

**Augustine Our Contemporary: Examining the Self in Past and Present****Willemien Otten****Publication Date**

30-05-2018

**License**

This work is made available under a Copyright Controlled by External Host license and should only be used in accordance with that license.

**Citation for this work (American Psychological Association 7th edition)**

Otten, W. (2018). *Augustine Our Contemporary: Examining the Self in Past and Present* (Version 1). University of Notre Dame. <https://doi.org/10.7274/24858318.v1>

This work was downloaded from CurateND, the University of Notre Dame's institutional repository.

For more information about this work, to report or an issue, or to preserve and share your original work, please contact the CurateND team for assistance at [curate@nd.edu](mailto:curate@nd.edu).

Edited by Willemien Otten and Susan E. Schreiner

# AUGUSTINE

## OUR CONTEMPORARY

*Examining the Self  
in Past and Present*



AUGUSTINE OUR CONTEMPORARY



# AUGUSTINE OUR CONTEMPORARY

---

Examining the Self in Past and Present

Edited by

WILLEMIEN OTTEN

and

SUSAN E. SCHREINER

University of Notre Dame Press

Notre Dame, Indiana

University of Notre Dame Press  
Notre Dame, Indiana 46556  
undpress.nd.edu

Copyright © 2018 by the University of Notre Dame

All Rights Reserved

Published in the United States of America

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Otten, Willemien, editor.

Title: Augustine our contemporary : examining the self in past and present /  
edited by Willemien Otten and Susan E. Schreiner.

Description: Notre Dame : University of Notre Dame Press, 2018. |

Includes bibliographical references and index. |

Identifiers: LCCN 2017055860 (print) | LCCN 2018005245 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780268103477 (pdf) | ISBN 9780268103484 (epub) |

ISBN 9780268103453 (hardcover : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Augustine, of Hippo, Saint, 354-430.

Classification: LCC BR65.A9 (ebook) | LCC BR65.A9 A875 2018 (print) |

DDC 270.2092—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017055860>

Ⓢ *This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992  
(Permanence of Paper).*

This e-Book was converted from the original source file by a third-party vendor. Readers who notice any formatting, textual, or readability issues are encouraged to contact the publisher at [ebooks@nd.edu](mailto:ebooks@nd.edu)

## CONTENTS

	Introduction: Augustine Our Contemporary <i>Susan E. Schreiner</i>	1
ONE	Augustine Our Contemporary: The Overdetermined, Incomprehensible Self <i>David W. Tracy</i>	27
TWO	<i>Semper agens/semper quietus</i> : Notes on the History of an Augustinian Theme <i>Bernard McGinn</i>	75
THREE	<i>Pondus meum amor meus</i> , or Contradictory Self-Love <i>Vincent Carraud</i>	105
FOUR	The Open Self: Augustine and the Early Medieval Ethics of Order <i>Willemien Otten</i>	135
FIVE	Teachers Without and Within <i>Adriaan T. Peperzak</i>	165
SIX	Luther and Augustine on Romans 9 <i>David C. Steinmetz</i>	185
SEVEN	St. Augustine, or the Impossibility of Any <i>Ego cogito</i> <i>Jean-Luc Marion</i>	199

EIGHT	The Augustinian Strain of Piety: Theology and Autobiography in American History <i>W. Clark Gilpin</i>	233
NINE	The Saint and the Humanities <i>William Schweiker</i>	249
TEN	The Source of Temptation <i>Franklin I. Gamwell</i>	267
ELEVEN	Augustine and Political Theology <i>Jean Bethke Elshtain</i>	293
TWELVE	<i>Cor ad cor loquitur</i> : Augustine's Influence on Heidegger and Lonergan <i>Fred Lawrence</i>	315
THIRTEEN	Ruins and Time <i>Françoise Meltzer</i>	365
	Notes on Contributors	389
	Index	395



# Introduction

Augustine Our Contemporary

SUSAN E. SCHREINER

The above title, taken from the opening chapter of this book, by David Tracy, encapsulates the overarching theme of the volume. The authors have interpreted the word “our” in terms of both historical and contemporary thought. Just as seminal thinkers throughout the centuries have turned for guidance to St. Augustine, so, too, have modern authors found him to be *their* contemporary. In Augustine they encounter a theologian who, from out of the distant past, continues to speak to them as they wrestle with the very issues that Augustine placed at the center of Western thought.

David Tracy is no exception. It is not an overstatement to say that from 1969 to 2007 Tracy’s tenure at the University of Chicago Divinity School constituted the “Tracy era.” Throughout this period, Tracy provided leadership in the study of Christian theology and its relationship to history, philosophy, literature, and ethics. Hence it is fitting that the

authors of the chapters in this book include scholars from all these areas. The broad and synthetic range of Tracy's knowledge has always astounded his colleagues and peers. Moreover, Tracy exemplified the interdisciplinary approach that he knew theology required. His teaching, research, and writings continue to guide and inform the intellectual projects of those who still wander these halls. Although he has retired, David's presence is still profoundly influential. For all that he taught us, we are grateful, and, therefore, we thank him with this volume.

However, these chapters do not analyze David Tracy's own writings. Despite his impact on the work of both the Divinity School and the wider world of scholarship, David staunchly refused to allow his colleagues to celebrate his retirement with a conference devoted to his own work. Anxious not to let him just pack up his books and leave the school, the faculty continually asked, "What can we do in honor of your retirement?" He insistently dodged the question. Finally, however, Tracy conceded that we could arrange a conference to commemorate his retirement on one condition; namely, that the conference be about St. Augustine. By making this decision, he both affirmed the importance of Augustine in his own theology and upheld the long-standing conviction held by the Divinity School that contemporary theology must grow out of, and be in conversation with, the history of the Christian tradition.

In his insistence that the conference focus on Augustine and his interpreters, Tracy thereby opposed the ever-present danger of a "presentism" that would isolate the theology of our age from those traditions that gave it life. The present always seems so urgent to contemporary thinkers. More so than in any other era, the present now bears down on us from every image, newspaper, and screen, and it is increasingly difficult to break the power of its grip. By maintaining the importance of St. Augustine, David once again acted as our teacher. Devoted to historical and contemporary readings of Augustine, this conference demonstrated the need to bring the past to bear upon the present. David showed us that it is our responsibility to question the past and to allow the past to question us. And so we held a very successful conference, which we felt to be so meaningful that we decided it was worthwhile to publish the results. Our hope is that this volume will demonstrate that thinkers ranging from Augustine's immediate successors to Lonergan and Tracy worked by turning back to the Augustinian legacy. In short,

Tracy was right: Augustine has always been a contemporary of the Western tradition.

Since all of our authors are writing on some aspect of Augustine, it might be useful to jump ahead for a moment to the essay by David Steinmetz. Steinmetz makes clear that the term “Augustinian” has always been problematic. As he argues, every theologian in the West was to some extent Augustinian. Contemporary historians have tried to study the extent of Augustinianism in three fundamental ways. One method concentrates on the theological environment in which a theologian reads Augustine and the tradition of interpretation characteristic of the religious community to which he or she belongs. Another method is one in which one focuses on one author’s use of Augustine. A third approach consists of comparing Augustine’s teaching on a given subject with the way that subject is treated by a later thinker. As Steinmetz warns, appealing to Augustine is not the same as being Augustinian in the strictest sense. Various thinkers adapted Augustine’s thought in order to solve the current issues with which they were struggling. Because our authors are primarily using the third methodology, we are able to provide a trajectory that traces the ways in which an Augustinian theme recurred, and was transformed, by later thinkers. In the course of this book, we will find topics that David Tracy’s chapter analyzes and that evoke further discussion—namely, such topics as nature and grace, sin and redemption, the possibility of knowledge, and the significance of tragedy. Most importantly, we will see that the voices from history as well as those from our own day address Tracy’s question about the self. We find discussions about the nature of the self, the capabilities and limitations of the self, and the place of the self in relation to God and the cosmos. By using both the historical and later interpretations, we have consciously resisted the presentism that is the constant temptation of contemporary thinkers. We have attempted, rather, to demonstrate the necessity of bringing the past to bear on the present. In so doing, we give examples from various genres and from different historical eras.

Of course not all elements of Augustine’s work appealed to every writer or every generation. It may be possible to identify some of the primary concerns of an age by discerning what writers chose to emphasize within the Augustinian tradition. If this supposition is correct, the following chapters may be revealing of our own era as well. This becomes

particularly clear when we perceive that one central issue continually resurfaces: the concern with the self. What can the self (or soul) accomplish? Is the self free or unfree? What can we know, and what is beyond our comprehension? What is the place of the self in the universe? What is the self seeking? Throughout we will find a deep, and perhaps anxious, interest in the volitional and intellectual capacities of the human self and its understanding of, and place in, the world.

Since Tracy's work set the agenda for the conference and this volume, it is fitting to open the volume with his essay "Augustine Our Contemporary: The Overdetermined, Incomprehensible Self." Tracy begins analyzing many of these issues by exploring the development of Augustine's view of the self throughout the course of Christian theology. As he states, Augustine's understanding of the self is most famous for his emphasis on the turn toward interiority. With this emphasis on interiority Augustine used several paradigms to construct what Tracy calls the "overdetermined self." The paradigm of "nature-grace" enables us to see how "intelligence-in-act" is driven by love. Tracy explains that Augustine believed that popular religion should also become a philosophical religion. For the philosophically mature Augustine, "the mind—through its exercise of attentive intelligence-in-act—was capable of producing both a genuine *scientia* of bodily, sensuous things, as well as a *sapientia*, or wisdom, about the first principles of reason in the divine ideas." At its limit, the mind could come to an inadequate but real and partial understanding of God as the Incomprehensible One. Furthermore, philosophy continued to bear on the truths of the faith: "Faith must always seek understanding of itself, its intellectual internal and external coherence." As Tracy argues, "Faith released a new knowledge and a new powerful desire to know always more—redirecting, enriching but never abandoning the employment of all the usual forms of reason. *Fides quaerens intellectum*."

However, the "Augustinian intellectualist self" should never lead us to downplay the important role of will or love. Tracy elucidates the relationship between the intellect and love by showing that, for Augustine, "Love, like faith and hope, drives understanding. *Fides quaerens intellectum* is simultaneously *Amor quaerens intellectum*."

He continues: "Nevertheless, another reality—sin—enters this Augustinian interweaving of intelligence and love to darken, wound, and becloud knowledge as it twists the will from its natural desire to love the

Good into something defined by false loves.” At this point the paradigm of “sin-grace” emerges as definitive of the sinful self, a self that Augustine defined as a convalescent who was being healed by grace over time.

Tracy explains that the classical Protestant reformers were attracted to the sin-grace paradigm at the expense of that of nature and grace. Finding that the central formulation of Augustine’s view of the self was found in the anti-Pelagian works, both Luther and Calvin emphasized the “radicality of the sin-natured self,” which included the bondage of the will and the self-delusion of the intellect.

Tracy concludes by introducing a third paradigm, which he draws from Greek tragedy. As he states, “In addition to (not in replacement of!) employing the nature-grace paradigm for understanding intelligence and will and the sin-grace paradigm for understanding the depth of sin, I propose a tragedy-grace paradigm to complete Augustine’s rich polyphonic and conflictual (in a single word, overdetermined) understanding of the ultimately incomprehensible reality, the human self.” Tracy develops this innovative paradigm in order to demonstrate that Augustine’s tragic sensibility is both intensified and transformed by God’s grace. In sum, Tracy develops an understanding of the self that is “comprehensible only as an overdetermined self—dazzlingly intelligent and loving, constituted by will as energy, will as choice—as well as a graced, sinful and tragic self.”

These themes regarding the nature of the self, interiority, the role of reason, sin, will, grace, and love continue to find expression in the chapters that follow Tracy’s. In his chapter, “*Semper agens/semper quietus*: Notes on the History of an Augustinian Theme,” Bernard McGinn focuses on the discussion of the divine names in the first five books of the *Confessions*. In these sections Augustine is struggling with the question of how the human being can properly address God. In order to talk with or about God correctly, we must somehow know the truth about God. How much can the human mind understand about God such that it is calling on the true God and not some false or fictitious divinity? To “name” God requires us to learn the true nature of the divine and to ask whether human language can ever express this truth. McGinn concentrates on the attributes that conclude Augustine’s “hymn of praise”—namely, with the invocation of the phrase “*semper agens/semper quietus*.” According to McGinn’s analysis, this phrase is the central theme by which Augustine expresses the simultaneous insufficiency and the necessity of speaking about God. Moreover, as

McGinn argues, this problem of knowing and naming the true God persisted throughout the medieval tradition but reemerged with full force in the vernacular mysticism of the thirteenth century. The problem persists today. As McGinn eloquently states, “We, like Augustine, have to discover the truth about the God we address, or at least as much as necessary to enable us to direct our faltering speech to the real God and not some counterfeit (*aliud enim pro alio potest invocare nesciens*).”

Vincent Carraud analyzes a different phrase of Augustine found in the *Confessions*: “*Pondus meum amor meus*.” His chapter, with that phrase as its title, returns us to the theme of interiority by turning to the relationship between love and the self. By studying the meaning of this phrase, Carraud asks a central question: “What does theology have to gain by thinking of its foremost object, love, as a weight?” He pursues this issue by an exploration that leads to the ultimate question: Is self-love a real possibility for the self in Augustine’s thought?

Carraud begins by explaining the concept of a “weight” [*pondus*] as derived from the “philosophical vulgate” of Augustine’s time. Adopting the tradition that stemmed from Aristotle, Augustine assumes the teleological concept of “natural place.” He shows that “the development in Augustine is that he, in contrast [to Cicero], subsumes under the single concept of *pondus* the two opposing impulses upward and downward.” In Augustine, weight does not mean “downward” but, rather, includes both heaviness and lightness. Carraud then argues that, owing to the paradox found in scripture rather than in widespread physical doctrines, Augustine’s idea of the “neutrality of weight” becomes the model of a twofold love—namely, both *gravitas* [heaviness] and *levitas* [lightness]. Tracing Augustine’s innovative use of *pondus* and *ordo*, Carraud demonstrates that the physical concept of weight has been transformed and acquired “essential neutrality.”

According to Carraud, what Augustine gains by linking love to the physical model of weight is a way of thinking about love as immanent and interior. This also means that love is “a (natural) law inseparable from the self.” Equally important, the physical model of weight allowed Augustine to think about the interiorization of movement according to the “law of love.” With this law of love, Augustine radically refuses all models of exteriority; order is also immanent. As he states, “Moreover, the love of God is my natural trajectory, and the divine law is not exterior.”

The “physics of love” allows us to understand the identity that Carraud emphasizes throughout his chapter: “My weight is my love; *my* love is *your* gift” (Carraud’s emphasis). Moreover, order and weight are synonymous. Weight makes a body move toward its own place, which is inevitably different from its initial place. Movement itself signifies disorder; its completion is its end or rest, which is the “establishment or reestablishment of order.” As a weight, love must move to its proper place, which is the “rest in God.” As Augustine says, “Our rest is our place.” Carraud asks, “If, then, love is that which causes displacement and creates order, the thing that displaces me and orders *me*, how could I conceive that I am, in myself, my own proper place? How would my self-love move me toward myself, and, consequently, how would this be love?” In Augustine’s theology, self-love cannot be a principle because love is “constitutionally and fundamentally a displacement teleologically directed toward another place.” Carraud powerfully concludes: “Self-directed love contradicts the very essence of love.”

Willemien Otten’s chapter, “The Open Self: Augustine and the Early Medieval Ethics of Order,” continues themes about *ordo* and the self by examining early medieval thought as a combined intellectual-moral project called the “open self.” This is a self deeply influenced by the Augustinian legacy, especially as it relates to ideas of self and creation. Otten questions why the therapeutic approach made famous centuries later by Martha Nussbaum’s *Therapy of Desire* did not recur after Augustine until the twelfth century. Augustine’s idea of the *exercitatio mentis* as preparation of the soul for its ascent to God seemed to be ideally suited to further therapeutic development. However, we do not find this reemergence of a kind of psychological introspection until Abelard’s interest in ethics, which bears the therapeutic subtitle *Know Thyself*.

Returning to the early Middle Ages from an Abelardian perspective, Otten argues that early medieval thought did not lack an interest in ethics, but this interest was implicit because it was intertwined with, and overshadowed by, cosmological contemplation. The move after Augustine was as much an outward one—toward the study of creation and the universe, as attested in the thought of Johannes Scottus Eriugena’s *Periphyseon*—as an inward one, as evidenced in Anselm’s *Proslogion*. Nonetheless, as Otten explains, “The greatest divergence separating various groups of early medieval authors concerns precisely the meaning of

the self.” Whereas Augustine and Anselm “can be grouped together as advocating a view of the self that is somehow centered and introspective, for authors like Eriugena or the Chartrians the inward view of the self retreats before an outward view of cosmic nature.” Otten proceeds, however, to show how complex this grouping becomes when analyzing the relationships among Augustine, Anselm, and Eriugena. She makes clear how the divergence regarding the meaning of the self concerned the relationships among God, the cosmos, and the self.

Otten begins by explaining how the “tropological” or “cogitative” turn in the early Middle Ages cultivated an “open transparent self.” This tropological turn, inaugurated by Augustine, is the “joint task of biblical hermeneutics and cosmological study” by means of which prescholastic thinkers reflected on the universe and reached out to God. They did so, however, without “taking the needs of the human self as their explicit point of departure.”

Otten goes on to explain the crucial importance of the sense of order and balance in early medieval discourse. By appreciating their importance, “It literally makes no difference whether we are dealing with the Platonic notion of cosmic *reditus* in Eriugena or with Anselm’s intimate, prayerful plea to God to reform his defiled soul in the opening chapter of his *Proslogion*, as the nature of their divergence, that is, of the soul or self from God in Anselm and of cosmic nature from God in Eriugena, is from an early medieval perspective a mere optical illusion. God, self, and cosmos must inevitably come together, because they jointly constitute the fixed regimen of divine order that constitutes the early medieval paradigm and whose rhythm spurs on and pulsates in early medieval reflection.” The reason Otten wants to speak of an “ethics” of order is that “inherent in the notion of order that is assumed, God and the cosmos are related in such a way that humans remain able to make responsible choices.” Through the ages authors have been free to use their own hermeneutical strategies to add moral depth to their texts. These choices are therefore “best seen as choices of an open self.” Their morality is mostly implicit because the purpose of these texts was not to give us a sinful human before an omnipotent God but rather “to facilitate traffic and thus continue the conversation.” Seen from this perspective, Otten concludes: “Directed by *recta ratio*, all that early medieval texts strive to do is to maintain traffic control as they try to assign both God and the soul their proper place in the universe.”



