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Study of Saint Augustine's "Confessions"

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A STUDY OF SAINT AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS

by

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PREFACE

Partly as a result of my investigation of Augustine's CONFESSIONS and certain other works that seem to stand together with the CONFESSIONS, I have been concerned with one major theme. The theme I refer to is called Way, or perhaps, The Way. I want to make it clear that this is a theme with many precedents, in our tradition as well as that of others; it is not something named for the first time here. My effort has been toward an appreciation of this theme - a tenative, exploratory effort at best.

Way is set forth in an ancient text entitled TAO TE CHING.[a] I do not know who has given the work this title, and it seems that no one can be absolutely sure who the author or authors of this work were. This theme is also rendered in what remains of the work of Parmenides. One translator, Kathleen Freeman, says of Parmenides' poem, ". . . it was divided into three parts: the Prologue, the Way of Truth, the Way of Opinion."[b] Martin Heidegger, who has translated certain fragments of Parmenides' poem in his work AN INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS[c] does not seem to refer to the poem by any title other than "didactic poem". Perhaps titles were applied to these fragments long after Parmenides' time. Heidegger himself certainly gives much attention to Way or Path.

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[a]Literally translated, according to Blakney, TAO TE CHING is THE BOOK OF THE WAY AND ITS VIRTUE. R. B. Blakney (trans.), Lao Tzu: The Way of Life (New York: The New American Library, 1957).

[b]Kathleen Freeman, Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 41.

[c]Ralph Manheim (trans.), Martin Heidegger, An Introduction to Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).

Of the two books of his with which I am more familiar, namely INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS and EXISTENCE AND BEING,[d] it is the former which contains the most explicit development of this theme. But the theme of way, I believe, is in evidence in one way or another in most of his work. Another contemporary thinker, Martin Buber, has written one book in particular which develops this theme in conjunction with his thought on good and evil. In this book, entitled GOOD and EVIL,[e] he makes it clear also that the Old Testament is a source wherein one could find thought on Way. However, the New Testament is similar to the Old in that respect: "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life. . ."[f]

I am certain that the above is not exhaustive of the works dealing with this theme. The fact that in many instances the authors of these works are not aware of one another's work leads one to believe this theme is not arbitrary. As we see from certain of the works I have cited, this theme is ancient also. Parmenides' poem and the TAO TE CHING are old, but within each of these works the authors indicate an even earlier origin of Way.[g]

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[d]This book is a compilation and elucidation by W. Brock of some of Heidegger's writings. Existence and Being (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1956), p. 80.

[e]Martin Buber, Good and Evil (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953).

[f]Matt. 7:14.

[g]For Parmenides' poem see Heidegger's translation of fragment 8, lines 1-6, in AN INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS, page 96; "But only the legend remains of the way. . ." For the TAO TE CHING see poem 70, page 123 of Blakney's translation; "My words have ancestors, my works a prince. . ."

III

I have thought of the CONFESSIONS as arising out of a certain definite discovery on Augustine's part. I have not taken the CONFESSIONS at face value but have gone under it, so to speak, in order to trace the route of the discovery itself. In doing this I have taken into consideration a part of Augustine's life that he himself does not cover in his CONFESSIONS. Also, I have enlisted the aid of other authors who have seemed to me to move in the same stream of thought as the CONFESSIONS.

I have thought that the discovery the CONFESSIONS is founded upon is a recollective, remembering discovery by which a man is appraised of the way or path of his life for the first time. Such discovery seems to come as confirmation. The way that is revealed appears as the unfolding of a destiny by which a man, through his participation in the performance of his destiny, has come into being and participated in the creation of world. The discovery of Way is tied to the discovery of world. And I believe this is how it is that Augustine has included commentary on the first book of the Old Testament, GENESIS, in his CONFESSIONS.

In reading the CONFESSIONS we might well be struck by the remarkable naturalness and non-arbitrariness with which deeply philosophical issues have confronted Augustine because of his attempt to come to terms with his own life. In all, the CONFESSIONS displays a thorough-going reciprocal relation between life and thought. This character of Augustine's thought brings about a renewed conception of what thinking is, inasmuch as his thought is particularly an <u>active</u> endeavor. The distinction between thought and act seems inadequate to the CONFESSIONS. I would like to suggest that the CONFESSIONS is by no means a mere passive narration of journey undergone sometime in the past. It has been

suggested to me that the CONFESSIONS is journey. I believe the period of encounter and discovery whence it derives was a time when Augustine was thrust forward into the future in the intensity of quest. This quest must have been an arduous one involving step by step cumulative discovery. It must have been an intense forward direction of effort which culminated in Augustine's meeting himself in his past along a single direction or way of meaning running out of the past and into the future without end. This break-through opened Augustine up to the oneness of his experience, which is to say, returned him into world. Thus, by intimating that Augustine participated in the creation of world I really mean that he was returned to world that is always there, but from which he had long been estranged.

The CONFESSIONS is a testament of thanksgiving. The discovery the CONFESSIONS is founded upon, the discovery of way and world, is always inadvertantly, naturally, received as gift, as given, even though one may miss the deeper significance of this givenness at the time. But the import of givenness may come through to a man, and he may come to reflect upon the continuing relevance of the basis of the discovery itself. Namely, that he can in no way know himself as beingful in himself, but rather beingful only as it is given him to be. I think that this is certainly one way Augustine renders the theme of humility.

The givenness of this discovery is rapidly vitiated if such discovery is interpreted as conquest, as heroic journey, as if one in coming upon it understands himself as "elected." Implicated in this distortion is a claim on one's part to know, I believe. Confirmation derived from the discovery is

usurped and employed as if it confirmed that about oneself which it seems to confirm. Namely, that one is a hero who has taken the divine ramparts by storm and preordained destiny. Underlying this deceiving appearance is a deception on one's own part. This self-deception seems to accrue from a liability of man's nature which becomes so entrenched as to be confounded with one's inherited characteristics, namely, egoism.[h]

I want to acknowledge my large debt to three authors particularly - Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Buber.

It was in Kierkegaard's THE CONCEPT OF DREAD that the philosophical terms I had been used to working with were transformed and brought to life in connection with a new line of thought that was only then developing for me. In the chapter entitled 'Time' Kierkegaard inserts a huge footnote[i] which in effect orients his own thought, the traditional Christian orientation, and the Greek with reference to one common crucial question, namely, the relationship between nothingness, being, and creation. He intimates that the relationship between nothing and creation (or transition, in the Greek scheme Kierkegaard considers) was a stumbling block for the Greeks. But he says the traditional Christian view is that everything is created out of nothing, and that

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[h]Here, and again on page 55 in the body of this thesis, I acknowledge my debt to the BHAGAVAD-GITA whence I have taken a central theme. "Man, deluded by his egoism, thinks: 'I am the doer.'" Prabhavananda and Isherwood (trans.), The Bhagavad-Gita (Hollywood: Marcel Rodd Co., 1944), p. 57.

[i]Walter Lowrie (trans.), The Concept of Dread (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 74.

nothing is not conceived as an abstract concept, but as sin, vanity, etc. He further suggests that the transition from nothing to being (which I construed as creation) properly applies in the "sphere of historical freedom" (which I understood as having something to do with the course of a man's life). In this way I received the notion that a man's life might be understood as a movement from nothing to being, provided he really lived his life.

In Martin Buber's GOOD and EVIL my attention was inescapably drawn to the human life-path as it is revealed to introspection. Buber made it clear that introspection is not looking at an object supposed to be the self, but is remembering, recollecting one's own past.

I have received so much from Heidegger's thought it seems irrelevant and impossible to particularize my debt to him. The spirit pervading his writings has meant the most to me. I should say that even though I credit Heidegger few times in this thesis, the background I have derived from him has gone a long way toward my being able to cope with it. All of the major themes and concepts I have worked with, namely, world, way, memory, light, ground, unconcealment, gathering, to name a few, are to be found in a developed form in his writings.

This thesis is divided into four parts. The first two are a preface to the third, and the fourth is the conclusion. In the first part, MEMORY AND ORIGIN, I bring attention to the question of creation, and try to show that Augustine's understanding of creation seems to call for a non-literal or spiritual approach on our part. In the second part I conduct a tentative exploration of literal and spiritual modes of understanding. In this part, BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PASSAGE FROM LITERAL

TO SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING, I try to show how it is that Augustine's effort in his CONFESSIONS presupposes his acceptance of the risk of the venture by which men come to spiritual understanding. I suggest that involvement in and acceptance of such venture might well bring it about that a man would be in a position to remember and recount his life.

I will frankly admit that a first, or even a second reading of the third and main part might easily lead one to believe there is no overall plan or order to it. I never really had possession of an overall ordering plan in my attempts to write it; it simply grew. But now that I have had time to see what I did I am in a position to elucidate what order is there.

Briefly stated, the third part, entitled AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS, is an attempt to follow out the course of his life Augustine reveals in the CONFESSIONS. I attempt to distill out what is essential, and place it in an explanatory light. I try to render Augustine's life-path. Inasmuch as he sees a certain similarity between the meaning of his life and the meaning of the fall and creation in the book of GENESIS I try to make this similarity more explicit, and lay both accounts somewhat side by side. In considering Augustine's childhood I observe his bond with his mother and raise the question of possible perversion which, if present, might tend to nullify Augustine's thought as a whole. In working out this question I found I was eventually and naturally led into an elucidation of Augustine's conception of confirmation of truth. In considering Augustine's fall, and the fall as given in GENESIS, I employ Kierkegaard's thought in THE CONCEPT OF DREAD wherein the fall in GENESIS is given much attention. One issue the concept of the fall

evokes, namely, human responsibility, led me into a discussion of Augustine's asceticism and the question of self-salvation. In considering the portion of Augustine's life that would presumably lie between the fall and creation it dawned on me gradually that Sophocles' OEDIPUS REX seemed to cover that portion. I therefore have attempted to bring out the similarity between OEDIPUS REX and the CONFESSIONS.

When these things are done I continue to follow out the course of Augustine's life until the point at which he encounters Platonism. Then I begin to deviate from Augustine's account of his life, and question the finality of his conversion and the general tendency of his thought as a whole. I try to suggest what it is Augustine may be involved in, and how it might be that his situation could have continued in unresolvedness after his conversion.

In the conclusion Augustine's path is carried on past his conversion, and I attempt to show in more detail how Augustine's and Oedipus' paths are similar. Inasmuch as Augustine's way seems to continue on past the point at which OEDIPUS REX ends I continue it with the aid of certain aspects of Heidegger's and Buber's thought. In doing this I follow the movement of way, which is now a 'return', and try to ascertain its meaning and tendency. I bring out how one passage at the end of the account of man's expulsion from Eden renders this meaning.

MEMORY AND ORIGIN

In Book One of THE CONFESSIONS, Augustine reflects upon his own origin and earliest ages; namely, birth, infancy, and boyhood. He approaches his own beginnings with two questions. He asks, ". . . whence I came into this dying life (shall I call it?) or living death?"[1] Then later he asks, "What then was my sin?"[2]

However, Augustine places the greatest weight upon his own memory, and remembered phenomena. Thus, he has to rely upon hearsay, parents' testimony, and observation of birth and infancy in others because he is unable to remember anything concerning his own origins. This is to say, as it were, that Augustine recalls nothing of his origin. Augustine himself, so far as his own memory is concerned, has originated out of nothing.

Throughout THE CONFESSIONS Augustine relies most exclusively upon his own memory. Even as we have seen above, when his memory reveals the strange and paradoxical, Augustine still sticks to it. Why does he do this? Does this preference for remembered phenomena aid his reflections on his own birth and infancy?

Augustine first recalls himself as a "speaking boy." His memory does not recall the origin of life, but only his being in the midst of it. Where there is no memory of oneself, can one be said to have acted,

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[1]E. B. Pusey (trans.), St. Augustine: The Confessions of St. Augustine (Vol. VII of The Harvard Classics, ed. Charles W. Eliot; New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909), Book One, p. 8.

[2]Ibid., p. 10.

or to be responsible and involved, or to have been at all? In view of this, Augustine is in a position to question the doctrinal notion of Original Sin, since sin implies responsibility and involvement. Also, and most important, Augustine says:

> Whence could such a being be, save from Thee, Lord? Shall any be his own artificer? or can there elsewhere be derived any vein which may stream essence and life into us, save from Thee, O Lord, in whom essence and life are one?[3]

Augustine clearly understands himself as recipient of the gift of life. This is brought out in one way through his saying, "Shall any be his own artificer?" which implies that no man creates himself, and brought out in another through the disclosure memory enacts in being unable to recall the origin of life.

However, is it altogether clear how Augustine is justified in invoking God as his originator and creator? There are at least two senses in which Augustine's presentation of this difficult matter is open to question. One is that he seems to postulate God as the original creating source by process of elimination. This is especially clear where Augustine says, "Whence could such a being be, save from Thee, Lord?" That is, he throws the question out in such a way that one feels compelled to agree by reason of default of answer; the question is rhetorical. In this sense God is a Deus ex Machina. Another questionable aspect lies in his failure to clarify how God stands in relation to the creation of bodies which we see in this world. Augustine says earlier, ". . . as I heard (for I remember it not) from the parents of my flesh,

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[3] Ibid., p. 10.

out of whose substance Thou didst sometime fashion me."[4] From this one would understand that not only does Augustine believe that God created what is understood as his soul, but also his physical substance. Such creation does not seem to be included in Augustine's later affirmation that God is that source whereby "essence and life" are given to us.

Both these objections might be subsumed under one consideration, which is by no means unimportant to the whole development of the thought presented in THE CONFESSIONS. In one sense the whole of THE CONFESSIONS stands as the elucidation of this notion, namely, the derived being or creatureliness of all the things that are in this world. In THE CONFESSIONS Augustine makes use of a saying of the Apostle Paul when he comes to explicit grips with the notions of creature and creator. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead ..."[5]

The above saying is open to certain interpretations that must be discussed. Briefly, it seems to maintain that God is to be understood through the "things that are made," and gives no certain hint what the "things that are made" are, except that it mentions the "creation of the world." Also, the "things of God" are "invisible," while, one must suppose, the "things that are made" are visible and open to the knowledge of men. Thus the saying would seem to affirm that all the things that are, all beings, the world, give evidence of and proof for the existence

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[4] Ibid., p. 8 (italics mine).

[5] Rom., 1:20.

of God. And since these visible things are accessible to all men who have ears to hear and eyes to see, and mind to judge, then "they are without excuse"[6] if they fail to understand.

This could mean: men are justified in inferring from the visible world to the invisible God understood as the author and creator of the visible world. This might be understood as a relationship of cause and effect, God as cause and the world as effect, and God as active and the world passive. Here creation might be understood as having taken place "once upon a time," and now the world simply exists in its "created" state with God being nowhere present except via inference. Thus the beings of the world lost their creaturely being and now stand as independently existing "things" or "objects," since creation is "finished" and the world complete.

There is a second interpretation of the original quotation which is related to the first. The invisible things of God are understood by the "things that are made." This might mean: God does not exist apart from his creation (as in the first interpretation); rather he is everywhere and all things are full of him, and are not at all except that He is in them. God is somehow to be understood "in" the things that are made. This would amount to a panpsychism or pantheism, or perhaps a variety of "nature mysticism."

