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## Augustine's *Confessiones*: The Battle between Two Conversions

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Augustine's *Confessiones*: The Battle between Two Conversions

by

Robert Hunter Craig

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Philosophy  
with a concentration in Philosophy and Religion  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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Pedagogic-Apologetic

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**DEDICATED TO:**

God

To my wife Terry Lee Craig

To my professor and pastor

James F. Strange

## PREFACE

I can recall reading the *Confessiones* of Augustine in 1988 for the first time when I was a sophomore at Stetson University in my Introduction to Philosophy class. I was a young ministerial student who had never read any philosophy – only theology. How relieved I was when Dr. Robert Perkins finally got to this primary source because it really was so theological in nature- so I thought. To my surprise, I found it somewhat confusing with all of its different investigations and prayers. The fact that it was in the first person made it more personal; but I had no contextual grasp of Augustine’s method or purpose in writing it. Moreover, I read it many more times in the course of my graduate studies at Emory University and eventually my first dissertation on Reinhold Niebuhr’s practical theology and the influence of Augustine on his “Christian Realism”. Finally, I had the wonderful opportunity to study with Dr. Thomas Williams, my mentor and co-director, at the University of South Florida in an Augustine Seminar in the Fall of 2013. It was during this seminar that I researched and discovered a thesis concerning this momentous writing of Augustine. It is my hope that this thesis will be a real and vital contribution to Augustinian scholarship.

I would like to thank Dr. Thomas Williams for his wisdom and incredible philosophical mind. I also thank him for his mentorship and editorial expertise in guiding me through this dissertation to its completion. He was the whole reason I came to the University of South Florida to study and has been a lasting inspiration and

example for scholastic and pastoral care of his students. Finally, I wish to thank Dr. James Strange for both supporting this project and any and all editorial assistance. Unfortunately, Dr. Strange, my other co-director, passed away before I was able to finish writing this treatise. From 2013 to his passing this past March 2018, Dr. Strange was the epitome of professional and pastoral guidance in my research and writing on Augustine – but more than that – he married my wife and I, allowed me to stay in his home when in Tampa, and had countless lunches and dinners together. We discussed both ministry and scholarship over those same occasions. His humility and love were exactly the qualities that I wish to carry on in my research and work with students moving forward in my career endeavors. May he always know how much I love him and honor him in this life until we meet again in the other dimension beyond space/time. Also, I would like to thank other members of my committee Alexander Levine, William Goodwin for their willingness to be on my dissertation committee and for the opportunity to study under their wisdom and guidance. Finally, let me thank my beautiful wife for working on my bibliography and putting it into a proper order. All quotations from Augustine's *Confessiones* were made from Henry Chadwick's translation. All Latin quotations were from Loeb Classical Library Harvard University Press.

R. H. Craig

University of South Florida

August 25, 2018

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## ABSTRACT

There are four aspects of Augustine's thought in the *Confessiones* that have been challenged and redefined in this dissertation: the full contextual matrix as to place, setting, and motivation for writing in Carthage North Africa 397C.E.; the genre and structural framework utilized by Augustine in framing this treatise using Plato's Allegory of the Cave in Book VII of the *Republic*; "Confession" redefined as confession of sin, confession of faith and confession of truth; and the meaning or purpose for writing in regards to his scriptural philosophy of consciousness and to the redefining of Socratic ratiocination based on humanistic pagan philosophy to that of theo-ratiocination which Augustine found in Scripture.

By theo-ratiocination I mean a necessary Divine illumined consciousness and reasoning as opposed to a "theosophy" which is usually defined as an ecstatic experiential or subjective Plotinian ecstasy or union with the Divine experience. My term will redefine a rationality that is universal to all created conscious life. By Synchronic – Synthetic - Triunism I challenged both materialist/physicalist (monism) Carnap, Ryle, Quine on mind; and, (dualism) Kantian ideas of *a priori* (pure reasoning) and *a posteriori* (empirical reasoning) dichotomy and a divided consciousness. It was shown that Augustine argued for a synchronous (*a synchroni*) synthetic triunism of consciousness of thought- as opposed to a linear dualism body stimulating mentalistic mind concept. Instead, Past(Memory), Present(Senses), Future(Imagination) synchronically exist in every cognate moment namely, what I will call, Biological(Perception/Body), Mentalistic (Apperception, Mind),

and External Illuminative/Inspiration/Concentration (Mentalistic Directive Outside a Controlled Will - Interpretation).

## INTRODUCTION

Augustine was the perfect apologist for the church in the late fourth century and early fifth century. Why perfect? Simply put, he had lived the life of a pagan – intellectually, spiritually and professionally. If there is one message we get from the *Confessiones* it is that the young Augustine had been afforded all the opportunities to engage in Roman cultural practices. The other message from that same work, is that he progressed through the Platonic allegorical cave in search of a beaconing light that drew him through the stages of intellectual progression and degrees of self-awareness within his individual soul; only to conclude that God was a relational God who wanted spiritual reconciliation and not intellectual enlightenment as the basis of conversion. Plato's conversion was not equal to the Christian conversion, according to Augustine, nor was philosophical thought equal to God's thought as revealed through the Scriptural text for Divine instruction and truth about the totality of existence. His life truly was about the making of a pagan mind into a Christian mind. Augustine's mind was, in fact, an expert in pagan socio-political history and the intellectual history that supported it. He seems to have been keenly aware of human corruption and injustice within the State and the Church.

## I. Definition of the Problem

The problem to be examined in this treatise is to analyze the structure and purpose of the *Confessiones*. This, of course, has been the center of academic study for centuries. There have been countless debates between the “crypto-Plotinian”, “crypto-Porphyrrian”, and Roman Catholic “Trinitarian” schools of thought concerning this ancient text. By this I mean was Augustine a Neo-Platonist who conjoined Scriptural theology with Plotinian theology? Did he combine Scriptural theology with Plotinus’ closest disciple and biographer Porphyry in order to seek to win over later Neo-Platonist intellectuals against Porphyry’s anti-Christian writings? The Roman Catholic school also sought to show that the *Confessiones* was based on Trinitarian theology and that the text is broken down in order to show the superiority of this theology over and against both Manichean and Pagan theology.

The mystery of the *Confessiones* by Augustine is that it is written in two distinct styles of discourse. The first nine books were written in a kind of “autobiographical” or self-reflective analysis of Augustine’s life up to its writing in 397 C.E.. The last four are most certainly philosophical prose written from a Christian/Scriptural perspective. It will be argued in this thesis, however, that books VII and X are the keystones to unraveling this mystery for both the structure and purpose for its writing. Moreover, it will be argued that the autobiographical section of the work is really an allegorical rendering or quilted patchwork of different “forms” of discourse all selected for pedagogical purposes. It is a mistake to think of Augustine’s *Confessiones* as strictly a straight historical or theological work, as many historians of Medieval Christianity tend to do when writing their sections on Augustine, for which they tend to focus on him as a

theologian engaging in reformation/polemical work against Manicheans, Donatists or Pelagians over and against the Catholic faith.<sup>1</sup> This thesis will argue that *Confessiones* is primarily a Christian philosophical ethical treatise or polemic against pagan philosophy and its emphasis on reason as a way of life toward happiness. Primarily, Augustine focused on the Socratic emphasis of the superiority of reason to find happiness in this life. This in turn will show that the work is a new kind of Christian philosophy or “Scriptural philosophy”<sup>2</sup> in which Augustine uses Scriptural texts and then translates those texts into the language of philosophical argumentation and dialectic in Books Ten to Thirteen. The apex of the work is Augustine’s own intellectual conversion and eventually superior spiritual conversion. He then elaborates his own philosophical analysis of that conversion experience in Books X through XIII as well. Moreover, it will be argued that this work is primarily an apologetic for “true religion” or the Catholic way of life – over and against Platonic conversion based on intellectual ascent or “inferred god” theology in Book VII of the Republic; which in turn becomes the dominant theme of pagan philosophy and its pedagogy as a way of life. In its totality, the *Confessiones* is primarily a Christian philosophical pedagogical presentation of what it means to truly “confessio” or convert to the Catholic way of life.

## **II. Analysis of How It Arose**

Augustine produced a work that is multi-dimensional and compositionally structured around the Platonic/Neo-Platonic pedagogical method of allegorical

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<sup>1</sup> See Kevin Madigan. *Medieval Christianity: A New History*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015)pp. 22-23; Joseph Strayer, Dana C. Manro. *Middle Ages*. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959)pp.20-23.

<sup>2</sup> My term – Dr. R. H. Craig

demonstration prior to straight prose elucidation. It is based on a theory of knowledge and education where people, of all intellectual sophistications and experiences in the pagan world – specifically Carthage in North Africa from which it was begun in 397C.E. – may come to spiritual conversion of the will as opposed to a simple intellectual enlightenment. Thus, the reader and listener both absorbed “levels of meaning” from the text. Moreover, that it cannot be fully appreciated or fully understood without acknowledging to some extent that the allegorical illustrations/personas that Augustine chooses to use in his *Confessiones* were selected with a pedagogical purpose or philosophical/theological lesson for the reader and/or hearer from both theological and philosophical communities within late fourth century Roman antiquity.

The first ancient Augustinian historian Bishop Possidius stated in the preface of his ancient biography of Augustine, “It is not my purpose to touch on all those things which the blessed Augustine noted about himself in his books of the *Confessions*, telling what his life was before receiving the divine grace and what it became on his conversion”.<sup>3</sup> He went on to state that it was his contention that Augustine was called to teach and preach

with all confidence against the African heresies, especially against the Donatists, Manicheans and pagans both in his finished books and extemporaneous sermons...and so with God’s help, the Catholic Church in Africa began to lift its head, having for a long time lain prostrate, seduced, oppressed and overpowered, while the heretics were gaining strength...even the heretics themselves gathered together and with the Catholics listened most eagerly to these books and treatises which issued and flowed forth by the wonderful grace of God, filled with abundance of reason and the authority of Holy Scripture.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Possidius. *Life of St. Augustine*. Internet (1919), pp. 39

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter VII, p. 42

Hence, we are to see quite clearly that Augustine saw himself, as well as by the Church, to be a philosophical theologian who was to be an apologist for the superiority of the Catholic way of life against the African heresies – both in the Church itself and the pagan world of hyper rationalization.

When we use the saying, “the Catholic way of life”, we are using it the way Augustine intended it to be understood in counter distinction to the pagan way of life ensconced firmly in humanistic reason as the basis of all happiness in this life. Also, we need to understand Augustine’s conception of history. James Wetzel states,

‘History’ in this use of the word stands for a narrative and cognitive unity rendered through writing. As surely as *this* history has taken possession of the world, the full mental possession of it is the soul’s assurance of eternal life. Augustine’s mature conception of the Jewish-Christian scripture/s was the product of complex processes in his intellectual life and environment, but probably no single factor was more important than his response to Manicheism. For this ex-Manichee, saving God’s justice and saving human freedom – that is, saving the two of them together – meant saving the overall unity of the scriptures by then held as canonical in the “catholic” church.<sup>5</sup>

What Augustine made explicit in his early and later writings, however, was that the true enemy of the Catholic model was the Socratic emphasis on humanistic reason as a basis of finding fulfillment both as individuals and as a corporate body of the State.<sup>6</sup>

Augustine makes it explicit that his methodology for apologetical defense of the Scriptural text was to attack the intellectual foundations – both philosophically (reason) and theologically (faith) of the Roman culture. I wish to suggest that the *Confessiones* was just such an attack but was presented to his fellow monks at his monastery in an

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<sup>5</sup> James Wetzel ed. *Augustine’s City of God: A Critical Guide*(Cambridge University Press, 2012)p.16

<sup>6</sup> See *De vera religione, De utilitate credendi, De doctrina Christiana*. I will be doing an analysis of these texts in Chapter Four in regards to Augustinian method.

allegorical pedagogical form which imitated Neo-Platonist pedagogy.<sup>7</sup> This pedagogical form was to tell an allegory that exemplified all the lessons to be taught – followed by, what I call, a straight Scriptural philosophical (analytical) apologetic of the allegory previously read or told. In Chapter One I will do an analysis of recent scholarship concerning theories of the structure and purpose of the *Confessiones* up to 2018. Through the remaining treatise, I will present my own theory that this marvelous and rich work is a historical allegorical dialogue between differing schools of thought in Roman culture and the apologetic of the Scriptural text which is philosophically translated to engage in dialogue with Pagan intellectuals and educate his fellow monks in a new pedagogical model for teaching Christianity.

### III. Justification of Thesis and Reason for Study

Augustine wrote in his *Retractiones*, which were written toward the end of his life about his critique or retractions concerning certain things that he stated in his writings, the following about his *Confessiones*:

The thirteen books of my confessions praise the just and good God for both the bad and the good that I did, and they draw a person's **mind** and **emotions** toward him. As for myself, that is how they affected me when they were being written, and that is how they affect me when they are being read. What others may think about them is up to them, but I know that they have pleased and do please many of the **brothers** a

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<sup>7</sup> See Augustine. *The Rule of Augustine*. (Garden City: Image Books, 1986), pp. 3-4 - Tarscius J. Van Bavel writes, "Augustine is well known as the restless searcher for truth, as the convert, bishop and scholar. He is less well known as a monk. We can only fully understand his personality, however, if we keep in mind that his sole wish after his conversion was to be 'a servant of God'; that is, a monk. He lived also as a monk when he was a priest, even later as bishop. But there is more to it than that. In writing the oldest monastic rule in the West, Augustine exerted an unusually great influence on the Christian ideal of the religious life...Augustine wrote the Rule in 397, about ten years after he had been baptized by Ambrose in Milan...Later he founded a monastery for clerics in his bishop's house in Hippo (395/6). It was there that, around 397, Augustine wrote his Rule."

great deal. The first to the tenth [books] were written about me and the three others about the **holy scriptures**...<sup>8</sup>

What do we learn from this statement by Augustine himself? I would point to the conjoining of both mind and emotion. This would indicate that his goal in using an autobiographical allegory was to humanize or emotionalize his teaching in the document as a whole. That is precisely the pedagogical method of Neo-Platonism before and during Augustine's educational pilgrimage. Second, I would focus on the audience of the document that he specifically mentions – namely the “brothers”. I would argue that this document was not simply intended for the historical “mind” of pagan intellectuals; but rather it was intended for the heart of the listener or reader. Specifically, Augustine's fellow monks at his monastery were his students as well as his colleagues. Thus, the *Confessiones* was a pedagogical model for evangelizing and understanding a type of Scriptural philosophy of mind and of providential time within the human mind/soul. Finally, I would point to his understanding that the straight prose, which most scholars agree was the most analytical and philosophical, was about “holy scriptures”. This would support my thesis that the final books were Scriptural philosophy concerning a theo/rational explanation of the conversion of the mind/soul. They are meant, therefore, to be a long meditation on memory and the soul's cognitive powers and “the spiritual situation at the time he wrote the book”. It should also be noted that by the time Augustine writes the *Confessiones* 396/397, he had already published: *The Happy Life*, *Against the Sceptics*; *On Order* 386; *Soliloquies* 387; *On Human Responsibility* 388-395; *Commentary on Genesis against the Manichaeans* 388/89; *The Master* 389; *On Music* 390; *On True Religion* 390; *On Belief* 391; *On the*

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<sup>8</sup> Augustine. *Retractiones*(New York: New City Press,2010) p. 114

*Sermon on the Mount* 393; *Expositions of some Propositions on Romans* 394; *Replies to Simplicianus* 396; *First part of Christian Teaching* 396.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, it appears that Augustine had established himself as a philosopher in regards to ancient philosophical debates and as a theologian – specifically, with his new hermeneutical lens of exegesis using allegory as a means of what I call “philosophical translating” the Scriptural text into a philosophical or intellectual schematic that could be both intelligible and in dialogue with philosophical argumentation. Augustine was neither a crypto-neoplatonist nor was he a traditional theologian of his time. Instead, Augustine used the methodology of philosophy in understanding immaterial truths by translating Scriptural categories of the Holy Text into this same schematic of philosophy in order to make the Scripture multi-dimensional between the external materialist reality of the physical universe and the existential or inward perception of the soul.

What then is the relationship of Books I-X and what are called the “exegetical books” of XI-XIII? The relationship, it seems to me, is how Augustine describes it toward the end of his life in 426 in the *Retractiones*. I do think that Books I-IX are structurally programmed by Augustine to use Platonic theory of education for teaching how the mind/soul of humanity finds the immaterial/immutable God intellectually; and, it also states forth right the proclamation for the superior conversion of the will through the reconciliation with God through Christ, then simply the intellect of the mind. Instead of the title *Confessiones*, Augustine could call his work “On the Quest for True Happiness in God”. Nonetheless, it is my argument throughout this essay that

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<sup>9</sup> John Rist. *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. xvii

Augustine sees the human mind as grasping multi-dimensional truths or diversity of truths in human consciousness. Therefore, it should be no wonder that the *Confessiones* could be interpreted as a Scriptural Philosophical or Theo/Rational interpretation of the Mind. If we get right down to it, the entire work is a type of dialogue – like those of Plato – except it is a dialogue between God and the Self - i.e. Augustine or Humanity. Augustine argued that his quest was humanity’s quest universally. If that is the case then Books I-X are the allegorical descriptions of that quest – within human culture – of the mind/soul to find ultimate happiness both intellectually/philosophically and theologically/mystically.

Book X is a transitional book of sorts. There is internal evidence in it that directly keeps the connection with Books I-IX when Augustine refers back to the previous confessions. However, this book moves away from allegory in regards to his current “spiritual condition at the time he wrote the book” and instead to a more analytical analysis of the mind/soul’s “cognitive powers”. Augustine purposely told the allegory in order to engage, on multiple dimensions, the religion, morals, socio-cultural and socio-political mass behaviors, and ultimately, the philosophical foundations of pagan culture as opposed to the Catholic faith. The final Books are a needed explanation of the allegory told in order to specify the meanings he wanted to teach and to avoid misinterpretation. This, of course, follows in the Platonic pedagogical method of Book VII of the *Republic*. Plato tells the Allegory of the Cave to describe human thought towards his god. He then tells an analytical interpretation philosophically. Hence, Book X is that analytical interpretation of how memory played such an important role in keeping Augustine ascending toward the light of God as incorruptible and immutable.

The mind of the individual is where the battle for conversion is to be fought. The past has immediate impact on the present in each cognitive moment. It continually beacons and reminds Augustine of his Christian upbringing by his mother Monica.

Books XI through XIII are a continuation of Augustine's Scriptural philosophy or apologetic for a theo-rational explanation of spiritual conversion against pagan Neo-Platonist philosophical arguments that are rooted in the Roman culture of his day. His treatises on Memory, Time/Eternity, Form/Matter and the Creation of the World are all Scriptural philosophical explanations of the allegory of his life and spiritual quest. He specifically argued against Plotinus' and Porphyry's on these subjects. Both of which are founded in Socratic and Platonic philosophy first.

Why do I think the structure of the *Confessiones* is built on Plato's Allegory of the Cave model in Book VII of the *Republic*? First, I would argue that there is what I call specific "cave language" from the Allegory of the Cave throughout the allegorical autobiography section which would be readily recognized by any educated person in Roman culture. Second, Form Criticism, which is taught in Old Testament and New Testament studies, teaches that there are different forms of literature in any given book of the Bible.<sup>10</sup> I will argue in this thesis that if we study the *Confessiones* with a form critical approach then we will see that Augustine utilized four different rhetorical

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<sup>10</sup> See John H. Hayes. *An Introduction to Old Testament Study*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), pp. 127– "The methodology which Gunkel pursued, and he did not use the term form criticism (*Formgeschichte*), was what he called literary history (*Literaturgeschichte*) and genre research (*Gattungsforschung*). The overall goal of such an endeavor was the desire to understand and appreciate the literature of ancient Israel in its totality, that is, in its functional relationship to the whole of the people's life and history. For Gunkel, this involved two tasks. (1) 'The prime task of a history of literature in Israel must...be to determine the *literary* types represented in the Old Testament' (1928,59). (2) 'This study of the literary types, however, will only merit the name of Literary History when it attempts to get at the *history through which these types have passed*' (1928, 61)."

literatures in his allegory: 1. Historical Narrative, 2. Philosophical Exposition, 3. Theological Refutation and Lecture, 4. Prayerful Dialogue with God.<sup>11</sup> Third, Augustine uses the Platonic ascendancy structure beginning with Book I with the zenith of the *Confessiones* in Book VIII. Like the *Republic*, Augustine begins his descent back into the cave of the world after his vision of ostia experience. Finally, I will argue that Augustine did, in fact, have a sound knowledge of Platonic works – specifically, the *Republic*.

#### **IV. Method of Approach**

The method of approach will be both a systematic and exegetical study of the *Confessiones* of Augustine. Chapter One will be a structure and meaning analysis of recent scholarship up to 2018 concerning differing theories as to the structure and purpose of the *Confessiones*. Specifically, I will look at the writings of John J. O’Meara, Peter King, Robert Pasnan, Robin Fox, William E. Mann, John M. Rist, Brian Stock, Brian Dobell, Gary Wills, James J. O’Donnell, Henry Chadwick, Andres Nino, Robert McMahon, Frederick Crosson, Peter Van Fleteren, James Wetzel, and Lawrence Rothfield. Chapter Two will be an exposition of the “sitz im leben” or setting in life of the *Confessiones*. Specifically, the actual socio-political context of its writing and what was going on in Carthage where it was written at the time it was written. Chapter Three will be an analysis of “Socratism” and its differing philosophical schools that promulgated human ratiocination in order to cure the mind/soul of dysfunctionality and for the pursuit of human happiness free of anxiety within the ontological. Chapter Four will be an analysis of Allegory of Cave structure of the *Confessiones*. Specifically, I will

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<sup>11</sup> I will expound further in Chapter 4 on Augustinian Method

elucidate my pedagogic-apologetic model for Augustinian Method. We will study in detail Neo-Platonism's use of allegorical pedagogy and how it was implemented throughout the Roman Empire. Chapter Five will be an exegetical analysis of Books X-XIII which, I argue is the theoretical apologetic for understanding the connection of the Old Testament with Christianity in response to pagan criticisms and to elucidate further the understanding of Divine Grace. Books X-XI will examine Augustine's philosophy of consciousness and Books XII-XIII will examine his philosophy of "*confessio*" and "*conversio*"; and also, its superior relation to pagan philosophical understanding of "*conversio*". Finally, in Chapter Six, we will look specifically of the influence of the *Confessiones* on Medieval, Modern, and Analytical philosophy of mind and metaphysics and how each appropriated Augustine's method and scriptural philosophy with full knowledge such as Thomas Aquinas and Gottfried Leibniz; or by those analytic philosophers such as Frege, Quine, and Strawson who may not have known but nonetheless, owe their thought to this giant we call Augustine.

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**STRUCTURE AND MEANING ANALYSIS OF THE *CONFESSIONES*:**  
**A LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this chapter will be to do an in depth literature review of current Augustinian scholarship concerning the structure and meaning of the *Confessiones*. By structure we mean the genre and/or architectural plotting of argumentation to which Augustine used to create this work. The meaning of the work is the idea or purpose for which it was written. These two questions have been – and still are - the object of scholarly investigation. Nonetheless, I wish to formulate my own categorization scheme for placing this scholarship into some kind of coherence of analysis. The following categories are:

*Ancient Philosophical/Theological Structures* = Plotiniun, Porphyrian, Trinitarian, Christological

*Literary Structures* = Prayer, Novella, Prose Poem

*Spiritual Discipline Structures* = Soliloquy, Spiritual Exercise, Questioning

*Philosophical Autobiographical Structures*=Intellectual Conversions, Phenomenology, Feminist

*Scriptural Philosophical*<sup>12</sup> = Manichean Apologetic, Allegory, Confessio, Superior Conversion, Memory, Providential Time, Matter.

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<sup>12</sup> My category – Dr. R.H. Craig

In this chapter I will begin with a further elaboration of the “problem” in the *Confessiones*. I will then present each of my categories for scholarship in dealing with the problem of structure and meaning within its pages. Finally, I will propose my own category for understanding the *Confessiones*’ structure and meaning.

## I. The Problem

There have been many scholars and commentators on Augustine’s works and many have utilized his later works to formulate theories as to the structure and meaning of the *Confessiones*. It has been argued, for example, that this work is without structure or, at the very least, is incongruent in its usage of historical accuracy or semblance of connection with the final three chapters. Thus, it has led many to seek hidden meanings and agendas for both the theological and philosophical bent in order to create and/or invent a “structure” and/or “meaning”. What is interesting is that the very sin many learned in seminary and/or graduate school to avoid in regards to the analysis of a Scriptural text, (i.e., the “reading into the text” a meaning that would not have been understood to the ancient audience for which it was addressed), is the very sin that is applied to this text by theologians and philosophers alike.

The second aspect of the “problem” with the *Confessiones* is the numerous historical inaccuracies throughout the text that do not conform with other books or sermons by Augustine himself.<sup>13</sup> Brian Stock writes,

However, by way of introduction something has to be said about autobiographical narrative, since this is the source of the largest controversy in Augustinian

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<sup>13</sup> Frederick Van Fleteren, trans. *The Life of Augustine by Louis Sebastien, Le Nain de Tillemont*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010)pp. 305-348 – in the appendixes Fleteren goes into extensive detail of historical contradictions by Augustine.

studies over the past century and is directly linked to Augustine's notion of soliloquy through the *Confessiones*. The problem has arisen because he left differing accounts of the same events in his life, and it is unclear how these accounts reflect what actually took place. The debate on the question reached a turning point in 1950, when Pierre Courcelle published a rigorously argued set of studies, which effectively distinguished between 'historical' and 'theological' motivations in Augustine's records of his intellectual pursuits down to the time of his conversion to the religious life. Courcelle challenged many statements concerning events related in the *Confessiones* and proposed that a more accurate account of the formative years of the bishop of Hippo could be pieced together from letters, dialogues, and commentaries written before 397.<sup>14</sup>

Frederick Crosson, in his "Structure and Meaning in St. Augustine's *Confessions*", states that Augustine's organizational structure in the *Confessions* is incongruent:

the virtually unanimous critical judgment is that it is hastily put together, moves by fits and starts, dallies here, and hurries there...as an 'autobiography' even allowing for it being the first or among the first of the genre, it does not meet our expectations. Only in the ninth book in passing do we learn that he had a brother. In the sixth book we meet Alypius and are told that he had been a student of Augustine in Thagaste, though no mention occurs of him in the third book...most attempts to deal with a structural division of the work have foundered because they begin from the most famous scene, that of the conversion in the garden of Augustine's house, and assume that the peripety of the work must occur when he is turned around from the flesh to the spirit.<sup>15</sup>

The main Crosson fact that I wish to focus on in this treatise is that,

the third book ends with a discussion of Augustine's reading of the books of the Manichaeans, the fourth book ends with a chapter on his reading of Aristotle's *Categories* (even though he tells us explicitly that he had read the book of six or seven years earlier), the fifth book ends with a discussion of the Academic philosophy, the sixth book with a discussion of Epicurus, the seventh book with a discussion of the Platonists, and the first half of the story does not tell us the name of any people he encounters...he only names those who have been instrumental (whether knowingly or not) in the path of ascent toward God.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Brian Stock. *Augustine's Inner Dialogue*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) pp. 8-9

<sup>15</sup> Gareth B. Matthews, ed. *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) p.

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30

Hence, Augustine is purposely illustrating a rhetorical progression based on the chronology and “instrumental” personas as laid out in the *Confessiones* which would seem to correlate, it seems to me, with the progression of thought of the mind/soul from childhood to pagan adult life in Carthage/Rome or Milan with that of the Allegory of the Cave structural model of Plato in Book VII of the *Republic* – except for a completely different superior *conversio* once out of the cave and into the transcendent vision of God at Ostia. Therefore, in the following sections, I wish to investigate, in detail, scholarly attempts to solve this problem within the *Confessiones*.

## II. Ancient Philosophical and Theological Structures

John J. O’Meara is probably the most noted interpreter of Augustine in the twentieth century. He is also one of the most well known proponents for Augustine as a crypto-Plotinian. By this I mean that he thought Augustine purposely saw equal parallels between Neoplatonist philosophy and Scriptural teachings concerning the metaphysics of the universe; specifically, his use of Plotinian methodology for understanding the metaphysics of the Universe. For he writes,

Augustine’s acceptance of Christianity was sincere and that he was also deeply impressed with Neo-platonism. He, with many others, thought (fondly as it proved later) that there could be a synthesis between the Christian faith and Neo-platonic reason since indeed the one God had to be the source for both authority and reason. It would, I think, be true to say that since 1954 we are no longer interested in what is now called the ‘false’ problem of whether Augustine at any particular time was a Christian rather than a Neo-Platonist or vice versa. To us he now seems to have been a Christian of his time who held certain views that were abhorrent to Neo-Platonism but nevertheless had been much influenced by Neo-platonism in not unimportant ways.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Dominic J. O’Meara, ed. *Neoplatonism and Christian Thought*, (Norfolk:ISFNAS), p. 35

In fact, O'Meara argued in 1970 that the entire idea of *conversion/turning to or* "conversion syndrome" could be found in Plotinus' *Ennead* 1.6 "On Beauty". For him, Augustine is describing in Book VII his drive toward Plotinian "ecstasy". For he goes on to state,

I am convinced that the impression that Augustine received from reading Plotinus 1.6 which made it possible for him to abandon materialism in any explanation of reality, abode with him forever. It was not so much Plotinus' articulation of immaterialist doctrine that affected him, as profound insight that the emotional, almost mystical concentration on the hypostases afforded him....<sup>18</sup>

James Wetzel will further argue that,

we would be wrong, however, and fundamentally wrong, were we to suppose that Augustine introduces room for the will by diminishing his Platonic confidence in the power of knowledge to motivate and thereby to conform human agency to the good. He retains this confidence undiminished not only in the *Confessions*, but for the remainder of his career as a theologian, and it is what I have referred to as his profounder debt to Platonism. Most of Augustine's commentators, I think it fair to say, would disagree with me wholeheartedly.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, Phillip Cary argues that most commentators have placed a Catholic preconception on the interpretation of Augustine; especially, when it comes to Book VII. Cary attacks the Catholic need for a mystical or supernatural experience instead of an epistemological one. Catholics, for Cary, think that a natural desire has to have a mystical experience to correct it. He goes on to state,

this notion does not sit easily with Augustine's conception of the inner vision of God in the *Confessions* Book Seven, which Catholic scholars tend to read as mystical rather than Platonist; i.e., as special supernatural occurrences rather than an inherent epistemological power of the intellect. (This I take to be a typically Catholic misreading of Book Seven driven by the same motivation as the typically Protestant misreading of Book Eight as a conversion to Christ: an

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.37

<sup>19</sup> James Wetzel. *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.6

unwillingness to see how Augustine's Platonist philosophy defines the goal of his life.).<sup>20</sup>

Epistemologically, Augustine found the Platonists, specifically Plotinus and Porphyry, the foundation to give him the intellectual ascent to God. According to Cary, the notions of incorporeality, incorruptibility, unchangeability, and omnipresence are all epistemic tools for his understanding of the nature of God. For he states,

Moreover, these ontological concepts are connected with soteriological issues, via the Platonist notion of a participation or sharing in the divine light that does not (in contrast to the Manichean view) make us literally part of God. Especially, important in this regard is a description of the inner vision of God toward the end of Plotinus' essay 'On Beauty', which must count as our author's favorite passage from the books of the Platonists, because he quotes or alludes to it more than any other...the soul must turn inward and upward, shifting its attention from bottom of the ontological hierarchy to the top: Augustine thus turns away from the external world of bodily things, enters the inner world of his own soul, and finally gazes above his soul at the light of Truth, which is his unchanging Creator.<sup>21</sup>

Hence, Cary makes Augustine into a kind of "Plotinian Prodigal Son" that must turn inward and ascend toward God with the inner eyes of the soul.

Robin Fox in his latest work, *Augustine*, also sees the *Confessiones* as an intellectual ascent that found its true foundation in Platonist philosophy. For he states,

Already in the mid-second century, the Christian thinker Justin had described his resort to Platonist writings: 'in my indolent stupidity,' he wrote, 'I thought that immediately I would see God, for this is the goal of Plato's philosophy'... the *Confessions* describe and interpret his[Augustine] ascents to God's presence. They are first detailed accounts of such an experience by a Christian in the Latin West, except for the visions of martyrs while awaiting their day of death. They have had a decisive effect on subsequent accounts of mystic visions and their interpretation in the next thousand years of Western Christianity. Yet, it still disputed whether his experience has been obscured by his later interpretation

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<sup>20</sup> Kim Paffenroth and Robert P. Kennedy, ed. *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), p. 124

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113 - 115

and by the underlying purpose of the *Confessions*. In two of the three cases, the ascents have even been classed as ‘failures’, ‘vain attempts of an ecstatic sort.’<sup>22</sup>

It is Fox’s contention that Augustine had a non-scholarly reading of Plotinus. What he knew of Plato was based on his “little book of ‘many things of the philosophers’, but his reading of Plotinus was to be very acute indeed”.<sup>23</sup> Augustine claimed that Plotinus’ writings were “Plato reborn”. I would argue at this point that such a statement by Augustine seems to indicate a prior reading of Plato. Even Fox entitles chapter seventeen of his work “Plato Reborn”. Nonetheless, Augustine had two turns after discovering the Platonists “intellectual vision”. The turn inwards helped him to see a bright light. According to Fox, Augustine came to understand that God had to be a spiritual being and not a material one. For he writes,

the *Confessions* give an orderly account of his progress. First, he has an experience, then the knowledge which resulted from it. Then he has a second experience, also related to new knowledge, and finally he addresses the moral questions with which it left him...‘I looked back only, I confess, as if from a journey, onto the religion implanted in me as a child’. He ‘looked back only’, as if over his shoulder while he travelled ahead in a Platonist direction and Christianity, his religion since childhood, seemed a distant point behind him...his Platonist language is more pronounced. He dwells on the ascent’s ‘stages’, a word which Plotinus’ pupil Porphyry also used for the process. They are inner psychological stages, not successive stages in his perception of the external world. Augustine describes the inner layers of his consciousness, just as Plotinus had distinguished them.<sup>24</sup>

It will be Fox’s contention that essentially Augustine saw true religion in both the teachings of Moses and that of the Greek philosophers – mainly, Socrates and Plato -

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<sup>22</sup> Robin Fox. *Augustine*. (New York: Basic Book Publishing, 2015), p.241.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 242-248

thus, a kind of equality of light or wisdom between both the scriptures and Plotinian philosophy.

John Rist, in his latest work *Reading Augustine: On Ethics, Politics and Psychology in the Twenty-First Century*, states unabashedly that

in metaphysics Augustine is a Platonist, as to a degree all reflective Christians must be; thus, thinking once more about Plato may help us understand something of why he declined to follow the full Platonic line on individuals...Augustine's *Platonism* is derived primarily from readings in the philosophy of Plotinus as translated by the earlier Latin-speaking orator and convert to Christianity, Marius Victorinus. Coming from a different culture from contemporary Greek bishops and a Christian culture as yet less standardized intellectually, Augustine could give free rein...He could think philosophically within his own world while over time gradually gaining an adequate grasp of what the Greeks were up to: this he acquired from Ambrose, the learned bishop of Milan who baptized him, and from his friend, and Ambrose's episcopal successor, Simplicianus...Nevertheless, his basic culture was Latin, Cicero his earliest and most consistent intellectual teacher."<sup>25</sup>

Hence, Rist follows the dominant scholarly line that Augustine was highly influenced by Plotinus from a metaphysical point of view primarily. He argues that there was a separation between the Greek speaking intellectuals and the Latin speaking intellectuals in regards to the dominant literature they would have been exposed to in their educational endeavors. Specifically, Augustine was introduced to this intellectualism through the writings of Cicero, Varro, and Seneca according to Rist.

His analysis of the *Confessiones* is that it is a "retrospective autobiography" and later he will call it a "spiritual autobiography". He questions whether Augustine "consciously intended to supplement metaphysics with history and retrospective

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<sup>25</sup> John Rist. *Reading Augustine: On Ethics, Politics, and Psychology in the Twenty-First Century*. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018), pp. 37-39.

autobiography is uncertain.”<sup>26</sup> Rist questions this because he essentially thinks Augustine’s portrayal in the *Confessiones* of lust and intrigue through spiritual reflection was not a new genre in North African culture. Even if many would think, with Augustine, that he could “claim to have ‘almost invented’ spiritual autobiography...for there were other writings circulating in the ancient world – typically pagan and Christian – which seem at least precursors of Augustine’s masterpiece.”<sup>27</sup> Rist points out that there existed in North Africa a “picaresque novel” by a fellow North African Apuleius “whose Platonic philosophical writings Augustine knew – and disliked – as he tells in the *City of God*.”<sup>28</sup> It was called *The Golden Ass* and was cast in the first person and, according to Rist, was somewhat religious. The main character turns into an ass and partakes of magic and sex and finds redemption in the goddess Isis. For Rist writes,

That *The Golden Ass* is in the first person and culminates in a conversion are not its only parallels with Augustine’s *Confessions*. The sin of dabbling in magic which the hero is guilty is precisely *curiositas*, or wanting to know what it is wrong to want to know or to seek to know. It is a favorite sin of Augustine’s, and along with the lust of the flesh and the desire to dominate forms his ‘triple concupiscence’. Augustine and Apuleius are right: there are facts which we ought not want to know (however ‘scientifically’ interesting they may be)...the hero manages to fornicate his way through many adventures until the end he wins the love of his bride whose necessary virginity has been excitingly at risk throughout the story...Augustine’s *Confessions*, though far better written and intellectually superior to this kind of material, could and does appeal to the same mixture of motives in the minds of much more respectable readers.”<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, Rist speculates that this work was possibly influential on Augustine in formulating both his structure and meaning in the *Confessiones*. Now I would possibly argue with Rist for correlating these two writings based on the timeline of exposure. For

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 41

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 42

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 42

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 42-43

Augustine indicates that he was exposed to illicit literature early in his Carthage days as a student in the *Confessiones*. He mentions this Apuleius document by name in *De Civitate Dei* but we are never given an exact dating as to when it was published or even when Augustine would have read it in order for it to be an influence. Secondly, I do not think that Augustine wanted to be in any way affiliated with such a document – even if to imitate its genre. I would say the same thing about Plotinian or Porphyrian philosophy. Just because he may have been exposed to it by Ambrose in Milan – one has to remember that Ambrose repudiated pagan philosophy in two documents: *Concerning Repentance* and *On the Duties of the Clergy*.<sup>30</sup> In both works, Ambrose speaks very harshly to the reading of pagan philosophy for ultimate wisdom and happiness. I think Ambrose’s influence would be superior to that of pagan thought. Ambrose, too, was a scripturalist in that he may have translated the Scripture into philosophical constructs using the language of Platonism – but certainly not its logic.

In *Augustine’s Intellectual Conversion*, Brian Dobell argues that Augustine was really a Porphyryian. It is his contention that Augustine had a late reading of Porphyry

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<sup>30</sup> Ambrose. *On the Duties of the Clergy (Book II)* – Chapter Two – “The Different Ideas of Philosophers on the Subject of Happiness” – “He proves, first, from the Gospel that it rests on the knowledge of God and the pursuit of good works; next, that it may not be thought that this idea was adopted from the philosophers, he adds proofs from the witness of the prophets. The philosophers have made a happy life to depend, either (as Hieronymus) on freedom from pain, or (as Herillus) on knowledge. For Herillus, hearing knowledge very highly praised by Aristotle and Theophrastus, made it alone to be the chief good, when they really praised it as a good thing, not as the only good; others, as Epicurus, have called pleasure such; others, as Calliphro, and after him Diodorus, understood it in such a way as to make a virtuous life go in union, the one with pleasure, the other with freedom from pain, since a happy life could not exist without it. Zeno, the Stoic, thought the highest and only good existed in a virtuous life. But Aristotle and Theophrastus and the other Peripatetics maintained that a happy life consisted in virtue, that is, in a virtuous life, but that its happiness was made complete by the advantages of the body and other external things. But the sacred Scriptures say that eternal life rests on a knowledge of divine things and on the fruit of good works. The Gospel bears witness to both these statements. For the Lord Jesus spoke thus of knowledge: ‘this eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom you have sent’ [John 17:3]... Let no one think that this was but lately said, and that it was spoken of by the philosophers before it was mentioned in the Gospel. For the philosophers, that is to say, Aristotle and Theophrastus, as also Zeno and Hieronymus, certainly lived before the time of the Gospel; but they came after the prophets.”

and that he developed an ambivalent love/hate appreciation of the philosopher. Dobell thinks that Augustine's Christology was highly influenced by Porphyry and his anti-Christian writings. He also believes that Augustine did not discover these same writings until c. 395 and that Porphyry may have been the main influence on his Platonist conversion in 386.<sup>31</sup> He seems mainly to base this on Augustine's focus on Porphyry and not Plotinus in the *City of God*. In that work, Dobell states that Augustine praised and censured Porphyry and "that the Tyrian philosopher is both highly praised and strongly censured in that work, might suggest that it is he who had been the stronger influence upon Augustine's initiation into Platonism in 386 and consequently the first to be assaulted when Augustine turned sour on Platonism".<sup>32</sup> Later on he will write,

Augustine's view of Christ would have been more or less congruous with Porphyry's view of Christ, as expressed in the *Philosophy of the Oracles*. It was not until c. 395 that the anti-Christian character of his own writings – let alone those of Porphyry – would have become apparent to Augustine...of course, it is possible that Augustine discovered this work around the same time that he was grappling with Paul...there is no need to explain Augustine's later hostility towards Platonism by positing his relatively late discovery of this or that blasphemous work of Porphyry, whether *Against the Christians* or *Philosophy from Oracles*...In my view, Augustine's later hostility towards Porphyry's is entirely consistent with Porphyry's having exerted (even through his anti-Christian writings) a significant influence upon Augustine's early writings. Augustine's early views are strikingly similar to those of 'Porphyry the non-Christian'. There is no reason, then, to dismiss the possibility that Porphyry influenced Augustine's Photinian Christology. Moreover, it is entirely possible – however paradoxical it might seem – that this ancient nemesis of Christianity actually played a role in inspiring Augustine's conversion in 386.<sup>33</sup>

Dobell goes even further in stating that Porphyry reminds Augustine of his early self.

He states that Augustine may not have been aware of Porphyry's *Against the Christians*.

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<sup>31</sup> Brian Dobell. *Augustine's Intellectual Conversion*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.234

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.234

He bases this on Augustine receiving questions during the production of the *Retractiones* in which he is told that they come from Porphyry's polemical work. Augustine received these questions from Deogratias of Carthage c. 409. Augustine did not believe the claim and hence, is thought to have not read the work itself.<sup>34</sup> Dobell writes,

“In his early writings, Augustine had made the mistake of defining Christianity in ‘Porphyrian’ rather than ‘Pauline’ terms. This error was finally corrected by the understanding of grace that he achieved through his revolutionary reading of Paul in the mid-390’s. If this makes Augustine’s early writings less Christian than has been appreciated, it also brings Porphyry closer to Christianity than has been appreciated ...Of Porphyry, Augustine might say quite literally: ‘There but for the grace of God go I’”.<sup>35</sup>

**Critique:** I disagree that Augustine was either a Plotinist or a Porphyrian. Both philosophers were known as anti-Christian polemicists. By the time of the writing of the *Confessiones*, Augustine was actively seeking to convert the Platonists as he states plainly in *Vera Religione* - as well as Romanianus, a Manichean. Romanianus was a “pagan by birth, a philosopher in his interests, and someone who was led astray in his way of life, a doubter, and a seeker.”<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, both philosophers openly rejected the incarnational idea of an embodied God. Augustine’s philosophical schematic of the ascent of the soul was borrowed from Plato’s *Republic* Book VII. However, his ascent model is not the same as that of Plotinius – or for that fact Plato.<sup>37</sup> As Peter King has pointed out, Augustine created an “Anti-Platonist Ascents” model in which he

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 235

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.235

<sup>36</sup> Augustine. *Vera Religione*. (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2005), p.16; See also, pp. 30-31

<sup>37</sup> See Pierre Hadot. *Plotinus or The Simplicity of Vision*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p.7, “Thus, Plotinus’ mysticism has two stages or levels: the soul must first transform itself, separating itself from discursive reasoning and sensible consciousness, purifying itself so that it becomes Intellect; then reascending to the original state of Intellect, it will refind the original unity in which Intellect nonintellectually reunites with the Good.”

challenges the *eros* basis for ascent to that of the *agape* or Scriptural model. Ascent yes – but certainly not Plotinian nor Porphyryan.<sup>38</sup> I would now like to look at both Trinitarian and Christological approaches to the *Confessiones*.

Peter King in his paper in the *Modern Schoolman* argues that in order to understand the *Confessiones* Book VII one has to understand how Augustine would have interpreted Plotinus' *Ennead V* in regards to his triadic division of reality as One, Being, and Intellect. It is his contention that Augustine would have superimposed the Catholic theological idea of the Trinity in trumping Neo-platonist philosophy. He further argues that Augustine was an accomplished "rhetor" and he purposely does not explicate Platonist philosophy because he wants to allow scriptural passages to be dominant as a spiritual explanation for what Platonist philosophy describes on a strictly rational basis. For he writes,

For although he is at pains to emphasize its importance, and furthermore situates his report of the experience at the very center of the *Confessions* (the midpoint of the middle book), his presentation of the encounter some eleven years after the event, undercuts its philosophical significance. Furthermore, it is unlikely that his is accidental. Augustine was far too accomplished a rhetor not to be aware of the effects of his literary devices...In dogmatic language, Augustine claims in *Confessiones* 7.9 13-14 to have found in these unnamed works proofs of the Christian Trinity but no mention of the Incarnation/Redemption – roughly, that he had found neoplatonism correct and demonstrative in metaphysics but flawed in ethics. Now if Augustine's dogmatic language is not to be taken literally but rather to be understood in non-dogmatic terms, we need to uncover what he was driving at.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, this is a literalist interpretation of the Trinitarian overlay or correlation by Augustine to Plotinus' triadic division.

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<sup>38</sup> William E. Mann. *Augustine's Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Peter King. *The Modern Schoolman*, pp. 1 and 4

E.J. Hundert in his essay, “Augustine and the Sources of the Divided Self”, does a wonderful job of essentially looking at Book VII as a battle between reason and rationality as a basis of moral action as described by Plato and Aristotle in the Socratic virtues and their implementation for desired ends on the one hand; and Augustine’s newly discovered focus on the “perversion of the will” on the other. Specifically, Augustine focused on the recalcitrance of the will in following through with what rationality has shown it to do. Plato’s radical reflexivity” as explicated by both Plotinus and Porphyry, set the stage for introducing Augustine to the “inward perception” of self-introspection as the necessary tool for leaving materialist reality and its influence. For Hundert states,

Augustine shifted the focus of the inherited classical discussion of the relative powers of reason and passions by treating the will (*voluntas*) not as the property of rational activity but under the heading of *libido dominandi* from which all action proceeds, and whose direction and goal shape the character of one’s emotions...Christians and pagans alike were driven by their impulses, the strands of compelling intention which bound a man to his deeds. Persons could be consistently distinguished from one another neither by their acts alone nor by the power of their rational faculties. Only the quality of their wills differentiated otherwise identical individuals.<sup>40</sup>

Hundert argues that Augustine was seeking to “unify the self” through his “Trinitarian theology”. He was purposely forming a polemic against the aggressive arrogance of the Stoics, Aristotelians, and the Neo-Platonist. Moral behavior or evil habits could only be shaken in relationship with the God in three persons.

Michael Gorman, in his response to Peter King’s Trinitarian interpretation, argues that King simply does the Catholic two step and applies a theology that has not

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<sup>40</sup> E.J. Hundert. “Augustine and the Sources of the Divided Self” *Political Theory*, Vol. 20, No.1 (Feb., 1992), pp.86-104

yet been introduced by Augustine. Furthermore, he simply thinks that King is conjecturing the Trinity when Augustine refers to “Spirit” in Book VII. Gorman states that Augustine uses the term “Holy Spirit” when referring to the Trinity specifically. King also takes the word “life” and conjectures that he means Holy Spirit. For he writes,

considering his writings more broadly now, Augustine does not – as far as I know – associate the word “life” with the Spirit in any special way. His normal words for the third person of the Trinity are ‘Holy Spirit’ (of course), ‘Love’ and ‘Gift’...Augustine’s purpose in the books of the Platonist’ passage is not to discuss the Trinity and the Incarnation but instead to discuss the Divinity of the Word and the Incarnation he aims to draw a contrast not between success in grasping the three persons and failure to grasp that the second person became incarnate, but instead between success in grasping that the second person is divine and failure to grasp that the second person became incarnate. The whole passage, in other words, is Christological (or ‘ethical’) – Father is brought in only to serve the purpose of discussing the Son, and there is no discussion of the Spirit at all.<sup>41</sup>

Hence, the issue for Gorman is that Augustine wanted to overcome the issues of materialism and evil by showing that the Divine Incarnation of Jesus is the missing variable in defeating these two issues. Essentially, Augustine is making the Christological distinction a necessary ingredient in one being truly happy in the life of the soul and not the body.

**Critique:** I would agree with Gorman to an extent. However, if my thesis is correct, Book VII of the *Confessiones* is the keystone to truly grasping the total meaning of this magisterial work. For by emulating Plato’s allegorical pedagogical method for demonstrating or teaching, Augustine allows the pagan, as well as the Christian reader, the ability to understand that to introduce the Trinity theology prior to the final

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Gorman. “Augustine’s Use of Neo-Platonism in *Confessions* VII: A Response to Peter King

conversion of relationality with Christ would be both anti-climatic/anti-ascent and philosophically premature in the Cave/World ascent story. I agree with Gorman that King is theologically reading into the text the idea of a Trinitarian answer to evil. It seems to me that what Augustine was attempting to do is to teach the reader/listener that the Jesus story in scripture has philosophical implications and logical authority in the existential reality of overcoming evil. Namely, the incarnational Christology redefines an understanding of God and His love for humanity. However, I would go beyond Gorman and argue that it is the supreme/superior reason or logic for the will turning away from self indulgence to the loyal love for God in covenantal relationship.