Throughout her essay, Otten demonstrates how the early medieval reading of Augustine constructively linked the rational and affective/spiritual dimensions of Augustine's thought. She is thereby able to show that there was "a layered, more complex notion of confession, opening up into the self as much as into the universe." This twofold perspective of early medieval thought is the kind of therapeutic message with which Augustine colored the outlook of the early Middle Ages as an ethics of order. Otten concludes, "The larger development of his thought notwithstanding, it seems to have mattered very little to Augustine whether he connected God, self, and cosmos via a Platonic and cosmological program, as in his early *Soliloquies* or *De Ordine*; integrated them in the two halves of his prayerful *Confessions*; or erected new parameters for their convergence in the semiotic *On Christian Doctrine*. Since it was not in selective but in mixed form that Augustine was transmitted to the early Middle Ages, understandably, early medieval authors accordingly came to see this mix as the essence of his message." Her analysis serves as advice to enrich the field of Augustinian studies by reading Augustine not just as the (post) modern author foreshadowing the discovery of the self but also as the author in whom world and self are found completely intertwined.

Thus Otten has shown that the early Middle Ages adopted Augustine's *exercitatio mentis* to create an "ethics of order." Ethical and pedagogical themes that stress order and the mind find further expression in the chapter by Adriaan Peperzak, "Teachers Without and Within." Peperzak shows the process of Augustine's transformation of Plato and then proceeds to compare Augustine and Bonaventure, with particular attention to the influence of the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions. Like McGinn, Peperzak is interested in the relationship between language and truth, but he is not discussing human language. Now we are dealing with an analysis of God's language when speaking to human beings. Peperzak shows that Augustine elevates the "cosmic metaphor of light" by giving it the power of an "intersubjective and educational metaphor for evoking a divine speaking that generates human words of truth."

Moreover, Peperzak shows that the decisive element in Augustine's transformation of the Platonic and Plotinian God creates a place for Christ as the unique mediator. For Augustine, the incarnate Word of God as the Light of the World is necessary for human beings to be convinced of the truth. As Peperzak argues, "Here stands the decisive difference

between Augustine and non-Christian Platonists: this—not Plotinus’s *Nous*—is the mediator, a divine man, incarnate Word of God and Light of the world, whom humans need in order to be convinced by the truth. His presence in our search is the light in which we are allowed to think and ‘see.’ Without being in touch with the *Logos*, there is no human truth.” Peperzak further shows that although Bonaventure’s framework is profoundly Augustinian, he also employs the works of Aristotle, as is apparent in Bonaventure’s explanation of how humans attain true knowledge of creation. Bonaventure agrees with Augustine that the search for truth must be based on faith: “Ultimately Christ is the only teacher, because he is the only originary principle and cause of both faith and reason.” However, Bonaventure also accepts the Augustinian device of *fides quaerens intellectum*, which requires rational inquiry to understand the hidden meanings and coherence of revealed truth. Nonetheless, theological and philosophical reflection cannot be the ultimate goal. Contemplation integrates rational insight with affective dispositions and virtuous behavior.

Although Bonaventure appeals to Augustine’s writings about Christ as “God’s Word and the one exemplary origin in which all eternal truths, ideas, essences, and laws form one creative *ars aeterna*,” he warns against an exclusive emphasis on divine illumination. God is “neither the only nor the complete principle of human knowledge.” While we discover truth in the light granted by the Word of God, that light itself cannot become the object of our conceptual grasp or unmediated speculation. The light “*in which* we ‘see,’ ‘think,’ and ‘speak’ the truth about beings cannot be comprehended or seen, because it is too much, too super-abundant, too blinding for a finite intellect.” According to Peperzak, Bonaventure agrees with Augustine that the human “soul is connected to the eternal laws, because the extreme edge of the active intellect and the highest part of its reason is somehow in touch with that [divine] light.” However, he agrees with Aristotle that our knowledge, including knowledge of universals, presupposes and requires sensibility, memory, and experience.

Peperzak concludes by reflecting on the role of teachers. Christ, of course, is the “inner teacher,” but “Christ has not come to abolish the authority of teachers.” As the “third level” beyond reason, contemplation is where a good theologian “must be at home.” In fact, for Bonaventure, “contemplation is a *pars pro toto* for a holy life, as seen from the perspective of its truthfulness.” Peperzak concludes by saying, “When we realize

that the Word of God is present in such constellations as the Power and Wisdom without which no worthwhile truth emerges,” exemplary teachers “appear as images of God’s own internal communication” and as messengers who “re-present the Word that, before all beginnings, is spoken by God and, from the beginning of space and time, echoes in every search for authentic truth.”

Augustine was also a teacher of Martin Luther, who claimed Augustine’s authority as often as possible. In David Steinmetz’s chapter we find the question of how much Augustine taught Luther. It is worth noting that, once again, the issue revolves around how Augustine and Luther understood the human being as the self who stands before God. Repeatedly Luther asked how the self, as sinner, can stand before a holy God. Steinmetz approaches this question by comparing Augustine’s interpretation of Romans 9 with that of Luther. This biblical chapter, which has been troublesome for exegetes throughout the centuries, has also raised significant and difficult questions for thinkers about divine justice, faith, and predestination.

Steinmetz shows Luther reading Augustine in terms of the questions that haunted sixteenth-century exegetes and laypeople alike. Could Augustine’s interpretation help Luther solve questions that were so hotly contested in the Protestant Reformation and, indeed, by all parties in the sixteenth century? We learn that despite all his admiration for Augustine, Luther found that Augustine’s exegesis of Romans 9 only posed further theological and pastoral problems. Therefore, as Luther wrestled with these pressing questions, Augustine provided very little help. As Steinmetz explains, “While Augustine worries about free will and the justice of God, Luther devotes his attention to the certitude of salvation and the understandable fears of the spiritually weak.” With Martin Luther, we find ourselves in a world very different from that of the eras studied by Otten and Peperzak. In Steinmetz’s chapter we have moved into that century that was so closely linked to the late Middle Ages but also saw the emergence of modernity.

The quest for certitude did not end with Luther or any of the debates of the sixteenth century. It only deepened, as is clear in the chapter by Jean-Luc Marion. In this chapter we return to questions about how the self can find and know the truth. Otten has shown that, if read from the early medieval perspective, the Augustinian *cogito* “injects God and

humanity into a wider cosmic world whose givenness . . . both invites and demands constant reflection." This reflection of cogitation draws the divine integrally into the "sphere of self and cosmos while making it gain deeper meaning through the repetition implied by the *exercitatio mentis*."

The concern with cogitation and the *cogito* recurs in Marion's chapter, but in a very different context and with very different content. This chapter, "Saint Augustine, or the Impossibility of Any *Ego cogito*," brings us into modernity and demonstrates the modern concern with the self by comparing Augustine's *cogito* with that of Descartes. Marion begins by showing that several of Augustine's statements have led scholars to equate Augustine's argument with Descartes's argument in *Discourse on Method*, a comparison that began in Descartes's own lifetime. For example, Mersenne cited a text from *The City of God*: "I do not at all fear the arguments of the Academics when they say, What if you are mistaken? For if I am mistaken, I exist. He who does not exist clearly cannot be mistaken; and so, if I am mistaken, then, by the same token, I am." Marion draws our attention to *De Trinitate* X.10.14: "At least even if he doubts, he lives; if he doubts, he remembers why he is doubting; if he doubts, he understands he is doubting; if he doubts, he has a will to be certain; if he doubts, he thinks, if he doubts, he knows he does not know; if he doubts, he judges he ought not to give a hasty assent." Do not these parallels make it obvious that Augustine had already articulated the Cartesian argument of the *cogito*?

Marion proceeds to explain why Augustine would have been unable to make Descartes's argument. The difference lies in Augustine's awareness of the essential insufficiency of the ego in itself and its consequent need for transcendence. However, for Descartes the experience of doubt "attests the certitude of the act of thought in such a way that the *ego* finds its essence in the *res cogitans*." Marion emphasizes the following: "This opposition cannot be concealed. The two arguments connect thinking and being. However, in one case it is a matter of beginning with the *ego* in order to deduce existence from it, even God's existence, as from a first principle different from this same God, while in the other case, it is a matter of making the *mens* certain through the doubt and its contradiction, in order to seek its condition of possibility beyond it, namely life." Why could Augustine not succeed in assuring the ego of its existence or assigning to the ego the cogitation as an essence (*res cogitans*)? Augustine

lacked neither the *cogitatio* nor the *esse*. According to Marion, what is missing in Augustine is the ego itself, and as a result Augustine refused to conclude that the ego could be known through itself.

At this point Marion discusses a problem posed by Augustine that will recur in subsequent chapters of this book. For Augustine, the *cogito* reveals that “I am a *quaestio mihi*,” that is, a problem to myself. Analyzing various passages in the *Confessions*, Marion demonstrates that “the more the certitude of existence allows the mind to enter into its being, the more the endless crossing of this field leaves it inaccessible to itself, unknown, impenetrable, as an abyss.”

Furthermore, Augustine’s understanding of *memoria* demonstrates the inaccessibility of the ego. The act of remembering provides no transition between “the fact of myself and my nature, my essence, and my ipseity.” Once again, the certitude of existence grants no access to one’s essence. By analyzing Augustine’s discussions about the fact of forgetting, Marion comes to the central concept of the “immemorial.” He explains that for Augustine memory ultimately concerns the remembrance of that “which never was, either present to me, or represented—the immemorial.” Rather than a faculty for restoring the past by re-presentation, memory is the “*memoria* of forgetting, of the forgetting of forgetting, and ultimately of the immemorial.” This brings about the necessity of transcendence. If *memoria* goes beyond what the *cogitatio* and the *mens* can comprehend, “then I have to think beyond my own thought to finally think me myself.” Unable to grasp the totality of what he is, “I must think me by thinking beyond myself.”

It is this “beyond” that holds the key to Augustine’s lack of “ego.” The prayer with Monica at Ostia proves this self-transcendence because the soul surpasses itself by “*no longer thinking itself*.” No longer inquiring about its essence, the mind is freed from itself and will become what it loves. As Marion argues, the only way “from the self (*qua* existence) toward the self (*qua* essence) is for the *mens* to rejoin the immemorial through a thought that transcends itself.”

But how do we know and love that beatitude that we have never experienced? Is the happy or blessed life found in the memory? This desire cannot occur through theoretical knowledge. Therefore, Marion explains, “We know the desire for the happy life without any acquaintance with it or understanding of it, because it inhabits us as an immemorial.”

Summarizing the necessity of self-transcendence, Marion concludes by saying, "I am" in this desire, "in what I neither have nor am."

Clark Gilpin's chapter moves us into the nineteenth century. Gilpin seeks to identify the "Augustinian strain of piety" in the literary culture of New England Puritanism. He demonstrates that the spirituality of this period tried to provide theological meaning to one's life within the wider sphere of divine providence. Gilpin finds the Puritan strain of piety to be an extension of the "retrospective piety" of Augustine's *Confessions*. Puritan ministers urged their congregations to examine their past lives for evidence of God's providence. This retrospective spirituality then enabled the Puritans to discern a unifying purpose for their lives and thereby to conceive theology as a practical wisdom about the coherence of life over time. We see here the difficulty of understanding the self and placing it within a world that was supposed to be governed by God. However, Gilpin goes on to argue that by the nineteenth century this retrospective providential view of life became increasingly uncertain. He concludes by discussing *Moby Dick*. His study of this literary masterpiece provides further evidence that Melville retains a retrospective narrative but also opens up the possibility of a theologically resonant approach to tragedy.

The interest in the self continues in this book, and William Schweiker is no exception, particularly in his focus on the role of the mind, the importance of teaching, and the learning of the humanities. However, by drawing on Augustine's thought in his chapter, "The Saint and the Humanities," Schweiker also addresses the ethical concerns about teaching. For him, the question is whether the teaching and learning of the humanities should have an ethical dimension. When reading Schweiker's chapter, we should again remember Otten's discussion of the tropological turn that connected scriptural exegesis with moral-intellectual persuasion. Recalling the resulting early medieval "ethics of order" allows us to read Schweiker's urgent questions from an important historical perspective. His questions also address the concerns evident in Peperzak's examination of the search for authentic truth in Augustine and Bonaventure.

Turning to Augustine and contemporary teachers, Schweiker asks, "Can we still speak meaningfully of the soul's journey as part of education, and what role, if any, does the interpretation of texts, including sacred texts, play in this journey?" Schweiker explores this issue through an analysis of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine* and argues that this text

provides a picture of education that is fundamentally an Augustinian *paideia*. In his analysis of this enduring Augustinian volume, Schweiker emphasizes the place of scriptural exegesis, which is “the third step in the ascent of the mind” and “inscribes a pedagogy of reading within the context of spiritual *paideia*.”

Schweiker proceeds to challenge the reader to consider whether this Augustinian *paideia* can be useful today. Humanistic reflection, he says, “must focus strictly on the products of human labor within the domain of language as a system generative of meaning and does so with respect to methods of inquiry that enable analysis, criticism, and insight without any assumption of or claim to the moral or spiritual rectitude of the scholar.” In contrast, Augustine believed that there are moral and spiritual demands “on the knower.” The spiritual *paideia* of the text opens to wider forms of inquiry but focuses on the spiritual condition of the exegete.

Schweiker is acutely aware that to see moral and spiritual conditions as necessary for knowing is “profoundly at odds with contemporary sensibilities.” The influence of experimental and scientific thought results in the conviction that the method of inquiry rather than the rectitude of the mind or heart guarantees true knowledge. He therefore carefully responds to various “criteriological,” epistemic, and semantic criticisms of Augustine’s understanding of education and concludes by claiming that Augustine can, indeed, be a resource for contemporary teaching and learning. By appropriating the “dynamics of productive communicability, and so the love and life” that are at the core of Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana*, we need to see that the pedagogy of our text can be “read as a movement into a fuller, richer, more productive life” under norms that increase life, the love for God, and the love for others. According to Schweiker, Augustine’s conception of *paideia* proposes that the humanities should see the “ascent of the mind” in terms of a movement into a deeper and more complex life, a life that “will enact a form of transcendence and freedom.”

The concern with the nature of the self is also the focus of Franklin Gamwell’s chapter, “The Source of Temptation.” Most of our authors have concentrated on the nature of the self in terms of the mind and of the problem but also the necessity of knowledge. Continuing the ethical aspects of Augustine’s thought, Gamwell also pursues the internal self-examination, but he does so by exploring the volitional aspect of the self in terms of the “sources of sin.” Comparing Augustine with Reinhold

Niebuhr, Gamwell argues that both thinkers perceived the human will as the cause of sin “in the strict sense.”

However, Gamwell asks a further question that both Augustine and Niebuhr struggled to answer. In Augustine’s words, “What is the source of this movement by which the will turns away from the unchangeable good toward a changeable good?” How does one explain how temptation relates to the act of sin? Concentrating on Augustine’s treatise *On the Freedom of the Will*, Gamwell analyzes three possibilities offered by Augustine to explain the source of sin—namely, attributing the temptation to the Creator, to Adam’s sin, or to the allure of inferior things. Gamwell shows that none of these solutions explains why the temptation to sin could have been so persuasive to Adam (or Lucifer).

Because Niebuhr did not accept these answers, he formulated an explication of sin that, although dependent on Augustine, was fundamentally different. Gamwell explains how, for Niebuhr, “sin posits itself.” He agrees with Augustine that “the flawed suggestion of another human (or one’s own past) could not be a force of evil absent a flaw in the present self.” This defect must be in the will and not necessitated by our nature. Since temptation is an evil, God cannot be the cause. Consequently, “each moment of decision must be complicit in the force of evil.” As Niebuhr says, “Man could not be tempted if he had not already sinned.” Having rejected Augustine’s “chronology,” Niebuhr poses an existentialist understanding of the Christian faith and insists that temptation results logically from the sinner’s prior sin. Consequently, the source of sin is not temporal but existential. The occasion for sin is “existentialist anxiety,” which is the “internality of finite self-awareness.” Niebuhr, therefore, effects “an existential transformation of Augustine” and agrees with Kierkegaard that “sin posits itself.”

Nonetheless, Gamwell believes that Niebuhr recognized that his account was self-contradictory. Searching for rational consistency, “Niebuhr in effect throws up his hands” because he finds no resource in logical rules to help him understand the nature of sin. Since the answers to the question regarding the “sources of sin” in both Augustine and Niebuhr are defective, Gamwell offers a third account that avoids self-contradiction and incoherence. Following Niebuhr’s existentialist approach, he argues that the source of sin is human fragmentariness. For Gamwell fragmentariness can explain both the turn toward the self and the social character



of temptation. Understanding the sources of temptation without recourse to seeing it as a penalty for Adam's original sin or as a mysterious defect of the will, Gamwell concludes: "The fragmentariness and social character of human consciousness are sufficient to offer a rational account of, in Niebuhr's term, 'the facts of human wrong-doing.'"

The nature of the self is the entry point for Jean Bethke Elshtain's chapter, "Augustine and Political Theology." Elshtain explains that to grasp Augustine's political theory, the reader must join his theological anthropology to his discussions about the civic life. In her attempt to determine the nature of Augustine's political theology, Elshtain stresses two main points. First, she is determined to negate the view that Augustine was a Christian "realist" who saw government and the civic life only as remedies for sin. Second, she makes clear that Augustine's political thought is characterized by a complex duality of both the positive and the negative, a duality that is clear in his views of the self, knowledge, language, society, war, and peace. This duality fundamentally centers on the constant alternative forces of unity and division.

Elshtain begins by examining "Augustine's complex ruminations on the nature of selfhood." After discussing the themes of love, desire, embodiment, the mind, the will, and Adam's "foundational sin," Elshtain concludes that for Augustine, the human being is "at once social and 'quarrelsome.'" In short, she recognizes that sin is central to his thought but does not eliminate the possibilities inherent in social existence. In fact, she says, "Sociality lies at the basis of Augustine's understanding of the nature of human societies." Analyzing Augustine's view of the mind and human knowledge leads Elshtain to Augustine's theory of language. As she explains, "Augustine's powerful theological anthropology compels attention to the ways in which human beings created in God's image communicate." For Augustine, language reflects "the ways in which the self is riven by sin" and how human societies "bear the stain of sin." Still, we are "driven to communicate by our sociality"; we are "both limited and enabled by the conventions of language." Although we are fallen and sinful, we are also still made in the image of God and defined by human relationality, which requires language. Sin does not obviate the fact that we are all "called to membership [in society] based on a naturalistic sociality and basic morality available to all rational creatures." Illustrating the complex duality characteristic of Augustine's thought, Elshtain shows that civic life

is a “kind of unity in plurality” that “pushes toward harmony,” while “the sin of division, with its origins in pride and willfulness, drives us apart.”

According to Elshtain, it is the “love of friendship” that lies at the root of Augustine’s “practical philosophy.” The need for “relationality” explains the fullness of Augustine’s view of the political realm. As she argues, “All of Augustine’s central categories, including war and peace, are in the form of a relation of some sort or another.” The bonds of affection are fundamental and tie human beings together. Nonetheless, these bonds are stained by sin and the division inherent in the plurality of languages. Therefore, “In light of the confusion and confounding of human languages, it is sometimes difficult to repair this fundamental sociality.” And yet, Elshtain explains, because we yearn for this restoration, we create civic order as a primary requisite for human existence.

