? There is no place (*nusquam locus*), whether we withdraw or draw near; there is no place (*nusquam locus*). O Truth, everywhere You preside over all.³¹⁰

In this way, the divine-human assimilation of the finite moving towards and with the infinite, draws desire inwardly and upwardly through and beyond the internalized physical and innate content of memory to its end, increasingly becoming universal with philosophical language as it pursues God from within. Once desire arrives at God by a spatial notion of memory’s infinity in which they meet, there is a reversal, preservation, and greater assimilation of the human and God through the transformation of memory as a place into that in which the human and God are nearly identical, so that the human is both ever in contact with God’s transcendence and always unlike, contained, and changed by it.

³⁰⁹ *Confessiones*, 10.25.36.

³¹⁰ *Confessiones*, 10.26.37: “ubi ergo te inveni ut discerem te, nisi in te supra me? et nusquam locus, et recedimus et accedimus, et nusquam locus. veritas, ubique praesides.”

Chapter 5.3. The life of virtue and temptation: mortification

Significantly, following the fourth Platonic ascent to God and Truth above and constitutive of memory, the descent of the human is the differentiation of human sin and virtue which correlate relative to the temporal and bodily life of the human: “I am needy and poor (*egenus et pauper ego sum*).”³¹¹ By this new relation of the human to its own senses, knowing, self, and God, there is a new self-relation of the human which inwardly perceives and recognizes its perpetual need for purification relative to its tendency towards temptation and spiritual poverty (*temptatio*) under the divine standard of judgement. These new relations and awareness of sin and virtue work out through the human’s relation to physical bodies at their level of knowing, certainty, and being. This is emphasized through Augustine’s rigorous and extensive examination of temptations relative to the five bodily senses, *curiositas*, and *superbia* of rational creatures.

By these examinations, in which transformed desire pursues its new end, there is a descent to the physical through its ascent to God above the memory. For it is in bodily relations that the human more or less adheres to the Truth. On account of the mixture of being in Book VII, the human does not perfectly have the virtue, or power, of continence given in Book VIII, for “by continence we are collected together and brought back to the One by [or from] which we flowed into multiplicity (*conligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus*).”³¹² A new differentiation and unification is required and effected by Truth as the pursuit of virtue and recognition of sin through bodily exertion, abstinence, penitence, and humiliation. For there is now a necessity to restrain and purify the body from temporal life, so that it can achieve as close a union with God in its mortal state. In this way, the assimilation of the human and God through memory unites ontological and moral characters, so that adherence to God as source and cause is through the proper care and moderate restraint of the body.

³¹¹ *Confessiones*, 10.38.63.

³¹² *Confessiones*, 10.29.40.

Chapter 6. Confessing the *superiora* of Scripture

Through Book X, the human turned inward to its infinite capacity for, and the realization of, temporal bodies and eternal realities is now led to understand them in comparison to the *superiora* of scripture in Book XI: “For a long time past I have been burning (*inardesco*) to meditate in Your law and confess to You (*tibi confiteri*);”³¹³ “Grant what I love: for I do love, and that love was Your gift . . . Let me confess to You what I find in Your books (*confitear tibi quidquid invenero in libris tuis*).”³¹⁴ The given love of the human and the command of God which He must fulfill in the human recalls the principle of Love in Book II, by which desire is given, moves, and is drawn to return to God: “Already I have said, and I do say, that by love of Your love I do this (*iam dixi et dicam, amore amoris tui facio istuc*).”³¹⁵ God’s prior Love, here, is reemphasized as the basis for the human’s movement and confession: “Behold, I have recounted to You many things (*multa*) which I can and desire [to recount], since You first willed (*quoniam tu prior voluisti*), so that I confess to You (*ut confiterer tibi*).”³¹⁶ In this way, desire moves beyond the *interiora* to seek and confess the *superiora* revealed in the words of scripture.

In tandem with memory’s infinite capacity, it is by God’s prior will that the human desires to confess the *superiora*, but incompletely in time according to the human’s mixture of being. For even though the human realizes its infinity and the *superiora* from within, when (*quando*) and in what way can the human satisfy its own nature to confess God’s eternal and prior movement in the human’s moving towards Him in time?³¹⁷ When and how would this total confession have a complete and ordered account in the dividing and successive intervals of time? “Even if I am sufficient to narrate this in an ordered way (*enuntiare ex ordine*), the drops of time are yet too precious to me.”³¹⁸ In this way, confession pushes beyond the biography of the human and is made infinite on account of the divine standard.

This need for confession is met from outside it through the physical scriptures, whose form and interpretation derive from the *superiora* they reveal. By meditation of

³¹³ *Confessiones*, 11.2.2.

³¹⁴ *Confessiones*, 11.2.3.

³¹⁵ *Confessiones*, 11.1.1; 2.1.1.

³¹⁶ *Confessiones*, 11.1.1.

³¹⁷ *Confessiones*, 11.2.2.

³¹⁸ *Confessiones*, 11.2.2.

the *superiora* in scripture, confession expands to include both its knowledge and ignorance. For, inwardly, the *superiora* are known most certainly and intimately, yet from above they remain beyond human comprehension. In this way, what is known and not known are at the same time encountered and confessed relative to the *superiora* of scripture, enabling the human to confess outwardly and inwardly through its knowing and unknowing.

For a long time past I have been burning (*inardesco*) to meditate in Your law and confess to You (*tibi confiteri*) my knowledge and ignorance, the beginning of Your illumination and the remains of my darkness.³¹⁹

The image of hiddenness, darkness, and the deer ruminating in the forest demonstrates the mode of ignorance which allows the human to confess the *superiora* which remain eternal and above human understanding. Reading scripture is an irrational activity for the human to exert itself in seeking to understand it spiritually, so that it rests in the stability Truth by confessing the eternal life which it partakes in yet never completely comprehends.

Do not close the gate as we knock. It is not for nothing that by Your will so many pages of scripture are opaque and obscure. These forests are not without deer which recover their strength in them and restore themselves by walking and feeding, by resting and ruminating.³²⁰

Chapter 6.1. Comparing temporal and divine speech

With and by the power of inward and superior Truth, confession of the *superiora* draws Augustine to their source in the Word by their bodily expressions in *Genesis* through Moses.

In [the Word] are hidden (*absconditi*) all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I seek for these very things in Your books (*in libris tuis*). Moses wrote of [the Word]. [Moses] himself says this, Truth says this.” (*hoc ipse ait, hoc veritas ait*).³²¹

³¹⁹ *Confessiones*, 11.2.2: “olim inardesco meditari in lege tua, et in ea tibi confiteri scientiam et inperitiam meam, primordia inluminacionis tuae et reliquias tenebrarum mearum.”

³²⁰ *Confessiones*, 11.2.3: “neque adversus pulsantes claudas eam. neque enim frustra scribi voluisti tot paginarum opaca secreta, aut non habent illae silvae cervos suos, recipientes se in eas et resumentes, ambulantes et pascentes, recumbentes et ruminantes.”

³²¹ *Confessiones*, 11.2.4.

By seeking the *superiora* through Moses, the expansion and realization of the human's interior life of memory is the means of understanding the *superiora* in its bodily form. For Moses, like Augustine, participates in the physical processes of genesis, having a beginning and end: "Moses wrote this. He wrote this and went his way (*scripsit et abiit*), passing over from this place, from You to You. He is not now before me."³²² However, even if Moses were bodily present to Augustine and Augustine perceived and internalized the words which he spoke, these temporal words that begin and end would not themselves communicate the *superiora* above them. For, as uncovered in Book X, it is by the comparison of changeable and outward physical bodies to the inward presence of Truth that the human recognizes the *superiora* that are recalled within the human itself.

From what place would I know whether he [Moses] was speaking the truth? If I even did know this, did I know it from him? Within me (*intus*), certainly, within the lodging of my thinking (*intus*), there is a Truth which is neither Hebrew nor Greek nor Latin nor any barbarian tongue, and which uses neither mouth nor tongue as instruments and utters no audible syllables. It would say: 'He speaks truth'. And I being immediately certain would say with confidence to that one, Your man [Moses], 'you speak the truth.'³²³

By this comparative mode of interior Truth that transcends all language, time, and space, the eternal *superiora* are understood and confessed in time relative to the same superior Truth in which, and by which, they are revealed. For by the comparison of the *superiora*, communicated both through human speech and through the physical scriptures, to the inward Truth, the human recognizes and realizes the *superiora* of scripture from within. Consequently, and necessarily, the human's own incomprehensible interiority is the basis of comparisons and judgements of these eternal realities. The need for confession is granted, then, by the same Truth that is beyond and within the human, being the same source of the Word, to which and by which all humans listen within: "since I cannot question [Moses], I ask You, Truth, who filled him when he declared what is true."³²⁴

³²² *Confessiones*, 11.3.5.

³²³ *Confessiones*, 11.3.5: "sed unde scirem an verum diceret? quod si et hoc scirem, num ab illo scirem? intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis, nec hebraea nec graeca nec latina nec barbara, veritas sine oris et linguae organis, sine strepitu syllabarum diceret, 'verum dicit', et ego statim certus confidenter illi homini tuo dicerem, 'verum dicis'."

³²⁴ *Confessiones*, 11.3.5.

On account of God's prior will, then, confession and understanding are mutual, so that the human speaks and hears what is known inwardly through comparisons of the physical and eternal, by which it is granted inward understanding beyond itself of what it cannot properly comprehend. In this way, Moses speaks and communicates the *superiora* hidden in the Word through the literal words of *Genesis*, and the confessing human is raised towards its understanding by, and with, the *superiora* under forms of knowing and unknowing appropriate to their inward and superior realities: "You have granted to Your servant to utter these things. Grant also to me the power to understand them."³²⁵

However, it is also by this mode of comparison that confession of the *superiora* intensifies the increasingly insurmountable difference between God's eternity above and within the temporal creation, relative to which confession must satisfy. Compared to God, the mutable and dependent nature of the temporal is in virtue of its lack or insufficiency appropriate to physical and composite bodies.

You are beautiful, for they [physical bodies] are beautiful. You are good, for they are good. You are, for they are. Yet they are not beautiful or good or have being in the sense that You their Maker are. In comparison with You (*comparato*) they are not beauty and goodness and being.³²⁶

In this way, confession differentiates time from eternity and the forms of communication proper to them. Creation itself derives entirely from and within the divine speech of God's total communication of Himself to Himself: "Therefore You spoke (*dixisti*) and they were made, and in Your Word You made them."³²⁷ In this way, the divine speech is not temporal, nor successive, yet contains these. The comparison between the transient and inferior physical words to the divine speech yields a difference which leads the human beyond the literal meaning of the words towards understanding them.