### **III. Literary Structures**

Henry Chadwick, in his work on Augustine, argued that the *Confessiones* is what he called a prose-poem addressed to God. He argued that it was a “profound modification” of the Neo-platonic *Soliloquies* which were addressed to Reason in the form of dialogues. He also contended that it was an apologetic against the Manichees. Specifically, their teaching concerning evil as substance or God as being partially made up of evil substance. For them, there was no intellectually honest way to understand evil in the world if God is supposed to be wholly good. Chadwick also contends that some commentators have argued that the *Confessiones* was an apologetic against critics within the Catholic Church who had challenged Augustine’s allegorical exegetical method which he had learned from both Bishop Ambrose of Milan and Origen’s writings before that.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Henry Chadwick. *Augustine*.(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.66

Chadwick argues that the last three books of the *Confessiones* are a “neoplatonic analyses of memory, time, creation, and lastly the *tour de force* of subtle exegesis of Genesis 1, interpreted as an allegory about the nature of the Church, the Bible, and the sacraments”.<sup>43</sup> For Chadwick, the last four books

actually carry the clue to the whole. Augustine understood his own story as a microcosm of the entire story of the creation, the fall into the abyss of chaos and formlessness, the ‘conversion’ of the creaturely order to the love of God as it experiences griping pains of homesickness. What the first nine books illustrate in his personal exploration of the experience of the prodigal son is given its cosmic dimension in the concluding parts of the work. The autobiographical sections are related as an accidental exemplification of the wandering homelessness of man’s soul in ‘the region of dissimilarity’ (Plato’s phrase for the material realm far removed from the divine). The wanderer is like a dehydrated traveler in a waterless desert, or a lover longing to see the distant beloved.<sup>44</sup>

In his translated edition of the *Confessions* (1991), Chadwick wrote in his introduction essay that this work by Augustine was not simply a historical account of his conversion to Christianity. For he writes,

The *Confessions* is more than a narrative of conversion. It is a work of rare sophistication and intricacy, in which even the apparently simple autobiographical narrative often carries harmonics of deeper meaning. To understand the work one needs to comprehend a little about the author’s mind, his loves, and hates, his intellectual debts and principal targets of criticism. The *Confessions* is a polemical work, at least as much a self-vindication as an admission of mistakes...And its form is extraordinary – a prose-poem addressed to God, intended to be overheard by anxious and critical fellow-Christians.<sup>45</sup>

Chadwick goes on to argue that Augustine knew that there would be criticism of this work within the Church itself. He points to the fact that Augustine spoke to the issue of worldly or secular rhetoric in order to communicate to the Church the message he

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.67

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.68

<sup>45</sup> Saint Augustine, trans. Henry Chadwick. *Confessions*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.ix

wished to convey as not his intention. Instead, Augustine knew the culture he was addressing both inside and outside the hallowed walls of the Catholic Church. For he states,

He wrote for an age stamped with an elegant skepticism, for which a well-turned phrase gave more pleasure than a cogent argument for the truth. In several places in the *Confessions* and elsewhere Augustine's term for contemporary pagan culture was 'loquacity': it used fine words, even rococo elaboration, but had little or nothing to say. Nevertheless, Augustine's wish to distance himself from the secularity of contemporary oratory and the teaching of pagan literature never meant for him that, in setting forth the truth he had come to find in Christian faith, he felt bound to avoid the skills he had learned in the rhetorical schools...Augustine shows an awareness that he will have Christian readers suspicious of his elaborate rhetorical style; at v.vi(10) their fears are expressly mentioned.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, Chadwick conjectures that the *Confessions* was written because of a specific request that Augustine received in 395 by Alypius – then Bishop at Thagaste – to write his autobiography on behalf of a converted rich land owner become priest by the name of Paulinus.<sup>47</sup> For it was his desire for Augustine to share his story “revealing how he had come to adopt the ascetic life, and by what way he had come to baptism and ordination.”<sup>48</sup> Chadwick's conjecture is based on the long section by Augustine on Alypius in his *Confessiones* – for him this cannot be coincidental.

James J. O'Donnell has been, by most accounts, the contemporary authority on Augustine and his *Confessiones*. He is a philologist by training and has published an extensive commentary on the *Confessiones* (1992) that is a meticulous textual criticism

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.x

<sup>47</sup> See Edmund Hill's *Introduction to De Trinitate*. (New York: New York City Press, 2012), p. 20 – “The *Confessions* is an *apologia pro vita sua*, because like Newman he found himself the victim of a smear campaign which was spoiling his pastoral effectiveness, as well as doubtless wounding his *amour proper*.”

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. xii - xiii

of the document. He is also an expert in the socio-historical world of Roman Antiquity. He concurs with most other contemporary scholars that the *Confessiones* is not an autobiography in the classical sense – although it was the first of its kind to lay out the interiority of the author at the same time giving historical narrative. Instead, he sees it as a collection of “autobiographical vignettes”. He goes on to state,

The *Confessiones* are the chief instrument by which Augustine shaped the narratives of his life. The achievement of that self-presentation lies in the way the narrative is made to revolve around a defining moment of conversion, localized to a specific place and time and dramatized in a particular way. From infancy to age 18 and again from age 27 until his death, any reasonable person who knew Augustine and was asked his religious affiliation would have said ‘Christian’.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, it is his contention that there are two Augustines: 1. is the Augustine of the *Confessiones* itself and 2. is the historical Augustine as Bishop with all the office’s responsibilities - both ecclesiastically and socio-politically. The main plot of this novella<sup>50</sup>, according to O’Donnell, is that the “central feature of the narrative lies in Augustine’s creation of himself as a man driven by philosophy... that the true student of philosophy never goes by half-measures but pursues truth relentlessly and endlessly”.<sup>51</sup>

As a novella, O’Donnell sees all of the positives and negatives that Augustine reveals in this plot line.<sup>52</sup> Unlike most literature of that time, e.g. Marcus Aurelius, the writers tend not to reveal moral failures or weaknesses. What makes the *Confessiones*

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<sup>49</sup> Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, Ed.. *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.9

<sup>50</sup> James J. O’Donnell. *Augustine*.(New York: Harper-Collins Publishing, 2005), p. 76.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*,p.20

<sup>52</sup> See Miles Hollingworth. *Saint Augustine of Hippo: An Intellectual Biography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 9 – “Augustine’s preference for painting in the broad brushstrokes of the novelist has made him the most evocative of early Church fathers; but the lamentation of the heart when it is written so exceptionally well is difficult to follow out into the world as practical code of conduct.”

so powerful is the way in which Augustine drives the character forward even in the midst of failure.

That failure, that disappointment, makes the *Confessions* a powerful work of art. The atmosphere and the anxiety that speak against the doctrine the book serves is what gives it staying power. The poignancy of the narrative, the fragility of the triumphs it achieves, and the anxiety that lingers in the wake of the storytelling are unmistakable.<sup>53</sup>

For O’Donnell, the *Confessiones* is a “conversion story”. The purposeful direction of this story is explained as being “necessary” – showing both what Augustine knows and does not know. For he writes,

I do not mean to say that at age forty-five Augustine saw the long year of increasing loneliness, polemical isolation, and immersion in the ruthless politics of his time stretching out ahead of him. Far from it: he seems instead to have imagined that the life of the bishop could still be one of mystical contemplation of the truths of scripture, and he set about various literary projects (notably the works *The Trinity* and *Genesis Taken Literally*) to make that real.<sup>54</sup>

Hence, the *Confessiones*, for O’Donnell, represents a “turning point” in Augustine’s life.

The structure itself, according to O’Donnell, is that of a “scholastic *quaestio*”. Essentially, this is a tension that is in the work so as to drive the reader to move beyond an initial rest in the tension – only to not be satisfied and to move beyond with further questions. For he writes, “that structure helps make explicit the received views, the difficulties that present themselves, a resolution of the difficulties with whatever new contribution is possible, and, in many ways most important, a final discussion that does

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.76

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.77

justice to the merits of the received views while resituating them in the light of new ideas”.<sup>55</sup>

In his commentary on Augustine, O’Donnell states that the work is an “intellectual autobiography, tracing the movement of Augustine’s opinions on matters of philosophic and religious nature from his earliest youth to the time of writing”.<sup>56</sup> For him the dates covered by the autobiographical section of the work are 354 – 397 CE.. He sees the last three books as

allegorical exposition of the first chapter of Genesis, and Bk. 11 in particular contains a long discussion of the nature of time. Bk. 10 is known mainly for its long discussion of the nature of memory and for a disturbingly scrupulous examination of conscience. There is no evidence that the work ever circulated in a form other than the one we have, but some scholars believe that Bk.10 is the fruit of second thoughts, added after the other twelve books were complete.<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, the work goes through a number of “ascents” and, for O’Donnell, it is a move from “ignorance to illumination”. He states that Augustine used this “Plotinian method” for the ascent of the mind toward illumination. However, Augustine was not satisfied with that method for the securing of true wisdom. Therefore, he moves beyond the Plotinian end point towards a vision of Ostia that represents a “post-Plotinian ascent to vision and becomes the organizing pattern for the first half of Bk. 10”.<sup>58</sup>

O’Donnell critiques the idea that the *Confessiones* is essentially an ascent paradigm or motif of the mind to God. His extrinsic critique was that Augustine, in his later mature work, explicitly rejected Pagan philosophy in *Civitas Dei*. His second

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<sup>55</sup> *Commentary on Augustine*.(Internet),p.7

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.8

internal or intrinsic critique is that not all that is in the *Confessiones* focuses on this ascension paradigm. He calls this an “unilinear” attempt of interpretation. He points specifically to Books 8 and 10. For he writes,

if the work were an attempt to depict the ascent pure and simple, then the memorable ‘sero te amavi’ paragraph would have served perfectly well for the last paragraph of the work as a whole. Not only do Bks. 11-13 obtrude, but the last half of Bk 10, an affront to our disdain for such scrupulosity, makes nonsense of any attempt at so limited a reading.<sup>59</sup>

Gary Wills, in his *Augustine’s Confessions*, argues, with others, that the *Confessiones* was probably a defense from those who really did not know him and who may have wondered as to his allegiance concerning his Manachean background or his somewhat sympathetic outlook toward Donatists. Valarus had drafted him into the Bishop office only two years earlier. Many had heard of Augustine as a brilliant orator from his tenure in Milan and Rome. As a priest, he had shown himself to be a powerful advocate for Catholic Christianity and for its superiority over and against other challenging sects within the Christian movement. Wills argument is that the *Confessiones* was a somewhat ecclesial political document written during a bout with gastrological and hemorridic ailments. Hence, it was essentially begun as a project to promote his career within the Church. Although written as a “long prayer”, it is mainly a reflective or inward analysis of the “condition of Augustine” at the time of its writing – a type of “interior exploration”. For Wills quotes the letter from Augustine to bishop Profuturus in 397 C.E.,

In regard to the spirit, as God allows, and as he grants me endurance, I am doing well. But in regard to the body, I am confined to bed, unable to walk or stand or sit, from the pain and swelling of anal fissures and hemorrhoids. But since God allows

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.8

this, what can I say but that I am doing well? If our will does not conform to his will, we are at fault, since he is not to be thought of as doing or allowing anything that is not for our good. You know this, but since you are my second self, why should I not say as freely to you what I say to myself? So I trust my days and night to your holy prayers. Pray that I do not use the days wastefully, and that I bear the nights with composure.<sup>60</sup>

Wills, therefore, sees the *Confessiones*, as being written out of “birth throes” in which the combination of “pain, serenity, and prayer” catalyzed this interior exploration and confession of life before and after conversion. Wills does make the unfortunate error of stating that this work was started in “Hippo” in 397. We know this to be mistaken as Augustine was preaching in Carthage throughout the Spring through Winter of that year.<sup>61</sup>

Wills points out that James O’ Donnell states that no other work in classical or Christian literature begins with a direct address to God.<sup>62</sup> Augustine’s early career was focused on reinterpreting the liberal arts from a Christian perspective. Moreover, that Augustine is a type of “Philosopher-Bishop” like his mentor Ambrose in Milan. For Wills, the audience of the *Confessiones* is God. For he states, “the whole book is one long prayer, perhaps the longest literary prayer among the great books of the West”.<sup>63</sup> He basis this analysis on the James O’ Donnell’s interpretation for the same conclusion:

He gestures in our direction and mentions us from time to time, but *never addresses his readers*. As a literary text, *Confessions* resembles a one-sided, non-fiction epistolary novel, enacted in the presence of the silence (and darkness) of God. What he attempts is a radical turn away from common sense – seen as

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<sup>60</sup> Gary Wills. *Augustine’s Confessions*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) Letter 38.1, 14-15

<sup>61</sup> Peter Brown. *Augustine of Hippo*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p.447

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p.21

tragically flawed by mad self-love – towards the wholly other, and thus toward the true self – for to him, we are not who we think we are<sup>64</sup>

It is, thus, a “prayer genre” for Wills. Augustine’s other works could be argued to be types of self-examinations – but they are all Augustine talking to “himself, not to God”.

Wills concludes, as do many others, that the *Confessiones* is not an autobiography. He states the historical problem masterfully in defining biography of a person as that which “begins with the person’s heritage and birth, then plots his or her development over the course of the life (bios), ending at the person’s death (thanatos), tracing connections, arguing with misconceptions about the life, emphasizing what was most significant about the person”<sup>65</sup> He goes on to point out the historical problems with this work as an autobiography in that it is not itself accurate to both the definition of ancient biography in that there is no mention of Augustine’s sister or his brother. Nor are the names of his common-law wife or best friend who died ever mentioned within its pages. Secondly, the actual historical facts and chronology are questionable if not completely mistaken. Hence, for Wills, we should ask what really is the genre of the *Confessiones*? Wills conjectures that this work is more like a “*Pilgrim’s Progress* or even to *The Divine Comedy*”.<sup>66</sup> In other words, it is more of a “journey toward God” written to God.

Brian Stock has published three works, the latest of which in 2017, in which he explores Augustine’s *Confessiones* from standpoint of “soliloquy”. Beginning in 2001 with his work *After Augustine*, Stock introduces the notion that this work by Augustine

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.21

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.15

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23

is really a spiritual discipline in “reading and self-knowledge”. He rejects the traditional label of autobiography when studying the *Confessiones*. Instead, he argues

in general, the ancient thinkers did not make a connection between the study of the self, the soul, or self-understanding and the composition of autobiographies...The *Confessions* became the Western model for the literary genre he called the *soliloquium*. This was envisaged as a type of discourse in which a person and his rational spirit entered into debate in the interior of the soul on the preconditions and limitations of self-knowledge. In the *Confessions* the characters in the dialogue were changed, but the philosophical objectives remained the same.<sup>67</sup>

According to Stock, Augustine had used the story of his life in other works with differing details. It was used “anecdotal” in his early dialogues and “retelling a part of it in his *Retractions* in the form of a doctrinal history”.<sup>68</sup>

In response to the skeptical view, Augustine used the self-knowledge or inner subjectivity to develop his *cogito* argument. He knew for sure that he existed because of the continuity of memory between cognitive events. Hence, “the story of the soul’s progress or education, which was a theme common to many ancient inquiries into self-knowledge after Plato, thereby became associated with the account of a particular life as it proceeded in historical time through stages of uncertainty, self-understanding, and ethical conduct”.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, Augustine used this rhetorical device, in contradistinction to previous thinkers who thought rhetoric to be empty and sophistical, to show that reason alone could not achieve a truly “ethically satisfactory” way of life. For he writes,

In place of this view, he adopted the position that reason had to be reinforced by persuasion. Using his personal life-history to support his case, he argued that none of life’s fundamental problems can be solved by philosophical reasoning,

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<sup>67</sup> Brian Stock. *After Augustine*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 10-11

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12

since the possibility of rational choice only arises when a person is in possession of enough facts to make an objective judgment among potentially different courses of action...The person who relates his own life, as he did, tells the story within the limits of the knowledge available, not as it would be told by an omniscient author who has all the relevant facts at his disposal.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, what Augustine did was to challenge the longstanding law, going back to Plato, which taught that rhetoric and philosophy do not mix. This was, in fact, a pioneering document that exemplified that law to be incorrect. Books I to IX are the telling of the progress of the soul “as the evolution of a reader who proceeded from pagan and sectarian views toward the truth of the Bible. In Books X to XIII, he presented an outline of a theory of reading in relation to ancient teachings on grammar, rhetoric, and interpretation”.<sup>71</sup>

In *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue: Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity*, Stock formalizes the argument that Augustine “invented” a spiritual exercise in which any person can use memory to “reconstruct and reinterpret life’s aims”. He now defines a soliloquy as “a type of rational dialogue (or dialogue with Reason) in which questions are asked and answers given within the mind of a single person”.<sup>72</sup> This inner dialogue is a “spiritual exercise” which Augustine developed in his early years immediately after baptism in Milan. He then applies this exercise, to some degree, to all his writings regarding both philosophy and theology – mainly in the form of dialogues. However, Stock does argue that the exercise was used in *Confessiones*, *De Civitate Dei*, and *De Trinitate*.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.12-13

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 13

<sup>72</sup> Brian Stock. *Augustine’s Inner Dialogue: Philosophical Soliloquy in Late Antiquity*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.1

Because Augustine used this exercise to search for wisdom and happiness, Stock argues that his writings are still being hailed as original on topics within contemporary study of philosophy, psychology, theology, and literature. “Among these are gesture, mimesis and non-verbal communication; linguistic conventions and the theory of signs; secular and religious (or Scriptural) hermeneutics; the will, intentionality, and ethics; temporal and spiritual forces in history; and areas of inquiry linking ancient and modern philosophy, such as sensation, perception, imagination, memory, materialism, and the origin of the human soul”.<sup>73</sup>

At the same time, Stock points out that the dialogue technique has been a problem to modern Augustinian scholarship because of its initial “rickety construction”. Some have even concluded that there is no real apparent or “recognizable principle of organization”. Stock argues that “there are essentially two sources of disorderliness in Augustine’s writings: one of these results from failures of reasoning on the part of Augustine or his interlocutors which have frequently been the subject of comment. The other is deliberately introduced by Augustine as part of the dialogues’ literary and philosophical design”.<sup>74</sup>

Augustine concludes, according to Stock, that the inner dialogue trumps the external dialogue. Serious thinking about the Self will not be satisfied or rectified by external voices of the pagan or worldly sort. Instead, talking to oneself and to God is the most perfect way to gain knowledge of the mind and its entanglements. Using the Bible as his example for prayer and historical narrative, Augustine states, “the Bible has been

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 3

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 4

brought forth by God like an epic song from an incomparably fine musician”.<sup>75</sup> Not only does Augustine use the Bible, says Stock, but he uses the specific writings of “Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Academic writings with which he became acquainted with in Carthage, Rome and Milan: chiefly, how to sift realities from appearances, how to ascend from the sensible to the intelligible by means of reason, and how to ascertain (or deny) the validity of mental impressions of existing things”.<sup>76</sup>

This spiritual exercise is to conduct inquiry “into the roots of personal and historical memories, which takes the form of a series of interpretive soliloquies. Just as secrets of wisdom are preserved in the ancient writings of the Bible, so there is, he proposes, deeply lodged within each person, and instructive text, so to speak, imprinted on the human conscience, which is hidden from view and contains the stamp of inviolable moral truth”.<sup>77</sup>

Hence, the soliloquy is a method by which Augustine demonstrates, not merely explicates, the limitations of human reason. The inner dialogue is superior to the external dialogue for healing the soul. As Stock points out, Anselm, Abelard, Kierkegaard, and Wittgenstein all benefited from this exercise in demonstrative subjectivity. Stock demonstrates this thesis by comparing two examples of “soliloquized spiritual exercises”: *Soliloquia* (386-387) and *Confessions* (397-400). In the first, Reason asked Augustine to utilize

a type of mental exercise that has two parts: First, he is to pray for health and assistance, and to commit his prayer to writing so that he will be encouraged by what he has thus far accomplished; afterwards he is to sum up what he has

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p.7

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 12

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 13

learned by means of this prayer in a few brief goals...*Confessiones*. A decade later Augustine presented a revised version of this spiritual exercise at *Confessiones* 8.7.16-8.12.29.<sup>78</sup>

Both of these examples are of what Stock calls “internal debates”. However, the appearance of “bureaucrats”, i.e. Simplicianus, Victorinus, Ponticianus, lead Augustine to inner dialogue and debate only to take up and read the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Romans. Therefore, the only way to true wisdom and happiness in God is ultimately through the trans-rational experience of conversion through faith and scripture.

In his latest work, *The Integrated Self*, Stock argues that Augustine was influenced by both philosophy and rhetoric in the formation of his method of “autobiography”. However, he goes even further in stating that Augustine rejects the dualistic view of Plato and Neo-Platonism in favor of a view “inspired by the Bible” - specifically, that the mind and body are co-equals in creating the total self. It is within the *Confessiones*, we find his analysis of memory, time, and will are analyzed in detail. However, he never specifically formulates a theoretical position of the “Self” according to Stock.<sup>79</sup>

His strategy was to use the “Socratic method of self-examination” which is used in his early writings up to the *Confessiones*. Stock states that this method is best illustrated with the “interior dialogue”. The second technique was “sacred reading (*lectio divina*)”. This originated, according to Stock, in Jewish and Christian devotions and was a “regular feature of monastic life in his [Augustine’s] time”.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid, pp. 77 - 79

<sup>79</sup> Brian Stock. *The Integrated Self*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), p. 1

Essentially, what Stock is seeking to show is that the *Confessiones* is one work in which Augustine attacks the idea of a divided self and the Socratic answer for this problem. Stock sees this theme reoccurring over and over from the Cassiciacum to Bishop's office in the thought of Augustine. Augustine was the first to examine this divided self and then to propose the Scriptural answer for its rectitude. The ethical norms of Socrates and for the most part, the totality of pagan philosophy, were inadequate for this universal human problem. As he states,

Augustine is convinced that there are essentially two pathways open to mortals for the improvement of the self, and both depend on faith. One leads upward through mysticism, by which we can temporarily achieve unity with the deity, as took place, in his view, in his final conversation with his mother, Monica, preceding her death at Ostia in 387. The other lies through a coherent program of reform and redirection for the self in this world, which can prepare the way for salvation, even though it cannot offer a guarantee, by helping us to lead virtuous lives. The method advocated by Augustine for achieving this goal consists in a set of mental and spiritual exercises in which asceticism, in the ancient sense of a 'training' (*askesis*) is identified with the patient, meditative study of the Bible. This is an important dimension of what he understands by 'Christian philosophy'.<sup>80</sup>

To prove this thesis, Stock looks back at examples of sacred reading and then moves to the rhetorical by the analysis of Cicero. Specifically, Stock argues that Augustine conjoined philosophy/rhetoric with sacred reading in seeking to create an integrated self.

**Critique:** Although I appreciate the wonderful insights of classicists/philologists concerning the *Confessiones*, and their creative energies in comparative literature for finding all kinds of artistic expressions and genres for this work, I must respectfully

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5

disagree as to these creative insights and designations. Simply put, the *Confessiones* was not intended to be anything other than a demonstrative proof for Augustine's philosophy of consciousness and conversion and its relation to the authority of Scripture. It was not, at the time, meant to be a strictly theological/devotional work for spiritual exercise in the monastic community – but rather a pedagogical / apologetic learning tool to be utilized by his fellow priests and monastics for a philosophy of mind/soul and an apologetic for its necessary superior conversion to that of pagan intellegencia within the Roman Empire. Although, the appearance of the presentation may be in the form of a quasi-prayer to God, this work essentially breaks down into a Dialogue/Treatise genre. I say quasi-prayer because in scriptural prayer, the petitioner does not engage in “lecturing” on philosophical analysis and then scriptural analysis in rebuttal usually to the particular philosophical school under consideration - nor does he or she “inform” God of anything. My Granddaddy often told me to not “preach toward and/or inform God in my public prayers before sermons or public gatherings. God is already fully informed.” In other words, trying to make oneself sound intelligent before an audience will only drive people away who are “captive” to your prayers. That is not to say that there are prayer periscopes of straight petitioning to God directly in the *Confessiones*– and then usually immediately following - a scriptural response which, it seems to me, represents the voice/dialogue of God back to Augustine – as well as through the voices of others in his life such as Monica, Alypius, or Ambrose. Nonetheless, essentially, the entire work could be seen as a Pedagogical Dialogue of sorts – but Books X-XIII are certainly examples of pure philosophy for the understanding of the mind/soul and the conversion or healing thereof.

#### IV. Autobiographical/Philosophical

Lawrence Rothfield in a paper called “Autobiography and Perspective in the *Confessions* of Augustine”, argues that Augustine produced a kind of “Christian Autobiography” from the literary critical point of view. Rothfield is a literary critic and thought that the *Confessions* had yet to be put under that sort of lens.

He states that Augustine conjoined the literary device of autobiography and theological analysis - thus, creating a new genre or structure for the time. Dante had written a Christian autobiography of sorts, but it was more mythical and less hard narrative. Augustine conjoined the “structures” of literary and theology made something that was “inextricably intertwined”.

Misch’s definition of autobiography means a “history” which is further defined as “a continuity of evolutionary progress”.<sup>81</sup> This definition further moves “toward the present achievement of a fully expressive literature of the self”. However, Rothfield states clearly that the *Confessions* does not fit within Misch’s definitional space. For he writes,

the *Confessions* can only be seen as a immature version of the genre, and Misch describes them as such: “The inner life had freed itself from dependence on Nature and the external world; but it was not yet ready to rely on itself and try, in the face of the dangerously rich flow of the psychic happenings, to attain the divine in the fullness of the soul so that it might form itself freely out of its infinite potentialities”.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Lawrence Rothfield. “Autobiography and Perspective in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Summer, 1981), p.209.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210

He next looks at Pierre Courcelle's "philological approach which examines the literary motifs or "intertextual *topoi*" and influences on the Augustine's work. He calls Courcelle's work "autobiographical realism" in which he scrutinizes Augustine's "conversion" experience. For he states, "Augustine's individuality turns out to be no more than a variation of a collection of textual patterns, patterns which are neither necessarily Christian nor autobiographical in and of themselves".<sup>83</sup> Rothfield realizes that he does not want to subscribe to "hermeneutic formalism" but he wants to integrate Augustinian theology which he defines as "a theory of the comprehension of experience" with Augustinian formalism which he defines as "a theory of the structure of a textual genre, here that of confessional autobiography".<sup>84</sup>

The problem, according to Rothfield, is that this admixture creates a type of "structural problem" which he defines as autobiographical narrative that then meets the epistemological one of "spiritual death and rebirth" – the two problems then become "superimposable". Augustine's insight, therefore, was to see the two problems and create a single solution. "The literary solution then becomes the same as the epistemological one: the Incarnation, which both articulates a verbalized epistemology (making knowledge of the flesh equivalent to knowledge of the word) and validates an autobiographical writing of the self (making word stand for flesh)".<sup>85</sup> He calls this technique of Augustine "the synthesis".

This self is, therefore, constituted in space which is both physical and psychological. Rothfield calls this Augustine's "specialized self". This self is very much

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.,p.210

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 211

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.211

different from the Cartesian self. The Augustine self states, “I have become a problem to myself” and “the Cartesian self-assurance that ‘I think therefore I am’ represents a wholeness of self. Augustine’s self is fragmented and dispersed. “It is a victim of a space which constitutes it, there can be no such thing as childhood innocence”.<sup>86</sup>

How does one become conscious of this problem? According to Rothfield, the autobiographical forces the self to see the world as text. “As Scriptural language subsumes the self, autobiography gives way, in the last few books of the *Confessions*, to what might be called ‘*logobiography*’. Few of us, of course, share Augustine’s willingness to submit to a Christian *logos*; our era is, as Kenneth Burke has noted, technological rather than theological”.<sup>87</sup>

Joseph Torchia in his work, *Restless Mind: Curiositas & the Scope of Inquiry in St. Augustine’s Psychology*, continues the triadic formulation in regards to what he calls “triad of vices” from I John 2:14-16. They are “lust of the flesh (*concupiscentia carnis*), lust of the eyes (*concupiscentia oculorum*), and the ambition of the world (*ambitio saeculi*)”.<sup>88</sup> For Torchia, this “triple concupiscence” was the framework by which Augustine analyzed his life of sin and redemption and its focus on the dual problem of evil and iniquity.

This theological foundation of analysis would then lead Augustine to a philosophical/psychological analysis of “carnal concupiscence, curiosity, and pride or ambition of the world. Lust of the eyes would fall under curiosity. This triadic

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.213

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.222

<sup>88</sup> Joseph Torchia. *Restless Mind: Curiositas & The Scope of Inquiry in St. Augustine’s Psychology* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2013), p. 95.

interpretation of iniquity, therefore, gives a schematic approach to understanding the “disposition”, or ordering of thoughts/loves, and their disordering through “psychological deliberations”.

Torchia sees the *Confessiones* as a “spiritual autobiography”. It is essentially a survey of his intellectual and moral pilgrimage in his search for “genuine wisdom” and the Christian way of life. Moreover, he sees another triadic formulation in the *Confessiones*: “pride, curiosity, and carnal concupiscence within his journey toward God. Torchia calls it a “*peregrinatio* of the heart and mind”.<sup>89</sup> It is his contention that the *Confessiones* is organized around this triadic formulation of primal vices. These were consistently used for both rhetorical and theological purposes in further writings of Augustine when discussing the separation of the mind from God and the pathways that lead to spiritual isolation and ruin.

Torchia argues that Augustine takes this triad of sin in “bold new directions in forging a comprehensive definition of iniquity in the context of Augustine’s own existential situation (and by implication, the experience of everyman)”.<sup>90</sup> In particular, he focuses on Augustine’s usage of *curiositas* which he claims Augustine identifies with “*concupiscentia oculorum* of I John 2:14-16”. This concept, therefore, stimulates a drive for the exaltation of the self and in so doing causes the individual to seek “sensual gratification inherent in carnal concupiscence”. Secondly, this same concept, according to Torchia, drives people toward a desire to know and to seek “worldly matters” and the

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.119

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.120.

“whole panoply of temporal and corporeal involvement”. Both aspects of *curiositas* is rooted in the original sin of pride.

The *Confessiones* therefore, is “Augustine’s definitive response to the problems which plagued him over the course of his rather circuitous journey...”.<sup>91</sup> This *curiositas* is a perversion of the will that then seeks the things of creation for its own totalitarian ends. This leads to a disorder of creation itself and exalts the soul in its place within the created order. For Torchia writes, “In a very real sense, *Confessiones* not only subject Augustine’s life (from infancy to his moral conversion) to a triadic interpretation, but the history of the human race as well”.<sup>92</sup> Hence, Torchia argues that Augustine’s hermeneutic is used entirely throughout the *Confessiones* in being the motivating factor for this writing and exploring his own *psyche*.

Robert Pasnau, in his paper “Plotting Augustine’s Confessions”, argues that the *Confessions* is primarily an autobiographical philosophical work. “Its philosophical content is neither scattered nor peripheral but animates and organizes all thirteen books”.<sup>93</sup> He states that the climax of the work is Augustine’s “ultimate conversion” and it is there that the “narrative and the philosophy” come together.

There are two parallel paths laid out by Augustine in this work. One is his journey toward God and the second is God’s presence throughout the journey itself. Pasnau’s argument is that even when Augustine wondered from God intellectually and morally – God was still actively present in the midst of his existential circumstances. He

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.120

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p.120

<sup>93</sup> Robert Pasnau. “Plotting Augustine’s *Confessions*”. (*Logos* 3 (2) (2000), p. 1

lists the sins of Augustine in the early section of the *Confessions (Books I to IV)*: Literature, Games, Lust, Theft, Theatre, Oratory, Astrology, Friendship, Beauty, Philosophy, and Science.<sup>94</sup> He goes on to state that “the general line of argument in these early chapters is the Platonic one familiar from the *Phaedo*”.<sup>95</sup> Essentially, Augustine is arguing against seeking truth in the senses of the empirical and instead to the Socratic “look within ourselves” in order to find not only ourselves but God as well. The argument being that when Augustine moved or strayed away from the self – he moved away from God.

According to Pasnau, Augustine’s analysis of his childhood through other developmental stages in his maturing was to represent essentially the human condition universally. The purpose, of course, was also to show that all humans are tainted with “original sin” even as exemplified in the behavior of infants and toddlers. Existentially as well, the wrong paths of lifestyle choices bring real unhappiness. Misery is described in the most dramatic terms.

In order to overcome this misery, Augustine also seeks many different rational solutions to his plight. This places him on a journey for “true wisdom” and to free himself from the chains that bound him. Pasnau lists this philosophical journey: Manicheism, Skepticism, Belief, Intellectual Certainty, and Moral Certainty.<sup>96</sup> He concludes this journey with a type of “religious epistemology” and “perhaps his most significant contribution to contemporary philosophy”. Essentially, that “belief and faith must precede understanding and knowledge, and must serve to direct and support the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.2

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.2

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.4

mind's inquiries. Augustine is not repudiating his quest for wisdom, merely refining his methodology".<sup>97</sup> Pasnau goes on to make the point that this may cause a great deal of consternation for empiricists and materialists alike – the idea of starting with belief/faith before gaining understanding or knowledge – only then to return to that same belief/faith. However, that is not what we find in the *Confessions*, instead we find Augustine going through many differing materialist/rationalist solutions only to find that none of them satisfied his misery and left him wanting. Knowledge, without faith/belief/ did not cure his soul/mind of its malady. Hence, Pasnau argues that “the *Confessions*, even more than a study in human psychology, is a study of the way God works within human lives...Augustine stresses God's role in directing events”.<sup>98</sup>

One of the theories for the occasion of the writing of the *Confessiones* is that it “may have been to describe Augustine's conversion from Manicheism to Catholic Christianity in light of Donatist accusations that he remained a crypto-Manichean, a mistaken charge the Pelagian Julian of Eclanum resurrected some thirty years later and a few twentieth-century critics still maintain (Wundt)”.<sup>99</sup> Augustine joined this group because of its scientific reasoning and materialist explanations for the vicissitudes and complexities of human existence. Specifically, he came under the influence of a teacher named Faustus who was very good with rhetoric – but, according to Augustine, lacked the substantive philosophical analysis for the deeper metaphysical questions of the human mind/soul.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.4

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p.6

<sup>99</sup> Peter Van Fleteren. “*Confessiones*” in Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*.(Grand Rapids: Willaim B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999),p.227

Johnathan Yates, in his paper “Augustine and the Manicheans on Scripture, The Canon and Truth”, states that the writing of the *Confessiones*, among others of what he calls “anti-manichean works”, drove Augustine, with other Bishops, to apologetically defend the authority of scripture to pagan culture. For he writes, “historical and theological/exegetical circumstances converged in order to compel Augustine and his fellow North American Bishops to delimit the canon of Scripture during the 390’s, thus establishing an ultimate source of truth and of theological authority both for themselves and for (western) Christendom at large”.

In his search for a “reliable source of truth”, Augustine essentially turned toward rationalism. This rationalism, according to Yates, caused him to reject scripture as that source because of its mythological language and, what he considered to be the case at the time, its “unintelligible” truth claims about reality. According to Yates,

This drift toward rationalism in turn paved the way for the Manichaeans whom he found attractive for several reasons, not the least of which, was their claim to offer a pure and enlightened form of Christianity that rendered the illogical and plebian faith of his childhood obsolete. Also, important was their rejection of many of the difficulties that Augustine had encountered in his very frustrating attempts to read the enigmatic and literarily uncouth catholic Scriptures. Even those books they did choose to retain were radically edited and re-interpreted.<sup>100</sup>

Yates thesis overall is that the “North African Catholic Church generally” was under attack primarily by the Manicheans in regards to the irrationality of Christian Scripture – specifically the Old Testament rendering of how evil entered the world. This then compelled the Church to “define their canon of Scripture” and to hold two North African

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<sup>100</sup> Johnathan Yates. “Augustine and the Manicheans on Scripture, The Canon and Truth”. *Theology and the Quest for Truth, Historical and Systematic-Theological Studies*. (Leuven University Press, 2006), p.12

councils which debated and determined the authority of Scripture. Yates quotes A. Allegeier's study<sup>101</sup> and F. Decret opinion in 1970 to buttress his argument.

Yates concludes that the *Confessiones* is essentially an anti-Manichean polemic, and, according to him, this line of reasoning has "been most often recognized by scholars". He then goes onto quote J. Van Oort, "One who is acquainted with the Manichean texts and their terminology will read Augustine's *Confessiones* with new eyes...The prevailing tone, the *cantus firmus* of the *Confessiones*, is Gnostic-Manichaeic".<sup>102</sup> Yates bases this conclusion on Augustine's analysis of Genesis in Books XI-XIII.

**Critique:** Again, the *Confessiones* is not a theological/devotional work per se. A theological/devotional work, by definition, is usually written with the vocabulary and logic for an already believer/thinker who usually has their own theological rationale in mind and a directive for its application, i.e. spiritual exercise. This is a pedagogic-apologetic work, it seems to me, for the conversion of educated Platonist intellectuals within/outside the Church and a pedagogical demonstration/proof for fellow "brothers" to use to convert Platonists/Manicheans outside the Church in Carthage and, at the same time, to reform the Church in Carthage from pagan influences and criticisms

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<sup>101</sup>See Allgeier. *Der Einfluß des Manichaismus* (n.9), p.9 - "Man geht nicht fehl, wenn man annimmt, daß also auch die kanonkritischen Ausführungen, die sich da und dort zerstreut finden, durch die antimanchäische Kritik veranlaßt worden sind. Das ist um beachtenswerter, als die ersten abendlandischen Synoden, welche sich mit dem Kanon der Bibel beschäftigt haben, ja die ersten Synoden überhaupt, auf deren Tagesordnung, so viel man weiß, die Frage des Kanons stand, die Synode von Hippo 393 und die zwei Synoden von Karthago 397 und 419 waren".

<sup>102</sup> Yates, p.17 See also – Jason David BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, 2: Making a "Catholic" Self, 388-401 C. E.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

against the Incarnational Christ and the concept of mercy/grace/forgiveness for sin without reciprocity or justice for evil done.

As to the anti-Manichean argument, if one looks closely at the style of discourse of the apologetics of the truly anti-Manichean writings of Augustine – beginning as early as 388/89 upon his return to Africa and the writing of *De Genesis contra Manichaeos* – one can readily see the stark difference in regards to style and sophistication of argumentation to that of books XI-XIII of the *Confessiones*. Indeed, he states up front in this earlier polemic on Genesis against the Manicheans that it was written for the “uneducated” masses that were being led astray by the Manichean’s arguments – like Augustine himself had been. Hence, upon a closer reading of the text, one can see that the prose is that of a “cut and paste” or proof texting analysis of Genesis 1 and following. There literally is no philosophical argumentation like we find in the *Confessiones*. The only real argumentation is that of allegorical hermeneutical interpretation delivered in a homiletical (preaching/rhetorical) style. Thus, I would argue, the audience or referent for which a document is written dictates the style or sophistication of argumentation. We must remember, although many scholars do not, that both the Platonists and the Manicheans made similar critiques of the Old Testament in regards to the same and specific verses within the Book of Genesis. It seems to me that the anti-Manichean writings tend to be more “cut and paste” proof texting with what I am calling homiletical prose to exhort and teach those being led astray. On the other hand, books XI-XIII of the *Confessiones* are written with very dense pure philosophical argumentation and are strictly dealing with the apex issue of conversion – an issue that, for the most part, is

foreign to Manichean debate and/or discussion. *Conversio* is a Platonist issue – not Manichean.

## V. **Scriptural Philosophical**

The question before us in this dissertation is to understand both the structural model for the architectural ordering of ideas in the *Confessiones*; and, furthermore, the meaning or teaching for which Augustine was seeking to elucidate. I wish to offer my own structural/meaning category for the analysis of this document – namely, *Scriptural Philosophical*. I use the term “Scriptural” because it implies a “confessional” designation as opposed to simply a socio-cultic compilation of literature and documents or bible.

Specifically, I will show that Augustine used the structural model of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave to fully demonstrate the truth of scriptural categories/constructs, e.g. Genesis 1, John 1:1-4, and the philosophy of the Apostle Paul in Romans, in regards to the healing of the human mind/soul. Moreover, in the process of formulating his own life story he organizes it so that the narrative and personas represent values, theoretical constructs/metaphysics, and schools of thought, both philosophical and religious, so as to incorporate the whole of pagan culture throughout the Roman Empire – but, especially in Carthage or “little Rome” as it was called in its day. This historical demonstration of introspection, through autobiographical narrative, supplies the empirical data, if you will, to satisfy both Pagan and Manichean materialist - and to prove the “True Wisdom” of his Scriptural philosophy of mind/soul that he intended to elucidate. This philosophy of mind/soul is a new interpretation of the Platonic philosophy of mind/soul and a new type of reasoning – namely, what I will call “Theo-

Rationality” or “Synchronic – Synthetic - Triunism”<sup>103</sup>. This philosophy will be further detailed in the chapters covering “Augustine’s Method in the *Confessiones*” and “Augustine’s Superior Conversion: Philosophy of Mind and Synchronic-Synthetic - Triunism”.

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<sup>103</sup> Both terms are my terms – by Theo-Rationalism I mean a Divine illumined consciousness and reasoning as opposed to a “theosophy” which is usually defined as an ecstatic experiential or subjective Plotinian ecstasy or union with the Divine experience. My term will redefine a rationality that is universal to all created conscious life. By Synchronic – Synthetic Triunism I will be challenging both materialist/physicalist (monism) Carnap, Ryle, Quine on mind; and, Kantian ideas of *a priori* (pure reasoning) and *a posteriori* (empirical reasoning) dichotomy and a divided consciousness. It will be shown that Augustine argued for a synchronous (*a synchroni*) synthetic triunism of consciousness of thought- as opposed to a linear dualism body stimulating mentalistic mind concept. Instead, Past(Memory), Present(Senses), Future(Imagination) synchronically exist in every cognate moment namely, what I will call, Biological(Perception/Body), Mentalistic (A perception, Mind), and Divine Illuminative/Inspiration(Mentalistic Directive Outside a Controlled Will - Interpretation). Also, there is currently a Neuro-biological mind theory by JM Delgado called “Triunism: A Transmaterial Train – Mind Theory”. Although I found this in the course of my research only recently, it had no influence on my philosophical interpretation of Augustine or on my terminology. However, I will include its abstract in this footnote for anyone that may be interested in a transmaterialist account of neurological science.

Abstract:

Triunism postulates that the mind is a unity with the following three structural elements essential that the absence of any one will prevent its existence: (1) Brain cells and pathways possessing material and transmaterial properties. (2) A flow of environmental information, coded and transduced at sensory receptors and forming part of the working brain through modifications of its anatomy and physiology. (3) Detectable manifestations derived from (1) and (2) which are expressed inward as perceptions and outward as behavior. The outside world enters through the senses and becomes a material and functional part of the maturing brain. Without a brain, the mind cannot exist. Without sensory inputs, the mind will not be structured and cannot appear. Without manifestations of inner perceptions and outward motor expression, the mind cannot be recognized by the individual or the environment. Transmaterial entities require the existence of supporting matter and may be represented by patterns of material organization or by temporal or functional relations between parts of the material substratum. They may transcend the existence of specific materials, changing carriers while preserving their nonmaterial identity, but do not possess intrinsic properties of matter such as mass and energy. Transmaterial aspects of reality, including material substratum patterning, and relative temporal, and functional characteristics may be subjects of experimental research” (*Ciba Found Symp.* 1979; (69): 369-96).

**CHAPTER TWO:**  
***SITZ IM LEBEN* : THE SETTING IN LIFE OF THE *CONFESSIONES***  
**IN CARTHAGE 397C.E.**

Pierre Hadot at his inaugural lecture at the College de France stated the following:

It seems to me, indeed, that in order to understand the works of the philosophers of antiquity we must take account of all the concrete conditions in which they wrote, all the constraints that weighed upon them: the framework of the school, the very nature of *philosophia*, literary genres, rhetorical rules, dogmatic imperatives, and traditional modes of reasoning. One cannot read an ancient author the way one does a contemporary author...In fact, the works of antiquity are produced under entirely different conditions than those of their modern counterparts”.<sup>104</sup>

The exegetical exercise of analyzing a document means that it should never be taken out of its contextual matrix. The technical term coined specifically regarding this historical critical approach is called “sitz im leben” or setting in life/place in life. Hadot seemed to understand that the philosophical documents of antiquity – as with Scripture – can be expounded to mean something that makes sense to the modern or post-modern mind – but, nevertheless, be a complete misinterpretation from its original meaning for the audience to which it was addressed.<sup>105</sup> In other words, that same modern reading would

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<sup>104</sup> Pierre Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), p.7

<sup>105</sup> See Hayes, 1979, p. 127-128 – “The following is a translation of a discussion he [Gunkel] published in ZAW in 1924:

‘Every genre shows its individuality in defined characteristics:

- (1) In a common store of thoughts and moods, which is carefully transmitted from generation to generation, despite the sundry changes in the customary spiritual quality that can be carried out at the hands of outstanding individual authors;
- (2) In a traditional linguistic form, i.e., definite phrases, sentence structures, images, and so forth; that is the customary form which usually preserves the thought and can endure sometimes for

be completely foreign to the ancient mind and thus, never intended by the author under investigation. One Hadot scholar put it this way:

Hadot's studies of the history of ancient philosophy and theology have always included the analysis of the 'rules, the forms, the models of discourse'...Such analysis is necessary in order to understand both the details of the work, the exact import of particular statements, as well as the general meaning of the work as a whole. Literary structure and conceptual structure must never be separated".<sup>106</sup>

Hence, it will be the purpose of this chapter to analyze the "setting in life" or what I will call Augustine's contextual matrix for the *Confessiones* at the time it was written and from the place it was written – Carthage North Africa. This will be accomplished by first establishing the date and place of authorship; then we will look at the socio-political context surrounding its production. Next, we will look at contemporary pagan culture and religion in Carthage and surrounding territory. Finally, we will investigate Carthage Christianity and its struggle for self-identity from that of a pagan dominance.

## I. Date and Place

Our dating for the *Confessiones* is based on essentially two facts: one is that Augustine makes no reference to the death of Bishop Ambrose in Milan, his priest and

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many centuries; on this linguistic form we lay a special value because it is just this which is the easiest to recognize.

- (3) A third characteristic of a genre is a definite *Sitz im Leben* of the people, in which it originally had its special place, out of which just these thoughts and their forms of expression have arisen and in which they are therefore also to be understood, even if it is true that the genres in a more developed time, when writing came to dominance in the cultural life, had given up this oldest situation in favor of the written book.
- (4) Only where we have all three criteria preserved together, only where we can ascertain that definite thoughts in a definite form on a definite occasion were expressed have we the right to speak of a genre."