Elshtain refuses to see this desire for civic life as simply a constraint of human sin. Civic life also expresses our need for sociality and fellowship, as well as “our capacity for a diffuse *caritas*.” Thus, “if language divides us, . . . it can also draw us together insofar as we acknowledge a common humanity.” For Augustine, “a people gathered together in a civic order is a gathering or multitude of rational beings united in fellowship by sharing a common love of the same things.” Granting this definition of society, Elshtain asks what Augustine saw as the good toward which civic life tends: “how do we identify a polity in which the disorder of dominance by the *libido dominandi* pertains by contrast to a polity in which a well-ordered social life, a world in which ordinary peace (*tranquillitas ordinis*) pertains that permits the moral formation of citizens in households and in commonwealths to go forward?” Here again Elshtain makes clear the dual character of human nature and human society: “It is the interplay of *caritas* and *cupiditas* that is critical, as well as whether one or the other prevails at a given point in time, whether within the very being of a single person or within the life of a civic order.”

The theme of the two cities enables Augustine to trace the “choreography of human relations.” Sin has created divisions within the self, between selves, and between nations and cultures. Although there is “darkness” in the life of human society, one must not withdraw from worldly responsibilities in order to ensure temporal peace. Participating in societal life, the Christian seeks to tame occasions for the reign of *cupiditas* and to maximize the space in which *caritas* can operate. According to Elshtain,

Augustine saw that there were two rules within human reach that were essential in establishing the space for the operation of *caritas*—namely, do no harm to anyone and help everyone whenever possible. Elshtain ends her analysis by addressing the subjects of war and peace. Although war is the ultimate example of the lust for domination in human sinfulness, there are, nevertheless, just and necessary wars. Elshtain explains that Augustine recognized the need for security amid hostile attacks, a fear or “shadow” that cannot be eliminated. The just ruler wages a justifiable war of necessity against unwarranted aggression or to rescue the innocent from destruction. The motivation for such a just war must be love for the neighbor and a desire for a more authentic peace. She explains that it is “because of our intrinsic sociality and under the requirement to do no harm and to help whenever we can that war is occasionally justifiable.”

Elshtain concludes by insisting that Augustine must be rescued from those who see him as an example of a political realism that ignores his insistence on the “great virtue of hope and the call to enact projects of *caritas*.” This misinterpretation of Augustine ignores his understanding of our innate sociality, relationality, and desire for a peace that is not based on dominion. Therefore, she argues, Augustine should “*never* be enlisted on behalf of the deprecators of humankind.”

Concern about the self and the nature of its existence in the world are continued in Frederick Lawrence’s chapter, “*Cor ad cor loquitur*: Augustine’s Influence on Heidegger and Lonergan.” In his analysis we return to epistemological issues of understanding, insight, and knowledge of the truth that have recurred throughout these chapters. He begins by examining the influence of Book X of the *Confessions* on Heidegger’s *Phenomenology of the Religious Life* and *The Lectures on Aristotle*. According to Lawrence, one of the first things that Heidegger gleaned from Augustine’s *Confessions* was that “the same reality that Augustine referred to by the term *nosse* was what he intended by the term *Dasein*, the only being that questions Being as its presence or there-ness (*Da*) in differentiation from being,” an insight that corresponds to Lonergan’s luminosity of consciousness.

Heidegger realized that “the self is constituted as Augustine’s *inquietum cor*.” In Lawrence’s reading, Heidegger “radicalized Husserl’s notion of intentionality by reinterpreting in terms of the concrete factual human being’s experience of inquietude.” Augustine enabled Heidegger to overcome Husserl’s impoverished notion of consciousness as perception by

turning to the meaning of the “restless heart.” As Lawrence explains, “Of the Augustinian motifs from the tenth book of the *Confessions* that Heidegger incorporated into his hermeneutic analysis of the factual life of Dasein, none is more significant than that of becoming a question to oneself.” Heidegger appropriated Augustine’s understanding of the self’s becoming a burden to oneself because of “the overwhelming conditions leading to one’s being *defluxus in multum*, or diverted by the multiplicity of various ‘meaningful’ possibilities.” The dispersion into manifold distractions makes us so attached to the world that one “becomes inaccessible to oneself: the self becomes absent to itself and lost in the objective surroundings that are the sources of its *delectatio*.” Relying on chapters 58–64, Heidegger came to understand how the self is objectified and how one’s *delectatio* becomes “absorbed by one’s own self-importance as the goal of living.” As Lawrence explains, “When the soul pursues its inclination into every and any possibility that attracts it, factual life cannot attain self-knowledge or proper self-possession, because it is fixated on the multiplicity of diverse worldly objects considered meaningful inasmuch as they are the sources of worldly pleasures, and obsessively dictate one’s existential orientation.”

Lawrence moves on to Heidegger’s appropriation of Aristotle and thereby resumes his focus on the “unrest about of one’s own life.” Instead of Augustine’s concern with *beatitudo*, the central problem is now the “this-worldly experience of death.” Lawrence demonstrates how Heidegger’s analysis of *Ruinanz* represents a consolidation of that which he gained from his interpretation of Augustine. Heidegger’s concept of ruinance goes to the heart of the human malaise. However, now the burden of concupiscence that weighed down Augustine and made him a question to himself is displaced by the existential categories of life and by seeing philosophical analysis as a movement that counters ruinance in recovering and pursuing the essential questionability of Dasein. Language about restlessness gives way to that of “care,” a care that is inevitably deflected into the inauthentic concern of *Besorgnis*, which is characterized by self-centeredness. Lawrence shows how Heidegger traced a trajectory of caring as it enacted “the tendency toward falling as the How of its facing death by not facing it.” Nonetheless, there remains a countermovement, a “maintaining oneself in genuine questioning.”

Lawrence then turns to Augustine’s influence on Lonergan, an influence gained through the study of Thomas Aquinas. In his analysis we find

two themes that have become very familiar to the reader. Like Heidegger, Lonergan related Augustine's "inability to cure himself of his *incontinentia* to the *defluxio in multum*." Consequently, Lonergan increasingly began to stress the role of *delectatio*. Like Heidegger and many other of our authors, Lonergan was also preoccupied with the question of knowledge in the act of understanding.

In his examination of Lonergan's developing views on knowledge and judgment, Lawrence explicates how Lonergan learned from Augustine that, as the eternal light, God is the foundation of our knowing. In terms that recall the chapter by Peperzak, Lawrence states that in a profoundly Augustinian insight, Lonergan understood that "the knowledge of truth is not to be accounted for by any vision or contact or confrontation with the other, however lofty or sublime. The ultimate ground of our knowing is indeed God, the eternal Light; but the proximate reason that we know is within us. It is the light of our own intelligences, and by it we can know . . . [for the very intellectual light that is in us is nothing other than a participated similitude of the uncreated light]."

After tracing Lonergan's development in *Verbum* and *Insight*, Lawrence turns to *De Verbo Incarnato*. He argues that one of the lasting influences of Augustine is evident in the changes Lonergan made to his Thomist *analysis fidei*. Lonergan abandoned the "standpoint from which the mind or intellect takes precedence over the will and knowledge takes precedence over love." Lawrence demonstrates that through a "decidedly Augustinian orientation" Lonergan came to acknowledge fully the role of feeling as the power of conscious living, the actuation of the human affective capacities and the effective orientation of the human being. This appreciation of feelings enabled Lonergan to appropriate Augustine's idea of *delectatio* and to recognize the dominant role of love. Recalling the chapter by Carraud, we see that Lonergan recovered Augustine's teaching that "*pondus meum amor meus, eo feror, quocumque feror*" (*Conf.* XIII.9.10). Faith becomes "the knowledge born of religious love." Grasping the primacy of love, Lonergan expounded an understanding of religious conversion in terms of "God's gift of his love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is in us (Rom. 5:5), of falling in love with God, and of being in love with God."

Lawrence contends that these Augustinian insights led Lonergan to articulate the relationship between faith and reason. Within the sphere of

God's love and revealed truths that are unattainable by the light of human reason alone, the assent of belief can take place only because of the *lumen fidei*, which is now understood as the "pressure of God's love upon human intelligence." Finally, moving from theological doctrine to theology as the collaborative enterprise of *fides quaerens intellectum*, Lonergan's life-long project of bringing history into theology "integrated Augustine's hermeneutics of love." Lawrence's chapter makes clear an important distinction between the influence of Augustine on Heidegger and that on Lonergan. Although the motifs of Augustine remain explicit, after his interpretation of Aristotle, Heidegger maintained that the factual life remains a completely profane affair. Lonergan's desire to understand fully the meaning of *fides quaerens* led to a coherent view of the relationship of love and knowledge, faith and reason, theology and philosophy. In coming to that view, he became "more Augustinian."

"Bringing history into theology" inevitably involves us with the issue of time. Few topics interested Augustine more than temporality and the nature of human life within time. Therefore, the perfect ending to this book is Françoise Meltzer's chapter, "Ruins and Time." This chapter focuses on the fascination with the contemplation of ruins, especially by the romantics. Meltzer begins by explaining that the romantic view revolves around two considerations: (1) the long passage of time and the ensuing slow erosion that together produced the ruins and (2) the rapidity and transitory nature of human life, of which the ruins are the reminders.

The profound awareness of *tempus fugit* permeates the many writers whom she studies. However, Meltzer digs deeper in order to uncover the ways in which this theme led to questions about subjectivity, the inaccessibility of the transcendental, and the fragile notion of God, all of which culminated in the limits of human knowledge. In her astute analysis of figures from Kant to Derrida, Meltzer shows that, "until the Enlightenment, or at least until the scientific discoveries of the seventeenth century, there are no seismic changes with respect to a knowing, reliable (if mysterious) God in the European Christian tradition." In order to illustrate this seismic change, Meltzer poses Augustine as a counterpoint to the problems that preoccupied the thinkers of the Enlightenment and the romantics, problems bequeathed to us today.

As she initially explains, "Reading the romantics with their thoughts on ruins alongside a text by Augustine, for whom God is real, undeniable,

and omnipotent, can help to highlight the crisis that pervades the romantic gaze.” Concentrating on Book XI of the *Confessions*, Meltzer emphasizes that for Augustine that which was unknown was the mind of God. Returning once again to Peperzak’s theme, we find in Meltzer’s chapter the importance of Augustine’s idea of God as a teacher. Meltzer explains that Augustine knew that God was his teacher, although God reveals only what he wants to teach; nonetheless, God is the truth, which is unalterable. As Augustine wrote, “Who is our teacher except the reliable truth? . . . He teaches us so that we may know; for he is the Beginning.”

However, Augustine’s understanding of knowledge belongs to a world very different from the modern and postmodern eras. Pointing to the centrality of Kant’s philosophy, which informed the perspective of the romantics, Meltzer shows that Kant’s legacy played a crucial role in altering the idea of subjectivity and in “fraying the belief in the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* that has always been assumed.” Kant’s analysis resulted in shifting the objective to the subjective, thereby raising questions about the limits of human knowledge. The contrast with Augustine is made clear. According to Meltzer, “With (German) romanticism in the wake of Kant, meditation is no longer a question of interrogating an undoubted, if mysterious absolute (Augustine); it is rather the question of how the transcendental, debarred from human knowledge except through intuition . . . affects the concept of the individual, or the subject contemplating the world and, it follows, subjectivity itself.” Except for fleeting flashes of recognition, the absolute is segregated from the phenomenal realm. What, then, is “really real” underneath the façade of phenomena? As Meltzer argues, “The melancholy that ensues as a result of what I am calling segregation from the absolute, is both inevitable and ubiquitous in the texts of the romantics; it is a melancholy born of epistemological anxiety.”

Meltzer continues to analyze the way ruins bring temporality and the transitory to the fore as she discusses a variety of thinkers, including Chateaubriand, du Bellay, and Diderot. Reflecting on the “sweet melancholy” provoked by ruins, Diderot wrote, “A torrent drags each and every nation into the depths of a common abyss. I, myself, I resolve to make a solitary stand at the edge and resist the current flowing past me.” Meltzer is careful to explain that the “I” to which Diderot referred is a concept of individuality that stems from the Enlightenment. The diminishment of the subject,

or the “suspension of the I,” refers to the modern conception of the individual as conceived by the Enlightenment. This individual confronts his or her mortality and insignificance in the face of “time’s immensity.” Thus she explains that, although a celebrated notion, the “I” becomes increasingly insignificant as it totters on the edge of Diderot’s “common abyss.” In Meltzer’s words, “*Ubi sunt* already begins to change into *ubi sum*,” a theme that will continue to resonate throughout the romantics.

Just as the modern sense of the “I” is a development of the Enlightenment, so, too, is the belief that science would lead to the truth, which meant that reason would allow the individual to think for himself or herself. Reason and logic would be the instruments for human growth. However, this optimism about reason and science threw “the subject back into the mind” but “without the stable categories that undergird Descartes’s philosophical move to begin with doubting ‘everything.’” Since science professed to open the doors of knowledge, “the place for the transcendent, or the divine is almost necessarily confined to the individual mind.”

Meltzer’s chapter forces us to ask where these developments in thinking about the modern subject and human knowledge leave us today. Turning to postmodernity, Meltzer shows how Derrida concluded that the ruin was neither a spectacle nor a theme “nor something in front of us.” As Derrida wrote, “Ruin is, rather, this memory open like an eye, or like a hole in a bone socket that lets you see without showing you anything at all, anything of the all.” Still, Meltzer says, Derrida exhibits “nostalgia.” The inability to see “anything of the all” returns us to the romantics, for whom fragments remain, and some sort of totality haunts, a memory of “an all” that (as Hegel points out) is only superficially belied by the view, among the ruins, “of *change* at large.” The romantics had turned “to nature for help, not God.” For Meltzer, this turn by the romantics reflected an increasingly “fragile notion of God.” As Meltzer says, “The old faith as it was must be revered, but it is also now to be buried with the other gods who have lost their believers.”

In Meltzer’s reading, “The ruin, as the romantics conceive of it, is *between* two inaccessible realms, of which it is neither: the idea of an unchanging eternity (like Augustine’s God), and that of the erosion that is human time.” Therefore, nostalgia for unity remains. But, as Meltzer reminds us, Walter Benjamin warned us to resist this nostalgia for unity



or totality. In so doing he cautioned against the temptation to believe that we can profess to surpass time and history.

Meltzer poignantly concludes: "We can admire and indeed envy Augustine's conviction that he will be restored, in death, . . . that in God there is no time, and that God will rebuild the ruin that is Augustine's being." For Augustine, unity was the ideal. Nonetheless, Benjamin's resistance and warning may be the only hope for extricating ourselves from that romantic insistence on "overcoming lack" and seeing in the fragment or ruin a promise, or memory of wholeness.

Although this volume greatly informs us about Augustine and the influence of his thought throughout the centuries, the chapters in it can also hold up a mirror from which we can gain insight into ourselves and our age. In short, these studies reveal just how much Augustine remains "our contemporary." The novelist and screenwriter Nic Pizzolato wrote, "Some people, no matter where they look, see themselves." In these chapters we see ourselves but with the benefit of historical distance provided by the historical readings of Augustine.

At this point it is important to note that the authors of the chapters in this book were not asked to write about any particular aspect of Augustine's thought. They were free to analyze any aspect of his writings that interested them. And yet these chapters repeatedly focus on the nature of the self. Various elements of the self are analyzed, including the will, sin, the mind, the ability to love and to find knowledge about God and the self. The ethical dimensions of these topics are also of concern to these aspects of the self, including the ethical dimensions of teaching and learning as well as the responsibility of the self in society. Finally, we also find discussions about the place of the self in the cosmos and the political world, as well as in providence and temporality.

Why did this unintended unity emerge? Numerous books attest to the current interest in the self, with Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) perhaps holding pride of place. The topics undertaken by our authors also reflect this contemporary preoccupation with the self, and this may well be because today the self has become decentered and destabilized. But we must not think that we are unique. Marion's essay can remind us that, like Augustine, we are saying, "I am a *quaestio mihi*." But our difficulty is quite different from that of Augustine's day. In

comparison to the prevailing ideas of that time, the self is now no longer within a unified worldview with faith in a transcendent God and no longer securely attached to society, the cosmos, and God. In fact, the self seems to be disoriented in the world. Meltzer's chapter leaves us with the recognition that we live among fragments, even fragments of the self. In his book *A Usable Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), William Bouwsma includes a chapter called "Anxiety and the Formation of the Early Modern Culture." He explains that when one lives at the end of an age, or between ages, a human being experiences the inevitable anxiety that stems from "the inability of an inherited culture to invest experience with meaning." Many readers will find this descriptive of our own age. However, this volume offers us a challenge. The inherited tradition reveals how distant we are from Augustine and his past interpreters. And yet, like those in the past, we can turn back to Augustine and the Augustinian tradition in order to find resources with which to explore our own deeply profound and troubling concerns. David Tracy was right: Only by knowing our intellectual past can we think responsibly in the present.

## ONE

# Augustine Our Contemporary

## The Overdetermined, Incomprehensible Self

DAVID W. TRACY

There are three explicit elements in Augustine's account of the self's interiority: first, intelligence-in-act; second, will as both basic energy-love and free choice; and third, sin, which can becloud the intelligence and entrap the will. There is also a fourth element in the self that is not explicit in Augustine but often haunts his texts: tragedy, that is, some mysterious inherited necessity causing intense suffering. Together these four elements constitute Augustine's unique model of an overdetermined self.

The first two elements, intelligence and will, are best interpreted through the traditional Catholic nature-grace paradigm. The third element, sin, is best read through the classical Reformed sin-grace paradigm. The fourth element, tragedy, can now be read through what deserves the name "tragedy-grace paradigm." Sometimes the four elements clash with, or even fragment, each other. Sometimes they tentatively harmonize. There is finally a unified self in Augustine but never a permanently stable self: *cor*

*inquietum*. Precisely through his troubled, restless complexity, Augustine, more than any other ancient Western Christian thinker on the self, remains our contemporary. Part of Augustine's genius was to understand the head and the heart together, never apart. It is necessary first to distinguish each element on its own, however, before one can realize that Augustine's self is penultimately overdetermined and ultimately incomprehensible (i.e., theologically as the *imago dei* of the Incomprehensible God).<sup>1</sup>

#### AUGUSTINIAN INTELLECTUAL INTERIORITY: THE JOURNEY WITHIN

Augustine, concerned throughout his life with the relation of transient time to eternity, usually preferred temporal metaphors. Surprisingly, however, he chose principally spatial metaphors for understanding our inwardness, our interiority. We can move *upward* (to God) only by moving *within*. When we move *within* we find an inner cavelike, in fact abysslike, space. Eventually we will find, if we travel (temporal) that inner route (spatial) rightly, that we are not alone in our own private space. For Augustine, every self is a unique individual self, but not a private self. In modern terms, there is no purely autonomous self, although, as Paul Tillich sharply formulated it, for the Christian there is a theonomous (*not* heteronomous) self. Each self, for Augustine, is unique, and its very uniqueness is constituted by relationships through intellect and love to all others and, above all, to God through Christ in the Spirit. Especially in the *Confessions*, Augustine believed that he displayed the self discovering through its most inner point—the *acies mundi*—the eternal, changeless Truth. More accurately, for Augustine it is not so much that we discover God in ourselves as that we find ourselves in God. We are *in* God *with* others. Once again, Augustine here prefers *spatial* metaphors even to describe our temporal, transient selves, grounded *in* the timeless, eternal God.