As much as Augustine might want to counteract the first interpretation with the second, and in doing so bring God back into relation with the "things that are made," he nevertheless resists this second possibility. "But Thou who fillest all things, fillest Thou them with Thy

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[6] Ibid.

whole self? or, since all things cannot contain Thee wholly, do they contain part of Thee? and all at once the same part? or each its own part, the greater more, the smaller less? And is, then, one part of Thee greater, another less? or art Thou wholly everywhere, while nothing contains Thee wholly?"[7]

Augustine resists the suggestion that the relationship between God and the "things that are made" be understood in a spatial or quantitative manner, as the phrase "in things" would seem to demand. However, Augustine indicates that God has essentially to do with things, even though He does not reside in them, or they in Him, in any physical manner.

Then perhaps the sustaining and creating relationship of God to the "things that are made," the manner in which things are 'in' God or 'caused by' God, must be understood in some metaphorical or symbolic sense. The difficulty might be resolved, as Augustine says, "... 'in a figure,'[8] which when I understood literally, I was slain spiritually."[9]

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[7]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., p. 6.

[8]1 Cor., 13:12; 2 Cor., 3:6.

[9]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Five, p. 81.

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PASSAGE FROM LITERAL TO SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

One is advised to put aside a mode of understanding that is "literal" in favor of one that is spiritual and expressed 'in a figure.' According to Augustine's testimony in THE CONFESSIONS, the abandonment of a literal understanding of these difficult questions was an event of tremendous importance, and only took place later in his life.

But, there are two questions that arise here with reference to literal understanding and difficult philosophical and theological problems. Since the literal understanding is the knowledge of the ignorant, the "unlearned masses," is not Augustine doing the most natural and normal thing in abandoning such understanding? Does not every intelligent man pass through such a phase in his development? And secondly, in putting aside literality and entertaining notions that must be understood, as it were, 'in a figure,' is not one abandoning the hard core of experienced phenomena and rationality which alone could serve as a basis for sound thinking? How could such thinking be precise, relevant, or scientific?

The first question implies that Augustine has done nothing unusual. Where the abandonment of literal understanding means, in effect, not being taken in by the "official version" and in doing so to penetrate closer to the inside of what is "actually going on," then it might be true to say (although it implies a deception, or at the very least a

misunderstanding, on the part of those at the core of the organization) that such a thing happens all the time and is neither unusual nor "unnatural" for the educated and intelligent. The difficulty lies in understanding how the overcoming of literality in one's thinking is more than the mere acquisition of sophistication or liberation from oppressive beliefs of extra-personal origin. Augustine shows that literality has to do with an essentially materialistic mode of thought involving self-deception. The release from such thinking is an event of singular character, and is only possible after one understands himself as involved at the source of deception. Only the realization of one's own involvement in the deception enables one to distinguish between modes of thought that are materialistic and ones that are not. That is to say, many philosophies which are commonly affirmed to be the opposite of, or at least different from, materialism, are actually not so, and are time-bound and dualistic as well. There is a sentence from Heracleitus that expresses the profound alteration in one's orientation attendant upon the entrance to wisdom. "Of all those whose discourse I have heard, none arrives at the realization that that which is wise is set apart from all things."[10] This reorientation from literal modes of thinking to that involving figurative expression, experiential realization, imagery, understanding of self-involvement, is at the heart of wisdom, and releases a new realm of phenomena that was always there but covered up; however, this must receive more complete treatment.

The second question (concerning the possible tenuity of phenomena

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[10]Kathleen Freeman, Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 32, frag. 108.

understood 'in a figure') doubts the feasibility of a philosophic venture that is seemingly devoid of a foundation in experienced phenomena and reason. This appearance is strongly suggested by the phrase 'in a figure' and the desire to consider the question of creation on other than causal or pantheistic lines; and in fact the desire to consider the question of creation at all.

Since the time of Parmenides creation has been, for the most part, either termed illusory, as mere appearance, subjectivity; or else creation has been interpreted in such a way as to mean artifaction, fabrication, assemblage, production, movement, transference, and so on.

I would like to show that this understanding of creation (creation is perhaps the same as becoming, where becoming means coming-into-being) is intimately related to a definite conception of experience and phenomena, and that this conception is what Augustine has in mind when he speaks of literal understanding. In this way I hope that we may see what is involved in the change from literal understanding to the spiritual ('in a figure') understanding of which Augustine speaks.

Creation has often been understood as within a tension between freedom and determinism. Plato's realm of appearance, and Aristotle's category of the potential, and Hegel's logic, are some of the proposed solutions that attempt to offer an explanatory account of things while not ignoring the claims of creation and novelty. But insofar as philosophy has tried to show that all things are explainable in principle it has been forced to compromise the only basis upon which creation is meaningful, namely, creation ex nihilo. In the saying, "Ex nihilo nihil fit," is the conception of nothing that is required for the

successful operation of philosophic endeavor involved in the process of exhaustive explanation. It would not do to have things coming into being that were not capable of being traced back to a cause or prior principle. "What is, is, and what is not, is not." Since everything is and nothing is not, then all change and movement, all becoming and creation, must operate solely within the realm of what is. There can be no entrance into the realm of what is from nothing. This means that new things, novelty of any sort, must somehow be made up of what was already there. And, too, the moving force, or motive, involved in the appearance of some new thing (or event, or particle, or prehension, or existential situation, etc.) cannot simply arise from nowhere. The creation must somehow be intended and purposeful or else explanation would be cut off here also. Thus, explanatory requirements quickly lead to a conception of created being that is both intended and composed of pre-existent "stuff." Now, insofar as explanatory demands insist on the primacy of original determination, then it is difficult to see how "freedom" can arise. And I believe that much room for deception exists here with relation to real life examples taken to exhibit the needed free-determinative creative principle in actual operation. That is, I think that many times description and representation are confused with explantion, and both are gathered together and called "explained creation." Somehow the complex explanations and intricacies that arise out of this mode of thought fail to elicit the necessary confirmation. There is always something left over that did not get included in the explanation. The treatment of the phenomena does not equal the force and intense meaning of the phenomena themselves (as experienced). Augustine seems to say this where

he gives voice to his way of getting at the truth.

> Nor yet do the creatures answer such as ask, unless they can judge: nor yet do they change their voice (i. e., their appearance), if one man only sees, another seeing asks, so as to appear one way to this man, another way to that; but appearing the same way to both, it is dumb to this, speaks to that; yea rather it speaks to all; but they only understand who compare its voice received from without, with the truth within.[11]

There are two things that must be brought out from the above treatment of creation (or change, becoming, etc., in a more philosophical vocabulary) that revolve about the tension between freedom and determinism which has so much to do with the requirements of explanation. One has to do with a hidden predisposition involved in the explanatory endeavor itself, and the other with the very definite understanding of phenomena that does not itself receive explicit attention.

The explanatory endeavor involves a hidden attitude of control over the things to be explained. This control is clearly implied in the all-governing power of the explanatory concepts themselves. What enormous power seems to be operative in the knowledge about what is possible and what is not possible!

In the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre and Bertrand Russell, I think the attitude of control over the phenomena is clearly present. The attitude of control tends to place a man over against the things to be taken into account. In so doing the things to be explained are transformed into objects that show themselves to the man in a manner that is in close relation to the attitude of control he comes to them with. In Russell's essay, "A Free Man's Worship," the things of the world speak in a definite way:

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[11] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Ten, p. 172 (italics mine).

> Brief and powerless is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark, blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way ... undismayed by the empire of chance, to preserve a mind free from the wanton tyranny that rules his outward life; proudly defiant of the irresistible forces that tolerate, for a moment, his knowledge and his condemnation, to sustain alone, a weary but unyielding Atlas, the world that his own ideals have fashioned despite the trampling march of unconscious power.[12]

And also:

> For in all things it is well to exalt the dignity of Man, by freeing him as far as possible from the tyranny of non-human Power.[13]

Russell states that such as this is the"... world which Science presents for our belief."[14] And to Russell's way of thinking this is our world. Russell reads off, describes, the phenomenon as if it stood in itself, particular and independent, as what it is. The scientific, objective mode of approach, is supposed to make the things speak for themselves, as what they are, as if things were somehow "in themselves." Russell's own manner of approach to the things of the world is not itself considered relevant to the way in which things present themselves. Russell makes his attitude very clear, namely, defiance, resistance, and control, a proud witholding of oneself from the "tyranny of non-human power." Russell makes the world speak with equal clarity. The world is omnipotent matter, wanton tyranny, irresistible and unconscious force, fact, "outside." Russell understands his own attitude as a reasonable and just response to the situation that

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[12]Bertrand Russell, Mysticism & Logic (New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc.), p. 54.

[13]Ibid., p. 47.

[14]Ibid., p. 45.

supposedly existed long before his arrival into it, and will exist long after he leaves it. His own possible attitudes with relation to the situation are not considered relevant to the way the situation appears. In fact, we must observe that the situation is not something Russell is in, but something he is against. The possibility of transformation is not reckoned with. The situation is without hope, except insofar as man's practical, scientific, and technological intelligence is able to remake the material world according to man's will. Yet, one cannot fail to notice that Russell himself speaks out of an unelucidated, proud spirit that invites one to consider the possibility of "something more" in his understanding of his situation than receives expression in this essay.

In Sartre's writing one sees an understanding of the things of the world that is remarkably akin to Russell's, if not exactly the same. The way it would be similar has to do with their own reception of things in experience. Russell is given over more to scientific descriptive terms, such as "collections of atoms" etc., but experiential renderings come through in words such as "tyranny," "against," "dark," "power," "outside," and so on. These words are more likely to come through in poetic discourse which is thought by some to be merely "human interpretation," or "subjective," but is really language that comes to grips with the being of the situation, or Being itself, or is at least potentially such language.

Gabriel Marcel, in a short work, THE PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE, considers Sartre's views on existence quite closely. Marcel asks, after some revealing sections of Sartre's thought have been quoted and

commentary and criticism offered, if Sartre's views on existence might not be summed up by saying "I apprehend myself as a prey of existence?"

Sartre's separation of man from all sources of support and justification, from all matter, or "being-in-itself," is a most radical and abrupt separation. For man, on Sartrean terms, "...to be is to choose himself; nothing comes to him either from without or from within himself that he can receive or accept. He is wholly and helplessly at the mercy of the unendurable necessity to make himself be, even in the smallest details of his existence."[15] In Sartre's view, man is condemned to create himself, or, in his words, "I am condemned to freedom."

Marcel brings out some key terms in the Sartrean description of existence, as for example, absurd, obscene, nausea, obstinate, outside, inanimate, dead, threatening, and appropriative (Sartre feels that threat is especially pertinent in relations with other people). One notices that terms such as 'obscene,' or 'nausea,' do not figure in Russell's description of the world, but that words like 'obstinate,' 'outside,' 'inanimate,' 'in-itself,' and especially 'threat,' convey something very similar.

In attempting to make good one's control over things one discovers that things appear to be resisting one's endeavors with a positive intent to resist. To speak of things as though they were collectively engaged in a conspiracy against mankind certainly sounds like a gross anthropomorphism, or perhaps like a "subjective reaction," but we see

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[15]Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness, quoted by Gabriel Marcel in "Existence and Human Freedom," The Philosophy of Existence, Manya Harari (trans.), London: Harvill Press, Ltd., 1954, p. 57.

that Sartre, and especially Russell, speak of things in this way. This sounds all the more anthropomorphic since both Sartre and Russell define things as "matter," "being-in-itself" (Sartre's term), "inanimate," etc. There is an old German saying I remember which concisely conveys the sense of one's relation to the things of the world that Sartre and Russell bear witness to insofar as they are given over to a control orientation. The saying goes this way: "Oh, the malice of inanimate objects!"

Even though, as I am maintaining, the "speech" or "voice" of things has very much to do with the mode of approach or attitude in which one encounters things, Sartre and Russell work with the phenomena they bear witness to as if the phenomena stood as what they are "in-themselves." Hand and hand with the supposed "in-itself" character of phenomena there is a tacit dissociation of the self from the way in which the phenomena appear, e.g. Sartre and Russell do not seem to understand themselves as called into question by, or essentially implicated in, what they bear witness to. What is affirmed to be the real is presented and defined in such a way as to make human involvement and response essentially irrelevant.

In conjunction with the delimitation of the real to an "in-itself" status and the dissociation of self there is another aspect of the control orientation that is fundamental to it. There is in evidence an understanding of the situation as a whole whereby that to which one's destiny is considered to be bound is deprived of the possibility of evoking an infinite demand upon one to respond as a whole man, to <u>be</u>. The real is understood as void, dumb, barren, and unworthy, and is even

thought to be "against" man.

Let us follow out just one of the three aspects abstracted from the control orientation, namely, the delimitation of the real to a material, "in-itself" status. We can do this without missing anything because all three aspects are three ways of saying the same thing, and, as Augustine understands it, they derive from a definite attitude and orientation. The orientation in question is dominated by a mode of understanding which Augustine terms 'literal,' and is similar to the Manichaeism he struggles to overcome in his CONFESSIONS. The overcoming of this orientation involves the passage from literal to spiritual understanding which Augustine undergoes.

By delimiting the real to an in-itself status a man dissociates himself from claim or questionableness with respect to the real. However, this dissociation is not necessarily an intentional act on his part, nor is his rendering of the real in this manner a pure invention. For, as Augustine shows, the orientation in question invites and presupposes self-dissociation, and tends to make reality appear for a man as material, and in-itself.

In the CONFESSIONS Augustine describes the situation in which he himself, and all men, tend to discover themselves at the beginning of their journey, in their early years. I will quote what is most relevant to our elucidation.

> I lighted upon that bold woman, simple and knoweth nothing, shadowed out in Solomon, sitting at the door, and saying, Eat ye bread of secrecies willingly, and drink ye stolen waters which are sweet; she seduced me, because she found my soul dwelling abroad in the eye of my flesh, and ruminating on such food as through it I

had devoured.[16]

> ...as yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, until at last a thing ceases altogether to be; which how should I see, the sight of whose eyes reached only to bodies, and of my mind to a phantasm?[17]

Later on in his life, while deep in the throes of Manichaeism, Augustine renders his situation thus:

> For I still thought "that it was not we that sin, but that I know not what other nature sinned in us"; and it delighted my pride, to be free from blame; and when I had done any evil, not to confess I had done any, that Thou mightest heal my soul because it had sinned against Thee: but I loved to excuse it, and to accuse I know not what other thing, which was with me, but which I was not. But in truth it was wholly I, and mine impiety had divided me against myself: and that sin was the more incurable, whereby I did not judge myself a sinner...[18]

In these quotations Augustine brings out the sense of his early corruption, speaks of his own complicity in the corruption and what effect it had upon him. The corruption as a whole constitutes a vicious circle, and tends to perpetuate itself; "...and that sin was the more incurable whereby I did not judge myself a sinner..." Given over to desire and lust a man inplicates himself in a mode of life which makes it increasingly necessary for him to secure himself from blame; "...not we that sin, but that I know not what other nature sinned in us..." In securing himself from blame he plays back into the hands of his lust and desire, for "...mine impiety divided me against myself..." and, as Augustine brings out, a divided man has little control over himself, and therefore he is impotent to curb his lust. This

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[16]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Three, p. 39.

[17]Ibid., p. 40.

[18]Ibid., Book Five, p. 76.

vicious circle also perpetuates ignorance. In the first place it whirls and confuses the mind, for addiction to ever varying objects of sense gives a man no time to think, diverts his attention, and spreads him over many scattering objects. Also, and most important, it puts a definite limit upon his comprehension of reality.

> ...as yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, until at last a thing ceases altogether to be; which how should I see, the sight of whose eyes reached only to bodies, and of my mind to a phantasm?[19]

Lust and desire help persuade a man that only the sensed object, or "body," that is desired is real. His mental life is filled with visualizations and representations of "bodies" (thus he construes spiritual things literally), and greatly obstructed by longings and hankerings for them. Augustine sometimes refers to a corrupted mental life as "carnal imagination." Furthermore, correlated with desire there is fear, and the object a man fears (fear has been defined by most thinkers as fear of an object, or a distinguishable in the world) he believes to be real, whether or not he is aware of his identification of the real with the feared object.