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p.7

mentor, which took place on 4 April 397; second, we know that in the *Retractiones*' order of documents – which are purported to be chronological – has *Contra Faustum Manicheum* coming immediately after the *Confessiones*. According to Frederick Van Fleteren, “the encounter with Faustus took place no later than 401, and probably earlier, perhaps as early as 397. Therefore, *Confessiones* must have been written sometime between 397 and 401, with an earlier date being more probable”.<sup>107</sup>

The city of Carthage North Africa seems to be the most probable place from which the *Confessiones* was written. This is concurred with Peter Brown in his exposition on the “Dolbeau sermons” under the heading “New Evidence” at the end of his momentous biography on Augustine, in which he states that Augustine preached the sermons at the “feasts of the saints” celebration that went from May to September of each year in Carthage. This was a particular celebration that focused on the martyrdom of the saints or those who previously had given their lives both as an early church in its apostolic days and as a persecuted church by Roman Caesars and administrations.<sup>108</sup> Augustine was relatively an unknown, although he had lived in Carthage twice before both as student and as teacher. Nonetheless he had not been there as a Bishop of Hippo. Moreover, he had a growing reputation as an outstanding rhetor or orator and

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<sup>107</sup> Frederick Van Fleteren. “Confessiones” in Alan Fitzgerald, ed. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, p.227

<sup>108</sup> Edmund Hill writes concerning *De doctrina Christiana* whose first two books were written just before 397CE in 396C.E. that the bishop of Carthage was Aurelius and that this document “was undertaken, not only in response to a particular situation, but in response to a particular request from a particular person... What was the nature of Aurelius’ achievement, which drew from Augustine the paean of rhetoric with which he continues this letter [Letter 41]? I think we might say that it was nothing less than the official inauguration of the Catholic Church’s renewal in North Africa. We know from Possidius’ biography of Augustine that it had not been customary in Africa for priests to preach and expound the gospel, this task, or privilege, being reserved for the bishops, many of whom for one reason or another neglected it... I suggest he was engaged, at Aurelius’ request, in writing a textbook or manual for use in training the clergy to teach and preach; in other words he was in the middle of *De doctrina Christiana*.” Hence, it is conceivable that the *Confessiones* is an educational tool or what I am calling a pedagogic-apologetic concerning the philosophy of the mind/soul and its necessary conversion according to scripture.

now, as a Bishop preacher of the Gospel. Brown points out that he was gravely ill and had to take to his bed the majority of his time in Carthage. Nonetheless, he is said to have preached “continuously”. For Peter Brown writes, “He was an ill man. Either before his journey to Carthage, or in the middle of these taxing months, he was confined to his bed with agonizing hemorrhoids, suffered sleepless nights and may have required painful surgical intervention.”<sup>109</sup>

What is interesting about these sermons, it seems to me, is that they are predominately addressed to Pagans and against all of the inducements of Carthage. “Little Rome”, as it was called, was the place in which, we are told, Augustine came to be introduced to both sexuality and, at the same time, Greek and Hellenistic philosophy while a young undergraduate there. When looked at closely, however, the Dolbeau sermons touch on many of the themes of the *Confessiones*.<sup>110</sup> It appears that the theology of grace and the instantaneous forgiveness of past sins were under attack by Pagans both outside and inside the Catholic church in Carthage. For Brown writes, “repentance was always possible. Pagans might criticize the Christian insistence on the forgiveness of sins: ‘You make men into sinners, who promise such impunity to those who are suddenly converted...take away that mercy, take away that promise of forgiveness and you take away the one harbor of relief in the most stormy sea of iniquities’”.<sup>111</sup> Brown goes on to quote from one of sermons by Augustine and notice how similar it rings with the themes of the *Confessiones*:

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<sup>109</sup> Peter Brown. *Augustine*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p.448

<sup>110</sup> Augustine. *Essential Sermons*. (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2007), pp. 50-52; See Sermon 29 - A sermon preached in Carthage in the restored Basilica during the Vigil of Pentecost, 24 May 397CE, on verse Psalm 118: *Confess to the Lord, Since He Is Good*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 448

You love that charioteer; you goad on all who love you to come along to watch him, to love him with you, to cheer him. And if they do not, you jeer at them, you call them idiots...And if the day of a wild beast show dawns, you, the fan of the wild beast fighter [the *venator*, the late Roman equivalent of the *matador*, pitted with nothing but a pike against lions, panthers and bears] you do not get any sleep...and when the time to go comes, you become a total nuisance to your friend, who is fast asleep and would rather sleep on than get up...If it were possible, you would snatch him from his bed and deposit him in the amphitheatre.<sup>112</sup>

Mary T. Boatwright states in her article, “Theatres in the Roman Empire”, that the embellishment of Roman theaters was lavish and ornate... before the middle of the third century BCE spectacles at Rome were predominantly un-literary and unsophisticated events: horse races, gladiatorial fights, athletic contests, Etruscan dances and musical shows, Fescennine verses that combined coarse impoverished jokes and personal satire, southern Italic farces known as *phylakes*, the most dramatic of the various public events performed in Rome. By 300BCE, in southern Italy and Sicily, which were heavily Hellenized *phylakes* had taken on some literary pretensions, parodying mythical plots and ridiculing everyday life...Roman theater as drama began only in the middle of the third century BCE with the development of literature of Rome. In 240BCE, the first literary tragedies and comedies...were performed in the city...Roman national tragic drama also had evolved out of Roman legends and history. Of both types of early tragedies we have only titles and fragments.”<sup>113</sup>

Thus, theatrical productions and violent games were the main reason for the demise of souls within the Roman Empire, according to Augustine. These so called gods – or “demons”, promoted themselves and their morality through such egocentric scripts and performances so as to brain wash the masses into thinking them immortal. For he writes,

well, I have no mind to arbitrate between the lewdness of theatrical entertainments and of mystic rites; only this I say, and history bears me out in making the assertion, that those same entertainments, in which the fictions of poets are the main attraction, were not introduced in the festivals of the gods by

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 449

<sup>113</sup> Mary T. Boatwright, “Theatres in the Roman Empire”, *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (Dec., 1990), pp.184-192

the ignorant devotion of the Romans, but that the gods themselves gave the most urgent commands to this effect, and indeed exhorted the Romans these solemnities and celebrations in their honor...and what man is there who is not more likely to adopt, for the regulation of his life, the examples that are represented in plays which have a divine sanction, rather than precepts written and promulgated with no more than human authority.<sup>114</sup>

From these performances, the Romans tempered, through edict, that these actors and writers could be arrested for slander if the performance was hurtful to political expediency. However, the plays, themselves, were allowed that followed the strict regulations of promulgating the lives of the Caesars and their accomplishments both fictional and real. Augustine then goes on to argue that the Roman masses should have known that the gods of “licentious entertainment” were unworthy of any divine honors. “For the theatrical entertainments in which such things are said and acted, and performed, were introduced into Roman society by the gods, who ordered that they should be dedicated and exhibited in their honor... how then, I would ask, can they be esteemed worthy of worship, when they propose that their own crimes be used as material for celebrating their praises”.<sup>115</sup>

Hence, what we learn from these sermons throughout that hot sickly summer is that the church was under attack from a pagan remnant both outside and within the Church itself. As Brown states, “The first Dolbeau sermons show little concert with pagans and heretics. Rather, they mark Augustine’s debut as a new intellectual force intervening for the first time in contemporary debates among Catholics.”<sup>116</sup> In 394, while still a priest, Augustine had challenged the Biblical scholarship of Jerome in

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<sup>114</sup> *City of God* 2.8

<sup>115</sup> 2.13

<sup>116</sup> Brown, p. 449

Bethlehem. Specifically, he challenged the way Jerome had dismissed in his exegesis the conflict between Peter and Paul concerning Jewish rites and their authority. Instead, Augustine defended the text as written and thought that the authority of the Scripture must be maintained and not politically altered for the sake of appearances to pagan criticisms. In turn, Augustine saw many of the pagan rites to be of a similar ilk that need to be abandoned by Catholic Christianity and that the Authority of the Bible should be the basis of faith and practice. For Brown, 397 was the miracle year in which Augustine saw his vocation as both apologist for the authority of the Scriptural text and the reformer of practice with the Catholic Church in Carthage in regards to dabbling in paganism and Catholic way of life.

With this said, pagan criticisms, both philosophically and religiously, and not Manichean theology were the predominate driving force for both the Dolbeau sermons and, I would argue, for the writing of his *Confessiones*. If one looks at this magisterial work, then one sees that the majority of it is expositing and debating pagan philosophical thought and socio-ethical practices. Only a small portion is actually describing, in detail, the actual teachings and events surrounding the Manichean period. By far, Augustine is attacking the intellectual foundations of pagan culture and trumping its arguments with historical demonstration of the failure of those arguments to cure the mind/soul of its malady of sin and human dysfunction on both the individual and social levels. If anything, the Manichean period centers more upon the style of the religion than on its actual substance – although, there is a section on Manichean materialist science or physics – this is only one example of physicalist consciousness from a religious perspective. Augustine is very clear that the pagan philosophies of the

Epicureans and Stoics, was also influential as to materialist influences on Augustine. Faustus, for example, represents, and is exhibit A, for the Ciceronian attack against rhetoric without substance. Faustus turns out for Augustine to be nothing more than an empty suit.

Brown later states,

If many of the Dolbeau sermons come from 397, they make plain that a further, more intimate reason had formed in Augustine's mind to make him wish to reform Catholic practice. It was a reason rooted in his new theology of grace...Although such matters are notoriously delicate to decide, I would be tempted, nonetheless, to risk a hypothesis. The writing of the *Confessions* may have occurred in the same year as Augustine preached in Carthage in 397. But which came first – the writing of the *Confessions* or the fresh wind of preaching on repentance, grace, and the authority of scriptures? I would suggest that the preaching preceded the writing of the *Confessions*. When Augustine returned to Hippo, as the tenth anniversary of the death of Monica approached, he was aware, from his experience in Carthage, that God had indeed set him to be a preacher in His Church. He now needed to explain exactly how this had happened.<sup>117</sup>

Now, I would take issue with Brown's hypothesis in two respects: 1. One cannot read the earlier works of Augustine from 390 to 396 C.E. and not see Augustine's theology of grace and repentance in counter-distinction to Socratism's and Plato's optimistic rationality for the healing of the mind/soul of its dysfunctional malady of vice and the perversion of the will.<sup>118</sup> 2. I would argue that because of his engagement with pagan

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp. 453-454

<sup>118</sup> See *Contra Academicos* – “For it is not the philosophy of this world, which our sacred writings very rightly abhor, but of another intelligible world to which the most subtle reasoning would never recall souls enveloped in the manifold darkness of error, and defiled by the sordid appetites of the body, if the Omnipotent God in His mercy toward mankind did not abase and degrade the greatness of His divine Mind, by assuming a human body in order that souls kindled not only by His words but also by His example, might be able to return to themselves and without the wrangling of arguments to have a taste of their true country.”; *De libero arbitrio* – “Yet since this defect [*defectus*] is voluntary, it lies within our power. You must not be willing to fear this defect, for if you do not desire it, it will not exist. What greater security can there be than to live a life where what you do not will cannot happen to you? Since a man cannot rise of his own will as he fell by his own will, let us hold with firm faith the right hand of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, which is stretched out to us. Let us wait for Him with steadfast hope; let us love Him with burning love.”; *De vera religione* – “But the soul, being overwhelmed and bundled up in its sins, would be

criticisms and double minded practices within the Catholic Church itself while preaching in Carthage; and because of his bed ridden illnesses<sup>119</sup>, Augustine had more than enough reason to write an apologetic document that would act as a demonstrative proof for a philosophy of mind/soul conversion according to Scripture and the necessity of translating or transposing those conceptual frameworks in counter-distinction to pagan arguments – mainly materialist/physicalist scientific - and Neo-Platonist teachings in regards to what constitutes virtue and the intelligible mind/soul - Books 1-9 being the historical introspective proof if you will and Books 10-13 being its theory. However, I do agree with Brown that Carthage is most probably where *Confessiones* began and was inspired. Carthage Catholic Christianity and Pagan intellectuals are its referents. Reform was the call to convert Pagans fully to the truth and way of life of Catholic Christianity and to monastic/intellectual Catholics to the superiority of the Christian conversion versus the Platonic for both.

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quite unable to see this and hold unto it by itself; and there is no intermediate step, what's more, in the human situation for grasping divine things, by which human beings could stride up to a likeness of God from their early life. Accordingly, God's inexpressible mercy comes to the rescue both of individuals and of the whole human race by means of a creature subject to change and yet obedient to divine laws, to remind the soul of its primal and perfect nature. That, in our times, is the Christian religion; it is in knowing and following this that salvation is most surely and certainly to be found.”; *De Doctrina Christiana* – “That is why, since we are meant to enjoy that truth which is unchangeably alive, and since it is in its light that God the Trinity, author and maker of the universe, provides for all the things he has made, our minds have to be purified, to enable them to perceive that light, and to cling to it once perceived. We should think of this purification process as being a kind of walk, a kind of voyage toward our home country... Wisdom herself had seen fit to adapt herself even to such infirmity as ours, and had given us an example of how to live, in no other mode than the human one, because we too are human...so when she came close to us, she was thought by proud men to have acted rather foolishly. And reckoned to have been made weak. But *the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men* (I Cor. 1:25).”

<sup>119</sup>Robin Fox (2015) states, “In 397, however, Augustine began to confess when he was not swamped with active business at all. In my view, he was confined to his room, suffering in the ‘shadow of death’. The nights and days loomed painfully ahead. He could not sit or lie down comfortably, but he could pray, at least, while kneeling or standing. At the rate of the *Tractates on John*, ten weeks would suffice to dictate the whole *Confessions*, but the *Tractates*, were composed at night-time only. With both the days and nights free, anything from three to six weeks would, in theory, be enough to dictate the *Confessions*, between mid-February, say, and late March 397.”, p. 533

## II. Socio-Political Context

The sociological or North African context for Augustine was indeed multi-cultural. The ethnic groups represented in the region were: Italian immigrants; children of Phoenician immigrants or “Punics” who were indigenous to the region for eight centuries; Berbers of the Kabyle clan who are to this day the main ethnic group in Maghrib or modern day Algeria. The Berbers intermarried with Islamic invaders but have remained to this day majority black.<sup>120</sup> This, also, has led to questioning as to whether Augustine was himself black.<sup>121</sup> Nonetheless, the region – especially Carthage – was very Hellenized or Romanized. This was based on the immense impact of Roman culture, literature, architecture, religion and philosophy. Occupation by Rome actually began in 146 BCE. The coastal cities were most influenced by Rome while the smaller surrounding villages throughout the region tended to keep their indigenous traditions and customs. This was true of Augustine’s hometown of Thagaste – yet there was a tremendous push by local families to encourage “upward social mobility...and the sons of these families seem to have been nurtured in a strong work ethic. Education in the ways of Rome was the key to success...”.<sup>122</sup>

The general description by Roman citizens of non-Roman dialects, according to Mark Ellingsen, was that of “Punic”. Latin, however, was the prerequisite language for advancement in Roman society no matter the territory within the Roman Empire. “It seems likely that Augustine’s family spoke only Latin at home, and there is no evidence that he was fluent in any of the other languages spoken in the region in which he grew

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<sup>120</sup> Mark Ellingsen. *The Richness of Augustine: His Contextual and Pastoral Theology*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), p. 7.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 8

up. After all, Berber and Punic were the languages of the countryside and of the lower class laborers.”<sup>123</sup>

Public behavior was always on display – whether sexually induced or in rhetorical debate. Everything was “discussed, debated, and complained about in public”. Reputation was to be preserved and highly controlled by both legitimate information and purposeful disinformation. Only trusted friendships were entertained and could even last a lifetime if preserved and valued. Ellingsen states, “Lifelong friendships and close extended-family relationships were a way of life”.<sup>124</sup>

The region, as well with most of the Empire, was patriarchal. Women were treated as if owned and in many cases were beaten by their lovers or husbands. Educationally, the region was quite disciplined and brutally harsh on disobedience. However, in Carthage, where Augustine was both a student and a teacher of rhetoric, he found the students disruptive and careless in their discipline and studies.

In regards to Augustine’s ethnic heritage, Ellingsen argues “a consensus is beginning to emerge that recognizes the likelihood of Augustine being of mixed racial background. He himself reminded his contemporaries of his ethnic, cultural roots.”<sup>125</sup> The author further points out that Augustine defended the “Punic” language which was a generic labeling for non-Roman or native African tongues - specifically, ancient Berber or Libyan. The defense comes in correspondence with Maximus a pagan friend who apparently challenged Augustine in regards to his post-conversion Catholic loyalty to

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p.8

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p.8

venerated martyrs or saints. In this correspondence, Augustine specifically states that he is familiar with the Punic language and of its importance in preserving many important documents from oblivion. For Augustine writes,

And if the Punic language is rejected by you, you virtually deny what has been admitted by most learned men, that many things have been wisely preserved from oblivion in books written in the Punic tongue. Nay, you even ought to be ashamed of having been born in the country in which the cradle of this language is still warm, i.e. in which this language was originally, and until very recently, the language of the people.<sup>126</sup>

Punic was used considerably around Augustine's diocese.<sup>127</sup> Phillip Burton, in his essay "Augustine and Language", states, "some congregations apparently possessed few Latin speakers and there were others which, if feelings were running high, might be better addressed in Punic than Latin."<sup>128</sup> Moreover, according to Burton, Punic and Etruscan were two foreign languages (after Greek) "to which the Romans accorded a degree of respect and whose literature they tended to regard as containing valuable historical and religious material."<sup>129</sup>

Hence, Ellingsen concludes that Augustine is referring to ancient Phoenician or Berberism and therefore, may very well have been of black ancestry if not of the black race itself. In another correspondence, Augustine literally states that he was Punic. For he writes, "Don't out of pride in your earthly ancestry dismiss one who monitors and admonishes you, just because I am Punic. Your Apulian birth is no pledge over Punic forces." Thus, we clearly see that Augustine did not shy away or tolerate the Roman elites looking down on his native land or his native peoples. This background never left

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p.9

<sup>127</sup> J.N. Adams. *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

<sup>128</sup> Vassey, p. 118

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., p. 118

him and had tremendous impact on his understanding of his mother Monica and her significance and wisdom – although never educated formally. “Race” is a modern concept according to Ellingsen, and “the Roman Empire did not exhibit a racial consciousness as is characteristic of modern Western society.”<sup>130</sup> However, it is clear that Augustine recognized that Roman ways of downplaying perceived reputational obstacles was prideful; and that he himself was ethnic conscious.

From the socio-political perspective, Augustine was born at the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire with one ruling Caesar. After the death of Emperor Constantius II, his cousin Julian became the reigning leader of the Empire. We will look further in the next chapter as to his polemic against Christianity and to the fact that he was specifically mentioned by Augustine in his *Confessiones*. Julian took 100,000 Roman centurions and 1,100 war ships into the belly of Persia only to suffer a military disaster outside of Ctesiphon along the Tigris-Euphrates River. In a specific battle north of modern day Baghdad, Julian rushed with his army to give assistance to the Northern column and did not put on his armor before battle. Consequently, he was engaged by a spear through his chest and was killed instantly only two years after assuming power. Within those two years, however, he had launched an all out campaign to restore pagan philosophy and religion to the forefront of the Roman Empire and to discredit the official state religion since 312 C.E. of Christianity. His was an aggressive campaign with many treatises and speeches on militant polemics to speak to the Empire and to those sympathetic in seeing Neo-Platonist philosophy put into dominance and the

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p.11

worship of the gods restored to ancient Rome's glory. This would, in fact, be the last official attempt to do so.

Upon Julian's untimely death, Jovian, an officer in the imperial guard, was placed in command and succeeded in getting the Roman Army back within Empire borders. Eight months later Jovian would die by asphyxiation. The cause of death was that of a charcoal brazier used for heating rooms. Many questioned the circumstances of his death. Eventually, Valentinian, another highly experienced officer, was promoted to Emperor. He then in turn appointed his younger brother Valens as Co-Emperor. It would be Valen's responsibility to rule the East, while Valentinian would rule the West (Italy, Spain, Gaul, Britain, North Africa west of Libya, Balkans and Greece). In 375, Valentinian would move the capital to Milan. The other imperial capital was founded in Constantinople – the City of Constantine.<sup>131</sup>

Both Emperors understood the significant security issues facing the Roman Empire. Valentinian, however, thought that the best defense was a good offense and initiated military campaigns against the Northern Gauls in 365 C.E. These campaigns lasted ten years and mainly focused on securing the northern border. This then led to an armed stalemate. The miracle of that fact was that in this same time period, Britain had been secured (368-69); and a major revolt in Africa was squelched (372-74).<sup>132</sup> Nonetheless, the stress of a slaughter by his soldiers across the Danube River at what is today modern Budapest in 375 left Valentinian in a state of mental exhaustion.

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<sup>131</sup> Mark Vessey, ed. *A Companion to Augustine*. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2015), p.12

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

Christopher Kelly, in his essay “Political History: The Late Roman Empire”, describes Valentinian’s death:

Later that year, representatives from Quadi sought peace, claiming that the raids across the Danube had been independent initiatives taken by those living near the frontier, responding understandably, in the in the envoys’ view – to the attempted building of a Roman fort in their territory. This was too much for Valentinian. In an explosive fit of anger he loudly abused the ambassadors for their lack of good faith; the outburst was followed by a moment of calm, and then a sudden and violent seizure. Speechless and in cold sweat, Valentinian was hurriedly rushed by his attendants into a private room. Shortly afterwards, grasping for breath, grinding his teeth in a vain attempt to talk, and with arms flailing wildly, the emperor died.<sup>133</sup>

Valens, meanwhile, had to protect the Empire from the East. However, upon the death of Valentinian, Valens took the initiative of invading the Gauls from the east. In the autumn of 376, instead of allowing the conquered to remain in their native lands, Valens began driving 80,000 men, women, and children to the other side of the Danube. Kelly states,

this was a remarkable moment. For most of its history, the Roman Empire had only ever incorporated large numbers of outsiders following conquest...poor conditions in the camp, the incompetence of the frontier command, and the absence of the emperor (600 miles away in Syria, monitoring the eastern frontier) combined to push a refugee crisis into a full scale revolt that Roman forces were unable to contain.

Valens waited eighteen months before sending reinforcements. This delay in addressing the crisis brought catcalls for his removal and open visceral hostility at his speeches in Constantinople.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p.15

Meanwhile, Valentinian had assured his succession by allowing Gratian, his eight year old son, to follow on as emperor upon his death. Valens knew that Gratian would be joining him in his counter-offensive against the Goths. Ultimately, Gratian delayed such an offensive and Valens was forced to maneuver on his own. However, he decided to enter into peace talks because of the excessive fatigue of his men. Unfortunately, some of the ranks did not get the message and they broke ranks only to start an all out battle with the Goths. Inevitably, the Romans were surrounded and slaughtered – even Valens was killed by an arrow to the heart and the building that was housing him was burned to the ground by the Goths not knowing he was inside. Upon learning of Valen’s death, Gratian nominated Flavius Theodosius as emperor in the East.

Theodosius sought to avenge Valen’s death against the Goths but could only manage a containment campaign. In 386/87 he was able to negotiate a treaty with the Persians. This is after his 382 settlement with the Goths in which it was stated that they could maintain lands that they had seized along the Danube. In 394, Theodosius won a sound victory at the battle of Frigidus River and from that made himself sole Caesar after thirty years of division.

In regards to Augustine, Theodosius is mentioned. However, as Kelly states,

no insight is offered into the political pressures facing Valentinian after the Magnus Maximus had secured his rule in Gaul and cut a deal with Theodosius. And this despite Augustine’s presence, from 384 to mid-387, in Milan, where his official post as court orator must have brought him into contact with those closest to the emperor. The *Confessions* set out systematically to erase the success story of a high-flying provincial in his early thirties, at the start of what might have been a glittering career in the western imperial capital...nothing at all survives of Augustine’s speeches in praise of Valentinian II. In the *Confessions* there is only self-loathing for his ambitious brilliance a ‘seller of words in the markets of

rhetoric'...'How unhappy I was...as I was preparing to recite the emperor's praises; in so doing I would utter many lies and through lying win the applause of those who knew it all to be untrue'.<sup>134</sup>

### III. Loquacity<sup>135</sup> or Contemporary Pagan Culture

We have established that Carthage was an important foundation in the making of Augustine's intellect. Its wealth and importance was only eclipsed by Rome itself. It has also been shown that Augustine wrote during a time of "national decay". JGP states in his translator's preface of the *Confessiones* in 1876,

'African Paganism,' says Pressense, 'was half Asiatic; the ancient worship of nature, the adoration of Astarte, had full license in the city of Carthage; Dido had become a mythological being, whom this dissolute city had made its protecting divinity, and it is easy to recognize in her the great goddess of Phoenicia under new wine... And Jerome, in one of his epistles, gives an illustration of the Church's relation to the Pagan world at the time, when he represents an old priest of Jupiter with his grand-daughter, a catechumen, on his knee, who responds to his caresses by singing canticles. It was a time when we can imagine one of Augustine's parents going to the Colosseum, and enjoying the lasciviousness of its displays, and its gladiatorial shows, with their contempt of human life; while the other carefully shunned such scenes, as being under the ban of the teachers of the Church. It was an age in which there was action and reaction between religion and philosophy; but in which the power of Christianity was so great in its influences on Paganism, that some received the Christian Scriptures only to embody in their phraseology the ideas of heathenism.'<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.18

<sup>135</sup> Henry Chadwick wrote in his introduction to his *Confessions*, "In several places in the *Confessions* and elsewhere Augustine's term for contemporary pagan culture was 'loquacity': it used fine words, even rococo elaboration, but had little or nothing to say. Nevertheless, Augustine's wish to distance himself from the secularity of contemporary oratory and the teaching of pagan literature never meant for him that, in setting forth the truth he had come to find in Christian faith, he felt bound to avoid the skills he had learned in the rhetorical schools."

<sup>136</sup> J. G. Pilkington. Trans. *Confessions of Saint Augustine of Hippo*. (Edinburgh: T.T. Clark Publishing, 1876), p. xiii

Hence, we have a socio-relational picture of paganism and Christianity cohabitating first with the superiority of paganism and its persecution of Christianity; and then, the eventual shift of Christian dominance and its intolerance toward pagans. This is the socio-religious and the socio-philosophical competition for the soul of what is left of the Roman Empire.

It was not by accident that Augustine began his attack against the decline of the Roman Empire based on the imperial cult or the worship of emperors. He knew that his polemic had to attack the religious foundations that had enabled immoral and unjust practices to flourish within the Roman or Hellenic culture. Therefore, in this section we will examine this religious development in Italy and then its spread to North Africa where Augustine would most readily have been introduced.

Suetonius, in his *De Vita Caesarum, De Iulius*, wrote about Julius Caesar:

He died in the fifty-sixth year of his age, and was numbered among the gods, not only by a formal decree, but also in the conviction of the common people. For at the first of the games which his heir Augustus gave in honor of his apotheosis, a comet shone for seven successive days, rising about the eleventh hour[about an hour before sunset] and was believed to be the soul of Caesar, who had been taken to heaven; and this is why a star is set upon the crown of his head in his statue. It was voted that the curia in which he was slain be walled up, that the Ides of March be called the Day of Parricide, and that a meeting of the senate should never be called on that day.<sup>137</sup>

Thus, began the practice of deification of the emperors by the Senate in order to formulate a socio-political impact in the reverence and respect needed for the honoring of laws and decrees by the masses. Augustine purposely uses Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and *De Divinatione* and Plato's *Republic* as the pre-Caesarian understanding of

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<sup>137</sup> Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars, The Deified Julius*, LXXXVIII

religion and its proper place in the lives of the people in order to undergird the organic nature of the state. Emperor cult divination, however, was a new move by Roman government in separating the gods of Jupiter and Mars, to that of a Julius, Augustus, and Romulus human deification practice.

Ittai Gradel, in his work *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion*, argues that Christian apologists, like Augustine, have sought to “Christianize” Roman religion. He makes it very clear that in the pagan mind, there is no division or distinction between religion and politics. For he writes,

Christianity of course combined philosophy, in the shape of detailed systems of dogma, with rituals of divine worship; these rituals acted out of the world of God and the sacrifice of His son as contained in the Holy Scripture...the core and basis of traditional Greco-Roman religion were precisely the contrary: the rituals, not any verbalized and authoritative texts or dogmas or philosophical reasoning.<sup>138</sup>

According to Gradel, the dichotomy between politics and religion are “irrelevant”. What emperor worship created was a new type of civil religion in which it was believed, at least by most of the masses, that the position of Caesar was a anointed post and must be worthy of a deified *genius* or soul power.

Gradel goes on to argue that pre-Christian “religio” (reverence before gods and duty toward men) was not concerned with inward, personal virtues, such as the belief in observance or faith and emotions in connection with worship. Worship was conducted both individually and corporately with the idea of the gods lending assistance for desired ends. One paid homage to a deity, polytheistic or emperor, with the idea of getting some reward for disciplined reverence. Paganism was polytheistic but most Romans simply

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<sup>138</sup> Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002),p.3

did not worship all the gods. Instead, most worshiped the most powerful or greatest like Jupiter – god of Rome. Mars was the god of war, etc.. According to Gradel, the sources do not really share whether the masses really thought of previous Caesars as gods. He states that missionary measures were practically unknown in the traditional pagan context. This may be challenged a little later when we examine this practice in North Africa. What we know is that the god worshiped was invoked by name in prayer before a sacrifice and blood was always separate from meat.

Caesar's divine honors came by the senate. There were three phases for deification: 1. After the battle of Thapsus in 46 BCE they gave him a chariot and statue which was placed in the Capitol; 2. After the battle of Munda in 45 BCE his statue was placed in the temple of Quirinus with an inscription of the "unconquered god"; and then finally, 3. The culmination of his whole life was celebrated in the last month's and he was decreed to be a "state divinity" with a state priest. This was officially implemented after his death – not while living. He was later given the title of "demigod". It would have been socially irresponsible to reject such proposals. In some ways the senate's gesture was a means of keeping his spirit alive going forward with the Republic officially collapsing. It was an attempt to create a new position of Caesar with "divine honors" in order to continue the momentum of this style of government –lest there be revolt.

The next move was to create this ruler cult throughout the empire. This would mean that the religion would need to be practiced by other cities and provinces both in municipal places and home places. Temples were erected and priesthoods or "flamens" were created to hold positions of leadership within this cult. We have large groups of sources that testify to imperial cults at the civic levels such as inscriptions, funerary,

honorary in which local aristocrats held by imperial priesthoods. It is from these flamens that Augustine is going to get the word of their disdain for Christianity as the cause of Roman downfall.

We move now to North Africa. Other than Italy in the west and Greece/Asia Minor in the east, this region in the south seems to have been instrumental in both trade and emperor cult worship and practices. For our purposes, this is the region of Augustine's early development and then later ministerial practice. It is important because his father, Patrick, was a practicing pagan and his mother a Christian. It is important because not only do you have the philosophers, religionists and politicians, but you have flamens or priests of this cult were represented in the townships of Avitina, Zita, Caesarea, Thugga and in 46BCE Carthage.

James B. Rives, states in "Imperial Cult and Native Tradition in Roman North Africa", that the evidence that had been found in both Avita and Zita

allow us to make a few observations about the early stages of imperial cult in North Africa. First, it attested at a fairly early date even in the small towns of Africa, suggesting that it spread quite rapidly. Secondly, it seems to have been closely linked with the spread of Roman culture. Thus, in Avitina a Roman citizen held a priesthood that was distinctly Roman, in both name and inspiration; similarly, someone Zita erected a statuary group that was Roman in style and no doubt derived from official exemplars in the city of Rome itself. In some cases, we are probably dealing with Roman or Italian colonists who brought their culture into Africa with them. It is likely enough, for example, that Saturninus, the flamen in Avitina, belonged to an Italian family.<sup>139</sup>

The gist of Rives' argument is that the evidence indicates that where there were native Romans or Italians then the cultic practice takes on a distinctive Italian identity and

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<sup>139</sup> James B. Rives, "Imperial Cult and Native Tradition in Roman North Africa, *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 96, No.4 (Apr.-May, 2001), pp. 425-436

practice. However, he makes the point that in the east or, Greek-speaking provinces, they too amalgamate a distinctive identity by combining pre-existing traditions with imperial cult practice. “Imperial cult thus developed in the context of an active interchange between the Greek cities and the power of Rome”.<sup>140</sup> He goes on to conclude, “within the general framework of Romanization, local populations were able to work out their own subtle modulations, so that the adoption of imperial cult did not necessarily entail the abandonment of an earlier cultural tradition”.<sup>141</sup>

Romanization meant building programs such as temples and theatres. It also included coinage and propaganda. Tertullian and Minucius Felix, both early Christian writers, speak of a cult of local rulers among the Mauretians who worship their own princes and a king who became a god. Rives argues,

Although Juba would have been too young to remember the funeral and deification of Caesar, he would have certainly been familiar with his cult in Rome. On his return to Africa, he may even have found it flourishing in the kingdom of his ancestors. An inscription of the late first century CE reveals that the existence of a flamen of Divus Iulius in Rusicade; the most likely date for the establishment of this priesthood is the late 40’s BCE, when Numidia was still ruled by Caesar’s ally P. Sittius.<sup>142</sup>

In regards to Carthage, this was a new colony and Roman citizens began to acquire property and started settling there. According to Rives, the colony had grown quite large by the early first century CE. They were “juridically” distinct from the native populations.

“It is in this context that that imperial cult developed in Thugga. The Carthaginian settlers established for themselves a locus for imperial cult at a

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p.427

<sup>141</sup> 427

<sup>142</sup> 431

fairly early date. This is a shrine to Tiberius, originally built by a certain Viria Rustica, it was supplemented near the end of the emperor's reign by an imperial altar, and by the reign of Claudius we hear of a priestess of the cult, a *flaminica*".<sup>143</sup>

Rives states that it was the local elite that held the positions of flamins or flaminicas and they represented an aristocratic class that oversaw allegiance to the emperor both dead and to the one still living who succeeded. He writes, "Although the native elite of Thugga now served as Roman style flamines, they also continued to hold the old Punic office of *shofet*, Latinized *sufes*".<sup>144</sup> The natives were able to hold to their local deities and even have open air sanctuaries which remained unchanged until the end of the second century CE. Romanization, therefore, was not one sided but an amalgam.

About a hundred years before Augustine emergence, Eusebius was writing a church history at the behest of his close acquaintance emperor Constantine. James J. O'Donnell states that, "the chronicle of Eusebius, as Latinized by Jerome, was probably available, but it was dry and sketchy, so perhaps Augustine had something with more narrative and interpretation in mind".<sup>145</sup> Anticipating the coming storm in the Christianization of the empire, Constantine had wanted a history that would show how the empire had gotten to the point of needing a spiritual renewal. He also needed a historical argument for the superiority of the Christian God to that of the pagan gods. Although still playing both sides of the fence, Constantine was taking the empire toward a Christian state religion; but was also still being adorned with pagan honors at the same time. Hence, Eusebius directly laid the historical and theological apologetic against

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<sup>143</sup> 432

<sup>144</sup> Ibid

<sup>145</sup> James J. O' Donnell, *Augustine* (New York: Harper Publishing, 2006), p. 251

Imperial cult worship as it was implemented by Tiberius and other emperors at the founding of the New Testament church.

In Book II of *The Church History*, Eusebius begins attack on ruler cult in section two “Tiberius Learns about Christ”. He believes this battle began between the empire and Christians to have been initiated because of the historical resurrection of Jesus from the grave. As was the custom, governors were to report any type of strange anomalies concerning mystical phenomenon or extra ordinary happenings. For he writes,

Our Savior’s extraordinary resurrection and ascension into heaven were by now famous everywhere. It was customary for provincial governors to report to the [Roman] emperor any new local movement so that he might be kept informed. Accordingly, Pilate communicated to the emperor Tiberius the story of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead as already well know throughout Palestine, as well as information he had gained on his other marvelous deeds and how many believed him to be a god in rising from the dead. They say that Tiberius referred the report to the senate, which rejected it, allegedly because it had not dealt with the matter before. According to an old law, still in effect, no one could be deemed a god by the Romans unless by vote and decree of the senate, but the real reason was that divine message did not require human ratification. In this way, the Roman council rejected the report submitted to it regarding our Savior, but Tiberius maintained his opinion and made no evil plans against the teaching of Christ.<sup>146</sup>

What is shown us here is that Eusebius wants the reader to understand that the Christian movement was a direct threat to imperial power from the standpoint of religious foundations for the legitimacy of state practices and virtues. By Christ resurrecting, a new authority was given by heaven to a non-Roman and essentially a new emperor to the Jewish province. Eusebius goes onto state, “those chained by superstition and idolatry found release through the power of Christ as well as the teaching and wonderful deeds of this followers. Rejecting demonic polytheism, they

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<sup>146</sup> Paul L. Maier, *Eusebius: The Church History*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), pp. 59-60

confessed the one God and Creator of the universe whom they honored with the rational worship implanted by the Savior”.

The early Christian thinker Tertullian had written before Eusebius the following in his *Defense of Christians*,

There was an old decree that no one should be consecrated as a god by an emperor before he had been approved by the senate. Marcus Aemilius observed this procedure in the case of a certain idol Alburnus. This underscores our argument that you [Romans] confer deity through human approval- if a god does not please man, he does not become god – so man must have mercy on god in your system! Tiberius then, in whose time the name *Christian* Palestine, where it began, communicated it to the senate, plainly indicating that he favored the doctrine. The senate, however, rejected it, because it had not itself reviewed it; but Tiberius stuck to his own opinion and threatened death any who accused the Christians.<sup>147</sup>

Eusebius then moves on to the works of Philo and Josephus in using their scholarship to buttress his argument against imperial worship in that the Jews had been at war, spiritually speaking, with the empire even before the Christian movement. Specifically, he cites Philo’s direct engagement with emperor Gaius. Eusebius states that Philo had reported in five books that Gaius was insane and had “proclaimed himself a god and had committed innumerable insolent deeds”. He then goes onto quote Josephus, the Jewish historian of the *Antiquities*, in which he relates that a riot had taken place in Alexandria between Jews living there and the Greeks. “Apion, one of the Alexandrian representatives, brought many charges against the Jews, claiming in particular that they neglected to honor Caesar and that when all Roman subjects erected

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p.61

altars and temples to Gaius as they did the gods, the Jews alone thought it disgraceful to honor him with statues or swear by his name”.<sup>148</sup>

Eusebius concludes that it is Pilate and then Gaius who simply wanted to force feed ruler cult worship down the throats of both Jews and Christians. It is his opinion that this battle really did not take harsh measures until Pilate’s crimes against Jesus and then the following cascade of events that forced the issue to the highest levels of government. Revolts became commonplace both in Jerusalem and Alexandria in regards to directly challenging the images, statues and temples that were being put up throughout the empire.

He then moves on to describe the event that would end Herod Agrippa’s life both as reported in Scripture and by Josephus in *Antiquities* Book 19. For it was in the theatre one particular day that Herod put on a robe made or woven of silver and “entered at the beginning of the day” so as to appear mystical and regal. The audience immediately cheered him on as a god and even “addressed him as god”. Josephus writes, “Be gracious! Until now we have revered you as a man, but henceforth, we confess that you are of more than mortal nature”.<sup>149</sup> He was struck down moments later while delivering an oration and told the audience to repent from thinking of him in such a manner. He complained of agony of the stomach and pain in the heart.

Thus, Eusebius had, through historical analysis, laid the foundation upon which Augustine could build. Augustine knew this tension between the Empire and Christians in regards to ruler cult worship was the fortress supporting the pagan culture in regards

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<sup>148</sup> 62

<sup>149</sup> 67

to its civic power and loyalty. It would be necessary to attack it rhetorically and philosophically in order to defend itself from the pagan polemic against it.

#### **IV. Carthage Socio-Religious and Philosophical Context**

As to Christianity, E. Glynn Hinson writes,

as both the anonymous author of the *Epistle to Diognetus* and Tertullian made clear, Christians of the second or third centuries could not separate themselves from their neighbors and live in ghettos. They lived in the same cities and observed most of the same local customs regarding food, clothing, and the like. They did, however, try to distinguish themselves in substantive moral matters not only from pagans but also from quasi-Christian sects such as Gnostics who, believing the flesh is evil...<sup>150</sup>

This was not only true in the second and third centuries but was even more so because of the clash of competition between philosophy and religion in the late fourth century.

As has been shown, this was mainly due to the fact of the dying Roman Empire mystique both militarily and religiously. Christianity had regained its dominance since the rule of Julian the Apostate 361-363 C.E. and now was turning tables on pagans in regards to intolerance and even some reverse persecution. To understand the Catholic way of life we have to turn to the Patristics and their apologia writings to describe the life of Christians as compared to Pagans in the Roman Empire.

Generally, Christians were taught to live according to the Divine Law of Moses and the Prophets in the Old Testament and the gospels in the New Testament. This divine law rejects: idolatry, adultery, murder, fornication, theft, love of money,

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<sup>150</sup> E. Glynn Hinson. *The Early Church: Origins to the Dawn of the Middle Ages*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p.140; See also, Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller. *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 163-177; See also Peter Brown. *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine*. (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1972), pp. 46-77

perjury/false witness, anger, and all licentiousness and uncleanness.<sup>151</sup> Regarding the New Testament, Christians espoused justice, chastity, love, and good citizenship. “They were forbidden to witness gladiatorial combats or other shows.”<sup>152</sup>

According to Hinson, as more people from outside of Hebraic circles became members of the churches, “Christians adapted their ethic to Stoic and Platonist modes of thought.” This is true not only in the third century but the fourth and fifth centuries as well. This “Christian-Stoic ethic” meant a shared emphasis on moderation in all aspects of living. Ostentation was rejected by both ways of life in regards to everything from eating utensils to furniture to clothing, jewelry, cosmetics and even hair styles for both men and women. Hinson further points out that Clement writes, “Christians’ possessions should be “in keeping with a Christian way of life.”<sup>153</sup> He goes on to say that Christians must avoid drunken parties, lewd songs, and gatherings that violate “the law” of Christ. Speech should be free from off color jokes and unrestrained laughter, indecent speech, and people considered as evil companions, sexual license, insults to others, immodest dress, rudeness in eating, brash speech or actions, whistling or spitting. Sleeping was to be done half awake and not too long. Sex is for procreation only and only natural sexual practices which rejects sodomy and bestiality. There should never be any sex apart from marriage and propriety is to be observed in the marital relationship.<sup>154</sup> Many pagan/Christians rejected this type of harsh legalism. Women, in particular, rejected this kind of harsh living. Hinson indicates that the

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 140

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.140

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p.141

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 141

pagan and Christian union seemed to solidify during the long stretches of peace in 212-249 and 260-304C.E..<sup>155</sup> For he writes,

the question of Christian lifestyle grew increasingly vexing. The large number of apostates during the persecutions under Decius and under Diocletian illuminates the fact that many had not thought through their commitments. Fleshing out this point are canons of the Synod of Elvira in Spain held in 305 or 306. If the canons represent actual cases, as is likely, they point up the grave difficulties many converts, including clergy, had in sorting out what distinguished Christian from pagan even in elementary ways. Some upper class converts could not decide whether they could continue to function as *flamines*, offering sacrifices to the gods or preparing for public games. Divorce, adultery, fornication, and sodomy were common. Parents sold their children into prostitution...both clergy and laity exacted interest from borrowers. Some failed to attend church regularly. Others still kept idols in their homes. An adulteress catechumen conceived a child and had it killed.<sup>156</sup>

The Council in Carthage in May 251C.E. established a system of penances depending on the violations. These could either be lengthy or short depending on the severity of the religious crime. Most of the time it was to those Christians who straddled the fence and sacrificed to the Roman gods and enjoyed the accoutrements of pagan decadence; and at the same time, wanted the eternal salvation of forgiveness from sin. This, of course, allowed for the communion between Church and State to remain without further hardship.

The restoration of the “fallen” became of particular concern in Carthage. The three most serious religious crimes were: apostasy, adultery, and murder. Pontifex Maximus who was thought to be the bishop of Carthage had declared an edict, according to Tertullian – a Montanist - in which he sought a unity between pagan and Christian by

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 143

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 143

restoration and forgiveness. Tertullian, however, spoke against the restoration of adulterers, or fornicators and murders in the ranks of the church. “God may forgive such sins, and offenders should do penance for that reason, but the church cannot. Not even the martyrs can attain forgiveness for such sins as adultery, save for themselves.”<sup>157</sup> Hippolytus stood firmly against any kind of leniency as well.

On the other hand, Novatus, a deacon and priest of the Church in Carthage, favored complete restoration by all who applied. Novatian, on the other hand, demanded complete ostracism of fallen saints to grievous sin. The controversy thus was called “Novatianism” after its leader and to not accept restorative measures toward sinners within the Church. Bishop Ambrose, Augustine’s mentor and baptismal priest and quoted by Augustine himself, wrote his treatise *Concerning Repentance* (384 C.E.) based on this controversy in Carthage. Within that work, he profoundly and tediously analyzed Scripture for its teachings – from the Old Testament Prophets to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the epistles of the Apostle Paul – to conclude that repentance, confession and restoration were foundational principles of the New Testament Church. “Cyprian and the African bishops allied with him [Novatus] steered a middle course between these extremes, wanting to evaluate individual cases.”<sup>158</sup> From 300C.E. onwards, there was implemented a completely worked out system of penance. People were separated into five categories of the penitent: 1. “weepers” who had to remain outside of church grounds; 2. “hearers” who could listen to sermons from the portico of a basilica or church but could not take part in communion and must leave with the catechumens; 3. “fallers” who would lie prostrate inside the building itself during the sermon and left

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p. 163

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 164

with catechumens; 4. “bystanders” who could watch the Eucharist but could not partake; and 5. “restored penitents” who could partake of communion fully.<sup>159</sup>

By the time of Augustine’s rise to leadership within the Church, Christianity was the dominant religion in the Roman Empire. Nonetheless, there were large pockets of resistance by Semitic religions and Pagans in Syria, Israel and North Africa. The philosophical schools in Greece had been closed and much was done in a reverse persecution against pagan temples and schools. This “christianization” process was the new evangelism of the Empire and it only made the remnants in both philosophy and religion all the more determined to hold on and to hold out against the Christian faith as a whole.

North Africa was largely known for its Latin Christianity within the Empire. Hinson states, “Paganism, however, held on tenaciously there too...In Augustine’s day, paganism still thrived. The temple of Caelestis in Carthage was not closed by imperial order until 391. Until 398, most rulers were pagan. Small wonder, then, that bishops like Augustine sometimes grew impatient and cried out for vigorous action”<sup>160</sup>

Basically, most of the aristocracy of Carthage had remained either partially or totally pagan in Augustine’s day. Many of them risked a great deal to stay faithful to the ancient religions of Rome. Symmachus and Ambrose both made great efforts to openly protest the removal and then the subsequent restoration of the Altar of Victory to Senate floor. Symmachus made three attempts to have it restored to no success. Ambrose stated that its restoration by Eugenius – only to be removed again by Theodosius – was

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 164

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., p. 225

a cry backward to the pagan persecutions of old. Thus, there was much consternation within the Church itself concerning the pagan heritage of Rome. Hinson goes on to state,

outside of Rome, paganism persisted in the villages and countryside. Christianity registered its greatest success in northern Italy, where Ambrose pressed for its triumph. In Milan, he battled the Empress Justina and the Arians for control of the area. In 396, he suggested that there were many churches, though pagan enclaves still dominated areas around Turin in the fifth century. A large part of the populace of Ravenna still remained faithful to the ancient deities. South of Rome, paganism survived at least until the time of Gregory the Great (590-604)

There was another form of quasi-Christianity in Carthage called Manichaeism.

This was a type of religious materialist science or theosophical explanation for the system of the world. They conjoined theology with a natural scientific physics concerning nature and God. On the one hand “these people professed a Trinitarian form of Christianity; they constantly spoke of ‘truth’; they claimed to know the truth not only in theological matters, but also in matters of physics.”<sup>161</sup> In regards to the Trinity, they denied the humanity of Jesus; they claimed that the Father was dualistically material made from both light and dark matter warring against itself; and the Spirit is in fact the final manifestation of Mani as a messianic figure himself. The Manichean church existed in Carthage and throughout Northern Africa – especially in and around Egypt. Johannas van Oort states in his article, “Augustine and the Books of the Manicheans”, that “from recent excavations, however, such as those in Egyptian Kellis, from many texts discovered in the late 1920’s in Madi in Egypt, and from finds made about one century ago in Tun-huang in central Asia and China, we know for certain that

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<sup>161</sup> Vessey., p. 190

the Christian element was Manicheism's hallmark...the figure of Christ occupies a special place."<sup>162</sup>

Accordingly, the members of this cult were, like Catholicism, divided into a type of clergy(teacher) and laity(student) dichotomy. The student or catechumen was called a Manichean "hearer"; while the teacher was known as Manichean "elect". Oort points out that

"Manichean texts in the Dachleh Oasis in Egypt, at the site of ancient Kellis some 900 km SSW of Cairo, provide valuable corroboration of one detail of Augustine's account. A number of manuscripts have been unearthed in Kellis that strongly suggest that Manichean hearers (as well as Manichean elect) were involved in copying of texts. Young hearers' involvement may be inferred from the wide range of Manichean psalms often written in a unpracticed hand, and in particular from one of the personal letters sent by a certain father Makarios to his son Matheos. This Matheos, obviously a younger hearer, is encouraged not only to copy Manichean books (apparently including books of Mani himself), but also to study them."

This insight would explain why Augustine had such an intimate knowledge of Manichean teachings – both by its founder and by other theosophers. Second, it seems to indicate a type of curriculum or volumes of teaching that were to be mastered by the hearers. From a pedagogical perspective, this type of rote learning through repetition and re-writing of works may have been the reason Augustine had such a vast and photographic memory of both religious and philosophical texts.

Hence, we have both canonical and non-canonical Manichean texts that Augustine would have discovered in Carthage. Oort writes, "apart from these remnants of the 'canonical' writings of Mani, we have Latin Manichean texts such as the

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p. 191

*Fragmenta Tabestina.*<sup>163</sup> This text was found in 1918 in a cave about 70 km SSW of Algerian Tebessa (ancient Theveste) and presently kept in Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. Mani's official canon was:

1. *The Living (or Great) Gospel*
2. *The Treasure of Life*
3. *The Pragmateia (or Treatise or Essay)*
4. *The Book of Mysteries (Secrets)*
5. *The Book of Giants*
6. *The Letters*
7. *The Psalms and Prayers*

The non-canonical works were:

1. *Faustus' Capitula*
2. *Adimantus' Disputationes*
3. The letter of the Roman Manichean Secundinus<sup>164</sup>

Oort states that Augustine did not know of Mani's church as a

Gnostic world religion – which existed for centuries, and in increasingly syncretistic forms in central Asia and China. But his long stay with the Manicheans, his study of their writings and his subsequent disputes with a number of their leading spokesmen all contributed for thorough knowledge of Mani's church and its declared Christian set of beliefs.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p. 196

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., p. 196

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., p. 198

Regarding their teachings, they essentially saw the construction of matter and this world as a type of prison. The divine soul was captured by the “forces of darkness”. The process for deliverance comes from “divine Light”. “The Father of Greatness” calls on the “Third Messenger” and his female companion known as the “Virgin of Light”. Through their copulation or concupiscence the semen and wombs liberate the captured souls. Augustine would later call this as “logic of wicked error”; and towards the end of his life he specifically speaks of a eucharist which involved semen and was practiced in Carthage.<sup>166</sup> Essentially, the mind could be corrupted by an inner conflict between the light of the soul being engaged in a dark material form. The cravings of the body corrupt the light of the mind.<sup>167</sup>

Hellenistic philosophy, also, was influential on Augustine - Ciceronian writings in particular.<sup>168</sup> Although not religions per se, these philosophical schools did come to be followed and promulgated as substitutes for religion. Epicureanism, Stoicism, and

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p. 199

<sup>167</sup> Jason David BeDuhn. *Augustine's Manichean Dilemma: Making a Catholic Self, 388-401*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 62

<sup>168</sup> Mark F.M. Clavier. *Eloquent Wisdom: Rhetoric, Cosmology, and Delight in the Theology of Augustine of Hippo*. (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2014), p. 26, 46-47 – “Three aspects of Cicero’s thought seem to have significantly influenced Augustine’s theology and his own assessment of rhetoric. First, Cicero generally shared with the Roman elite a disdain for rhetors who were considered to be in no way related to orators. While rhetors were generally Greek slaves or freedmen who based their craft on handbooks, orators were aristocrats who performed in the forum and handed on their craft through their example they set. Cicero generally retained this distinction by distinguishing eloquence (*eloquentia*) from rule-bound rhetorical theory. Second, Cicero sought to resolve the debate between philosophy and oratory by grounding eloquence in wisdom. For Cicero, *sapientia* and *eloquentia* are necessary twin pillars of civilization and they find their incarnation, as it were, most notably in the figure of the orator. Third, Cicero defined *eloquentia* as the ability to speak so as to prove, please and persuade in such a way that the audience will both prefer the orator to others and sufficiently approve of his arguments to enact them...By his day, Cicero’s ideal orator had been adapted and reinterpreted by both Neoplatonists and an increasingly cultured episcopacy. Philosophical rhetors such as Marius Victorinus retained Cicero’s ideal of someone who could express wisdom eloquently for the good of others but interpreted that wisdom within their Neoplatonic tradition. Drawing upon Stoic thought, Cicero had defined virtue as ‘a habit of mind in harmony with reason and the order of nature... Hadot suggest that Victorinus substitutes Cicero’s Stoic understanding of a natural soul with a more Neoplatonic understanding of an eternal soul imprisoned in a corporeal body. Virtue, for Victorinus, is therefore a return of the soul to its original nature...Contemplation and asceticism allow the soul to recall its original state.”