Augustine probably learned the philosophical-theological potentialities of the journey inward from Plotinus as well as Porphyry. As early as *De libero arbitrio* (2,7.7–2,15.35),<sup>2</sup> Augustine follows Plotinus's advice of moving within himself: classically, he describes the inward journey in the first nine books of the *Confessions*.<sup>3</sup> Largely through spatial and temporal metaphors and rhetorical tropes as much as through rhetorical topical

arguments, Augustine confesses God (*confessio* as testimony-witness in prayer) while also confessing his graced and sinful journey to God; then he confesses to himself and to his readers (especially, but not solely, his fellow Christian readers). Augustine keeps moving within until he arrives at the reflections on time in Book X and the theological speculations on creation and the created order in Books XI, XII, and XIII. Only later in his life, in the more serene sea of contemplation in the final books of *De Trinitate*, does the restless Augustinian inward-directed soul come to full contemplative loving peace and joy by proposing that we search within our own deepest graced inwardness—memory, understanding, and will—love—as grounded in the Trinity of infinite intelligence and infinite love: Father, Son, and Spirit.

In the splendidly serene Plotinus as well as in the more anxious Porphyry, the intellectually and morally purified soul on its “journey within” leaves what Augustine, too, will call the “region of dissimilarity” for the highest region available to the self under its own powers, the realm of nous, pure intelligence-in-act. There the soul must wait for the ultimate possibility (*not* necessity—it may not happen) for the magnetlike radiant other-power of ultimate reality, the one-good, to draw the self home.

In the realm of nous, the intellectually purified contemplative soul rests and struggles no more. In its earlier rigorous intellectual and moral exercises of purification, the soul has struggled to reach the realm Aristotle describes as contemplation. For Aristotle, although not for Plato, thought thinking itself is the ultimate reality as the source and goal of all reality. For Plotinus, in the realm of nous, the soul, Odysseuslike, reaches its own natural home. But the Plotinian self’s truest home is the ultimate reality beyond nous and beyond being (Plato)—the realm of the one and the good from which all reality radiates, emanates—to which the self’s entire ascent of accelerating intellectual and moral purification is directed and by which the self is magnetically drawn ever upward.

Plotinus brilliantly unites Plato’s “the good beyond being” of the *Republic* to the one of the *Parmenides* to become the Plotinian one-good as our final end, just as it is our source. The contemplative, indeed mystical, Plotinian experience of the good is one that, Porphyry informs us, Plotinus himself experienced only four times during his years with Porphyry.<sup>4</sup> Plotinus’s mystical experience of the one-good is necessarily transient, yet it does permanently affect the soul-self with a sense of lasting

peace, joy, and serenity. Eventually the Plotinian one emanates-radiates (i.e., impersonally) the soul back to the realm of nous to begin its return descent through all the lower levels of reality, only to begin to ascend anew. Plato was taken, in the *Republic*, to a vision of the good beyond being and, in the *Symposium*, to the appearance—suddenly—of the beautiful itself. Aristotle, in the view of most Platonists, never reached Plato's good beyond being and beyond intelligence. For all post-Plotinus Platonists (later named Neo-Platonists), Plotinus, like Plato, had been gifted with the contemplative-mystical vision of the one-good. Platonists added theurgy and sacred texts, even magic, to Plotinus's more austere inward journey. Clearly the Plotinian inner journey appealed to Augustine, recently philosophically Platonist and newly baptized. Now a Christian, Augustine began his Plotinuslike journey within. The self Augustine found in his inner journey within was very different from the Plotinian self. Above all, Augustine in his inner graced journey moved within to discover not the emanating generous (but unintelligent and unloving) impersonal Good but rather the all-intelligent, all-loving, creating, sustaining, redeeming God of the Bible—the God disclosed, in Paul as in Augustine, only in and through Christ (“I no longer live but Christ lives in me”; Galatians 2:20).

In *De Trinitate*, the true destiny of Augustine's graced intellectual and loving self can be described not only with the ancient idea of the self as microcosm but also with the biblical idea of the self as “*imago dei*.” The human being as divine *imago* was probably first experienced by Augustine in a mystical and uniquely dialogical vision he shared with Monica at Ostia. The Augustinian “drive” from rhetoric, dialectic, and dialogue as the preparatory routes to the highest experience of intelligence-in-act—contemplation—was initiated in his Cassiciacum dialogues. Shortly before that time of “*otium*” (leisure with friendship and dialogue), Augustine's Christian Platonist contemplative spirit had been released when he first heard the allegorizing sermons of Ambrose. Ambrose's Origenist sermons freed Augustine from despising many biblical texts as too vulgar in their literal sense. Christian Platonists at Milan, especially the bishop, Ambrose, showed Augustine how an allegorical exegesis of the Bible could reveal meditative and contemplative readings of the scriptures to complement the properly literal-historical sense of the texts.

Full contemplative intensity came later for Augustine—at its highest in *De Trinitate*. Indeed, the amazing accomplishment of *De Trinitate*,

theologically the most profound of Augustine's texts, is that its doctrinally Christian<sup>5</sup>—that is, Trinitarian, Christological, and Pneumatological—interpretation was originally inspired by his introspective reading of Paul alongside his interiorized journey-within reading of Plotinus from the time of his two conversions: his intellectual conversion (God is pure spirit, not matter), occasioned by reading some books of the Platonists (probably Latin translations of parts of both Plotinus and Porphyry), and his Christian conversion proper, leading up to his baptism (along with his son, Adeodatus) by Ambrose (387). Augustinian contemplation is a profound experience of the participation of the soul's memory, understanding, and will in God's Trinitarian, very own tripersonal Godhead.

#### THE SELF AS AWAKE: INTELLIGENCE-IN-ACT

Late in his life Augustine received a letter from a recently converted Christian young man with an intellectual dilemma that he hoped the then internationally famous Christian thinker, Bishop Augustine of Hippo, might resolve. This youthful intellectual—bright, honest, with all the idealism of youth—informed Augustine that he had spent most of his intellectual life reading the philosophers. He was close to giving up in skeptical despair before God's grace caught him up into the truth, that is, Christian faith. Hence his question to Augustine: Now, on the other side of faith, should he give up philosophy altogether? Does it bear any further use? Perhaps he expected that the famous Catholic bishop, the greatest living defender of the faith, would encourage his desire to abandon argument and philosophy altogether for faith alone. This expectation was to be sharply disappointed. The old bishop wrote back a resounding "No."

Augustine wrote his young correspondent words that Plotinus or, for that matter, Kant, could well have written: *Intellectum valde ama*.<sup>6</sup> Faith was, of course, the revelation of the final truth for Augustine. However, faith must always seek understanding of itself, its intellectual internal and external coherence; faith as reasonable trust must always be ready to give reasons for its hope to itself and to outside critics. Faith released a new knowledge and a new powerful desire to know always more—redirecting, enriching, but never abandoning the employment of all the usual forms of reason. *Fides quaerens intellectum*.

Popular religion, for Augustine, should also become a philosophical religion. Like Origen before him, Augustine believed that the truths revealed by faith made Christianity the true philosophical religion: philosophy for all people, not only for a philosophical elite. For Christian thinkers, popular religion and philosophic religion were not contraries but rather partners in the same community, grounded in faith. Augustine's earlier, more purely philosophical religion (seen in the dialogues) gradually yielded to a Christian theology that was orthodox, daring, and, at times, erroneous (e.g., on double predestination). At still other times (e.g., in the debates on the origin of the soul), Augustine, after great efforts and with characteristic intellectual honesty, decided not to decide.<sup>7</sup>

Since the groundbreaking work of Pierre Hadot on the role of spiritual exercises in all ancient philosophy,<sup>8</sup> it is clear that no one can understand Augustine's diverse uses of reason without realizing that for Augustine, as for all his philosophical and theological contemporaries, intellectual exercises like mathematics (especially numbers, for Augustine) and dialectics are not only intellectual exercises (as for most moderns) but also spiritual exercises. This Augustine learned, both intellectually and spiritually, from "some books of the Platonists." Through enacting Platonic dialectic, dialogue, and contemplation, Augustine learned several important intellectualist truths that he never abandoned: God is pure spirit; intellect is spirit, not matter; the soul is embodied, but as soul (i.e., spirit), it is as accurate to say "ensouled body" as "embodied soul." As the later, more Aristotelian scholastics would say, one must learn to distinguish but not separate soul and body, matter and form, mind and the senses. Above all, the theologian must learn the singular philosophical insight of the intellectualist Platonists on the purely spiritual nature of God and the soul—an insight not shared by materialist Stoics, Epicureans, and skeptics, or even by some Christian theologians (e.g., Tertullian).

Augustine's reading of the books of "some Platonists" has rightly been described as an "intellectual conversion,"<sup>9</sup> a crucial component in his explicitly Christian conversion ("*Tolle, lege*") in the garden at Milan. Through the Platonists, Augustine now grasped that his former Manichean- and Stoic-influenced materialist understanding of God and the soul was erroneous.

The shift in Augustine's new Plotinist understanding of the soul-mind led him to hold that the true power of the intellect reaches beyond



the senses and matter to the purely intelligible world of mathematics, dialectic, metaphysics, and theology. Mind [*mens*], as intelligence-in-act, is able through its various reasoning processes to understand the intelligible forms of sensuous, bodily, spatial, and temporal realities, as well as the ideas or forms of such purely intelligible realities, as forms or ideas of the mind itself and to attain, in its highest moments of graced contemplation, some understanding of the supreme Forms or Ideas, which are, Christianly construed, Ideas in the mind of God.

For the philosophically mature Augustine, the mind—through its exercises of attentive intelligence-in-act—was capable of producing both a genuine *scientia* of bodily, sensuous things, and a *sapientia*, or wisdom, about the first principles of reason in the divine ideas. At the limit, the mind, through its finite participation in divine infinite intelligence, could, through both apophatic and cataphatic analogous theological understanding, come to an always inadequate but real and partial understanding of God as the incomprehensible one—incomprehensible as infinite intelligence-in-act and infinite love. Moreover, a theological understanding of God's incomprehensibility can lead a Christian thinker to realize that the human being, by its very *imago dei* participation in the incomprehensible loving God, is itself, in its own finite way, also incomprehensible, as manifested in its distinctive and amazing human powers of intelligence and love. Completely unlike the infinite God, however, finite human intelligence and love as finite can become, through sin (original and personal), as we shall see later, also negatively incomprehensible—a smoldering abyss of self-enclosed and self-deluding egocentricity.

Both the depth of Augustine's philosophical and theological acuity (e.g., on the nature of *memoria*)<sup>10</sup> and the range of the forms of intellect that he mastered are amazing. Throughout his life, Augustine engaged in argument in both rhetorical and dialectical forms: in dialogue with friends; in fierce polemical arguments when he thought them appropriate (perhaps too often); and above all in the contemplative intelligence-in-act embedded in Augustine's Plotinuslike journey within. Like Plotinus or, for that matter, like Gautama Buddha (whose very name means Awakened One), Augustine understands intelligence-in-act as an awakening. Augustine helps his readers to be attentive, to awaken from our customary everyday slumbers and self-occlusion. Reason, for Augustine, is an always awakening intelligence-in-act.

This Augustinian intellectualist self should not lead one to downplay the important role of will or love. The desire for the Good drives the desire to know, not the reverse. Without abandoning his intellectualism, Augustine also never lost his artist's instinct for being able to think through image and metaphor as well, nor did he lose his erotic, passionate instinct for the cognitive role of affect, feeling, emotion, will. At heart Augustine was a rhetorician—indeed, the best Latin rhetorician of his day, and the best rhetorical theologian of any day. Gregory of Nazianzus, his contemporary and another major rhetorical theologian, was his only Greek rival as a rhetorical theologian. Even the wisely allegorical sermons and treatises of Ambrose, even the sermons of the golden-mouthed John Chrysostom, and finally even Gregory Nazianzen's brilliant rhetorical and lyrical theological élan were no match for the many-sided, protean Augustine.

Augustine's native talent for rhetoric, combined with his Latin literary education, trained him to possess a second self—an artistic-rhetorical-poetic self. Well educated in a Roman literary rhetorical education, although mostly self-taught in philosophy, Augustine, the former professor of rhetoric, never abandoned his call, even after his intellectualist Platonic discovery of a purely intelligible world available to reason not through rhetoric, but only through mathematics, dialectics, metaphysics, and contemplation.

There are, to be sure, better dialectical and theoretical theologians than Augustine (e.g., the ever-lucid Thomas Aquinas). There are greater contemplative theologians than Augustine, especially in the Greek tradition (Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor). However, no other rhetorical theologian, however accomplished—Gregory of Nazianzus, Bernard of Clairvaux, Teresa of Avila, John Henry Newman—can capture such sudden, unexpected moments of lightning brilliance in metaphor and irony, in image and concept, in narrative and theory.

Most of Augustine's arguments (save a few more strictly metaphysical arguments on God) are, in both the Ciceronian and Aristotelian senses, usually *topical* arguments in rhetoric and dialectic: that is, as Aristotle clearly states, arguments on contingent matters, which might be other than they are, not necessary ones. Some postmodern thinkers (Julia Kristeva, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida), with characteristic postmodern emphasis on the rhetoric of the tropes rather than on their topics, highlight just how radically rhetorical Augustine often is—tropically, not only

topically. Like those of the postmoderns, Augustine's tropes often control his topics, not the reverse. Augustine—like Plato himself far more than later Platonists, such as Pascal, Kierkegaard, Newman, and Simone Weil—was that rarity: a major philosopher-theologian expert in analyzing and developing abstract concepts (e.g., for Augustine, time, will, memory, creation, sin, grace) who was also a major artist. Augustine, like Plato and unlike most philosophers and theologians, was more like the great philosophical artists (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Lucretius, Hildegard of Bingen, Dante, Donne, Goethe, Dostoevsky, Eliot), who could think not only through concepts but also through images (*carthago-sartago*, the “cave” of memory, the “abyss” of the will, the “weight” of love). Augustine often enacted his arguments narratively, for example, through the Vergilian musical rhythms that served as an undertow in the *Confessions* or the outbursts of lyricism in his wondrous commentaries on the Psalms, through the sustained Roman gravitas of *The City of God*, through the almost baroque contemplative leaps of *De Trinitate*, through all the registers of the Latin language with Tacitean lucidity and precision—the Ciceronian rolling thunder of his cumulative sentences, his proto-romantic restless sensibility breaking through his impeccable late-antique Latin prose. Save for his polemical works, content in Augustine always finds itself only in and through form.

As the natural and trained rhetorician, Augustine was language-intoxicated.<sup>11</sup> He swam in all the major linguistic streams: metaphor and irony; metonymy, narrative, paradox, didacticism; rhetoric, dialectic, dialogue. Augustine never stopped believing that intelligence-in-act is one of our greatest gifts and must never be disparaged.<sup>12</sup> Only intelligence-in-act can be trusted to awaken us and keep us awake. Intelligence in all its forms, for Augustine, acknowledges that all is grace, including its own stunning powers and its greatest power—its ability to acknowledge its own limits, not through its flaws but through its very strength. *Intellectum valde ama.*

#### THE SELF AS WILL AND LOVE: WILL AS ENERGY, WILL AS FREE CHOICE

Augustine is the first philosopher to elaborate a full-fledged concept of will as central for understanding the self.<sup>13</sup> And yet there is no systematic definition of will in this unique philosopher of will. In fact, Augustine

uses "will" [*voluntas, arbitrium*] in different ways. Faithful to his own restless will, as described in the *Confessions*, Augustine's plural understandings of will are differently articulated depending on context: will as free choice and consent, free will, will as energy, the will's basic energy as love, the two wills or loves at war in history as in each of us (*caritas* and *cupiditas*).

Many discussions of Augustine's concepts of the will have been distracted by trying to render into a single coherent statement his different, sometimes conflicting, reflections on "free will," from his early work *De libero arbitrio* to his later bleak understanding of the "bondage of the will." In *The Retractions*, Augustine strongly maintained that Pelagius and Julian of Eclanum had no right to appeal to his early discussion of free will as evidence against his later reflections on the bondage of the will.<sup>14</sup> Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, the old Augustine insisted that he still held to his earlier *De libero arbitrio* affirmation of free will. In fact, however, Pelagius and Julian were not without a point. It is unclear how, exactly, Augustine could render other than roughly and paradoxically coherent his earlier strong insistence on the freedom of the will and his later equally strong position on the bondage of the will.

At the same time, Julian's polemic against Augustine failed to understand Augustine's deeper philosophical and theological reflections on the energy of reality itself as will and that universal energy as ultimately "will as divine love." Moreover, Augustine understood "the will" to possess a conflictual, abysmal dimension that Pelagius's and Julian's untroubled, easily unified, strongly moralistic notion of the self did not, perhaps could not, grasp. Jane Austen would have dismissed the view of the passionate, conflicted self in the Brontë sisters as so much romantic nonsense; Nabokov never could accept Dostoevsky's irredeemably conflictual self. American ego psychologists never seem to be within shouting distance of understanding Jacques Lacan's interpretation of Freud's radical uncovering of an always already split self as the deepest truth about the self that the early Freud discovered with his terrifying doctrine of the unconscious, an abysmal truth that the ego psychologists domesticated into the ego. John Dewey never understood why some of his fellow liberal theorists found Reinhold Niebuhr's similarly politically liberal but bleaker Augustinian, *City of God*-inflected portrait of both self and history in *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, volumes 1 and 2, far more realistic than Dewey's own more benign secular view of self and history alike; hence

the ironic paradox of “atheists for Niebuhr.” As William James observed in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, the healthy-minded souls and the sick souls are destined to misunderstand one another.

A modern analogy: In psychoanalytic terms, there is no unconscious for Pelagius, whereas the will as the unconscious force driving us forward for good and ill is omnipresent in Augustine. Simultaneously, the unconscious for Freud, as the will for Augustine, is a realm of depth: For Augustine, the embodied will is the space of the many unconscious affects, feelings, emotions, and desires constituted both by the will itself as the energy-power of love (*eros* and *agape*)<sup>15</sup> and the constant to-and-fro of its own restless and ambivalent will. The primal will in Augustine, like the unconscious in Freud, is fully alive, manifesting a *fascinans et tremendum* power-energy underlying and driving the conscious will. It is not impossible to affirm both the conscious freedom of the will and the unconscious bondage of the will, although their multiple interactions, like the interaction of the superego, ego, and id in the later Freud, are so intertwined as to need some adjective like Freud’s fine adjectival choice—“overdetermined”—to describe our motives. “Overdetermined,” indeed, is also the most accurate adjective I know to describe Augustine’s self as abyss.

One of Augustine’s sharpest portraits is his picture of the unstoppable power of the will: “*Pondus meum, amor meus*” (*Confessions* XIII.9, 10)—my weight is my love; my desire, my affects, emotions, feelings, and moods; my unconscious, preconscious, and conscious will is my weight—a weight that can draw me up like a flame or hurl me down like a gravity-laden falling rock. Love-will is the affective weight that pulls me to itself, often against my conscious will and intention. When “in” love we simultaneously feel liberated, more alive, more intelligent, and in bondage to the beloved object. As Lady Caroline Lamb is supposed to have cried out in the moment she first saw Lord Byron across a filled reception-hall: “That face is my fate.” Indeed it was, with disastrous results for both Lady Caroline and Byron. Augustine, unlike Pelagius and other moralists, would not have been surprised.