And these Your words [physical words], made for temporal succession, were reported by the external ear to the judicious mind whose internal ear is disposed to hear Your Eternal Word. But that mind would compare these words (*comparavit*), sounding in time, with Your Eternal Word in silence, and say: 'It is at length different, at length it is different' (*aliud est longe, longe aliud est*). The sounds are far below me (*infra me*), and have no being, because they are fleeting and

³²⁵ *Confessiones*, 11.3.5.

³²⁶ *Confessiones*, 11.4.6.

³²⁷ *Confessiones*, 11.5.7.

transient. But the Word of my God is above me (*supra me*) and remains in eternity (*manet in aeternum*).³²⁸

Desire, then, on account of the need for confession, must rise to understand the Word (*ad intellegendum*), which is “spoken eternally, and by it all things are uttered eternally (*quod sempiternae dicitur et eo sempiternae dicuntur omnia*).”³²⁹ The need for adequate confession from the finite of the infinite amplifies the human’s need and futility to be completely gathered into the simultaneity of eternity.

Importantly, this conclusion of the Word spoken in the simultaneity of eternity is repeated on the basis of certain truths (*certae veritati*) of the natural processes of physical creation. Humans know that the physical is a succession with an end: “We know this, Lord, we know (*novimus, domine, novimus*). A thing dies and comes into being inasmuch as it is not what it was and becomes what it was not.” By comparison of the temporal and the eternal with Truth, Augustine knows the eternal operation of the Word relative to successive moments of time:

No element of Your Word yields place or succeeds to something else, since it is truly immortal and eternal. And so by the Word coeternal with Yourself, You say all that You say, and whatever You say will be made, is made. You do not cause it to exist other than by speaking (*nec aliter quam dicendo facis*).³³⁰

Rising towards simultaneity through inward comparisons between the lower temporal creation and its superior source in God’s eternity, confession moves from knowing the Word’s simultaneity to knowing it as the eternal reason of God, in which it is known that things ought to begin and end (*in aeterna ratione cognoscitur*).³³¹ This is also the Beginning (*principio*) of the divine speech in *Genesis*, “for He speaks to us (*quia et loquitur nobis*).”³³²

In this way, the divine-human mutuality is mediated through the outward speech (*foris*) of the Word and understood inwardly (*intus*).³³³ This inward turn is towards stable Truth (*stabilis veritas*),³³⁴ which is recalled in the human by its reflexive thought, that is,

³²⁸ *Confessiones*, 11.6.8.

³²⁹ *Confessiones*, 11.7.9.

³³⁰ *Confessiones*, 11.7.9.

³³¹ *Confessiones*, 11.8.10.

³³² *Confessiones*, 11.8.10.

³³³ *Confessiones*, 11.8.10.

³³⁴ *Confessiones*, 11.8.10.

by a self-concentration of comparative listening, or speaking, to what is outward and temporal relative to the inward and unchanging Truth. At the same time, the human's return to its hidden end in the Beginning of creation (*reddentes nos unde sumus*) is the differentiation of the Word in, and by, confession through the Word's eternal expression in and through the human.

Here, the need to understand the Word intensifies through the increasing precision and failure of human language to confess the relation between time and eternity. Between the human divided and gathered in time within the eternal speech, the question persists as to how the human is able to rise above time to give an account of the Word in *Genesis*. Relative to the *Hexaemeron* tradition, the task is to confess a true and intellectual account of nature and its incorporeal source.

In this Beginning, God, You made heaven and earth, in Your Word, in Your Son, in Your power, in Your wisdom, in Your Truth speaking in a wonderful way and making in a wonderful way. Who can comprehend it? Who will give an account of it in words?³³⁵

Chapter 6.2. The assimilation of time and the mind

This crucial impasse in Augustine's search to understand the Word is the incomparable nature of time and eternity at this stage of the search.

Who can lay hold on the heart and give it fixity, so that for some little moment it may be stable, and for a fraction of time may grasp the splendour of a constant eternity? Then it may compare (*comparat*) eternity with temporal successiveness which never has any constancy, and will see that there is no comparison possible (*incomparabilem*). It will see that a long time is long only because it is constituted of many successive movements which cannot be simultaneously extended. In the eternal, nothing is transient, but the whole is present. But no time is wholly present.³³⁶

This incomparable difference between successions of passing present moments and an eternal present moves confession to seek the nature of time itself.³³⁷ For eternity as a whole above time cannot be understood by comparisons to the divisions of time from the

³³⁵ *Confessiones*, 11.9.11.

³³⁶ *Confessiones*, 11.11.13. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 228.

³³⁷ See Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 152-161, and Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), 29-32 for historical accounts of Augustine's discussion of time in Book XI.

perspective of divided time alone, since what time is begins with creation, “for You have made time itself” (*idipsum enim tempus tu feceras*). Confession of eternity, then, begins at, and relative to, the unlike character of time and physical bodies.

This new search to understand the nature of time has its basis in the human’s knowing relative to the natural processes of temporal bodies. Augustine writes, “I confidently affirm myself to know (*scire me*) that if nothing passes away, there is no past time, and if nothing arrives, there is no future time, and if nothing existed there would be no present time.”³³⁸ Here, the three tenses of time relative to the nature of genesis already appear inadequate, for according to the nature of the past it no longer exists, and for the future it does not yet exist, and for the present it either does not exist or is constant like eternity. Under this form of time known from the laws of physical bodies, time can only exist insofar as it has a beginning and tends to non-being (*tempus esse, nisi quia tendit non esse*).³³⁹ Crucially, by means of the human’s natural capacity and bodily perception, confession nevertheless pursues its end to understand time itself through bodies, for at every impasse of the argument, Augustine stresses that, nevertheless (*tamen*), the human compares times and its different forms: “for it is given to you [the human soul] (*datum enim tibi*) to perceive and measure intervals; . . . Nevertheless, we do measure times (*metimur tamen tempora*).”³⁴⁰

The character of confession, here, proceeds to contract time as a bodily extension outside the human to an indivisible moment. First, time is comparable in its duration as long or short: “Nevertheless (*tamen*), we say that time is long and time is short.”³⁴¹ However, since the past does not exist and the future does not yet exist, that is, since the past and future do not exist as an extension to measure, the immediate present is examined whether it has duration. By examining the present, mind contracts its extension (*spatium contractum est*) from a hundred years, to hardly a single day.³⁴² The present is further contracted to an indivisible point which lacks duration and has no space (*praesens*

³³⁸ *Confessiones*, 11.14.17.

³³⁹ *Confessiones*, 11.14.17.

³⁴⁰ *Confessiones*, 11.15.19; 11.27.34.

³⁴¹ *Confessiones*, 11.15.18.

³⁴² *Confessiones*, 11.15.20.

autem nullum habet spatium).³⁴³ This form of time extracted and contracted from physical bodies lacks any physical extension and is everywhere, though non-existent.

Here, Augustine returns to the natural capacity of the human to measure time by its consciousness of temporal intervals (*et tamen . . . sentimus intervalla temporum*). By comparing these intervals with each other (*comparamus sibimet*), Augustine distinguishes some that are longer, and others that are shorter.³⁴⁴ Nevertheless, there remains a basis to measure durations within human knowing. In this way, Augustine reasserts that both future and past times do not have independent physical extension, and so must exist as forms of the contracted present. In this way, the human remembers the past and predicts the future as forms of the present in and by the power of memory, since the present and its forms are recalled relative, not to the physical things themselves it remembers or predicts (*non res ipsae*), but to the “words conceived from images of them” (*verba concepta ex imaginibus earum*) known through physical bodies.³⁴⁵ From this, mind assimilates the present to the internalized physical in human knowing as the means and basis of comparing times.

However, this conclusion that the future is a form of the present is overturned through an examination of prediction. In the process of predicting future events, present time unifies both the physical body that is perceived and its image in the memory. So that when the sun’s rising is predicted prior to its rise, the physical sunrise, which will occur, and its image in the memory are already known together in the present: “the dawn glow which I see in the sky is not the sunrise, which it precedes, nor is the imagining of sunrise in my mind the actuality. These are both discerned as present (*duo praesentia cernuntur*) so that the coming sunrise may be foretold.”³⁴⁶ Deriving from this, the physical and its image is within the present, such that the prediction of future events is made on the basis of the present, with the result that the future as a form of the present actually does not exist nor can be predicted apart from the present itself.

At this point, the character of time changes. The preliminary notions of past, present, and future extensions, of the contracted present, and of the past and future as

³⁴³ *Confessiones*, 11.15.20.

³⁴⁴ *Confessiones*, 11.16.21.

³⁴⁵ *Confessiones*, 11.18.23.

³⁴⁶ *Confessiones*, 11.18.24. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 234-235.

forms of the present, are all insufficient to confess the true nature of time. Rather, returning to the contracted present, this instantaneous and non-existing point is expanded and tripled to “a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come.”³⁴⁷ There is a trinity of presents which share the same one present. This threefold present contracted from the physical is discovered in, assimilated to, and expanded in the mind itself (*in anima*), whose knowing is mutually tripled and correlates to this new interior form of trinitarian time: “The present considering the past is the memory (*memoria*), the present considering the present is immediate awareness (*contuitus*), the present considering the future is expectation (*expectatio*).”³⁴⁸ Deriving from, and relative to, the physical, the dialectic between time as a physical extension and between incorporeal mind seeking the nature time discovers and forms time’s outward trinitarian structure of the present, whose own internalization and assimilation to, and by, mind realizes the rational and correlative structures of mind’s trinitarian form of knowing relative to this new interior time.

However, the problem of time and its outward duration persists, since humans nevertheless (*tamen*) still measure time over some duration of space.³⁴⁹ From where and how time moves through these presents remains a problem, and the question becomes, what is the extension by which time is measured? Augustine returns to this problem relative to physical bodies. Stripping time of its relation to physical bodies, the measurement of time is not contingent upon the movements and rotations of physical bodies.

If the heavenly bodies were to cease and a potter’s wheel were revolving, would there be no time by which we could measure its gyrations, and say that its revolutions were equal; Or if at one time it moved more slowly and at another time faster, that some rotations took longer, others less?³⁵⁰

In the comparisons of the independent nature of time to the physical bodies themselves and their motions, it is evident that time is not measured by the physical: “Let no one tell

³⁴⁷ *Confessiones*, 11.20.26.

³⁴⁸ *Confessiones*, 11.20.26.

³⁴⁹ *Confessiones*, 11.21.27.

³⁵⁰ *Confessiones*, 11.23.29. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 237.

me that time is the movements of heavenly bodies.”³⁵¹ Rather, it is bodies which move in time (*in tempore*).³⁵² In this way, the assimilation of time into the mind draws with it the physical bodies which properly move in time, so that the examination of time in Book XI is a deepening and expanding of the human-physical mutuality of Book V, which internalizes and rises with the physical in human knowing towards God in Book VII.