Skepticism had residual representatives in Carthage in Augustine's day. "They were philosophies, not religions, but they came to take the place of religion with the more educated ancient Greeks and Romans."<sup>169</sup> No doubt the *Confessiones* had these educated pagans in mind when it was written in 397CE. These schools of thought each divided philosophy into essentially three disciplines: Physics (Metaphysics), Ethics, and Logic. What is interesting is that Augustine partook of each of these schools within his quest for Truth. Early on we read that he was a materialist in the shadow of Epicureans and Stoics. Finally, at the very end of Book VI, he claims that he adhered to the Skeptic or Academic school of philosophy. Each school was a kind of "step" or progression from the scientific physicalism (Atomism) of Epicureans; to the corporeal (substance) of Stoicism; to the religious dualist materialism of the Manicheans; finally, to the Ciceronian reservation of judgment concerning materialist/immaterialist understandings of truth. Contemporary scholars mostly think that instead of owning the actual fragments or works of these schools directly – many written in Greek – Augustine would have depended on doxographical reports from Diogenes Laertius and Cicero's writings: *de Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* "About the Ends of Goods and Evils" or *On the Nature of the Gods*.<sup>170</sup> It will not be our purpose to do a full analysis of these works but instead to do an overview précis of these school's of thought in regard to their essential arguments concerning the mind/soul.

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<sup>169</sup> Axios Institute, ed. *Epicureans and Stoics*. (Mount Jackson: Axios Press, 2008), p.1

<sup>170</sup> Peter Adamson. *Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) states, "*On the Nature of the Gods* remains one of our most important sources for Stoic and Epicurean theology. But Cicero is more than just a source to be mined for information about other thinkers. Even when writing philosophy, Cicero is still a rhetorician and he frequently insists that good philosophy should be stylistically appealing...Cicero greatly admires Plato and Aristotle, not only for their dialectical approach to philosophy but also for their rhetorical craft. Aristotle is praised for his inquiries into rhetoric, and Plato appears repeatedly as a master of language as well as thought. For Cicero, Plato is, as he has a Stoic spokesman put it, 'almost a god of philosophers'." , p. 118

Alexander the Great died in 323BCE and Aristotle died in 322BCE. What is interesting is that both Epicurus and the Stoic founder Zeno started their teaching careers twenty or so years later in Athens Greece. Both were reactionaries to Cynicism - a school of thought which was started in the tradition of Socrates. It was an imitative community for a literal following in regards to the Socratic rejection of the physical world and to live in a kind of anti-social removed state from the conventions of the time. It was certainly a new era in the history of Greek philosophy. The schools of both Plato and Aristotle were dissolving after the deaths of their respective founders. The Greek culture found itself in more wars with the ill effects of slavery and mass execution. What both philosophies had in common was that they sought to give humanity a definite path to “happiness” in this life without going into great speculations about any kind of after-life metaphysics. They did not seek to be un-pietistic however – just simply to liberate humanity from the chains of dogmatic religionist laws or rules through a strict scientific/physicalist understanding of human psychology.

Epicureans essentially followed an atomic metaphysics.<sup>171</sup> This adherence to Pre-Socratic philosophy was based on all aspects of human life – even that of the mind – as essentially a physical reality. All consciousness depends on sense-perception. All reality is physical and thus, life should be lived based on the sensual messages that are received in the mind concerning how to act. Pleasure and Pain guide the body in right conduct. Feelings that are actuated are the guide posts for the reason to formulate right judgments. There are compounds of atoms that make up objects in the universe but

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<sup>171</sup> See *Letter to Herodotus: Diogenes Laertius; Introductory Reports: Diogenes Laertius; On the Nature of the God: Cicero* in Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson. *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings*. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), pp. 5-18, 40-44, 50-57

these objects inevitably deteriorate over time and reconstitute so that nothing ceases to total nonexistence – for atoms are eternal. Epicurus thought that these atomic structures were weighed down by their own weight. He had no real concept of gravity. This, of course, means that the human being is nothing more than a physical object or machine that is dissolved at death. Death means extinction. With this reality in mind, humanity could then be liberated from the fear of death or the gods. Interestingly, Epicurus taught that there were gods but that they have no interaction with the physical universe at all. There is no fixed order in nature either. He thought that atoms could move freely and so could a person live their lives undetermined. Hedonism, for him, was not simply pleasure seeking for its own sake – instead he meant it in a scientific way that all humans and animals live for the sake of pleasure. Humanity aims at pleasure as an end in determining what makes them happy. He founded his school, called the Garden, in Athens and formulated a kind of communal living based on simplicity and utilitarian guidance as opposed to laws and justice theoretical ideals. Hence, he was an early example of the English Utilitarian School.

Stoicism, on the other hand, was a direct revolutionary movement against both the extremes of Cynicism and, as Cicero put it, the demoralizing teaching of the Epicureans.<sup>172</sup> The Stoics appreciated Logic and Dialectic in particular. Like Epicurus, the Stoics only based their school of thought on the principle of demonstrated proof or empiricism. They also recognized that the senses can be misleading from time to time. The clearness of the sense-perception is what compels the assent of the mind and forces it to comprehend reality. This “Presentation” is stamped on the consciousness and

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<sup>172</sup> Brad Inwood and L.P. Gerson, pp. 124-163

could not exist unless the object was present. The Universe, itself, is not only guided by God – but is God. They agreed with Aristotle that the first cause of all that exists is the divine Mind. This Mind is what is in all physical reality. Hence, God is material or intertwined with all material or corporeal matter in the form of Fire and Breath or Aether. This fiery Spirit created out of itself the material world. Its heat creates a Tension (Nouma) which causes all movement within the universe. The world goes on by fixed law or Logos which in turn was their understanding of Fate or divine Providence. Evil, therefore, is the imperfection of the particular while developing – while the whole is perfectly good. The key to happiness, therefore, is to surrender to the will of nature or to live in accordance with nature. The Stoics sought to remove unnecessary emotion and attachment through a type of monasticism from the physical world. They taught that the individual should seek to convert the Self into a Wise Sage. Virtue, therefore, was a type of inward righteousness based on human reason. To be happy was to be wise and to be wise was to be happy. One is not to react to loss, death, or pain as this is an example of a lack of virtue or mental discipline.

As to the mind/soul, the Soul according to Stoicism, is what drives all of the bodily processes. It is co-existential in the same space as the bodily substance – as heat is to a bar of iron. Zeno, the school's founder, was very interested in the study of the mind/soul. It was his disciple, Chryssipus, who stated that humanity possesses the “nouma” which is the cognitive which in turn comes from the “World Soul” or nouma. Throughout the universe there is “active matter” and “active reason” which co-exist. The evidence of the Divine was to be found in the design of nature itself. The concept of “hexis” is what binds all of the corporeal together into its perceived unity or cohesion.

The soul also possesses “fusus” which is what causes growth, development and the ability to procreate. All these aspects of the soul co-exist in an absolute blending or fusing called “kresis”. The commanding center, however, is not found in the brain but rather in the heart. It was believed that in the heart is a “hegemonikan”<sup>173</sup> or center where is located cognitive function and transcendent reason. It was a kind of brain within the brain if you will. This was based on the development of a fetus in which the heart is the first to develop and then noumina spreads outward from the center which, in turn, stimulates growth and development. Sense-organs simply reproduce the flash of stimulation into a “phantasis” which Stoics thought had a similarity to light. It will be possible to see some Stoic influence on both the Apostle Paul’s philosophical theology and Augustine’s metaphysical constructs based on Scripture.

## **Conclusion**

To truly understand Augustine’s *Confessiones*, it was necessary to do an in depth analysis of its environment specifically within the city of Carthage in North Africa. It has been shown that Carthage was primarily pagan throughout its pre-Christian and post-Christian existence. This was the seat of pagan literature and education, philosophy, and pagan religion. It was known as “Little Rome” and had many of the amusements of Rome as well. We see that much of what Christianity held to be distinguished from pagan culture – in fact amalgamated into a Christian-Stoic way of life. One thing that Augustine wanted to point out in his *Confessiones* was that he

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<sup>173</sup> “By ‘leading part’ I mean that which the Greeks call *hegemonikan* in each type of thing there cannot and should not be anything more excellent than this...that is why the cosmos must be wise and why the nature which contains in its grasp all things must surpass them in perfection of its reason; so the cosmos is a god and all the powers of the cosmos are held together by the divine nature”, p. 146

himself was completely unqualified to be a bishop in the Catholic faith – let alone a Christian leader of any sort based on the standards of its earliest founders within the Empire. We must at this point remember that the apex or zenith of the *Confessiones* is that of conversion – total and complete change of the mind/soul. In the next chapter we will investigate Socratism’s conversion philosophy and its teachings concerning the mind/soul.

### **CHAPTER THREE:**

#### **SOCRATISM: RATIOCINATION AND HAPPINESS**

In the previous chapter we were able to look specifically at the socio-political and socio-religious contextual matrix of Carthage North Africa at the time of Augustine's writing of the *Confessiones*. This enabled us to determine, for the most part, the motivation for Augustine focusing on the issue of "conversion" as described by philosophy - both in the history of philosophy up to that point and to competing religions that were confusing and putting obstacles before Catholics and Pagans alike. The main criticisms thrown toward Christians were the joint ideas of an instant forgiveness for sin and the removal of eternal consequence for sin through the love of an incarnational God and thus, the cure of the mind/soul's guilt consciousness back unto a "true" happiness consciousness.

In this chapter, we will investigate Carthage's socio-philosophical context to which Augustine had been both nurtured and confronted. Also, we will further our argument for Augustine's Scriptural philosophy by a close exegesis of Book VII of the *Confessiones*. For it is my contention that Book VII was the very keystone that Augustine gave the reader and/or listener for both the structure and meaning of this document from a pedagogic-apologetic point of view. From this we will see that Augustine rhetorically used Plato's ascent of the soul structure, as explicated in the Allegory of the Cave in Book VII of the *Republic*, in order to provide his own kind of "phenomenal empiricism", or "subjective empiricism", which provided the materialist

narrative of his body through space/time; and, at the same time, a new kind of verification theory for his mental states, if you will, or demonstrative narrative of the journey of his mind/soul's "mental states", which he will argue in this same Book, transcended the constraints of material space/time or the spatio-temporal dimension within his historical body narrative. <sup>174</sup>

Therefore, it will be our purpose to first look to Book VII for our initial understanding of the structure and meaning of the *Confessiones*. From that we will see that the *Confessiones* is really an apologetic, or polemic, for Scriptural understanding of the mind/soul's true malady of a "perverted will" not an undisciplined or "ignorant" intellect. It will also be shown that the Scriptural meaning of *conversio* is in contradistinction to that of Socratism's ratiocination (Socratic method and dialectic for the primary use of humanistic reason in curing the mind/soul of ignorance and leading toward ethical virtue) which in turn leads the mind/soul toward the end goal of happiness or, stated another way, the Platonic conversion which then leads the mind/soul toward intellectual certainty which was specifically exemplified in the Allegory of the Cave and its subsequent philosophical apologists concerning the immaterial or intelligible forms of knowledge. Thus, it will be necessary to investigate the philosophical influences on Augustine in order to understand his "pedagogic-apologetic"<sup>175</sup> method and the rational formation of his pagan mind before his scriptural

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<sup>174</sup> See Gerard O' Daly. *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*. (Berkeley: University of California, 1987), pp. 45-46, "The metaphorical death of soul is compared with the real death of body: in the former the soul is abandoned by God to its folly, in the latter the body is abandoned by the soul to its dissolution. Yet, just as the body will be resurrected, so can the soul be resuscitated (*renovation*) by repentance and faith...Metaphor ("the adopted transfer of the meaning of a word from its proper object to an object not particularly its own) should not mislead, but elucidate: it recasts language in the service of comprehension of the realities behind the linguistic sign.", p. 46

<sup>175</sup> My term – Dr. R.H.Craig

theo-rational conversion. Finally, we will investigate the polemics - mainly Neo-Platonic - against Christianity which seemed to have had an influence on Augustine's pedagogic-apologetic method to which we will explicate further in the next chapter.

### **I. Book VII of the *Confessiones* as Key to Understanding**

Book VII of the *Confessiones* is essentially a recapitulation or intellectual, not historical, précis of the previous six books. But it is not only an intellectual summery of Augustine's pilgrimage toward an intellectual certainty of the metaphysics of God and the relationality of God toward the material universe; it is also a keystone for understanding the structure of the *Confessions* as a whole as it follows Plato's Book VII in the *Republic* and his Allegory of the Cave/Interpretation pedagogical method for teaching the multi-dimensional truths he wished to communicate in this climatic chapter.

Book VII of the *Confessiones* is, on the intellectual level, the climatic discovery of the intellectual certainty for the Platonic Good or God. In other words, Augustine in this book has the Platonic or intellectual conversion spoken of in regards to Plato's Allegory of the Cave in book VII of the *Republic*. For it is there that we read that, for Plato, the intellectual conversion allows the pilgrim to leave the confines of the Cave/World and to "know" the Good purely without defilement or worldly influence. On the other hand, it also is the birth pangs of an even greater conversion that goes beyond the intellect and finally puts to rest the mystery of the origin and continued presence of evil in the physical universe. Hence, Chapter VII is the conjoining of two "conversions" – one the intellect or intellectual certainty; and the other the beginning of will (moral certainty) or motivational seat of all human acts. Therefore, Augustine finds answers to the nature of

God; the origin of evil, differentiation of Being and the authority of Holy Scripture in trumping Socratic logic and ancient Neo-Platonism in the final answer to the happy life and true understanding of God. Essentially, I would call this the “Mouth of the Cave” chapter. Augustine is at the end of the cave but not yet walked into the Son of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1 is Augustine’s admission that he was for all intent and purpose a strict materialist at the beginning of this quest. He blamed this on his intellectual pride. For he states, “But the older I became, the more shameful it was that I retained so much vanity as to be unable to think any substance possible other than that which the eyes normally perceive”... Although you were not the shape of the human body, I nevertheless felt forced to imagine something physical occupying space diffused either in the world or through infinite space outside the world”.<sup>176</sup> Augustine will use this language throughout this chapter of what I call “prisoner language” for describing the intellectual restraint of the Cave/World. This restraint forced Augustine to think of God as some kind of physical substance. To think otherwise would be unintelligible or knowledge based on superstition, the very reason for his initial rejection of the Christianity of his mother. He admits that he did not think of God ever as a human form –like that of the Greeks. Instead, chapter One of Book VII is meant to elucidate Augustine’s intellectual constraint to see or to understand a God that was not material or mutable permeating all of the physical universe with power and structure.

Chapter 2 begins with the statement: “I thought non-existent anything not extended in space or diffused or concentrated or expanding, which does not possess, or

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<sup>176</sup> Confessions VII

is incapable of possessing, such qualities. My eyes are accustomed to such images...I did not see that the mental power by which I formed these images does not occupy any space, though it could not from them unless it were some great thing".<sup>177</sup> It is here that Augustine admits to a "conjecture" on his part concerning the metaphysics of Being and God. Namely, that God has to be in all substance and all substance necessarily received God like a sponge. God permeates all substance like "sunlight". He admits to the faultiness of this logic in that those things that have more mass would in turn possess more God than that which is smaller in mass. He states at the end that God had not yet "lightened" his "darkness". He states in this chapter yet again that he was "incapable of thinking otherwise" about the metaphysics of God.

In Chapter 3 we are introduced yet again with Augustine's engagement with Nebridius and the Manichees in Carthage North Africa. Here the language is harsh in calling them deceivers and "word spinners". This group postulates a material dualism that argued that God was harmed by imperfection and a dark opposition within substance itself. Specifically, one of God's members or

offspring of every substance, is mingled with hostile powers and with natures not created by you, and is corrupted by them and so changed for the worse that it is altered from beatitude to misery, and needs help to deliver and purify it. They say this is the soul, enslaved, contaminated and corrupt, to which aid is brought by your word, free, pure, and intact; and yet your word is itself corruptible, because it is of one and the same substance as the soul.<sup>178</sup>

This now creates more contention for Augustine who stated that he could never think of God as corruptible but rather as a pure incorruptible radiance in all substance. However, he did follow the "enslavement" motif in Manicheism and the place of

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 7.2

<sup>178</sup> 7.3

scripture in liberating this entanglement. He could not give up divine immunity from corruption. The ultimate question for Augustine is how could a pure and kind God create, or allow to exist, this evil within human experience?

Chapter 4 will now show how Augustine moved beyond the Manichees based on this very foundational problem of evil in the universe. Is it a creation of God? It bothered him that he did not have a clear grasp of the cause of evil. If he could not answer this question on the origin of evil then he would have to think of God as corrupted or mutable. He refused to believe the Manichean argument that substance was a victim of evil and not a perpetrator of it. He attempted to “lift my mind’s eye out of the abyss” by listening to Ambrose’s sermons which argued that “free choice of the will is the reason why we do wrong and suffer your just judgment”. The way he did this was to admit that he possessed both “life” in the present and a “will” to motivate action. What he concluded for a time is that he had control of his will when willing and/or not willing. He states again that he was “brought into the light”. Only to be snagged again by habitual activity in the Cave/World. Nonetheless, he continued to hold to the idea that God is just and Good – in fact the “Supreme Good”. This idea keeps beaconing him forward in his quest. He now begins to look inward when he states, “who put this power in me and implanted in me this seed of bitterness”? How did the Devil, who was perfect in heaven, become imperfect if perfect? He still had problems with the idea of evil as something external to substance that inflicts harm on substance.

Chapter 6 Augustine reiterates the incorruptibility of God because no soul could possibly conceive anything better than God. If God was imperfect then other souls would conceive something better. This settled the matter that incorruption is better

than corruption. Moreover, God cannot will something better than his own will. Nor can God be compelled to do anything against his will. For as Augustine states, “for the will and power of God is God’s very self. And what can be unforeseen by you who know all things? No nature exists but you know it”.<sup>179</sup>

By the time we get to Chapter 7, Augustine knows the quest to be necessary but he begins to see that the method of getting through it was “flawed”. He admits that he did not see the flaw in the search. The flaw was in thinking God to actually be in substance or in finite creation. For this then creates the very real dilemma of how evil gets into finite creation. For Augustine evil is both within nature and natural disasters or natural evil; and evil is within human suffering and contradiction in social experiences. Then he asks the question: “or does it [evil] not have being”? Moreover, why fear something that does not have being? Hence, is it possible that the fear itself is evil since evil has no being? After some deliberation on these questions, Augustine poses a very core question for this quest: “could it exist contrary to God’s will”? Augustine states later that he was afraid that he would die without these questions being answered. His answer begins with the fact that in spite of his intellectual encounters within the Cave/World, he still possessed a unformed and hesitant “faith” in Jesus Christ and Catholic teaching. He states, “Yet my mind did not abandon it, but daily drank in more and more”.

In Chapter 8, 9, and 10 we relive Augustine’s encounter with Astrology and its teachings concerning the predictions of future events within one’s life. This was a new type of intellectual Cave/World distortion. It comes about from a friend in rhetoric by

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<sup>179</sup> 7.6

the name of Firminus. He explains that it was through his father that he learned the prediction of future events through the “constellations” of the stars in the heavens. He wanted to know what Augustine thought on the matter. Therefore, whether the story is of Firminus concerning his birth and that of a slave at the exact same hour; or the example of Twins born at the exact same moment; or even the biblical story of Esau and Jacob, Augustine makes it clear that no life is pre-determined or predestined. Each will formulate its own destiny based on free-choice and causality within life circumstances. They will “choose” their own destinies.

Chapter 11 has Augustine using the Cave/World language of being delivered from “chains”. For the Astrology conversation proved to Augustine’s mind how defiant he was in not letting go of the core Catholic principles of the immutability of the substance of God and of Jesus; that they provided a way for salvation “whereby humanity can come to the future life after death. These matters, therefore, were secure and firmly fortified in my mind while I was seeking feverishly for the origin of evil”.<sup>180</sup> Augustine calls this a type of “mental pregnancy”. He states that he could not begin to articulate to friends the “tumult of his soul” nor could even put it into words if he so chose to articulate it. He was still stuck in the “externals” of the Cave/World. He could only comprehend and fix his attention on things in space. He challenges Aristotelian logic when he concludes that for him to find happiness he must submit to God and “you have made subject to me what you created to be lower than me. This was the correct mean, middle ground, in which I would find health, that I should remain ‘in your image’ and in serving you be master of my body. Upon reflection, Augustine realizes that this is an

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<sup>180</sup> 7.11

“arrogant” conclusion that he could control anything regarding the control of his body. For just as he made this Aristotelian conclusion, he immediately fell back in the Cave/World in which those so called “inferior things” were on top of him and “pressed me down”. He stated that the very physical objects became barriers to his return to God. He concludes, “my swelling conceit separated me from you, and the gross swelling on my face closed my eyes”.

In Chapters 12 through 21, the battle between Platonic “conversion” and Scriptural “conversion” comes to fruition when Augustine blossoms by discovering his “inner perception” through Platonic books. However, he realized that God was about mercy toward the arrogant and prideful. That God actively, not passively, resists the proud. Hence, Augustine realized that he had inward goads or memories that reminded him of God’s certainty. First, God reminded Augustine that he gave grace to the humble. It is here that Augustine uses bold intertextuality to intertwine John 1:1-14 with the introduction of “Platonic” books and teaching. For Augustine saw the parallels between the teaching of Plato and the Platonists and the Bible’s teachings of Genesis, the Gospel of John, Acts and Pauline theology in both Romans and Philippians regarding the metaphysics of God and the origin of evil. It is in the Platonic books where Augustine was “admonished to return into myself”. God and the Word are one and the same and Jesus has always been pre-existent and present in the creation of the universe. So, the Platonic books were methodologically helpful to Augustine in discovering and using inward perception as a guide to understanding immateriality or immutability. The Platonic books were helpful with giving Augustine an intelligible schematic upon which to hang metaphysical analysis for the multi-dimensions of both

substance and spirit. However, the Neo-Platonists were prideful and arrogant against Christianity and Catholic Faith. What they called for was intellectual certainty of God's light which is the governing dynamic over all of creation both physical and spiritual. So, essentially, Platonism in both the writings of Plotinus and Porphyry, paralleled in stark similarity John 1. However, what was lacking according to Augustine was the theistic model of God incarnate or in flesh dwelling in human form. What Augustine never grasped until the Platonists was that Jesus was more than a wise, perfect God who was virgin birthed to keep Him from human corruption; especially wise in understanding the Hebrew Scriptures; salvation coming through Him, etc.. This was all Augustine really theoretically grasped. Moreover, he thought it all to be unintelligible until he realized where Platonism fell short. The death and resurrection of the Incarnate God was the exemplar for gaining true happiness in this life. Catholic teaching, therefore, was a way of life and not merely an intellectual knowledge for a soul's anxiety about the life after death. He makes it clear over and over in strong rhetorical form that the Platonic books lack the Incarnational and Redemptive power of God humbling Himself and allowing Himself to be destroyed by the Creation; only to overcome death and to be physically reconstituted and lead humanity once and for all for the definitive truth both philosophically and theologically of life necessary for true *euidomia*.

In Chapter 16, Augustine discovers through the Platonists the importance of memory for moving inward in introspection. However, he goes beyond the Platonic conversion toward a superior knowledge or wisdom. For he states,

I entered and with my soul's eye, such as it was, saw above that same eye of the soul the immutable light higher than my mind – not the light of everyday obvious to anyone, nor a larger version of the same kind which would, as it were, have given out a much brighter light and filled everything with its magnitude. It was

not that light, but a different thing, utterly different from all our kinds of light. It transcended my mind not in the way oil floats on water, nor as heaven is above earth. It was **superior** because it made me, and I was inferior because I was made by it. The person who knows the truth knows it, and he who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it.<sup>181</sup>

Hence, Augustine agrees with the Platonists that the “One” or God is Being. In that regard he attributes this philosophy with “converting” him from God as substance. However, the Incarnation and physical life of this Being becoming mortal and suffering in this dimension for the sake of creating a “love” relationality with Creation was a totally superior relational conversion to the One then a mere intellectual certainty of God’s existence. Hence, Augustine realized that unless this relational conversion takes place, he is still within the confines of the Cave/World and will never defeat the evil which so enslaved him. He quotes Plato’s *Statesman* when he says, “And I found myself far from you “in the region of dissimilarity”.<sup>182</sup>

In Chapters 17 through 21, Augustine now introduces the reader to the next intellectual discovery. Namely, evil is not an existent created by God, rather evil is the “privation of some good”. It is not a privation of all good – only some good. This then helps Augustine to understand that in both natural evils such as natural disasters and in human evil, that we should not get focused on individual evils or privations. Rather, we should look at all of Creation as a necessary “totality” in which these privations may be necessary correctives in bringing balance and salvation to the fallen Creation. Moreover, Augustine argues that humanity should see natural Creation as a “harmony” in which time and space bend with evil and good together – not all of one or the other. Therefore, from a psychological standpoint, Augustine did not have to be so frustrated

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<sup>181</sup> 7.16

<sup>182</sup> Plato’s *Statesman*, 273d

with what he calls “conflict of interest” concerning the elements of Creation. Instead, we have a duty to praise God for all of creation throughout time and space. Augustine writes,

For you evil does not exist at all, and not only for but for your created universe, because there is nothing outside it which could break in and destroy the order which you have imposed upon it. But in parts of the universe, there are certain elements which are though evil because of a conflict of interest. These elements are congruous with other elements and as such are good, and are also good in themselves.<sup>183</sup>

In Chapters 20-21, Augustine once again breaks down the quest or pilgrimage in the Cave/World in order to bring the reader up to speed on how he is able to promote a theory of Harmony of the Universe – one which Leibniz will exploit to its fullest extent later as well as his understanding of Time as Past, Present, Future. In describing fellow citizens of the cave, Augustine now calls them “wicked” and using his prisoner language he states,

to these lower parts the wicked themselves are well fitted, to the extent that they are dissimilar to you, but they can become fitted for the higher parts insofar as they become more like you. I enquired what wickedness is; and I did not find a substance but a perversity of the will twisted away from the highest substance, you O God, toward inferior things rejecting its own inner life (Ecclus. 10:10) and swelling with external matter.

Chapters 23 through 27 are what I call the “Incarnational Love Chapters”. For it is here that Augustine realizes that his theoretical or intellectual certainty about both God as “Spirit” and as “Flesh” in the Incarnation, does not necessarily translate into defeat of his own personal privation of the good or evil – namely his sexual habit. There seems to be a disconnect between knowledge and will that now makes Augustine realize that he is not out of the Cave/World by only as the mouth. He still has not walked out

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<sup>183</sup> 7.19

into the “Son” of Plato’s Allegory. What he does discover, however, is that he always “loved” God and not a “phantom surrogate”. He understands that his own “weight” was what was keeping him in the Cave/World Nonetheless, there was this whispering “memory” of God. It is the body that weighs down the soul according to Augustine.

In Chapter 23, Augustine uses his most Platonic allegorical language when he states,

I found the unchangeable and authentic eternity of truth to transcend my mutable mind. And so step by step I ascended from bodies to the soul which perceives through the body, and there to its inward force to which bodily senses report external sensations this being as high as the beasts go. From there again I ascended to the power of reasoning to which is to be attributed the power of judging the deliverances of the bodily senses. This power, which in myself I found to be mutable raised itself on the level of its own intelligence, and led my thinking out of the ruts of habit. It withdrew itself from the contradictory swarms of imaginative fantasies so as to discover the light by which it was flooded...so in the flash of a trembling glance it attained to that which is. <sup>184</sup>

Hence, Augustine describes both his intellectual and spiritual quest in the language of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave. This language is not the same language of Ennead V of Plotinus –although, it does have an ascendancy motif. This is the keystone to understanding the *Confessiones* as structured around this allegory. It is a supreme pedagogical tool for Augustine to demonstrate through exemplars the multi-dimensional truths he is wishing to communicate.

Finally, in Chapters 24 through 27, these are the “Christological” chapters that set up Book VIII. He now explains to the pagan audience both inside and outside the Church, that the Incarnation Christ is greater than any philosopher Socrates or any other on earth. For Jesus showed that weakness and meekness are the true methods or

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<sup>184</sup> 7.23

lifestyle necessary for true happiness. Only through Jesus' example on earth could Augustine ever hope to have the motivational strength to break the evil habits that ensnared him. The Word made flesh was more than Jesus the Wise – it was the true example of Divine Love. Love from the Creator to the Creation. He now is ready to admit,

so because the scriptures are true, I acknowledge the whole man to be in Christ, not only the body of a man or soul and body without a mind, but a fully human person. I thought that he excelled others not as a personal embodiment of the Truth, but because of the great excellence of his human character and more perfect participation in wisdom.<sup>185</sup>

Thus, we find in chapters 26 and 27 Augustine's deliberate and specific criticisms of the "Platonist books". He sees the scriptures as trumping the wisdom of Plato and the Platonists and that its wisdom was

imprinted into my memory so that when later I had been made docile by your books and my wounds were healed by our gentle fingers, I would learn to discern and distinguish the difference between presumption and confession, between those who see the way which leads to the home of bliss, not merely as an end to be perceived but as a realm to live in.<sup>186</sup>

For Augustine, what needed to happen and what had to happen was that his own personal will should be conformed to God's will as revealed in Jesus Christ.

He finally states in chapter 27,

None of this is in the Platonist books. Those pages do not contain the face of this devotion, tears of confession, your sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a contrite and humble spirit(Ps 50:19), the salvation of your people, the espoused city(Rev.21:5), the guarantee of your Holy Spirit(2 Corn. 5:5), the cup of our redemption. In the Platonic books no one sings: 'Surely my soul will be submissive to God?'.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> 7.25

<sup>186</sup> 7.26

<sup>187</sup> 7.27

Hence, we have shown from this exegetical sampling that Augustine, coincidentally, seemed to taste most all of the intellectual goods of pagan culture and religion from Carthage to Rome to Milan. Coincidental, in the sense that some scholars question the historicity regarding some of the historical struggles as presented in the *Confessiones*.<sup>188</sup> Nonetheless, Augustine developed new type of philosophizing method which can be described as a historical psychological approach. I myself have called it a “subjective empirical” or the Kantian “phenomenal empirical” methodology for proving or demonstrating that the pagan humanistic ratiocination model is not only partially ineffective for the “cure of souls” but it is actually even a falsity in regards to accurately describing the true story of ratiocination itself in its totality. To truly understand Augustine in the *Confessiones*, one cannot see this, as Courcelle did, as primarily a theological work. This work is, on the contrary, primarily a new kind of philosophy about the totality of human consciousness in all of its extents – not just the physical sensual perception within space/time. It is multi-dimensional in what I call a Scriptural philosophy that is seeking to show- or to be an apologetic for- the superiority of Scripture’s theo-ratiocination for truly curing mind/souls over and against the Pagan one dimensional humanistic materialist or sensualist scientific answers to the diseased mind/brain; or, for that matter, to the Socratic two dimensional (Body/Mind) inward ratiocination as complete in and of itself for being the final description of reason over and against the passions in healing humanity of its self-destructive tendencies. It will be necessary, therefore, to investigate how Augustine’s pagan mind was formulated by

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<sup>188</sup> See Louis Sebastien, Le Nain de Tillemont, trans. Frederick Van Fleteren. *The Life of Augustine*. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010), pp. 305-348 –Van Fleteren has a number of notes at the end of his translation of this work in which he substantially shows historical inaccuracies by Augustine in the *Confessiones*. This then lends credence to my thesis that what events and personas which are used in the *Confessiones* were more than likely cherry picked for the purpose for his pedagogic-apologetic reasons.

pagan philosophy and then, in the next chapter, look to his new methodology in the *Confessiones* for his own philosophizing in regards to the cure for mind/souls. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and the Hellenists were philosophers of the intellect and humanistic reason. Augustine, on the other hand, was the philosopher of God, intellect and the will as disclosed in the sacred text of scripture.

## **II. Socratic Ratiocination and Philosophy as a Way of Life**

In order to understand Plato and Platonism, which highly influenced Augustine, one has to understand Plato's mentor and the process for philosophizing as explicated by Socrates. For it is he that developed the idea for philosophic ratiocination<sup>189</sup> as the needed antidote for the "cure" of mind/souls; this was in contradistinction to the pre-Socratics or sophists who looked to philosophy for more to do about the scientific description of nature and its processes. From this line of reasoning, therefore, developed the relativistic notion of no universal truths in regards to ethics or how we ought to live. Socrates, however, will directly challenge this strict materialist (atomist) philosophical system.

Pierre Hadot put it this way,

the figure of Socrates – as sketched by Plato, at any rate – had, it seemed to me, one unique advantage. It is the portrait of a mediator between transcendent ideal of wisdom and concrete human reality. It is a paradox of highly Socratic irony that Socrates was not a sage, but a 'philo-sopher': that is, a lover of wisdom...Socrates thus functions as a mediator between ideal norms and human reality. The concepts of 'mediation' and 'intermediate' call to mind the ideas of equilibrium and the Golden Mean. We should therefore expect to see in Socrates a harmonious figure, combining divine and human characteristics in delicate nuances."<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Discursive train of thought as in a scientific analysis – demonstrated reasoning or logic for judgments/conclusions

<sup>190</sup> Hadot., p. 149

It is no wonder that both Socrates and Plato were held up in Hellenistic Rome as demigods. For both of them revolutionized ratiocination as the highest essence or quality of humanity. The disciplining of which could bring about happiness and tranquility in this life partially – but never fully. The search for wisdom, therefore, is the primary duty of every mind/soul in the body(form) and in the preparation for death for the life to come.

Philosophy as a way of life was more than a body of theoretical knowledge. It was a training exercise, or as Hadot calls it, a “spiritual exercise” in the formation of a rational excellence and moral virtue. This training meant that the disciple learned to endure the physical life of the body – and to overcome it with disciplined and trained ratiocination - or, the ordering of the train of thoughts within consciousness. Moreover, John Cooper states,

the only predecessor of Socrates whom one could reasonably suggest as a philosopher who conceived his philosophy as a way of life is Pythagoras (along with Empedocles, whom ancient writers class as influenced him...they plainly constituted some sort of cult or ‘brotherhood’ with some sort of common life together, whether in a political community as at Croton and Metapontum in Italy in Pythagoras’s own day (last half of sixth century BCE) or in private organizations (‘schools’). This life combined what we can recognize as philosophical ideas with dogmas, ritual practices, and dietary and other taboos, all allegedly inherited from Pythagoras.<sup>191</sup>

Cooper points out that the word “philosopher” was introduced into Greek during Socrates’ lifetime. The word “wisdom” as well was not known to the pre-Socratics. Instead, it came to be understood by Socrates and his followers as “a complete, rationally worked out account of reality.”<sup>192</sup> This reality, however, was more than the

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<sup>191</sup> John Cooper. *Pursuit of Wisdom*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 31

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30

perceptions of sense datum. It was more than a reductionist physicalist account of the world like that of the atomists before him. Yet, Socrates was not satisfied either with the Homeric and mythological explanations for the system of the world. Instead, Socrates' conjoining of his religious education with that of logical analysis within human psychology, in relation to the physical world, is what enabled him to discover that there indeed exist universals and they are immutable and unchanging within the "Logos" of nature.

Wisdom, therefore, was a type of true knowledge that could bring about an existential peace of mind. It not only brought this peace of mind or "ataraxia", but it brought "inner freedom (autarkeia), and a cosmic consciousness. First and foremost, philosophy presented itself as a therapeutic, intended to cure mankind's anguish."<sup>193</sup> We will find this reiterated over and over throughout the history of western philosophy from Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Xenocrates, Epicurius, the Stoics, the Platonists, and, yes, Augustine. Hadot states it even further,

Ancient philosophical traditions can provide guidance in our relationship to ourselves, to the cosmos, and to other human beings. In the mentality of modern historians, there is no cliché more firmly anchored, and more difficult to uproot, than the idea according to which ancient philosophy was an escape mechanism, and an act of falling back upon oneself. In the case of the Platonists, it was an escape into the heaven of ideas, into the refusal of politics in the case of the Epicureans, into the submission to fate in the case of the Stoics. In the first place, ancient philosophy was always a philosophy practiced in a group, whether in the case of the Pythagorean communities, Platonic love, Epicurean friendship, or Stoic spiritual direction. Ancient philosophy required a common effort, community of research, mutual assistance, and spiritual support.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Hadot, p. 265

<sup>194</sup> Ibid, p. 274

Wisdom, for Socrates, is virtue. Cooper defines virtue as, “the good condition of the soul, is a state of mind in which one does firmly grasp and understand the full system of human values, in comparison and relationship with one another.”<sup>195</sup> Moreover, a life that is for “the love of wisdom” is a life that lives by that system once rationally explained. It requires, according to Cooper, a firm understanding and “grasp” about the “fundamental truths of human nature.” From this possession of virtue, Socrates thought that a person could discover and live a long and happy life. Socratic philosophy stressed first and foremost the eternal value of the mind/soul and the secondary value of everything else that is physical. Thus, the knowledge/wisdom distinction is brought into clear focus by Socrates. For Socrates,

“knowledge is the grasp of the truth of some fact or group of facts on the basis of a comprehensive, complete understanding of the whole system of facts, and relationships among them, that constitute some distinct area of intellectual inquiry...Wisdom goes beyond that knowledge by requiring that, once acquired, it be so deeply and firmly settled in one’s mind that one would be prepared, for all future time, when in normal possession of one’s powers, to apply that knowledge, with confidence and demonstrable authority, in any and every circumstance, so as always to do what is right and best, with a complete and fully grounded justification in mind for what one does.”<sup>196</sup>

Beyond these two dichotomies, there still is required a *techne* or skill in the art of analysis and explanation for one’s own knowledge to wisdom and wisdom to knowledge. In order for there to be a “complete good condition of the soul”, there must be a defense from the “*doxa*” or opinion of the world at large. At the root of the word “dialectic” is the word dialogue. The Socratic Method, as historians came to call it, is really a method of analysis of truth and logic through dialogue and questioning. The foundational premise for Socratic philosophy was influenced by the pre-Socratic Heraclitus. For it

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<sup>195</sup> Cooper, p. 36

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, p. 48

was his contention, that all of reality – both physically and relationally – is in a constant state of flux or impermanence. This includes the reality that “while opening wisdom to us too in principle, brought with it other defects that rendered wisdom practically unattainable, so that it was never actually attained by any human being.”<sup>197</sup> Although Socrates agreed with this philosophy in regards to the body, he did not fully agree that the mind/soul could not be shown to be impermanent and thus, partially known even while in the body. For him, this meant a way of life that reflected and analyzed the human good as the good of the mind/soul. Hence, all opinions and analysis are to be included in the journey toward truth – but not all can survive. This then calls for an “open-ended” philosophical discussion and inquiry. However, Socrates made it his life’s calling to show that although begun in an open-minded and open-ended beginning – the ending consistently comes to a “determinate set of conclusions”. What are they?:

1. “god is wise in virtue of the divine nature”
2. “that the highest and controlling good in a human life is wisdom, or, in practice, its pursuit”
3. “the nature of justice and its value”
4. “the nature and value of courage”
5. “the nature and value of piety”
6. “the nature and value of temperance or moderation in one’s capacity for bodily pleasure and indulgence in it”

### **III. Plato’s Forms, Allegory of the Cave and Theory of Education**

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid, p. 49

In his writings, Plato defines Forms as both pre-existing and “fixed” in the nature of things. For he stated in the *Parmenides*, “these Forms are, as it were, patterns fixed in the nature of things; the other things are made in their image and are likenesses.”<sup>198</sup> Here we see that Plato is stating that there are pre-existent patterns by which composites or concrete things take shape and functionality. He sees the concrete or composite as a “likeness” which in turn delineates the concept of a secondary reflective not a pure duplication. In the *Timaeus* he writes,

Or are the things we see or otherwise perceive by the bodily senses the only things that have such reality, and has nothing else, over and above these, any sort of being at all? Are we talking idly when we say that there is such a thing as intelligible Form of anything? Is this nothing more than a word?...If intelligence and true belief are two different kinds, then these things – Forms that we cannot perceive but only think of – certainly exist in themselves...We must affirm that they are two different things, for they are distinct in origin and unlike in nature...We must agree that there is, first, the unchanging Form, ingenerate and indestructible, which neither receives anything else into itself from elsewhere nor itself enters into anything else anywhere, invisible and otherwise imperceptible; that, in fact, which thinking has for its object... Whereas for an image, since not even the very principle on which it has come into being belongs to the image itself, but it is the everlasting semblance of something else, it is proper that it should come to be in something else, clinging in some sort to existence on pain of being nothing at all, on the other hand, that which has real being has the support of the exactly true account, which declares that, as long as the two things are different, neither can ever come to be in the other in such a way that the two should become at once one and the same thing and two.<sup>199</sup>

For Plato, therefore, intelligible Forms have to pre-exist for matter to be ordered with intelligibility and purpose. There must be a separate entity that orders matter and dictates functionality. The human mind/soul, thus, has the capability to understand Universal Forms in their pre-existent state partially – hence, the Idea. The Idea

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<sup>198</sup> 132d 1-3

<sup>199</sup> 51b 7-52d1

(Universal) is not perceptible and is indivisible. This is, of course, built on the premises of the pre-Socratics by which Plato formulates his logic of being - specifically, Heraclitus' view that all material reality is in a constant state of flux.<sup>200</sup> Thus, there must be an eternal and indestructible pattern that exists outside of material being or molecular being and continues in a process of generation and regeneration amidst the degeneration of material perceptible objects. W. D. Ross makes some conclusions in regards to this understanding of Plato:

That Plato consistently thought of Ideas as different from sensible things. Secondly, and with equal certainty, that he thought of them as completely objective, neither as thoughts nor as the 'contents of thoughts' (whatever that phrase may mean), but as entities whose existence is presupposed by all our knowledge. Thirdly, that he thought of them as existing separately from sensible things; but to the question whether Plato consistently so thought of them no simple answer can be given."<sup>201</sup>

These objects, therefore, are beyond the true intellectual knowledge of human intelligibility in regards to perfect understanding. The understanding is always secondarily grasped by the mind/soul and then cognized by the intellect into partial knowledge or understanding. Universals objectively exist apart from material composites. They are the basis for all knowledge and cognitive understanding. I concur with Ross that there may be more realism in Plato than he is often given credit. Moreover, the Universals are fixed in matter and can be partially remembered and reflected on but not originally discovered through the process of rigorous deduction of material being. For Plato thought that all Universals or Forms were already possessed in the mind/soul. Platonic idealism, as it will come to be called, is sprinkled with bits of

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<sup>200</sup> See Syrianus. *On Aristotle's Metaphysics 13 – 14*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006)

<sup>201</sup> W.D. Ross. *Plato's Theory of Ideas*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 227

hard realism in regards to material truth by revealing hidden truth of the imperceptible objects within concrete reality. The possible part that Plato's religion played in his metaphysical analysis is another paper all together; but it was known that Socrates was profoundly religious. Hence, it is possible that this metaphysical theory by Plato is in fact an apologetic itself for his own form of theo-rationality or theological/cosmological belief system. With this analysis as background, let us look more specifically at Plato's dialogue the *Republic*.<sup>202</sup>

Plato's Allegory of the Cave in Book VII of the *Republic*<sup>203</sup> was a zeitgeist in the history of philosophy up to that point. For it exemplified that Homeric mythological

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<sup>202</sup> John Rist. *Augustine Deformed: Love, Sin and Freedom in the Western Moral Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 68 – "He knew from Cicero and Varro something of the contents of the *Republic*, and in translation rather more of the *Timaeus*."

<sup>203</sup> R.E. Allan, trans., *Plato's: The Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) pp. 227-261: "Next then, I said, concerning education and lack of it, compare our own nature to a situation like this: Picture people as dwelling in a cavernous underground chamber, with an entrance opening upward to the light, and a long passageway running down the whole length of the cave. They have been there since childhood, legs and necks fettered so they cannot move: they see only what is in front of them, unable to turn their heads because of the bonds. But light reaches them from a fire burning some distance behind and above them. Between the prisoners, picture a track a bit higher up, and a little wall built along it like the screens in front of the performers at puppet shows, above which they show the puppets...See also then people carrying all sorts of artificial objects alongside this little wall, statues of men and other animals, made of wood and stone and all sorts of things. Some of the carriers are talking, it is likely, others silent...a strange image, he said, and strange prisoners, Like ourselves, I replied. For first, do you think such prisoners see anything of themselves or one another except the shadows cast by the fire on the wall of the cave in front of them? Why would they, he said, if they had been compelled to hold their heads motionless throughout life? What about the objects being carried along. Isn't it the same? Of course. Then if they were able to converse with one another, don't you think they would acknowledge as things which are, the things that they saw? Necessarily. What if the prison also had an echo from the wall opposite. Whenever someone of those passing gave utterance, do you think they would believe anything except the passing shadow spoke? Emphatically not, he said. Such prisoners, then, I replied, would acknowledge as true anything except shadows of artificial objects. Quite necessarily, he said. Consider then, I replied, what release and healing from the bonds of unwisdom would consist in, if it by nature occurred to them in this way: whenever one of them was released, and suddenly compelled to stand up right and turn his head and walk and look upward to the light, he would feel pain in doing all this, and because his eyes were dazzled, he would be unable to discern those things yonder whose shadows he had seen before. What do you suppose he would say, if someone told him that what he had seen before was foolishness, but that now, being somewhat nearer to what is and turned toward more real objects, he would see more correctly? Especially if after being shown each of the things which are passing, he was compelled by questioning to answer what it is? Don't you

language could have tremendous philosophical value by opening the reader to multi-dimensional consciousness through the following of a main character in a life journey. Although Plato's allegory is fictional, it influenced Neoplatonism five hundred years later in the thought of Plotinus<sup>204</sup>, Porphyry, Iamblichus, all of whom had created and maintained the pedagogical value of allegory in teaching levels of meaning or "diversity of truths". This allegory was taught in rhetorical works and schools as an ingenious way

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suppose he would be perplexed and at a loss, and believe things he saw before more true than those pointed out to him now? Yes, he said. Then suppose he were also compelled to look toward the light itself. It would hurt his eyes, and he would turn away in order to escape to the things he was able to see, and acknowledge them as really more clear than that was being shown him. That's so, he said. But if someone forcibly dragged him from there up the rugged steep ascent, I replied, and did not let go until he had hauled him into the light of the sun, wouldn't he suffer and be distressed as he was dragged along? And when he came to the light, his eyes would be so filled with its brightness that he would be unable to see even one among the things now claimed to be true? No, he said, at least not immediately. Then I suppose he would have to become accustomed to it, if he is going to see the things above. It would be easiest first to look at shadows, next at images in water of men and other things, and afterward at the things themselves; after this, it would be easier to contemplate things in the heaven and the heaven itself by night, and gaze at the light of the stars and the moon than at the sun and its light by day. Of course. Finally, then, I suppose, the sun. Not appearances of it in water or in alien seats: he would be able to look at it alone by itself in its own place, and contemplate it as it is. Necessarily, he said. After this, he would infer of it that it is this which produces the seasons and the years and governs everything in the visible place, and is in some manner cause of all the things they used to see. It is clear, he said that he would arrive next at this conclusion along with that. Suppose he were to recall his first dwelling place, and wisdom there, and his fellow prisoners then. Wouldn't he think himself happy in the change, and pity them? Indeed. Suppose they had honors and prizes for those who most acutely discern and best remember the shadows that pass – which of them usually comes before, and after, and at the same time – and from this was then best able to guess what was coming next. Do you think he would want what they have, and envy them their honors and positions of power? Or would he feel, as Homer has it, that he would much prefer to be the slave of a landless man and suffer anything at all, rather than believe those things and live that life. Yes, he said, I think he would suffer anything rather than accept that life. Consider this too, I replied, If such a man went down again and sat upon the same seat, would not his eyes be filled with darkness, coming suddenly from the sun? Yes, indeed, he said. Suppose then he had to compete again in judging those shadows with people who had always been prisoners, while his vision was dim, before his eyes settled down – and it would take some little time to get used to the darkness. Wouldn't he be laughed at? Wouldn't he be said of him that he had journeyed upward only to return with his eyes ruined, that it wasn't worth it even to try to go up? And if they were able somehow to lay hands on the man trying to release them and lead them up, and kill him, they would kill him. Certainly, he said.