The will as affects, moods, and choices (rational and irrational) can become so habitual as to become a second nature: a habitual evil (vice) or a habitual good (virtue). As Aristotle sharply pointed out, it is as difficult for a habitually good person of virtue to do evil as for a habitually evil person to do good.

We live in boxes within boxes within boxes where the outermost box—choice as freedom of the will—is actual enough but fragile and is often hostage to our vices-habits-addictions (our second nature) and to the fundamental and largely preconscious, even unconscious, powers of desire, more than we want to believe. Most of us are relatively helpless in freeing ourselves from authentic addictions (drugs, alcohol, smoking, etc.) on our own. Addictions literally take over the self. Addictions are the exact negative opposite of Paul's great cry of liberation, "No longer I but Christ lives in me!" (Gal. 2:20). At the same time, for Augustine, God's grace lives in the ever-flowing grace of the human desire for the Good. Even at our most perverse other-denying, other-destructive, and self-destructive moments, we can suddenly have experiences, times out of time, that serve as epiphanic "hints and guesses" (Eliot) of the Good or God drawing us unconsciously forward.

Even more than Plato in the *Symposium*, Augustine dramatically portrayed the power of beloved objects to attract us like a magnet: the beautiful fleshly bodies of others, the spirit-filled intellects of beautiful souls, the night sky, the north African sun, the harvest thick in the fields, the gentle sea breezes from the Mediterranean on a summer's day in Hippo become a sudden, violent storm, the apophatic emptiness of the desert, the fecundity of the rainy season. More realistically than Plotinus, the more body-conscious and affect-laden Augustine demonstrated over and over just how strongly our five basic loves—for God, neighbor, self, mind, body—have allowed us to experience the desire for the Good deep within us and driving us as God's own magnetlike grace in us, of which we may remain unconscious. Authentic loves, desires, and affections leap upward like a flame to *agapic* wisdom. The thrill of beauty in the arts—music especially, for Augustine—frees us to experience, however transiently, the beautiful as goodness and truth. Augustine, so alive to his own and others' shifting moods, affects, and will, was, in one way, a kind of romantic *avant la lettre*. He was, for example, so disturbed to discover music's power over him that he briefly considered banning it. For Augustine, the deepest reality in us is the affect-laden will-desire for the Good, which ultimately, as divine providence, determines all reality despite all the swerves of chance, fate, and fortune. Finally, nature-grace is deeper and more powerful than sin-grace, joy than sorrow, peace than conflict, yes than no.

For Augustine, the will for the Good is, as much as for Dante, the most powerful force in our lives and in the cosmos itself. Above all, will as love is the most basic energy in human reality, as it is in reality itself, because love is the very reality of God in Godself: God is Love (see Augustine's commentary on the first letter of John).<sup>16</sup> Even understanding is driven by love; love's affections contain understanding. The desire for the Good (will-love) drives what Bernard Lonergan called the pure, detached, unrestricted, disinterested desire to know. Affections, for Augustine, are not some pleasant addition to or distraction from understanding. Like Heidegger (whose early work up to and including *Sein und Zeit* was deeply influenced by Augustine),<sup>17</sup> Augustine held—contrary to many Platonists—that affects, morals, and feelings bore cognitive value. For Augustine, intellectual attention must always be paid to our affects, our feelings, our desires—in a word, our will. The will, with or without conscious choice, cannot but keep on willing. Love, like faith and hope, drives understanding. *Fides quaerens intellectum* is simultaneously *Amor quaerens intellectum*, as some medieval Augustinians made explicit: Gregory the Great in *Amor ipse notitia est* and William of St. Thierry in *Amor ipse, intellectus est*.

In Augustine the intelligent, conscious, deliberative will is by nature free in its choices. Therefore, the will in its freedom of choice does not merely choose but consents to its choice. And yet rumbling, sometimes thundering beneath all choice, sometimes suddenly flashing out of nowhere, the unconscious will wills. The will wills. The will cannot but will. The will as preconscious desire and unconscious sheer energy cannot stop willing. In Augustine we can best understand the ultimately Real less by reflecting on the external cosmos than by turning inward into a *tremendum et fascinans* discovery of the abyss of the self, where eventually we find the will in all its conflictual complexity willing: "The human being is a vast deep. . . . The hairs of our heads are easier by far to number than are our feelings and the movements of the heart" (*Confessions* IV.14, 22).

Unfortunately, Augustine knew only partly the highly original readings of his more optimistic Greek contemporary, Gregory of Nyssa, for whom the self's will is a stretching out (*epectasis*) in never-ending loving contemplation and reaching toward God. Via *epectasis*, Gregory daringly affirms, the will continues even after this life (we experience not

eternal rest, therefore, but eternal *epectasis*). If Augustine had known Gregory's brilliant notion of the contemplative will as always/already *epectasis* stretching out forever in even more *epectasis*,<sup>18</sup> one wonders if this uniquely Nyssan reading might have given Augustine a way to interpret his ineradicable restlessness—as a constant stretching out of mind and will-love for more of God's infinite gift-grace of love? Restlessness is, to be sure, often negative but can also be a positive affect.

Augustine's account of will, however, did not include Gregory of Nyssa's *epectasis* or, for that matter, the more positive reading of the will adopted by most Greek Christians (with a few exceptions, such as Macarius). At the same time, Augustine's portrait of the will, unlike that in so many modern accounts of the will (above all, Nietzsche's), is, like that of the Greeks, always purposeful. For Augustine, even in choosing the wrong object of love, a person still purposively wills the good.

The contrast between will in Augustine and Nietzsche clarifies both. Nietzsche's will is a driving, endless energy, a power without beginning, without end, without purpose. Will, for Augustine, is likewise, before and beyond intelligence, the driving energy of all reality, but Augustine's will is fully purposeful as the love that, for the Christian, is the source and end of all reality.

Nietzsche, the most influential philosopher of the will in modernity, in his various artistic enactments of will as Will to Power, found it impossible not to attack violently Augustine's radically opposed Christian notion of will as love. For both thinkers, will as pure energy is reality; for both, will is power; but that power, for Augustine, is not the purposeless energy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche or the *Liebestod* of Wagner and other romantics, but the engifted, gracious, other-driven and other-directed "love of God and love of neighbor" that in *De doctrina christiana* Augustine dares to make the working canon (perhaps the canon within the canon) for interpreting all scripture. Not surprisingly, almost all Nietzsche's references to Augustine are negative. And yet, given that Augustine was Nietzsche's unwelcome predecessor on the centrality of will as the energy driving all reality, Nietzsche might have written of Augustine what he wrote about one of the most authentic heirs of the Augustinian model of the self in the modern period, Blaise Pascal: "Whatever else be true, Pascal is in all our blood." More than any thinker on the will prior to Pascal, Augustine, the first major philosopher of will,



is in the blood of all of us, philosophers and theologians alike, whether we affirm or reject his portrait of the will.

In Western Christianity itself, Augustine's interpretation of the will as love had profound consequences. Recall only the most famous heirs of Augustine's interpretation: Gregory the Great, Bernard of Clairvaux, William of St. Thierry, the Victorines, all love mystics; Bonaventure ("*bonum diffusivum sui*"), Dante ("*L'amor che muove il sole et l'altre stelle*"), the Love-saturated Teresa of Avila, who called the *Confessions* her second scripture; John Donne ("Lord, lest thou enslave me I can ne'er be free, nor chaste unless thou ravish me"); Pascal ("*Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas*"); George Herbert (in his classic poems on love); Søren Kierkegaard (in *Works of Love*); Simone Weil (in her agapic mystical experience occasioned by reading George Herbert's poem "Love"); and Pope Benedict XVI (in his first and last encyclical, *Deus Est Caritas*). The list of Augustinians writing on love could easily be extended. In fact, the Augustinian synthesis on love as *caritas* has served as the now familiar Western Christian Catholic *caritas* synthesis, wherein *agape* transforms but does not reject *eros*. More than any other theologian, Augustine so defines the classical Christian understanding on love that Anders Nygren's brilliant but wrongheaded 1930 attack on Augustine's *caritas* synthesis<sup>19</sup> occasioned critical responses from almost every major theologian of two generations, whatever their other differences: Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, William Temple, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Bernard Lonergan, and Werner Jeanrond, as well as several philosophers, including Max Scheler, Hannah Arendt, and Paul Ricoeur.

Intelligence-in-act and will-as-love: these two realities are so interwoven in Augustine that they can be distinguished but never separated. Nevertheless, another reality—sin—enters this Augustinian interweaving of intelligence and love to darken, wound, and becloud knowledge as it twists the will from its natural desire to love the Good into something defined by false loves. Sin, both personal and original, invades and at times overwhelms the convalescent Augustinian self. The will becomes not only weak and fragile (as the will always was for Augustine) but sinful. In the "region of dissimilarity," the will as love becomes twisted almost beyond recognition as it is distorted more and more by unending false desires become unbreakable addictions.<sup>20</sup> Even before the Pelagian controversy, Augustine began to fear that something was awry about the

self, however intelligent, however loving. Reading Paul, in what came to be known as the Augustinian “introspective” manner, Augustine believed that Paul confirmed his own fears in words that seemed to be directly addressed to him: “The good that I would do, that I do not; the evil I would not do, that I do” (Rom. 7:19).

Without Augustine’s ever abandoning the nature-grace model (the intelligent-loving self described thus far), another Augustinian element in the self surfaced more and more: a self not just positively constituted by its love for neighbor and through its love for God, and thereby also by a love for one’s authentic loving self, but a self now sinking, as in quicksand, into an inescapable solidarity-in-sin with others—the self finding a very crowded company as it sinks, the *massa peccati*.

#### THE SIN-SATURATED SELF: SIN AND GRACE IN AUGUSTINE

As scholars of early modernity have argued, the sixteenth century was profoundly influenced by Augustine both in the Renaissance (e.g., in Petrarch, Ficino, Erasmus, Montaigne, Shakespeare) and in the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. That conflict-ridden century (“early modernity”) should be read not only as a fierce conflict of interpretations of how to read Scripture properly but also as an equally intense conflict about how to read Augustine rightly: Is Augustine on the self best understood through the Renaissance (both Catholic and secular) paradigm of nature-grace in continuity with the medievals? Or is he better understood through the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers and the seventeenth-century Jansenist paradigm of sin-grace? Both paradigms can justly appeal to important texts of Augustine. In the *Confessions*, for example, the primary paradigm is nature-grace (or graced human nature as intelligence-in-act and will-love). Confession, for Augustine, is principally testimony and praise to God for all his gifts (intelligence, love, friendship, learning, etc.) and only secondarily confession of Augustine’s own sins to God as well as to the community, to himself, and to any reader of the text. In sum, the theocentric priority<sup>21</sup> in Augustine’s *Confessions* is the exact opposite of the anthropocentric, indeed egocentric, model initiated in Rousseau’s *Confessions*. Sin-grace often interrupts the nature-grace continuities of Augustine’s narrative: “The enemy held my

will; and of it he made a chain and bound me. Because my will was perverse it changed to lust, and lust yielded to become habit, and habit not resisted became necessity. They were like links hanging one of another—which is why I have called it a chain—and their hard bondage held me bound hand and foot” (*Confessions* VIII.5, 10). This is the Augustine who attracted Martin Luther in his even more radical sin-grace reading of the bondage of the will.

The paradigm of nature-grace for most medieval and high Renaissance thinkers and artists before the more sin-grace infused works of the later Michelangelo (the *Last Judgment*, the unfinished sculptures) illuminated the continuities they found between our nature as intelligence-in-act and affective loving will as both *eros*-love and God’s agapic grace (e.g., in Marsilio Ficino, in Raphael and the early Michelangelo). Indeed, as Karl Rahner well observed, the graced nature of intelligence-in-act and will-as-love is our concrete actuality; what we often call “nature” is merely a helpful abstraction (a “remainder concept,” in Rahner’s phrase). The classical Protestant Reformers, however, especially that explosive religious and theological genius Martin Luther, as well as the more humanist, more systematic, but hardly less radical John Calvin, rejected the traditional medieval and contemporary Renaissance humanist paradigm of nature-grace for understanding the human situation and for reading Augustine himself in favor of the sin-grace paradigm, which alone could probe the radicality of the sin-saturated self (bondage for the will, self-delusion for the intellect). Both Luther and Calvin believed Augustine’s anti-Pelagian texts on the sinful self were the central formulation of Augustine’s model of the self as well as the most accurate reading of our state since St. Paul himself in Romans and Galatians. For Luther, and even more for Calvin, the intellect was a very useful tool for logical analysis, for formulating arguments against opponents, and (for Calvin and also Melanchthon) for a theological ordering of the principal theological *topoi* into a coherent Lutheran and Reformed systematic theology. On strictly theological, that is, existentially salvific, matters, however, reason was powerless. Luther held that on strictly theological matters, “the whore reason” (especially Aristotle) was useless. Analogously, on the will, Martin Luther, in his famous polemic against the Catholic Reformer and humanist Desiderius Erasmus, violently insisted on the total bondage of the will against Erasmus’s all too sanguine defense of free will.

Paradoxically, the more humanistically (logically and rhetorically) educated John Calvin went even further than Luther by claiming that, however useful reason clearly was for many purposes, unaided philosophical reason, especially in its Scholastic (“sophistical”) versions, was useless on questions of understanding the nature and attributes of God. Indeed, Calvin once stated that, on these matters, reason was nothing other than “a factory for making idols.” Even more radically than Calvin himself, the later seventeenth-century Reformed theologians at the Synod of Dort denounced Arminius’s defense of free will and proclaimed their own doctrine of the total depravity of the will, double predestination, and irresistible grace as central beliefs of the Reformed (or Calvinist) tradition. It should be emphasized, however, that Calvin himself was not necessarily a Calvinist. In fact, Calvin’s own principal theological emphasis, despite his affirmation of the “terrible decree” of double predestination, was not the same as that of the Synod of Dort but was a theological portrait of God as gracious and loving sovereign Father,<sup>22</sup> even given the mystery of the “terrible decree,” which was to be not understood but held in faith.

Augustine’s own understanding of the sin-saturated self deepened with the years. As early as 397, Augustine analyzed the weak and sin-inflected will in his responses to the questions of Simplicianus. A sense of the will’s actual bondage became far more radicalized in his later anti-Pelagian writings. Originally, Augustine responded nonpolemically to Pelagius’s lucid, if rather complacent, analysis of the will, its freedom, and its all too facile ability to be reformed through moral effort. Modern “moral rearmament” is a Pelagian banner. Pelagius was an impressive moral reformer.<sup>23</sup> He believed the self had a weak will that needed grace, of course, but above all, moral strengthening through moral self-discipline aided by grace. Augustine and Pelagius never met personally. Unfortunately, Augustine was away at a conference of bishops when Pelagius tried to visit him on his way to Jerusalem. Pelagius and Augustine did, however, correspond and did read each other’s work. Their first correspondence shows a polite, restrained dialogical disagreement that only later became a disastrous polemical fight to the death. Pelagius, an empirical and British moral reformer, was a favorite of Christian aristocratic circles in Rome. Augustine, on the contrary, was neither principally a moral reformer nor a favorite of Roman aristocratic circles. Augustine was a passionate Latin African beyond the moral horizon of these circles.<sup>24</sup> He

was a radically religious and theological genius who would have no truck with Pelagius's position, which inevitably seemed to him at best naïve, at worst perverse and heretical. Why, Augustine pointedly demanded of Pelagius, did the Church baptize infants if there is no original sin?

In reading Pelagius's responses to Augustine, one cannot avoid the impression that Pelagius never really grasped what—or whom—he was dealing with: an Augustine whose portrait of a sinful self was so conflicted that, once examined by a journey within, sin revealed abyss upon abyss in the self wherein an ineradicably conflicted, self-trapped ego could never be saved—or even diagnosed properly—by any Pelagian moral self-reform. As Peter Brown well observed, Pelagius and many other contemporaries of Augustine were as shocked by and uncomprehending of Augustine's unnerving vision of a seething, untamable conflicted self as Sigmund Freud's contemporary Viennese psychologists and moral reformers were by Freud's discovery of an unconscious,<sup>25</sup> which shattered their much easier psychologies of the self and its discontents as so many toys.

In the last years of his long life, Augustine had to deal not with the very decent, well-mannered, polite if evasive moral reformist Pelagius, but with a new generation of far more fierce Pelagians. Julian of Eclanum, a young south Italian aristocratic bishop, was a brilliant dialectician and committed Pelagian moralist.<sup>26</sup> He was an admirable ethical Christian; for one example, Julian contributed most of his personal wealth to the poor of Sicily. In many ways, Julian, like Pelagius in an earlier generation, was a moral Christian reformer of a familiar type that still exists. What Julian preached was Christian moral reform as outlined by Pelagius. What Julian preached against was—Augustine. Even more than Pelagius himself, Julian of Eclanum found repulsive Augustine's depiction of a human being as so ridden with sin that no combination of “just enough” grace and “just enough” moral self-discipline would solve the problem.

As in many polemical exchanges, the increasingly violent polemics between Julian and Augustine displaced any hope of dialogical argument. Neither Augustine nor Julian was at his best in these bitter, brittle exchanges. Julian, a first-rate dialectician, used his argumentative skills very well, but he also made some mean-spirited *ad hominem* attacks on the elderly Augustine—telling Augustine, for example, to go back to his Punic donkeys as “the Punic Aristotle” and leave civilized Christians at peace. Julian's ultimate insult, however, was not ethnic but deeply

theological: Over and over, Julian tormented Augustine with the unnerving charge that the old Augustine was no longer a Christian but had returned to his Manicheanism through his relentlessly pessimistic reading of the human condition, especially of human sexuality. For Julian, the strange Augustinian reading of original sin transmitted through the sexual intercourse of our parents sounded all too like a Manichean detestation of flesh, sex, and, at the limit, matter itself.

Julian was not without a point, but it was not one that Augustine would ever grant. Augustine did not need his extreme views on sexuality to defend his complex, overdetermined theological view of the human condition. But he would not retreat. The tragedy expanded: The more Julian attacked Augustine for excessive statements on our sin-saturated, guilt-ridden, concupiscent self, the more Augustine responded through ever more excessive statements, not (as his admirers like myself still wish he had done) by moderating some of his judgments while maintaining his basic vision of the overdetermined will.

Julian's combination of dialectical skill and *ad hominem* insults provoked the now elderly and exhausted Augustine into a fury, at times almost a frenzy, as he flailed out at Julian, never once moderating even some of his in fact extreme and unnecessary positions but instead making them yet more radical and provocative.<sup>27</sup> Did Augustine need to insist upon double predestination? Did he need his humanly repulsive teaching that infants who died without baptism are damned? Did he need to declare that his position on original sin in humankind can be demonstrated by the (masculinist) observation that in the sexual act, man [*sic*] loses reason, the characteristic that distinguishes him from all the other animals (since a man cannot control his erections as Adam apparently did before the fall), and becomes merely another animal bereft of reason's control of the passions? Did he need to hold that original sin was transmitted sexually?