However, “nevertheless,” the human does measure time as the duration of bodies, and to measure time itself still remains a question: “I could not measure the movement of a body, its period of transit and how long it takes to go from A to B, unless I were measuring the time in which this movement occurs. How then do I measure time itself?”³⁵³

This search for measuring time itself through the motion of bodies is transformed by discovering a new relation to time as the “distension of mind itself (*distentionem . . . ipsius animi*).”³⁵⁴ That is, mind itself is the basis of time and of its measurement. In this way, mind does not measure time as it passes from future to present to past,³⁵⁵ but is itself the reflexive measuring of its own expanded and tripled cognitive state. Mind does not measure intervals marked by physical bodies, but by itself relative to the physical: “In You, my mind, I measure periods of time (*in te, anime meus, tempora metior*).”³⁵⁶

In sum, the overall character of time, through, and on account of, the need of confessing the *superiora* of scripture in the eternal Word, is one of contraction from physical durations of past, present, and future, to a universal and non-existing point in the present. This contracted point is internalized by the human’s infinite capacity, whose own internalization is a tripled expansion of both the universal present and mind itself. Time and its measurement is raised above physical bodies and their motions, by which the physical is drawn into time itself within the mind.

Herein is another form of return for the physical and rational trinities in and with one another through the inward rise and expansion of time and human knowing. Through

³⁵¹ *Confessiones*, 11.23.30.

³⁵² *Confessiones*, 11.24.31.

³⁵³ *Confessiones*, 11.26.33. Translation by Chadwick, *Confessions*, 239.

³⁵⁴ *Confessiones*, 11.26.33.

³⁵⁵ *Confessiones*, 11.27.34.

³⁵⁶ *Confessiones*, 11.27.36.

bodies, time is internalized and infinitized within human knowing. Through human knowing, the physical is drawn inwardly to participate in differentiated forms of knowing and incorporeal time as memory, immediate awareness, and expectation (*memoria, contuitus, expectatio*).³⁵⁷

By assimilating time and the physical to human knowing, the human's relation to time has been transformed so that it can seek to confess and understand the eternal Word under its infinite capacity of temporal expansion. According to the nature of human knowing and intellect, the human and temporal bodies are capable of ascending together above the creation to seek the *superiora* of *Genesis* in the eternal present of the *Principio* by the infinite distension of mind. In this way, Book XI is the crucial ascent from and with the physical towards the eternal moment of creation and its differentiation as the objective cosmos in Books XII and the spiritual cosmos of XIII.

Chapter 6.3. The gathering of thought: *cogito* and *conligo/colligo*

Having been expanded and made correlative to and with time, the gathering of human knowing is capable of rising towards eternity above time. This "gathering" is a fundamental move of the divine-human mutuality. Knowing (*cogito*) and its gathering (*conligo/colligo*) are one and the same by mind's own gathering of, and being gathered by, the formal realities of the *superiora* within and above the human infinity in Book X. It is relative to the *superiora* themselves that knowing, or thinking, becomes more and more the human's realization of its own profound depth, uncovering in a step-by-step ascent its very self as an expanding and infinite relation which contains, but does not completely comprehend the *superiora*.

In this context, thought is the human's inward recollection of the realities themselves through themselves (*per se ipsa*) from within, which are, crucially, at the same time the human's own power for recollection of its superior source and cause. By thinking (*cogitando*), the memory orders and is ordered by the *superiora*. Thinking, then, is a process of formation in which thought gathers the formal realities already present in the human, so that human thought is simultaneously gathering itself by being gathered into, and by, the *superiora* it recalls from within. Relative to the human, thought and

³⁵⁷ *Confessiones*, 11.20.26.

being develop in degrees according to the human's familiarity with, and so its grade of formality by, the *superiora* in the memory. Augustine draws this relation through the very word *cogito* itself, demonstrating how thought is a bringing together (*cogo*) and a gathering (*colligo/conligo*) of these innate principles.

By thinking (*cogitando*), as it were, to gather together (*conligere*) [the things themselves], and by directing the mind to care for them (*animadvertendo*), they easily come forward with the mental exertion (*intentioni*) more familiar with them, as if ready at hand stored in the memory itself where previously they lay hidden, scattered, and neglected.³⁵⁸

Importantly, this is both a unifying and differentiating movement through its conformity to the *superiora* within and above. Moving through, and with, the unity and division of thought, human knowing is a continuous and repetitive process of recalling the same principles present to and above it. The temporal character of human thought demonstrates its rise and fall relative to the *superiora*. The emphasis of thought falls on *rursus*, *velut*, and *iterum*, words which pertain both to the repetitive and continual recollection of the *superiora* and to the human's insufficiency to remember them perfectly and simultaneously. In time, the human must make continuous recollection, or confession, of the *superiora*.

Yet, if for quite short periods of time I cease to recollect them, then again (*rursus*) they sink below the surface (*demerguntur*) and slip away (*dilabuntur*) into remote recesses, so that they have to be thought out again as if they were quite new (*denuo velut nova excogitanda*), drawn again (*iterum*) from the same source (for there is nowhere else for them to go). Once again (*rursus*) they have to be brought together (*cogenda*) so as to be capable of being known (*sciri possint*); that means they have to be gathered (*colligenda*) from dispersion. Hence is derived the word *cogitate*.³⁵⁹

In this way, thinking and being are one, so that confession, knowing, or remembering, pertains to the nature of the divine-human mutuality and the dependence of the human upon, and by, the *superiora*.

³⁵⁸ *Confessiones*, 10.11.18: "cogitando quasi conligere atque animadvertendo curare, ut tamquam ad manum posita in ipsa memoria, ubi sparsa prius et neglecta latitabant, iam familiari intentioni facile occurrant."

³⁵⁹ *Confessiones*, 10.11.18: "quae si modestis temporum intervallis recolere desivero, ita rursus demerguntur et quasi in remotiora penetralia dilabuntur, ut denuo velut nova excogitanda sint invidem iterum (neque enim est alia regio eorum) et cogenda rursus, ut sciri possint, id est velut ex quadam dispersione conligenda, unde dictum est cogitare."

A result of “thinking” in Book X is the ascent through structures of knowing wherein comparisons relative to physical bodies are the basis to uncover and realize the *superiora* which transform the confessions in preparation for, and in consequent of, God’s eternity in Books XI-XIII. Likewise in Book XI, the gathering (*conligo/colligo*) of time into the mind is both the cause and result of Augustine’s searching the *superiora* concealed in the scriptures. By thinking of the relation between time and eternity, Augustine moves and is moved toward his own stability in the formal reality above time which belongs within and above him: “I shall be stable and solid in You, in my form, Your Truth (*et stabo atque solidabor in te, in forma mea, veritate tua*).”³⁶⁰ This process of thought gathers the human relative to time, such that, by thinking, time becomes the human’s own relation to thought as its differentiation and collection relative to eternity. This gathering raises the human towards the *superiora* above time as an ascent and a formation, both unifying the human towards its goal and differentiating and expanding it to discover the multiplicity of its own structure of thought. The character of thought here is that it enlarges and inwardly stretches towards its inherent goal before time (*ante*), gathering it from its projections and dispersions in temporal bodies (*in ea*).

Because Your mercy is above lives (*super*), behold, my life is a distension (*ecce distentio est vita mea*). Your right hand upheld me . . . that I might hold Him in whom I am also held. So that, following the One, I might be gathered (*conligar sequens unum*) . . . Not [gathered] into [temporal] things (*in ea*) about to happen and pass away, past things forgotten, but [gathered] in things which are before (*ante*) [time]. I follow . . . not distracted (*distentus*) but enlarged (*extentus*), not with a stretching-out in different directions (*secundum distentionem*) but with an inward exertion (*secundum intensionem*).³⁶¹

In this context, thought inwardly draws the human to rise and fall relative to temporal bodies and their processes, so that the human’s search for the *superiora* concealed in scripture is enabled by its developing and increasingly apt nature to gather itself above the literal words which Moses wrote to understand the *superiora* above them.

³⁶⁰ *Confessiones*, 11.30.40.

³⁶¹ *Confessiones*, 11.29.39: “sed quoniam melior est misericordia tua super vitas, ecce distentio est vita mea, et me suscepit dextera tua in domino meo . . . ut per eum apprehendam in quo et apprehensus sum . . . conligar sequens unum, praeterita oblitus, non in ea quae futura et transitura sunt, sed in ea quae ante sunt non distentus sed extentus, non secundum distentionem sed secundum intensionem sequor.”

By the mode of comparison (*comparavit*), the human knows and is known in the *superiora* through the physical words and example of Moses.³⁶² Relative to Book XII, Augustine seeks the *superiora* of *Genesis* to understand the meaning of time's order through the priority of form and matter indicated at the end of Book XI: "You are my eternal Father, but I am scattered in times whose order I do not understand (*ego in tempora dissilui quorum ordinem nescio*)."³⁶³

Chapter 6.4. Knocking upon Genesis: the nearly-nothing

Confessing the eternal *superiora* of scripture takes the form of "knocking upon" its physical words in order to penetrate, and be enabled by, the *superiora* they conceal. Emphatically, Book XII opens with the verb *pulsare* to characterize the mutuality of finite thinking being thought within, and by, the eternal *superiora*, for the human is knocked (*pulsatum*) by the words of scripture as the human works hard to knock upon them (*pulsans*).³⁶⁴ It is a reciprocal knocking of God and the human, in which the human's knocking is being knocked by and with its own power from outside it in God. The result is that the "poverty of human intelligence" (*egestas humanae intellegentiae*) produces more words (*plus loquitur*) than attaining what it seeks (*quam inventio*). The *superiora* remain beyond the circumference of the human infinity, yet by seeking them, by thinking them, they are multiplied and diversified through reason and speech in time.

Importantly, the basis of this knocking is the divine-human mutuality under the form of God's promise to the human. Reminiscent of Books I, X, and XIII, Augustine recalls the fundamental movement of the quest. What is sought is already given and present to the human. The search itself increasingly expands becoming more and more articulate, formed, and gathered in the *superiora* through the comparative process of the physical and the *superiora* it conceals.

'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock (*pulsate*) and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and seeking he will discover, and by knocking (*pulsanti*) it will be open'. These are Your promises (*promissa tua*

³⁶² *Confessiones*, 11.6.8.

³⁶³ *Confessiones*, 11.29.39.