As it stands now, our quotations from the CONFESSIONS and our analysis of them point up the situation of bondage and evil which Socrates speaks of in the Phaedo. In the Phaedo Socrates (Plato?) says that this situation has mostly to do with one's confusing his soul with his body by reason of the lust, desire, and fear which pin a man to sense objects. Socrates clearly proposes a solution. The way to overcome this abysmal bondage and ignorance is to separate the soul from the

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[19] Ibid., Book Three, p. 40.

body and collect her to herself. But Socrates also mentions two good reasons why men have only very rarely done this. Men who have corrupted and confused their souls with the body think that to be without the body is to be as good as dead. Secondly:

> But the soul which has been polluted, and is impure at the time of her departure, and is the companion and servant of the body always, and is in love with and fascinated by the body and by the desires and pleasures of the body, until she is led to believe that the truth only exists in a bodily form, which a man may touch and see and taste, and use for the purposes of his lusts, -- the soul, I mean, accustomed to hate and fear and avoid the intellectual principle, which to the bodily eye is dark and invisible...[20]

Socrates indicates that there is something fearful about going into the soul. This is an important point which we will develop more fully as we go on. However, there is one important point which Socrates does not clarify, but which Augustine does. Is it, or is it not within a man's power to separate himself from "the body"? Actually, to be fair, Socrates speaks often of man's being "a possession of the gods," and of his own subservience to, and following of, God, and therefore one cannot say that Socrates believes man can free himself, or is really free in himself.

Augustine continued on for some little time, firmly enmeshed in the bondage we have described. In the quotation from the CONFESSIONS we employed, Augustine is seen at two distinct stages of his evil. The first quotation describes Augustine in a fall or slide into bondage; the third shows that Augustine had become more "hardened" in his evil. That is, his evil involved a kind of defiance of, and self withholding

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[20]B. Jowett (trans.), Plato: "Phaedo," The Dialogues of Plato (New York: Random House, 1937), p. 466.

from, counter-claim upon himself.[21] His situation was hardening into an elaborate scheme of self-justification, and habituation.

But the long movement of Augustine's coming to himself involved his undergoing a reversal of this situation, exposing himself to himself in the light of the truth, and endeavoring to cut himself away from what he was clinging to. However, he discovered that insofar as he attempted to will himself free from his bondage his situation tended to assume an insidious aspect for him. Only someone who has attempted to will himself free from himself could appreciate what he says in the following quotation.

> Whence is this monstrousness? and to what end? The mind commands the body, and it obeys instantly; the mind commands itself, and is resisted. The mind commands the hand to be moved; and such readiness is there, that command is scarce distinct from obedience. Yet the mind is mind, the hand is body. The mind commands the mind, its own self, to will and yet it doth not. Whence this monstrousness? and to what end?[22]

This statement is taken from Augustine's description of his situation at the time of his conversion to Catholic Christianity. In this crisis, and others also I believe, Augustine tended more and more to face up to himself.

In being drawn into question Augustine gradually opened himself up to his own past. But in his past, if a man is willing to allow himself to witness it, there dwells, perhaps, all the many ways in which he has failed, and simply, failure itself. But failure, the recollection

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[21] These two stages of the progress of evil are elucidated in: Martin Buber, Good and Evil (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 140.

[22] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Eight, p. 137.

of failure, opens a man up, and enables him to hear again the call to be[23] which his failure is with respect to. This is very likely why Socrates describes the soul as dark and feared, for response to this call involves one's giving up the familiar, the seeming "real" to which one is bound. This, as Socrates points out, is like death itself, because other than what one is clinging to, there is nothing that seems ready to buoy one up and preserve one. But this is just the point inasmuch as it is only as one relinquishes finite and self-made props that one finds true support. With the above in mind we are now in a position to consider the CONFESSIONS as Augustine's acceptance of the risk, and of the promise of an attempt to come to grips with his own past.

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[23] I am availing myself of a notion that permeates Heidegger's thought as a whole, but is to be found, in English, in: Existence and Being (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1956), p. 80.

AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS

Where does one's past begin? Augustine speaks briefly of some fleeting memories of himself as a "speaking boy," perhaps about the age of two or three, but his early childhood does not offer itself up for remembrance until his school years appear. But this was a time of forced entrance into an entirely unknown world, attended by discovery, dread, and punishment at the hands of his first masters in grammar and rhetoric, who were unyieldingly severe.

Augustine compares his early school instruction very unfavorably with an earlier age in the home of his parents in Tagaste where he eagerly and freely gathered in the words and meaning of his native tongue. But now, in Madaura, the place of his first schooling, some twenty miles south of Tagaste, Augustine recalls that he found himself in a crisis. He could neither meet the demands laid upon him, nor bear the beatings he received for the failure thereof.

> But, Lord, we found that men called upon Thee, and we learnt from them to think of Thee (according to our powers) as of some great One, who, though hidden from our senses, couldst hear and help us. For so I began as a boy, to pray to Thee, my aid and refuge; and broke the fetters of my tongue to call on Thee, praying Thee, though small, yet with no small earnestness, that I might not be beaten at school. And when Thou heardest me not...[24]

Augustine recalls that everyone, including his parents, "mocked my stripes," and he seems sensitive to the possibility that the reader might be inclined to mock also. So he compares the beatings which as a

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[24]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book One, p. 13.

boy he received at the hands of his first masters with the evils all men face in whatever age, "the racks and hooks and other torments," and inquires of the Lord if there is any man of so great a spirit that he can think lightly of these horrible things; "For we feared not our torments less; nor prayed we less to Thee to escape them. And yet we sinned in writing...less than was exacted of us...but our sole delight was play..."[25]

Contrary to what one might expect, Augustine does not regard his response in this trying situation as merely childish. Rather, he seems to feel that his was a relevant response which loses none of its relevance because it was done by a child. Further, he seems to indicate that there are dreaded possibilities ever-presently pertaining to the situation of man against which a man is insufficient in virtue of his own strength alone, yet which he must nevertheless face up to. In a way, Augustine is presenting this situation as justification for his own action in attempting to enlist the aid of what might appear in the aspect of "other" power, or help. The respect in which Augustine might seem to indicate that his childhood attempt to invoke the aid of God was not relevant lies in the qualification he affixes to his manner of conceiving God at that early age, namely, "...(according to our powers) as of some great One ..." But soon after this, he indicates indirectly a more relevant way in which the invoked aid of God might be revealed when he inquires of God if there is any man who can think lightly of "the racks and hooks and other torments." Here he refers to a "soul so great," and "so great a spirit" gained from "cleaving devoutly to Thee" with "intense

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[25] Ibid.

affection" (he distinguishes this affection from a "sort of stupidity"). That is to say, Augustine properly conceives the appearance of the invoked aid of God, not as "other" power, but as within the man, i. e., as spirit or greatness of soul. Insofar as God is thought of as a being (howsoever "great"), as a great "One" who resides outside the situation, as Augustine seems to be saying that he thought as a child, then the appearance of God's help naturally must be conceived of as a "something other." Nevertheless one gets the slight taste throughout THE CONFESSIONS that Augustine is attempting to enlist the aid of divine power as if it were "something other," since he seems to be judging himself insufficient and impotent and gives the appearance of having "given up" and in need of something "extra" to complement his own will in the continuing struggle. But the ins and outs of this consideration must await further development.

After a time Augustine began to understand what was being asked of him and rose to the head of his class, and thus was "pronounced a hopeful boy." But Augustine provides a description of his early education in rhetoric and declamation that indicts it, and places it in a causative relation with his later torments, errors, and sin. He was encouraged, nay, coerced by personal example and text to "take matters into his own hands," and give full rein to his desires and demands of his will in utterance and deed (provided, of course, he did not neglect the "covenanted rules of letters and syllables"). The inherent justice of what was being declaimed was as nothing in comparison with the desired effect on the listerner's heart to be gained through the use of artificial devices such as fabricated emotion, gestures,

figures of speech, which were perfected into an "art" subject to employment for whatever purpose. This allowed and required, if the speaker would excel (and Augustine would do no less), a way of life quite congenial to the natural inclinations of willfulness and desire so present in budding youth and harmful in later life. A way of life was necessary, so, if you please, artificiality might itself appear natural and spontaneous, and thereby give freedom to hidden desire and will. In this way one gradually becomes two persons. One creates and presents to the world an exterior "face," or aspect, which enjoys a kind of autonomous existence. Exterior autonomy is needed so that it appears as if all of one's expressions proceed directly and unhesitatingly from the heart, just as they might in an honest man. But, not only was this mode of life encouraged, it was justified through a conception of divinity after the fashion of Homer which transferred ". . . things human to the gods," and a "divine nature to wicked men, that crimes might be no longer crimes. . . " Augustine condemns this general orientation as the "friendship of the world."

> For what more miserable than a miserable being who commiserates not himself; weeping the death of Dido for love to Aeneas, but weeping not his own death for want of love to Thee, O God. . . I Loved Thee not. I committed fornication against Thee, and all around me thus fornicating there echoed, "Well done! Well done!" for the friendship of this world is fornication against Thee;[26] and "Well done!" "Well done!" echoes on till one is ashamed not to be thus a man.[27]

Thus, the way of life promulgated by those firmly held in bondage by the friendship of this world, as Augustine shows, presents itself as

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[26]Jam., 4:4.

[27]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., p. 16.

a comprehensive whole. I think it is important that "this world" is referred to and not the world, or, simply, world. The phrase "this world" pointedly designates the familiar, the ordinary, the aggregate of specificable beings taken to be the meaning of 'world.' The appearance of unity and comprehensiveness in "this world" is enhanced by received opinions and acceptable behavior, enforced and confirmed by an allotment of rewards ("Well done!") and punishments (stripes and beatings; for the young). This way of life is further confirmed and justified through the acceptance of a more or less general philosophical theory of the whole which excludes, denies, or distorts, any potentially relevant determinant threateningly situated "outside." In general, there is an insistent attempt to maintain control and evolve everything within a domain over which one can make good his control. But time and time again "left-overs" declare themselves, such as fate, chance, the chaotic and irrational, the "outcast" and "misfit," misery, etc. These "left-overs" are seen as having the quality of being unchangeably "other," or "outside," or, perhaps, "not yet overcome." Augustine is showing that this orientation revolves about a mode of existence which I have briefly summarized as willful, given over to desire, prone to the acceptance of received opinions, and seeking to gain and maintain control. The manner in which things reveal themselves, or withdraw and go into concealment, with reference to human approach and attitude is the most subtle of all subtleties since one is himself involved to the very core. A man is not often granted the opening to witness this simultaneous revelation and concealment that takes place with reference to his own attitude. But this opening, which is a revelation in itself,

can occur through memory, as Augustine shows in his CONFESSIONS. The revelations of which THE CONFESSIONS are composed are brought into the light with the cooperation and offering of Augustine's memory of himself to himself.

According to the way Augustine presents his early years it appears as if he grew up under the influence of two fundamentally divergent modes of thought and life, the one loud and overcoming, after the fashion of the wisdom of the world, and the other quiet, patient, and enduring. The first we have briefly considered, and seems to have been the orientation of Augustine's father who was also a pagan, though later converted. The other is the Catholic Christianity of Augustine's mother. One notices that Augustine prefers his mother over his father, and places her, at length, in a very sympathetic light. Augustine's proximity to his mother, and vice versa, forces one to consider possible perversion, an undue "attachment," in their relationship. A psychologist alerted to such relationships and their possible perversion would certainly notice this facet of Augustine's orientation right away.

The measure of Augustine's attachment to his mother might be taken by noticing that he understands happiness and the happy life as meaning "repose" and "returning." Again, Augustine's attachment to his mother might be reflected in his attitude toward women. Augustine confined himself to a limited relationship to women insofar as he only had mistresses, and dispensed with them when his sexual desire was curbed. Also, how was it that Augustine was able to form such a strong attachment to the young man who was later taken by death (Book Four)? Why does Augustine devote so much space in THE CONFESSIONS to his mother?

Why does Augustine seem to "kill" his father? That is, his father is hardly spoken of, and even at that he is presented in a somewhat derogatory light. Perhaps Augustine's "God" is really a kind of "father" which he needs insofar as he might have forsaken his own masculine nature. It is clear that if it were true that Augustine was unduly and unknowingly attached to his mother, then a good many things might be explained.

Since these profound influences might be said to be "unknown" to Augustine, in his subconscious, then all of his waking thought on his own situation becomes suspect. In fact, in view of the character of the thought in THE CONFESSIONS and Augustine's own possible self-deception, one might seem to be well advised to pursue a predominately psychological investigation. This advice is confirmed by Augustine himself inasmuch as he engages in much psychological analysis on his own account.

However, even though some psychological thought is extremely helpful, there are ways in which psychology can lead one astray. There is, for instance, a tendency to deny the whole of a man's thought a hearing on its own terms if the man has exhibited a psychological irregularity of some type. Also, there are reductive psychologies which see the whole of a man's life and thought as derived solely from certain, perhaps hidden and unacknowledged, psychic factors, i. e., sexual drive, will-to-power, etc. Reductive psychologies seem to imply that a man is almost always deceived with respect to the truth of his own situation. They also seem to imply that they have a kind of secret or private access to the significant and uncorrupted phenomena of a man's life, which the man himself does not have. In the sense in which a psychologist only

takes into consideration possible self-deception on the part of the man (other than the psychologist himself, or the psychologist himself taken in abstraction from himself) under examination, then perhaps the psychologist is deceiving himself. If and when the psychologist himself is called into question with reference to possible self-deception, then psychology as a theoretical or empirical science, or therapeutic method, is transcended.

The possibiltiy of deception, and especially self-deception, raises the question of how confirmation, or, perhaps, verification and "proof," ought to be construed. This question has traditionally involved much difficulty, and has received its resolution in diverse ways. An alert psychologist might discover considerable aberration in Augustine's orientation, wherein Augustine might be said to be deceiving himself, and yet one might overlook the depth and exactness of Augustine's conception of confirmation, and how it serves to keep him from self-deception. One should note, however, that Augustine's profound understanding of how confirmation ought to be construed has very much to do with his own gradual discovery that self-deception permeated his whole orientation, and that he himself, as self, was untenable and without foundation.

Augustine, throughout his CONFESSIONS, frequently refers to a saying by the Apostle Paul in order to render the sense of confirmation he has discovered. The frequency with which he refers to Paul's saying, the many ways he sees it as relevant to the essence of his insight concerning God, leads one to believe that this saying embodies a theme of fundamental importance to Augustine. The Apostle Paul says:

> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,...[28]

There are certain aspects of this saying that should be delineated. A. There is an explicit division between what is manifest ("the things that are made") and what is not manifest ("the invisible things of God"). B. It is clear that confirmatory and grounding, creative power does not derive from within the manifest, but from "the invisible," the non-manifest. C. By the phrase, "the things that are made," one gets the sense of an opposite, namely, the things that are not made. This focus of attention upon the "madeness" of "things" permits the implication that "things" might also lie in, say, concealment, or "not-madeness," and that therefore the Apostle may conceive "madeness" as a coming forward, a coming out of concealment into the light, an appearing. If my implications are not unfounded, then perhaps the Apostle speaks out of a sense of Being which is similar to what Martin Heidegger elucidates.[29]

> D. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead...