And yet these famous late outbursts were not the only moments of his later life. Indeed, when one reads the recently discovered letters and sermons of Augustine,<sup>28</sup> one can easily agree with Peter Brown that the elderly Augustine was not just the shrill anti-Pelagian polemicist of legend, or even the angry old bishop Peter Brown himself had earlier portrayed. In fact, to his pluralistic congregation at Hippo, Augustine was always deeply pastoral—compassionate yet just; strong but gentle; above all, pastorally understanding of human fragility and the human, all too

human, need for consolation. As refugees poured into Hippo for the last twenty years of Augustine's life after the Vandal seizure of Rome (410 CE) and as the barbarian armies advanced mercilessly across North Africa ever closer to Hippo at the very end of his life, the pastor-bishop Augustine did all he could to comfort and to protect his people. The people of Hippo were justly terrified of the future. The old Augustine (who died as the barbarians were laying siege to Hippo) refused to leave his people for safety elsewhere as some other North African bishops did.

Whatever else was true of the old Augustine, he never lacked courage—physical or moral. The old Augustine remained at the end as he was at the beginning of his bishopric: sometimes stern but always compassionate for all his parishioners, especially for the poor and the marginalized. Concurrently, the late Augustine remained a fierce polemicist, especially against Julian of Eclanum. As Augustine's earlier unfortunate, atypical appeal to coercion against the Donatists and the accelerating bitterness of his fierce exchanges with Julian demonstrated, Augustine was altogether too uncompromising a person ever to be sentimentalized in his old age as anything remotely like a sweet old man.

Fierce polemicist he remained. At the same time, Augustine was too good a pastor in his unflagging pastoral activity for his people to have his last days remembered only for his slash-and-burn, take-no-prisoners polemical exchanges with Julian. Not only did Augustine develop an overdetermined model of the self; he was himself an overdetermined character. Taken as a whole—early, middle, and late—Augustine is something like a character out of Dostoevsky. Over the years Augustine seemed unconsciously to display the polyphonic voices and multiple selves of all the Karamazovs—Ivan, Dimitri, Alyosha, and even at times the repulsive father Karamazov.<sup>29</sup>

Augustine, like Dostoevsky, forces his attentive readers into facing several ordinarily unacknowledged, because undesirable, actualities about the self. A deep part of the incomprehensible self for Augustine is an abyss that many may prefer not to notice or even to hear about. In an analogous manner, Virginia Woolf elicits what can happen to non-Russian readers when they first read the great unnerving Russian novels.<sup>30</sup> We feel we are entering an unknown and disturbing world. Our familiar landmarks, indeed the very floor beneath us, seem to give way. Tectonic shifts occur in our increasingly unsteady psyches. We no longer know

ourselves. We are no longer just fragile; we are fractured. We are now besieged not just by the strictly philosophical “limit questions” of modern Western thought (Kant et al.) but also by what the Russians name “the accursed questions”—the unavoidable, perhaps unanswerable, questions that most human beings experience in some period of their lives, especially in the boundary situations of life (profound anxiety; a sense of no-thing, of absurdity that can suddenly descend on us; our fierce grief at the illness and death of those we love; our confused fear at our own illness, our dying, our encroaching death [Tolstoy’s Ivan Ilyich]; our intractable guilt; our ennui, which is poisonous; an honest sense of powerlessness).

“Who am I?” “Is my life or any life worth living?” “How can God exist when there is so much suffering?” “Whence evil?” Virginia Woolf wisely remarked that neither Dickens nor the Brontës, splendid as they are, prepared us for the altogether strange, disturbing world of the Russian novel. Woolf is surely correct: We can never be quite the same again after reading Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Gogol, Chekov. Nor can Christians ever be quite the same after reading Augustine on the conflicted, overdetermined self. One may ultimately reject Augustine’s view of the self. Many thinkers do, just as many (e.g., Vladimir Nabokov) reject the extremity of Dostoevsky’s vision of the conflicted, twisted self. But after such revelations, what peace? Rejection of Augustine’s view is fully possible, but the full, complex, conflicted, ambivalent, unnerving power of Augustine’s portrait of our overdetermined selves—both highly intelligent and deluded, both loving and hate-filled, both sinful and tragic—haunts most of Augustine’s careful readers. Did Augustine allow nature-grace to yield to sin-grace as the paradigm by which to understand the self? I think not; but the readings of Luther, Calvin, Jansen, and others do articulate realities that cannot be set aside or ignored in Augustine’s texts on the self. If a tornado is headed this way, it does not help to hope it is a refreshing wind.

Another Augustinian, Søren Kierkegaard, rightly argued that one can understand what a Christian means by sin as a fundamental disorientation of the self (*not* sins as moral faults) only if one first understands what a Christian means by grace. Augustinian sin is not a collection of moral faults, as in Pelagius’s thought; it is a twisted disorientation of the whole self. Sin for Augustine is not a temporary state of moral weakness but a state of being: a full-fledged perverse, addictive disorientation of the self. If the human situation were less conflicted and overdetermined



than Augustine argues it is, Pelagius's austere moralism might well suffice. Moral reforms, like better, more rigorous arguments, should always be welcome. But neither arguments nor moral reform is sufficient when dealing with or even diagnosing the deepest, most twisted, unconscious actuality of the self. For such actualities, one needs a hermeneutics of suspicion, including that of the greatest Christian hermeneute of suspicion, Augustine of Hippo.<sup>31</sup>

In the analogous philosophical language of contemporary critical theory (e.g., that of Jürgen Habermas), the Augustinian notion of sin is a description not of conscious error but of an unconscious, systematically functioning distortion in the self. The self-deluded (not merely erroneous) self's liberation cannot be achieved through any self-healing of intellect (better arguments) or will (moral self-reform). As the Japanese Pure-Land Buddhists insist, our situation is such that only some other-power—for the Christian, God's grace—can free us. A psychotic is not liberated by further rational argument or by further dialogue with family and friends. A psychotic needs, as we say, professional help. It matters relatively little whether our self-delusions are caused through actions of our recent selves or, as is more likely, through some childhood or youthful trauma, genetic condition, or even life itself (*sunt lacrimae rerum*; Vergil, *The Aeneid*). Critical theorists can spot systemic distortions in an individual (classical psychoanalytic theory) or, at the limit, in whole cultures (ideology-critique, genealogical analysis, feminist theories, queer theories). Sexism, racism, classism, elitism, Euro-centrism, homophobia, and so on are more likely to be unconscious systemic distortions than conscious errors. Critical theories have been forged to find ways (unlike traditional theories) not only to understand the self but also to help emancipate it from its unconscious systemic distortions.

Like secular critical theories, Augustine's theological model of the self can accurately be called a theological critical theory. His paradigm of grace-sin helps one to understand aspects of the self that the nature-grace paradigm on its own does not. It is impoverishing for nature-grace theologians to ignore Augustine's sin-grace paradigm, his uniquely theological critical theory, even if, like myself, these theologians believe that the nature-grace paradigm is the foundational model of the Christian self within which the sin-grace paradigm must somehow—probably dialectically—be incorporated. But theologians of the nature-grace paradigm

ignore the fury and power of sin in the self and in all history—foolishly, and, at the limit, fatally. Pelagius, I repeat, was an admirable moralist. Julian was a brilliant dialectician. However, moralism and argument alike regrettably evaporate once exposed to a deep and conflictual vision of sin—evil such as that proposed by the old Augustine even amid his polemical fury and bizarre exaggerations.

#### THE FOURTH ELEMENT: THE IMPLICITLY TRAGIC SELF IN AUGUSTINE

All the elements outlined earlier are necessary for any adequate interpretation of the self in Augustine. However, there is another element in Augustine, an element admittedly more implicit than explicit, a matter of his unthematized but ever-present sensibility—in more Augustinian language, a matter of affect, mood, and sensibility. This further element—a tragic sensibility—was the implied but not explicit element Augustine needed to complete his model of the self and to correct some of his misfirings in blaming all evil and suffering on human beings.

In addition to (not in replacement of!) employing the nature-grace paradigm for understanding intelligence and will and the sin-grace paradigm for understanding the depth of sin, I propose a tragedy-grace paradigm to complete Augustine's rich polyphonic and conflictual (in a single word, overdetermined) understanding of that ultimately incomprehensible reality, the human self. Through the three paradigms the human self is viewed as penultimately overdetermined; that very overdetermination, moreover, leads one to the threshold of the self's understanding of itself as much as, at that limit, it evokes the ultimate incomprehensibility of the self: the self's participation, even divinization, in the incomprehensibility of God's self. The Augustinian self is ultimately a mystery to itself; to understand that mystery as mystery, an interpreter needs help from all four paradigms.

One reason that an interpreter needs the addition of a tragedy-grace paradigm to understand the Augustinian self fully is this: as important as the issue of radical evil is for understanding humankind after the horrors of the last century, as well as the massive global suffering of whole peoples and classes in this century, evil alone is not the only topic that needs theological attention.<sup>32</sup>

Human beings, other animals, and Earth itself are afflicted even more by suffering than by outright evil-sin; much of that enormous suffering has been caused by human evil, indeed sin, but much of it has not been thus caused. Sometimes evil just happens: volcano eruptions, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, the inexplicable suffering and death of infants and children, even ordinary adult illness, death—all these so-called “natural” evils cause enormous suffering to human beings, as to all sentient beings. These realities are named natural *evils* only because we do not cause them; nature does. But they so affect *us* with suffering that we name them natural evils but not sins. We call them “evils” in the same way we call some undesirable (to us) plants “weeds” only because we do not want them in *our* gardens. Natural evils would be better named natural afflictions, that is, intense sufferings caused not by sin or by God but by nature itself. Nature impersonally and indifferently follows its own inexorable laws. Alternatively, as human-caused climate change now so afflicts us, nature has been so interfered with by human beings that some recent floods, forest fires, and even hurricanes bear all the marks of human evil-sin. Nature is experienced by us as, on the one hand, wondrous and awesome, and, on the other hand, as brutal, even seemingly cruel and indifferent toward us. Most natural afflictions and sufferings, however, cannot be accorded either to God as “acts of God” or to human sin.

Augustine, more than any other ancient thinker, uncovered the uncanny human tendency to evil as well as the stark actuality of evil and sin in history and ourselves. This actuality is obvious to all but the inextricably Pollyannaish. A tragic consciousness uncovers sin (e.g., the vile murders of a brother’s children at the bloody origin of the house of Atreus). However, a tragic consciousness is more concerned to uncover the enormous suffering caused less by personal sin than by some mysterious necessity—fate, fortune, chance, providence. Personal sin may be a subsidiary but is not the principal cause of such overwhelming suffering and excessive punishment as that of Oedipus, Orestes, Phaedra, Cassandra, Pentheus, et al. Much of the enormous suffering in human existence seems deeply inappropriate, at times even obscene, to blame on human evil (e.g., the terrifying earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011; the fate of Jesus, Lear, Cordelia, and Desdemona). Suffering, even more than evil-sin, demands philosophical and theological attention today, at a time when not only do increasing natural “evils” or

afflictions cause so much suffering, but also massive global suffering so abunds through the tragic—that is, largely unintended—injustice operative in many social, economic, and political structures.<sup>33</sup>

Most contemporary Christian thinkers (including Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Ricoeur, and Joseph Ratzinger—perhaps the three most prominent Augustinian thinkers of the last century) have been reluctant, as was Augustine, to use the categories of tragedy to rethink what a demythologized Augustinian “original sin” might mean for a contemporary understanding of the self. However, after so many modern and postmodern rereadings of the philosophical import of the ancient Greek tragedies, why not take tragedy more seriously—more exactly, the paradigm of tragedy-grace—to help explicate a sensibility recurring in most of the texts of Augustine, and then use that tragedy-grace paradigm not, of course, to replace the sin-grace paradigm but to partly correct and complement it? Evil and sin are intractably real, causing overwhelming suffering; so is tragic necessity (fate, chance, fortune) and its attendant suffering.

Augustine avoided the category “tragedy,” despite what clearly seems to have been his own tragic sensibility, because he rejected the notion of a fate not controlled by an omnipotent God. There is also the historical fact (fate): Augustine (like most of his contemporaries) probably did not know the texts of Aeschylus or Sophocles. However, Augustine knew and loved Vergil very well indeed and Homer indirectly well enough: Homer, the father of the ancient tragic form about which Aeschylus reportedly said that he and all later tragedians lived merely on the crumbs dropped from that bounteous Homeric table. As Simone Weil brilliantly wrote in one of the classic essays of the twentieth century, *The Iliad, or Poem of Force*,<sup>34</sup> Homer was the first Greek thinker to enact as the true hero of tragedy the actuality of force, that force of life itself with which every human being, victor or victim of the back-and-forth shifts of history or the vagaries of nature, must one day deal. Unlike Weil, with her extreme anti-Roman viewpoint, Augustine knew that Vergil’s *Aeneid* was a truly worthy successor of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Vergil continued Homer’s tale with the tale of the escaped Trojan, Aeneas, wandering purposefully toward the new Troy, Rome. The *Aeneid* is not simply a triumphal epic for Augustus Caesar.<sup>35</sup> To be sure, it is partially that. Far more, however, the *Aeneid* is the greatest tragic lament in Western literature; it displays the terrible tragic price to be paid by both victors (Aeneas-Rome)

and victims (Dido-Cathage). Vergil incarnates the authentic Greek, now also Roman, tragic vision: suffering comes not just from our own evil actions but also from some strange necessity in reality itself: "*Sunt lacrimae rerum.*" Augustine himself knew this Vergilian truth well, as witnessed by a Vergilian tonality in the *Confessions*, in the *City of God*, and in his commentaries on the psalms of lamentation.

Fate was a dangerous category for Augustine's purposes since, for the tragedians, fate and chance (unlike providence, a biblical and Stoic category that Augustine accepts) is not controlled by the gods, even by the high god Zeus. Augustine, as a Christian, believed that only a doctrine of divine providence was an appropriate theological category for describing what happens to us whether we will it or not, since all reality (even fate, if such there be) is ultimately controlled providentially by the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving God. Augustine, therefore, rejects the category of fate. In Greek tragedy after all, the gods, even Zeus, are very powerful but not all-powerful; they do not control fate. Zeus is not Yahweh. Yahweh, for Augustine, is all-powerful or is not God (*Deus sine Deo*).

Nevertheless, Augustine presents something like a Christian tragic sensibility with the categories of providence and predestination, not fate. What might this mean? Why otherwise did Augustine so love Vergil, whose tragic lament is embedded in the very rhythms and many of the images of the *Confessions*, if he lacked a tragic sensibility attuned to Vergil? One example: In the *Confessions*, Augustine is troubled that he had been so moved as a student whenever he read Vergil's account of Dido's tragic suffering when Aeneas cruelly abandoned her on the shores of North Africa.<sup>36</sup> In retrospect, the now Christian Augustine feared that his youthful vicarious experience of dramatic and poetic lament for a "merely" fictional character may have been wrong. And yet—and yet Augustine himself echoed this very same Vergilian tragic lament when he confessed his own guilt for first deceiving and then cruelly abandoning his mother Monica on the same Carthaginian shore where Aeneas had abandoned Dido. That Vergilian tragic lament spoke to Augustine's own sensibility toward his action as not just a sin but a necessity demanded at the time, that is, a tragic necessity.

Augustine's sensibility, in my judgment, was unmistakably a tragic one focused not only on sin but also on a tragic necessity: Thus his own initial attraction to the Manicheans and their ineradicable sense of our tragic fate;

thus his own increasingly dark vision of the human condition exploding in full force in his late anti-Pelagian writings. Augustine's reading of original sin does insist on the guilt of its inheritors, but it also suggests something very like a tragic necessity wreaking itself on all human beings. What kind of tragic vision was Augustine's? Vergilian, certainly, and biblical as well, deeply influenced by his two favorite biblical works, the Psalms—especially, of course, the poignant tones of the Psalms of Lamentation—and the epistles of Paul, with his sense of the paradoxical reality that we can understand the truth of God only through Jesus Christ and him Crucified, the sinless but divinely tragically fated Jesus the Christ.

Even if one attends only to the classical tragedies of the ancient Greeks—that is, to Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—it is impossible to claim that any single definition can apply to all Greek tragedies. In fact, most philosophical definitions of tragedy are generalizations from one preferred tragedy: *Oedipus Rex* for Aristotle and Freud; Aeschylus's *The Oresteia* for Nietzsche and Arendt; Sophocles' *Antigone* for Hegel and Lacan; Euripides' *Hippolytus* for Seneca and Racine; Homer's *Iliad* for Simone Weil.

In post-Kantian German philosophy, tragedy became a major issue for philosophers—from Goethe, Schiller, Friedrich and August Schlegel, and Novalis to Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche, as well as, in contemporary philosophy, Scheler, Heidegger, Adorno, Jaspers, Benjamin, Gadamer, and Arendt. The German philosophical world was shaken by Greek tragedy in a way analogous to the way the medieval theological paradigm of nature-grace was shaken by the new sin-grace emphasis of the Reformation.

Most of these German philosophers so taken with tragedy were Lutheran in heritage. Indeed, as Friedrich Nietzsche, himself the descendant of three generations of Lutheran pastors, once ironically noted: "German philosophy was born in Lutheran parsonages." Not only the Latins but also the Greek Christian theologians, with the possible exception of Gregory of Nazianzus, found little to no theological interest in the ancient Greek tragedies. No Greek Christian Father (again except possibly Nazianzen) found that Greek tragedy, unlike Greek philosophy, was either a resource for or a challenge to their contemplative theologies. Like the early Augustine of the *Dialogues* of Cassiciacum and Thagaste, the Greek theologians were far more optimistic about the self, especially

the self's intuitive understanding and its contemplation, as well as the self's freedom of will. As Jaroslav Pelikan argued, the Greek theologians, surrounded by an ever-darkening Hellenistic culture where fate reigned supreme, emphasized freedom of the will to fight cultural fatalism.<sup>37</sup> The major situational problem for the Greek theologians contemporary to Augustine, therefore, was the opposite to that for Augustine; he faced the Pelagians, for whom an overbelief in the freedom of a relatively unimpeded will denied the Christian belief in inherited sin (which the Greeks never denied but which they believed was a more weakened and wounded will than Augustine's more radical picture claimed). The Pelagians also denied the tragic sense of the ancient tragedians and the Roman Stoics (for example, Marcus Aurelius).