³⁶⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.1.1. See Wayne J. Hankey, "Books XI & XII: How God made the Heaven and the Earth: Eternity & Time Knowledge and Ignorance," Seminar PowerPoint, Winter 2018, slides 15 and 20.

sunt), and who fears to be deceived since Truth makes these promises? (*cum promittit veritas*).³⁶⁵

In this way, reciprocal knocking is both the promise and means of confession. What is needed and granted thus far is the transformation and accumulation of philosophical language and reasons necessary to confess what the human properly knows of the eternal under forms of knowing and unknowing. Furthermore, “knocking” is linked to the essential move of desire in Books I and XIII within the divine-human mutuality, so that the human is aroused by the difference of scripture to knock upon, and understand, the Word in *Genesis*. A result and conclusion of this knocking in Book XII, towards which confession moves, is the discovery and realization of the a-temporal creation of unformed physical and spiritual matter: “By considering these things, as much as You give, my God, as much as You arouse me to knock (*me ad pulsandum excitas*), and as much as by knocking You open (*pulsanti aperis*), I find there are two things (*duo*) You have made without time, though neither is coeternal with You.”³⁶⁶

In the difference and arousal of desire, then, Augustine’s confession in BK XII begins by arriving at, dividing, and comparing the two creations of matter and the *superiora* in *Genesis* beginning with, and relative to, physical bodies and bodily senses. Rising from the inferior creation, the “low tongue” (*humilitas*) confesses the *superiora* beyond it (*altitudini*) through unlikeness relative to the lower creation of the physical earth and the heavenly bodies.³⁶⁷ By and with the body, the human sees the physical heaven (*video*) and treads the earth (*calco*), recognizing that its own physical body derives from this kind of creation (*unde est haec terra quam porto*).³⁶⁸ Augustine proceeds to compare the physical with the *superiora* concealed in the words of scripture, God’s ‘heaven of heaven’: “But where is the ‘heaven of heaven’, Lord, about which we have heard in the words of the psalm: ‘The heaven of heaven belongs to the Lord, but the earth he has given to the sons of men’?”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.1.1.

³⁶⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.12.15.

³⁶⁷ *Confessiones*, 12.2.2.

³⁶⁸ *Confessiones*, 12.2.2.

³⁶⁹ *Confessiones*, 12.2.2.

By this comparison of *locus* relative to bodily senses, creation doubles from the physical to uncover the supra-physical reality of the *superiora* which are akin to God's eternity: "Where is (*ubi est*) the heaven which we do not perceive (*non cernimus*), relative to which our heaven and earth are earth? . . . Each of these vast physicalities (*magnum corpus*) [heaven and earth] are not absurdly called 'earth' in relation to that 'heaven' of unknown quality (*nescio quale*)."³⁷⁰ Arriving at the "heaven of heaven" above the physical, the distance between knowledge and unknowability is more and more increased and distinct through the search for the 'heaven of heaven' in *Genesis*.

Confession of the *superiora* proceeds again through the physical by understanding the physical creation of *Genesis* under the "invisible and unorganized" earth in the Book of Wisdom (*invisibilis et incomposita*).³⁷¹ Through Moses, the human learns that the physical creation was "an unknowable deep abyss (*nescio qua profunditas abyssi*) over which (*super quam*) there was no light because it had no form (*nulla species*)."³⁷² Emphatically, the mutual knocking of Truth pushes and is pushed beyond the literal words of *Genesis* to seek what was before (*priusquam*) the unformed matter (*informem materiam*) of the physical earth. Repeating twice the phrase "Is it not You, Lord, who has taught me? (*nonne tu, domine, docuisti*)," Augustine asserts that the Truth presiding over all things teaches there is a creation before time. The result is the discovery of a formlessness before the formed physical creation, a kind of almost-nothingness.

Is it not You, Lord, who instructed (*nonne tu, domine, docuisti*) the soul which is making confession to You? Is it not You, Lord, who taught me (*nonne tu, domine, docuisti*) that before You formed and divided that 'unformed matter' there was nothing? . . . Yet it was not entirely nothing (*non tamen omnino nihil*). It was a kind of formlessness without any form (*erat quaedam informitas sine ulla specie*).³⁷²

Relative to the rational hierarchy of Book III, the character of this "not-entirely-nothing" is the unknowability it shares with its superior source and cause. For while encountering it produces the need for new philosophical language and conceptions which are different from familiar speech (*usitato aliquo vocabulo*),³⁷³ it cannot be known

³⁷⁰ *Confessiones*, 12.2.2.

³⁷¹ *Confessiones*, 12.3.3.

³⁷² *Confessiones*, 12.3.3.

³⁷³ *Confessiones*, 12.4.4.

physically or intellectually since it lacks any sensible or discernible form. Comparing the physical and the *superiora* alone demonstrates how even physical bodies possesses a greater degree of being, form, and knowability than the not-entirely-nothing: “On account of their lowly position (*pro suo gradu infimo*) they [physical bodies] are less beautiful (*minus enim speciosa*) than all the remaining *superiora* which are full of light and radiance (*superiora perlucida et luculenta omnia*).”³⁷⁴ Proper to unformed matter, then, is darkness, ignorance, and nearly non-being.

Why, therefore, may I not consider the formlessness of matter? . . . When thought seeks (*quaerit cogitatio*) in it what the senses may touch (*sensus attingat*), it says to itself, ‘it is no intelligible form . . . because it is the matter of bodies. Neither is it sensible, because what is seen and sensed in the invisible and formless does not exist.’ While human thought says these things to itself, it may attempt either to know it by being ignorant, or by knowing it to be ignorant (*nosse ignorando vel ignorare noscendo*).³⁷⁵

In this way, this formlessness remains unknowable, insofar as Truth declares it exists as formless matter.

If one could speak of ‘a nothing something’ (*nihil aliquid*) or ‘a being which is non-being’ (*est non est*), that is what I would say. Nevertheless (*tamen*) it must somehow have existence already (*iam utcumque erat*) in order to be capable to receive visible and ordered forms.³⁷⁶

Importantly, total confession (*si totum confitear tibi . . . totum tibi confiteatur*),³⁷⁷ then, expands to include the unknowability of both the “almost nothing” and the ‘heaven of heaven’, confessing the higher through and with the lower. First, by confession of the formlessness of matter under an imaginative understanding, Augustine recalls the physical formlessness he thought under the Manicheans. Both Augustine and the Manicheans did not understand (*non intellegens . . . non intellegent*) nor think matter (*non eam cogitabam*) except as a physical body, even once all form was stripped away: “I used to use the word formless not for that which lacked form but for that which had a

³⁷⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.4.4.

³⁷⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.4.4-12.5.5: “cur ergo non accipiam informitatem materiae . . . ut, cum in ea quaerit cogitatio quid sensus attingat et dicit sibi, ‘non est intellegibilis forma sicut vita, sicut iustitia, quia materies est corporum, neque sensibilis, quoniam quid videatur et quid sentiatur in invisibili et incomposita non est,’ dum sibi haec dicit humana cogitatio, conetur eam vel nosse ignorando vel ignorare noscendo?”

³⁷⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁷⁷ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

form.”³⁷⁸ It is a difference between the privation of form, and a something which exists as the privation of form. Nevertheless, even under Manichean corporeality, Augustine arrives at this physical formlessness through comparisons of bodies and their degrees of beauty (*comparatione*). There is a difference of beauty manifest through physical bodies, and crucially, true reason (*vera ratio*) offers a mode of detraction (*detraherem*) by which Augustine removes form from existing physical bodies in an attempt to discover a physical formlessness.

This [physical formless matter], which I thought, was not the privation of all form, but by comparison (*comparatione*) of more beautiful things it was unformed (*informe*). True reasons convinced me (*vera ratio*) that I should wholly subtract (*detraherem*) all remnants of every kind of form if I wished to think the absolutely formless (*prorsus informe*). I could not achieve this.³⁷⁹

The failure to imagine a complete physical formlessness is on account of the correspondence of thought and being, by which it is impossible for something to think or to be utterly nothing. What Augustine’s initial search for the formlessness of matter demonstrates is that Truth teaches there must be something prior to the physical creation that is knowable with a kind of ignorance, such that it cannot be completely nothing, nor can it be known through any form, and so it lies between (*inter*) the two.

I found it easier to suppose something deprived of all form to be non-existent (*non esse*) than to think something could stand between form and nothingness (*inter formam et nihil*), neither endowed with form nor nothing, but formless and so almost nothing (*informe prope nihil*).³⁸⁰

From the Manichean images of formed bodies (*plenum imaginibus formatorum corporum*), Augustine rises to confess the formlessness of matter relative to the mutability of physical bodies themselves (*ipsa corpora*).³⁸¹ This mutability of physical bodies is a certain truth (*certae veritati*) of the natural processes of becoming. This truth is iterated in Book XI, that the physical is a succession with a beginning and end: “We know this, Lord, we know (*novimus, domine, novimus*). A thing dies and comes into

³⁷⁸ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁷⁹ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁸⁰ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁸¹ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

being inasmuch as it is not what it was and becomes what it was not.”³⁸² So also in Book XII: “I concentrated my attention on the bodies themselves and gave a more critical examination to the mutability by which they cease to be what they were and begin to be what they were not.”³⁸³ Augustine’s examination of physical bodies relative to their form demonstrates that by thinking, gathering, or confessing the mutability of bodies alone uncovers a kind of knowing through ignorance of the nearly-nothing, on account of which the nature of genesis occurs, for “I suspected that this same transition [of becoming] occurred from form to form through the formless (*de forma in formam per informem*), but not through a complete nothingness (*non per omnino nihil*).”³⁸⁴

In tandem with this principle of form and its movement through the formless, Augustine confesses that “the mutability of changeable things is itself capable of all forms (*ipsa capax est formarum omnium*), in which mutable things are changed (*in quas mutantur res mutabiles*).”³⁸⁵ In this context, arrived at through bodily observation of physical bodies alone, the “almost nothing” is an unknowable deep abyss (*nescio qua profunditas abyssi*) in the sense that all physical bodies owe their beginning and end to the infinite capacity of formless matter to change and be formed by the *superiora*. The reason for this capacity is according to God’s own supreme nature, for,

there was nothing other than You out of which You could make them [the physical and spiritual creations] (*aliud praeter te non erat unde faceres ea*), God One in Three and Three in One (*una trinitas et trina unitas*). That is why You made heaven and earth out of nothing (*de nihilo*).³⁸⁶

The Selfsame begets in simple equality the Selfsame, thus creation is through another from nothing (*nihil*). This nothing is further characterized in Book XIII as God’s own unlikeness: “For in that place [God’s Wisdom] depended even embryonic and formless things, all of which in their own spiritual or physical category move to excess and to Your far removed unlikeness (*in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam*).”³⁸⁷ What develops, then, from the self-identity of God is a doubling both of God and of the

³⁸² *Confessiones*, 11.7.9.

³⁸³ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁸⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁸⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

³⁸⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.7.7.