We see immediately that Paul's saying is like a poetic, or inspired, utterance. Therefore, it does not seem possible that one could truly catch its meaning unless its "poetic" character was taken into consideration. But also, we see that this saying is not the kind of poetic statement that confines itself to the expression of "feeling."

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[28]Romans, 1:20.

[29]Ralph Manheim (trans.), Martin Heidegger: An Introduction to Metaphysics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 99-115.

Besides being poetic, the saying is carefully constructed, and it tells one that considerable thought lies behind its expression. Furthermore, the saying strikes one right away, at "first glance," as some kind of "proof" or "demonstration" of important truth.

Paul's saying might well arise out of a long history of Paul's own thought, meditation, and experience. A man engaged in the endeavor to come into wisdom sometimes reaches a point where he finds that what is best, highest, and most essential in his orientation can be rendered in one concise statement. In the formulation and realization of such a statement, a man knows that he has gained something essential, and knows that his endeavor, as he is enabled to appreciate its significance at a time in which he is open to such appreciation, is consummated. Further, in the conciseness of such a statement there is contained the manifold of heretofore unresolved aspects of his endeavor, unified, and resolved in the particular way in which the statement consummates them.

I think that Augustine takes Paul's statement in the sense brought out above, and Augustine himself sees this statement as essential in a number of seemingly diverse contexts which nevertheless are unified and epitomized in the statement. Frankly I admit that I am unable to, strictly speaking, "verify" the above sentence in a precise manner, even though I "see" that it is true. Nevertheless, by considering one particular, and yet comprehensive, context in which Augustine understands his life as one that "tells" something essential, there is a way to bring out the importance of Paul's statement to Augustine. Also, in this way I can show how Augustine's conception of

confirmation or ground is exceedingly profound, and powerful in its ability to keep one from self-deception.

In considering Paul's saying we noticed that it somehow appears as a "proof" or "demonstration" of something. But unlike most proofs, it does not move from an already ascertained conception of ground or confirmation to something seen as confirmed by that ground, so much as it moves from what is confirmed ("made") to that which confirms (the invisible things of God). The saying appears to invoke, by this "backward" movement, the ground of that which is grounded or "made," as well as what is grounded.

The saying invokes ground, but does not presume to present ground as manifest or "visible." However, the saying indicates the way of access to ground. It says that ground, "the invisible things of God," are to be "understood by the things that are made." If one can construe the saying as a "proof," and therefore as presenting "evidence," then what is the "evidence?" The evidence would be the "things that are made" which the "invisible things" are to be "understood by." Could the "invisible things" become "evidence?" They could only become "evident," in the mode of being "evident" in which they are "understood by the things that are made." In other words, if the saying is strictly taken then it is clear that ground is not accessable in-itself, but only by way of "the things that are made."

The denial of access to ground in-itself, and the saying (with some interpretation, certainly) does deny such access, has important consequences which appear in Augustine's thought in THE CONFESSIONS.

Augustine's past, as he is now enabled to recall it in his

CONFESSIONS, reveals itself to him as having been, in one sense, a movement from Pride towards Humility. Augustine employs many other such "opposites," some expressly and some implied, as he renders the experiential character and overall sense of this movement out of his past. Besides pride-humility, there are also, darkness-light, disorder-order, bondage-freedom, groundedlessness-groundedness, and others. Also, there is a movement out of nothing towards being. But even though Augustine finds sin to "be" nothing, and sees good and evil as akin to being and nothing, I hesitate to introduce being-nothing because Augustine does not work with being-nothing as explicitly, or as clearly, as, say, Martin Heidegger does. It would be misleading to impute the clarity to Augustine's thought on being and nothing that Heidegger's has. However, with the background I have gained from Heidegger's thought I am able to see a certain kinship between Augustine and Heidegger, and can raise Augustine's thought on being to a greater explicitness than he does himself. The main respect in which I will make Augustine's thought on Being more explicit and clear, with Heidegger's aid, has to do with Augustine's <u>implied</u> tendency to relate Being with <u>appearing</u>, standing forth in the light, "made." Although Augustine did, I believe, implicitly relate Being and appearing (appearing as part of the essence of being, and no mere illusion), in the CONFESSIONS, he is not explicit about it. However, the whole tenor of his thought, the emphasis upon confirmation as <u>direct reception</u>, the "poetic" character of his utterance, and the man himself, leads me to believe he simply took appearing, as of the essence of being, for granted. I do not believe that the notion of creatures appearing in

the fullness of their being would be lost upon Augustine. I think that Augustine was enabled, at times, to bear witness to creatures in their fullness, as is done in this psalm he quotes:

> ...for that Thou art to be[30] praised, do show from the earth, dragons, and all deeps, fire, hail, snow, ice, and stormy wind which fulfill Thy word; mountains and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars; beasts, and all cattle, creeping things, and flying fowls; kings of the earth, and all people, princes, and all judges of the earth; young men and maidens, old men and young, praise Thy Name. But when, from heaven, these praise Thee, praise Thee, our God, in the heights, all Thy angels, all Thy hosts, sun and moon, all the stars and light, the Heaven of heavens, and the waters that be above the heavens, praise Thy Name...[31]

Here, in this psalm, as well as in Paul's saying, God, or ground, is not spoken of as though He might appear, be manifest, as those things are manifest which "show" Him (as in the psalm), or which He is to be "understood by" (as in Paul's saying). Strictly taken, Paul's saying and this psalm deny access to God in-himself, and focus attention upon creatures themselves, in their groundedness.

The extent to which Augustine moved from pride towards humility was the extent to which he gave up taking ground as in-itself. In taking ground as in-itself, as opposed to ground as 'understood by' creatures, one debases ground to the level of creatures, and "grounds" or "justifies" creatures with a creature. In doing this one purports to ground creatures and tends to lay down the conditions or terms upon which he will accept them. But Augustine discovered, as he attests, that he was only enabled to bear witness truly insofar as he gave up

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[30]Pusey (trans.) op. cit., Book Seven, p. 116.

[31]Ps. 148:1-12.

such presumptuous claims; insofar as he himself was "reversed," and cast down from his presumption (pride). Augustine's "reversal" is reflected in the "opposites" we noted previously with which he must render the sense of his life-path. These "opposites," and especially his movement from pride towards humility, reflect the way Augustine was himself utterly confounded insofar as he presumed to "know," and to lay down the conditions upon which he would accept things. His "reversal" reflects the extent to which he had to deny himself for the truth. Augustine's "reversal" lies behind the numerous "twists" of phrasing we see in his CONFESSIONS, where he puts a possible way of understanding something, and then denies it. For example:

> Let him rejoice even thus; and be content rather by not discovering to discover Thee, than by discovering not to discover Thee. [32]

Then, the way Augustine avoided self-deception was through the denial of self. And confirmation of the truth of his orientation, in one important way he received confirmation, lay in Augustine's being enabled to bear witness to creatures in the fullness of their being, in their being "made."

In about his sixteenth year Augustine contracted a stomach ailment at school in Madaura, so his parents brought him back to Tagaste. During his year in Tagaste Augustine was out of school and free to do as he chose while his parents used this time to gather money so that their promising son might study in Carthage. In this period of leisure Augustine recalls that, "The reins...were slackened to me...even

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[32]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book One, p. 10.

unto dissoluteness in whatsoever I affected...and mine iniquity burst out as from very fatness."

> And what was it that I delighted in, but to love, and be loved? but I kept not the measure of love, of mind to mind, friendship's bright boundary: but out of the muddy concupiscence of the flesh, and the bubblings of youth, mists fumed up which beclouded and overcast my heart, that I could not discern the clear brightness of love from the fog of lustfulness. Both did confusedly boil in me, and hurried my unstayed youth over the precipice of unholy desires, and sunk me in a gulf of flagitiousnesses.[33]

One's life in retrospect divides itself off into definite "times," or periods, each of which has an overall sense or feel to it. One does not arbitrarily make these divisions, rather they present themselves in this way. The abrupt division which Augustine reveals between his school-boy years, and this year in Tagaste, he expresses with a separate book in his CONFESSIONS (Book Two). Each of the books in THE CONFESSIONS is composed around this principle, excepting, of course, books ten through thirteen, which discuss memory and the book of Genesis.

Now it is suddenly no longer the world of boyhood, but the world of youth. The things of boyhood are rapidly being left behind and consigned to oblivion, and the possibilities of youth are looming up to be entered into. Augustine says this about the relationship between his boyhood and youth: "In boyhood itself, however (so much less dreaded for me than youth)..."[34] He also employs many images to bring out more clearly the experiential character of what is happening to him, such as "falling," "tumult of the senses," "invisible wine of self-will," "troubled sea," "lust," "boiling," "hurried," "darkened." He describes

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[33] Ibid., Book Two, p. 23.

[34] Ibid., Book One, P. 15 (italics mine).

it another way, thus: "...while turned from Thee, the One Good, I lost myself among a multiplicity of things." 35

Augustine speaks of this period of his life as the time of his fall. He seems aware that there is considerable similarity between his own experience at this time, and the mythical account given of The Fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Augustine alludes to this myth many times in Book Two as he explicates his own experience. He never explicitly states that he sees a firm connection between his own experience of The Fall and the mythical account in Genesis, but the interpreter can see such connection implicitly present. Augustine speaks of his discovery of woman and sexuality. However, what is most important and essential in order to link Augustine's account of this time of his life with the account of the fall in Genesis, is Augustine's indication that he became rebellious and set himself over the world, and his indication that his whole situation became darkened and barren because of this.

The account of The Fall in Genesis, the myth of Adam and Eve, involves, as a sequence of events, the prohibition, temptation, violation, curse, and expulsion. The Fall is a fall into sin, and sin is elucidated both in Genesis and in THE CONFESSIONS as violation of divine law and attempted usurpation of divine power.

Let us briefly consider what might be involved in the notions of law and violation in connection with The Fall. Augustine speaks often of divine law. I will quote some places where he indicates what divine law might be, and how it might be manifested.

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35 Ibid., Book Two, p. 23 (italics mine).

> . . . and by my own sin Thou didst justly punish me. For Thou hast commanded, and so it is, that every inordinate affection should be its own punishment.[36]

Also:

> For it is not by our feet, or change of place, that men leave Thee, or return unto Thee. . . So then in lustful, that is, in darkened affections, is the true distance from Thy Face.[37]

Also:

> How deep are Thy ways, O God, Thou only great, that sittest silent on high and by an unwearied law dispensing penal blindness to lawless desires.[38]

Also:

> . . . but Thou art the most overflowing giver of all Good.[39]

And:

> . . . whatsoever is, is good.[40]

In the first three quotations I have selected Augustine indicates how divinity appears in the aspect of law. The last two quotations point out the divine as the true source of being and goodness, and reveal what man's violation may be, namely, man may take himself to be the source of being and goodness and attempt to usurp divine claim.

What is the "how" of man's violation, and his attempted usurpation? Augustine implicates "inordinate affection" in this connection; "So then in lustful, that is, in darkened affections. . ." Augustine further

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[36] Ibid., Book One, p. 15.

[37] Ibid., Book One, p. 20.

[38] Ibid., Book One, p. 21.

[39] Ibid., Book Two, p. 29.

[40] Ibid., Book Seven, p. 115.

indicates that the violation is the same as the punishment; the violation and punishment are one. "...that every inordinate affection should be its own punishment." "...an unwearied law dispensing penal blindness to lawless desires." In not separating the violation from the punishment, which, if separated, might lead one to believe that violation and punishment were in a "causal" relationship, Augustine endeavors to remain true to the phenomenological aspect of the evil. That is, Augustine remembers how his past orientation appeared for him, and he endeavors to stick to the actual experience of evil. If he were to portray violation and punishment as in a causal relationship, then might not one be tempted to visualize a god outside the world who returned punishment for violation? Besides not separating the violation and punishment, Augustine speaks of "blindness" and "darkened," in our first three quotations, in his endeavor to keep to his recollection of his experience within evil. And within Book Two of his CONFESSIONS, which covers his life at the period of his fall, Augustine employs this descriptive passage:

> ...but out of the muddy concupiscence of the flesh, and the bubblings of youth, mists fumed up which beclouded and overcast my heart, that I could not discern the clear brightness of love from the fog of lustfulness. Both did confusedly boil in me...[41]

Also:

> ...and I was tossed about, and wasted, and dissipated, and I boiled over in my fornications...[42]

Overcome in his lust and possessive grasping, a man "flows out"

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[41] Ibid., Book Two, p. 23.

[42] Ibid., Book Two, p. 23.

"through" his senses towards the desired sense objects (note that beings are hereby reduced to "objects" or "body"), and is dispersed, darkened, and pinioned to sense objects (which themselves become darkened thereby).

Thus, even though Augustine's speech appears as "poetry," and "rhetoric," at first glance, it is a generally accurate phenomenological rendering of the situation in question. Also, consider that substantially the same description of evil illusion is to be found in Plato's PHAEDO, where Socrates says:

> And were we not saying long ago that the soul when using the body as an instrument of perception, that is to say, when using the sense of sight or hearing or some other sense (for the meaning of perceiving through the body is perceiving through the senses) -- were we not saying that the soul too is then dragged by the body into the region of the changeable, and wanders and is confused; the world spins round her, and she is like a drunkard, when she touches change?[43]

Also:

> ...but an evil greater far, which is the greatest and worst of all evils, and one of which he never thinks.
> What is it, Socrates? said Cebes.
> The evil is that when the feeling of pleasure or pain is most intense, every soul of man imagines the objects of this intense feeling to be then plainest and truest: but this is not so, they are really the things of sight.[44]

At one point in his CONFESSIONS, Augustine brings out what I believe he conceives to be the most relevant sense of the overall relation holding between divine law, punishment and violation of divine law, and man's true place under divine law.

> For to these things [by "these things" Augustine means, "..... things contained in place..."] was I superior, but inferior to Thee;

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[43] B. Jowett (trans.) "Phaedo," The Dialogues of Plato (New York: Random House, 1937) I, p. 464.

[44] Ibid., p. 468.

> and Thou art my true joy when subjected to Thee, and Thou hadst subjected to me what Thou createdst below me. And this was the true temperament, and middle region of my safety, to remain in Thy Image, and by serving Thee, rule the body. But when I rose proudly against Thee, and ran against the Lord with my neck with the thick bosses of my buckler,[45] even these inferior things were set above me, and pressed me down, and no where was there respite or space for breathing.[46]

Now, I confess that I can offer nothing further on Augustine's conception of divine law than this brief description, unless I repeat points handled elsewhere in this thesis many times. One of the main reasons for my inability in this respect is that I find the notion of law in connection with the divine to be essentially confusing and somehow contradictory. I will bring out the aspects in which divine "law" troubles me with the following questions.

Would divine law imply that the world has a "finished," or complete, character, and therefore that it is man's position to "conform" to this preestablished structure? How might it be that divine law is not a code, nor a specifiable structure of ordinances, but nevertheless is law? Is divine law demonstrable; could one be said to "know" it? How could there be free response to the divine by man, under divine law, inasmuch as law implies punishment and coercion for failure to respond? Does not divine law imply a restriction on man's freedom, or if we say that man's freedom lies along the way of his fulfillment of divine law (as Augustine seems to say in the last quotation offered), then how might we understand this fulfillment as creative, and not merely conformatory?

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[45]Job 15:26.

[46]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Seven, p. 111.

In my previous attempts to elucidate divine law I have had the difficulties embodied in these questions in mind, and have attempted to reconcile them. But now I suspect the notion of divine law itself as much as I also suspect my understanding of it. Might it be, inasmuch as Augustine's orientation is still tainted by a tendency towards self-withholding and control,[47] that he tends to experience the divine as that which defines and limits the extent of his control, i. e. experiences the divine as "law"? However, "law" would be understood here as a "mirroring" of his own tendency to control.