<sup>204</sup> It is clear that Plotinus' Fifth Ennead follows Plato's Allegory of the Cave order for knowledge, see Plotinus, *The Six Enneads*, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952)pp.208-251.

of reaching multiple personas with one speech so that they all come away with a message being communicated.

In the third section of Book VII Plato's interpretation of the Allegory, we read about the soul's education and virtues specifically. For Plato writes,

that this power is present in the soul of each person, along with the instrument by which each person understands. It is as if an eye could not turn from darkness to what is bright except in company with the whole body. Just so, this instrument must be converted from what becomes by turning in company with the whole soul until it has become capable of being lifted up to contemplate what is, and the brightest of what is. But this, we say, is the Good.<sup>205</sup>

Thus, Plato introduces the concept of "conversion" based on the recollected knowledge within this "instrument" for the Good or god. This conversion must entail both external reality of the body and its engagement with material reality; and, by the introspection of the soul, to move into a liberated psychological state of Truth and not Doxa or opinion. This is an intellectual journey and is painful to previous held opinions and/or beliefs concerning truth.<sup>206</sup>

Marko Ursic states in his paper, "The Allegory of the Cave: Transcendence in Platonism and Christianity", that

the spiritual landscape opened up by Plato – that is transcendence in relation to the direct presence of the world, to immanence – had before, in pre-Platonic Greek thought, not yet been discovered... this allotting of the levels into a Here below and a Beyond, into the immanence of the world that passes away and the transcendence of the everlasting, is essential for an understanding of the Platonic allegory. Here, in this world, this great gulf can only be spoken of in allegory,

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<sup>205</sup> Book VII(518B-519D)

<sup>206</sup> See Julia Annas. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 242-271; Arthur Herman. *The Cave and the Light*. (New York: Random House Publishing, 2013), pp. 12-26; John R. Wallach. *The Platonic Political Art*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 41-65

which, with its analogical openness, makes it possible for us while still here below to ‘remember’ the light from beyond and awaken to our imprisonment in the Cave.<sup>207</sup>

Plato goes even further in his explanation of his allegory when he states,

Once it is perceived, the conclusion must follow that, for all things, this is the cause of whatever is right and good in the visible world it gives birth to light and to the lord of light, while it is itself sovereign in the intelligible world, and the parent of intelligence and truth. Without having a vision of this Form no one can act with wisdom, either in his own life or in matters of state.<sup>208</sup>

The idea of an inferential god was explicated by Greek philosophers and passed onto subsequent philosophical movements. The “unintelligibility” theme against religions will be one which will lay the foundation for the development of Platonism into a type of religious movement in order to satisfy the intellectually superior seekers of the day. Augustine realized that the Platonic and Ciceronian gods are wrongly understood and the Biblical God, with its Incarnational presence, is going to pose a problem to the Roman audience. Plato’s Socrates even criticized such “divine apparitions” in the *Republic*.

Ursic points out that “the way out of the Cave is the process of true understanding, of philosophical awakening, which delineates the distinction between the educated and the uneducated.”<sup>209</sup> Essentially, the wanderer travails a circular pilgrimage where “the beginning and the end are one”. For in the education of the philosopher true “essential” knowledge requires the understanding that as one starts in the belly of the cave – so must the wanderer return for the good of humanity. There are

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<sup>207</sup> Marko Ursic, trans. Andrew Louth. “The Allegory of the Cave: Transcendence in Platonism and Christianity”. *Hermathena*, No. 165 (Winter 1998), pp. 85-107

<sup>208</sup> 517BC

<sup>209</sup> Ursic, p. 86

levels of being that are discovered within this allegory by Plato: 1. Imprisonment in the Cave beginning in childhood; 2. the release from being chained; 3. the ascent upward toward the light of knowledge and truth and ultimate “vision” of the Sun; 4. the return back into the Cave to humanity (fellow prisoners) are still captive and blind to this light and essential knowledge.

The Cave, of course, is the physical world. The shadows are the valued objects that are declared and accounted for as what is “real” by prisoners. The climb is that of philosophizing through ratiocination and dialectical analysis by separating what is doxa from what is truth. The Sun vision is the true pure philosophy of the Divine Logos - the cause and creator of all that is good within space/time and material being. Ursic points out

“that the fire in the cave enlightens, that is makes possible, the first level; the sun, which is sovereign over the whole visible world is the source of everything visible, generates the second level; the third level is enlightened, that made knowable by the idea of the Good... ‘This, then, which gives to the objects of knowledge their truth and to him who knows them his power of knowing, is the Form of the Good’ (508E). Knowledge is possible on the basis of things in the Ideas and of Ideas in the highest idea of the Good. The Good is understood by Plato primarily in an ontological and epistemological sense, and only secondarily in an ethical sense.”<sup>210</sup>

Logos, or logoi, means ideas within words or language. Plato is creating a new kind of understanding of reality from a strict sense-experience-reason reduction to that of imagination-sense-experience-reason triad of ratiocination. For the prison stated by Plato is that dwelling which “corresponds to the region revealed to us through the sense of sight, and the firelight within it to the power of the Sun.”<sup>211</sup> One should not forget the

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p. 87

<sup>211</sup> 517B

Divided Line Theory of Book VI either. For from that illustrative diagram one could argue that the turning and seeing the fire represents that of scientific truth of the material causality of firelight to shadows – however, even this power of humanistic ratiocination seems incomplete and points beyond the scientific truth of material causation– toward a transscientific knowledge, if you will, of an even truer cause.

Pedagogically, Usric makes this observation, “Plato’s myths and allegories – and in particular the Allegory of the Cave – are not only introductory tales, parables of some kind, the chief purpose of which is to provide the teacher with concrete examples, which make it possible for him to bring the pupil closer to an abstract truth (ideas) ... namely that our world, the *whole* cosmos of sight and sense experience – is a cave!”<sup>212</sup> Plato’s theory of education, therefore, was based on the idea that the spectator becomes the participant. The idea is that the reader/listener is to be brought into the dialogue and the drama at the same time. Thus, both reader/listener and character arrive at the finish line together exhausted but enlightened or even converted.

R.C. Lodge in his work, *Plato’s Theory of Education*, states,

Plato’s theory of education is developed formally and with some approach to systematic constructiveness in two dialogues only: the *Republic* and the *Laws*. In the *Republic* the ideal outline is clear and distinct, unhampered by the concrete limitations of actual human experience. In the *Laws* the ideal is still there; but its outline is somewhat blurred by the attempt to apply it to the fluctuating actualities of life, as envisaged by the disillusioned experience of Plato’s old age.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Usric, p. 88

<sup>213</sup> R.C. Lodge. *Plato’s Theory of Education*(New York: Harcourt, Bruce, and Company, 1947)p. 1

The question mainly to be raised by Platonic dramas, it seems to me, is who are these characters and what do they represent? Essentially, Plato places “personas” that are representative of everything from virtues that need overturning, to schools of thought within both religion and philosophy. The goal for this method is found in Plato’s interpretation of his Allegory of the Cave in Book Seven. For after giving us this story of numerous conditions for the journey of education, Plato then gives a specific interpretation through specific analysis so that the reader cannot mistakenly interpret it with his or her own agenda. One could almost see it as similar to a parable with a follow-up interpretation by the speaker like we see exemplified by Jesus of the Gospels. The interpretation is more analytical and logical and moves from narrative story to logical understanding. However, the point of the Allegory of the Cave is to provide an initial structure for understanding how the soul learns to “see the light” of immaterial reality or the Intelligibles of the Good or God as the governing dynamic of all that is. The allegory then moves to the pragmatic reality that once one has seen and/or grasped this light, it is impossible, really, to return to the shadows of secular logic or “doxa” for which people chase after and reward themselves in order to give meaning to their lives. Lodge states, “the vast array of Platonic personae fall roughly into three groups. In the first and largest group we have representatives of the conventional, commonsense Athenian seen of the ruling class...personae that have mass-effect. They reinforce what is said and done...and so extending the range of participants who sit in judgment upon the dramatic action”.<sup>214</sup> He goes on to say that there is a second group of personae that represent “popular thought” such as poets, artists, and theatrical productions. The third

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<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p.3

group of personae is that of the philosophers and religionists who seek to propagate their teachings within culture. Thus, this pedagogical method of Plato and his subsequent theory of education will be highly influential on Plotinus five hundred years later in the founding of what will be called “Neo-Platonism”. Plotinus its founder will be followed by Porphyry, his biographer/editor and adversary to Christianity. In 300CE, Iamblichus will further develop his own school in Athens and formally put together a curriculum of studies in both Greek and Latin for the further promulgation of the philosophical teachings of Plato and Plotinus. Proclus will follow with his own curriculum 410-485CE.

#### **IV. Neoplatonic Allegorical Pedagogy<sup>215</sup>**

John Dillon, in his essay, “Image, Symbol and Analogy: Three Basic Concepts of Neoplatonic Allegorical Exegesis”, argues that there are no real written rules, that he could find, within Neoplatonic commentaries where specific requirements are given for the precise interpretation of two terms concerning Neoplatonic allegory:

*eikon/symbolon* and *analogia/analogon*. Specifically, he concludes that “it is possible, on the other hand, that the rules of Allegory cannot be stated precisely, but must simply be derived from experience – sitting at the feet of one’s master – and from personal inspiration”.<sup>216</sup> This inspiration comes about by the eyes of the intellect/mind.

Allegorical method was indeed a powerful tool for the communication of meaningful

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<sup>215</sup> See, Paulina Remes, *Neoplatonism*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008; Thomas Whittaker, “The Polemic Against Christianity” in *The Neo-Platonists*(Cambridge: University Press, 1928); Richard T. Wallis, “NOYE as Experience” in Blain Harris, 1976; Andrew Smith, *Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge Press, 2004); Gary M.Gurtler, “Sympathy: Stoic Materialism and the Platonic Soul”, in Michael Wagner, ed., *Neo Platonism and Nature*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002)

<sup>216</sup> R. Blain Harris, ed., *Significance of Neoplatonism*(Norfolk: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 1976) p.248

truths in an audience friendly way. Dillon goes onto quote from Proclus' *Commentary on Timaeus* where Socrates declares his intention of giving a recapitulation of his discourse of the previous day on the Ideal State:

“Some (sc. Porphyry), taking the recapitulation of the *Republic* in an ethical sense (ethikoteron) say that it reveals to us that we must enter upon the contemplation of the Universe in an ethically ordered frame of mind; others (sc. Iamblichus) consider that it has been placed before the inquiry into Nature (psyusiologia) as image (eikon) of the organization of the Universe; for the Pythagoreans had the habit of placing before their scientific instruction the revelation of the subjects under enquiry through similitudes (omoia) and images (eikones), and after this of introducing the secret revelation of the same subjects through symbols (sumbola) and then in this way, after the reactivation of the soul's ability to comprehend the intelligible realm and the purging of its vision, to bring on the complete knowledge of the subjects laid down for investigation. And here too the relating in summary of the *Republic* before the enquiry into Nature prepares us to understand orderly creation of the Universe through the medium of image (eikonikos) while the story of the Atantise acts as a symbol (sumbolikos); for indeed myths in general tend to reveal the principles of reality (ta pragmata) through symbols. So the discussion of Nature in fact runs through the whole dialogue, but appears in different forms according to the different methods of revelation”.<sup>217</sup>

Dillon believes that Iamblichus is the one who primarily and formally introduced this theory of allegory into Neoplatonism and that he found it from Neopythagorean sources of inspiration – Numenius and Nicomachus of Gerasa.<sup>218</sup> It is essentially made up of a “three-level system” of exegesis. Before revealing directly the truths of their doctrine, Pythagoreans introduced the disciple to two preliminary steps: 1. “they would

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid., pp. 248-249

<sup>218</sup> Augustine states in *De Civitate Dei* (VIII, xii) – “the most noble recent philosophers, who were pleased to follow Plato, did not wish to be called Peripatetics or Academics, but Platonists...among these the Greeks Plotinus, Iamblichus, and Porphyry are very eminent, and the African Apuleius was an eminent Platonist in both languages, i.e. in both Greek and Latin.” See also *Contra Academicos III, xviii, 41* – “The voice of Plato, which is the most purified and lucid in philosophy, has shone out from the parted clouds of error most of all in Plotinus, who has been judged to be a Platonic philosopher so like to him that one would think that they had lived together, or rather since there is so much time between them, that he [Plato] had lived again in him [Plotinus].”

present to him homoia and eikones of reality”. An eikon was a simpler and more direct teaching. The *Republic* is more of an eikon while the myth of Atlantis is a symbolon – all myths are symbola.<sup>219</sup> 2. The allegorization of characters of the *Parmenides* commentary makes use of the second meaning of *Anologia*. This term was used in Neoplatonic sense as a mathematical or geometrical proportion. But, it is mainly used, according to Dillon, “as the correspondence between the surface meaning of the text (or of the characters, things and actions mentioned in the text) and the metaphysical truths of which it, or they, are the expression”.<sup>220</sup>

The characters of the dialogue, for Dillon, are addressed by Proclus’ commentary on both the *Timaeus* and *Parmenides*. In these commentaries, Proclus reveals that the characters (*prosopa*) could represent higher or lower truths. They could represent virtues that a certain populace may hold – such as pagan pride or lack of sympathy. They could represent philosophical or religious positions with an audience. Dillon states, “reality in the same way that the various classes in the Ideal State of the *Republic* do, and thus, qualify as eikones”, and is best seen by a quote of Proclus:

The father of the discourse should correspond (*analogon estanai*) to the father of Creation (for the creation of the cosmos in discourse is an eikon of the creation of the cosmos by the (demiurgic intellect); while the demiurgic triad which receives the unitary and generic creation of the Father, there should correspond the triad of those who receive the discourse, of whom the summit is Socrates, joining himself directly to *Timaeus* by reason of contiguity of life-force, even as in the paradeigmatic realm the first principle is united to that which is prior to the triad.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> 249

<sup>220</sup> 255

<sup>221</sup> 254

Therefore, should we not be surprised that Augustine, who studied Neoplatonic thought, would have been introduced to not only the direct dialogues of Plato but to the numerous commentaries on the dialogues by Neoplatonic founders and their disciples?

Michael Dunn, in his essay, “Iamblichus, Thrasyllus, and the Reading Order of the Platonic Dialogues”, argues that Iamblichus, following in the master’s footsteps, created a “canon” and codified certain preferences among the dialogues and created a standard pedagogical structure for their study in Neoplatonic schools. “It was not, however, merely a random selection of what Iamblichus regarded as the most important Platonic dialogues: it also constituted a systematic and coherent course of reading in Plato”. Dunn goes on to state unequivocally about the “tetralogies” of Platonic corpus: “1. That they constitute a coherent reading course in the Platonic dialogues, and were so regarded by the ancient Platonists; 2. That the main outlines of this reading course can be discovered; 3. That the tetralogies as a reading course are superior in important respects to the Iamblichan canon”.<sup>222</sup> Specifically, Augustine was probably introduced to what are called the “political or fifth group dialogues” because of his background in rhetoric and his teaching to other rhetoricians for their preparation in the work as hired speech writers for politicians or intelligencia in regards to politics. This reading course is as follows:

*Cleitophon*, or Protrepticus, ethical

*Republic*, or On the Just, political

*Timaeus* or On Nature, physical

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<sup>222</sup> p.60

*Critias* or Atlanticus, ethical

*Minos*, On Law, political

*Laws*, On Legislation, political

*Epinomis*, or Nocturnal Assembly, Philosopher, political

*Epistles*, ethical

Dunn goes on to state, “Plato himself in the prologue to the *Timaeus* makes it a continuation of the *Republic* and the cosmological background to the history contained in the *Critias*”.<sup>223</sup>

Porphyry wrote a book that Augustine would have read – and I would argue – had a major influence on him in how he structured his *Confessiones*. It is called *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Thirteenth Book of the Odyssey*. In it he does an analysis of Homer’s *Odyssey* in regards to the significance of the “cave in Ithaca”. He begins by admitting that there is no historical explanation by the poet as to this significance. He called it “poetical license” but the issue for him was whether to take Homer literally concerning men descending into the cave and the gods ascending out of the cave. For he states,

For, indeed, the whole world is full of gods and men; but it is impossible to be persuaded, that in the Ithacensian cave men descend, and Gods ascend... the poet, under the veil of allegory, conceals some mysterious signification; thus compelling others to explore what the gate of men is and also what is the gate of the gods; what he means by asserting that this cave of the Nymphs has two gates; and why it is both pleasant and obscure, since darkness is by no means delightful, but is rather productive of aversion and horror...Hence, since this narration is full

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<sup>223</sup> p.68

of such obscurities it can neither be a fiction casually devised for the purpose of procuring delight, nor an exposition of a topical history; but something allegorical must be indicated in it by the poet who likewise mystically places an olive near the cave... this cave, therefore, will not be entirely a Homeric fiction. But whether the poet describes it as it really is, or whether he has added something to it of his own invention, nevertheless the same inquiries remain; whether the intention of the poet is investigated, or those who founded the cave.<sup>224</sup>

Thus, Porphyry investigated this poem with the purpose of introducing the student to the concept of allegory.<sup>225</sup> He has at his disposal many analysis by the “ancients”, as he calls them, who had studied and been influenced by this pre-philosophical document.

The ancients, according to Porphyry, consecrated the cave as representing the world. The earth was a symbol of matter from which the world consists. “For caves are, for the most part, spontaneous productions, and connascent with the earth, being comprehended by one uniform mass of stone; the interior parts of which are concave, but the exterior parts extended over an indefinite portion of land...therefore, the world is obscure and dark; but through the connecting power, and orderly distribution of form, from which also it is called world, it is beautiful and delightful.”<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Porphyry. *On the Cave of the Nymphs*. (1917)

<sup>225</sup> David Dawson states, “Augustine uses the terms *allegoria* and *figura* to denote ways in which the Bible (especially the Old Testament), in describing one thing, can also represent something else. Although Augustine would have encountered *allegoria* and *figura* in the course of his Latin rhetorical education, in his own exegetical use of the terms he appeals to Pauline precedent: *allegoroumena* (Lat. *Per allegoriam dicta*) in Galatians 4:24, *typos* (Lat. *Figura*) in 1 Corinthians 10:6, and *typikos* (Lat. *Figura*) in 1 Corinthians 10:11...Augustine’s uses of *allegoria* and *figura* are intended to characterize the ways that God uses the Bible to transform human beings, changing them from creatures who oppose the divine will into those who live in joyful obedience to it...Instead, the terms describe the biblical text as it is read by persons who are themselves undergoing the process of spiritual transformation that God is using the text to help bring about.”, in Fitzgerald (1999), p. 365

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 2

Porphyry then moves on to point out that what he calls “theologists” – namely Zoroaster, Pythagorians and Plato – all saw the cave as not only representative of the physical or sensible nature of the world but also its “invisible powers”. For he writes,

“not only, however, did the ancients make a cavern, as we have said, to be a symbol of the world, or of a generated and sensible nature, but they also assumed it as a symbol of all invisible powers; because as caverns are obscure and dark, so the essence of these powers is occult... From hence, as it appears to me the Pythagoreans and after them Plato, showed that the world is a cavern and a den. For the powers which are the leaders of souls... And by Plato, in the seventh book of the *Republic*, it is said, ‘Behold men as if dwelling in a subterraneous cavern, and in a den like habitation, whose is widely expanded to the admission of the light through the whole cave.’ But when the other person in the dialogue says: You adduced an unusual and wonderful similitude,’ he replies, ‘the whole of this image, friend Glauco, must be adapted to what has been before said, assimilating this receptacle, which is visible through the sight to the habitation of a prison; but the light of the fire which is in it to the power of the sun’...that theologians therefore considered caverns as symbols of the world, and of mundane powers, is through this, manifest. And it has already been observed by us, that they also considered a cave as a symbol of the intelligible essence...they thought it to be a symbol of the intelligible world, because that world is invisible to sensible perception...thus, also, partial powers are unapparent, and especially those which are inherent in matter.”<sup>227</sup>

With this document, therefore, we have been able to show that the Allegory of the Cave was widely known and discussed as to both its symbolic allegorical aspects and its connection to philosophical truth about the nature of the world.

## **V. Motive for Writing: Pagan Criticisms Against Christians**

With the rise of the Christian religion within Greco-Roman society and its appearance to be a competitor for truth against mainly Platonist philosophy and the fact of its theocratic motivations, there arose a strong chorus of Pagan intellectuals who

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid., Section 3

sought to dismantle Christianity's claim to ultimate truth both as a religion and as a philosophy for a new way of life. Specifically, Celus, Porphyry and Emperor Julian made strategic and intellectual attempts to discredit Christianity as unintelligible and even dangerous to the survival of the Roman Empire and its continued stability against Barbarian in roads.<sup>228</sup>

Neo-Platonism, or Platonism as it will be referred, was considered by intellectual pagans to be the great hope for the unification of the Empire under one philosophical rubric. Thomas Whittaker put it this way,

it [Platonism] was an attempt to bring the various national cults of the Roman Empire into union under the hegemony of a philosophical conception...Neo-Platonism was that which alone gave unity to all that remained of Greek culture during the period of its survival as such. Neo-Platonism became, for three centuries, the one philosophy of the Greco-Roman world. It preserved the ancient type of thought and admixture with alien elements; and, though defeated in the struggle to give direction to the next great period of human history, it had a powerful influence on the antagonist system, which, growing up in an intellectual atmosphere pervaded by its modes of thought, incorporated much of its distinctive teaching.<sup>229</sup>

Moreover, this philosophy became the central tenant within the curriculum of education throughout the Empire – namely what was called “liberal studies”. Whittaker states that it was only rivaled by “empirical practice” and “rhetorical ability”. Later on this same Neo-Platonist philosophy will wage war against “mechanical philosophy” as it was called – namely that of “Hobbism” in England.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> See James J. O' Donnell. *Pagans: The End of Traditional Religion and the Rise of Christianity* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2015), pp. 165-200.

<sup>229</sup> Thomas Whittaker. *The Neo-Platonists*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. xi

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii

As Eusibius and Augustine proved to be apologists for the Christian faith after its implementation as an officially recognized state religion, so Porphyry and Emperor Julian proved to be strong apologists for both ancient Greco-Roman religion and Platonist philosophy against the growing dominance of Christianity in all its forms. They inherited this polemical stance from a second century thinker named Celsus.

Whittaker writes,

Celsus, writing in the second century, conceives the problem to be that of reconciling philosophical theism with diversities of national worship. It may be solved, in his view, by supposing the supreme Deity to have allotted different regions to subordinate divine powers, who may either be called gods, as by the Greeks, or angels, as by the Jews. Then, to show that the Christians do have no philosophical advantage, he points to the declarations of Greek thinkers that there is one supreme God, and that the Deity has no visible form. On the other side, he insists on the resemblances between Hebrew and Greek legends. Greek mythology, he remarks, has in common with Christianity its stories of incarnations...The more intelligent Jews and Christians are ashamed of much in Biblical history, and try to explain it allegorically. What is supposed to be distinctive of Christian ethics has been put better, because more temperately, by the Greek philosophers. Plato holds much the same view about the difficulty there is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. He declares likewise that evil is never to be returned for evil.<sup>231</sup>

Hence, it was not simply the Manicheans who openly challenged Catholic Christianity in regards to the authority of its scriptures. As will be shown, both Porphyry (late second century CE), and possibly Plotinus before him, and Julian (361 – 363 CE) made frontal assaults against Christians or “Galileans” in their respective orations and writings against the Genesis account of creation in the Old Testament. Furthermore, Books IX through XIII of the *Confessiones* are a form of Scriptural philosophical apologetic specifically against Platonist’s attacks to the Genesis account and the New Testament

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., pp. 136-137

understanding of an incarnational savior and an epistemology of faith seeking understanding for eternal salvation upon death. Moreover, these criticisms will be found both in the writings of Porphyry and Julian respectively.<sup>232</sup>

Both Porphyry and Julian had a sympathetic respect for the writings of the Hebrew scriptures and the Jews in particular. This was mainly, as Thomas Whittaker points out, due to the fact that Judaism did not pose a theocratic threat to the Empire as a whole. Nonetheless, Porphyry did see Christianity as an “unreasoning religion” that was “ground down” by the “superstitious delusion of the ancient idolatry”. He considered Platonism to be a “wise and profitable doctrine which contains the way of true religion.”<sup>233</sup> We will see this term “true religion” used by Augustine for one of his treatises prior to the writing of the *Confessiones*.

What Porphyry argued for was what he called “demonstrative arguments” which give “sound sense and receive the proofs of our doctrines more reasonably, and be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us the reason of the hope that is in us.” Although, Porphyry’s books were destroyed twice by edict in both the fourth and fifth centuries, we still have fragments by the writings of other Christian authors who quote Porphyry directly. For example, Porphyry seemed to focus on the New Testament Apostles and Evangelists concerning their writings about the life of Jesus. For Jerome states in one of his works,

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<sup>232</sup> Henry Chadwick. *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 2 – “Augustine cannot be understood at all if he is treated as some timeless figure out of relation to his age. His early boyhood coincides with the brief reign of emperor Julian. The long conflict between a confident and conquering Christianity capturing Roman society and a fierce pagan counterattack forms the backcloth of much that he writes.”

<sup>233</sup> Porphyry. *Against the Christians* (2004)

Porphyry says, “Paul conquered the whole world, from the Ocean to the Red Sea. Let some say, ‘He did it all for money’; for Porphyry says, ‘(They were) poor and country-dwelling men, seeing that they used to have nothing; for the magicians in Egypt also did wonders against Moses, Apollonius also did them, Apuleius also did them, and any number have done wonders...so they may receive riches from rich and impressionable women, whom they had led astray’. For you say this – (yet) why were they killed? Why were they crucified?”

In another passage Jerome writes, “This passage that impious man Porphyry, who wrote against us and vomited out his madness in many books, discusses in his 14<sup>th</sup> book and says: ‘The evangelists were such unskilled men, not only in worldly matters, but also in the divine scriptures, that they attributed the testimony, which had been written elsewhere, to the wrong prophet’ This he jeers at.”

In Macarius’ *Apocriticus*, we are told that Porphyry “savagely” attacked the Evangelists as inventors and not historians of the events about Jesus. He based this on the fact that there were differing accounts of the Passion that were not “harmonious” but instead “contradictory”. Apparently, Porphyry looked for contradictions about historical events and signification as indicators of fallacious teachings by other religions and philosophies. He also pointed out what he thought to be inconsistencies in the teachings of Jesus himself. In one passage he will refer to Peter as his beloved disciple and then another call him Satan and tell him to get behind him. Essentially, most of Porphyry’s criticisms were in regards to the historicity and literalist interpretation that he applied to the New Testament. His strongest criticism was the emphasis upon the simplicity of faith as opposed to philosophical wisdom and intellectual certainty. Specifically, he criticized the fact that he had yet to meet a Christian that had faith and moved a mountain.

Julian, on the other hand, trained as an outstanding rhetor and very much steeped in pagan philosophy – especially that of Plotinus and Porphyry - used the full and mighty power of his office as Emperor to reverse the legal course that had been initiated by Constantine. By 361 when he ascended the throne of Rome, Christianity had been fully ensconced into the Empire as a state religion. Whittaker writes,

Julian’s solution of the problem, renewed by his reversal of the policy of his uncle, was to grant a formal toleration to all. Both sides are forbidden to use violence, which is entirely out of place where opinions are concerned. Nevertheless, for dignities, ‘the pious’ – that is to say, the adherents of the old religions – are to be preferred. Christians are not allowed to be public teachers of Grecian letters; the reason assigned being that the Greek poets, historians, and orators treat the gods with honor.”<sup>234</sup>

Unlike Porphyry’s works, there is no evidence of the destruction of Julian’s writings. This may be because they were official royal declarations and needed to be preserved for their historical value. Nonetheless, his work *Against the Galileans*, as well as countless letters and orations, were circulated widely throughout the major cities of the Roman Empire during his reign. They represented the revival of paganism – both religiously and philosophically – in restoring what was considered the way of the gods concerning reason and as a safe guard against further military defeats.

Wilmer Wright states that Julian called the Christians “Galileans”. This was mainly because he openly stated that “no prophet comes from Galilee”. Accordingly he writes,

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<sup>234</sup> Whittaker, pp. 141-142 footnote, “For those of ordinary capacity (tois idiotais) the utility of divine myths is sufficiently conveyed through symbols without rational understanding. For those of exceptional intelligence (tois perittois) there can be no utility without investigation into truth of reason continued to the end (ouk aidoi kai pistei mallon allotpias doxes and te sphetera kata noun energeia)

His chief aim in the treatise was to show that there is no evidence in the Old Testament for the idea of Christianity, so that the Christians have no right to regard their teaching as a development of Judaism. His attitude throughout is that of a philosopher who rejects the claims of one small sect to have set up a universal religion...In the fifth century Cyril of Alexandria regarded the treatise as peculiarly dangerous, and said that it had shaken many believers.”<sup>235</sup>

What is interesting is that Julian was educated by Christian teachers. His tone in this work is profoundly aggressive and he borrows heavily from both Celsus and Porphyry before him. All three pagans were sympathetic to the Hebrew God and it seemed similar to their understanding of the demiurge of Plato. All three used Plato extensively in their argumentation against Christianity according to Wright.

In regards to the scriptures themselves, Wright states, “Julian borrowed from Porphyry’s lost polemic in fifteen Books, he does not discuss questions of the chronology and authorship of the scriptures as Porphyry is known to have done.” Supposedly, Julian had many admirers of this text and felt that it was definitive in its refutation as well as making the “Christians look ridiculous”.

Before investigating his writings themselves, it should also be mentioned that Julian was a rhetor of some renown. It is, therefore, most probable that Augustine would have known of him apart from his anti-Christian stance. He specifically mentions him by name in Book VIII of the *Confessiones* in regards to Simplicianus’ story about Victorinus’ conversion from rhetoric and pride to a transformative heart for God.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Julian the Apostate. *Against the Galileans*. (1923)

<sup>236</sup> Augustine. *Confessiones Book VIII*: “As soon as your servant Simplicianus told me this story about Victorinus, I was ardent to follow his example. He had indeed told it to me with this object in view. Later on he added, in the time of the emperor Julian when a law was promulgated forbidding Christians to teach literature and rhetoric, Victorinus welcomed the law and preferred to abandon the school of loquacious chattering rather than your word, by which you make ‘skilled the tongues of infants’ (Wisdom. 10:21).” See also Paul Rigby. *The Theology of Augustine’s Confessions*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 23 – “Victorinus witnesses not only for Christ but against the traditional Roman religion.

Another great rhetorician was Libanius who was a Sophist (314-393 CE). He was an outstanding defender of classical Greek paganism. He writes of Julian as the one who saved and restored rhetoric back to its rightful place of dominance within the curriculum of liberal studies. Jaroslav Pelikan states,

That devotion to the classics and to Greek antiquity was focused on Greek polytheism, so that he could describe one of his rivals as one who ‘personally was a worshiper of the gods’ but who ‘spoke in praise of him who had set himself against them’, meaning Jesus Christ, who, his editor notes in commenting on these words, is ‘never mentioned by name in Libanius’. That is why the accession of the emperor Julian ‘the Apostate’ and his renunciation of Christianity not only meant that paganism was once more in charge, but that ‘the art of oratory came again to be admired’. Therefore, he petitioned Julian, he advised the citizens to have regard for the emperor’s anger, and he mourned his death. And according to Libanius, the emperor returned the compliment: ‘Your eloquence puts you among the rhetoricians, but your actions have enrolled you among the philosophers’. Reporting these words of Julian, Libanius added: ‘I rejoiced...for this was uttered by one who consorted with heaven [*hypo tou theois synoikountos*].’<sup>237</sup>

Moreover, Augustine was on a similar career path himself within his emperor’s circle of influence when he found Ambrose and the Church in Milan. The rhetor was the propagandist on behalf of the emperor and his policies. This is why he struggled with the use of “signs” or words without intellectual integrity or substance – as did Cicero before him. One was expected to lose one’s self in the identity of the emperor in order to

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Augustine witnesses not only to his own conversion experience to Christ but also against, among other things, his pre-conversion adherence to pagan Latin culture, magic, astrology, Academic philosophy, Platonic pride, and, above all, Manichaeism. These are the false testimonies in the dispute between Catholic Christianity and the various cultural and religious institutions of Augustine’s world. For Augustine, the stake in these debates was his, and, by extension, everyman’s, immortal soul... Philosophical proofs are necessary; testimony’s proofs are only probable.”

<sup>237</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan. *Divine Rhetoric: The Sermon on the Mount as Message and as Model in Augustine, Chrysostom, and Luther*. (Crestwood: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001), p.17

receive praise and promotion through the ranks. We really do not know how far Augustine may have gone in this regard.

In *Against the Galileans Book I*, Julian begins with an overview concerning the general demand by people for myths or fabrications instead of truth and logic. They desire because of that “part of the soul which loves fable and is childish and foolish, it has induced men to believe that the monstrous tale is truth.” He then moves on another general overview of humanity’s inherent desire for the knowledge of God and that of nature. “Surely, besides this conception which is common to all men, there is another also. I mean that we are all by nature so closely dependent on the heavens and the gods that are visible therein.” For Julian, this is the universal binding principle that binds all humanity together. He does not need to refer to “Hellenes and Hebrews” to know this truth.

From these general overviews or preliminaries, Julian then goes into his first major critique of Christians. Namely their association to the Jewish bible or Genesis account for propagating the truth about natural creation or that of human nature. He mocks the creation of Eve as a helpmate only to then become such a major disappointment. He then attacks a God that would deny human beings the knowledge of determining what is good or evil. “What could be more foolish than a being unable to distinguish good from bad?” This knowledge according to Julian was basic and gave “coherence” to the mind of humanity. He specifically calls the creation account of Genesis a myth that in turn is blasphemous about God. He does not understand the contradiction of a help meet causing a great fall of humanity and how could a God keep people from having basic knowledge about the world and how it works. He concurs that

Moses and the Jews believe in other gods called angels and that they are not superior to the creator God. He points out that this is very similar to Plato's account of the creation story. For Julian writes,

Now, if you please, we will compare the utterance of Plato. Observe then what he says about the creator, and what words he makes him speak at the time of the generation of the universe, in order that we may compare Plato's account of that generation with that of Moses. For in this way it will appear who was the nobler and who was more worthy of intercourse with God, Plato who paid homage to images, or he of whom the Scripture says that God spake with him mouth to mouth.

Essentially, Julian makes note that Plato's gods are visible in the sense that he sees them in the planets, moon and stars. However, they are only "likenesses" of the invisible gods. Accordingly, Plato knows the intelligible and invisible gods. The remainder of the book is a direct frontal assault on Moses, Jesus, and the Apostle Paul. Paul in particular keeps "changing his views about God, as the polypus changes its colors to match the rocks, and now he insists that the Jews alone are God's portion, and then again when he is trying to persuade the Hellenes to take sides with him, he says, 'do not think he is the God of the Jews only, but also of Gentiles yea of Gentiles also'".

He finally ends this book with this question, "why were you so ungrateful to our gods as to desert them for the Jews? Was it because the gods granted the sovereign power to Rome, permitting the Jews to be free for a short time only, and then forever to be enslaved and aliens?" Julian then rhetorically goes after Jesus in that essentially he never brought any real benefits to his followers. For it is his contention, that mathematics, science and philosophy of the Platonist religion had brought real benefits to its followers. Platonism gave "constitution of the state and the fashion of the law courts, the administration of cities and the excellence of the laws, progress in learning

and the cultivation of the liberal arts, were not all these things in a miserable and barbarous state among the Hebrews?” He then moves to a final question, “If reading of your own scriptures is sufficient for you, why do you nibble at the learning of the Hellenes?” He then argues that Paul and his churches borrowed from Hellenistic philosophers such as the Stoics in formulating their ethics and their theology.

## **Conclusion**

It has been shown that Augustine was educated and influenced heavily in Socratism. I think it somewhat curious that scholars have mainly attributed his analysis of Genesis at the end of the *Confessiones* only to Manichean motivations and influence. What has been shown is that Augustine was also influenced by the pagan criticisms both intellectually and contemporaneously by current pagan attacks while in Carthage for the festival of the martyrs. Therefore, paganism and not Manichean theology was the driving force for the writing of the *Confessiones* and, I would argue, for its structure and meaning ultimately.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### **AUTOPSYCHOGRAPHICAL<sup>238</sup> AUGUSTINE: THEO-RATIOCINATION AND THE PEDAGOGIC – APOLOGETIC METHOD IN THE *CONFESSIONES*: BOOKS I-IX (STRUCTURE)**

We have learned thus far in our investigation that Augustine, at the time of the writing of the *Confessiones*, was more than likely under some polemical critiques for his preaching by the Pagans- Stoics, Manicheans and Platonists in Carthage. If, as Peter Brown has noted earlier in our discussion, Augustine found his apologetic – or what I now call his ***pedagogic-apologetic*** - voice in Carthage North Africa because of these criticisms from outside the Church by Pagan intellectuals; and, also because of the corruption or double minded congregants who were still loyal to pagan philosophical traditions and cultural norms within the Church, then the writing of this document was intended for both the sophisticates and non-sophisticates alike who were fundamentally being influenced by wrong philosophy and wrong religion as Augustine saw it. Furthermore, Augustine felt they did not necessarily understand what it truly meant to both *confessio* of a true belief in the Incarnational Christ nor did they understand fully how the mind/soul experiences a true *conversio* from a materially focused theory of consciousness to that of a Scriptural philosophical mind set. In other words, as the

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<sup>238</sup> My term – Dr. R.H. Craig

Bishop of Hippo, he was now duty bound to be both teacher and defender of the authority of Scripture over and against non-scriptural Church traditions and pagan philosophical influences and polemics against the Christian faith.<sup>239</sup>

In this chapter we will now look at the *Confessiones* itself as to its structure. This will be accomplished by first investigating different theories concerning Augustinian method. We will then further elaborate my own theory of Augustinian pedagogic-apologetic method for translating scriptural teachings into a philosophical theo-ratiocination constructs. This will first be accomplished by examining, in detail, *De libero arbitrio voluntatis*, one of his more systematic analytical accounts, which was fully completed in 395CE – a year before ordination to Bishop - and truly is, it seems to me, a prime example of Augustinian philosophy of Scripture in regards to the explanation of theo-ratiocination within the mind/soul prior to the *Confessiones*. His other earlier works such as *De vera religione* and *De utilitate credenda* do both possess his use of “cave” language and even literal quotes from the Allegory of the Cave itself, but they are far less philosophical and tend to be more homiletical in both their argumentation and presentation – even though they are apologetic against both Platonism and Manicheeism. Finally, we will do an analysis of the Allegory of the Cave structure of the *Confessiones* itself. Following in the next chapter, we will finally investigate this work as to its meaning.

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<sup>239</sup> Matthew Levering. *The Theology of Augustine*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), p. 89 – “The first step came through the books of the neo-Platonists, which freed Augustine from his spatial imaginings about God and evil. Comparing their insights with the Gospel of John’s proclamation of the Word of God and our participation of the Word, he found the Scripture not only revealed this truth more clearly but also showed the path for ascent to the Word – namely, through the Word’s descent. By imitating the Word’s humility, our pride is healed and replaced by love.”

## I. Overview of Methods

It will necessarily be correlated that a philosophical, or theological, method tends to lend itself to the structure or genre in regards to the plotting of argumentation by a thinker in regards to convincing or “converting” the reader and/or listener to a particular logic. It is my contention, therefore, that Augustine had a particular methodology for doing his philosophy – and especially in regards to converting Platonists and Manicheans to the logic of Christianity or Scripture in particular. Because of brevity I will only examine four alternative contemporaneous methods to my own theory – that being Mark Ellingsen’s “allegorical – apologetic” method, Stephen Menn’s “aporetic” method, Frederick Crosson Ciceronian method, and Paul Kobet’s “psychagogic” method.

It is Mark Ellingsen’s contention that Augustine was trained in the thought of “classical learning, Neo-Platonism, and Manicheism”. Because of this training, Augustine was able to combine or create a synthesis of reason and faith. This then developed into an allegorical hermeneutic for interpreting Scripture. By allegorical Ellingsen means “bypassing the Bible’s literal meaning in favor of ‘deeper’ spiritual meanings purportedly hidden in the text.”<sup>240</sup> The author then compares this hermeneutic with the “Method of Correlation model that has dominated much of Post-Enlightenment Theology” which in turn meant that Augustine “interpreted the Bible in light of a set of philosophical assumptions, correlating the Scriptural text with these assumptions by reading it allegorically.”<sup>241</sup> Eventually, Ellingsen argues, Augustine grew

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<sup>240</sup> Mark Ellingsen. *The Richness of Augustine: His Contextual and Pastoral Theology*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), p. 15

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15

less and less dependent on these philosophical logics and instead, chose a more Biblicist or literalist hermeneutic when teaching the truths of Scripture.

When Augustine looked over his philosophical journey, he concluded that it “had been better for him to have read the Platonists before reading Scripture. This helped him, he concluded, more clearly to see the difference between the Biblical witness and Plato.”<sup>242</sup> Ellingsen states that Augustine adopted the Ambrosian “letter-spirit” distinction or the Pauline “Law-Gospel” distinction as explicated in the *Confessiones*. This in turn implies an “allegorical” method such as that of the idea of “God withdrawing so that we might return, that He has descended so we might ascend to Him.” It is his contention that Augustine saw Plato as showing humanity to a kind of salvation – however incomplete and left wanting. For he called humanity to abandon physicalist philosophical “certainties” and the ethical implicates that that kind of philosophy might require - chasing after the “shadows” of physicalist attachments while ignoring the eternal, unchanging, immutable objects of a happy life and ethics.

Ellingsen writes,

“He also asserted that Plato saw the way of salvation, for like the catholic faith he called the human race away from desire for temporal goods to the spiritual. Christianity is construed as making Platonic truths generally available to common people. Indeed, Plato himself was nearly Christian, Augustine contends... He claimed that Scripture makes the deep mysteries of philosophy accessible to all.”<sup>243</sup>

Ellingsen concludes, based on Augustine’s elucidation in Book IX of the *Confessiones*, that Augustine saw God as being in the human mind/soul intrinsically as

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., p. 16

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 17

well as the universe as a whole. The truth, therefore, is actually higher than our minds.

For he writes,

Reason and philosophy have no role in verifying the authority of Scripture in these instances. In fact, at one point in his *Confessiones* as he sought merely to exposit the logic of Christian faith, Augustine insisted that, as in the case of many truths that must be believed on the word of others, one can believe in the authority of Scripture on the word of those who believe in the Bible. On these grounds, he observed, what he once deemed absurdities in Scripture now served for him as a reminder that it is a book for all that could be read easily and yet preserved the deepest part of its mystery.”<sup>244</sup>

Stephen Menn, in his “The Desire for God and the Aporetic Method in Augustine’s *Confessions*” argues that he had neglected in his work *Descartes and Augustine* the use of aporetic method or the “desire and search for God” in *Confessiones* Book IX in regards to Memory and Temptation. Specifically, Mann wants to understand “how aporiai and solutions contribute to the activity of confessing as Augustine understands it.”<sup>245</sup>

He begins with Augustine’s metaphysics of God and the mind/soul. He called Augustine’s method the “discipline of contemplation”. This method leads to pure intellectual cognition of the soul and God. He focused, specifically, on the mind/soul’s capacity to formulate judgments – “including normative judgment on other things and on itself.” This is the way we have of understanding God as “truth” or “nous” in the Plotinian sense. This truth standard is

the *standard* that the soul uses in passing normative judgment on itself and other things. This standard is also the *source* of the soul’s (normative) knowledge of these things, in Augustine’s poetic terms a source of light to the eye of the mind;

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., p. 21

<sup>245</sup> William E. Mann, ed.. *Augustine’s Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 72

of course this comparison goes back ultimately to the Sun analogy of *Republic* 6-7.<sup>246</sup>

This understanding helped Augustine, according to Menn, to see more clearly the relational dynamics of God to the mind/soul. Namely, before he had seen it more as a part -to -the –whole relationship. Meaning the soul was always a part of the whole of God in all aspects of reality. Now, however, Augustine saw the relationship as “relation of measure to the thing measured, of a standard to what is judged by how far it conforms to and deviates from that standard. And this means he can understand how (moral) evil can be in the soul without it also contaminating God...”<sup>247</sup> God is thus not spatially or temporally contaminated but, rather, things and objects are “contained in God without God being spatially extended and divided by the things contained in him...things are ‘contained’ by the divine standard...”<sup>248</sup>

The *Confessiones*, therefore, is a series of aporiai and solutions or questions and non-solutions building and leading to an ultimate solution. This leaves the reader/listener on the edge of climax and anti-climax until rest is eventually made in God. Nonetheless, Menn points out that this is not a new structural method. For he writes, “Plato writes this way, notably, in the *Sophist*. Of course “aporia” a Socratic word, denoting the condition of puzzlement with Socrates induces in his interlocutors (and in his readers) and which he claims to share himself.”<sup>249</sup> Menn suspects that Augustine received this method from “Alexander of Aphrodisias and by Plotinus”.<sup>250</sup> The key for Menn is that nobody else had written with this method in an

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid., p. 72

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, p. 73

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., p.74

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., p. 74

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., p. 75

autobiographical genre. Confession, therefore, is that of bad deeds done and it can be for the goodness within is when that goodness is completely because of God and nothing of individual merit.<sup>251</sup> He does see the *Confessiones* as “formally, an enormous thirteen – book – long – prayer.”<sup>252</sup> Menn states that until Augustine read the Platonist books, he was generally talking to “Cicero’s philosophical writings.” Our next theorist will concur with this Ciceronian conclusion.

Federick Crosson, in his “Structure and Meaning in St. Augustine’s *Confessions*”, states that Augustine was influenced by Cicero’s three dialogues on the philosophy of religion. Specifically, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Cicero is concerned about knowledge of God beyond the religious traditions and their unintelligible analysis. Crosson wrote,

while insisting on the indispensable role of religiousness in securing the public welfare, raises questions about the consistency of the conception of the nature of the gods which the practice of religion presupposes. The dialogue goes further than this: despite its title and the introduction of the topic as theme (i.e., the nature of the gods) in the dialogue itself, it raises the question of whether there is any ground, apart from the stories of the religious tradition, for affirming the existence of the gods at all...the evidence for the existence of the gods must be taken from the world around us, evidence about the nature of the whole that is available to humans from observation and inference. What would such evidence consist of? Basically, that the order of nature can be explained only by the inference that God is the origin of that order or that the gods are.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Menn writes in *Descartes and Augustine* (1998) p. 199 – “Confessing means acknowledging that whatever good we have, we have received from God, and of course the Platonists too grant that our power of knowledge comes from participation in Nous; beyond this, Augustine has already acknowledged God’s special grace in establishing scriptural authority, which guides those who cannot see God until they come close enough to see him. But all this is consistent with assuming that, once we have acquired the power of seeing God, we will be able to do without further assistance. In turning from “presumption” to “confession,” Augustine is acknowledging that he needs more help.”

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77

<sup>253</sup> Gareth B. Mathews, ed., *The Augustinian Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) p. 27

What Crosson argues further is that Augustine, in the *Confessiones*, is using his movement away from the first triadic category of the youthful flesh, toward the second triadic category of the mind and its pride. Augustine wants to move even further toward the third triadic category of the life of human promotion of career and worldly dominance. This triadic division for stages of life is a useful tool. Nonetheless, each of these intellectual steps were direct engagements with the intellectual foundation of the pagan culture and its leadership. Thus, it seems to me, this movement has to be purposeful to Augustine for a multi-dimensional approach to communicating the whole truth of the Gospel as a direct challenge to pagan intellectualism. Crosson seems to be alluding to this idea in regards to Augustine's new significance for purposely following the Platonist's theory of knowledge and education; and leading people in regards to the light that beacons individuals and societies toward the pure light of God and His power to effect and enlighten proper action for the creation of a Christian Rome

The second aspect that Crosson brings out is that of the "hearing God speak" theme throughout the *Confessiones*. For him this is the second level for this work. I wish to argue that God speaks to Augustine not only inwardly but externally through human voices and the holy text. Also, in this regard, Augustine is carrying on an allegorical dialogue in the tradition of the Neo-Platonist. Later, Augustine will write a little dialogue called *On the Teacher* in which

he assimilated his Platonic conception of knowledge to his new found Christianity without hesitation: the light of the upper portion of the divided line that reveals the forms is there identified with the logos of St. John's Gospel, the light that enlightens every man who comes into the world. At the time of writing the *Confessions*, Augustine is still willing to describe the God whom he learned to

discern by reading the Platonists as a light that enlightens the soul's vision(7.10.16).<sup>254</sup>

Hence, God speaks inwardly and outwardly. The Platonist conversion deals simply with God as force dominating and determining Creation. The Platonist was seeking to intellectually convince the culture of the intelligibility of God within substance itself. In regards to morals, both Plato and Aristotle saw the intellect as the determining factor for the control of the will and passions. There is no real conversing with this god or Good in the Platonic sense. Instead, you find this god through logical dialectic and mathematical reasoning. Intellectual enlightenment is the goal in this context. Crosson later writes of Augustine's relational hearing,

to hear God speaking is not to hear or see some paranatural event, it is to come to see the whole of nature as transfigured; it is to enter into and exist in a newly grasped meaning of the whole, illuminated by the light of faith...contrary to the only way in which Cicero could conceive of it, the epiphany of the divine is not just an event within the whole, it is the whole itself as epiphany. The vehicle of God's presence is the created world, the world experienced as telling of God.<sup>255</sup>

Finally, Paul Kolbet has written what I think to be a very illuminating and insightful work for the understanding of Augustinian method – especially in the *Confessiones*. It is called psychagogic method or “psychagogy”. He quotes Abraham Malherbe's scholarship concerning this topic: “The constant attention philosophers devoted to their followers' intellectual, spiritual, and moral growth resulted in a well developed system of care known as psychagogy.”<sup>256</sup> Kolbet states that this method is

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<sup>254</sup> P.33

<sup>255</sup> P. 34

<sup>256</sup> Paul Kolbet. *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), p.

employed in the New Testament itself because of its popularity within rhetorical education and practice throughout the Roman Empire.