³⁸⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2: “ut inde penderent etiam inchoata et informia quaeque in genere suo vel spiritali vel corporali, euntia in immoderationem et in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam.”

creations before time. Since the nature of *idipsum idipsum idipsum* is the perfect self-relation of equal and self-differentiating substance, there must also be a *nihil*, unlikeness, out of which identity creates something other than Itself. On this basis of God's triunity, Truth pushes the human to confess a *nihil*, God's own unlikeness, out of which emerges a doubled a-temporal creation (*duo quaedam*) that forms a hierarchy relative to God's *idipsum* and *nihil*, the 'heaven of heaven' being almost identical to identity (*prope te*), the other being entirely dissimilar and nearly nothing (*prope nihil*).³⁸⁸

The role of the nearly-nothing is thus fundamental to the genesis of physical bodies. This nearly-nothing made from God's unlikeness (*de nulla re paene nullam rem*) before the creation of time (*ante omnem diem*), the character of the nearly-nothing is its formlessness (*omnino informe erat*) and active receptivity to all forms (*formari poterat*).³⁸⁹ It is the ground for mutability, for "from this next-to-nothing (*de quo paene nihilo*), You made all these things by which this mutable world is stable and not stable (*constat et non constat*)."³⁹⁰ From mutability, the nearly-nothing is also, thus, the ground of time through the movement of form through the formless: "Its mutability is apparent, in which various times can be perceived and measured. For the changes of things make times (*fiunt tempora*) as their forms are varied and turned."³⁹¹ In this way, confession is a movement insofar as it is a mutable and temporal process of the human.

Having passed through the unlikeness and ignorance of formless matter, the initial confession of the 'heaven of heaven', or the *superiora*, at *Confessiones* 12.2.2 is recalled at 12.8.8: "The 'heaven of heaven' is Yours." By comparison with the dissimilar nature of unformed matter (*prope nihil*), the near identical character of the 'heaven of heaven' (*prope te*) is a "kind of intellectual creation" (*creatura est aliqua intellectualis*) which participates (*particeps*) in God's eternity without sharing in His equality.³⁹² It partakes in eternity by the purity of its whole affection (*toto affectu se tenet*) through pure

³⁸⁸ *Confessiones*, 12.7.7.

³⁸⁹ *Confessiones*, 12.8.8.

³⁹⁰ *Confessiones*, 12.8.8.

³⁹¹ *Confessiones*, 12.8.8: "in quo ipsa mutabilitas apparet, in qua sentiri et dinumerari possunt tempora, quia rerum mutationibus fiunt tempora dum variantur et vertuntur species."

³⁹² *Confessiones*, 12.9.9.

contemplation of God without defect (*sine ullo defectu*).³⁹³ Its knowing, or intelligence, is a matter of simultaneity (*ubi est intellectus nosse simul*), not in part, not in an enigma, not through a mirror, but complete (*ex toto*).³⁹⁴ This knowing is not of one thing at one moment and of another thing at another moment (*non modo hoc, modo illud*), but is simultaneous (*nosse simul*) without any temporal successiveness.³⁹⁵

Consequently, relative to the almost-nothing, mutable creatures cannot depend upon themselves for their own being, that is, upon their own mutability. For by its own principle, mutable creatures exist in virtue of the movement of forms through the formless. The human cannot preserve itself through itself apart from the temporal and physical processes of changing, and being changed, by forms from above through the physical, made known and understood as the *superiora* in the scriptures. For the refusal to live by the *superiora*, which contain and constitute the creature, is evil and death. The human cannot be its own life, and must receive it through another: “May I not be my own life. I lived evilly from myself (*non ego vita mea sim: male vixi ex me*). To myself I was death. In You I am recovering life (*mors mihi fui: in te revivesco*). Speak to me, instruct me, I have put faith in Your books.”³⁹⁶

Chapter 6.5. The Prior Good and the poverty of creation

Returning to the end of the *Confessiones*, we arrive again at the divine-human mutuality which opens and moves the work at every level of the *itinerarium*, beginning at, relative to, and with, the physical. The creature entirely owes itself to God’s power and nature, given and worked through the creature’s being and working. Entering once more into, and with, the mutuality of given and empowered natures, Book XIII opens with an invocation of God above the human who calls the human to Himself. “I call upon You (*invoco te*) . . . I call You into my soul (*invoco te in animam meam*) which You are preparing to receive You through the longing which You have inspired in it (*quam praeparas ad capiendum te ex desiderio quod inspirasti ei*).”³⁹⁷

³⁹³ *Confessiones*, 12.11.12.

³⁹⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.13.16.

³⁹⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.13.16.

³⁹⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.10.10.

³⁹⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

To reemphasize, confession thus far has become the constitution, activity, preparation, expansion, and formation of the human to rise more and more into God, so that the *interiora* increasingly corresponds to the *superiora*, or that the human and divine infinities converge in and through one another's unification and differentiation, aroused by, and drawn into the Spirit through the physical. Importantly, it is God who is always prior to, and the basis of, the human by nature of composite beings in Book VII and the distinction of time and eternity in Book XI. The human calling upon God into itself is thus encompassed by God's work and Spirit, and is drawn to His prior eternity before the creation of intellectual and physical matters. In this way, Book XIII opens with the human calling in time within the eternal calling from above and outside the nature of all mutable and temporal things.

Now calling upon You (*invocantem te*), do not desert me. Before I called upon You (*priusquam invocarem*), You were there before me (*praevenisti*). With mounting frequency by voices of many kinds (*multimodis vocibus*) You put pressure on me, so that from far off I heard (*audirem*) and was converted (*converterer*) and called upon You as You were calling to me (*vocantem me invocarem te*).³⁹⁸

Through comparison, God is before human existence (*priusquam essem tu eras*) and the human has no being which receives existence (*nec eram cui praestares ut essem*).³⁹⁹ All is given from without, for God's prevenient goodness is the prior cause of creation: "Nevertheless, behold, I exist, a result of Your goodness (*ecce sum ex bonitate tua*), which goes before all (*praeveniente totum*) that You made me to be and all out of which You made me . . . To You I owe my being and the goodness of my being."⁴⁰⁰ God's Goodness, then, is the cause of creation's subsistence in It.

Naturally, Your creation subsists (*substitit*) from the fullness of Your goodness (*ex plenitudine quippe bonitatis*), so that a good which confers no benefit to You, and which not being from You is not equal to You, can nevertheless have its existence caused by You and so will not lack being.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1: "nunc invocantem te ne deseras, qui priusquam invocarem et institisti crebrescens multimodis vocibus, ut audirem de longinquo et converterer et vocantem me invocarem te."

³⁹⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

⁴⁰⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.1.1.

⁴⁰¹ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2: "ex plenitudine quippe bonitatis tuae creatura tua substitit, ut bonum quod tibi nihil prodesset nec de te aequale tibi esset, tamen quia ex te fieri potuit, non deesset."

Confession begins relative to this priority of the divine-human mutuality in God's Goodness. Emphatically, the repetition of the verb *promeruere* characterizes confession as the search of creation's worth, merit, or pleasure in the prior sight of God. Similar to the result of the third Platonic ascent, Augustine distinguishes the "praise" of creation from its source, beginning confession at the level of the creature.⁴⁰²

How has heaven and earth pleased You (*promeruit*), [or, how were they worthy of You], which You made in the beginning. Let the spiritual and physical creation, which You made in Your wisdom (*in sapientia tua*), tell us (*dicant*) they were pleasing to You (*promeruerunt*).⁴⁰³

Relative to, and with, the lowest and most unlike degree of physical goods, Augustine seeks the prior Good which is present in and above formless matters: "For in [Your Wisdom] depended even embryonic (*inchoata*) and formless (*informia*) things."⁴⁰⁴ Relative to Book XII, confession encounters and moves through this formlessness, the almost-nothing, in comparison to which mind expands to uncover through formlessness the opposite end and limit of intellectual matter that shares a near likeness with eternity. In this way, confession of the end and limit of the objective creation of physical and spiritual matter of *Genesis* is the mutual realization and expansion of mind relative to formlessness and form of thought.

Here, confession starts from the formlessness of Book XII and establishes a hierarchy of matters and their goodness towards confession of the Good above them. That is, confession of the Good begins through the tendency of unformed goods towards unlikeness, "all of which in their own spiritual or physical category move to excess and to Your far removed unlikeness (*euntia in immoderationem et in longinquam dissimilitudinem tuam*)."⁴⁰⁵

By comparing the gradation of mutable goods in the Good, there arises a hierarchy of formless physical matter, formed bodies, and formless spiritual matter. "Formless spiritual matter (*spiritalis informe*) is superior to formed body (*formatum*

⁴⁰² See O'Donnell, *Commentary on Books 1-7*, 375-376 (6.12.21) for this rendering of *promeruere* as "being pleasing" as opposed to its classical meaning of "being worthy" or "having merit."

⁴⁰³ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

⁴⁰⁴ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

⁴⁰⁵ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

corpus). However, formless physical matter (*corporale autem informe*) is better than no existence at all (*omnino nihil esset*).⁴⁰⁶ By this gradation of different matters, their goodness derives from, and through, the same Good, so that their differentiation and unification is God's Word recalling and conforming them through His conversion in them: "So formless things are dependent on Your Word, unless through the same Word they are recalled to Your Oneness and receive form, and, from You the One, the supreme universal Good (*summo bono*), they are very good (*universa bona valde*)."⁴⁰⁷ However, the question of worth, or pleasure, on the side of created goods persist, since matters do not inherently deserve or grant their own goodness and creation outside of God's Good: "How did they please You (*promeruerant*) even to be formless, which would not exist unless from You?"⁴⁰⁸ Such also recalls the recreated physics of lactation at the end of Book IX and the need for prayer through another. For after death, Monica needs Augustine to pray for her sins, receiving spiritual grace with, and by, the physical and spiritual members of the church.

Within this hierarchy of matters and the degrees of goodness and being which belong to them, Augustine begins again to search for the prior Good through formless physical matter: "How did physical matter please You (*promeruit materies corporalis*) even to be merely invisible and unorganized, for it would not exist at all unless You had made it."⁴⁰⁹ The inherent goodness of the physical is entirely derived from God and cannot claim itself outside of Him. Consequently, the given nature of the physical demonstrates that it ought not to exist since it had no prior being deserving of goodness. "Therefore, since it did not exist, it could not be worthy of You (*promereri*) that it should exist."⁴¹⁰ This conclusion about the physical is also true of the spiritual creation, despite its near equality of form: "How did the inchoate spiritual creation please You (*quid te promeruit*), even to be merely in a dark fluid state like the ocean abyss, being dissimilar to You, unless through the same Word it had been converted to the same by whom it was

⁴⁰⁶ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

⁴⁰⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

⁴⁰⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.2.2.

⁴⁰⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.2.3.

⁴¹⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.2.3.

made.”⁴¹¹ Likewise, the conversion of spiritual matter is given and is not in itself pleasing to God that it should receive form (*non te promeruerat*), but rather is made and converted by God’s grace (*gratiae tuae*) so that it contemplates His eternity.⁴¹²

By comparison between the different matters themselves, confession passes through the hierarchy of goods, uncovering both their inherent givenness and encountering the inherent dissimilarity, formlessness, or nothingness, of created beings. That is, confession recalls the totality of matters as goods, as not entirely-being nor entirely-non-being, which, relative to themselves alone, have no claim on the highest Good present within and above them. In virtue of the Good, then, creatures do not have complete comprehension of themselves, that is, they do not possess the Good in its perfect self-possession that is beyond and contains composite beings.