The nature-grace paradigm, with its relative optimism on the self, flourished in Eastern Christian thought. Indeed, a relatively optimistic account of the freedom of the will continued in Orthodox theology until the modern Russian theologians (especially Soloviev and Bulgakov) developed their speculative theologies of history, which, faithful to the tragic character of Russian history, included undeniably tragic, not only sinful, elements. Although the Russian Orthodox Vladimir Lossky articulated a deeply impressive apophatic theology, neither he nor his Greek successors (both the nonapophatic John Zizioulas and the apophatic Christos Yannaras) took to heart any Augustinian—for that matter, any Dostoevskian—portrait of an irretrievably split self.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Lossky and his successors rejected both Augustine and Dostoevsky. On the contrary, Sergius Bulgakov—influenced by Dostoevsky and, even more, by his own sense of the seemingly unending tragic disruptions of Russian history, culminating in his own experience of exile and the even worse fate of his theological colleague Pavel Florensky in the violently anti-Christian Bolshevik Revolution—understood tragedy theologically. The exiled Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev also created a Christian tragic and apocalyptic philosophy of religion.<sup>39</sup>

Scholars over the past thirty years have frequently analyzed the role of socioeconomic-political factors informing the peculiar religious intensity and haunting tragic sense of late antique North African Christians—Tertullian, Cyprian, Tyconius, and Augustine, the Donatists and Catholics alike. That passionate, tragic North African sensibility never disturbed the more contemplative Christian Alexandria or Cappadocia or

Constantinople. The difference between North African and Greek theology is analogous to that between modern British analytical philosophy and modern German philosophy. In the latter case, as noted earlier, most German philosophers found themselves philosophically challenged by ancient tragedy. Even the later Kant, by the time of the *Third Critique*, discovered that the philosophical problem of freedom and necessity had become far more complex and existential than he had hoped it might prove to be in the first two *Critiques*. The categories of the sublime and symbol disclose an openness to the modern tragic sense (a favorite post-Kant romantic trope). Even more of a sense of radical evil invaded Kant's late thought. In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, for example, Kant's newly articulated sense of radical evil disturbed but did not displace his rationalism.<sup>40</sup> However, more than Kant admitted, his own late sense of the problem of radical evil effectively unhinged the limits within which both religion and tragedy were earlier supposed to live. The terror in the French Revolution (which Kant, unlike Fichte, still defended) influenced the more sober tone, occasionally touched by a genuine historical tragic sense, in Kant's brilliant late essays on history, especially "On the Impossibility of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies" (1791).

Neither Goethe nor Schiller nor the early romantics (Friedrich and August Schlegel and Novalis) needed lessons on the importance of tragedy for understanding the human situation philosophically. They were all philosophers and tragedians, either in drama or in reflection. For example, August Schlegel insisted on the philosophical importance of Shakespeare's tragedies before any English philosopher had noticed. The major philosophical breakthrough on the relationship of tragedy and philosophy, however, was accomplished by Hegel.<sup>41</sup> He was the first philosopher for whom the fact that reason had a history was a major issue for reason itself. Hegel's contextual-historical turn in philosophy likewise meant that the blatant tragedies of history (a "slaughterbench" as Hegel described it) must be taken into account by philosophy. The deepest history—the history of *Geist* itself—must transform all prior philosophical, religious, and artistic understandings of the self, as of all reality, in order to form new dialectical models of the self. For Hegel, in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the philosopher as philosopher must trace the history of the major forms of art, religion, and philosophy. For this new historicized philosophy or philosophical history, one of the most important historical, aesthetic,



moral, religious, and implicitly philosophical forms, Hegel argued, was Greek tragedy.

In consequence, post-Kant German philosophical understandings of tragedy became both more capacious and more challenging than Kant's more tentative steps. Post-Hegelian and post-Nietzschean philosophers up to Benjamin, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Arendt, although curiously not Habermas, have found it important to correlate their philosophy critically with one or another Greek tragic vision. It is distinctive of most modern German idealist and postidealist existential, phenomenological, and hermeneutical German philosophers to take classical Greek tragedy, as well as that of such modern tragedians as Shakespeare and Calderon, Goethe and Schiller, with critical philosophical seriousness. Additionally, Walter Benjamin rediscovered the uniqueness and import of the formerly overlooked seventeenth-century German Lutheran baroque form of tragedy, *Trauerspiel*.<sup>42</sup>

In the contemporary period, some major Russian (Berdyaev), Polish (Kolakowski), and Iberian philosophers (both the Basque Miguel de Unamuno and the Castilian Ortega y Gasset) took tragedy with full philosophical seriousness.<sup>43</sup> The Iberian philosophers, faithful to the uniquely Iberian Catholic baroque tragic sensibility as seen in Calderon, were the principal Western philosophers besides the Germans to make tragedy a major philosophical issue. In the mid-twentieth century, some French philosophers (Sartre, Camus) wrote philosophical tragic dramas; since that earlier existentialist period, however, French philosophers have been largely silent on tragic themes, especially in the more aleatory French postmodern thought, in which chance, not fate, is a predominant category. In Anglophone philosophy, only a few analytical philosophers (Bernard Williams, Martha Nussbaum, Stanley Cavell) have made tragedy a philosophically important concern. In the culture of the United States, the secularized Calvinism deeply formed by the earlier Calvinist culture of explicit predestination, for example, in Jonathan Edwards, became fate in the tragic novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville and later in those of Henry James, William Faulkner, and others, but did not much affect most American philosophers, who have remained Emersonian in their nontragic sensibilities.

Ironically, modern Christian theologians have paid less attention to tragedy than have the philosophers. In fact, most modern theologians

have accorded very little attention to tragedy as a form that might help inform, reform, and transform, and in turn be transformed by, one or another theological vision of salvation. To be sure, Christianity ultimately offers a nontragic vision (indeed, as Dante insisted, Christianity is theologically a *commedia*). However, the hopeful Christian resurrection vision of peace and joy is grounded in the primordial Gospel passion narratives: the tragic reality of horrifying suffering (indeed affliction) of Jesus in Gethsemane, his capture, torture, and crucifixion—the most disgraceful and painful of deaths for the lowest of criminals of the ancient Roman world. Paul’s dialectical paradoxical theology speaks: Christians believe only in the God revealed in “Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). When one recalls that the central Christian symbol is the cross (so unlike the serene symbol of the sitting, peaceful Buddha), one must ask, Why did the first theologians and their successors, so wise in their use of Greek philosophy to help them think through Christianity as a philosophical religion, at the same time ignore the great potential of Greek tragedies in helping to articulate a Christian theology of the cross and a theology of suffering? Fortunately, some modern theological voices did break the puzzling silence on the possible import of the classical Greek tragic visions for a religion grounded in the crucified one: those of Søren Kierkegaard, Simone Weil, Karl Barth, Sergei Bulgakov, Reinhold Niebuhr, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Donald MacKinnon, Jon Sobrino, James Gustafson, Lawrence Bouchard, Wendy Farley, and a few others. The huge majority of theologians, however, have turned solely to philosophy and never to tragedy to help articulate the fuller complexities of Christian self-understanding.

Here is a thought-experiment: What if early Greek theologians from Justin Martyr (second through third century) through Dionysius the Areopagite (probably sixth century) had taken the Greek tragedies as seriously as they took Greek philosophy? Greek Orthodox theology would not have had to wait for the modern Russian Orthodox theologians, as well as the theologically informed novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky<sup>44</sup> and the religious philosopher of tragedy Nicholas Berdyaev, to learn how fruitful sustained attention to Greek tragedy can be for Christian theology.

Theology can also illuminate and be illuminated by the tragic (not only sinful) elements in many biblical stories—the stories of Hagar and Ishmael, Saul, David, Solomon, even Moses. A complex, conflictual

story of tragic necessity also skulks along in the biblical prophets' terror-ridden responses to the divine unhinging calls to prophesy in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. Classical prophets seem to be both exceptionally graced and exceptionally tragic figures—note, for example, the lamentations of Jeremiah; the fate of John the Baptist; the cries of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla; the terrified initial resistance to his prophetic call by Mohammed. Furthermore, does Greek tragedy not have affinities with the laments in the book of Lamentations, including the daring lamentations toward God in Godself, still a far more prominent tradition in Judaism than in Christianity? That strange biblical book Ecclesiastes (“Vanity, vanity, all is vanity”) could have been written by Euripides. Job's terrifying cry beyond lamenting against divine injustice in the book of Job bears all the power of the decimated Theban cry of injustice at the revolting actions of the god Dionysius in the *Bacchae*.

In the New Testament, the unnerving gospel of Mark displays strong elements of tragedy where only the mad and the demons seem to understand the divine power of this strange, doomed apocalyptic prophet. Jesus's resurrection, to be sure, is affirmed in Mark as in the other gospels. At the same time, in Mark alone, the original ending of the gospel is strange and incomplete: the women at the tomb flee, weeping and confused, while the male disciples have absented themselves altogether. Even the more sanguine Luke will change geography itself to ensure that the narrative carries Luke's Jesus to the city of Jerusalem and his divinely predestined fate.

In the gospel of Matthew, an increasingly sober, even tragic, sense of inevitability takes over the narrative as it unfolds, always relating word and action, Jesuanic discourse and the crowd's disheartening, constant misunderstandings and rejections until the final discourse, Matthew 25, before the passion itself begins. Matthew leads his readers from the most optimistic Christian discourse ever written (the incomparable Sermon on the Mount, a call to a fully Christian life, which, as Tolstoy bitterly observed, no Christian church has ever dared to live), to the deeply moving, still demanding, almost desperate cry of Matthew 25 (the Magna Carta of all liberation theologies)—if you will do nothing else, at least listen and live the most important Jesuanic call of all, the call to pay attention above all to the outcasts, the rejected, the forgotten: Feed the poor, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned. In sum, wake

up to fight the suffering and injustice all around you. As Augustine himself would later write in *De doctrina Christiana*, the sole hermeneutical key to the whole Scripture is “love of God and love of neighbor.”

The whole Christian Bible ends, after all, with the apocalyptic-tragic cries of the persecuted Christian community in Asia Minor in the book of Revelation. Greek tragedy could have been helpful to aid the earliest theologians in their sometimes unsteady readings of central aspects of these biblical texts and many others—the Exodus, the Babylonian Exile, the two destructions of the Temple—as surely as Greek mysticism and the Greek philosophy of *eros* helped Philo, Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa in their enriching readings of the Song of Songs and the gospel and letters of John. The Jewish theologian Philo and the Christian theologian Gregory of Nyssa created Platonically influenced mystical readings of Moses. Could not their brilliant contemplative and mystical treatises on Moses’s ascent of Mt. Sinai have been well complemented by a second, different, reading—one more influenced by Greek tragedy on the descent of an elated Moses down Mt. Sinai with the Decalogue only to find an unwelcoming, ungrateful people worshipping a golden calf? The full story of Moses bears triumph and joy but also unmistakably tragic components: Moses’s murder of an Egyptian official; God’s near murder of Moses himself; Moses’s unending, even tragic, difficulties with his people, whose relentless complaints sometimes burst forth in fierce fury at their leader; and, above all, the fact that Moses (like the later Martin Luther King Jr.) was a prophet destined never to reach the promised land himself.

Here is a second thought experiment, this time for Latin theology. What if the passionate and often pessimistic North African Latin theologians had developed a Christian theological vision with the aid of a tragedy-grace paradigm,<sup>45</sup> together with Augustine’s unique rendering of the nature-grace paradigm on intelligence and will-love, as well as the sin-grace paradigm on the abyss of sin? Vergil, the *Iliad*, and the many suggestive biblical passages cited earlier were available, even if Aeschylus and Sophocles apparently were not, although it is possible (not probable) that Euripides may have been through Seneca. If Augustine had allowed himself to incorporate his own innate tragic sense into his theology as well as he articulated his joyful contemplative orientation with the aid of Platonist philosophy and his unique and North African sense of unconscious and conscious sin, he might well have added an explicitly tragic

element to his complex model of the self. As the more pastoral Augustine sometimes hints in his letters and sermons, some human situations may be described more accurately as tragic than as sinful. Augustine, the pastor of his beleaguered people, never insinuates (like some contemporary Christian fundamentalist preachers) that floods or storms, earthquakes or barbarian invasions, are the people's fault. An Augustine-influenced Christian theological transformation of Greek, Latin, and biblical tragic senses happened much later: first, in early modernity, in great Christian tragic artists such as Calderon, Milton, Racine, and Corneille and in philosophers such as Pascal, and, in later modernity, in such Christian thinkers as Péguy, Kierkegaard, Simone Weil, and T. S. Eliot. Christian artists more than Christian theologians have sensed that tragedy can illuminate the Christian paradoxical human situation to the point at which a paradigm of tragedy-grace should be added to nature-grace and sin-grace.

Indeed, most modern theologians, as much as the earliest theologians, have kept their distance from tragedy. Jonathan Edwards is the outstanding eighteenth-century exception. Kierkegaard and Newman are the major nineteenth-century Christian exceptions. Theologians have too often and too facilely contented themselves with easy declarations that Christianity is "beyond tragedy." That is indeed true (as attested by the resurrection), but it is crucial for what Jesus Christ endured *before* the resurrection to be understood and not to be lost. Christianity, after all, is, as I have said before, a religion whose foundational narrative is the passion narrative and whose foundational symbol is the cross. When a theology moves beyond philosophy, it does so only by passing through philosophy. So, too, should any theological move beyond tragedy be only through tragedy, not around it. Analogously, the only powerful forms of postmodern thought are those that have seriously gone through modernity rather than, as is sometimes the case, used postmodernity as an excuse to return with unearned ease to premodernity. Theologians should be as willing to go through the raging river of tragedy as they have been willing to go through the "fiery brook" of philosophy and critical theory.

A few Christian theologians have so dared: outstanding is the late Anglican theologian Donald MacKinnon, who writes:

There is a sense in which Christian theology may be much more than it realizes the victim of the victory won in the person of Plato by the

philosophers over the poets, and in particular the tragedians. It is true that Aristotle sought to modify the significance of this victory; but he failed to reverse it. . . . I wish to ask the question whether in fact the theme of the work of Christ may not receive effective theological treatment when it is represented as tragedy. This I say remembering the supreme significance of the resurrection, but also continually recalling the extent to which in popular apologetic understanding the resurrection has been deformed through its representation as in effect a descent from the Cross, given greater dramatic effect by a thirty-six-hour postponement.<sup>46</sup>

Original or inherited sin for Augustine served as the surest explanation of the mystery of iniquity—the mystery that always most tortured him. But against Augustine's official teaching, why could this inherited necessity not be read as a tragic inheritance, not personal sin (which should always involve personal consent)? It is plausible to say, with Augustine or not, that there is some mysterious inherited evil in which we all participate and through which we all must suffer, even though we are not personally responsible for the origins of this mysterious inheritance. Augustine's penetrating sense of some strange and powerful inherited evil afflicting humanity can, however, also be read, contra Augustine, as an inherited necessary, tragic evil but not as original sin. Inherited evil, along with an inevitable inclination toward evil, is not as such (i.e., before one acts upon it) sinful. That inevitable aspect of our situation is better described as tragic, not sinful.

This Augustine would not allow. Since God cannot be responsible for causing (as distinct from permitting) evil, he concluded, in effect, that human beings must be responsible for all evil. This Augustinian conclusion is probative only if no third possibility is given (*tertium non datur*). But *tertium datur*. A sense of tragic necessity is that third possibility: an element, as noted earlier, that is present in the Bible alongside powerful biblical portraits of sin.

There is an intellectually skeptical and existentially dark side to Augustine, where sin and tragic necessity seem to exist uneasily side by side. Perhaps, left to himself, Augustine might have become, as Ronald Knox ironically observed about Pascal, a radical pessimist, a tragedian of hopelessness, not hope. Augustine might have become the village atheist.<sup>47</sup> But grace caught Augustine and he became and remained for life a

hope-ful, often joyful and contemplatively peaceful, Christian to the end; but, like Pascal, Augustine also never fully lost his other, tragic, sensibility. Augustine was a Christian convalescent; he was never fully healed, never a serene and joyful mystic in the manner of Dionysius the Areopagite.

As for Greek tragedy itself, in spite of many modern misunderstandings that tragedy characteristically ends without hope, the fact is that among the Greek tragedies that have survived, about half end in a “hopeless” mood and half end with hope. Despite common linguistic usage, “tragic” does not mean “hopeless.” Augustine may have been able, therefore, to strengthen, not weaken, his Christian hope, his incarnational theology of the cross and resurrection and his nonapocalyptic eschatology if he had allowed himself to include a tragic element in his model of the intelligent, loving, willing, sinful, and tragic self.

One can further clarify the implicit tragic aspects in Augustine’s portrait of the self by comparing his vision of the self to certain aspects of those of the three classical Greek tragedians whose texts (tragically!) Augustine did not know. Clarification through contrast is always a promising intellectual exercise. Who among the ancients, other than Euripides,<sup>48</sup> is more penetrating than Augustine on how our affects and passions can so becloud and take over our minds that we reach the point of impenetrable self-delusion? Euripides, the child of the Athenian intellectual revolution of the Sophists and Socrates, believed that reason does indeed enlighten and liberate human beings from superstition and obscurantism. But Euripides was no optimistic rationalist: Reason, even philosophical reason, can at times turn human beings into self-satisfied, arrogant monsters programmed for a tragic fall. Intelligence, Euripides thought, can rarely suppress or even deflect the passions away from blindness and self-delusion. In *The Bacchae*,<sup>49</sup> Euripides’ greatest work, Pentheus, the young rationalist, the self-satisfied king of Thebes, bearing all the *hubris* of youth, is driven by the orgiastic god Dionysius, the god at once of ecstatic joy and revolting cruelty, to insanity and self-destruction. Dionysius cruelly manipulates Pentheus’s vanity and his deeply repressed and confused erotic passions. Euripides, like Augustine, believed that the passions can so disorient our intellects that even our positive *eros* can shift suddenly into a pathway of tragic self-destruction. So it is in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* with Phaedra’s inappropriate but irresistible tragic erotic love for her unknowing stepson, who has his own repressions to afflict him.

The Euripidean tragic strain in Augustine shows itself in Augustine's brilliant (and very non-Platonist) focus on the passions—how passion can easily dislocate, even destroy, reason (*pondus meum, amor meus*). A Euripidean tragic strain is alive in Augustine in his penetrating observations on the power of feeling, emotion, affect, and mood over our best intentions and most brilliant thoughts. Still, Augustine's tragic view of the human situation is ultimately less comparable to that of Euripides than are those of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Augustine's awesome vision of the power of inherited original sin possesses a more Aeschylean *gravitas* than any Euripidean lament over disordering passions. Aeschylus, like Augustine, possessed an innate sense that evil can be inherited as a result of some aboriginal ancestral crime. For Augustine himself this inheritance was original sin. That sin included humanity's tragic solidarity in a universal and inescapable inherited—that is, original, at the origin—ancestral sin, for which Adam's and Eve's descendants are somehow also to be held responsible and guilty. All humankind is now in the house of Atreus. In the last play of the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus dramatizes the hope that through their dialectical and dialogical reasoning on justice, human beings, by using reason in the polis—if they act with the aid of the Olympian gods, especially Athena, goddess of wisdom—can hope to understand justice enough to found a court of law and thereby break the unending cycle of revenge in the doomed house of Atreus.