Possible violation, as I have tried to elucidate it, always involves the arrogation to oneself of the divine claim to found the being of beings. "Arrogation to oneself" or "self-will," presupposes that one is a self and knows what selfhood might be. However, the period of his life that Augustine considers in Book Two (the time of the first sin, the Fall), is a time when the existence of knowing selfhood is questionable. In Augustine's analysis of his situation at the time of his fall we notice that he alludes to the presence of confusion, dread, darkness, desire, ignorance, etc. There is something peculiar about a man's situation at this time that invites investigation in connection with the notions of sin, fall, and error.

One might assume that a man enjoys selfhood, has choice, and knows good and evil, at the time of The Fall, and then chooses evil and falls. With these assumptions, however, one is committed to a belief that evil is sheer perversity. But it is hard to maintain that the innocence of

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[47] This aspect of Augustine's orientation elucidated particularly on p. 103 of this thesis.

childhood so quickly changes into abrupt perversity with The Fall. Another suggestion is that The Fall has the character of unconscious activity, ignorance, and loss of control due to overpowering desire. But on these terms it is difficult to entertain the notion of responsibility. In this rendering a possible opening is provided by which to escape guilt.

The situation of The Fall, the first sin, raises the question: how is it that innocence becomes guilt? Or if we say that guilt only is insofar as it is experienced and owned up to, which occurs, perhaps, only long after The Fall, then there are still the questions: how is innocence "overthrown," or "lost," and whence is sin? After all is said and thought over, the notion of The Fall still retains its essential ambiguity and contradiction. The Fall has the elements of both innocence and guilt, responsibility and lack of responsibility, accountability and unaccountability, and knowledge and ignorance. How can one maintain, with the notion of Original Sin, that man must or will sin, and still maintain that such sin involves responsibility and can beget guilt? What might the myth of The Fall of Adam and Eve be "saying"?

In his short work, THE CONCEPT OF DREAD, S. Kierkegaard (whose thought has helped me very much) considers the notion of Original Sin very closely, and offers a psychological analysis of The Fall in conjunction with an explication of the myth of Adam and Eve. Kierkegaard shows how dread, which is dread of a "something which is nothing,"[48] dread of possibility for possibility leading into the unknown and

[48]Walter Lowrie (trans.), S. Kierkegaard: The Concept of Dread (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 39.

forbidden has the essential ambiguity, and is the dominant mood, of The Fall.

> ...he who through dread becomes guilty is innocent, for it was not he himself but dread, an alien power, which laid hold of him, a power which he did not love but dreaded--and yet he is guilty, for he sank in the dread which he loved even while he feared it. There is nothing in the world more ambiguous...[49]

This situation, The Fall, pertains to this definite period of one's life; once fallen, man is open to a period of continued "sin," which is a different situation (Augustine speaks of this at length as habit, routine, vanity). If the story of Adam and Eve is applicable to The Fall, then perhaps the myth of the ark of Noah might have to do with what follows The Fall. During the time of "continued sin" the soul retreats into a protected place whence it is possible it may appear again, just as the ark of Noah protects the life of the world from the deluge that covers the earth, until the waters subside and the dove does not return.

In the brief and violent space of his sixteenth year Augustine speaks of himself as having committed many sins. One infers from the many references to lust, passion, and unclean desires, and also from the more direct references to the possibility of marriage (foregone, since a wife would be a hindrance to his education and career) and fornication, that Augustine had discovered sexuality. In the third chapter of Genesis, concerning The Fall, it is said thus: "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked..." At this innocence and ignorance begin to crumble, but this does not necessarily mean that guilt ensues. However, one gets the distinct impression that as a direct

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[49] Ibid., p. 39 (italics mine).

result of The Fall there appears the curse and expulsion from the garden, that is to say, there is punishment. Where there is punishment, there must be violation, and there must be law which is violated. Thus The Fall involves and implies discovery, violation, law, curse, and punishment.

The violators were commanded not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, else they should die, but they ate of it anyway. The command prohibiting and putting out of bounds the tree of the knowledge of good and evil immediately makes it "that tree which we must not touch, else we die." The tree becomes "That tree." The divine command reveals that tree as different from all the others, and although the tree is forbidden there now appears both the tree and the dread possibility of eating of it. The dread has something to do with "death." Do they know what death is? If we say they do, then how can we likewise say they are innocent and ignorant? As Kierkegaard brings out, innocence is like a dream of peace and repose. Then, we must say, where does death enter in, how does innocence become aware of it? We know that the divine command, with death as the consequence for its possible violation, gives them pause for a while, but why? Kierkegaard further clarifies how it is with innocence and ignorance. Innocence is dreaming, peace, and repose..."but at the same time there is something different, which is not dissension and strife, for there is nothing to strive with. What is it then? Nothing. But what effect does nothing produce? It begets dread." [50] Kierkegaard distinguishes two definite stages of the progress

[50] Ibid., p. 38.

of innocence. The first stage is immediately above (namely, dreaming, peace, and repose, and at the same time, vague foreboding; before the hearing of the divine command), and here innocence has to do with the dread of its nothing in such a way that it is not overthrown. The dread is there and it shows itself, in children, as "a seeking after adventure, a thirst for the prodigious, the mysterious."[51]

But, when it comes time and it is ready, innocence hears the divine command, the prohibition, "Thou shalt not...or you will surely die." This enigmatical command need not be supposed to be a voice from the clouds. Augustine recalls something his mother told him about this time: "For she wished, and I remember in private with great anxiety warned me, not to commit fornication; but especially never to defile another man's wife."[52] With words such as these the youth is greeted at various times. Even though, in this case, the prohibitory "divine command" proceeds from the mouth of a parent, still, the parent's admonition may be received as, and reflect, a concern devolving from transcendent authority. The youth may not actually be threatened with death in words, nevertheless the anxiety and sense of urgency with which these things are said lets him know that something is at stake. But this something is a nothing to him, and no matter how much one tried to explain to the youth what is at stake, he, in his innocence, cannot understand. It remains a vague foreboding which is dreadful, and increases in its ambiguity and intensity with each warning. The ambiguity lies in the

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Two, p. 26.

way in which the youth is both attracted to and repelled by the nothing with which he has to do. To speak of his having a choice between good and evil, Kierkegaard brings out, presupposes what is consequent upon the picking of the fruit. The whole point is that, "When one assumes that the prohibition awakens the desire, one posits a knowledge instead of ignorance; for Adam would have had to have a knowledge of freedom, since his desire was to use it."[53] There must first be a knowledge of freedom. The prohibition keeps pointing to that with reference to which he is not to exercise his freedom, but as yet he has no freedom. "The prohibition alarms Adam (induces a state of dread) because the prohibition awakens in him the possibility of freedom."[54] Kierkegaard speaks of the ". . . alarming possibility of <u>being able</u>."[55] Kierkegaard also speaks of an inherent notion of "the terrible,"[56] and also of an awakening to "possibility for possibility."[57] But, speaking psychologically and perhaps phenomenologically, the alarm is the dread, begot by nothing. A later thinker (Heidegger)[58] seems to suggest that the dread appearing with the awakening of freedom has to do with the imminent possibility of losing the world, or leaving the world.

Since Kierkegaard conceived these changes as going on within the

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[53]Kierkegaard, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 40.

[54]<u>Ibid.</u>

[55]<u>Ibid.</u>

[56]<u>Ibid.</u>

[57]<u>Ibid.</u>

[58]R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick (trans.), Martin Heidegger: "What is Metaphysics?" <u>Existence and Being</u> (London: Vision Press, Ltd., 1956).

man, in his "subjectivity," he never could make any sense out of what a "fallen world" might mean. He felt that the "outside world" had nothing to do with the "inside man." This is important because Augustine also has this trouble in his exposition of Genesis which concerns the creation of the world, although there is some ambiguity with reference to this in Augustine's situation.

One important reason why Kierkegaard insisted his analysis was strictly psychological is that psychology is a variety of science with an objective viewpoint, and reveals the human subject in terms of "states," feelings, and complex dialectical alterations thereof. This might be any human subject, and not necessarily myself. But Kierkegaard is speaking of sin and original sin, and sin cannot be encountered except as my sin. Sin is something which I am involved in, or I have done and am doing. There is no such thing as "sin in general." Augustine is also most clear on this point. Nothing short of guilt and personal involvement in sin as a doer of it can reveal sin in its essence. Thus objective science is irrelevant in principle with relation to sin, and Kierkegaard employs psychology as a way of revealing predisposing factors with relation to sin. But sin itself appears in the world out of the unique, sudden character of human decision (Kierkegaard speaks of "the leap" in this connection) no matter how many predisposing factors may be found relevant to this decision. By sin, sin comes into the world, and not by any other way.[59] To suppose it appears because of dread, or desire, or will, or ignorance, comes close to explaining it

[59] Kierkegaard, op. cit., p. 29.

away, and perhaps declining one's own involvement in it.

The temptation is great to treat sin as a problem asking for a solution, for some reason for its appearance. And when one is following out the passage from innocence to guilt in human life, as we are doing, care must be taken to avoid giving the appearance of tracing a series of causal relations, as if there were no people there, or as if people might be considered as complex machines. Thinking given over to pictures, abstractions, representations, is prone to a conception of man in this light, and thus the thinker excludes himself from consideration.

Sin is a mystery, and not a 'problem,' although the mystery does not render personal responsibility necessarily vague or ambiguous. Thus we come to the difficult part of the tale of Adam and Eve in Genesis, namely, the appearance of the "serpent" and the tasting of the fruit of knowledge. Kierkegaard speaks of dread in a way that shows it as a preparation for the possibility of freedom. "Thus innocence is brought to its last extremity. It is in dread in relation to the prohibition and the punishment. It is not guilty, and yet it is in dread, as though it were lost."[60] Could we say at this point that innocence is open to suggestion? If we say that this "serpent" has seduced, or deceived, Eve, and thereby deluded her out of her own decision on the matter, then we can pin the responsibility on the "serpent," and not on Eve. Thus, whatever suggestion she is open to now, must not, as Kierkegaard emphasizes, take decision out of her hands.

What does the serpent do? He himself is a revelation, and he

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[60] Ibid., p. 41 (italics mine).

reveals the fruit of the tree in a new light, and denies that death will result from its tasting. His advice removes the hitch that gives the decision the character of real decision. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain, according to him. "Yea, hath God said, that Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Perhaps this could be rendered thus: "Are your powers limited; cannot you take everything?" And he goes on to say, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then shall your eyes be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Then, as in a dream, the tree suddenly steps forth and presents an entirely different aspect from before. One observes that this tree has gone through three transformations. At first it was simply a tree in the center of the garden. The prohibition suddenly singled it out from all the others in a forbidding aspect. And now: "And when the woman saw that the tree <u>was</u> good for food, and that it <u>was</u> pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make <u>one</u> wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat...and he did eat." With reference to human attitudes, and the meaning of the events that take place, the things in the garden undergo transformations. They do not merely appear to do so, although they do appear, but they are "taken" as they manifest themselves in the way they appear. The myth is putting something that actually "comes off" in experience. The transformation of the things in the garden is truly a wonder, but these transformations may be understood experientially, as phenomena, as what really occur. "And the eyes of them were both opened, and they knew that they <u>were</u>

naked..." Previously, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." One cannot say that this manner of considering experience leads to fuzzy thinking. What is happening here is clear, even though it does not lend itself to precise explanation and calculation. These things appear, and therefore are appearances, but not necessarily mere appearance. If one denies appearance to things then they become incapable of manifesting their being, since they must put in an appearance (as Heidegger suggests) in order to be. Appearance must be taken seriously as a mode of being, and not condemned apriori as mere. In search of 'causes' one can begin to get some idea of the ways in which things appear, or do not appear, with reference to the manner in which people take them.

The immediate 'cause' in this situation is the serpent, or, perhaps, temptation, which suddenly renders the tree of knowledge visible in the light of temptation. Whereupon, Eve, again as in a dream, picks fruit of this tree and eats, and then gives it to her husband who also eats. Temptation has to do with the possibility of action with reference to something, and as the temptation arises the thing "speaks," or offers an appearance, with reference to the proposed possibility of action. The power of temptation to render things intelligible in its light is not confined to "sinful" possibilities of action, but pertains to all proposed action. Again, as it was in our presentation of dread, temptation does not make the decision for one. But it does render things in its light, and it would seem that the word temptation is confined to an approach to things that renders them inviting of action with reference to them. The source of temptation in the myth is the serpent, and the

serpent is a being "outside" Eve, in the garden. This bothers Kierkegaard since it would seem to posit an operating principle in the world that acts contrary to God's will, and also an excuse whereby decision can be referred to something other than oneself. To what source can temptation be attributed? Would it help to consider temptation as an "inner" phenomenon which is perhaps a function of desire and will? In this way one could pin the responsibility squarely on himself. But can one claim himself as the source of temptation? In truth, to what indeed can one claim himself as the source?

In the excess of self-castigation Augustine seems to claim himself as the principle source of all his "evils," but perhaps he is just bringing extra pain upon himself. One cannot claim himself as the source of hunger, and thereby declare that eating is something of a sin which one is responsible for, as Augustine seems to in the tenth book. This approach to the question of bodily demands is the cult of asceticism.[61] Implicit in such asceticism is the understanding of all creaturely existence as inherently evil, the desires, the will, "the body," all "matter," and also implicit is the belief that one's own failures can be traced back to these "causes." Insofar as one sees fit to exclude himself from creaturely existence which is believed to be inherently evil, then one can take the comfortable position of declaring the source of evil as other than himself. This is akin to the Manichaeism which Augustine is extricating himself from and combating fiercely. But insofar as one understands himself as partaking of this creaturely existence

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[61] I do not want to condemn all asceticism, but only that form of asceticism employed as a means of self-salvation. In Vol. Two, page 81.

which is believed to be inherently evil, then one is forced into the unnatural position of declaring himself evil and guilty. This may be what is leading to the extreme self-castigation which we see in St. Augustine. I think that guilt is unalterably unambiguous, but if one declares himself guilty in certain 'known' aspects, rather than owning up to his discovered and accepted guilt, then guilt becomes ambiguous and distorted. In declaring his own guilt Augustine divides himself into an evil demon on one hand, and a god on the other (that part of himself declaring guilt and sitting in judgment).

One finds that Augustine is involved in ambiguity with reference to creaturely existence. I think that this has much to do with his adherence to that strain of asceticism (a disguised form of the same persuasion which we find Augustine struggling with in Manichaeism) which is present in Plato, Plotinus, and seemingly present in much of Christianity. Such asceticism posits and creates an opponent, namely, the evil of "matter," desire, "the body," etc., and in so doing pronounces a resounding indictment of creaturely existence. Since

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of his Systematic Theology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), Tillich distinguishes asceticism as a form of attempted self-salvation from asceticism understood as a "disciplinary exercise" which as such may be a necessary part of life. Tillich also elucidates "ontological asceticism" which involves a devaluation of finite being, and attempts self-salvation "through mystical evaluation beyond finite reality." I think "ontological asceticism," as Tillich describes it, is a precise formulation of the mode of thought that Plato, Plotinus, and, to a great extent, Augustine, partake of. The ascetic "tries to extinguish desire completely by eliminating as many objects of possible desire as he can within the limits of finite existence" (Tillich, p. 81). In the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter Two: The Yoga of Knowledge) there is a short passage that considers this possibility: "The abstinent run away from what they desire but carry their desires with them: when a man enters reality, he leaves his desires behind him." (Quoted from p. 48 of the translation by Prabhavananda and Isherwood, Hollywood: Marcel Rodd Co., 1944.)