Already discovered in Book VII from the first Platonic ascent, this truth concerning the mutable nature of goods as a mixture of being and non-being is crucial again for the human to rise through and beyond both the goodness and nothingness of the creation: “All my abundance which is not my God is poverty.”⁴¹³ From here, the comparison of matters in relation to their goodness and unlikeness expands confession to discover its superior source in God’s simplicity: “That is what You alone are, because You alone are in absolute simplicity (*quod tu solus es, quia solus simpliciter es*).”⁴¹⁴ In this way, uncovering, ordering and passing through the neediness of created goods from the Good, the human is drawn towards their abundance in the Good.

What, therefore, could be lacking relative to the Good (*ad bonum*), which You are to Yourself (*tu tibi es*), even if these things were entirely nothing, or had remained formless, which You did not make out of any need (*ex indigentia*), but out of the plenitude of Your goodness (*ex plenitudine bonitatis tuae*), restraining them and converting them to form, not as though Your joy was perfected by them?⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ *Confessiones*, 13.2.3.

⁴¹² *Confessiones*, 13.3.4.

⁴¹³ *Confessiones*, 13.8.9: “omnis mihi copia quae deus meus non est egestas est.”

⁴¹⁴ *Confessiones*, 13.3.4.

⁴¹⁵ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5: “quid ergo tibi deesset ad bonum, quod tu tibi es, etiamsi ista vel omnino nulla essent vel informia remanerent quae non ex indigentia fecisti sed ex plenitudine bonitatis tuae, cohibens atque convertens ad formam, non ut tamquam tuum gaudium compleatur ex eis?”

Drawn and expanded by the abundance of Goodness through the confessional movement of the human through the unlikeness of goods, the human arrives at the Spirit, which is above, within, and moves from without, every creature. In this way, the neediness and abundance of Goodness and their relation have the scriptural form of God's rest through His Spirit "borne above the waters" in *Genesis* (*superferebatur super aquas*).⁴¹⁶ Already discussed in Chapter 1, the Spirit is the self-sufficient love which grants and works through the creature's own given triadic structure, arousing more and more the creature's desire and tendency towards God through conversions appropriate to its nature and capacity: "Your incorruptible and immutable will was 'borne above' (*superferebatur*), itself sufficient to itself and in itself (*ipsa in se sibi sufficiens*), above (*super*) the life which You had made."⁴¹⁷ On account of this mutuality, the Spirit does not rest on creatures (*in eis requiesceret*) as if they supported it.⁴¹⁸ That is, God's providence is not the sole, primary, and exclusive movement in the cosmos. Rather, when the Spirit rests on creatures, It "makes them rest in Itself (*hos in se requiescere facit*),"⁴¹⁹ so that God's rest is the creature's resting in Him. The initiation of rest falls on both sides of the creature and God in the Spirit.

Relative to this confession of Goodness as the interdependent relation of excess and need in and from God's Spirit, the conversion and formation of formless matter to the *superiora* is a process of increasing clarity to become like, to see like, and to see with, the life of Spirit Itself, at the same time differentiating more and more the objective and subjective creation in human knowing: "It remains for it [formless matter] to be converted to Him (*converti*), by whom it was made, to live more and more by the fount of life (*magis magisque*) and to see light in His light (*in lumine eius videre lumen*)."⁴²⁰ By the nature of confession, it belongs to the human to become "more and more" a seeing thing relative to the Unity and Trinity of God's Oneness and self-differentiation: "You teach him, already having capacity, to see (*videre*) the Trinity of Unity and the Unity of Trinity (*doces eum iam capacem videre trinitatem unitatis vel unitatem trinitatis*)."⁴²¹

⁴¹⁶ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁴¹⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁴¹⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁴¹⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁴²⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.4.5.

⁴²¹ *Confessiones*, 13.22.32.

Importantly, the basis of this divine-human aspect is the inward and superior Truth of God's Word in Book XII. Truth is present in, and to, all creatures, so that confession and sight of, and by, the *superiora* are through another.

If both of us see (*videmus*) that what you say is true, and see (*videmus*) that what I say is true, then where, I ask, do we see this (*videmus*)? I do not see it in you (*in te*), nor you in me (*in me*), but both of us see it in the immutable Truth itself (*in ipsa*) above our minds (*supra mentes*).⁴²²

Relative to *Genesis*, the comparison of this inward and upward seeing, with and by the Truth, to the less formative view of faith shows the difference of form and content in their respective correlation to the *superiora* in scripture. Under faith at the level of images and bodies, an imaginative reading produces an account of the creation according to the physical understanding of Books I-VI (*ex familiaritate carnis*).⁴²³ God has a body which generates other bodies in time and place. God is an endless mass (*molem immensa*), who, by speaking words in temporal succession, creates outside Himself (*extra se*), as if in places far away from his own location (*locis distantibus*), the heavens and earth as great physical bodies (*magna corpora*), one above the other, in which all things reside, including God's own great mass.⁴²⁴

In comparison, the purifying vision of intellectual understanding sees (*vident*) the *superiora* through and beyond the physical words to understand the eternal Word. In this way, *Genesis* reveals the nature of God's self-identity and unlikeness, the return of all things to God's simple unity as the One by their formation and differentiation according to their natures: "Formed through Your likeness it returns to You, the One (*recurrens in te unum*), according to the appointed capacity granted to each according to its kind."⁴²⁵ In this way, pushed beyond belief, more and more clearly is Spirit seeing in and through the human's comparative seeing of God through the unlikeness of formlessness and physical matter.

⁴²² *Confessiones*, 12.25.35.

⁴²³ *Confessiones*, 12.27.37.

⁴²⁴ *Confessiones*, 12.27.37.

⁴²⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.28.38: "quae formaretur per similitudinem tuam recurrens in te unum pro captu ordinato, quantum cuique rerum in suo genere datum est."

In Book XIII, an apex of this vision of the *superiora* in *Genesis* is the supreme Trinity. Raised by, and with, the Spirit through the human's mutual rise to find the Spirit with, and by, the physical, Augustine arrives at the highest form of Trinity concealed in and above the physical: "See (*ecce*), the Trinity, which You are, my God, appears to me in an enigmatic image (*in aenigmate*)."⁴²⁶ Arriving at this vision of the Trinity Itself in *Genesis*, the increasing clarity of the divine-human aspect defines and discerns true, transcendent, and hidden identity and self-differentiation. Starting at, and being led by Truth beyond belief, images, and the *phantasmata* of a corporeal God and creation under faith, Trinity is realized through the expanding, clarifying, and illuminating confession of *Genesis* as the account of Spirit, of the mutuality of different matters and their incorporeal source and cause.

Believing (*credens*) that my God is Trinity, in accordance with my belief I searched in God's holy oracles (*quaerebam*) and behold (*ecce*), Your Spirit was borne above the waters. Behold! (*ecce*) the Trinity, my God—Father and Son and Holy Spirit, Creator of the entire creation.⁴²⁷

Proceeding from the Trinity concealed in scripture, confession increasingly differentiates, and is differentiated by, the Spirit as a purifying movement towards the divine-human aspect, always through the order of creation from unlikeness. What occurs is the ever-transcending push of God beyond the finite and the further delineation of the creation and God Himself. In this way, the Spirit gives and is given physical form relative to bodies. The Spirit is the weight and movement of every bodily thing: "A body by its weight tends to move towards its proper place (*corpus pondere suo nititur ad locum suum*)."⁴²⁸ Likewise, Spirit is the desire which moves every creature by the Spirit's moving in its desire: "My weight is my love (*pondus meum amor meus*)."⁴²⁹

By further comparison between the human and God, the divine-human aspect defines and unites the likeness and unlikeness of their triadic relations. By seeing that vision (*videt istam visionem*), the human's structure of being, knowing, and willing (*esse, nosse, velle*) is "a long way different" (*longe aliud*) compared to the structure of Trinity

⁴²⁶ *Confessiones*, 13.5.6.

⁴²⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.5.6.

⁴²⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.9.10.

⁴²⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.9.10.

beyond it (*supra ista*) of unchanging Being, Knowing, and Willing (*est incommutabiliter et scit incommutabiliter et vult incommutabiliter*).⁴³⁰ A culmination of this definition of Spirit is the nature of God’s own mutual infinity of His Unity and Trinity, that He, “exists in simplicity and multiplicity as an infinity (*infinito*), in Itself the limit to Itself (*in se sibi fine*), by which it is, is known to Itself, and is sufficient to Itself unchangeably the Selfsame (*incommutabiliter idipsum*), by the abundant magnitude of Unity (*copiosa unitatis magnitudine*).”⁴³¹

Chapter 6.6. Method of allegory: the divine-human aspect

Thus far in the *itinerarium*, by the mutualities of the human, the physical, and God, human knowing has arrived at and differentiated various infinities, or profound depths, culminating in the Spirit’s rest in the creation. In Book IV, the multiplicity of human affections and desires is a great deep (*grande profundum*),⁴³² related perhaps to the self-differentiation of God’s love in human desire at Book XIII (*caritas tua diffusa est in cordibus*).⁴³³ In Book X, *memoria*, or mind, the human itself, is emphatically a great depth, its life an infinite multiplicity (*penetrabile amplum et infinitum; profunda et infinita multiplicitas*).⁴³⁴ In Book XII, the formlessness of matter is given mythic expression as a “deep unknown abyss (*profunditas abyssi*),”⁴³⁵ and its mutable nature is capable of all forms (*ipsa capax est formarum omnium*).⁴³⁶ Also emphatic is the horrifying depth of God’s eternal communication through the physical and temporal words of scripture (*mira profunditas eloquiorum tuorum!*).⁴³⁷ Here in Book XIII, God above and within these infinities is His own infinity (*infinito in se sibi fine*).⁴³⁸

Perhaps then, confession, as an ever clarifying seeing that has been prepared and moved to confess these infinities in *Genesis*, so that it sees, and sees by, the divine-human aspect in the Spirit, expands, defines, and unifies these infinities, at the same time

⁴³⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.11.12.

⁴³¹ *Confessiones*, 13.11.12.

⁴³² *Confessiones*, 4.14.22.

⁴³³ *Confessiones*, 13.7.8; 13.31.46.

⁴³⁴ *Confessiones*, 10.8.15; 10.17.26.

⁴³⁵ *Confessiones*, 12.3.3.

⁴³⁶ *Confessiones*, 12.6.6.

⁴³⁷ *Confessiones*, 12.14.17.

⁴³⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.11.12.

by and with them, perpetually pushing their circumferences, yet always being pushed and transcended by God's own self-sufficient Life beyond itself.