In the final play of Aeschylus's trilogy, *The Eumenides*, human beings, with the inestimable aid of the Olympian gods, may persuade the gods of blood, earth, and family—the Furies—to partake of the new tentative order of justice. This hope, moreover, for law as justice, not revenge, is a solid one for Aeschylus. This hope is theologically grounded:<sup>50</sup> Zeus is ultimately just. Human beings will therefore discover a tragic, not philosophical, wisdom: Despite all appearances to the contrary, Zeus is just; life, in consequence, despite its evils, its injustices, its sufferings, is meaningful and hopeful. We learn this Aeschylean wisdom, however, only through tragic suffering “drop by drop even in sleep.” Profound suffering purifies both mind and heart to be open to receive tragic wisdom. This classical Aeschylean tragic wisdom can be found in Augustine, whose tragic wisdom was of course theologically transformed by his Christian vision into Christian *agapic* wisdom through suffering, a process of which the cross reminds all Christians.



Neither dolorism nor fatalism accurately invokes either the Aeschylean or the Augustinian tragic theology of suffering. Aeschylus thought that the story of the house of Atreus needed three plays to enact its truth dramatically, not, as Sophocles and Euripides believed, a single play. For Augustine, the foundational Christian story of suffering and unlimited hope is the story in the four gospels, not one, the story of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ through whom one understands that God *is* the infinite love and intelligence, infinite justice and mercy. The traumas described by Aeschylus and Augustine are radically different, yet both include a similar sense of tragic necessity (Orestes in the *Oresteia*, Jesus in the synoptic gospels) and a wisdom through suffering in the gospel of John and the letters of Paul. Despite their radical differences, the stories of the Bible can, at times, be illuminated in classical Aeschylean terms—as those exceptional Augustinians, John Milton and Jean Racine, demonstrated. Unsurprising is the fact that two of the greatest Christian tragic dramatists, the revisionary Puritan, John Milton, and the revisionary Jansenist, Jean Racine, were both Augustinian. Almost despite himself, Augustine communicates a Christian tragic sensibility to careful readers—although more, it seems, to Christian artists than to Christian theologians and philosophers.

Both Euripidean and Aeschylean tragic notes, therefore, can be found in Augustine's implicitly tragic Christian vision. However, there is also something peculiarly Sophoclean in Augustine's overdetermined model of the self. Augustine could have written his own (to be sure, Christianly transformed) version of Sophocles' greatest ode: his ode to humankind as *deinos*,<sup>51</sup> that is, as a paradoxical wonder shining in intelligence and joyful strength while at the same time sharply damaged and twisted. *Deinos* is a Sophoclean word for the abyss of wonder that is the human self.

Oedipus is both highly intelligent and self-deluded: both well-intentioned toward others (his entire city, for whose sake he is willing to die) and ineradicably egocentric, both innocent and responsible. Sophocles implies that not only Oedipus but every human being is a *deinos*. Some human beings, like Oedipus, refuse to live according to the human measure (the Sophoclean heroes, *daimones*). Oedipus *must* know the truth about his origins, whatever the horrendous consequences. No one—prophet, wife, the warning chorus—can stop him before it is too late. It was always too late for Oedipus. *He must know*. Sophoclean daimonic heroes<sup>52</sup> are mortals who cannot but go beyond the mortal human

measure into a realm closer to that of the immortal gods. The heroes are no longer “human, all too human.” They are *daimons*.

Antigone, too, refuses the human measure. She “lives for love, not for hatred.”<sup>53</sup> She lives by the code of the gods for justice, not the reasonable political code of the city. It matters not at all to Antigone that the ruler of her polis, Creon, has threatened death to anyone who disobeys his decree that Antigone’s brother, a traitor to the city, will not be buried and, therefore, will be disgraced in death as in life. Antigone will not—cannot—obey this unjust law. Antigone lives for love through justice—the ancient justice, that of the gods. She is fully prepared to go to her death in obedience to another, higher law—the ancient law of the gods that one must bury one’s own. Antigone is not in any simple sense an obviously good person like Shakespeare’s Cordelia. Rather, Antigone, like Oedipus and all Sophoclean heroes, has obvious flaws: her unattractive stubbornness, which lies within her admirable and unrelenting sense of justice. Antigone treats her weaker sister Ismene cruelly, with unwarranted contempt; she ignores the feelings of her fiancé, Haemon. And yet Hegel was right to call Antigone the most beautifully (i.e., morally admirable) figure in our literature. As a daimonic hero who must live beyond the finite measure, Antigone could not but live as she did no matter what the consequences, just as Oedipus could not continue living until he knew the terrible truth of his own origins no matter what the consequences.

All Sophoclean heroes are mortals who, faithful to their *daimonic* natures, must go beyond the human limit, beyond the finite measure appropriate for humanity. Sophocles seems to believe that the best human hope of understanding human beings in the universe is to turn away from stories of ordinary mortals and to turn to the uncanny stories of those larger-than-life figures, the *daimonic* heroes. Only by attending to the unnerving stories of these *daimonic* heroes, Sophocles seems to hold, can human beings hope to find some glimpse into the “accursed” questions. Is Zeus ultimately just? Is human life—finite, measured, and mortal—ultimately meaningful? Or is it all finally absurd? Sophocles believed we cannot learn enough by telling the stories of ordinary mortals, even exceptional ones like the characters of Aeschylus and Euripides. Only the stories of the Sophoclean *daemonic* heroes—inevitably tragic because of their irresistible drive to go beyond the human measure—may give us some clue to our place in the universe.

Unlike Aeschylus, Sophocles is not entirely sure that Zeus is just. In some tragedies Sophocles enacts a hope that Zeus is just. In other tragedies, he clearly does not. After displaying an unrelenting drama of horror and injustice, the *Trachiniae* concludes with the uncanny, seemingly hopeless line "There is nothing here that is not Zeus."<sup>54</sup> *Oedipus Tyrannus* ends without hope, but *Oedipus at Colonus* ends with great hope in the form of tragic wisdom, with the suffering hero, Oedipus, becoming an official *daimon* to be honored at his new shrine at Colonus (the shrine where Sophocles was priest for the cultic rituals). Unlike Euripides, Sophocles does clearly believe in the gods and, in some but not all of his plays, believes they are just.

As a deeply committed Christian, Augustine always had graced hope. And yet the self of Augustine is in some ways very like a Sophoclean *deinos* (so intelligent, so strange) and sometimes like a Sophoclean *daimon*. As we have seen, in the first place Augustine's self is as intelligent as Augustine himself so clearly was: in discursive rhetorical arguments, in dialogues, in meditation and speculation, and finally in divinizing contemplation with moments of profound intuitive vision. In the second place, as we have also seen, Augustine's self is always active in affect, emotions, will, love. The self of Augustine is *deinos*. In the third place, Augustine's self also finds itself unable to escape its own self-created prison, its God-denying, other-rejecting, intelligent and loving, self-destructive ego (later named by Martin Luther *curvatus in se*). In other words, Augustine's fully positive, intelligent, and loving "nature-grace" self is simultaneously a self darkened in intelligence, twisted in will, ever restless and mood-shifting, addicted to its own sins and poisoned by some evil fatelike inherited necessity. Both Augustine's nature-grace paradigm and his sin-grace paradigm are fundamental for understanding the complex Augustinian self. Augustine's self bears not only all the characteristics of Sophocles' human being as *deinos* but also bears, at its extreme limit, the excessive character of a *daimon* (both saint and sinner; Luther's *simul iustus et peccator*). Human beings are capable of the extremes of good (note the importance, for Augustine, of the story of the *daimonic* saint, Anthony, as a Sophoclean herolike monk in the desert—a choice of life clearly beyond the human measure) and evil (as in his own Iagolike love of evil for evil's sake in his famous youthful theft of pears without reason).

Contrary to his explicit theological intentions, Augustine does in fact implicitly render tragedy, as Milton and Racine did explicitly centuries later, i.e., not only a nature-grace version of the self, not only a sin-grace version, but also a Christian tragic version. If Augustine had known Greek tragedy, he would, of course, have theologically transformed the Euripidean, Sophoclean, and Aeschylean tragic elements, as did Calderon, Milton, Racine, Eliot, and other Christian tragedians, into a distinctly Christian tragic vision, just as he had earlier transformed Platonist philosophy into a Christian contemplative theology. In my judgment, the Latins, unlike the Greeks, produced no great tragedians save the incomparable Vergil and the tragedian *manqué*, Augustine of Hippo. Seneca, usually cited as the greatest Latin tragedian, hardly qualifies: Seneca dramatizes a violent, sensationalized, somewhat Euripidean vision without the precarious tragic balance that Euripides always maintained in his best plays and Seneca almost never did. By contrast, Augustine's vision—at once resolutely and explicitly Christian—is also implicitly tragic.

And yet something else—something stranger—may likewise be the case. Perhaps Augustinian theology, almost alone among ancient Christian theologies and almost alone among modern theologies, was also a theology betraying those few traces of ancient Greek tragedy still alive in Augustine's day of theatrical decadence. Perhaps. At any rate, the authentic greatness of Augustine's complex theological model of the self is that it included both the nature-grace and the sin-grace paradigms to understand dimensions of the self. In its overdetermined and ultimately incomprehensible way, Augustine's model of the self is also open to a tragedy-grace paradigm to understand its full complexity. Augustine's understanding of the self is an uncanny one: a self ultimately (i.e., theologically) an incomprehensible *imago dei* of the incomprehensible Trinitarian God in Godself. And yet that same self is penultimately comprehensible only as an overdetermined self—dazzlingly intelligent and loving, constituted by will as energy and will as choice—as well as a graced, sinful, and tragic self.

The history of the reception of Augustine has usually consisted in highlighting one or at most two of these four major elements as the master-key to Augustine's understanding of the self. This will no longer serve. It is time to rethink the complete Augustinian overdetermined portrait of the self. Partial, indeed partisan, readings, however valuable in their historical context and however insightful they remain for grasping

one or the other central element in the self of Augustine, do not satisfy. For all their brilliance and permanent value, the classical readings of Augustine on the self are not adequate interpretations of the multiple, sometimes conflicting, insights on the self uniquely enacted in our history by Augustine of Hippo. *Sui generis* is a phrase that seems invented to describe Augustine: our contemporary, with his unmatched portrait of the self—penultimately overdetermined and ultimately incomprehensible.

## NOTES

1. On the *imago dei* Augustine is original: He shifts the theological understanding of the *imago* from the Greek emphasis on Christ alone as the *imago* to a Trinitarian *imago* (i.e., to the Father through Christ in the Spirit). As Trinitarian, the *imago* in humans becomes memory-understanding-will (love). It is, therefore, not accurate to describe and criticize Augustine's *imago* as a psychological analogy. It is a theological, that is, Trinitarian, analogy that yields triads, especially memory-understanding-will (love) in human beings. See *The Trinity* [*De Trinitate*], trans. Edmund Hill (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), esp. 298–303 and 383–88. On the christomorphic character of Augustine's Trinitarian theocentrism, see David Tracy, "Augustine's Christomorphic Theocentrism," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. Aristotle Papanikolaou and George Demacopoulos (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008).

2. *De libero arbitrio libri tres*, ed. William M. Green, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 74, Sancti Aureli Augustini Opera (Vindobonae, Austria: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1956).

3. For the *Confessions* I use the fine three-volume text and commentary by James J. O'Donnell (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1992). Volume 1 is the text and introduction; this volume will be cited parenthetically below. For an English translation, see *The Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

4. Porphyry, "On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of his Books," in *Plotinus*, trans. A. H. Armstrong, 7 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 1:71.

5. For the importance of the Nicene doctrine, see Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 142–71.

6. *Epistle 120*, in *S. Aurelii Augustini Hipponiensis episcopi Epistulae*, ed. Alois Goldbacher, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 34, S. Aureli Augustini Operum (Vindobonae, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1895), 2:704–22.

7. Augustine, *De anima et eius origine libri quattuor*, ed. Karl Franz Urbani and Joseph Zycha, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 60, Sancti Aureli Augustini Opera (Vindobonae, Austria: F. Tempsky, 1913), 303–419.

8. Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1995).

9. This does not mean, *pace* Alfarić et al., that Augustine's real conversion was to Platonism, as Augustine makes clear in the *Confessions*. This important intellectual conversion needed prayer, scripture reading, and baptism in order to become a full Christian conversion. Amid the vast literature on the topic of Augustine and Platonism, see Robert Crouse, "Pauca Mutatis Verbis: St. Augustine's Platonism," in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2000), 37–50, and Giovanni Reale, *Aurelio Agostino: Natura del Bene* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1995).

10. Garry Wills, *St. Augustine* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999), 88–97.

11. See Philip Burton, *Language in the Confessions of Augustine* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007).

12. This pervasive interiority can be seen as early as the dialogue of Augustine on reason itself. See *Soliloquiorum libri duo*, ed. Wolfgang Hörmann, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 89, Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera (Vindobonae: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), 3–98.

13. Albrecht Dihle, *The Theory of the Will in Classical Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

14. Saint Augustine, *The Retractions*, trans. Mary Inez Bogan, Fathers of the Church Series 60 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1968).

15. For references see my essay "The Divided Consciousness of Augustine on Eros," in *Erotikon: Essays on Eros, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Shadi Bartsch and Thomas Bartscherer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

16. Augustine, "Homily VII," *Homilies on the First Letter of John*, in *Saint Augustine: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, trans. H. Browne, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: T & T Clark and W. B. Eerdmans, 1986), esp. 501–8.

17. Martin Heidegger, "Augustinus und der Neuplatonismus," in *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, Gesamtausgabe F II, 60.2 (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1995), 160–299.

18. A modern interpreter can see, following Jean Daniélou's classic analysis of *epektasis*, that *epektasis* is very like the notion of spiritual exercise described by Pierre Hadot.

19. Anders Nygren, *Eros and Agape*, trans. Philip Watson (London: SPCK, 1982), 136; John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine; the Hulsean Lectures for 1938* (London: Wipf and Stock, 2007); and idem, "The 'Retractiones' of St. Augustine: Self-criticism or Apologia?," in *Augustinus Magister: Congrès*

*internationale augustinien, Paris, 21–24 September 1954*, 3 vols. (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1954–55), 1:85–92.

20. See Gerald Bonner, *Freedom and Necessity: St. Augustine's Teaching on Divine Power and Human Freedom* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), for a persuasive reading and the myriad relevant references.

21. See Tracy, "Augustine's Christomorphic Theocentrism."

22. David Steinmetz, *Calvin in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, trans. and ed. Elsie Anne McKee, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 2001).

23. Gerald Bonner, *Augustine and Modern Research on Pelagianism*, Saint Augustine Lecture Series: Saint Augustine and the Augustinian Tradition (Villanova, PA: Augustinian Institute of Villanova University, 1972); repr. in idem, *God's Decree and Man's Destiny: Studies on the Thought of Augustine of Hippo* (London: Variorum Studies, 1987).

24. The tone of Augustine's initial criticisms of Pelagius does not demonstrate the violent polemics that eventually took over, especially when Julian of Eclanum entered the controversy. For Augustine on Pelagius himself, see "Against Two Letters of the Pelagians," "On Grace and Free Will," and "On Rebuke and Grace" in *Saint Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings*, trans. Peter Holmes, Robert Ernest Wallis, and Benjamin B. Warfield, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 374–492.

25. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 368.

26. For a recent defense of Julian, see Josef Lössl, *Julian von Aeclanum: Studien zu seinem Leben, seinem Werk, seiner Lehre und ihrer Überlieferung*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 60 (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

27. This increasingly polemical stance against Julian of Eclanum begins in two letters against the Pelagians and lasts until the very end of the unfinished work against Pelagius in *Opus Imperfectum*. See "The Spirit and the Letter," "Nature and Grace," and "The Deeds of Pelagius," in *Answer to the Pelagians*, trans. Roland J. Teske, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century 23 (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1997), 150–202, 225–75, 336–81.

28. On the importance of the recently discovered sermons (by François Dolbeau) and letters (by Johannes Divjak) for reinterpreting the pastoral, nonpolemical character of Augustine in his later years, see "Epilogue," in Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 440–513.

29. For Mikhail Bakhtin on Dostoevsky, see "Dostoevsky's Poetics," in Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 238–52.

30. Virginia Woolf, "The Russian View," in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, 1912–1918*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), 341–44.



31. For the concept of a “hermeneutics of suspicion,” see “Interpretation as Exercise of Suspicion,” in Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 32–36.

32. See G. R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

33. See my essay “Incarnation and Suffering: On Rereading Augustine,” in *Godhead Here in Hiding: Incarnation and the History of Human Suffering*, ed. Terrence Merrigan and Frederik Glorieux, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 234 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2012).

34. Simone Weil, *The Iliad, or Poem of Force*, trans. Mary McCarthy, pamphlet 91 (New York: Politics, 1946), 3–30; reprinted as “*The Iliad*, Poem of Force,” in *The Simone Weil Reader*, ed. George A. Panichas (Wakefield, RI: Moyer Bell, 1977), 153–83.

35. See W. R. Johnson, *Darkness Visible: A Study of Vergil’s Aeneid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

36. *Confessions*, trans. Chadwick, 81.

37. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600–1700)*, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 216–52.

38. See the consistently negative appraisals of Augustine in John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1985), and in Cristos Yannaras, *Person and Eros*, trans. Norman Russell (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2007).

39. Nicholas Berdyaev, *The Fate of Man in the Modern World*, trans. Donald A. Lowrie (London: SCM Press, 1935), and *The Beginning and the End*, trans. R. M. French, originally *An Essay in Eschatological Metaphysics* (London: G. Bles, 1952).

40. Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960).

41. Miguel de Beistegui, “Hegel, or The Tragedy of Thinking,” in *Philosophy and Tragedy*, ed. Miguel de Beistegui and Simon Sparks (London: Routledge, 2000), 11–56. See also other essays in *Philosophy and Tragedy*. The other major German philosophical reading of tragedy is, of course, that of Friedrich Nietzsche.

42. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1998).

43. Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, trans. J. E. Crawford Fritch (New York: Dover Publications, 1954).

44. See Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011).

45. There is a need for a full study of Augustine on fate and necessity, for example, in *The City of God*, in his criticism of Cicero in Book V, chapters 8, 9, and 10; and in his polemical response, in Book II, chapters 9, 10, and 11, to Julian of



Eclanum, who had accused Augustine of still remaining—in his “Against Two Letters of the Pelagians”—Manichean and fatalistic. See *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 1984), 188–96, 394–95.

46. Donald M. MacKinnon, *Borderlands of Theology and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1968), 100.

47. Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion, with Special Reference to the XII and XVIII Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), 202.

48. See, for example, Euripides, *Electra*, trans. Emily Townsend Vermeule, *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, ed. David Grene and Richard Lattimore, 4 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 4:397–454.

49. Euripides, *The Bacchae*, trans. William Arrowsmith, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, 4:543–608.

50. See Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*, trans. Richard Lattimore, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, 1:166–71, esp. lines 881–1047.

51. See *Antigone*, in *Sophocles*, with an English translation by F. Storr, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956). The ode referring to *deinos* in *Antigone*, spoken by the Chorus, begins with “πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει” [Many wonders there be, but naught more wondrous than man], lines 332–40.

52. This is my own reading of the controverted issue of the exact meaning of Sophocles’ notion of the hero as *daimon*.

53. “My nature is for mutual love, not hate,” *Antigone*, in *Sophocles*, line 523.

54. Sophocles, *Women of Tracchis*, trans. Michael Jameson, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies*, 2:325, lines 1277–78: “. . . and there is / nothing here which is not Zeus.”