Essentially, this was a method developed with the idea of influencing not only the intellect but the psychology or mind/soul to the point of a type of radical/passionate conversion to the argument being presented. This practice could be used both in the law courts for arguing a case; or it could be used as a kind of religious exercise within cultic practices. Poetry was also known for doing this at the time. Kolbet writes,

when someone sought to cure souls through the use of psychagogy, it meant engaging in a more ambiguous practices than what is implied by the alternatives of pedagogy, education, or even dialectic...Rational arguments were thus thought to need supplementation by various techniques consciously designed to enlist the non-rational faculties of the human person into the therapeutic process and assimilate them to its therapeutic aims...psychagogy refers to those philosophically articulated traditions of therapy – common in Hellenistic literature – pertaining to how a mature person leads the less mature to perceive and internalize wisdom for themselves. These traditions, moreover, stress that for therapeutic speech to be effective, it must be based on knowledge and persuade by adapting itself in a specific ways both to the psychic state of the recipient and to the particular occasion... psychagogy is a distinctive use of rhetoric for philosophic or religious ends.<sup>257</sup>

However, Kolbet shows in the first three chapters of his work that this method really began in the Classical period with a cynic philosopher, garb and all, known as Dio. He was then able to show that Plato, Aristotle and eventually Hellenistic philosophers, such as Cicero and Seneca, used the method extensively.

In regards to Dio of Tarsus, he gave great orations to entire cities in which he filled up amphitheatres with thousands of attendees. Kolbet states that Dio promoted

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<sup>257</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9

himself as an instructor of cities “coming by divine guidance to address and counsel them. He removed himself from those known as “sophists” for he did not produce these psychagogic orations with monetary gain in mind. Instead, he saw himself as a kind of physician for the mind/souls of his listeners. It was Dio’s contention that his speeches would “make people happier (eudaimonousi) and better and more self-controlled and more able to administer effectively the cities in which they dwell.”<sup>258</sup> He calls for both education (paideian) and reason (logon) together for the cure of mind/souls.<sup>259</sup> For as Dio indicates, “education and reason as the essential ingredients of the curative process, stating that the one ‘who throughout life employs that remedy with consistency finally comes to a healthy, happy end’ (telos ugies kai eudaimon)”.”

Kolbet then writes of Socrates’ and Plato’s use of the imagery of the dark cave in the use of describing life as a pilgrimage. For he states,

Plato likens the visible realm to a dark cave where people have been shackled since childhood with bonds fastened so firmly that their heads are prevented from turning. He later explains that the bonds are those ‘of kinship with becoming, which have been fastened’ to human nature ‘by feasting, greed, and other such pleasures and which, like leaden weights, pull its vision downward. A fire with a ling path along which objects are carried stands behind the prisoners. The only things they have seen since birth are the shadows cast by the objects on the wall in front of them, and the only voices they hear are from those who carry the objects. Plato points out that the prisoners ‘would in every way believe that the truth is nothing other than the shadows of those artifacts.’ Furthermore, if they could talk to one another, they would ‘suppose that the names they used referred to the things they see passing before them.’... Plato then invites his reader to imagine what it would be like to have one’s bonds loosed and to ascend from the darkness and shadows of the cave to the fully illumined world...painful process where over an extended time all of one’s judgments are reordered in such a way that actual objects began to be seen as real rather than their shadows, and a

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid., p. 22

<sup>259</sup> Ibid., p. 24

proper reference of words is shifted to no longer refer to shadows... Plato's 'ascent', therefore, describes a shift in the mind's 'mode of cognition' rather than 'a passage from one world to another' as it begins to understand 'reality in terms of the universal principles, the intelligible structures and natures, which appear and are exemplified in sense-experience.'<sup>260</sup>

Moreover, in regards to this "conversion" of the mind/soul for Plato, he understands that human nature suffers from a "double ignorance" problem of sorts. "Not only are they 'in the grip of ignorance' due to a lack of knowledge, but they are also, like those prisoners who have become experts at looking at shadows, convinced of their own wisdom."<sup>261</sup> Thus, Kolbet sees the Allegory of the Cave as a psychagogic exercise used to bring about enlightenment of the mind/soul and an understanding of *ratio or intellectual* conversion – not a conversion that entails both intellect and will as Augustine comes to teach and preach.

In conjunction with Kolbet's rhetorical methodological analysis, it seems to me, that Augustine may well have been purposely placing his story/life pilgrimage into an allegorical structured journey in a similar order to Plato's psychagogic allegorical method of the Cave. I would further argue that Augustine promoted a new conception of God from that of the historical philosophy of both the past and the present within pagan culture. He is seeking to lay down a foundation for reinterpreting this famous iconic work of philosophical/rhetorical composition in which was argued for the conversion of the "Republic" intellectually– through the assent of the mind from "doxa/opinion" to "alethia knowledge/truth". Augustine, also, is seeking to create an understanding of "conversion", both philosophically and theologically, toward a God

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid., p. 29

<sup>261</sup> Ibid. p. 30

that does not control or determine causality in nature in regards to human experience, but rather a God that is immanently in relationship with humanity as it experiences causality by the choices that it makes, and thus, uses the circumstances of our living to beacon us toward Him in reconciliation and renewed love for Self and the Other through conversion of the will necessarily and not the intellect.

## II. Plato's Influence on Augustinian Method in His Earlier Writings

Many contemporary scholars are now acknowledging that more than likely Augustine had access to Latin translations of Plato – such as Cicero's *Meno* - and even some direct Greek writings of Plato as well.<sup>262</sup> For decades, it was thought that he had such a cursory knowledge of ancient Greek that he would have only been able to read Latin translations or mainly Hellenistic philosophical interpretations of Plato in the course of their own writings. Others have argued that he had access to only what were called philosophical handbooks with fragments of original content. However, scholars are now coming to believe that Augustine knew Greek better than portrayed in the *Confessiones*. Mainly this is due to both his rhetorical studies and his rhetorical teaching which would have required Greek knowledge in order to advance as far as he did in his career to official rhetor in Milan on behalf of the emperor. "Latin only" would

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<sup>262</sup> See Brian Stock. *Augustine's Inner Dialogue*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.42-44; In other places Augustine himself speaks of his favoritism for the *Septuagint* which was the Greek Old Testament because of the ancient story of those early copyists who all came up with the same translation word for word. See also, *De Civitate Dei* (book X, 1) - " 'Piety', again, or, as the Greeks say, *eusebeia* is commonly understood as the proper designation of the worship of God. Yet this word also is used of dutifulness to parents...From this usage it has also come to pass that God Himself is called pious, in which sense the Greeks never use *eusebein*, though some passages of Scripture, therefore, they have sought to preserve the distinction by using not *eusebeia*, the more general word, but *theosebeia* which literally denotes the worship of God."

not have cut it.<sup>263</sup> Moreover, Augustine makes it plain in *De Doctrina Christiana* that a teacher of scripture should in fact study the text in its original languages of Hebrew and Greek in regards to the meaning of signs/words in the text itself. His sabbatical year for the study of Scripture may well have been a time of linguistic study as well as theological study in preparation for his Bishopric office. I think his statements concerning his dislike for Greek in the *Confessiones* are rhetorical in nature for the purpose of the hidden meaning and did not imply that he never mastered the language at a later point in life or career.

What can be argued, it seems to me, is that he certainly mentions both Socrates and Plato by name quite often in his earlier works and he uses, what I call, “cave language” often in his more philosophical analysis – especially in the *Confessiones*. From a structural standpoint, he employs the Platonic “ascent of the soul” motif throughout his earliest writings and especially up to his *Confessiones* in which he rejects the Platonist *eros* ascents for the Scriptural *agape* ascents.<sup>264</sup> For Frederick Van Fleteren states in his article “Ascent of the Soul”, that “in antiquity, ascent of the human soul proceeds from the sensible world to the interior self and then to God. This motif underlies most of Augustine’s early works, and two of his major works, *Confessiones* and *De Trinitate*.”<sup>265</sup> I agree with Fleteren in regards to its use in the *Confessiones* – but I

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<sup>263</sup> See Carol Harrison. *Augustine: Christian Truth and Fractured Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16 – “In considering the relation between Christianity and philosophy in Augustine’s conversion – and his later thought – we perhaps also need to remind ourselves, if it has not already become clear, that philosophy was an integral and essential part of Augustine’s cultural milieu and of his own intellectual mindset. It was unthinkingly adopted as the means to examine, discuss, and evaluate truth. This was true of Christianity, at least from the second century onwards, as it was in pagan society in general.”

<sup>264</sup> See Peter King. “Augustine’s Anti-Platonist Ascents” in William E Mann, ed. *Augustine’s Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 6-25.

<sup>265</sup> Alan D. Fitzgerald, ed. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*. (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), p. 63

would further argue that it was the Platonic model and not the Platonist model that was consistently used through 386 – 397 CE and especially in his three major works as Bishop from 395-397CE just before his work began on the *Confessiones*. By Platonic, I mean the Allegory of the Cave ascent model and not the Plotinian ascents. The cave language is what differentiates the two. The cave language is found in *De Libero Arbitrio Voluntatis*, *De Vera Religion Liber*, *De Utilitate Credenda Liber*, and *De Doctrina Christiana*, and *Confessiones*.<sup>266</sup> In each of those works there are references to Plato, specifically, and there is also “cave language” or “ascent language” throughout.

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<sup>266</sup> In *De vera religion*, Augustine examines in detail Socratic, Platonic and Platonist ratiocination. For he states, “Every approach to a good and blessed life is to be found in the true religion, which is the worship of one God, who is acknowledged by the sincerest piety to be the source of all kinds of being, from which the universe derives its origin, in which it finds completion, by which it is held together...[God] that it is he alone who is above our minds, the one by whom every soul and the whole of this world has been fashioned, was later put by Plato into writing which was more agreeably, if not more effectively, persuasive. These men, you see, were not of the caliber to turn the minds of their fellow citizens to the true worship of the true God, away from their superstitious regard for idols and from the vanity of this world...I believe the master [Plato] would answer that this could not be done by any human being, unless the power and wisdom of God were to except him from the ordinary course of nature and from any human teaching and, by enlightening him from the cradle with some inner illumination, were to adorn him with such grace, strengthen him with such firmness of purpose, and finally bear him up with such majesty, that he would shun everything that depraved humanity sets its hear on, endure everything that horrifies it, do everything that amazes it, and in this way by this sovereign love and authority would convert the human race to such a healthy, saving faith...the turning away from earthly affairs and conversion to the one true God is so openly advertised and sought after day after day...” pp. 31-33

In *De utilitate credenda*, Augustine states, “To say, however, that now, when I have turned away from all those shadows of reality...when I loved those shadows and was held ensnared by them, I was enlightened and shone with light – that, to put it as kindly as possible, is the statement of someone thinking too dimly about the subject but keen to talk about it...It is like what what happens after a long period of blindness and darkness. Our eyes are barely open and they still reject the light, blinking at it and turning away from it, even though it is what they want, and most of all if anyone tries to show them the sun itself. It is like this now with me. I do not deny that there is something words cannot describe, the soul’s one and only good, that is visible to the mind, and sighing and lamenting, I confess I am not yet fit to gaze it.”, pp.118-119

In *De doctrina Christiana*, Augustine states, “And anyone that does not see this is like a blind man in the light of the sun, whom that clear, bright light, presenting pouring into the place where his eyes should be, benefits not at all. Those, however, who do see it and run away from it, have had the sharpness of their minds blunted by growing accustomed to the dark shadows of the flesh. So people are beaten back from their home country, as it were, by the contrary winds of crooked habits, going in pursuit of things that are inferior and secondary to what they admit is better and more worthwhile... That is why, since we are meant to enjoy that truth which is unchangeably alive, and since it is in its light that God the Trinity, author and maker of the universe, provides for all the things he has made, our minds have to be purified, to enable them to perceive that light, and to cling to it once perceived.”, p. 110

Before looking at those works specifically, we need to understand more fully the “ascent of the soul” method within its historical use in ancient Greek thought and rhetorical studies to which Augustine would have most certainly been exposed.

It is thought that this method was first developed by the Pythagoreans and the Orphic religion in the mid-sixth century BCE. Fleteren states that Plato was thought to have been a “modified Pythagorean” based on his use of this method in *Republic VII*.<sup>267</sup> He goes on to state,

“Diotima’s speech to Socrates recounted in *Symposium 203e-211b*, and the image of winged horses, chariot, and charioteer of *Phaedrus* are the most ancient extant literary ancestors to Augustine. Plato indicates the human path to the Good and the Beautiful (*Symposium*), intellectual and moral (katharsis). The ‘eye of the mind’ can be trained to see ideal forms. Vision of the Good defines Plato’s philosopher-king. All strive for the immortality of wisdom – few attain it.”<sup>268</sup>

Plotinian and Porphyrian schools modified Plato’s ascent model – called by them (anabasis or anagoge). This is six hundred years after Plato in the third century CE. In both models – Plotinian we have in the *Ennads 1.6* and the Porphyrian we can only conjecture – they seem to follow the logic of that laid out by Plato in the *Symposium*. Stephen Menn has an efficacious delineation of the two movements that are under the rubric called “Platonism”:

I have tried to distinguish between “Platonic” and “Platonist.” The Platonists are members of the Platonic school, the school that tried to extract a systematic philosophy from Plato’s dialogues, which flourished especially from the first through sixth centuries AD; their philosophy is Platonism, and the Platonist doctrines are their doctrines, while a Platonic doctrine is a doctrine found in Plato’s dialogues... Since writers from Augustine’s time through Descartes’, whether or not they read Plato directly, always interpreted him either through

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid, p. 63

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. 63

late ancient Platonism or through doxographical reports in Cicero or Aristotle...<sup>269</sup>

Moreover, it should be noted as well that Augustine, himself, makes this distinction between Platonic and Platonists in both the *Confessiones* Book VII and in his *Retractiones* multiple times. This then lends credence to the argument that he had direct access to Platonic dialogues and doctrines as well as Neo-Platonist works – most probably through his priest and mentor Ambrose. Surely, Ambrose, as both a former pagan rhetor/orator and former government official, would have had in his own collection of works by Plato and thus, direct access to the dialogues of Plato – for we do know that he had well grounded knowledge of Greek. Nonetheless, both schools of thought called for modification of Platonic doctrine in this regard – which was to place as the ultimate goal an absolute and permanent theosophical union with the “One” in this life. Supposedly Plotinus achieved this goal multiple times while Porphyry reports he only achieved it once. Fleteren further writes,

the ascent begins with sensible reality. From beauty perceived in matter, the soul moves to the interior self, toward virtue and moral purification. Next the intellect cleanses itself through study of the liberal arts, ending with dialectic and philosophy. In this process the soul begins to understand its true nature. Only then is the mind prepared to intuit One, Plato’s Good and Beautiful...the human intellect aspires to find the spark of the divine within, to ascertain what the soul really is, and then to unite itself with the ‘En’ or the act of union is termed ‘Enosis’...in these authors, as in *Republic* 7 the object of the ascent, though they never themselves attained it, was permanent union with the Absolute, even in this life.<sup>270</sup>

Hence, we find this model throughout the writings of Augustine for leading the souls of humanity unto God. It is useful to a point except for the fact that it really only leads to

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<sup>269</sup> Stephen Menn. *Descartes and Augustine*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. xii-xiii

<sup>270</sup> Fitzgerald., p. 64

intellectual certitude of the immutability of God and the mind/soul within the material body. Moreover, it left Augustine frustrated and the moral catharsis he was seeking never materialized because of the problem of the will as he saw it.

Freteren states that “Augustine had read various doxologies or philosophical encyclopedias” as introduced by the “Milanese circle” for which Bishop Ambrose was supposedly a member. Accordingly, he would have read both Plotinus’ *Enneads 1.6*, and Porphyry’s *De regress animae* both of which lit “an incredible fire” within him as both a young rhetor and spiritual seeker.<sup>271</sup> Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that whenever Augustine teaches or speaks of this method within his writings he uses the *Republic 7* cave language – which I would argue must have been the best known and most rhetorically useful means of teaching what I am calling “theo-ratiocination” or thought about God’s relation to consciousness and rationality.<sup>272</sup> Whether it is the *Soliquium*, *Contra Academicos*, *De Beata Vita*, *De Libero Arbitrio*, etc., the Scriptural doctrines or what I would call his “philosophy of Scripture”, seems to trump that of Platonic models. So in his early writings we see an interesting attempt at synthesis of the Platonist models of ascent with naïve scriptural understanding of his philosophy of God if you will. However, eventually as his theological studies of scripture matured, Augustine begins to see that scripture itself has a perfect and existentially complete teaching for

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid., p.64

<sup>272</sup> Peter King, in his article “Augustine’s Anti-Platonist Ascents”, states, “The rhetorical trope has its philosophical roots in Plato’s image of the Form of the Good as the Sun in the *Republic*, well-known in the Platonic tradition and the clear reference here. It was also more widely available in the culture of his day, for instance in the classical myth of Semele, who persuaded by Hera to insist that Zeus appear to her clothed in light, was incinerated when she tried to look upon Zeus’s divine light. Augustine’s fellow-African, Apuleius, even says that intermediate divine spirits are so resplendent that they ‘beat back’ (*reverberant*) our gaze. This is an intrinsic part of the ascent...the upward movement of ascent stems from God; the contrary downward movement, which prevents ascent, comes from Augustine’s “weight”: his *consuetude carnalis*.” – See William E Mann. *Augustine’s Confessions: Philosophy in Autobiography*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 9-10

the total cure of the mind/soul in its totality of the consciousness of God, Self, and the World. Fleteren goes on to write,

Augustine's understanding of the ascent is gradually refined by his assimilation of biblical doctrine: the soul is the spark of the divine but a creature of God, formed in his image; early on, Christ as mediator is understood in the sense of a moral authority and exemplar; grace appears. Augustine hoped to harmonize Christianity with the ideal of the ancient pagan sage.<sup>273</sup>

### **III. Pedagogic-Apologetic Method for Theo-Ratiocination**

I wish now to present my own model for Augustinian method not only in the *Confessiones* but in other writings leading up to, and even after, this monumental work. When I speak of the “pedagogic” aspect of this model I mean to say the philosophical or rational/demonstrative – in both the Platonic and Aristotelian sense or as a philosophy of science aspect. Yes – I think that Augustine wanted to translate Scriptural conceptual frameworks into demonstrative scientific ratiocination<sup>274</sup> for the inner workings of the mind/soul; a description of its corruption and dysfunction; and finally to its ultimate and only cure through conversion. In other words, Augustine produced a complete understanding for, what we would call today in analytic philosophy, a philosophy of mind or philosophy of consciousness through a demonstrative method of introspective historical description of his own consciousness through space/time. Moreover, when I speak of the “apologetic” aspect of this model I am referring to the teachings or theo-ratiocinations of Holy Scripture from the Augustinian point of view. Thus, Augustine

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid. p. 64

<sup>274</sup> Wayne Hankey writes in this article “*Ratio*, Reason, Rationalism”, “Ratiocination (*ratiocination*) is the process of reason's search, its discursive motion. Reason is, properly, mental sight or vision. In this contrast to actuality of reason is stressed against process. Science (*scientia*) is seeing the reality on which reason is focused.” – in Fitzgerald. *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, p.700.

wanted to demonstrate that there is no consciousness or Being without an illuminative Divine Logos (Logic/Standard) or (Referent) always present in the mind/soul– whether ascended to or rejected by the free use of what we even call today – the will. The “will” is that power of the mind/soul to control concentration toward right or wrong thinking within consciousness – with freedom for ascent or descent within the cognitive process. Moreover, Augustine always sought to “proof” or “demonstrate” a “faith seeking understanding”. I will, of course, investigate this further in the next chapter as to the “meaning” of the *Confessiones*. However, I wish to argue now in this chapter that Augustine was, in fact, the father of Medieval, Early Modern, Modern, and Analytic philosophy as we study them today within academia. There would not have been a Hobbes, a Descartes, a Leibniz, or a Frege<sup>275</sup> without an Augustine. His pedagogic – apologetic model was the beginning of a scientific or demonstrative explanation of human consciousness or mind on the one hand through historical/psychological description– and the explanative cure of the mind/soul’s self induced dysfunctionality through a redefining of reason or ratiocination as, instead, a theo-ratiocination process that encompasses the totality of existential experience in the life of the body within space/time or this spatio-temporal dimension. To further my argument I would like to

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<sup>275</sup> Gottlob Frege. “On Sense and Reference” states, “It is natural, now, to think of there being connected with a sign (name, combination of words, letter), besides that to which the sign refers, which may be called the reference of the sign, also what I should like to call the *sense* of the sign, wherein the mode of presentation is contained...the reference and sense of a sign are to be distinguished from the associated idea. If the reference of a sign is an object perceivable by the senses, my idea of it is an internal image, arising from memories of sense impressions which I have had and acts, both internal and external, which I have performed. Such an idea is often saturated with feeling ; the clarity of its separate parts varies and oscillates. The same sense is not always connected, even in the same man, with the same idea. The idea is subjective: one man’s idea is not that of another.”; Also See – “The Thought: A Logical Inquiry”. *Mind*. New Series, Vol. 65, No. 259 (Jul., 1956), pp. 289-311

investigate Augustine's pre-writings prior to 397CE and then the writing of the *Confessiones* itself.

Part of the pedagogic aspect of this model is that Augustine was not only influenced by Plato but appears to have been highly influenced by Aristotelian philosophical arguments concerning both pedagogy and substances prior to his introduction to Neo-Platonism - although, both Plotinus and Porphyry were influenced by Aristotelian arguments and analysis themselves.<sup>276</sup> In Book IV. xv (24) of the *Confessiones* specifically, we begin reading of Augustine's materialist/physicalist philosophical outlook concerning the mind and the world of corporeal forms. For he writes,

My mind moved within the confines of corporeal forms. I proposed a definition and distinction between the beautiful as that which is pleasing in itself, and the fitting as that which pleases because it fits well into something else. I supported this distinction by examples drawn from the body. Moreover, I turned then to examine that nature of mind, but the false opinion which I held about spiritual entities did not allow me to perceive the truth. The truth with great force leapt to my eyes, but I used to turn away my agitated mind from incorporeal reality to lines and colors and physical magnitudes of vast size. Because I could not see any such thing in the mind, I thought I could not see my mind...just as vicious acts occur if obsession has captured the mind's affective part which is at the root of the impulse to carnal pleasures, so also errors and false opinions contaminate life if the reasoning mind is itself flawed. That was my condition at that time. For I did not know that the soul needs to be enlightened by light from outside itself, so that it can participate in truth, because it is not itself the nature of truth. You will light my lamp, O Lord. My God you will lighten my darkness (Ps. 17:29), and of your fullness we have all received (John 1:16). You are the true light who illuminates every man coming into this world (John 1:9), because in you there is no change nor shadow caused by turning (Jas. 1:17).<sup>277</sup>

Later on in that same book, we learn that Augustine's teacher of rhetoric at Carthage as well as "others too who were reputed to be learned men, used to speak of this work

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<sup>276</sup> Augustine. *De Civitate Dei*. (New York: Random House Publishing, 1993), p. 257 – "This has given them such superiority to all others in the judgment of posterity, that, though Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, a man of eminent abilities, inferior in eloquence to Plato, yet far superior to many in that respect..."

<sup>277</sup> Henry Chadwick. *Confessions*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 68-70.

[Aristotle's *Ten Categories*] with their cheeks puffed out with conceit, and at the very name I gasped with suspense as if about to read something great and divine". From this statement it is possible to see Aristotelian logic within Augustine's mind concerning matter and its differing Aristotelian categories and demonstrative methodology. We should now look at Aristotle's thought specifically in order to understand fully Augustinian method.<sup>278</sup>

Aristotle states in Cat. 2a1-20, that Substance is defined as:

that which is called a substance most strictly, primarily, and most of all – is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject, e.g. the individual man or the individual horse. The species in which the things primarily called substances are, called *secondary substances*, as also are the genera of these species. For example, the individual man belongs to the species man and animal is a genus of the species; so these – both man and animal – are called secondary substances...It is clear from what has been said that if something is said of a subject both its name and its definition are necessarily predicated of the subject.

We can see by this opening definition that Aristotle is implicitly stating that the concept of Substance must be broken down into its constituent parts. Basically, it is made up of two subcategories which are primary substances and secondary substances. Based on his theory of predication, it is possible to take an object in concrete or material existence and to deduce the predicates to the point of a base line causation or causality known as the primary substance. This is primarily the *ousia* in which nothing further can be said of this causality being for it is intrinsic to itself. For it predicates nothing further. This, then, is the "individual" or peculiar entity or identity. Augustine would have understood

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<sup>278</sup> See – Sarah Byers. "Augustine and the Philosophers" in Mark Vessey. *A Companion to Augustine*. (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell Publishing, 2012), pp. 175-186, "Yet certain aspects of Aristotle's natural philosophy and ethics can be detected in Augustine's work, as has been occasionally noted in literature...He had access to Aristotelian ideas through Varro's syncretized presentations of the 'ancients', as well as through Neoplatonism."; See also John Rist. *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

this as Aristotelian Substances as opposed to pre-existent Platonic Forms. The other subcategory of Substance is what Aristotle called secondary substances. These are substances in a secondary sense. They are secondary because they are predicated and relationally descriptive of primary substance or the substantial cause for an existent. Hence, the individual man (this) would be secondarily understood relationally as a (such) – such as the relation of man to animal or tree to plant. These relational understandings are called Species and Genus. The species is closest to the primary substance but it still predicates primary substance while the genus predicates the species. Aristotle uses this demonstrative methodology in order to clarify and qualify our understanding or knowledge of Being as it means to be – to exist. Thus, the name of an object and its definition are both predicated of the primary substance. According to Aristotle, the species, genus, and definition are the Formula of an object. Therefore, universal knowledge, from the Aristotelian perspective, is scientifically deduced and inducted through reason and the engagement of a particular object with a similar object of like nature. However, a person does not need to see or scientifically analyze every object of like kind to formulate a universal knowledge of objects both particular and general. Aristotle's mind/soul does not recollect but discovers partial truths through abstraction, prediction, and demonstrative logic; and then formulates universal knowledge from these predicates and applies it carefully and thoughtfully to other composites of like nature to form universal knowledge. With this Aristotelian influence established, let us now investigate Augustine's application of this pedagogic or demonstrative method to his apologetic or proof for the existence of God, or his philosophy of God, and God's necessary presence within the mind/soul in order to create human consciousness or Being – hence, theo-ratiocination.

Augustine's treatise *De Libero Arbitrio Voluntatis* is one of the best models of his early scriptural philosophy in Dialogue/ Treatises structural form in which he directly translates scriptural constructs into philosophical categories and logic. It was begun in Rome 387-388CE and then completed in 395CE back in Africa as priest in Hippo Regius. Furthermore, it was started two years after his conversion to Catholic Christianity and one year after his baptism by Ambrose of Milan in 386CE. Nonetheless, it is a marvelous sampling of Augustinian method of theo-ratiocination and his philosophy of the mind/soul or consciousness. For it contains Augustine's proof in Book II of the demonstrable existence of God.

In Book I Augustine and Evodius are in a contemplative discussion on the reason for suffering in the world and purpose behind the creation of evil. The standing question was whether evil was a creation of God or of humanity. Augustine argued that suffering can be accounted as the discipline of God for wrong action but that the evil of human activity was not of God but rather based on the free choice of the will in the nature of the human being. In Book II, the discussion moves to what do we as human beings really know? Augustine enters into differentiating between faith (believing) and knowing (intelligence). The basis for Evodus' knowledge to this point was really a faith or belief in the affirmative to which was based on authoritative theological teaching. Augustine wants to show him that the knowledge of God's existence is common to **all** humanity and to what it means to be a human-being. For he states, "do you know this clearly, or do you believe it willingly without really knowing it, because you are prompted by authority?"<sup>279</sup> This is very similar to Descartes' Methodical Doubt

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<sup>279</sup> Augustine. *On Free Choice of the Will*. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1964), p. 35

methodology for doubting and then constructing from common truth of the mind.

Notice that Augustine is focusing his proof from experience of consciousness and not on substratum questions of other disciplines or authorities. His proof is broken down into three main sections: 1. How is it proved (method) that God exists?; 2. Are all things good from God?; 3. Is free will one such good?

He begins with an analysis of human consciousness. The most basic form of consciousness is the question as to one's knowledge that one exists. This for Augustine is the basic building block of the question of Being itself. He thinks that it is proven that one exists by the fact that one lives and perceives a body and bodily senses. However, Augustine states that there is still a higher or more excellent form of Being which he calls understanding. Understanding is the cognition of being conscious of perceiving and knowing.

We perceive corporeal objects through the bodily senses. A bodily sense cannot perceive itself. It is rightly fitted to the object to be perceived. He states that we know this because of another sense called the "inner sense". The inner sense is common to both humans and beasts; and it seems to recognize and know the bodily senses and their percepts. Everything that the body senses passes through the lens of the inner sense which is a type of "mind's eye". However, this same sense lacks understanding and is inferior to reason. For he states that this process of consciousness is based on the faculty or power in relation to the object to be experienced. He challenges the object that the one who understands is better qualitatively than that which is the object of understanding. Augustine argues that "everything that understands is better than what is understood. This is false because man understands wisdom yet is not better than

wisdom.”<sup>280</sup> For Augustine, the inner sense is superior to the bodily senses because it judges and controls in regards to immediate judgment of pleasure and pain – embrace or retreat. It also determines what is lacking or is sufficient. This inner sense is the living activity which is more superior to merely existing. The inner sense is a type of immediate advisor to the bodily senses to resist or embrace.<sup>281</sup>

The next or higher faculty in the process of consciousness is the power of reason. This is more excellent because it is the power to analyze and distinguish the percepts and data of body, bodily senses, and the advice of the inner sense. Reason controls and judges these lower processes and therefore, is better or more excellent. This activity is understanding which is more superior to instinctual judgment of the inner sense. The creature that merely exists is inferior to the one that both lives and understands through the faculty of reason. Reason, according to Augustine, is the head or eye of the soul. There is nothing in the nature of man that is more excellent than the power to evaluate and distinguish through category or definitional schematic the percepts of data that are accumulated in an instant by the mechanisms of the human body. The rational mind still realizes that it is inferior and that it is still not adequate to totally grasp the truth in its existential totality. For he states, “reason discerns something eternal and immutable”. There is still something that stands outside the self and is objectively true even if it is grasped by multiple persons and viewed by all at the same time.

The object can stand outside of the consciousness but enter into consciousness through bodily experiences. Each person in their multiple experience of an object can,

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid., p. 47

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., p. 47

in fact, experience the object at the same time and yet have different sensual experiences in retrieving data from the experience. Each sense is the ownership of its master.

However, objects do not change simply based on the individual experiences of the actor.

For Augustine states,

By 'our own' and 'personal', I mean that which each one of us consumes for himself and what each alone perceives in himself as belonging properly to his own nature. By 'common' and, as it were, 'public', I mean what is perceived by everyone who perceives, without its being changed or destroyed.<sup>282</sup>

Taking his lead from Plato, Augustine then moves his proof of the existence of God to the reality of the common or public knowledge of numeric values which are grasped not by the bodily senses but rather by the rational mind. Its validity or truth is not determinate by individual sensual experiences. He states, "the order and the truth of number (*ratio et verities numeri*) are present to all who think."<sup>283</sup> Numbers are not based on the perceptions of bodily senses but rather are impressed upon the human soul and are common to all who think. Augustine argued that numbers are used interchangeably based on "fixed and unchangeable law". For he further states,

men to whom God has given ability in argument, and whom stubbornness does not lead into confusion, are forced to admit that the order and truth of numbers have nothing to do with the bodily senses, but are unchangeable and true and common to all rational beings.<sup>284</sup>

For Augustine, as with Plato, the mystery of numbers cannot be explained experientially. The numeric value or computational logic seems to find their being only in the minds of people no matter their context or station. Within the consciousness of

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., p. 53

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., p. 54

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., p. 56

humanity, there seems to pre-exist an understanding of the wholeness and unity of the concept of one and that its multiplication and division are based on fixed and unchanging laws of common/public experience. These laws, once mastered, enable humanity to rationally understand bodily senses beyond simple existing. Numeric, computational, scientific logic or physics are apriori and aposteriori and stand whether understood or not understood. These laws of logic cannot be destroyed by personal ownership or personal experience. This, of course, opens the proof to the opportunity to enter other evidence of mysterious understanding that is not capable of being privately owned or claimed individualistically and thus, corrupted as being biased or personalized. For he concludes, “Not without reason was number joined to wisdom in Holy Scriptures where it is said, ‘I and my heart have gone round to know and to consider and to search out wisdom and number’.”<sup>285</sup> Hence, Augustine saw that there were two dimensions to Being. On the one hand are the percepts of appearance and then the reflective cogito of those percepts. On the other hand, there are the pre-existent laws and truths of numbers or numerical rationale. If there is a pre-existent numeric rationale then it has to mean that there must be a pre-existent Creator of such rationale.

Augustine next applies this logic of Being to the truth of wisdom. If there is a basic numeric rationale that everyone adheres to and/or collectively ascents to then does the same hold true for wisdom? He agrees that there are differing “opinions” or thinking about any number of different arts or technes. There are logics about soldiering, farming, priest craft, and political governing. However, he concludes that

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., p. 57

wisdom is really knowledge about ultimate Being. In this case, he is referring to the highest Good. It is the happy life which is the goal of all people. He uses the example of the “road of life” and that the one who seeks the highest Good will become wiser and thus, more happy; while the one who seeks only the earthly “good” will become less wise and more unhappy. For he writes,

the greater his error on the road to life, the less his wisdom, and the farther he is from the truth in which the highest good is discerned and grasped. Moreover, when the highest good has been pursued and obtained, each man becomes happy –which beyond a doubt is what we all wish.<sup>286</sup>

Augustine concluded, therefore, that there exists a hierarchy of knowledge and that we all wish to be truly happy in this life and must climb up the chain of wisdom. He argued that there must be a pre-existent “Idea of Happiness” and a pre-existent “Idea of Wisdom” that is impressed on the mind/souls of all human beings which beacons us to seek after it. Upon finding this wisdom along life’s way then “rest” and “joy” become derivatives of the journey and discovery. True happiness lies beyond the physical appearances of ontological being. However, Augustine does not go as far as Plato as to dismiss the significance of ontological –specifically, the body, as a necessary variable to discovering wisdom. If there are “immutable rules of number” then there are “immutable rules of wisdom”.

These rules of wisdom are also common and cannot be privately owned or destroyed. He later states,

Won’t you also admit the following to be absolutely true: that we should live justly; that the worse should be subordinate to the better; that equals should be

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid., p. 58

compared with equals and to each should be given his own; and that each of these truths is present for you, me, and all to see in common?<sup>287</sup>

Truth, therefore, is one and common to all who think. It cannot be destroyed nor corrupted by human thinking or activity. He is convinced that universally all would agree that humanity should seek incorruption and not corruption and the higher Good is always to be sought after by all. Hence, both number and wisdom are immutable truths and can be found, according to Augustine, in Holy Scriptures.

This Scriptural Philosophy or Philosophy of Scripture states that because humanity can only seek after the Highest Good through reason, then humanity ultimately finds fulfillment in both numeric rationale and wisdom. Scripture combines these two dimensions of wisdom and both are found to be identical. Both “transcend our minds” and both must be perceived through the community of subjectivity. It is through this community of subjectivity that they are given objective validation or verification of Being in the realm of the ontological. This truth, however, is immutable and cannot be corrupted or owned by being discovered. It is pre-created and not a creation of reason. These are called by Augustine as the “inner rules of truth which we perceive in common.”

Humanity has enjoyment in this truth. “Happy indeed is the man who enjoys the Highest Good. It is this truth that reveals all true goods, and every man in accordance with his capacity chooses them, either individually or together, for his enjoyment.”<sup>288</sup> Freedom, therefore, according to Augustine, is not freedom to question truth or to ignore truth, but rather to submit to it. This is not a humanistic freedom based on the

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 61

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 68

powers and faculties of humanity but rather the surrender of human powers to the Highest Good which is pre-existent and ultimately liberates the human mind/soul from the blindness or addiction of temporal goods. If there are any goods in the ontological it is because they participate in the Highest Good.

Finally, in this proof for God, Augustine concludes that if reason, which is humanity's highest power, ascends to wisdom and the Highest Good then there must be something higher in the ladder of knowledge. He concludes, therefore, that it is beyond reason's capacity to fully grasp. He points to Beauty as the example of what is innately impressed on the mind/soul and pulls us beyond ontology to wisdom and the truth behind the object. Unfortunately, most get caught in the "shadows" of the goods and do not push through and submit to the Highest Good. For Augustine writes, "but love of the shadow causes the soul's eye to become too lazy and weak to endure the splendor of the sight of you."<sup>289</sup> For Augustine, the beginning of wisdom must be found in pre-existent Being – ontology is the derivative of the ultimate and Highest Good. Thus, this book by Augustine is an excellent model of the pedagogic – apologetic method and his use of the Platonic Allegory of the Cave as a structural guide for demonstrating his Scriptural philosophy for theo-ratiocination.

#### **IV. Allegory of the Cave Structure in the *Confessiones***

Augustine's *Confessiones* is structured around Plato's theory of education as explicated in Book VII of the *Republic*.<sup>290</sup> By structured I mean that the pedagogical

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<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 75

<sup>290</sup> See, Marko Ursic and Andrew Louth, "The Allegory of the Cave: Transcendence in Platonism and Christianity, *Hermathena*, No. 165 (Winter 1998), pp.85-107; Henry Chadwick, "The formation of Augustine's Mind: Cicero, Mani, Plato, Christ", in Chadwick(1991); James Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Dominic J. O Meara, ed., *Neoplatonism*

method that Augustine employs is that of using imagery through allegorical examples and personas, i.e. his own autobiographical illustrations or exemplars, which are then formally interpreted for the reader in books ten through thirteen. Specifically, the *Confessions* is a polemic against Neo-Platonist theory of education for their own “City of God” in regards to the “conversion” of the intelligence as opposed to the “will” within the soul/mind. The climax of the work is his conversion experience in the garden in which God speaks to him through inner hearing and the Word of Holy Scripture. Hence, Augustine is taking the reader not simply through a one dimensional autobiographical or historical journey. Instead, using Platonic allegorical genre, his is a multi-dimensional composition that takes readers or listeners through his life’s journey but always in constant “dialogue” through both Biblical quotations and representational prayers where God also speaks- not just listens. The characters that he mentions by name, like Platonic and Neoplatonic dialogues of old, are meant to represent specific ways of thinking, living or representational schools of thought that would be very familiar to a pagan audience in the late fourth century Roman empire. With each new philosophical and/or intellectual experience, Augustine moves the reader to a gradation of intellectual and spiritual challenge. With each new tension or experience, Augustine guides the reader to a deeper and deeper understanding of the incompleteness and ineptness that Manichaeism, Stoicism, and eventually Neo-Platonism fails to diagnose the whole of human experience. There are specific exemplars of analysis that seem very similar to Platonic or Neo-Platonic teaching, e.g. his analysis of the theatric or escapism

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*and Christian Thought*(Norfolk: International Society For Neoplatonic Studies, 1991); Emile Zum Brunn, “The Metaphysics of Conversion”, in *St. Augustine*, (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1988); E.J. Hundert, “Augustine and the Sources of the Divided Self”, *Political Theory*, vol. 20, No.1 (Feb., 1992), pp.86-104; Thomas Williams, “Hermeneutics and Reading Scripture”; Joseph Strayer and Dana C. Munro, *Middle Ages*, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959)

by the masses. With the quotation of a Scriptural text or prayerful recollection of God's voice by the narrator, the reader is given theological direction for the proper analysis of the tension - but not necessarily its immediate solution. Those solutions will come in time through the gradual willful or decisional choosing upward toward the ultimate of Platonic allegory which is that of complete liberation from the "cave" and into a reconciled relationship with the governing dynamic of all reality which, for both Neo-Platonism and Augustine, is God. So, in some ways this is his story for the search for Plato's God but it ends up being a completely new understanding of the diagnosis for the failure of both the individual and the collective to live in happiness in the midst of this perfect created order by God. By diagnosing the individual plight or fallenness, Augustine is speaking to the prideful intelligencia and pagan leadership of both Church and State, in regards this crumbling empire; and to the necessity for a new and complete surrender to the Biblical God for its intellectual, moral and political salvation.

It is obvious to me that Augustine is directly challenging the Neo-Platonist "inferred" god conversion of the Allegory of the Cave and replaces it throughout the *Confessiones* with a relational God conversion that is deeply involved in providing inner hearing through prayer and the Holy Spirit; but, also through the direct teaching of Scripture. Moreover, Augustine is redefining the problem of evil by placing it both within the scope of involuntary sin of pride within the will and decisional choices of the free-will that all human beings possess. Finally, he is replacing the authority of human philosophical sophistication and wisdom with the authoritative voice of God through both prayer and Holy Scripture that he apologetically defends as superior to any "Socrates" or philosophical logic and truth. Consistently, throughout the *Confessiones*, the cave

language or phraseology are used such as: *darkness, light, shadow or shadowy, weighted down or by my own weight, ascent, climbing, steps or stepping, chained, bonded, to rise up, break the chains, turning toward, vision, fellow pilgrims and citizens, blinded eyes, conversion, and charioteer*. The following, therefore, is a cursory “cave” language outline of the structure of the *Confessiones*:

### **Confessional Structure**

Books I-3: Sinful Childhood, Locked Down, Bonds of Flesh, Bit Higher Up, See Only in Front of Them

Books 4-6: Artificial Objects, Materialism, Prisoners-like ourselves, Compelled to Hold Heads Motionless, Bonds of Unwisdom, Converse, Pain in Free Thinking, Perplexed with Invisible, Religion, Unable to See as True, Ambrose Sermons=Forcibly Dragged, Loss of Friend-Easier to Look at Shadows,

Books 7-9: Compelled to Look, Walks Further, Neoplatonism, Intelligible Christianity, See the Truth of All Things, Garden Conversion and Vision of Ostia Epiphany, Renounce the Cave and the Call to Return to the Cave

Books 10-13: Analytical Interpretation of the Autopsychographical story told – Possibly four formal treatises written prior to the writing of the Allegory so as to know exactly how to structure the story and what personae and experiences would fit the teaching wished to be communicated on a multi-dimensional level.

### **Before the Cave**

Book I: In counter-distinction to Plato, Augustine opens with his philosophy of God and the relation to human existence. This would be the real “Beginning” of human cognizance/theo-ratiocination and then he moves again in Books X-XIII toward the “Beginning” is also the “Ending” – thus, a full circle rhetorical model. Moreover, Augustine is starting with the “Vision of the Sun” experience at the beginning of his Allegory of the Cave Structure knowing that it will end with the same teaching. For he even repeats, “I would have no being, I would have no existence, unless you were in me.

Or rather, I would have no being if I were not in you ‘of whom are all things, through whom are all things, in whom are all things’ (Rom. 11:36).”<sup>291</sup>

### **A. Imprisonment in the Cave**

#### *Sinful Childhood*

Chapter 8 – Infantile sin from original sin: “Little by little I began to be aware I was and wanted to manifest my wishes to those who could fulfill them as I could not. For my desires were internal; adults were external to me and had no means of entering into my soul... How many of our days and days of our fathers have passed during your Today, and have derived from it the measure and condition of their existence?”

#### *Locked Down/Bonds of Flesh*

Chapter 9.14 – O God, my God, ‘what miseries I experienced’ at this stage of my life, and what delusions when in my boyhood it was set before me as my moral duty in life to obey those who admonished me with the purpose that I should succeed in this world, and should excel in the arts of using my tongue to gain access to human honors and to

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<sup>291</sup> I think it worthy of mentioning the very likely possibility that Augustine was also influenced by the thought and method of Rabbi Philo Alexandrinus – a Pharisee. Although he was a Jewish contemporary of Jesus and Paul in the library at Alexandria Egypt, he truly was the first to see the allegorical aspects of Holy Scripture and to its elucidation using Stoic and Platonic philosophical constructs. He was truly a Jewish philosopher theologian. First published in February of 2018, the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* states, “Philo of Alexandria is a Jewish thinker who lived in Alexandria in the first half of the first century BCE. Whether he really was a philosopher is a question still debated at length. At the beginning of the Roman Empire, especially for the Stoics and the Cynics, the fundamental task of the philosopher was the construction of his own self. A man who sought to improve himself had to first regulate his own nature, controlling his passions and emotions and eliminating any gap between theory and practice. He was thus to approach the perfection of a god. To the exact contrary to attitude, Philo’s purpose was to prove the *oudeneia*, the ontological nothingness of human beings. In his opinion, the only way to have real existence was to admit that one is nothing without the help of God, who is the source of freedom, *logos* (reason), and consciousness. He aimed to be the best possible servant of the Revelation and of the text that forms God’s Word.”

acquire deceitful riches... As a boy I began to pray to you, 'my help and my refuge' and for y prayer to you I broke the bonds of my tongue..."

Almost baptized- deferred because of his continued desire to "defile himself". He learned nothing "unless compelled. No one is doing right if he is acting against his will, even when what he is doing is good... I had and still possess of being able to read whatever I find written, and to write myself whatever I wish."

Obscene Books – "Let me, my God, say something also about the intelligence which was your gift to me, and the ways in which I wasted it on follies. A task was set which caused me deep psychological anxiety."

Fallacious Speech/Dysfunctional Morals

Adolescence – "I turned from unity in you to be lost in multiplicity." "But I in my misery seethed and followed the driving force of my impulses, abandoning you." "Far away in exile from the pleasures of your house. Sensual folly assumed domination over me, and I gave myself totally to it in acts allowed by shameful humanity but under your laws illicit."

Stealing of the Pears – no reason other than for love of self-destruction. "There is beauty in physical objects, as in gold and silver and all other such things. When the body touches such things, much significance attaches to the rapport of the object with the touch. Each of the other senses has its own appropriate mode of response to physical things."

Mimesis of Pride. Curiosity appears to be a zeal for knowledge. "No one who considers his frailty would dare to attribute to his own strength his chastity and innocence, so that

he has less cause to love you – as if he had less need of your mercy by which you forgive the sins of those converted to you. If man is called by you, follows your voice, and has avoided doing those acts which I am recalling and avowing in my own life, he should not mock the healing of a sick man by the Physician, whose help has kept him from falling sick, or at least enabled him to be less gravely ill.

“Who can teach me that, but he who ‘illuminates the heart’ and disperses the shadows in it?” “What was the state of my mind?”

Theatrical Shows – “My love was returned and in secret I attained the joys that enchains, I was glad to be in bondage, tied with troublesome chains... I was captivated by theatrical shows. They were full of representations of my own miseries and fuelled by fire.”

## **B. Free to Look Upward**

### *Began to Rise Up*

*Hortensius* – “I began to rise up to return to you”<sup>292</sup>

Give attention to Holy Scriptures – “I was not in any state to be able to enter into that , or to bow my head to climb its steps...it seemed unworthy in comparison with the dignity of Cicero. My inflated conceit shunned the Bible’s restraint, and my gaze never penetrated to its inwardness

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<sup>292</sup> William J. Collinge states, “A lost dialogue by Cicero, written in 45BCE and named for Q. Hortensius Hortalus, a friend and fellow orator of Cicero. It was a protreptic work, an exhortation to the study of philosophy, in the tradition of Aristotle’s last dialogue *Protrepticus* on which it was based in part. In its setting in the dialogue, Cicero’s protreptic responds to the Hortensius’s attack against philosophy...At the age of eighteen, in Carthage, Augustine read the *Hortensius* as part of the ordinary course of rhetorical studies.”, Fitzgerald (1999), p. 437

Philosophers – “have said things which are true, but even them I would think to be no final authority for love of you ...Truth, truth: how in my inmost being the very morrow of my mind sighed for you!” “But for myself, my hunger and thirst were not even for the spiritual creation but for you yourself, the truth ‘in whom there is no changing shadow caused by any revolving. The dishes they placed before me contained splendid hallucinations. Indeed one would do better to love this visible sun which at least is truly evident to the eyes, than those false mythologies which use the eyes to deceive the mind.”

### Materialism/Shadows

Concubine

Manichees

“Still loved shadows”

Optimistic Emphasis in Friendship –Solace in Friends

“Imagining of Corporeal Things”

“Back to the light – “I had my back to the light and my face towards the things which are illuminated.”

Naturalism and Science – “You see them and pierce their shadowy existence...” “They have not known this way by which they may descend from themselves to him and through him ascend to him.”

Faustus – “without his will or knowledge had begun to loosen the bond by which I had been captured. For in your hidden providence... .” “To correct my steps you secretly made use of their and my perversity.” “I thought only in physical terms, were those vast masses. Gasping under their weight I could not breathe the pure and simple breeze of your truth.

### **C. The Ascent Upward Toward the Light of Truth**

#### *Forcibly Dragged/ Easier to Look at Shadows*

Ambrose – “I was not interested in learning what he was talking about. My ears were only for is rhetorical technique, this empty concern was all that remained with me after I had lost any hope that a way to you might lie open for man. Nevertheless, together with the words which I was enjoying, the subject matter in which I was unconcerned came to make an entry into my mind... So after several passages of the Old Testament had been expounded spiritually I now found fault with that despair of mind, caused by my belief that the law and the prophets could not be defended at all against the mockery of hostile critics.”

Scepticism – “Accordingly, after the manner of the Academics, as popularly understood, I doubted everything, and in the fluctuating state of total suspense of judgment...I was now preferring certain philosophers. But to these philosophers, who were without Christ’s saving name, I altogether refused to entrust the healing of my soul’s sickness...until some clear light should come by which I could direct my course.”