This mode of confession is the basis and means of an allegorical, or spiritual, reading of *Genesis*. It is the culmination of the role of the human to understand the Word by confessing the objective and subjective creation under its intellectual form as the church. In this way, created physical and intellectual matters return, or are recreated, in human knowing under a raised spiritual understanding of the creation as the physical and spiritual members of the church. In this way, matter, the human, and scripture, become the basis for equivalents and comparisons between them, forming and differentiating the hierarchy of the spiritual and physical members of the church in and by God: "Among us also in His Christ, God has made a heaven and an earth, the spiritual and physical members of His church (*spiritaes et carnales ecclesiae suae*)."⁴³⁹ In this way, the whole creation returns in human knowing, becoming the church which mirrors ever more clearly the *superiora*. From this, the admonishment of St. Paul in Romans 1:20 is realized, that "the invisible things of God are understood and seen through the things which are made (*ut invisibilia dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciant*)."⁴⁴⁰ What was touched and struck back in Book VII is now the confession and vision of the church in Book XIII.

By this method of allegory, the gathering, or thinking, recollects the *superiora* relative to the mutual recreation of the cosmos and the human as the spiritual cosmos in, and beyond, the book of *Genesis*. The objective account of physical and spiritual matter in Book XII is transformed to become the creation of the physical and spiritual members of the church through the recreation of the human from formlessness to form. In this way, allegorical confession situates the whole *exitus* and *reditus* of the objective cosmos in mutual correspondence to the subjective *exitus* and *reditus* of the divine-human mutuality through and with the physical, so that formlessness and form are equivocated between the objective and the subjective in and by God's self-relation.

Crucially, this simultaneous recreation and mutual differentiation and unification of the cosmos and the human in God begins and proceeds through unlikeness,

⁴³⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.12.13.

⁴⁴⁰ *Confessiones*, 10.6.10; 7.17.23.

unknowability, matter, and the physical. For example, in ignorance, the human is the formless earth that receives its form by the light of doctrine from above. The Spirit “borne above the waters” and God’s command “let there be light” is the necessary penitence of the human. Light is first given from above to the human to enable penitence, then the human doing penitence enables its own becoming of the same light. The repetition in the Latin emphasizes this order: “Let there be light, do penance (*fiat lux paenitentiam agite*) . . . Do penance, let there be light (*paenitentiam agite fiat lux*).”⁴⁴¹ This superior light disturbs the human, so that it remembers the Lord “from the land of Jordan and from the mountain,” who is the Word, since It is “equal” to God and became “little” to meet the need of the human’s condition of ignorance. This remembrance of the Word displeases the human in God’s displeasure of its unconverted state, and by displeasure of itself it converts to God (*conversi sumus ad te*).⁴⁴² The creation of light, then, is the recreation of the human from darkness to light above it. In this state of conversion to the light, the human exists in unseen hope, “still through faith (*per fidem*), not yet through sight (*per speciem*)” of the *superiora*.⁴⁴³

By allegorical confession, the human unifies and differentiates the subjective and objective creation relative to the physical, in which it traverses the six days of *Genesis*. The six days of the creation and recreation of the cosmos and the human as the church occur in this order:

First Day: the waters/formless matter/ignorance is converted towards its form/faith by outside light/doctrine.⁴⁴⁴

Second Day: the heavenly firmament and garments of skin/holy scripture are God’s authority for humans below and surrounded by it, above which are the angels/intellectual matter which read/participate in the Word Itself.⁴⁴⁵

Third Day: the waters/fluctuating soul rises as the dry land bearing fruit/exercising virtue relative to physical bodies.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴¹ *Confessiones*, 13.12.13.

⁴⁴² *Confessiones*, 13.12.13.

⁴⁴³ *Confessiones*, 13.13.14.

⁴⁴⁴ *Confessiones*, 13.12.13-13.14.15.

⁴⁴⁵ *Confessiones*, 13.15.16-13.16.19.

⁴⁴⁶ *Confessiones*, 13.17.20-13.17.21.

Fourth Day: deriving from virtue, there becomes the heavenly lights/justice which rise above the earth to adhere to the firmament/scriptures in order to contemplate the Word. By contemplation, the heavenly light/spiritual person distinguishes night/physical matter from day/intellectual matter. This differentiation of night and day further delineates as the division of light/Spirit as the stars/spiritual gifts of the human. Belonging to the night/the physical is the moon/*sacramenta, mysteria*, and signs/milk which strengthen the infant/animal man/physical understanding. By becoming the dry land/exercising virtue, it belongs to the day/spiritual person to shine/proclaim the light/Wisdom.⁴⁴⁷

Fifth Day: from the waters/formless matter emerge and multiply reptiles and flying creatures/*sacramenta, mysteria*, and signs, whose mutable nature under the heavenly firmament/scripture differentiates physically for the sake the human's physical understanding.⁴⁴⁸

Sixth Day: in comparison to the waters, the living soul/example of virtue and imitation of Christ through mortification of the physical, emerges from the dry land and surpasses its physical relation to the creatures from the water/*sacramenta, mysteria*, and signs. This is the renewal of mind which now sees the Oneness and Trinity of God in contemplation of the Word in scripture, becoming like Him as judge over the animals which derive from the sea/*sacramenta, mysteria*, and signs, and over the fruitful earth/living soul. That is, the spiritual person discerns and judges both the differentiation of religious practice and the interpreter and interpretations of scripture. The generation of the living soul is intellectual, and it grows by feeding on its own spiritual fruit which it merits through its work/joy/fertility by interpreting the sacraments and scripture.⁴⁴⁹

Relative to God's own infinity at work above and in this mirroring of infinities, the allegory of *Genesis* clarifies the divine-human aspect by the human's confession of the mutual creation, formation, and recreation of the cosmos and the human. By equivocating the physical, intellectual, ontological, and moral, the result is the correlation of the human becoming a seeing thing by, and with, God's seeing in the increasing

⁴⁴⁷ *Confessiones*, 13.18.22-13.19.25.

⁴⁴⁸ *Confessiones*, 13.20.26-13.20.28.

⁴⁴⁹ *Confessiones*, 13.21.29-13.30.45.

completion of His good work at each stage of the *Genesis* account, so that the rise of the human through the creation of the church is its clarifying vision of Spirit.

In this context, the culmination of the sixth day is the assimilation of God's seeing in the human's seeing the goodness of creation in the prior Good: "And You saw (*vidisti*), God, all that You had made, and it was very good, because we also see them (*quia et nos videmus ea*), they are all very good indeed."⁴⁵⁰ By this correlation of sights in the Spirit, the comparative movement of confession from, and with, the infinities of matter, the human, and scripture, approaches the near complete assimilation of the human and God in confession. It is the unification and differentiation of temporal and eternal vision, worked and prepared by the inter-mirroring infinities of allegorical interpretation. The character of the living soul as God's judge, then, is its participation in the Oneness and self-differentiation of the divine aspect through the creation.

Those who see (*vident*) these things through Your Spirit, You see (*vides*) in them (*in eis*). Therefore, when they see (*vident*) that they are good [the things which are seen], You see (*vides*) that they are good. Whatever is pleasing for Your sake, is pleasing You in them (*in eis*). The things which are pleasing to us through Your Spirit, is pleasing to You in us (*tibi placent in nobis*).⁴⁵¹

Converging on the seventh day, the divine-human aspect itself becomes the simultaneity of God's own rest and work in and through the human in Him. This is the conclusion of Book XIII and the *Confessiones* as a whole.

There also You will rest in us (*in nobis*), just as now You work in us (*in nobis*). Your rest will be through us (*per nos*), just as now Your works are done through us (*per nos*). But You, Lord are always working and always at rest (*tu autem, domine, semper operaris et semper requiescis*). Your seeing is not in time, Your movement is not in time, and Your rest is not in time.⁴⁵²

⁴⁵⁰ *Confessiones*, 13.28.43.

⁴⁵¹ *Confessiones*, 13.31.46: "qui autem per spiritum tuum vident ea, tu vides in eis. ergo cum vident quia bona sunt, tu vides quia bona sunt, et quaecumque propter te placent, tu in eis places, et quae per spiritum tuum placent nobis, tibi placent in nobis."

⁴⁵² *Confessiones*, 13.37.52: "etiam tunc enim sic requiesces in nobis, quemadmodum nunc operaris in nobis, et ita erit illa requies tua per nos, quemadmodum sunt ista opera tua per nos. tu autem, domine, semper operaris et semper requiescis, nec vides ad tempus nec moveris ad tempus nec quiescis ad tempus, et tamen facis et visiones temporales et ipsa tempora et quietem ex tempore."

Chapter 7. Conclusion

A conclusion of the role of the physical in the *Confessiones* at the end of Book XIII is the near assimilation of God and the human in the spiritual cosmos of the church, in which the church militant lives and exercises the same divine power to unify and differentiate the objective and subjective relative to their recreation as the church's interpretation and hierarchical ordering of true accounts and the *sacramenta*. The command of God to demand this power of Him is always through and relative to bodies. At every step, the physical is necessary for the human's generation, bodily preservation, and conversions tending to, and assuming, its natural and expansive capacity as God's judge in confession.

At the same time, this *itinerarium* of the human is the discovery and realization of physical bodies, incorporeal mind, and physical matter, towards God Himself resting and working in the human. In this way, the physical and the human's relation to it is the positive and necessary means for the birth, growth, and assimilation of the divine-human mutuality by, and in comparison to, another. Underlying the *Confessiones* as a whole, accounts of nature form the basis of this movement. Fundamentally, the human must always return to its bodily relations with the real physical to re-ascend its nature to mediate the return of the physical and God.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Agaësse, Paul, and A. Solignac. *La Genèse Au Sens Littéral En Douze Livres: De Genesi Ad Litteram Libri Duodecim*. Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1972.

Augustinus, Aurelius. *Patrologia Cursus Completus*. Series Latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Garnier: Paris, 1844-64. Collected in *S. Aurelii Augustini Opera Omnia: Patrologiae Latinae Elenchus*. November 11, 2018.
<http://www.augustinus.it/latino/index.htm>

_____. *De Genesi ad Litteram libri duodecim*. PL 34.

_____. *De Trinitate libri quindecim*. PL 42.

_____. *De Genesi contra Manichaeos libri duo*. PL 34.

_____. *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et de Moribus Manichaeorum libri duo*. PL 32.

Ambrose, Aurelius. *Exameron in Sancti Ambrosii, Opera Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 32.1. Edited by Karl Schenkl, Heinrich Schenkl, Michael Petschenig, Otto Faller, and Michaela Zelzer. Pragae / Vindobonae: F. Tempsky; Lipsiae: G. Freytag, 1897.

Basil of Caesarea. Ὁμιλία θ' εἰς τὴν ἑξαήμερον in *Tou en agiois patros emoon Basileiou, archiepiscopou kaisareias kappadochias, ta eyriskomena panta = Sancti patris nostri Basilii Magni, caesareae Cappadociae archiepiscopi, opera omnia. Quae exstant, vel quae eius nomine circumferuntur, ad mss. codices gallicanos, vaticanos, florentinos & anglicos, necnon ad antiquiores editiones castigata, multis aucta: nova interpretatione, criticis praefationibus, notis, variis lectionibus illustrata, nova sancti doctoris vita & copiosissimis indicibus locupletata / opera et studio domini Juliani Garnier, presbyteri et monachi benedictini e Congregatione Sancti Mauri, Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca* 39. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Garnier: Paris, 1857-1866.