Augustine is more inclined to accept guilt, and participation in creaturely existence, but is still taken in by the path of salvation decreed by asceticism with its implications concerning creaturely existence brought out above, then he is enmeshed in a continuing struggle with a truly steadfast opponent, namely, himself.

In Book Ten of the CONFESSIONS Augustine reviews his situation with reference to eating and drinking. To obtain a closer look at the bind and ambiguity Augustine is in, let us consider this aspect of it.

> There is another evil of the day, which I would were sufficient for it. For by eating and drinking we repair the daily decays of our body, until Thou destroy both belly and meat, when Thou shalt slay my emptiness with a wonderful fulness, and clothe this corruptible with an incorruption. But now the necessity is sweet unto me, against which sweetness I fight, that I be not taken captive; and carry on a daily war by fastings; often bringing my body into subjection, and my pains are removed by pleasure. For hunger and thirst are in a manner pains; they burn and kill like a fever, unless the medicine of nourishments come to our aid.[62]

> Placed then amid these temptations, I strive daily against concupiscence in eating and drinking. For it is not of such nature that I can settle on cutting it off once for all, and never touching it afterward, as I could of concubinage. The bridle of the throat then is to be held attempered between slackness and stiffness.[63]

In general, Augustine believes that eating and drinking constitute a necessity, but a dangerous necessity, because they might possibly take him captive. If possible it would be better, he says, to have done with eating and drinking, but it is not possible, therefore they must be controlled. Now, we notice that Augustine tends to call

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[62]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Ten, p. 191.

[63]Ibid., Book Ten, p. 193.

eating and drinking themselves into question, as inherently suspect; however, he clearly sees himself at fault also.

> I fear not uncleanness of meat, but the uncleanness of lusting.[64]

In this quotation, and in other places in his review, Augustine tends to say that eating is not itself in question. Rather, he says that it is one's relation to eating that is in question, i. e. do I lust, or not?

> Thou hast taught me, good Father,[65] that to the pure, all things are pure; but that it is evil unto the man that eateth with offence,[66] and, that every creature of Thine is good, and nothing to be refused, which is received with thanksgiving...[67]

But, even though he goes out of his way to exonerate food itself, we see, in Augustine's tendency to consider eating as a dangerous necessity which it were better to avoid, the background workings of the asceticism mentioned above. In view of this asceticism Augustine can only construe eating in two senses. Either it is within the bounds of necessity, in which case it is justified, or else it is gratification and lust, which is sin. Now is not there something wrong with this view? For we know that a man who has whole-heartedly done a good days work has no such qualms about his meal, enjoys it greatly, and accepts it with thanksgiving since it enables him to go on with his work and life. Furthermore, the question of lust and gratification may never

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Ten, p. 193.

[66] Rom. 14:20.

[67] I Tim. 4:4.

enter his mind because he may well be fulfilled in his work.

I think that Augustine is partially victimized by this asceticism because it diverts him from whole-hearted participation in creaturely existence, which would void this difficulty at one stroke. However, there is an aspect of his situation wherein Augustine is not merely victim, but is himself implicated in his difficulty. In our first quotation (within this analysis of Augustine's situation with reference to eating and drinking) we see that Augustine renders hunger and thirst in a particular way.

> For hunger and thirst are in a manner pains; they burn and kill like a fever, unless the medicine of nourishments come to our aid.[68]

It has been suggested to me that instead of understanding hunger as a natural occurrence, a man who is held by lust and craving is likely to interpret hunger as Augustine has, i. e. as a burning fever which drives one toward its gratification. Thus, hunger as a natural occurrence, which has the phenomenological aspect of "coming upon" one, gets confused with burning desire.[69] This confusion makes it possible for a man to misconstrue eating as sin, even though an ascetic might affix his guilt in certain known respects (his eating, drinking, etc.), it is clear that his guilt lies at some deeper level and has to do with his having the craving which has turned creaturely existence into an enemy.

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[68]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Ten, p. 191.

[69]The thought which lies behind my being able to even understand the possibility of such a confusion I have derived from the BHAGAVAD-GITA; wherein it is said that egoistic delusion lies behind one's believing that "I am the doer." (In this situation above the delusion lies in one's believing that he is responsible for his hunger, that this hunger is his creation).

The region of responsibility I am trying to define has something to do with will, but again will must be distinguished from momentary impulse which has the distinct character of "coming upon us." I think that I must say that even though many things "come upon us," and even though we intentionally go out to meet many things, nevertheless there is a deeper sense in which we "go along with," or "refuse to go along with," the things that come to pass. In this deeper sense of assent or refusal, the deepest region of personal responsibility holds sway.[70] It seems to me that such responsibility has less to do with particular and specific actions than it has to do with the overall sense of one's situation in everything one does. It is in this region that sin and guilt find the most profound application, and not to specifically "sinful" deeds.

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[70]In considering what lies at the basis of corrupt consciousness, which if corrupt would corrupt a man's action and thought, R. G. Collingwood sees failure to pay attention to, recognize as 'mine,' and fully follow out such intimations of feeling as we may receive, however disturbing, which call upon us to respond to them. Collingwood's discussion has certain points which have helped me: A - He shows that there is a good possibility that conscious thought might well be corrupt even before it begins its machinations, B - He shows that we might well have a corrupt conception of our experience even before we appeal to it for verification, C - He shows that evil is not initially a decision to evil, but is a weakness, a failure to respond adequately, which tends to leave us more and more dominated by what we have failed with respect to, D - Through his emphasis upon attention, courageous and resolute response to a call (however vague, subtle, or disturbing such call may be) Collingwood shows that the essence of man lies in the region of attention and response, and that this is the region wherein deepest responsibility and possible guilt seem to lie. E - A man who fails to respond tends to exonerate himself and impute his liabilities to some other source than himself; this is precisely what Augustine sees in Manichaeism, and in himself while he was deceiving himself as a Manichee. R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (New York: The Oxford Press, 1958), pp. 206-221.

In those early years Augustine reveals how things presented the appearance of confirmation of an attitude which he now knows to be corrupt and evil. He became head of the rhetoric school, took a mistress, competed for garlands, won prizes, etc. As time passed, however, he encountered sorrow, coercion, habit, vanity, profitless work, and, indeed, everything became painful and empty. His "field," or "the ground," as it is put in Adam and Eve, became cursed..."cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee..."

Upon the violation of the divine prohibition, there occurs the curse and the expulsion. "Punishment" appears, and one is given to understand that this punishment is born of divine agency. The notion of 'curse,' or divine "punishment," might lead to a distortion of the notion of divinity unless one insists on precise explication of this punishment. Such a notion might strictly apply to divine withdrawal of presence. Divine withdrawal of presence implies that man punishes himself. Divine withdrawal might be understood in the same sense that a patient, humble, and potentially helpful man simply withdraws his presence when faced with the task of possibly dealing with a willful, ungrateful, and destructive man. However, my analogy is only intended as analogy. Augustine sees self-punishment in sin, in this statement: "...and by my own sin Thou didst justly punish me. For Thou hast commanded, and so it is, That every inordinate affection should be its own punishment." [71]

Divine withdrawal leaves man on his own hook (which was his own

[71] Pusey (trans.), op. cit. Book One, p. 15.

preference insofar as the serpent's suggestion was taken), and makes him a "barren land" [72] to himself.

> And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Now, some may ask, "Is this really a curse?" Does not the hard situation of life, and the ultimate eventuality of death, as described in this curse, bear a close resemblance to what is commonly understood as the "facts of life"? From the point of view of the generality of accepted ways of thinking, excepting of course the religious claims (their promise of eternal life, productive life, and joyful life), this is man's situation, which has recently begun to be challenged by those exalting the power of the sciences to re-make the world along more satisfactory lines. From the viewpoint of the wisdom of the world this is the eternal fact of man's situation and is not a curse at all. In this light the curse pronounced on Adam and Eve is simply a religious device to "account for," or explain the evil of the world which contradicts mistaken human notions of all-good divine power. So far as I have been able to think it out, the notion of curse pertains to man's situation in two senses. The first sense pertains to those of the persuasion of the "wisdom of this world" who accept the existence of evil in the world as a "matter of fact," and describe the hope of reaching to a situation of all-good as wishful thinking. Such are the truly hopeless, and they live under a double curse. Firstly, their situation is cursed in that their life is without

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[72] Ibid., Book Two, p. 32.

joy and everything they do comes to nothing. But secondly they are cursed in that they are no longer able to realize they are cursed. What has taken place here might be called double-forgetting, and this takes place along the long course of a man's life. Such a man was cursed once, but he forgot it, and then, later on, he forgot that he forgot. One's awareness of being cursed first reveals to him that he lives in a fallen world. But in this situation one may "make the best of it," and move along as well as he can on his own power. But as time passes one forgets about the situation of being cursed, and takes the world "as is," even though it actually both "is and is not." Then, as time passes, a man may forget that he forgot his curse, forget that the world has fallen, and now things simply "are the way they are," and "never were any different," and cannot really be in essence altered. This is true hopelessness, because hope has been forgotten, and quiet, hidden despair now reigns. Here I must quote a fragment from Heracleitus which takes this situation into consideration. "If one does not hope, one will not find the un-hoped for, since there is no trail leading to it, and no path."[73] The second sense in which I think the notion of curse pertains lies in the situation in which a man becomes aware of his curse, and comes into an active relation with it, but mistakes its meaning.

We are attempting to understand the myth of Adam and Eve as if it pertained to what transpires in experience. That is, we insist that the myth is not mere myth, but rather a strange account of what actually transpires in the life of men, and the being of the world. Augustine has

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[73]Freeman (trans.), op. cit., frag. 18, p. 26.

discovered a profound similarity between his own life experience and the mythical accounts given in The Fall (Adam and Eve), and the coming-into-being put so simply in the first book of Genesis (creation). Augustine makes explicit reference many times to his own experience as elucidating the meaning of the book of Genesis. After relating his life, Augustine elucidates memory (Book Ten), and then carries over experiential meanings (derived via memory from the course of his past life) to the last three books which elucidate the meaning of Genesis. I will list some of the places in his commentary on Genesis where he makes explicit use of these meanings: Book Thirteen; paragraphs three, four, six, seven, ten, seventeen.

One might ask himself the question: "Why did Augustine include those three books of commentary on Genesis with the confession of his life?" What might the answer be? I think that the felt truth of his insight into the meaning of Genesis is one of the main reasons Augustine wrote his CONFESSIONS. Before he could present his explication of Genesis he had to reveal the course and meaning of his own life. I think Augustine was drawn toward Genesis even before he realized implicitly that his own life held the "key." When I say this I know that I am stepping into the realm of indirect interpretation, but I am drawing from my own experience with the myth of Genesis, and also from the fact that Augustine had been working with Genesis about the time he wrote THE CONFESSIONS. Thus, between his own as yet unrealized life-experience, and the book of Genesis, the truth came out.

There are also two other major factors in this discovery, namely, the crisis brought on within Augustine due to the requirements he felt he

had to meet as a bishop; and the life of St. Paul. Meeting the requirements of priesthood made him search deeply into himself, and thus he cut through surface layers of reality which covered his depth. The life of St. Paul (formerly Saul, the dreaded persecutor of Christians), his conversion taking him from the depths of perversion, and then his later apostolic life, provided Augustine with a meaning of St. Paul's statement referring to the invisible things of God being understood by the things that are made. St. Paul himself is one of these "made things" who attests to and reveals the invisible God. Just as in St. Paul's life, Augustine's life has been first destruction at his own hands, and then re-creation at the hands of God. "God re-making what he made." From this one gets a preliminary insight into the curse as meaning, "taking things into your own hands."

What can one "take into his own hands?" Only the tangible, the palpably real, the manifestly present, can be handled and be open to manipulation. In the fallen world conjunct with the withdrawal of divine presence, Being is taken to be the sum total of all the palpably real beings that now seem to stand in their own right. But they fall and "rise" according to how it comes out, and are falling all the time. Augustine begins to become aware of the fallibility of creatures (death of his own good friend, personal sickness, disgusting life work, etc.) later on in his life. Then the curse appears in its full force. The curse has been present all the time but awareness of it dawns gradually. One discovers that he has to work, and then discovers that all work appears to be fruitless, but there is no escape. Gradually, and little by little, all the aspects named in the curse take shape, and then one

gets the deep feeling that he is cursed, all men are cursed, the world is cursed, and all his efforts are doomed.

At the beginning the curse is always misunderstood. One takes steps to prevent the fulfillment of what is understood as the horrible. One begins gradually to move away from the horrible, and thus one becomes a traveler, a journeyman, a man on the run. However, there is something else here other than the need to remove from the horrible. There is also the hidden need to explore, to uncover and reveal (this has something to do with the act of revelation that takes place in the Garden).

Insofar as one has succeeded in preserving a distance from the horrible, the disastrous, a modus vivendi has come into being. All the ways and means of living, asceticism, science (taken as a hope of "salvation"), brute force, connivance, intelligence and cleverness, etc., all the pre-planned patterns for salvation, and so on, now come into their own. One may move into what speaks to him as his way, and this situation can persist for a long time. The path of one's journey here is not necessarily smooth and uninterrupted. As in the course of Augustine's life we see that many times one is cast out from a place that at first gave the appearance of desirability and stability. In fact, that is the path of travel. First a holding on, a preserving, and then expulsion, and journey.

For all this time one has been continually moving further and further away from the place of departure, namely, what is figured mythically in Genesis as the garden wherein is located both the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. This place is no more, it is gone. What initiated the departure was the act of taking things into one's own

hands, or, perhaps, being "as gods." One notices that the desired tree of life is not said to be placed somewhere out ahead of one, but behind in the Garden now guarded by fire. Is it not strange that this is the one place that a man is least likely to look, nay, impossible, for how can one see behind himself?

At the same time one is moving further and further away from the place of departure, one is also returning. In Sophocles' OEDIPUS REX we see the movement of this 'return.'

In departing from the land that Oedipus takes to be his place of birth, Oedipus believes that he is rendering his curse impotent, but we see that he is getting closer and closer to his true birthplace all the time. In taking steps to avert the fulfillment of the horrible curse Oedipus fulfills it himself "unknowingly."

How is this tragedy revealed? Because of the plague on the land which renders it a "barren land," Oedipus inquires into the matter as he did previously when he won his domain from the riddling sphinx at great personal risk. This evil plague is said to be the result of a violation committed long ago by a violator that now lives in the land, and the plague will continue until the violator is discovered and cast out. Oedipus again takes matters into his own hands and inquires into the source of the evil <u>as if he were not that same source</u>. Step by step, via Oedipus' astute inquiry, Oedipus himself begins to stand revealed as the evil, Thebes as his true birthplace, his wife as his mother, and the murdered traveler as his father, the once king. Oedipus' <u>modus vivendi</u>, namely, his great strength and intelligence, is what Oedipus has relied upon to prevent the fulfillment of the horrible curse. But we see that

his modus vivendi is what made possible the fulfillment of the horrible deed the curse "predicted." One notices that his great powers also abet his discovery of himself as the unknown violator. One's modus vivendi taken as a means of self-salvation kills itself when carried to its limit.