Mother Monica and Ambrose Reading of Scripture – praise of Monica every time he sees Augustine without knowing the depression and grief he is going through personally.

“More and more my conviction grew that all the knotty problems and clever calumnies which those deceivers of ours had devised against the divine books could be dissolved. I also learnt that your sons, whom you have regenerated by grace through their mother the Catholic Church, understood the text concerning man being made by you in your image not to mean that they believed and thought you to be bounded by the form of a human body.” “By believing I could have been healed. My mind’s eye thus purified would have been directed in some degree towards your truth which abides forever and is indefectible...While it could be not be healed except by believing, it was refusing to be healed for fear of believing what is false. It resisted your healing hands.”

Nebridius – Quest for the Happy Life – “the things which seemed absurd can also be understood in another way which is edifying. Let me fix my feet on that step...”. “There was no certain source of light”. “For I was so submerged and blinded that I could not think of the light of moral goodness and of a beauty to be embraced for its own sake – beauty not seen by the eye of the flesh, but only inward discernment.”

*Compelled to Look/Walks Further/Intelligible Christianity*

Neo-Platonism Discovered = Book VII has already been fully exegeted in Chapter Three.

Intelligible Christianity – still resistant because of sexual habits and perverted will

Conversion to Certitude of the immutability of God

**D. Out of the Cave Vision and Back Into the Cave**

See the Truth in All Things/ Garden Conversion/ Vision of Ostia/Back to the Cave

Out of the Cave: Scriptural text out of Romans and true conversion of the heart and will

Vision of Ostia – Platonic Vision of union with God – Experienced by Monica (unsophisticated Faith) and Augustine (sophisticated Faith) – hence, all can experience the vision of ultimate truth.

Augustine then has a calling to retire and dispossess all material belongings and return to the Cave of this world in ministry and defense of God against pagan critics.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown the powerful influence that both Neo-Platonism and direct Platonic teachings had on Augustine's method and philosophizing in regards to demonstrating the superiority of the scriptural ascent to that of either Plato or Plotinus for the curing of the mind/soul. Furthermore, it has been shown, within the text itself, Augustine's use of Plato's Allegory of the Cave model to demonstrate or verify the state of his mind through his consciousness pilgrimage in God within space/time.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### **ANALYTIC AUGUSTINE<sup>293</sup>: SYNCHRONIC- SYNTHETIC-TRIUNISM AND HIS PHILOSOPHY OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND SUPERIOR CONVERSION IN THE *CONFESSIONES* BOOKS X-XIII**

#### **(MEANING)**

Bertrund Russell writes, in his *A History of Western Philosophy*, that

Saint Augustine, at most times, does not occupy himself with pure philosophy, but when he does he shows very great ability. He is the first of a long line whose purely speculative views are influenced by the necessity of agreeing with Scripture...In Saint Augustine, on the other hand, original thinking in pure philosophy is stimulated by the fact that Platonism, in certain respects, is not in harmony with Genesis. The best purely philosophical work in Saint Augustine's writings is the eleventh book of the *Confessions*. Popular editions of the *Confessions* end with Book X, on the ground that what follows is uninteresting; it is uninteresting because it is good philosophy, not biography.<sup>294</sup>

This quote by Russell supports my thesis that the *Confessiones* was intended to be a pedagogic-apologetic demonstrative proof, if you will, for the redefinition of human ratiocination to that of a Scriptural theo-ratiocination; and, furthermore, for the superior total existential (intellect and will) conversion of the mind/soul in counter-distinction to that of the Pagan or Platonist inferred intellectual conversions only. In this final chapter, we will investigate the “Analytic” Augustine in regards to his

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<sup>293</sup> My Term – Dr. R.H. Craig

<sup>294</sup> Bertrund Russell. *A History of Western Philosophy*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), pp. 352-353

Scriptural philosophy of Mind/Soul/Consciousness, Language, Epistemology and Science as elaborated in Books X-XIII. We will look specifically at Books XII and XIII as to his scriptural philosophy for the Superior Conversion of Catholic Christianity for healing the mind/soul.

## **I. Books X: Scriptural Philosophy of Mind and Memory**

As has been shown in previous chapters, Augustine used a new and comprehensive analytic method in the *Confessiones*. This work really was not an autobiography – or recording of the *bios* or historical life and actions of the body per se – instead, a more fitting designation for this work would be “autopsychographical”<sup>295</sup> – *animi or psuke* historical introspective investigation or demonstration of the mental and emotional state of affairs at a given time in the ontological life within space/time of Augustine. This method was chosen, I believe, because Augustine thought that his psychological journey of a strict materialist/physicalist reductionism to the immutable/immaterial objects of consciousness within the Greco-Roman contextual matrix was universally experienced by both pagan intellegencia and non-sophisticates –such as Augustine’s mother Monica - in the quest for the “happy life” or “good life” through the differing wisdom schools and religions of that age. Secondly, because he was under pagan criticisms concerning the Scriptural conversion and instant forgiveness/mercy of sins and its lack of Senecan/pagan justice, there really was no way to “prove”<sup>296</sup> the superiority of Scriptural truth than to demonstrate through a type of “verification”<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> My Term – Dr. R.H. Craig

<sup>296</sup> Aristotle’s critique of Plato – mainly in regards to the necessity of rigorous demonstrability of substantial form claims – something that was neglected by many Platonic/Neo-Platonists disciples.

<sup>297</sup> Comes from Philosophy of Science Vienna Circle – Rudolph Carnap, Moritz Schlick – nothing is meaningful unless verified empirically – hence, metaphysics was considered meaningless because it could not be verified.

process - starting from the beginning of consciousness at birth moving through to the present moment of writing itself – in order to show the inferiority of competing “ways of life” in regards to ultimately curing the mind/soul of sin and guilt/anxiety through a purely intellectual knowledge (certitude) versus the superiority of the Incarnational (Image) Christ that is, in turn, a God consciousness through love in relationship (Divine illuminative understanding) with this image God, if you will, within the mind/soul itself.

In Book X, therefore, we move from the introspective historical demonstration to the theoretical explanation of the “allegory” previously demonstrated. For he writes in chapter 2, “indeed, Lord, to your eyes, the abyss of human consciousness is naked (*humanae conscientiae*).” There are essentially three understandings by Augustine for the act of confession in this work it seems to me: confession of sin, confession of faith, and confession of truth.<sup>298</sup> Books I-VI seem to mainly focus on the “shadows” of physicalist/materialist consciousness and the sins that it stimulates. Books VII-IX are about a shift of the mind/soul/consciousness toward the immutable/immaterial objects and toward the ultimate conversion experience through the incarnational (image) Christ God; Books X-XIII are the confession of truth or the analytic explanative for both the scientifically/philosophically minded and the simply faithful pilgrim in regards to a Scriptural philosophical explanation of human consciousness and the relational theoriation existent within the mind/soul.

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<sup>298</sup> Rowan Williams. *On Augustine*. (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2016), p.3 – “He exploits fully the multiple meanings of the word *confessio* itself: it means any sort of acknowledgement (of sin or spiritual conviction, for example); but it also means, in the Latin of Augustine’s Bible, acknowledging God in prayer and praise.”

Specifically, Book X of the *Confessiones* is about Augustine's philosophy of memory within his mind/soul model. The inward groaning or guilt motif is a "witness that I am displeased with myself." Augustine usually sets up each book with an introduction as to the problem to be addressed and then a kind of overview or outline of the logic he is going to flesh out in detail. In Book X chapter 2 he begins his focus on an explanatory theory of mind/soul based on his previous narrative or historical experiment of introspective analysis of his "apperception" of human consciousness within space/time. He begins to counter pagan "happiness" models by correlating his definition of true happiness with a synthetic of God and Self within the mind/soul. For he states,

You are radiant and give delight and are so an object of love and longing that I am ashamed of myself and reject myself. You are my choice and only by your gift can I please either you or myself...I have already spoken of the benefit I derive from making confession to you. I am not doing this merely by physical words and sounds, but by words from my soul and a cry from my mind, which is known to your ear...Therefore, my God, my confession before you is made both in silence and not in silence. It is silent in that it is no audible sound; but in love it cries aloud. If anything I say to men is right, that is what you have first heard from me. Moreover, you hear nothing true from my lips which you have not first told me.<sup>299</sup>

Hence, we see from the outset that Augustine is beginning the analytic analysis or theoretical part of his work almost as he had started Book I with a philosophy of God statement at the very beginning of the *Confessiones* as to the existent of God in the human consciousness with or without faith, belief or acknowledgment. This existent, which I have called theo-ratiocination, is the reason or causation for the emotion of guilt universally within the consciousness or human conscience. This existential reality, according to Augustine, is not based on human causality – for it is experienced from

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<sup>299</sup> Henry Chadwick, trans. *Augustine's Confessions*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 179

childhood through life. The human consciousness cannot escape this existent or presence of God within the mind/soul necessarily - for we are always aware that we are created and not a creation of ourselves. Thus, there can be no human ratiocination without God – whether acknowledged or not. He eventually will call this existential mental state of guilt/anxiety caused by a lack of ascent or acknowledgment, by either individuals or societies, of the this God consciousness as a kind of “sickness” of the mind/soul - the only cure for which is a reconciliation with the God consciousness within by the individual will through love and mercy/forgiveness by the incarnational (image) Christ from within and repentant action from without demonstrating acknowledgement.

Chapters 3-6 seem to be a true analysis of why he is choosing to use this genre of “confession”. He does see his psychical state as being sick. Why confess anything? “The human race is inquisitive about other people’s lives, but negligent to correct their own. Why do they demand to hear from me what I am when they refuse to hear from you what they are.” This statement by Augustine is indicative of the pagan criticisms regarding, presumably, the sins of others and maybe even himself; for he goes on to state, “And when they hear me talking about myself, how can they know if I am telling the truth, when no one ‘knows what is going on in a person except the human spirit which is within?’” This, of course, is also setting up his philosophy of science question regarding the verification for apperception within human consciousness. Further he states, “...so make my confession to you that I may be heard by people to whom I cannot prove that my confession is true. But those whose ears are opened by love believe me.”

In chapter 4 Augustine makes his most explicit statement concerning the motive for writing this work in the three confessional forms that I spoke of earlier: sin, faith, and truth. For he states,

the profit derived from confessing my past I have seen and spoken about. But what I now am at this time when I am writing my confessions many wish to know, both those who know me and those who do not but have heard something from, or about me, their ear is not attuned to my heart at the point of where I am whatever I am. So as I make my confession, they wish to learn about my inner self, where they cannot penetrate with eye or ear or mind...they cannot really have certain knowledge.”<sup>300</sup>

As to who may be the audience, itself, Augustine addresses as the “brothers”. Throughout chapter 5 he uses the terms, “brotherly mind”, “brotherly person”, “he is loving me”, “Christian brother’s mind, not an outsider’s – not that of ‘the sons of aliens whose mouth speaks vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of iniquity’”. This would all be indicative of monastic relationships within either monasteries in Carthage or others in Thagaste or Hippo. For he further states in chapter 6,

I am making this confession not only before you with a secret exaltation and fear and with a secret grief touched by hope, but also in ears of believing sons of men, sharers in my joy, conjoined with me in mortality, my fellow citizens and pilgrims... So, to those whom you command me to serve, I will reveal not who I was, but what I have now come to be and what I continue to be.

This terminology would be analogous to the “cave language” from Plato’s Allegory of the Cave – in which the people within the cave are “fellow citizens and pilgrims”. He also speaks of “being held back by my own weight” which in turn is speaking to both intellectual and moral habits and/or prejudices.

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-181

In chapter 8, Augustine begins his analysis of mind/soul or consciousness when he states, “my love for you, Lord, is not an uncertain feeling but a matter of conscious certainty.” He sees his soul as being “floodlit which space cannot contain and where there is sound that time cannot seize, where there is a perfume which no breeze disperses...I asked the breezes which blow and the entire air with its inhabitants said: ‘Anaximenes was mistaken; I am not God’.” Augustine goes on to rhetorically mock the asking of sun, moon and stars and they too said they were not God. He further asks his “external environment” and it all said that it was not God.

After eliminating physicalist philosophies, such as Stoicism on nature, Epicureanism on pleasure, and Manichaeism on a physical God, Augustine moves to his specific argument for the superiority of the “inward”. For he states, “what is inward is superior. All physical evidence is reported to the mind which presides and judges of the responses of heaven and earth and all things in them...the inner man knows this – I, I the mind, through the sense-perception of my body.” In chapter X, he further criticizes the physicalist/materialist/scientist when he states, “yet by love of created things they are subdued by them, and being thus made subject become incapable of exercising judgment...in that respect, my soul, I tell you that you are already superior. For you animate the mass of your body and provide it with life, since no body is capable of doing that for another body.” Hence, there exists an “I” that is doing the looking within the mind/soul. This “I” knows with certainty that it did not create itself.

Beginning with chapter 11, Augustine is now shifting to the crux of his theory regarding human consciousness. Here he refers back to the cave language of Plato when he states,

Who is he who is higher than the highest element in my soul? Through my soul I will **ascend** to him. I will rise above the force by which I am **bonded** to the body...there exists another power, not only that by which I give life to my body but also that by which I enable its senses to perceive...I who act through these diverse functions am one mind. I will also rise above this power... I will therefore rise above that natural capacity in a **step by step ascent** to him who made me. I come to the fields and vast palaces of memory.<sup>301</sup>

Hence, Augustine is describing his method for historical introspective analysis which he received from Platonist philosophy in regards to the powers of the soul to look inward (apperception) and to move forward in an ascent from base materialist consciousness (perception) and basic knowledge of mere existence to a superior “understanding” within consciousness by bringing to the forefront conceptual images and connections from what he calls “memory” or *memoria*. Henry Chadwick delineates Augustine’s understanding of *memoria* as:

a deeper and wider term than our ‘memory’. In the background lies the Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis*, explaining the experience of learning as bringing to consciousness what, from an earlier existence, the soul already knows. But Augustine develops the notion of memory by associating it with the unconscious (‘the mind knows things it does not know it knows’), with self-awareness, and so with the human yearning for true happiness found only in knowing God.<sup>302</sup>

In chapter 12, Augustine sees memory as a type of storehouse of sense-perceptions turned to images. “Whatever we think about” comes from this process and has the capacity to “increase or diminish or in some way alter the deliverance of the senses and whatever else has been deposited and placed on reserve...” The actual process of thinking is based on the ability of the soul to deliver images or concepts to the conscious mind. This basically is the recording of sense-perceptions at the initial stage

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid., p. 185;

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., p. 185 (footnote)

of human conscious thought. He states, “events give way to those which followed, and as they pass are stored away available for retrieval when I want them. All that is what happens when I recount a narrative from memory.”<sup>303</sup>

However, in chapter 13 Augustine begins his explanatory theory of memory in detail. He calls it a “huge cavern, with its mysterious, secret, and indescribable nooks and crannies”. Again, “cave language” is used by Augustine in which he was indicating that the pagan definition of the cave as spatial-temporal world, as defined by Plotinus and Porphyry, was incorrect – instead, the cave is actually allegorical for the mind/soul itself in regards to human consciousness. Objects, themselves, do not materially enter the mind but “the images of the perceived objects are available to the thought recalling them. But who can say how images are created, even though it may be clear by which senses they are grasped and stored within?” This, of course, is the 64 million dollar question. Even in darkness, he states, can the individual produce color, sound, and other images and distinguish between them. This then enables people to “recall at pleasure other memories which have been taken in and collected together by other senses.”

In chapter 14 Augustine now focuses on the fact that within human consciousness “the actions are inward”. This chapter is vital for a theory of consciousness because within its parameters Augustine explains consciousness as a synthetic. Moving forward he states, “I meet myself and recall what I am, what I have done, and when and where and how I was affected when I did it.” Augustine is pointing to the very cause of human anxiety – memory enables us to see ourselves for who we are at every cognate moment

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid., p. 186

within space/time – similar to the “blackbox” on an airliner.<sup>304</sup> Others only see the historical actions and vocal signs pronounced in order to formulate judgments by

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Letter VII. (a.d. 389.) To Nebridius Augustin Sends Greeting. Chap. I.--Memory may be exercised independently of such images as are presented by the imagination. 1. I shall dispense with a formal preface, and to the subject on which you have for some time wished to hear my opinion I shall address myself at once; and this I do the more willingly, because the statement must take some time. It seems to you that there can be no exercise of memory without images, or the apprehension of some objects presented by the imagination, which you have been pleased to call "phantasiæ." For my part, I entertain a different opinion. In the first place, we must observe that the things which we remember are not always things which are passing away, but are for the most part things which are permanent. Wherefore, seeing that the function of memory is to retain hold of what belongs to time past, it is certain that it embraces on the one hand things which leave us, and on the other hand things from which we go away. When, for example, I remember my father, the object which memory recalls is one which has left me, and is now no more; but when I remember Carthage, the object is in this case one which still exists, and which I have left. In both cases, however, memory retains what belongs to past time. For I remember that man and this city, not by seeing them now, but by having seen them in the past. 2. You perhaps ask me at this point, Why bring forward these facts? And you may do this the more readily, because you observe that in both the examples quoted the object remembered can come to my memory in no other way than by the apprehension of such an image as you affirm to be always necessary. For my purpose it suffices meanwhile to have proved in this way that memory can be spoken of as embracing also those things which have not yet passed away: and now mark attentively how this supports my opinion. Some men raise a groundless objection to that most famous theory invented by Socrates, according to which the things that we learn are not introduced to our minds as new, but brought back to memory by a process of recollection; supporting their objection by affirming that memory has to do only with things which have passed away, whereas, as Plato himself has taught, those things which we learn by the exercise of the understanding are permanent, and being imperishable, cannot be numbered among things which have passed away: the mistake into which they have fallen arising obviously from this, that they do not consider that it is only the mental act of apprehension by which we have discerned these things which belongs to the past; and that it is because we have, in the stream of mental activity, left these behind, and begun in a variety of ways to attend to other things, that we require to return to them by an effort of recollection, that is, by memory. If, therefore, passing over other examples, we fix our thoughts upon eternity itself as something which is for ever permanent, and consider, on the one hand, that it does not require any image fashioned by the imagination as the vehicle by which it may be introduced into the mind; and, on the other hand, that it could never enter the mind otherwise than by our remembering it,--we shall see that, in regard to some things at least, there can be an exercise of memory without any image of the thing remembered being presented by the imagination. Chap. II.--The mind is destitute of images presented by the imagination, so long as it has not been informed by the senses of external things. 3. In the second place, as to your opinion that it is possible for the mind to form to itself images of material things independently of the services of the bodily senses, this is refuted by the following argument:--If the mind is able, before it uses the body as its instrument in perceiving material objects, to form to itself the images of these; and if, as no sane man can doubt, the mind received more reliable and correct impressions before it was involved in the illusions which the senses produce, it follows that we must attribute greater value to the impressions of men asleep than of men awake, and of men insane than of those who are free from such mental disorder: for they are, in these states of mind, impressed by the same kind of images as impressed them before they were indebted for information to these most deceptive messengers, the senses; and thus, either the sun which they see must be more real than the sun which is seen by men in

observation of these external signs. Augustine indicates that we record within the mind/soul all of the time not only our historical actions but when, where, and how we were affected by life's ontological productions. Not only that, Augustine states that he believed words of others can also produce images within the memory that then can in turn be recalled. Thus, there are direct experiential knowledge images and there are secondary/instrumental experiential knowledge images as learned by others through communication of vocal signs. In other words, we, as humans, think "pictorially" – not linguistically or propositionally. From childhood onward we think pictorially or through image even while we are pre-linguistic. This was pointed out by both Plato and Augustine in regards to childhood materialist consciousness. Moreover, human consciousness is not linear but is, in fact, synchronous and synthetic –in other words multidimensional (ontological and deontological) within each cognate moment. For Augustine states,

Out of the same abundance in store, I combine with past events images of the various things, whether experienced directly or believed on the basis of what I have experienced; and on this basis I reason about future actions and events and hopes, and again think of all these things in the present.

It is at this point, in chapters 15-19, that Augustine looks at the profundity of memory in regards to its "infinite" powers and in turn to its greatest gift which is learning. In chapter 15, Augustine asks in his own way what we have come to call in philosophy of mind as the "hard problem"<sup>305</sup>. The hard problem being: how can

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their sound judgment and in their waking hours, or that which is an illusion must be better than what is real. But if these conclusions, my dear Nebridius, are, as they obviously are,

<sup>304</sup>

<sup>305</sup> See David Chalmers. *The Conscious Mind*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

material neurobiological stuff produce consciousness of these “immaterial images” before our minds? For Augustine states,

this power is that of my mind and is a natural endowment, but I myself cannot grasp the totality of what I am. Is the mind, then, too restricted to compass itself, so that we have to ask what is the element of itself which it fails to grasp? Surely, that cannot be external to itself; it must be within the mind. How then does it fail to grasp it? This question moves me to great astonishment. Amazement grips me. People are moved to wonder by mountain peaks...But in themselves they are uninterested. They experience no surprise that when I was speaking of all these things, I was not seeing them with my eyes...I could see inwardly with dimensions just as great as if I were actually looking at them outside my mind. Yet when I was seeing them, I was not absorbing them in the act of seeing with my eyes. Nor are the actual objects present to me, but only their images.”

In chapter 16 we learn that not only do we possess images of the direct experiential and secondary/instrumental images that are non-experiential, but we have techne or art/skill images for processing these images within human consciousness. Specifically, Augustine is referring to the “liberal arts” skills of dialectic or “dialectical debate” as he called them. He is also referring to his ability to analyze literature and the retention of concepts formulated within the mind/soul when stimulated by these objects of the liberal arts – philosophy, literature, grammar and mathematics. Nonetheless, he understands that these formulated images do not enter through the bodily senses per se. For he states,

nor is it analogous to something which the body touches and feels, which even after contact with us has ceased, can be imagined by the memory. These objects have no entry to the memory: only their images are grasped with astonishing rapidity, and then replaced as if in wonderful storerooms, so that in an amazing way the memory produces them.

In chapters 17-19 Augustine investigates the analytics of language and notional conceptual images within the mind/soul. There are, for him, three kinds of questions: 1. “Does P exist?”; 2. “What is P?”; and 3. “What kind of thing is P?”. He states that we can recall “images of sounds which constitutes these words”. For Augustine, the body represents essentially a number of “entry ways” in which the mind retains stimulations that then are formulated into images. However, when one speaks then the vibration is carried through the air - but not the image itself or reality itself. Instead, he states, “I know that they have passed through the air as noise, and that they no longer exist. Moreover, the ideas signified by those sounds I have not touched by sense-perception nor have I seen them independently of my mind.” Augustine then goes on to ask the question regarding speech images, “how did these matters enter my memory?”

He does not necessarily know the answer to this question. What he does know is that

within myself I recognized them and **assented** to their truth. I entrusted them to my mind as if storing them up to be produced when required. So they were there even before I had learnt them, but were not in my memory. Accordingly, when they were formulated, how and why did I recognize them...the answer must be that they were already in my memory, but so remote and pushed into the background, as if in the most secret **caverns**, that unless they were dug out by someone drawing attention to them, perhaps I could not have thought of them.

Although this may seem to echo Plato’s theory of recollection from a prior existence or pre-existence, i.e. the *Meno*, Augustine is now actually reinterpreting this existent or phenomena within memory in order to begin to point to “someone” outside of memory itself illuminating or pointing attention to a particular idea “formulated”.

He called these unearned or non-sensual ideas or cognates “notions”. We “discern them inwardly not through images but as they really are and through the concepts themselves.” In other words, we possess and assent to, what I would call as prefabricated or pre-formulated, cognates or concepts that we did not fabricate or formulate by our own will and power within the mind/soul. For Augustine goes on to state,

we find that the process of learning is simply this: by thinking we, as it were, gather together ideas which the memory contains in a dispersed and disordered way, and by concentrating our attention we arrange them in order as if ready to hand, stored in the very memory where previously they lay hidden, scattered, neglected. Now they easily come forward under the direction of the mind familiar with them...once again they have to be brought together (*cogenda*) so as to be capable of being known; that means they have to be gathered (*colligenda*) from their dispersed state. Hence is derived the word cogitate. To bring together (*cogo*) and to cogitate (*cogito*) are words related as *ago* (I do) to *agito* (agitate) or *facio* (I make) to *factito* (I make frequently). Nevertheless, the mind claims the verb cogitate for its own province. It is what is collected (that is by force) in the mind, not elsewhere, which is strictly speaking the object of recollection.

Hence, the mind has the power to both formulate and/or fabricate by force of the will the differing objects, existents, or percepts of the mind into cognates/concepts. But not only that, Augustine in chapters 19-21 points to the fact that we can “remember that I remember” these cognates within space/time. Also, the “affections of the mind” are contained within the memory. Which means that memory remembers feelings and has the power to “hold memory itself. So I can be far from glad in remembering myself to have been glad...in the present case the mind is the very memory itself...we call memory itself mind.” Further more in chapter 23, Augustine speaks to the fact that memory also possesses, without sensual experience, the images of words signified and of numbers

without images. “It is remarkable that in my memory are present not their images but the numbers themselves.”

However, in chapters 26-34 Augustine seeks to move beyond and to challenge both Socratism’s humanistic ratiocination and Aristotle’s “eudaimonia” understanding of the “happy life”. Augustine now wants to investigate as to the meaning of this philosophy in regards to God. For he asks, “and this is mind, this is I myself. What then am I, my God? What is my nature? It is characterized by diversity, by life of many forms, utterly immeasurable. See the broad plains and **caves** and **caverns** of my memory?” He divides the objects of the mind essentially into three categories: 1. Images of sensual perception of physical objects; 2. Immediate presences such as intellectual skills; 3. Indefinable notions or “recorded impressions” such as the passions or emotions even if not felt at the time of remembering. Nonetheless, he points to a further “force” or “force of life” that he now claims to be transcendent to memory itself. For he writes,

you are my true life. I will transcend even this my power which is called memory. I will rise beyond it to move towards you, **sweet light**. What are you saying to me? Here I am **climbing up** through my mind towards you who are **constant** above me. I will pass beyond even that power of mind which is called memory, desiring to reach you by the way through which you can be reached, and to be **bonded** to you by the way in which it is possible to be bonded...so I will also **ascend** beyond memory to touch him who ‘set me apart from quadrupeds and made me wiser than the birds of heaven’ (Job 35:11).

Here Augustine is labeling God as a “constant” or constant presence within the mind/soul. From a logical point of view, we might label this designation by Augustine as “referent” in the Kripkien sense for meaning. God is a base-line upon which all of consciousness rests. Without this logical base-line or referent, consciousness has no directed relation to the created order other than a learned experiential data base of

chaotic variables of the senses. Augustine seems to understand that without the “substance” of God or “God will” then this drive toward perfection, which is universally experienced in both aesthetics and ethics, would never exist. “God will” substance must logically come before any consciousness of “Being” in any way, shape, or form.

In chapter 27, Augustine now makes the argument that God must always be present in the consciousness whether remembered (recognized) or not. For he states,

unless I had it in my memory, whatever it was, even if an offer was being made to me, I would not have found it because I would not have recognized it. That is what happens when we seek and find something lost...its image is retained within, and the search continues until it is once more seen. When it is found, it is recognized from the image which is within...unless we recognize it, and we cannot recognize it if we do not remember it.

Essentially, God is recognizable universally and is a constant within the mind/soul. Mainly this is due to the fact that we recognize the concept or idea of God even without sensual experiential images. God is without image until the incarnational Christ (Image). Regardless, this God conceptual consciousness directs our thoughts as a necessary part of possessing understanding both scientifically and philosophically within the ontological. It is a transcendent conceptual guidance framework that is a constant referent for human intellection process in dealing with the objects, existents, and percepts of sensual experience within space/time. For “knowledge” without understanding has no meaning. Moreover, there can be no meaning of the ontological without God consciousness and guidance for meaning. Thus, theo-ratiocination within both philosophy of science and philosophy of mind is born.

The “happy life”, therefore, is not found in the Socraticism of the Greco-Roman dualist world. Nor is it found in the materialist science of Aristotle’s contemplative life

alone or the acquisition of knowledge for ego's or knowledge's sake. Chapter 29, states unequivocally, "when I seek for you, my God, my quest is for the happy life. I will seek you that my soul may live (Isa. 55:3), for my body derives life from my soul, and my soul derives life from you. How then shall I seek for the happy life? It is not mine until I say: 'It is enough, it is there'. But then I ought to say how my quest proceeds; is it by remembering, as if I had forgotten it and still recall that I had forgotten?" Happiness, for Augustine, is defined as "joy in the truth". What Augustine concludes is that all of humanity seeks for the happy life or for happiness. Universally this quest is in every mind/soul because all mind/souls are creations of the Creator mind/soul or Divine logos. Whether educated sophisticate or un-educated peasant, the God consciousness is eternally present and is constant. Not only that but all people have access to the happy life regardless of station. For he writes in chapter 33,

the happy life is joy based on the truth. This joy is grounded in you, O God, who are the truth, 'my illumination, the salvation of my face, my God'. This happy life everyone desires, joy in the truth everyone wants...and they would have no love for it unless there were some knowledge of it in their memory. Why then do they not find their joy in this? Why are they not happy? It is because they are more occupied in other things which make them more wretched than their tenuous consciousness of the truth makes them happy. For among humanity there is still a little light. May they walk, may they indeed walk, so that the **darkness** does not capture them.

The remaining chapters of Book X tend to move toward a more critical analysis of the activities of Carthage both in regards to theatrical shows and empirical science elitism and arrogance. However it does end in chapter 70 with a word from God to Augustine about the necessity of returning to the cave of sin and misery in order to preach the truth and to lead those who will recognize the God referent within to find the true happiness that can only be found in a life with God and not a life ignoring God within.

For he writes, “terrified by my sins and the pile of my misery, I had racked my heart and had meditated taking flight to live in solitude. But you forbade me and comforted me saying: ‘that is why Christ died for all, so that those who live should not live for themselves, but for him who died for them’ (2Cor. 5:15).

## **II. Book XI: Scriptural Philosophy of Consciousness and Time**

Continuing his apologetic against pagan criticisms for both the incarnational Christ and the Scriptural Genesis creation account which, for Augustine, trumps the Socratic dualist wisdoms and pagan religions of the Greco-Roman world, Augustine now moves toward a further elaboration of his scriptural philosophy of mind and consciousness. And, at the same time, because the Genesis account and John’s Gospel speak of a Creator God that speaks the material world into existence through His “Word” or “Logos”, Augustine must explain this reality through, what I am calling, “philosophical translation” or metaphysical constructs. Specifically, he must take mythological (allegorical/figurative) language and concepts and explain them theo-rationally and, to some degree, scientifically or logically in order to understand this faith as Truth. In Book X, he gave a philosophical translation of the human mind/soul’s power of memory and how it works in consciousness. Now, in Book XI, he will demonstrate through “pure philosophy” the understanding of time – past, present and future – and its implication for human wellness or sickness of the mind/soul through life.

In chapter 7.9, Augustine points out that God wants all of humanity to “understand the Word, God who is with you God. That word is spoken eternally, and by it all things are uttered eternally. It is not the case that what was being said comes to an end.” In the Gospel of John 1:1-4, the New Testament introduces the idea of the Word as Logos or

intellect/wisdom/Divine Mind. In verse 2 the argument is introduced further that nothing exists that was not brought into existence by this Word. What the pagans seem to be criticizing, both of Genesis and John's Gospel, were the ideas of a *creatio ex nihilo* or "creation out of nothing"; and that it was simply spoken into existence for heaven and earth to come to exist; and the idea of an "eternal" Word that transcends space/time and is ever present throughout the ontological. Augustine realizes that he must philosophically translate what were essentially allegorical or figurative descriptions into metaphysical intelligible constructs. He does this profoundly by explaining the concept of time within human consciousness.

He begins his argument in chapter 8.10 with a rhetorical question and definitive thesis:

how to express it I do not know, unless to say that everything which begins to be and ceases to be begins and ends its existence at that moment when, in eternal reason where nothing begins or ends, it is known that it is right for it to begin and end. This reason is your Word, which is also the Beginning in that it also speaks to us. Thus in the gospel the Word speaks through the flesh, and this sounded externally in human ears, so that it should be believed and sought (inwardly), found in the eternal truth where the Master who alone is good teaches all his disciples.

For Augustine, this Word is spoken into written form in the Old Testament through revelation of the Holy Text to Moses – but this same eternal Word then became flesh historically, ontologically, incarnationally, in the person of Jesus Christ who then became the eternal image within the mind/soul's memory for both individuals and collectives for the Truth of God within the ontological. In other words, Christ exemplifies the definitive or ultimate wisdom of God within the ontological, and is, in fact, Wisdom itself. This Wisdom is the only wisdom or guidance that will heal or cure

mind/souls from both spiritual (Intellect/Will) and historical (Bodily) corruption within the ontological realm. Christ is the true eternal exemplar or “Socrates” for finding the happy life in God. For he writes in chapter 9.11,

what is the **light** which shines right through me and strikes my heart without hurting? It fills me with terror and burning love; with terror inasmuch as I am utterly other than it, with burning love in that I am akin to it. Wisdom, wisdom it is which shines right through me, cutting a path through the cloudiness which returns to cover me as I fall away under the darkness and the load of my punishments...You will redeem my life from corruption and crown me with mercy and compassion, and satisfy my longing with good things, in that my youth will be renewed like an eagles...Let the person who can hear you speaking within listen.

Henry Chadwick recognizes that this argument by Augustine was against Porphyry’s “Neoplatonic contention that the Incarnation is impossible because it implies change in God and is here taken to be a principle equally affecting Creation.”<sup>306</sup>

Scriptural time, therefore, is specifically addressed in chapter 10.12 – 23.30 in which Augustine states,

For God’s will is not a creature, but is prior to the created order, since nothing would be created unless the Creator’s will preceded it. Therefore, God’s will belongs to his very substance. If in the substance of God anything has come into being which was not present before, that substance cannot be truthfully be called eternal. But if it was God’s everlasting will that the created order exist, why is not the creation also everlasting?

This idea of God as substance (*ad ipsam ergo dei substantiam pertinent voluntas eius*) or even “God’s will” as substance (*dei substantia*) seems to indicate certainly that all of human creatures - maybe all of living material creation - within the ontological realm possess three co-existential triunistic substances within its metaphysical makeup: body,

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<sup>306</sup> Footnote, (Chadwick) *Confessions* p. 228

mind/soul, God's mind/will. Therefore, "dualism", it seems to me, is not an adequate metaphysical description but rather "triunism" is the more accurate metaphysical description of the totality of existential reality as we know it – thus, theo-ratiocination.

In chapter 11.13, Augustine begins to lay out the problem to be analyzed and begins by pointing out that the pagan mistake was to think of time as a

temporal successiveness which never has any constancy and will see there is no comparison possible...in the eternal, nothing is transient, but the whole is present. But no time is wholly present. It will see that all past time is driven backwards by the future and all future time is the consequent of the past, and all past and future are created and set on their course by that which is always present...who will lay hold on the human heart to make it still, so that it can see how eternity, in which there neither future or past, stands still and dictates future and past times?

We begin to see here that ontological time has a past and a future. However, the eternal is an everlasting present in which there exists no past and no future. In fact, there was no "time" before creation according to Augustine. Nonetheless, this leads Augustine to contemplate how time (past, present, future) is understood within the mind/soul and how does it formulate human consciousness. As to God, "all your 'years' subsist in simultaneity, because they do not change; those going away are not thrust out by those coming in... Your 'years' are 'one day' and your 'day' is not any and every day but Today, because your Today does not yield to a tomorrow, nor did it follow on a yesterday. Your Today is eternity." Hence, we begin to see the beginning of Augustine's scriptural philosophical theory of time taking shape as he now moves on to time and its relation to human consciousness.

"What then is time?" asks our scriptural philosopher. "Who can comprehend this even in thought so as to articulate the answer in words?" For Augustine, we speak of

time with words indicating intervals of time such as “long” or “short”. The issue in a nutshell is how can we really speak of intervals of time when we are always in a present state of consciousness. In other words, our present consciousness does not stand alone nor is it ever in an isolated state. This is because for every present moment there is a past moment being left and a future moment being produced. What Augustine discovered was that time is really more of a subjective consciousness than an external linear sequence of historical/material moments. Within the human mind/soul, the three categories of time measurement – past, present, future – are in a constant state of overlap or conceptual overlay so that human consciousness moves seamlessly from past to present to future – however, all three are always present, co-existentially, in every cognate moment synchronically. In other words, there is no consciousness without conceptual overlay in synthetic form. For he writes in chapter 14.17, “if then, in order to be time at all, the present is so made that it passes into the past, how can we say that this present also ‘is’? The cause of its being is that it will cease to be. So indeed we cannot say that time exists except in the sense that it tends towards non-existence.”

“Present” therefore, is what we refer to as either long or short – not total time within consciousness as a whole. “If we can think of some bit of time which cannot be divided into even the smallest instantaneous moments, that alone is what we can call ‘present’. And this time flies so quickly from future into past that it is an interval with no duration.” In other words, there is no distinct separation between the three categories of time for they amalgamate, if you will, by conceptual overlay so as to appear to the mind/soul as one consciousness and not three distinct. This means that past, present, and future are always within the human consciousness even when concentrating on any

one state or memory. Thus, I am always in a state of thought or ratiocination and I have the ability to observe all three at will. All three influence my consciousness and sub-consciousness through apperception. Moreover, for any present moment I am also reflecting on past moments and, at the same time, projecting (premeditating) with imagination a future moment and action to be produced. “We are conscious of intervals of time and compare them with each other , and call some longer, others shorter...Moreover, we are measuring times which are past when our perception is the basis of measurement.”

Augustine then addresses his method in the *Confessiones* of creating a dialogue/treatise combination by using historical psychological dialogue in order to analyze states of mind throughout particular historical events and discussions. For he writes in chapter 18.23,

when a true narrative of the past is related, the memory produces not the actual events which have passed away but words conceived from images of them, which they fixed in the mind like imprints as they passed through the senses...but when I am recollecting and telling my story, I am looking on its image in present time, since it is still in my memory... we frequently think out I advance our future actions, and that premeditation is in the present; but the action which we premeditate is not yet in being because it lies in the future. But when we have embarked on the action and what we were premeditating begins to be put into effect, then that action will have existence, since then it will be not future but present...It is not the sun which lies in the future (it already exists) but its rise, which has not yet arrived. Yet unless I were mentally imagining its rise, as now when I am speaking about it, I could not predict it. But the dawn glow which I see in the sky is not sunrise, which it precedes, nor it the imagining of sunrise in my mind the actuality. These are both discerned as present so that the coming sunrise may be foretold. So future events do not yet exist, and if they are not yet present, they do not exist; and if they have no being, they cannot be seen at all.

Therefore, Augustine concludes that we are wrong in designating being to past and future since neither exists. Instead he states, “it is inexact language to speak of three times – past, present, and future. Perhaps it would be exact to say: there are three times, a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come. In the soul there are these three aspects of time, and I do not see them anywhere else. The present considering the past is memory, the present considering the present is immediate awareness, the present considering the future is expectation...[thus] the customary way of speaking is incorrect.”

God is the one that grants our ability to know and understand “universal truths”. Hence, it is only by having a theo-ratiocination or synchronic-synthetic-triunistic consciousness that we can think universally at all. Otherwise, if we were only a dual substance organism of individual mind/soul and body then we would be completely locked into a narrow concentration or attention focus that could not see the universe as a whole within the subjective consciousness. However, we are always aware of the universe, regardless as to whether we are aware particularly of an object of concentration. What is measured by time designation is “present consciousness” (*ipsam metior praesentem*) “not the stream of past events which have caused it. When I measure periods of time, that is what I am actually measuring. Therefore, either this is what time is, or time is not what I am measuring.”

In chapter 28.37, Augustine concludes his argument with these final questions concerning the consciousness process concerning his philosophy of action:

how does this future which does not exist, diminish or become consumed? Or how does the past, which now has no being, grow, unless there are three processes in the mind which in this is the active agent? For the mind expects, and

attends, and remembers, so that what it expects passes through what has its attention to what it remembers...Yet attention is continuous, and it is through this that what will be present progresses towards being absent...But my attention is on what is present: by that the future is transferred to become the past. As the action advances further and further, the shorter the expectation and the longer the memory, until all expectation is consumed, the entire action is finished, and it has passed into the memory.”

It is thus through “conversion” or the conversion of the concentration/attention by the Divine Incarnation of Christ as Image and Exemplar – or more importantly –through God’s illuminative/directed concentration and/or attention, that human consciousness is able to be properly directed toward the “light” or “right” future action within space/time through the conceptual overlay of memory, sensual/image apperception, imagination/premeditation toward future action. It is God that directs “concentration” (*non distentus, sed extentus, non secundum distentionem, sed secundum intentionem*). It is in God’s truth that Augustine found “stability and solidity”. For in his conclusion he states that God is the “Creator of the universe, creator of souls and bodies. We, as spiritual beings, therefore, have the ability to distend and stretch our feelings in expectation for this memory of God consciousness. For he writes in chapter 31.41,

you are unchangeably eternal, that is the truly eternal Creator of minds. Just as you knew heaven and earth in the beginning without that bringing any variation into your knowing, so you made heaven and earth in the beginning without that meaning a tension between past and future in your activity. Let the person who understands this make confession to you. Let him who fails to understand it make confession to you.

### **III. Theo-Ratiocination: Superior Conversion – Books XII and XIII**

Human consciousness is multi-dimensional according to Augustine. Holy Scripture speaks to this multi-dimensionality within the consciousness of humanity. The three substance mind/soul - Synchronic-Synthetic-Triunism (God’s Will, body, mind) - is not

only true in regards to inter-subjectivity of the mind/soul; but it is true in regards to his philosophy of Scripture or Scriptural philosophy as a “multi-dimensional” phenomena. In Book XII, Augustine enumerates multiple interpretations by both Pagan and Catholic critics concerning the creation account as depicted in Genesis 1. Augustine wanted to defend the nature of this text in relation to human minds. As with the other two books dealing with memory and eternity/time, Augustine will in the next two books try to elaborate further the nature of Scripture and the description of creation by a Creator God by Word. Secondly, he will seek to elucidate the proper exegesis of sacred text and its multi-dimensional character. This will come about as he explains, in philosophical language, exactly what *conversio* really means within the mind/soul schematic he had already described.

The issue might be raised, therefore, as to why Augustine seems to see the need for a philosophical translation of the creation account in Genesis 1 in order to further explicate his philosophy of conversion. It would seem to me that the creation account, once understood philosophically/theo-rationally, will further develop Augustine’s argument for theo-ratiocination as a necessary reality of the human consciousness. For this God consciousness reminds both individuals and collectives of their imperfection against the perfection or “Standard” which is understood universally from within the mind/soul necessarily. Self-love and egocentricity based on the perversion or distortion of the will must be overcome – both individually and collectively – in order to maintain some type of equilibrium within the created order of the earth and, consequently, to avoid the moral destruction of humanity and the environment it inhabits. In other words, this God consciousness must be listened to and relationally obeyed through

mutual love/devotion – otherwise there will be ontological consequences that will lead to individual and collective death of the natural world. Thus, Scriptural conversion is not simply about the individual salvation of any one individual for life beyond the grave in and of itself. Instead, it truly is about a mass rescue operation by God to heal or cure the perverted/distorted will within the consciousness of humanity by the ontological demonstration of agape/unconditional love to all humanity – past, present, future. This healing comes through the love and theo-rational teachings and demonstrative example of the Incarnate Christ as exemplified through scripture of a healthy theo-ratiocination ontological demonstration for which gives the mass memory of humanity an “Image” by which to relate and to love God and the Other beyond the self and its individual or collective agendas based on pagan humanistic consciousness. Hence, it is not simply an anti-Manichean apology – although it could be part of the stimulus for writing – it is instead the philosophical foundation for an apologetic for both the superiority of the Scriptural conversion versus the Platonic and an elucidation of the mission of the Catholic Church as a whole.

In Book XII, Augustine continues this confession of truth dynamic by now comparing creation stories in regards to pagan and scriptural accounts. He begins in chapter 1 by stating up front that the relation of heaven to earth is really, in the Kantian sense, “beyond knowledge” and “belongs to the Lord, not to the sons of men.” He begins with the recognition that the criticism of previous pagan attacks concerning the unorganized state of the earth as “formless” and without “light” may appear irrational and unscientific. He clarifies this idea by stating, “yet it was not absolute nothingness. It was a kind of formlessness without any definition.” It was essentially imperceptible.

However, Augustine notices epistemologically that “human thinking employs words in this way; but its attempts are either a knowing which is aware of what is not knowable or an ignorance based on knowledge.” Hence, Augustine was pointing to an inadequacy of human talk or language to adequately describe this formless state of the universe. He states in chapter 6.6, “I found it easier to suppose something deprived of all form to be non-existent than to think something could stand between form and nothingness, neither endowed with form nor nothing, but formless and so almost nothing.”

The issue next for Augustine was how to move from a state of suspicion to that of knowledge for he “suspected that this passing from form to form took place by means of something that had no form, yet was not absolute nothing. I wanted to know, not to suspect.” What is a “nothing something” or “a being which is non-being”? He concludes, “it must have had some prior existence to be able to receive the visible and ordered forms.”

However, in chapter 7.7, Augustine concludes that God is the constant immutable and never changing Being that had the capacity for creating the ontological realm first and then, secondarily, the substances of objects – both spiritual and physical. “Where could this capacity come from except from you, from whom everything has being insofar as it has being?” Augustine then shifts immediately to the implicates for this type of reasoning or metaphysics on human consciousness in relation to this Being. For he writes,

But the further away from you things are, the more unlike you they become – though this distance is not spatial. And so you, Lord, are not one thing here, another thing there, but the selfsame, very being itself, ‘holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty’ ...that is why you made heaven and earth out of nothing, a great thing

and a little thing, since you, both omnipotent and good, make all things good, a great heaven and a little earth. You were, the rest was nothing. Out of nothing you made heaven and earth.

Thus, we see the eternal intertwining between God and Being. The further that humanity obfuscates from this reality – the sicker and worse it becomes psychologically and/or spiritually dysfunctional; hence, the need for *conversio* of the totality of human consciousness and not simply the enlightenment of the intellect in the humanistic sense.

Finally, at the end of Book XII in chapter 28.38, Augustine states,

they see that by your stable permanence you transcend all past and future time, and yet there is nothing in the time-conditioned creation which you have not made. Your will, which is identical with your self, has made all things by a choice which in no sense manifests change or the emergence of anything not present before. You did not make the creation out of yourself I your own likeness, the form of all things, but out of nothing, which is formless dissimilarity to you, though, nevertheless, given form through your likeness. So it returns to you, the One, according to the appointed capacity granted to each entity according to its genus. All things are very good, whether they abide close to you or, in the graded hierarchy of being, stand further away from you in time and space, in beautiful modifications which they either cause or passively receive. To the limited extent that they can grasp the **light** of your truth in this life those who see these things rejoice.

All that has this “being”, therefore, must return to the Creator of Being because it only exists in God – nothing exists apart from God – not even human consciousness. Thus, there is really no escaping God within the human consciousness – only obfuscation of the “theo” from within theo-ratiocination. Upon the death of the bodily substance, the other two substances, God Will and mind/soul, will then be free to return as one and to meet “face to face”.

As to Scripture itself, Augustine concludes Book XII with the conclusion that there will inevitably be differing interpretations of allegorical/figurative sacred texts

such as Genesis 1. He sees this as a positive and not a negative. For he states in chapter 31.42,

For through him [Moses] the one God has tempered the sacred books to the interpretations of many, who could come to see a diversity of truths. Certainly, to make a bold declaration from my heart, if I myself were to be writing something at this supreme level of authority I would choose to write so that my words would sound out with whatever diverse truth in these matters each reader was able to grasp, rather than to give a quite explicit statement of a single true view of this question in such a way as to exclude other views – provided there was no false doctrine to offend me. Therefore my God, I do not want to be so rash as not to believe that Moses obtained this gift from you. When he wrote this passage, he perfectly perceived and had in mind all the truth we have been able to find here, and all the truth that could be found in it which we have not been able, or have not as yet been able, to discover.

Therefore, confession of the truth of scripture requires a willingness to hear God speak to us multi-dimensionally to the totality of our human consciousness by these sacred writings. Because of this ability to speak the Words of God, scripture requires a respect for multi-dimensional and multi-diverse teachings to all aspects of human consciousness and should be studied as authoritative for the basis of faith and practice within the ontological realm. The interpreter, therefore, should be able to translate philosophically these teachings for the understanding by God's light or illuminative insight and theo-rationality.

In Book XIII, Augustine addresses the climatic theme of *conversio* or conversion of the mind/soul and the outside-the-Church pagan criticisms and the inside-the-Church criticisms – and essentially Augustine's reason or impetus for the writing of the *Confessiones* in the first place. For our purposes, we will only focus on his understanding of scriptural conversion and his defense of Pauline philosophy concerning the “superiority of love” or superior conversion of love. The other topics,

though very interesting, are not necessary for our study from a philosophical point of view.

In chapter 1.1 Augustine states,

Before I called on you, you were there before me. With mounting frequency of voices of many kinds you **put pressure on me**, so that from far off I heard and was **converted** (*et converterer*) and called upon you as you were calling to me (*invocarem te*). Moreover, Lord, you wiped out all the evils which merited punishment, so as not to bring the due reward upon my hands (Ps. 17:21), by which I fell away from you. In any good actions of mine you were there before me...Before I existed you were, and I had no being to which you could grant existence... Let the spiritual and physical creation, which you made in your wisdom, tell us what merit they have before you. On your wisdom depended even embryonic and formless things, all of which in their own spiritual and physical category move towards the chaos where there is no control (*immoderationem et*), and to a far off dissimilarity (*in longinquam dissimilitudinem*) to you...It would have been dissimilar to you unless by your Word it had been converted to the same Word by whom it was made, so that illuminated by him, it became light and, though not in an equal measure, became conformed to a form equal to you...For we also, we are a spiritual creation in our souls, and have turned away from you our light.