Boehner, Philotheus, and Brown, Stephen F. *The Journey of the Mind to God*. Indiana, Indianapolis / Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.

Boehner, Philotheus and Zachary Hayes. *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum: Latin Text from the Quaracchi Edition*. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, Saint Bonaventure University, 2002.

Calvin, Jean. *Institutio Christianae Religionis in Ioannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia: Ad fidem editionum principum et authenticarum ex parte etiam codicum*

manu scriptorum, additis prolegomenis literariis, annotationibus criticis, annalibus Calvinianis indicibusque novis et copiosissimis. Edited by Guiliemus Baum, Eduardus Cunitz, Eduardus Reuss, Alfred Erichson, Paul Lobstein, Wilhelm Baldensperger, and Ludwig Horst. Corpus Reformatorum Volumen 30. Brunsvigae: Apud C.A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1863.

Cohn, Leopold. *Philonis Alexandrini Libellus De Opificio Mundi.* Breslauer Philogische Abhandlungen 4.4. Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967.

Dillon, M. John, Jackson P. Hershbell, and Emma C. Clarke. *Iamblichus: De Mysteriis.* Writings from the Greco-Roman World 4. Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.

Dodds, E. R. *The Elements of Theology: A Revised Text.* 2nd edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

Chadwick, Henry. *Saint Augustine: Confessions.* Oxford World Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Hill, Edmund. *On Genesis: On Genesis: A Refutation of the Manichees, Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis, The Literal Meaning of Genesis.* The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century. Brooklyn, New York: New City Press, 2002.

O'Donnell, J. James. *Confessions.* 3 Vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

_____. *The Confessions of Augustine: An Electronic Edition.* Text and Commentary by James J. O'Donnell. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. For the Stoa Consortium, 1999. <http://www.stoa.org/hippo/>.

Schmitt, F.S. *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia.* Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946.

Skutella, M. *Les Confessions.* 2 Vols. Translated by E. Tréhorel and G. Bouisou. With introduction and notes by A. Salignac. Bibliothèque Augustinienne. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962.

Secondary Sources

BeDuhn, Jason David. *The Manichean Body: In Discipline and Ritual.* Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Beierwaltes, Werner. "Augustins Interpretation Von Sapientia 11:21," *Revue Des Etudes Augustiniennes* 15 (1969): 51-61.

_____. *Identität Und Differenz.* 2nd Edition. Philosophische Abhandlungen, Bd 49. Frankfurt Am Main: Klostermann, 2011.

- Boersma, P. Gerald. "Jerusalem as *Caelum Caeli* in Augustine," *Augustinian Studies* 49:2 (2018): 247-276.
- Booth, Edward. *Saint Augustine and the Western Tradition of Self-Knowing*. Saint Augustine Lecture Series, Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Tradition. Villanova, Pennsylvania: Villanova University Press, 1989.
- _____. "St. Augustine's « notitia sui » related to Aristotle and the early neo-Platonists," *Augustiniana* 27 (1977): 70-132, 364-401; 28 (1978): 183-221; 29 (1979): 97-124.
- Brown, Peter. *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. 2nd Edition. London: Faber and Faber, 2000.
- _____. *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.
- Byers, Sarah Catherine. "Augustine's Debt to Stoicism in the *Confessions*." In *The Routledge Handbook of the Stoic Tradition*. Edited by John Sellars, 56-69. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.
- Catapano, Giovanni. "Augustine." In *A History of Mind and Body in Late Antiquity*. Edited by Anna Marmodoro and Sophie Cartwright, 343-363. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Chase, Michael. "'Omne corpus fugiendum?' Augustine and Porphyry on the body and the post-mortem destiny of the soul," edited by Anca Vasiliu, Alexander Baumgarten, and Bogdan Tătaru-Cazaban, *χώρα, Revue d'Études Anciennes et Médiévales* 2 (2004): 37-58.
- Chenu, Marie-Dominique. *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968.
- Courcelle, Pierre Paul. *Recherches Sur Les "Confessions" De Saint Augustin*. Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 1968.
- Crouse, Robert. "*Paucis mutatis verbis*: St. Augustine's Platonism." In *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*. Edited by Robert Dodaro and George Lawless, 37-50. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2000.
- _____. "*Recurrrens in te unum*: The Pattern of St. Augustine's *Confessions*," edited by E.A. Livingstone, *Studia Patristica* 14 (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur, Berlin, 1976): 389-392.

- _____. "The Meaning of Creation in St. Augustine and Eriugena," edited by E.A. Livingstone, *Studia Patristica* 22 (Kalamazoo / Louvain: Cistercian / Peeters, 1989): 229-234.
- Di Silva, M. F. "Plotinus and Augustine on evil and matter," *Archai* 2 (2018): 205-227.
- Dutton, D. Blake. *Augustine and Academic Skepticism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 2016.
- Du Roy, Olivier. *L'Intelligence De La Foi En La Trinité Selon Saint Augustin, Genèse De Sa Théologie Trinitaire Jusqu'en 391*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966.
- Feichtinger, Hans. "Οὐδένεια and humilitas: Nature and Function of Humility in Iamblichus and Augustine," *Dionysius* 11 (2003): 123-160.
- Giraud, Vincent. "Signum et Vestigium dans la Pensée de Saint Augustin," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*. Lire le monde au Moyen Âge : signe, symbole et corporéité, Tome 95. Paris: J. Vrin (2011/2): 251-274.
- Griffin, W. Carl, and David L. Paulsen. "Augustine and the Corporeality of God," *The Harvard Theological Review* 95 (2002): 97-118.
- Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*. Translated by Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- Hankey, J. Wayne. "Stephen Menn's Cartesian Augustine: Metaphysical And Ahistorically Modern," *Animus* 3 (1998): 183-210.
- _____. "Self-knowledge and God as Other in Augustine: Problems for a Postmodern Retrieval," *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 4 (1999): 83-123.
- _____. "'Knowing as we are Known' in *Confessions* 10 and Other Philosophical, Augustinian and Christian Obedience to the Delphic *Gnothi Seauton* from Socrates to Modernity," *Augustinian Studies* 34 (2003): 23-48.
- _____. "Self and Cosmos in Becoming Deiform: Neoplatonic Paradigms for Reform by Self-Knowledge from Augustine to Aquinas." In *Reforming the Church Before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*. Edited by Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton, 39-60. Aldershot, Hants, England / Burlington, VT: Ashgate Press, 2005.
- _____. "Reading Augustine through Dionysius: Aquinas' correction of one Platonism by another." In *Aquinas the Augustinian*. Edited by Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering, 243-257. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2007.

- _____. "Recurrens in te unum: Neoplatonic Form and Content in Augustine's *Confessions*." In *Augustine and Philosophy*. Edited by Phillip Cary, John Doody, and Kim Paffenroth, 127-144. *Augustine in Conversation: Tradition and Innovation*. Lanham / Boulder / New York / Toronto / Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books / Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.
- _____. "Natural Theology in the Patristic Period." In *The Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology*. Edited by Russell Re Manning, 28-56. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- _____. "Augustine's Trinitarian Cosmos," *Dionysius* 35 (2017): 63-100.
- Harrison, Carol. *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- _____. "Measure, Number and Weight in Saint Augustine's Aesthetics," *Augustinianum* 28 (1988): 591-602.
- Johansen, Karsten Friis. "The Mind's Discovery of Itself: Augustine on Self-Knowledge with a View to the Pagan Tradition." *Henologische Perspektiven II: Zu Ehren Egila Wyllers: Internationales Henologie-Symposium an Der Norwegischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Oslo*. Edited by Tore Frost, Elementa 69 (Amsterdam: Rodopi / Brill, 1998): 62-82.
- O'Connell, J. Robert. *St. Augustine's Confessions: The Odyssey of Soul*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969.
- O'Daly, Gerard. *Platonism Pagan and Christian: Studies in Plotinus and Augustine*. Aldershot / Burlington: Ashgate, 2001.
- _____. *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987.
- Ortiz, Jared. *'You Made Us for Yourself': Creation in St. Augustine's Confessions*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2016.
- O'Meara, J. John. "The Neoplatonism of Saint Augustine." In *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*. Edited by Dominic J. O'Meara. 34-41. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1982.
- _____. *The Young Augustine: The Growth of St. Augustine's Mind Up to His Conversion*. London. New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1954.

- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem? Timaeus and Genesis in Counterpoint*. Thomas Spencer Jerome Lectures 21. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- Piras, Andrea. "Sealing The Body: Theory and Practices of Manichaean Asceticism," edited by Mohr Siebeck, *Religion in the Roman Empire* 4 (2018): 28-44.
- Rist, M. John. *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1994.
- Roche, W. J. "Measure, Number, and Weight in St. Augustine," *New Scholasticism* 15 (1941): 350-376.
- Rombs, J. Ronnie. *Saint Augustine and the Fall of the Soul: Beyond O'Connell and His Critics*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006.
- Sastri, Martin. "The Influence of Plotinian Metaphysics in St. Augustine's Conception of the Spiritual Senses," *Dionysius* 24 (2006): 99-124.
- Sorabji, Richard. *Time, Creation, and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983.
- Stewart-Kroeker, Sarah. "Augustine's Incarnational Appropriation of Plotinus: A Journey for the Feet," *Studia Patristica* 62 (2013): 165-178.
- Teske, J. Roland. "Genesis Accounts of Creation." In *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. Edited by Fitzgerald, Allan, and John C. Cavadini, 379-381. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999.
- _____. "Saint Augustine as Philosopher: The Birth of Christian Metaphysics." In *To Know God and the Soul Essays on the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 3-25. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008.
- _____. "The World-Soul and Time in Augustine." In *To Know God and the Soul Essays on the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 216-237. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008.
- Vannier, Marie-Anne. "Creatio", "Conversio", "Formatio" chez S. Augustin. *Paradosis* 31. Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions Universitaires, 1997.
- Wills, Gary, *Saint Augustine's Childhood: Confessions Book One*. New York: Viking, 2001.
- Zum Brunn, Émilie. "L'exégèse augustinienne de 'Ego sum qui sum' de la 'métaphysique de l'Exode.'" In *Dieu Et L'Etre : Exegeses D'Exode 3, 14 Et De*

Coran 20, 11-24 [sic], 141-164. Centre D'études Des Religions Du Livre. Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1978.

. "La dialectique du 'magis esse' et du 'minus esse' chez saint Augustin." In *Le Néoplatonisme. Royaumont, 9-13 Juin 1969*. Edited by Pierre Hadot and Pierre-Maxime Schuhl, 373-380. Paris: Éditions Du Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique, 1971.