The essence of this dreadful revelation is its revelation of the past, and of Oedipus himself. How does this "looking back" take place? The blind seer (?!) unwillingly (is not Oedipus king?) points out Oedipus as the murderer, but Oedipus resists him violently. Augustine recounts that his mother tried to get a priest to correct her son's Manichaean error (excluding oneself from the source of evil), but the priest knew better than to try and would not do it. Tiresias knows better too, but he does it in anger. It is only by virtue of Oedipus' great power to insist on staying, enduring, that he is able to remain involved in the inquiry, because every indication begins to point at him. Oedipus strikes out at his accusers, detects "suspicious" plots among his friends, but still persists in the inquiry. The inquiry is both willing and unwilling. As it proceeds every involved witness in the land trembles, and attempts to resist its progress. Oedipus' mother speaks of the fables of the Gods, Tiresias has to be forced, the household servant who has had himself removed as far as possible and taken up sheep herding bears witness against his will. Disaster is bringing further disaster in its train. But Oedipus will "bring the truth to light."

Oedipus calls and the witnesses out of the past come, some by "accident" and some by force. Oedipus is connected to his true place

of departure, revealed as the source of the evil (as is Augustine), and tied to his father's murder. The long circle is now complete, and he is the one. The basic and essential mode of disclosure in Augustine's CONFESSIONS and OEDIPUS REX is, I believe, memory. But memory as the essential mode of disclosure is not so apparent in OEDIPUS REX as in the CONFESSIONS. OEDIPUS REX seems to take place in the "real world" of men and movement, action and struggle, and it seems that Oedipus' major mode of communication with his past is via other men who bear witness, or Oedipus' inferences from known facts and present conditions, even though Oedipus does remember killing the "traveler" (now revealed as his own father). I think this seeming difference between OEDIPUS REX and the CONFESSIONS can be partially resolved if one considers that OEDIPUS REX is a play, and therefore must tend to assume an "outward" aspect. If one were to dramatize the CONFESSIONS (which is certainly possible) might one not come up with something akin to the mode of disclosure effected in OEDIPUS REX? Secondly, we must consider that the CONFESSIONS partially hides the situation out of which it arises. That is, Augustine must have gradually found himself in a situation, extending over a great length of time, in which thought and action were inseparable, and events in his life began to "speak" of their derivation out of his past. Thirdly, Augustine, as Oedipus does, must have begun to remember his past, and this recollection tends to occur involuntarily as events call a man into question, thereby evoking the gradual appearance of the man as a whole to himself. Also, Augustine's CONFESSIONS is not passive meditation or "pure thought," but is active meditation and meditative action; his thought and his life work together the more he has

to reckon with the meaning of his life.

One notices that the first riddle the solution of which removed the evil sphinx from the land was answered by the generic term "man." This is reminiscent of the situation of Augustine's conversion to Catholic Christianity. It would be a mistake to believe that Augustine's troubles were over after his conversion took place. As time went on Augustine discovered himself again getting deeper and deeper into a threatening situation. This led to a major crisis about the time just previous to Augustine's acceptance of the position of bishop at Hippo. He then again made his decision, and it is out of this situation THE CONFESSIONS arise wherein he reveals himself as the source of the evil, and himself as twice-born. This second crisis is in close correspondence, I think, with Oedipus' second uncovering of the source of the evil with the answer, "myself." With this revelation Oedipus is cast out for the third time.

Oedipus again becomes a wanderer, but he is now a wanderer in a different sense. Oedipus has "put out his eyes," and is "blind," as was Tiresias. That which Tiresias understood Oedipus is also coming to understand. Previously both Augustine and Oedipus were "never at a loss" and felt that their capacity to deal with any situation whatever was unbounded and continually "confirmed" by the situation itself. Thus, they thought they had an inherent right to be. Now they know they are deserving of nothing, and everything has been taken from them. The way is now being paved for everything they receive to be received as a gift.

Why does not their wandering now cease? If they have returned to the source, the place of their picking of the fruit of the "tree of knowledge," why cannot they simply reach out and pluck of the tree of

life? They are again expelled, but what expels them? Guilt. In guilt one can no longer take up, or presume, his place amidst the creatures of the world. One is unworthy. Guilt is not chosen, but once discovered it may be accepted. Even though one has been proven to be the violator, this in itself is never a guarantee that guilt is there. Violation of law may brand a man "guilty," but guilt may not be accepted, or owned up to, by that man.[74]

What removes the burden of guilt once it has been revealed? Is not THAT WHICH declares guilt, THAT WHICH renders guilt bearable? Augustine speaks of God as having "covered my sins." However, Augustine gives an account of other factors which, he seems to say, prevent him from plucking of that life-giving tree. He confesses that his habits of long standing still plague him. Sexual desire, excessive eating, distractions due to the lust of the eyes, and perhaps a love of the fame of this world, still torment Augustine, and in Book Ten, which concerns his present situation, he reveals and considers these factors. That is to say, Augustine thinks he knows what perfection and imperfection are, and seems to be applying a strong directing force to his life. Perhaps, he seems to be thinking to himself, there is such a tree to be plucked if only I go about this correctly. The torments Augustine is combatting

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[74]But man may be guilty whether he decides to own up to his guilt or not. I have tended to assume that guilt is something that a man might eventually be exonerated from. But I am not sure. Also, I have found a place in Heidegger's thought where he seems clearly to abide by the notion of "permanent guilt." This would mean that a man could never truly believe himself to be set apart from infinite claim upon him; a man could not ever truly believe himself to be "his own property." For Heidegger's use of the notion of "permanent guilt," as given by Werner Brock in English, see: Martin Heidegger, Existence and Being (London: Vision Press Ltd., 1956), p. 85.

all revolve about his involvement in creaturely existence, which, he seems to feel, must be cut down to an absolute minimum if he is to reach the bliss and happiness of God in contemplation. Augustine seems to be trying to reach an end state, a place of motionless rest and happiness. Perhaps he is trying to bring everything to a halt. Life in this world is nothing but "trial without end," so the answer is to leave the world. But Augustine only really comes to himself when he meets up squarely with the duties and responsibilities of this earthly life that come his way. When he does this he comes into an honest relationship with everything, as opposed to the cringing and passive relationship involved in asceticism and world-denial.

In coming out to meet squarely the responsibilities of his earthly existence that speak to him as in need of being done, he must dig down in his very depths. This is when he really discovers things of the utmost importance, and finds true happiness. It is out of this situation that THE CONFESSIONS come, a situation of crisis and involvement in creaturely existence. This crisis was brought on through the responsibilities his position as Bishop of Hippo would entail. Before taking this position Augustine felt he had to be up to it and ready and willing to give himself over to its demands. He made his decision to DO IT, and entered into his situation with an <u>undivided heart</u>. Once before he did this at the time of his conversion. And once again, in the time of real decision he discovered that he was the recipient of help that came from <u>he knew not what source</u>.

Each time Augustine made his decision he denied himself and so far as was within his power he answered to the call of the difficult, the

unfamiliar, and unknown, which had declared itself to him. This is to say that with each decision Augustine moved closer toward a whole-hearted relationship to everything. Since THE CONFESSIONS were born of a crisis and decision which occurred much later than his conversion, I believe that the conversion was not the decisive event of Augustine's life, and was by no means completely decisive.

The term 'conversion,' as pertaining to Augustine's first decision, is misleading if it implies that Augustine's struggle within himself ended. The basic issue Augustine struggled with remained relevant to his situation, namely, whether he would continue to withold himself, to remain within himself, or not. Each time Augustine made his decision, and especially his decision to accept active priesthood, Augustine surrendered more of himself, and placed himself in a situation whence withdrawal was prohibited. Augustine gave up more of his ability to keep his situation within his own control each time. He dreaded, as any man might, the possibility that his situation might move outside his control, and thereby render him dependent and in unknown territory. But Augustine knew, and confessed, that his attempt to control himself held him within a fruitless, despairing, abhorrently 'familiar,' and destructive mode of life.

In fact, it seems to be true that Augustine's situation in bondage and sin is remarkably akin to the inner meaning of the curse laid upon Oedipus (which Oedipus himself fulfilled, as Augustine does also). The murder of the father, the marriage with the mother; on the one hand destruction of one's own, and on the other the "mating" with one's own whence inbred and distorted creations arise. I believe that this curse pertains to the essence of the situation of bondage and sin. It points

directly, brutally, and literally to the forms of bondage, all of which necessarily involve one's remaining with himself. It is just this decision, namely, whether to remain within himself or not, that Augustine copes with.

We have considered Augustine's sixteenth year in Tagaste with some of its consequences in his later life, as the time of The Fall, the beginning of time. He, also, speaks of this time as The Fall, and devotes a separate book to it. But he goes on and traces the course of his life through ever deepening darkness and despair, until finally, out of a situation of crisis, he begins to come into the light. Each one of the first nine books treats of a definite period within the overall sense of the course of his life.

After the year in Tagaste, Augustine went on to school in Carthage, which was the Rome of Africa. There were theaters with stage-plays, ampitheaters with gladitorial contests, prizes offered for declamation, many religious sects (among them the Manichaens), and so on. In short, it was a place wherein one might easily dissipate his whole life away most conveniently, and it was the fashion to do so.

> To Carthage I came, where there sang all around me in my ears a cauldron of unholy loves. I loved not yet, yet I longed to love, and out of a deep-seated want, I hated myself for wanting not. I sought what I might love, in love with loving, and safety I hated, and a way without snares. For within me was a famine of that inward food, Thyself, my God; yet through that famine I was not hungered; but was without all longing for incorruptible sustenance, not because filled therewith, but the more empty, the more I loathed it. For this cause my soul was sickly and full of sores, it miserably cast itself forth, desiring to be scraped by the touch of objects of sense.[75]

[75] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Three, p. 33 (italics mine).

Augustine puts this situation in another way. "I...was with joy fettered with sorrow-bringing bonds."[76] And in another, "...I wandered with a stiff neck, withdrawing further from Thee, loving mine own ways, and not Thine; loving a vagrant liberty."[77]

With exultation, and pride in accomplishment, Augustine moved gradually into greater and greater bondage. The important thing I wish to emphasize here is that Augustine reveals that the gist of his bondage lay in his utter attachments to carnal imagination, and sense objects. Offering no resistance to his desire and will, he became glued to whatever presented itself as pleasing, and was firmly glued to all the pleasant appearing things about him.

Being dependent upon perishable things for his very "life" he was forced to undergo alternate misery and pleasure, depending on how events came off. He began to know tears and sorrow, and to derive a kind of perverse enjoyment therein. The plays in the theaters spoke to his miserable condition, were "fuel to my fire." He acquired a mistress, and through her underwent the "iron burning rods of jealousy, and suspicion, and fears, and angers, and quarrels." He also came to be head in the rhetoric school.

"In ordinary course of study" Augustine came upon a book by Cicero, which contained an "exhortation to philosophy."

> Every vain hope at once became worthless to me; and I longed with an incredibly burning desire for an immortality of wisdom, and now began to arise, that I might return to Thee.[78]

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid., p. 35 (italics mine).

[78] Ibid., p. 36.

And Augustine resolved to investigate scripture, but he could not fathom it, for it was a thing "not understood by the proud." So he gave it up.

> Therefore I fell among men proudly doting, exceeding carnal and prating, in whose mouths were the snares of the Devil, limed with the mixture of the syllables of Thy name.[79]

These were the Manichees. The limit of their conception of being answered to "the five dens of darkness [the senses] which have no being, yet slay the believer."[80]

Augustine describes his situation with yet another figure; "...my soul dwelling abroad in the eye of my flesh, and ruminating on such food as through it I had devoured."[81]

> ...and departing from the truth, seemed to myself to be making towards it; because as yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, until at last a thing ceases altogether to be; which how should I see, the sight of whose eyes reached only to bodies, and of my mind to a phantasm? And I knew not God to be a spirit,[82] not one who hath parts extended in length and breadth, or whose being was bulk; for every bulk is less in a part than in the whole; and if it be infinite, it must be less in such a part as is defined by a certain space, than in its infinitude; and so is not wholly everywhere, as Spirit, as God.[83]

Augustine is saying that his existential situation of bondage to things of sense governed the whole of his understanding at this time, and for a long time following. At this time his mother attempted to correct her son's error, but it was all to no avail.

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[79] Ibid., p. 37.

[80] Ibid., p. 39.

[81] Ibid.

[82] John, 4:24.

[83] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Three, p. 40.

In his nineteenth year Augustine finished his work in Carthage, and returned to Tagaste. He was now a confirmed Manichee, and was beginning to settle into a somewhat set pattern of life. Habits were forming, and his proud attitude was gaining confirmation, for was he not becoming a success?

In the fourth book he considers together the years from nineteen to twenty-eight, the first few of which were spent in Tagaste. Here he started a school, and taught grammar and rhetoric, and also secretly taught the doctrine of Manes.

> For this space of nine years then (from my nineteenth year to my eight-and-twentieth) we lived seduced and seducing, deceived and deceiving, in divers lusts; openly, by sciences which they call liberal; secretly, with a false-named religion; here proud, there superstitious, everywhere vain![84]

Here Augustine took up the books of "nativity-casters" (perhaps astrology, although they were called then "mathematicians") "because they seemed to use no sacrifice, nor to pray to any spirit for their divinations."[85] The art here was an attempt to predict and explain human actions by the movements of the stars and planets. Augustine quotes a few of their sayings, which, he seems to believe, indicate the general motive behind their actions. "The cause of thy sin is inevitably determined in heaven;" and "This did Venus or Saturn, or Mars: that man, forsooth, flesh and blood, and proud corruption, might be blameless; while the Creator and Ordainer of heaven and the stars is to bear the blame."[86] This motive, of course, was the great

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[84] Ibid., Book Four, p. 47.

[85] Ibid., p. 49.

[86] Ibid.

attraction of Manichaeism, since it justified one's leading any life he chose while placing his misery and blame upon the detrimental influence of the "powers of darkness."

Within this period of time Augustine suffered the death of his best friend:

> At this grief my heart was utterly darkened; and whatever I beheld was death. My native country was a torment to me, and my father's house a strange unhappiness; ...I became a great riddle to myself, and I asked my soul; why she was so sad, and why she disquieted me sorely;[87] but she knew not what to answer me. And if I said Trust in God, she very rightly obeyed me not; because that most dear friend, whom she had lost, was, being man, both truer and better than the phantasm she was bid to trust in. Only tears were sweet to me, for they succeeded my friend, in the dearest of my affections.[88] ...and I had remained to myself a hapless spot, where I could neither be, nor be from thence. For whither should my heart flee from my heart? ...And yet I fled out of my country...And thus from Tagaste I came to Carthage.[89]

This is Augustine's first real disaster, and the start of a long chain of movements from place to place occasioned by his dissatisfaction and misery.

How does Augustine explain what has happened?

> Wretched I was; and wretched is every soul bound by the friendship of perishable things; he is torn asunder when he loses them, and then feels the wretchedness which he had ere yet he lost them.[90]

When Augustine was first in Carthage it was noted that he speaks of himself as quickly becoming riveted to desired objects of sense. That is to say, Augustine cast his heart upon them and all his hopes. In this way "world" becomes a construct of one's desires, and world in

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[87] Ps., 42:5.

[88] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Four, p. 52.

[89] Ibid., p. 54.

[90] Ibid., p. 52.

this sense is a tenuous relationship composed of perishable beings. If such perishable beings fall prey to that possibility which gives them their name (death), then "world," tenuous and fraught with dread as it already is, shatters entirely. A man disintegrates utterly, and is no longer a "one." This is what has happened to Augustine.

With the aid of this experience Augustine enters into a long discussion on the meaning and question of ground or support. Such ground or support is considered by Augustine in relation to a man in his living. Augustine is not searching for what might be called logical ground, or rational ground, rather he is inquiring into the ground of self, perhaps the power of self, and also into the ground of all beings.