In these passages from chapter 2.2 – 2.3, Augustine delineates his understanding of his philosophy of conversion. As stated earlier, he did not understand it as that of the Platonic enlightenment (intellectual certitude) model of the Allegory of the Cave in the *Republic* Book VII. Instead, Augustine ties the Old Testament account of God as Creator of Being as the basis of as to why the spiritual substance must rejoin with the Creator of its being. Simply put, the obfuscation of the consciousness from its the-  
ratiocination is an act of the freedom of the will which is possessed by the individual mind/soul. You will recall that we defined the “will” as that faculty or power within the mind/soul to attend or concentrate on cognates and/or conceptions – both pre-fabricated/pre-formulated by the God Will substance and those that are

fabricated/formulated by the will power of the individual mind/soul. Accordingly, with this obfuscation by the mind/soul within consciousness to ignore the God Will substance or illuminative voice concerning the cognates/conceptions of the ontological experience, the mind/soul attends or concentrates on cognates/conceptions without God Will substantive logic for its own obfuscatory purposes and agendas. Hence, humanity enters into a kind of “blindness” in life without true meaning or referent or providential guidance either in the interpretation of ontological cognates/conceptions or in the execution of moral judgments based on differing fact patterns of life circumstances. Thus, ontological/historical consequences accumulate within the memory and “weigh down” humanity with the guilt of obfuscation and with a fatalism/depression of the impossibility of ever returning to a state of theo-rational equilibrium for a healthy will power to move forward within the ontological.

However, Augustine experienced a scriptural conversion in which he states in chapter 4.5,

“the corollary of your perfections is that the imperfection of created things is displeasing. So they seek perfection from you that they may please you... when scripture says your Spirit rests on people, it means that the Spirit makes them rest on himself. But your incorruptible and immutable will sufficient to itself and in itself, was ‘born above’ the life which you had made, a life for which to live is not the same as living in perfect happiness, because even while in a fluid state in darkness it had life. It remains for it to be **converted** (*cui restat converti ad eum*) to him by whom it was made, more and more to live by the fount of life, to see **light** and to become perfect, radiant with light, and in complete happiness.

Therefore, the mind/soul always universally knows that it is in a state of imperfection or dissimilarity with the God Will substance within the consciousness. This sense of guilt cannot be escaped – although there are many human inventions for seeking and/or

attempting to do so. Moreover, “true happiness” can only be restored – it cannot be invented. This restoration of theo-ratiocination comes about by conversion back unto an attendance or concentration on the God Will substance within human consciousness based on the unconditional love and forgiveness of previous obfuscation and sin – ontologically/historically. The historical consequences for actions performed during this theo-rational blindness still remain throughout life – however, the Memory of the mind/soul, in conjunction with the God Will substance, is able to cope and overcome and formulate new cognates/conceptions without the memory of past sin and guilt - literally as if it never happened within the mind/soul. This removal of guilt can only come through one on one mercy/forgiveness from God. Only by restoration of theo-ratiocination equilibrium can the mind/soul possess “true happiness”. This, of course, by Augustine was a direct counter-distinction to Socratism and Aristotelian “eudemonism”.

In chapter 7.8, Augustine makes a direct apologetic for the authority of Pauline philosophy of conversion against pagan criticisms toward the apostle himself and against his understanding of the superiority of love in juxtaposition to the stoic ideas concerning compassion and merit based justice. For he begins with,

against this background the able reader can grasp your apostle’s meaning when he is saying that ‘love is diffused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us’ (Rom. 5:5). Teaching us concerning the things of the Spirit he demonstrates that the way of charity is ‘supereminent’ (I Cor. 12:1). Moreover, he bows the knee for us to you that we may know ‘the supereminent knowledge of the love of Christ (Eph. 3:14-19)... To whom can I expound, and with what words can I express, the weight of cupidity pulling us downwards into the precipitous abyss and the lifting of love given by your Spirit who was ‘borne above’... It means our feelings and our loves. The impurity of our spirit flows downwards because of our love of anxieties, and the holiness which is yours draws us **upwards** in a love of

freedom from anxiety... Whatever is less than you can never be sufficient to provide itself with the rest of contentment, and for this reason it is not even a source of contentment to itself. For you, our God 'will lighten our darkness'.

The Apostle Paul understood only too well of his own unfitness to be a leader of the Jesus Movement within the Greco-Roman world. He, himself, had been a radical persecutor of this Movement. If anyone had within his mind/soul memories of sin and evil – it was Paul. Nonetheless, Paul developed a scriptural philosophy of his own in which he realized that his own experience of conversion was based on no merit of his own. Nor were the cognates/conceptions that he then possessed within his own understanding earned or merited based of his own intellect. We might want to remember that Paul had once been known as Saul of Tarsus. Although he studied Pharisaism at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem, Saul of Tarsus was right in the middle of Stoic territory.<sup>307</sup> Like Augustine, he had Roman citizenship and education from his birth. As an adult, he spent ten years back in Tarsus upon his conversion working presumably as a tent maker and surrounded by all kinds of philosophical chatter and discussion. Certainly, he must have entered the fray and spoke of his own testimony concerning Christ and thus, honed his apologetical skills within the gentile world. Therefore, his teaching concerning the agape love of Jesus based on instantaneous

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<sup>307</sup> See N.T. Wright. *Paul: A Biography*. (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2018), pp. 74-75 – “The default mode in Tarsus, and many other parts of the ancient Mediterranean world, would have been some kind of Stoicism, with its all-embracing vision of a united and divine world order in which humans partake through their inner rationality, or *logos*. The famous alternative, Epicureanism, was a minority, elite option that saw the gods, if they existed at all, as themselves a distant, happy elite who took no interest in human affairs and certainly didn't try to intervene in the world...There were many more themes and variations on themes, an endless round of discussions in the tentmaker's cramped little shop, on the street, over meals with friends, at home. It was, we may suspect, fascinating and frustrating by turns. Like many other Jews of his day, Saul of Tarsus, thinking as a Jew while taking on board the theories of the wider world, would reflect on the similarity and dissimilarity between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of Israel...If the Stoics had a big integrated vision of a united world, so did he. If the Roman Empire was hoping to create a single society in which everyone would give allegiance to a single Lord, so was he.”

mercy/forgiveness of past memory/sin was considered “foolishness” to the pagan intelligencia. Foolish because they had not really studied, like Paul had, the teachings of the Incarnational Christ concerning the superior conversion based on love. From Pauline scriptural philosophy in the book of Romans, Augustine came to understand that anxiety was based on the obfuscation of the God consciousness within the mind/soul and must be reconciled. However, the freedom of the will is stubborn and desires independence from the God Will substance. Only by the Image and Teachings of the Incarnational Christ entering into the Memory of humanity could this stubbornness of will be overcome through reciprocal/relational love between God and Humanity.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have analyzed the meaning or purpose of the *Confessiones*. This was demonstrated by an exegetical analysis of Books X-XIII. Within this text we were able to enter into the third aspect of *confession* – namely, confession of truth. This truth has to do with God always present within every cognate moment illuminating or directing the will to concentrate or attend to certain pre-fabricated or formulated conceptions within the mind/soul. It was also shown that time is really a subjective concept of the measuring between present moment consciousness as it is pregnant with both past memory and premeditated imaginative future actions. God is a referent.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONFESSION-AL INFLUENCE ON PHILOSOPHY OF MIND AND METAPHYSICS

After elaborating both the structure and the meaning of the *Confessiones* – specifically Augustine’s Synchronic-Synthetic-Triunism in regards to the mind/soul and human consciousness, we will now take a small look at the influence of this magisterial work on later philosophers regarding both their methods and their particular philosophies of mind – both dualist and monist metaphysics.<sup>308</sup> As stated earlier, Augustine was a triunist and went beyond Plato and the Platonist in that he found within Scripture the tri-logics of Plato, Aristotle, and I would argue even the Stoics within all its differing forms. However, as to the God Will substance or God substance within the mind/soul substance – not the body - based on the insights of Scripture is, in

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<sup>308</sup> See Reinhold Niebuhr. “Augustine’s Political Realism” in *Christian Realism and Political Problems*. (Fairfield: Augustus M Kelley Publishers, 1953), p. 119-146 – “This conception of self-hood is drawn from the Bible, rather than from philosophy, because the transcendent self which is present in, though it transcends, all of the functions and effects, is comprehensible only in the dramatic-historical mode of apprehension which characterizes biblical faith. Augustine draws on the insights of neo-Platonism to illustrate the self’s power of self-transcendence; but he rejects Plotinus’ mystic doctrine, in which the particular self, both human and divine, is lost in the vast realm of undifferentiated being.” See - James Wetzel. *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Frederick Van Fleteren. “Augustine and Philosophy” *Augustinian Studies* 41:1 (2010) 255-274; J. Caleb Clanton. “Teaching Socrates, Aristotle, and Augustine on *Akrasis*” *Religions* 2015, 6, 419-433

my opinion, his most powerful contribution to philosophy, theology and even science. Augustine was not a pantheist like the Stoics or Spinoza. Instead, he proved that God can be ignored or obfuscated by non attention but never escaped from within the mind/soul. God is a necessary logical baseline or referent for all consciousness “to rest”. Even within scientific enquiry, God directs the enquirer to a vision (ratiocination) – pictorially – for the proper focus or concentration of the mind/soul toward the phenomena under investigation. Humans do not have the power to illuminate themselves from within – conceptions and qualia are directed from beyond the individual will in the process of concentration within human enquiry for truth. He understood that the logic of synthetic substances or fusion meant that any thought life that exists must be empirically verified by language or “signs” to the best of human ability to articulate in order for Truth – on all its existential levels- to be ultimately understood and predicted within the worlds of philosophy and science. Therefore, we will now look in detail at Thomas Aquinas, Gottfried Leibniz, and Analytical Philosophy of Metaphysics to see this influence in action.

### **I. Thomas Aquinas: Apprehension and Understanding in the Mind**

Thomas Aquinas was an expert on Augustine as well as Aristotelian metaphysics and ethics. He, as well as Islamic philosophers before him, saw the certitude that can be achieved through laws of logic or computation based on the analysis of the interior acts of the mind. It is impossible to demonstrate the speculations of a Democritus or other atomists who simply argue that all there is to human existence is matter or material creating consciousness within the human mind. Aquinas understood the Aristotelian project in all its profundity. Nonetheless, he also understood the gaps in regards to the

phenomenological side of consciousness that is innate prior to experience. The Eternal Law was a governing dynamic or providential force that governed Mind and the relationality of material in the physical world of space/time - to use an Einsteinian phrase. Moreover, he understood that the strict materialists were seeking to gain ethical freedom by denying the reality of substantial forms within space/time. Thus, the project to which Aquinas dedicated himself and his ministry was to be an apologist for the Theological phase of human rationality – but to also “demonstrate” through common experience of internal acts of the Mind which are universal to all human beings – that phenomenal description can go further than the Aristotelian project by including the religious dimension of logic – and, also, to demonstrate and explain what Scripture had articulated through mythological logic and language in regards to the relationality of substantial forms to material reality. Like Augustine before him, Aquinas was seeking to make the truths of Scripture even more intelligible to the scientific mind.

The human soul or mind for Aquinas had to be a logical and fully rational reality – necessarily not contingently. For him, humans are intellectual because they are the only creatures free from matter. How is this so? For him, the intellect within the soul is intelligible. This means that an intelligible is abstracted from matter by the intellect and thus, is separated from matter. We cannot have intellectual knowledge of material reality except by abstraction because we cannot enter the material object in itself. Therefore, “whatever is immaterial is intellectual”.<sup>309</sup> The intellect, in turn, uses material things as instruments for the mind’s bidding. Humans have freedom of choice because they are not bound to matter and can formulate judgments(conclusions) by the

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<sup>309</sup> Thomas Aquinas. *Compendium of Theology*. Manchester, Sophia Institute Press, 2002, p.71

intellect. For he states, “the intellect does not act or desire without forming a judgment nor is the judgment of the intellect the product of natural impulse”.<sup>310</sup> For him, the “true apprehension” of the object is the basis of human judgment. Aquinas states that the intellect has a perception of “ends” and of the means for reaching or achieving ends. The mind is a substantial form because it self-motivates or self-causes its own judgment. It does not depend on external objects to self-move. The mind also possesses an intellectual desire or appetite for the “good” within all judgments. Hence, the performance of actions is based on an intellectual end that is desired intelligibly in order to formulate a “free judgment” or free choice. Human beings are free because they are not determined on a singular trajectory. For he writes, “a being is free that is not tied down to one definite course. The appetite of an intellectual substance is not under compulsion to pursue any one definite good. For it follows that intellectual apprehension embraces good universally”.<sup>311</sup> This universal good is based on the fact that intellectual substances do not simply calculate infinitely but do come to degrees of perfection or supremacy of ideas in formulating understanding.

What is understanding within the mind? For Aquinas, the understanding is affiliated with humans and no other species. For he states, “evidently man understands universals and the relations between things and immaterial objects which are perceptible only to the intelligence”.<sup>312</sup> From this he also deduces that the receiver of such immaterial objects must be lacking said object previously in the receiver. Therefore, no bodily organ can pre-possess knowledge of sensible natures for if a bodily

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., p.72

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>312</sup> Ibid.,

organ did know “through the medium of the bodily organ then that organ would have to lack in sensible nature. But this is impossible”.<sup>313</sup> Therefore, the cognitive faculty knows in accord with the particular way the species comes to be known by nature. The intellect knows immaterially or conceptually as its way of knowing. Thus, like Aristotle, Aquinas sees the intellect’s power to abstract from material reality universal conceptions or forms from “individuating material conditions”. Moreover, this species or abstraction of material reality cannot exist in the intellect materially and thus, not received into the bodily organ because the organ is itself material. The perfection of the intellect comes through the “excellences of intelligible objects”. This then leads Aquinas to his conclusion concerning the immateriality of the intellect: “thus, if man is found to be intelligent, and if man’s understanding is not effected through the medium of a bodily organ, we are forced to acknowledge the existence of some incorporeal substance whereby man exercises the act of understanding”.<sup>314</sup> This substance is self-acting or can perform an action without the aid of the body and is not dependent on a body has to be, for Aquinas, incorporeal or immaterial. Hence, there exists an intellectual world where there has to be a first mover or actor and this is God. God is pure act or pure actuality and is never in potency. Humanity, however, moves between potency/potentiality and act/actuality in regards to motion or movement. Therefore, human intellects exist in potential and actual forms.

The first is what he called “the possible intellect”. This is that part of the intellect that possesses universal intelligible forms of sensible objects. He considers this part of the intellect to be the lowest because it possesses the least universality and is mainly

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., p.74

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., p. 75

concerned with particulars. This p-intellect<sup>315</sup> is closest to matter and its ideas are closely related to material reality. Humans understand by bringing out universal categories based on the p-intellect's collection of data. Apprehension, as opposed to comprehension, is based on the formulation of universals and immaterial forms but these must pass through the mediums of sense faculties. Aquinas states that humanity must be equipped with sense faculties which allows the mind to collect particulars and to know particulars in order to apprehend understanding. The Platonic forms are rejected by him because knowledge within the intellect does not come from pre-existent forms self-subsisting outside of material reality. For he states, "knowledge of things in our intellect is not caused by any participation or influence of forms that are intelligible in act and that subsist by themselves".<sup>316</sup> Forms, abstracted from matter by the intellect, are intelligible in potency and not in act. For him, the intellect only understands universals.

The agent intellect is the other power of the intellect which will cause a species abstracted to move from potency of particulars to the act or actuality of the formulation of universals – "like light to colors". There is a middle between pintellect and aintellect called the "habitual intellect" which possesses intellectual species in such a way that it uses them easily and at will. Thus, the potential intellect when the species is made the form within the possible intellect and then it is apprehended in understanding through the agent intellect once understood.

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<sup>315</sup> I will refer to potential intellect as p-intellect and agent intellect as a-intellect

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., p.77

Human choice is free choice. Human will is free-will. Thus, Aquinas is an apologist for this understanding of the human mind and its relation to the material world. The human will cannot be necessarily moved to choose anything. The source for both the natural and voluntary acts is “internal” and all that is coerced in nature is external. If this was not the case, the giving of “merit” and “demerit” in regards to human actions would be contrary because it would be based on actions that cannot be helped supposedly. For he states, “for if nothing is within our power, we are necessarily moved to will things, and deliberation, exhortation, precept punishment and praise and blame of which moral philosophy consists is destroyed”.<sup>317</sup> Things in nature are material. However, from this material object comes universals or forms(ideas) and these are the source of our actions and inclinations. Both natural appetites and actions are the result or effect of inclinations. Hence, human beings have intellectual forms and inclinations of the will which are based on the “understood forms”. All external actions by humans result from these willful inclinations. Forms are “individuated” by the material object or matter itself and the inclinations that follow are determined by one thing. Nonetheless, the “understood form” is a universal and can include many individual things. Thus, the inclination of the will can be indeterminately disposed to many things and not predetermined.

The intellect’s object is the “formal cause” and the will’s object is the “final cause”. The first source of movement, therefore, is the end, which initiates the performance of an act. This first source of movement comes from the intellect and movement of an action comes from the will. The will’s self-movement is based on “deliberation”; which

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.,

“is an inquiry that does not yield only one conclusion but can lead to contrary conclusions. Hence, the will is not moved necessarily. As shown before in regards to the dominance of the passions, the will does not always have to deliberate. Deliberation is caused by prior movement because it comes before the movement of the will. “Act of will” proceeds deliberation. Aristotle and Aquinas both agree “that what first moves the intellect and the will is something supernatural”.<sup>318</sup>

The object that properly moves the will is the good which is apprehended as suitable. Aquinas states that “a good without suitability will not move the will”. He goes on to conclude,

and so a good if it is presented to us a good but not as suitable will not move the will and since deliberations and choices regard particular things which are the objects of the will’s acts, we need to apprehend good and suitable things as good and suitable in particular and not only in general. If we apprehend something as suitable good in every conceivable particular, it will necessarily move the will. Human beings necessarily seek happiness.<sup>319</sup>

Thus, true happiness cannot be manufactured by propaganda or manipulation of consciousness externally. Instead, it must meet the pre-existent requirement of suitability toward the ultimate end – which is ultimate happiness. For Aquinas, there can be no true happiness – no ultimate happiness – without following the eternal law that providentially governs the realms of both nature and spirit or matter and form. “A person may not will to think about happiness, as even the very acts of the intellect and will are particular acts...if good is not found in every particular, it will not necessarily

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>319</sup> Ibid.,

move the will even regarding specification of the act for a person can will the contrary...such as good for health and not good for enjoyment”.

According to Aquinas, the “particular condition” can move the will in three ways: (1) one particular can predominate and then reason moves the will in regards to what is useful for health not pleasurable; (2) A person can think of a particular circumstance and not about another because of favorability one over another either from within or without so that this particular “absorbs” the individual; (3) Based on the disposition of a person, ends “seem” to a person as the person is disposed – angry or calm temperament toward an object, as a same object may not be suitable for two different people – “healthy and sick people regard food in different ways”.

The “true” exists as an object in the mind only. Thus, God’s providence works perfectly in every kind of thing even though the contingent effects are based on contingent causality. Therefore, the human will can will other things other than God’s will. For example, “the human wills to sin”. God does not will that a human will to sin. In order to gain truth, the will moves the intellect to activity to discern good and evil in the object. “Assenting” is the movement of the intellect toward right understanding of something in the mind – namely truth or falsity. “The intellect ascends to conceptions when it judges them to be true”. “Not every cause necessarily brings about an effect even if the cause is sufficient since the cause can be prevented from sometimes achieving its effect”.<sup>320</sup> The will, therefore, can be caused to act but the cause can be stopped in reaching full effect by the will choosing not to will. This is done by removing the thought or consideration from the consciousness that would induce the will to act;

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.,

or, by considering the contrary and shutting down further deliberation or reasoning concerning what is good and not good about the object. Aquinas quotes Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, "the active power disposed toward contrary things does not necessarily produce its effect".<sup>321</sup>

What, then, is the source of human knowledge? Aquinas readily agrees that the source of knowledge comes from the senses. However, not all knowledge is subject to the senses or "known directly through perceptible effects". Perception in this case means external objects of perception by the senses. Aquinas understands there to be an internal perception or perception of perception in which the "intellect also knows itself through its activity which is not subject to the senses but knows internal acts of the will as acts of the intellect in one respect move the will and the will in another respect causes acts of the intellect as effects are known through causes and causes through effects".<sup>322</sup> Examples of such knowledge are universals, the potentiality of prime matter(noncomplex) for differing forms, power of the will disposed to contrary because they follow "successively" from the same source and we trace movements of the will which are of different kinds to the same source. Desire and want are an act of will which is not based on reason. "Desire is a function of the will not reason. Moreover, reason proposes something to the will which is "intention". Thus, discourse comes to a judgment or conclusion and matters of operation come to an end in movement or "doing". Aquinas states that "choice is the principal element in moral virtue in which both reason and will are necessary for the essential character of moral virtue".<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>323</sup> Ibid.,

## **II. Leibniz: Motion and the Metaphysics of Consciousness**

Leibniz made a unique contribution to both phenomenology and to the philosophy of mind debates that we currently see in the twenty-first century. Although not a Cartesian, he did agree with the mechanistic physics of the physical world. He disagreed with stopping at matter or geometric extension as the basis of defining matter. He disagreed with Descartes' physics concerning motion. Specifically, motion as defined as movement from place to place. Thus, by challenging these two fundamental truths of the Cartesians, Leibniz initiated his program of clarifying what truth is – namely, necessary and primary truths and how the moderns and the empirics were basing their systems on contingent truths taken as universal theory. Leibniz is not only an apologist for the necessary truths but he is a kind of new Augustine who wants to conjoin Platonist doctrines, natural religion, and Biblical theology into a coherent system that is mechanistically demonstrative but that inspires the reader to an intellectual assent for the Final Cause of all of nature – namely, God.

Most of the writings of Leibniz are not written in any particular systematic way. The corpus of writings that we have seem to be mostly individual treatises and dissertational correspondence to different intellectuals concerning his thoughts on any number of issues. Hence, one has to look to his writings in their totality over time and within their own particular contexts to truly explicate a particular philosophical position by Leibniz. Therefore, the “sitz im leben” or “setting in life” is of necessary importance in the

exegetical exercise of piecing together a solid and founded theory of anything when it comes to Leibniz. This is particularly true when it comes to his position on consciousness within his philosophy of mind. Nicholas Jolly has argued, and rightfully so, that Leibniz had two main targets when he wrote both his *Preface* and his *New Understanding*; namely, the positions of John Locke and Malebranche in regards to their respective polemics against innate ideas or principles.<sup>324</sup>

On May 26, 1706, Leibniz writes to Thomas Burnett, “the death of Locke has taken away my desire to publish my remarks upon his works. I prefer now to publish my thought independently of those of another!”<sup>325</sup> However, on May 12, 1709, he writes, “My remarks upon the excellent work of Locke are almost finished; although we are not of the same opinion, I do not cease to value it and to find it valuable”. Also, on June 16, 1707, he states, “my purpose has been to throw light upon things rather than refute the opinions of another”. All three of these statements by Leibniz give a great deal of insight into the character and heart of this man. However, it also shows that the subject of innate ideas within the mind of man is of paramount consequence for him in saving metaphysics and apriori analysis from being dismissed as irrelevant to the understanding of the subjective experience of humanity. In this essay, *Preface to New Essays on Human Understanding* and his *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Leibniz sets out to elucidate in detail his philosophy of mind or soul. Specifically, his understanding of human consciousness and how it is formed, and continues to be reformed, without a strict dependency on material stimulus in order to move or think.

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<sup>324</sup> Nicholas Jolly. “Leibniz and Malebranche on Innate Ideas. *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 97, No 1 (Jan., 1988) pp.71-91

<sup>325</sup> Leibniz, G.W. and Arthur G. Langley. “New Essay on Human Understanding”, *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (July 1885), p.279

It will be his core argument that Locke is in the tradition of Gassendi and Democritus. His is a materialist mind that comes into the world as a *tabula rasa* or empty slate.<sup>326</sup>

The heart of his philosophy of mind attack really begins in the *Preface*. For it is here that he compares and contrasts his and Locke's similarities in regards to the powers of the mind. Specifically, he investigates the contradiction that Locke seems to be making when he, himself, discusses reflection as a capability of a materialist mind. Leibniz seems that this capability in and of itself seems to indicate an innate quality within the human consciousness. Reflection has to do with the ideas that do not originate in sensation but come from mental analysis; a kind of perception of perception if you will. For he writes, "reflection is nothing more than the attention to what is within us and the senses do not give us what we already bring with us...given this can anyone deny that there is a great deal of innate in our mind, since we are innate to ourselves...these objects [intellectual ideas] are always immediate and always present to our understanding – though they may not always be perceived consciously (appercus) on account of our distractions and our needs".<sup>327</sup> It was Locke's belief that there existed no potentiality within the mind nor were there any thoughts that actually consciously perceived (apperceptions). From this, Leibniz counters with the fact of paradox of habits and memory contents are not always consciously perceived. He does not think that reason has the capacity by itself to know how "far back our past and perhaps forgotten apperceptions can go, especially, in view of the Platonist doctrine of reminiscence. Leibniz understood that apperception was not simply that of external

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., p. 280

<sup>327</sup> Ariew, Roger and Daniel Garber eds. *Leibniz Philosophical Essays*. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989), p.294

reality; but, that there were apperceptions within ourselves. For Locke, bodies were without motions and souls did not have innate ideas. It is at this point that Leibniz points out that even Mr. Boyle, which was Locke's mentor, stated that nothing could be at perfect rest. He goes on to state that there are thousands of moments in which there exist an infinity of perceptions in us. It is apperception and reflection that allow us to formulate an aggregated and ordered consciousness out of the thousands of individual percepts or impressions too numerous and too homogeneous to delineate.

Leibniz argued that the senses are necessary for all "our actual knowledge"; but, they come short of giving us the totality of knowledge. "The senses never give us anything but instances – that is particular and individual truth...logic together with metaphysics and morals, of which the one shapes natural theology and the other natural jurisprudence, are full of such truths and consequently their proof can only arise from internal principles which are called innate".<sup>328</sup> The senses do serve their function of stimulating attention and reflection but not consciousness in its totality. Beasts are purely empirical. Humans possess necessary truths as well as contingent truths and are guided morally and by principled rational exercise. Hence, he writes, "for only reason is capable of establishing sure rules and of providing what uncertain rules lack by formulating exceptions to them, lastly finding connections that are certain in the compulsiveness[force] of necessary consequences".<sup>329</sup>

How then does Leibniz formulate a synthetic or multi-dimensional consciousness? It begins with attention. For he writes, "all attention requires memory

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid., p. 296

<sup>329</sup> Ibid., p.297

and when we are alerted to pay heed to some of our own present perceptions we let them pass without reflection and without even noticing them. But someone alerts us to them right away and makes us take note thus there are perceptions that did not consciously perceive right away, the apperception in this case arises only after an interval – however, brief”.<sup>330</sup>

Moreover, we do not perceive what he calls “tiny perceptions” or “petites perceptions” because they are the individual perceptions that make up the aggregate whole we call object. Our minds are always in motion even when dreaming. He later brings it home with the following statement, “as a result of these tiny perceptions, the present is filled with the future and laden with the past, that everything conspires together (symptonia panta, as Hippocritus said) and that eyes as piercing as those of God could read the whole sequence of the universe in the smallest substances.

Leibniz realizes that these insensible perceptions, as he would come to call them, are essential for a type of connectivity between cognitive thought in which an individual actually formulates a notion and a continuously moving thought life within the mind. These insensibles are made up of past, present and future petites perceptions that, when noticed, formulate conscious thought. He would later call them the “connective tissue” of consciousness. For he states, “these insensible perceptions also indicate and constitute the individual, which is individuated [characterized] by the traces which these perceptions preserve of its previous states. They can be known by a superior mind, even

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., p.295

when the individual himself does not sense them, when he no longer has explicit memory of them”.<sup>331</sup>

Leibniz’s consciousness, therefore, is a type of conceptual overly of mind states; and not a mind state to mind state linear progressive consciousness as described by the materialist thinkers – especially, Locke. Instead, any one cognitive moment is ripe with synthetic multi-dimensional notions. When these notions are conjoined into one formulation they impinge and influence present judgment and action. “These perceptions can provide a way of recovering the memory as needed through periodic unfoldings...it is these tiny perceptions which determine us in many situations without our thinking of them, and which deceive the common people by the appearance of an indifference of equilibrium”.<sup>332</sup> Insensibles, thus, are simply degrees of mini-mind-states in which perception is formed and cognized into conceptual constructs and networks of ideas. For he states,

insensible perceptions have as much use in philosophy of mind [pneumatique] as corpuscles do in physics; and it is equally unreasonable to reject one as the other under the pretext that they are beyond the reach of the senses...nothing takes place all at once, and it is one of the greatest and best verified maxims that ‘nature never makes leaps; this is what I call the law of continuity...one only passes from small to large and back again through what lies between, both in degree and in parts...motion never arises immediately from rest nor is it reduced to rest except through lesser motion...but until now, those who had given the laws of motion have not observed this law, believing that a body can instantaneously receive motion opposite to the previous motion”.<sup>333</sup>

Hence, noticeable perceptions come to the consciousness by degeed motion.

Nonetheless, past memory apperceptions, present perceptions and future imaginative

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., p.296

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., p. 297

<sup>333</sup> Ibid.

notions can all conceptually conjoin to form one cognate or distinctive idea. He would later write in his *New Essays*, in response to the question “are the sciences innate?...their actual knowledge is not, but much that you may call virtual knowledge, like the figure traced by the veins of the marble, is in the marble, before one discovers them in working the apperception of that which is in us depends upon attention and order...nature has not given herself trouble to impress upon us innate knowledge, since without it there would be no means of coming to the actual knowledge of necessary truths in the demonstrative sciences, and to the reasons of facts”.<sup>334</sup>

What then are these conceptual overlays or the variables of a synthetic consciousness? In his late, mature, metaphysics, in the essays *Principles of Nature and Grace Based on Reason*(1714) and *The Monadology*(1714) Leibniz delineates the mind variables for a consciousness. In the *Monadology* he states, “that every present state of a simple substance is a natural consequence of its preceding state, the present is pregnant with the future...we apperceive our perceptions and we must have had previous perceptions immediately before, even though we did not apperceive them. For a perception can only come naturally from another perception and motion can only come from a previous motion”.<sup>335</sup> Leibniz understands a perception to be a “passing state which involves and represents a multitude in the unity or in the simple substance...which should be distinguished from apperception, or consciousness...this is where the Cartesians have failed badly, since they took no account of the perceptions that we do not apperceive. This is also what made them believe that minds alone are

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<sup>334</sup> Leibniz, G.W. and Alfred G. Langley, p.290

<sup>335</sup> Ariew and Garber, p.216

monads and that there are no animals or other entelechies”.<sup>336</sup> Thus, we have a new definition for apperception from that of his earlier writings. In the *Discourse*, as well as other places, apperception 1 is that of awareness or attention. In apperception 2, in his later metaphysics, he is blatant to define it as the totality of consciousness both distinctively and indistinctly. I think that this has been a major oversight by scholars of Leibniz.<sup>337</sup> Memory provides for Leibniz a kind of sequentialism of the soul which he says “imitates reason but must be distinguished from it”. Imagination “comes from the magnitude and multitude of proceeding perceptions”. Hence, Memory, Sensory Perception and Imagination conjoin into one unified whole in the consciousness. This means that for any given present mind state there is enmeshed with it both past mind states and future mind creations through the imaginative mind state. Thus, there is always consciousness going on in the mind and this consciousness is eternal according to Leibniz. Our present judgments and actions become an amalgamation of non distinct past mental states and future imaginative mind states and they all happen in cognizable moments as unified wholes. I think this is a completely new way of analyzing both what consciousness is and how it informs our ethics moment to moment.

### **III. Augustinian Metaphysics and Analytic Philosophy**

Metaphysics, or analytic metaphysics, has had quite a comeback in post – 1950’s academia. Thanks to the likes of W V Quine and P F Strawson under the influence of linguistic philosophy, were able to bring metaphysics back from the positivist grave of

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid., p. 214

<sup>337</sup> See Allison Simmons. “Changing the Cartesian Mind: Leibniz on Sensation, Representation and Consciousness. *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 110, No. 1(Jan., 2001) pp. 31-75; Mark Kulstad. “Leibniz, Animals, and Apperception”. *Studia Leibnitiana*, Bd. 13, H. 1 (1981), pp. 25-60; Nicholas Jolley. “Leibniz and Phenomenalism”. *Studia Leibnitiana*, Bd. 18 H. 1 (1996), pp. 38-51; Anthony Savile. “Leibniz’s Contribution to the Theory of Innate Ideas”, *Philosophy*. Vol., 47, No. 180 (April., 1972), pp. 113-124

“meaninglessness” to the sunlit ground of meaning.<sup>338</sup> Like Plantinga, I too have been impressed with the ingenuity of logical possibility to any number of metaphysical propositions. One reoccurring theme seems to be ever present in these papers - the theme of real versus ideal or the actual versus the perspective of the observer to the calculus itself. In other words, analytic philosophy examines the philosophical enterprise by the use of modal calculus to linguistic expression to determine precise meaning of ideas. Like all science, the perspective of the philosopher as he/she examines ideas must first look at the position or motivation or “observational position” for such examination, and more precisely, factor in such perspective to the calculus of meaning in regards to ideal/real or actual/possible determinations.

The consciousness of the communicator of ideas or propositions, in the course of proving the logic of such ideas, must factor in to the modal calculation or logical possibility argument that where the stimulus of such ideas are being initiated. In other words, the stimulative affect of an idea within consciousness. For example, the analytic certainly understands that consciousness does not happen in a other worldly realm. It is based on the stimulus of impressions of the senses and the record of such stimuli within the memory of the mind. This is without debate for the analytic. Otherwise, the analytic would have to believe that consciousness is self created or revelation from another realm. The observational aspect of an idea is the determinative factor of distinguishing

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<sup>338</sup> Moritz Schlick. “The Foundation of Knowledge”. *Erkenntnis*, Vol. IV (1934); “The Turning Point in Philosophy”; O. Neurath. “Physicalism: The Philosophy of the Viennese Circle”, *Philosophical Papers*. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1983), p. 48ff; Rudolph Carnap. “The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language”, *Erkenntnis II* (1932); Gilbert Ryle. *The Concept of Mind* (Hutchinson, 1949), pp. 11-24

between the objects of imagination and the actual (outside the mind) objects that stimulate consciousness.

In each of the three papers, however, the ontological commitments were calculated based on modal analysis of linguistic expressions without any true description of observational positioning within the metaphysical ideas being proven. Quine, simply used linguistic logic, to show the fallacy of “meaningless” within semantic expression as explicated by positivists in the early part of the twentieth century in doing away with Hegelian metaphysical expression. The “meaning” of language was the determinative factor for truth to positivist – so Quine used linguistic logic of created ideals versus actual reals in regards to “unactualized possibilities”. Lewis created his own type of modal realism in challenging Quine and the possibility that non-existent objects could or do exist. His indexical theory of actuality for the perspective of variables that inhabit their own particular world are real to them and thus, exist. Plantinga, like Quine, cannot swallow the existence of non-existent objects. However, using counter-modal calculations of linguistic expressions determined that Lewis used “Canonical Conception of Possible Worlds”; and Plantinga wanted to create an “Actualist Conception of Possible Worlds” that basically used part of the logic of the canonical but rejected its ontological commitments to the literal existence of other worlds or possible worlds.

Modal logic has its place in the world of mathematics. For in the world of quantities it is necessary to the calculation of precise truth to have a procedure of calculus. Numbers are theoretical entities but they have their own meaning only in regards or relations to quantity of something. They are used to calculate or predict

precise quantity not of mind objects but spatio-temporal objects outside the observer. However, the use of numeric logic and groupings, modal logic, mathematical calculus to give metaphysics some kind of quantitative meaning is only fully explicative if it includes the calculator or philosopher or scientist. This is true mainly because people are not numbers. They are both the receiver and creator of ideas through imagination and memory. The metaphysical enterprise can be existentially verified in the spatio-temporal realm if and only if the observational perspective of the idea is factored into the proof being discussed. Lewis, for example, basically admitted that if he thinks it then it can be proven to have possibly existed. This could be translated: if I can create Proposition P about Property X and “believe” that both exist or could exist in all possible worlds that have not yet been empirically verified but, nonetheless, are logically possible within the framework of modal logic, then an ontological commitment can be formed. Ideas are not numbers. Ideas are essentially amalgamated or formulated from pre-existential and post-existential variables within the consciousness of a person. On the other side of the house, Plantinga attempts to pick the fruit of Lewis and then burn the tree of his ontological commitment to non-existent objects. However, he too makes the same mistake of exempting from his analysis the reality of the observational position from which metaphysical commitments can or should be made. If this observational perspective is within the realm of the consciousness, then it factors into whether such ideas are formulations of imaginative realisms or actualized idealism that can be verified in the existential – not necessarily in the empirical realm.

Metaphysics, therefore, is like numbers in that it is a form of logic within the consciousness that is, in turn, formed by the existence of a consciousness within the

spatio-temporal realm. Like numbers, consciousness and metaphysics would be meaningless if it could not have existential relations within the spatio-temporal. The existential quantification in relation to observational quantification is what gives meaning and truth to metaphysical propositions. In other words, the stimulus in the causal chain of the formulation of metaphysical or ontological commitments must be clearly stated in the propositional declarations of a particular thinker. Simply stating that an object in the mind of the thinker could have existed and therefore, can be believed to exist is jumping to the conclusion without describing openly how the object was stimulated and then formulated with the consciousness of the thinker who claims it to be logically possible. As long as the observational perspective is not fully explicated then the proposition is most certainly illogical.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter it has been shown that Augustine's scriptural philosophy has been profoundly impactful on all aspects of philosophical schools within the Medieval to Early Modern to Analytic Philosophy of today. Furthermore, his influence on philosophy of consciousness and language has impacted many disciplines within philosophy itself – epistemology, philosophy of mind, and metaphysics.

**CHAPTER SEVEN:  
(CONCLUSION)**

**THE CAVE AND GOD CONSCIOUSNESS UNDERSTANDING**

**I. Findings**

There are four aspects of Augustine's thought in the *Confessiones* that have been challenged and redefined in this dissertation: the full contextual matrix as to place, setting, and motivation for writing; the genre and structural framework utilized by Augustine in framing this treatise; "Confession" redefined as confession of sin, confession of faith and confession of truth; and the meaning or purpose for writing in regards to his scriptural philosophy of consciousness and to the redefining of Socratic ratiocination based on humanistic pagan philosophy to that of theo-ratiocination which Augustine found in Scripture.

We have shown that Augustine was in Carthage North Africa for most of the year in 397C.E.. As the new Bishop of Hippo, Augustine was asked by Bishop Aurelius of Carthage to preach the sermons throughout the "festival of saints" from mid-Winter till late Summer and early Fall. For an extended period of time within that missional experience, we know that Augustine was bed ridden and could, for the most part, only kneel and stand to preach before returning to his room. We conjecture that Augustine produced the *Confessiones* during both day and evening hours within the duration of that illness period. Furthermore, this writing was motivated because of pagan

criticisms thrust against Catholic Christianity from different pagan intellectuals, both written and spoken, within and without Carthage concerning the doctrine of Grace or instant mercy/forgiveness of sins through scriptural conversion. Most of the sermons he preached that year were against pagans and the cultural practices by Catholics within the Church who straddled the fence between paganism and its religious rites, and Catholicism and its doctrinal stances. Especially apparent was the lack of devotion to the “authority of scripture” for trumping pagan philosophical thought concerning the mind/soul. This confusion of two different understandings of reasoning or rationality and for what is necessary for a true cleansing of the mind/soul, inspired Augustine to engage in a pedagogical/apologetic proof for Scriptural reasoning/rationality and the scriptural understanding of conversion of a sick will and not just an ignorant intellect.

It has also been shown that Augustine utilized a tool that he had been using in a number of his earlier works to lift the mind/soul of the reader/listener from base materialist consciousness to that of transcendent understanding of God. However, in the *Confessiones*, Augustine uses as genre a Dialogue/Treatise Model— except this time it is a pedagogical dialogue that is rhetorically structured around a quasi-prayer motif in which the reader/listener may overhear both Augustine petitioning God through prayer then narrative of philosophical lecturing and then response through scripture and analysis of previous lecture given. Specifically, it was shown that he structure Books I-IX based around the Allegory of the Cave structure by Plato in Book VII of the *Republic*.

Finally, it was shown that what Augustine produced in Books X-XIII was an analytic/theoretical explanation of the historical psychological model/data preciously elucidated. Augustine, thus, produced a Christian version of Philo of Alexandria’s

Jewish model for the formation of, what I am calling, Scriptural Philosophy based on exegetical analysis rooted in allegorical or figurative hermeneutics. Specifically, he proves – not preaches – the necessity for a God referent or base-line consciousness upon which all mental constructs and/or metaphysics are built from – not over and against.

## **II. Implications**

In the *Confessiones*, Augustine awakens us to a new problem in the philosophy of mind/consciousness. It is a problem that sophisticated materialists and Neo-Platonists did not see within their individual logics and argumentations. It is a problem that was rejuvenated by Descartes and Leibniz only to be obfuscated by Empirics and Kantian/German Idealist systems. The problem simply put is our humanistic tendency to not recognize that we possess, what I am calling, unearned/unmerited and/or pre-fabricated (unwilled) conceptual frameworks that both order perception in relation to apperception and, at the same time, we possess perceptual order within an apperceptual “Understanding”. In other words, philosophy, until Augustine – and to a large extent since Augustine - has obfuscated from its descriptive metaphysics the very real Self doing the observing of phenomena – both objectively and subjectively. Either the Mind/Soul is described as a reductionist neurobiological “computational” machine that has a preliminary hard drive built in with pre-programmed data processors, if you will, or it is described as a “pure reason” that has no empirical data for its formulation and analysis. Either way, both are arguably based on human ratiocination which is assumed to be the only ability to analyze and process sense datum in order to formulate a continued conscious stream of cognates. Thus, as Hillary Putnam has pointed out,

philosophy divides up into two competing camps within most philosophy departments around the world: Monist Substance/Objective/Materialist/Scientific and the other Dualist Substance/Subjective/Trans-materialist/Phenomenological.<sup>339</sup> Both, according to Augustine, are partially right and both are partially wrong in their individual metaphysical descriptions of the mind/soul existential reality totality. The variable that is ignored by both – and yet is usually simply taken for granted by most – is the idea of an Understanding. What exactly is the “Understanding”? Is the Understanding truly “earned” through human ratiocination alone; or is it possible that the Understanding is “unearned” and “unmerited” from a purely humanistic ratiocination point of view? This Understanding idea was, of course, plainly elucidated by Plato, Augustine, Anselm, and Kant in regards to wisdom and pure mathematics/physics within the mind. Kant would call this pure reasoning affect as “a priori synthetic judgments”. This was in contradistinction to “a posteriori synthetic judgments” based on empirical sense datum as experienced by the body within space/time.

For Augustine, the Understanding is an amalgamative of three substances or Synchronic-Synthetic -Triunism and not one (monist) or two (dualist) substances. For him, the Interpretation of perceptual sense datum and apperceptual mind/soul datum is always illumined by a “light” or reasoning that is external of the other two substances which make up consciousness or cognition. Thus, no conscious being has an individual or separated consciousness apart from this light of illumined interpretation baked into the cake if you will – a constant referent. What Kant wished to call “enlightenment” based solely on humanistic ratiocination without recognition of this

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<sup>339</sup> Hillary Putnam. *Mind, Language and Reality*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975)

referent or his transcendental idealist cognates is misguided - yet he at least recognized that the bodily material is not capable of “pure” cognates which are not informed at all by bodily experience.<sup>340</sup> This external illumined interpretation of perceptual and apperceptual datum, it seems to me, could be defined as an ordered perceptual observation or concentration/attention within the mind/soul and, moreover, is a necessary variable within consciousness in order to Understand reality and its goings on within the ontological. For if Augustine’s theory of consciousness is correct, how could the infant ever actuate movement away from the fetal position toward purposeful action without being completely overwhelmed by percepts and qualia? For without a prefabricated perceptual order between perception of sense datum and apperceptual interpretation and then imaginative or premeditative action, the child, the colt new born, the calf in the field would never act upon birth without the illumined interpretation of an external ratiocination or Theo-ratiocination guiding interpretation of consciousness in each present cognate moment. In other words, if the past (memory) informs the present cognate and the future (imaginative/premeditative) which informs the present cognate, then how could something newly born or conscious be able to function without any, what I would call, “feeder logic” or “fuel logic” informing the present at birth in order to premeditate a future purposeful action. If Augustine is right in that we think pictorially through image within each present cognate moment in regards to both past memory and future action based on reflective consciousness – then

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<sup>340</sup> Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Pure Reason* in *Modern Classical Philosophers*. Benjamin Rand, ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1924), p. 378 – “What is here is unknown *x*, which give support to the understanding, when it seems to have discovered an entirely new predicate B to belong necessarily to the subject A? Experience it cannot be, because the principle has a degree of universality that experience can never supply, as it is supposed to connect the new conception with the old in the way of necessity, and must do so entirely *a priori*, and on the basis of mere conceptions. And yet our speculative *a priori* knowledge must rest upon such synthetic or ampliative propositions.”

how can a being without any perceptual/apperceptual memory have any pictorially image formulated consciousness in order to act purposely unless there is an external interpretative pictorially illumination that is unearned and unmerited from a human ratiocination point of view? There is from the first conscious moments a God Consciousness Understanding – for if we are honest we know that once we are of an age and sophistication to reflect on perceptual and apperceptual interpretations of the ontological based on willful formulations by what we observe and, to a large extent, have been taught to think as human ratiocination alone – is really in fact informed by conceptions and illumined attention that we ourselves did not earn or merit within our cognate formulations and judgments. This can only be discovered, of course, by admitting a Self or Observational Position within consciousness itself within all calculations, discoveries, and cognitive formulations of reality within each present cognate moment. Not only that but an external or God logic informs the Self –whether obfuscated or not – in order to move and see pictorially beyond the material cave in guiding future action and influence within the ontological. God Consciousness Understanding is where we get universal truth and not simply a particular relativistic judgment. Everything that exists, both perceptually and apperceptually, comes from God. Theo-Ratiocination, therefore, always was, always is, and always will be. Ratiocination cannot logically exist without external illumination or logic feeding and fueling future cognitive interpretation and action. We, as finite creatures, are always limited by the immediate environment for perceptual and apperceptual stimulus. Without Theo-Ratiocination it would be impossible to transcend our immediate environment and formulate universal cognates and interpretations. There was a time in the history of humanity before language and books in which conscious beings were still

driven toward a universal consciousness beyond the immediate environ stimulus. We see this anthropologically by evidence of early religious practices and governmental organizational models of ancient tribal societies. Empathetic relations among both animals and humans are very real indicators of Theo-Ratiocination. There seems to be universally within all of humanity an awareness of Theo-Ratiocination or God Consciousness external to the will informing our interpretations of present cognates and future premeditative actions throughout space/time. Therefore, there will always be exemplars of religious/spiritual consciousness, whether formally or informally, within human communities and intellectual pursuits.

*Conversio* or the turning of our observational position or Self toward the “light” of this external logic informing consciousness is necessary for a person to be in right relation with God and the environ. Because of free-will concentration, we are able to direct our own observational position toward environ stimuli only and to interpret and premeditate our own future actions through obfuscation apart from illuminative logic. The conceptual frameworks that are built, therefore, can be erected within the mind without acknowledgement of this external interpretative logic or base-line God logic. Augustine argues that the Christian Movement was about the healing of humanity from existential guilt that comes about from this separation within consciousness. The incarnate Christ comes into the mind/soul’s memory through the three-dimensional image of the historical Jesus of Nazareth and his teachings and example of *agape* love or unconditional love of God toward humanity. This then gives us a willingness to face God Consciousness without guilt and to be harmonized or reconciled back unto God and in turn to formulate a loyal restored concentrative Theo-ratiocinative equilibrium within our psychology – both individually and corporately.

### **III. Future Scholarship**

My goal for future scholarly endeavors will be to hopefully develop a systematic account of Theo-Ratiocination in the traditions of Aquinas, Leibniz and Kant. I also wish to produce a new criticism for Scriptural studies in regards to what I will call “Scriptural Philosophical Criticism”. This will be a philosophical translation of the text with the tools of modern philosophical logic for understanding the mind/soul and its healing. My premise is that the Scripture is really all about reformulating the Theo-Ratiocination within consciousness. I think Reinhold Niebuhr did this to some extent as he studied with D.C. McIntosh at Yale Divinity School in philosophy of religion-as did Martin Luther King, Jr. at Boston University and his dissertation on Paul Tillich—however, neither thinker was really trained in both philosophy and theology co-existentially or synthetically. I wish to have a more exactitude in language for understanding the philosophical constructs and implicates of Scripture. Historically, I would like to look into the Theo-Ratiocination arguments of Descartes and Leibniz in regards to Augustinian influence. Furthermore, I think a study on Augustine’s philosophy of science will be useful on understanding how Theo-Ratiocination illumines scientific discovery and theory – Einstein’s thought experiments being one such example. I would like to think of myself as a Neo-Augustinian, Neo-Thomist or Neo-Medievalist philosopher.

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