Through this experience in particular, and through the whole course of his life as revealed in THE CONFESSIONS, Augustine shows that the discovery of the necessity of ground is revealed through lack of ground, namely abyss, or, perhaps, nothing.

With the death of his friend the true status and being of his friend is revealed, namely, as perishable. As Augustine shows, all the beings of the world stand revealed through the occurrence of this death. All beings are shown to be perishable, and death makes its appearance as qualifying one's relation with all beings. In appearing, death casts Augustine out of his mode of existence with reference to beings which was such that beings had the appearance of imperishability. What is important to grasp here is that Augustine does not carry out his analysis of the death of his friend on the supposition that he is defining the status of beings "in-themselves." Augustine is not saying that he was previously deceived when he thought beings were imperishable, and that now

he knows the truth, namely, beings are perishable. He is not condemning beings for their perishability, rather he is offering an analysis and condemnation of his mode of living at that time in which his friend was taken as if he were imperishable and presented the appearance of being imperishable. Augustine is not conducting an inquiry into the essence of beings as if they might be considered "in-themselves," in fact, he is condemning the mode of existence in which he took them to be in-themselves. "For whence had that former grief so easily reached my very inmost soul, but that I had poured out my soul upon the dust, in loving one that must die, as if he would never die?"[91] "...for I never left him, and we hung but too much upon each other..."[92]

In his analysis Augustine speaks clearly of two major modes of relationship to perishable beings, and always elucidates each relationship with reference to ground, substance, or support.

The test of ground or support to Augustine's way of thinking is whether or not whatever is offered as ground provides the possibility of "repose." But since the ground Augustine searches for is ground of self, then the trial of what has been taken to be ground not only tests or tries that ground, it puts Augustine himself on trial. Failure of ground means loss of self. With reference to Augustine's requirement of ground, namely, "repose," then failure of ground means lack of repose. Insofar as ground is taken to be perishable beings, Augustine has learned from the death of his friend that this applies:

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[91] Ibid., Book Four, p. 54.

[92] Ibid., p. 51.

> ...yet let not my soul be riveted upon these things with the glue of love, through the senses of the body. For they go whither they were to go, that they might not be, and they rend her with pestilent longings, because she longs to be, yet loves to repose in what she loves. But in these things there is no place of repose; they abide not, they flee...[93]

Ground, understood and taken as creatures in-themselves, is untenable. However, Augustine suggests a second meaning of ground, and relationship to perishable creatures, which provides true support.

> If souls please thee, be they loved in God: for they too (as well as bodies) are mutable, but in Him are they firmly stablished; else they would pass, and pass away...See there He is, where truth is loved. He is within the very heart, yet hath the heart strayed from him.[94]

"...yet hath the heart strayed from Him." With reference to the 'heart' Augustine elucidates that mode of bondage and violation in which he was involved insofar as he hung upon, or clung to, his friend. Also, with reference to the heart, namely, "Go back into your heart,"[95] Augustine indicates the way in which creatures are taken with reference to God and thereby "firmly stablished."

Augustine differentiates between situations of bondage and freedom with reference to one's relations with finite beings or perishable creatures by distinguishing the way in which one takes creatures as "in-themselves" (bondage, violation), or takes creatures "with reference to Him" (God). His relation with his friend, and his friend to him, Augustine describes as being bound with the "glue of love, through the

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[93] Ibid., p. 56.

[94] Ibid., p. 57.

[95] Ibid.

senses of the body," and also as "hanging upon," or perhaps "clinging to." Augustine indicates that his relationship to his friend was bondage, and he seems to say that such bondage has to do with a "straying of the heart from Him."

As Augustine shows, both his prior clinging to or hanging upon his friend, and his subsequent misery and sadness due to his friend's death, means that there is an underlying depth of need and urgency which stands behind one's having to do with beings. But such need which pertains to one's having to do with beings becomes "clinging" or "hanging on" to beings, insofar as one approaches beings in an attempt to derive his support from them. In this mode of approach one is in bondage. However, one may not fully realize the extent to which he is in bondage, or that to which he is in bondage, until or unless what one is bound to perishes or dies. But it is also true that one may not have been aware of the real meaning and presence of what one is bound to until it is taken away. That is, through the death of his friend Augustine discovered his bondage to him, but he also discovers himself able to give an account of what friendship is, and who he really was. Before his death, Augustine's friend appeared only in the light of their distorted relationship with each other.

Augustine went on to Carthage after the death of his friend, and gradually "recovered" from his misery. He gives some account of what sort of recovery this was:

> Times lose no time; nor do they roll idly by; through our senses they work strange operations on the mind. Behold, they went and came day by day, and by coming and going, introduced into my mind other imaginations and other remembrances; and little by little patched me up again with my old kind of delights, unto which that

> my sorrow gave way. And there succeeded, not indeed other griefs, yet the causes of other griefs.[96]

He uses the phrase "patched me up" to indicate the manner in which he became "one" once more. By this Augustine shows that the character of his oneness at the time was really 'compositeness.' The whole that he was and continued to be for a long time was really a tenuous unity made up of things brought together in a kind of "jury rig" manner, a sort of temporary repair. In other words, Augustine's fall continued, but he attempted to bring it to a stop by reaching out and clutching on to whatever seemed to offer support. But when a man grabs and clutches then the only things which appear for him are "things," which seem to stand "in-themselves," i. e., they do not really stand.

The previously unnoticed need for firm ground, and ground itself, was revealed by the destruction of false ground (the death of his friend) and the sudden appearance of abyss. But Augustine indicates that the manner of his coming into a situation of groundedness once more was like a sort of "running away," and then a "pulling together" which takes place inasmuch as "times lose no time." But there succeeded the "causes of other griefs" inasmuch as Augustine continued to derive support from beings as though they were in-themselves.

But I think that Augustine is omitting something here. The manner of his attachment or bondage to beings is now somewhat different than before. Augustine was attempting to derive support from his friend, but he also makes it clear that he loved his friend. In one sense love is

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[96] Ibid., Book Four, p. 54.

the strongest of all attachments, and it puts one out in a most vulnerable stance since a man truly surrenders something of himself, if not his whole self, in love. The bondage of love is different from say, bondage to cigarettes or attachment to women by reason of sexuality and lust, since one does not really care for what he is "using," and is still holding onto himself.

After a man has suffered loss with reference to what he has truly loved, then an involuntary and partially unnoticed withdrawal of self may begin to take place. One is now "on his guard." One may attempt to devise a scheme of life in which one may love and still not be vulnerable. But this could never be. I think that insofar as Augustine tries to maintain that death and loss are completely resolved through reference to God in a way that pushes aside the risk of love, then he is confusing freedom from bondage with withdrawal of self.

However, about this time, Augustine was moved by the fame of an orator in Rome named Hierius, and wrote some books on The Fair and the Fit, which he dedicated to this man. Augustine examines his actions, and elucidates his understanding and motives at that time. He wrote the book seeking fame, and dedicated it to a famous man whom he had never known except through hear-say and reputation. And in these books he took things he considered beautiful as if they were somehow "in-themselves." He also considered another "thing," namely, the rational soul (which he also thought might err by reason of some "unknown substance of irrational life"), as if it were also in-itself. "...who knew not that it must be enlightened by another light, that it may be the partaker of truth, seeing itself is not that nature of truth." The light of which Augustine

speaks as the true light is that Light which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world..."[97]

When he was "scarce twenty years old" Augustine encountered Aristotle whom he understood with no difficulty. He criticizes Aristotle with reference to his doctrine of substance and quality, and mentions that he tried to fathom God in terms of this doctrine.

> ...whereas Thou Thyself art Thy greatness and beauty; but a body is not great or fair in that it is a body, seeing that, though it were less great or fair, it should notwithstanding be a body.[98]

> But what did this further me, imagining that Thou, O Lord God, the Truth, were a vast and bright body, and I am fragment of that body? Perverseness too great![99]

Augustine had been having doubts about the validity of Manichaeism for some time, and he mentions that he raised many questions about the Manichaean Doctrine with those adherents immediately about him. But no one could provide answers to his complete satisfaction. However, there was a great Manichee named Faustus who was supposed to be able to answer all of Augustine's questions (according to his friends). Augustine had long waited "for the coming of this Faustus," and finally he came. Faustus was polite, well mannered, and of agreeable disposition, but he had no answers, excepting the same ones Augustine had already heard. Augustine discovered that Faustus was also ignorant of almost all the liberal arts.

> For after it was clear that he was ignorant of those arts in which I thought he excelled, I began to despair of his opening

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[97]John, 1:9.

[98]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Four, p. 62.

[99]Ibid., p. 63.

> and solving the difficulties which perplexed me (of which indeed however ignorant, he might have held the truths of piety, had he not been a Manichee). For their books are fraught with prolix fables...[100]

Thus Faustus set Augustine free from his utter bondage to Manichaeism, and in THE CONFESSIONS Augustine thanks him and the Lord for this.

> Thus that Faustus, to so many a snare of death, had now, neither willing nor witting it, begun to loosen that wherein I was taken. For Thy hands, O my God, in the secret purpose of Thy providence, did not forsake my soul...[101]

Faustus helped free Augustine from his utter bondage to Manichaeism, but he was still somewhat held by it. However, he is now free to move on. He hears from his friends that the students in Rome are much better behaved than the students of Carthage, so he decides to go across the sea to Rome. However, his mother did not want him to leave both her and Africa, or else she wanted to go with him. She went with him as far as the sea, whereupon Augustine tricked his mother and took ship, leaving her behind on the shore:

> The wind blew and swelled our sails, and withdrew the shore from our sight; and she on the morrow was there, frantic with sorrow, and with complaints and groans filled Thine ears, who didst then disregard them; whilst through my desires, Thou wert hurrying me to end all desire...[102]

On the other side Augustine fell sick, but recovered, and continued on to Rome. In Rome Augustine again associated with the Manichees, but not as ardently as before. He had serious doubts about

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[100] Ibid., Book Five, p. 72.

[101] Ibid., p. 73.

[102] Ibid., Book Five, p. 75 (italics mine).

the validity of Manichaeism, but as yet he was unable to become clear to himself about what was wrong even though it was clear to him that something was wrong. He was beginning to come to grips with evil, and a sort of innate piety would not allow him to believe that God either sponsored evil or was restricted by evil. "But I, conceiving of things corporeal only, was mainly held down, vehemently oppressed and in a manner suffocated by those 'masses'...[103] His "fancy" disposed bodies and masses in space, and he tried to imagine how the question of evil and good might be reconciled through "opposing masses," and so on. But he could not, and always had to admit that God was constricted by evil on one or another side. The inadequacy of his inquiry was not so much that he conceived good and evil as bodies or masses, but that insofar as he understood the question of good and evil as something that could be put before himself in thought and considered as if he himself were not intimately involved, then he excluded himself from the question. "For I still thought 'that it was not we that sin, but that I know not what other nature sinned in us'; and it delighted my pride to be free from blame..." [104]

In Rome Augustine began to teach again, but although the students were well behaved, they tricked Augustine and did not pay their fees. About this time, however, the people of Milan sent to Rome for a rhetoric teacher, and public speaker, to serve their city. Augustine applied, won it, and went to Milan.

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[103] Ibid., Book Five, p. 79.

[104] Ibid., Book Five, p. 76.

> To Milan I came, to Ambrose the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men...To him was I unknowingly led by Thee, that by him I might knowingly be led to Thee.[105]

Ambrose was an "excellent speaker" of wide fame, and so at first Augustine went to hear him for that reason alone. "And while I opened my heart to admit 'how eloquently he spake,' there also entered 'how truly he spake'; but this by degrees."[106] "But salvation is far from sinners[107]...yet was I drawing nearer by little and little, and unconsciously."[108]

As Augustine became more familiar with the Catholic faith through Ambrose, he saw that the Manichees had grossly misrepresented it in many ways. Manichaeism became still more suspect, and especially after"...I had heard one or two places of the Old Testament resolved, and ofttimes 'in a figure,'[109] which when I understood literally, I was slain spiritually."[110]

Also, the Manichees' doctrines about the "frame of this world" which the "senses of the flesh can reach to" did not even compare very favorably with some of the philosophers he read. "So then after the manner of the Academics (as they are supposed) doubting of everything, and wavering between all, I settled so far, that the Manichees were to

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[105] Ibid., Book Five, p. 80.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ps., 119:155.

[108] Pusey (trans.), loc. cit.

[109] 1 Cor., 13:12; 2 Cor., 3:6.

[110] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Five, p. 81.

be abandoned..." [111]

In the next three books of THE CONFESSIONS we witness the progress of a man gradually being called more and more into question, until, finally he stands revealed as that source of evil he is seeking out. In the beginning of Book Six Augustine provides a summary of his situation at the early part of his stay in Milan. We might ask, what is keeping Augustine in Milan? As I will point out, his position as public speaker of the city comes to be unbearable to him, and one might wonder why he is not seeking about for another position somewhere else, as he did previously.

Ambrose. Ambrose hardly speaks to Augustine since there is little time apart from the demands of his congregation, but the figure of Ambrose remained throughout the rest of Augustine's life as one who was strong, happy, and firm in the truth.

But Augustine was anything but sure:

> O Thou, my hope from my youth, where wert Thou to me, and whither wert Thou gone? Hadst not Thou created me, and separated me from the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air? Thou hadst made me wiser, yet did I walk in darkness, and in slippery places, and sought Thee abroad out of myself, and found not the God of my heart; and had come into the depths of the sea, and distrusted and despaired of ever finding truth. [112]

Here Augustine employs several images to render his situation, namely, 'darkness,' 'slippery,' 'heart,' and 'sea.' He puts it in another way: "...that I should pass from sickness unto health, after the access, as it were, of a sharper fit, which physicians call "the

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[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid., Book Six, p. 82.

crisis."[113]

The images of light and ground (darkness, and slippery places) are used frequently by Augustine to render the experiential sense of his situation. In his commentaries on Genesis in the last three books Augustine likens the absence of ground, namely, 'sea,' in his own life to the saying in the first chapter of Genesis, "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The absence of light, namely, darkness, Augustine also discovers in his own life at this time (and as having obtained all the time previously), and this also he relates to Genesis; "And God saw the light, that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness." The first chapter of Genesis which speaks of creation, is replete with references to light and darkness, ground and sea.

I do not believe that Augustine has simply borrowed these images from Genesis in order to explicate the sense of his situation, although he has discovered meaning in Genesis through the course of his own life. The images of light and ground are not brought from some other source and introduced into the explanation of situation, but are experiential renderings gained from the situation itself.

At this point Augustine seems to be at the pit of despair and uncertainty, though Ambrose's presence has begun to renew hope. His mother is also with him now, and it evidently came as a surprise to find her son approaching Christianity. This new development she attributed to Ambrose, and so did Augustine, who went to hear him as much as

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[113] Ibid., p. 83.

possible. And too, Augustine was beginning to fathom the way in which scripture could make sense.

Augustine is now thirty years old, and is coming to a major turning point in his life, a time of decision. He is threatened since his habits of long standing are now tending to incarcerate his present mode of life and lock him within his despair and hopelessness, even though it is he himself that perpetuates his habits. Habit lulls one into a dreadful sleep, whence one can be utterly overcome and taken prisoner. "My will the enemy held, and thence had made a chain for me, and bound me. For of a froward will, was a lust made; and a lust served, became custom; and custom not resisted, became necessity. By which links, as it were, joined together (whence I called it a chain) a hard bondage held me enthralled."[114]

But it was only in Augustine's thirty-first and second years that he really became aware of his habits, and began to reckon with them. Now, in his thirtieth year, he was as yet hidden to himself, and the situation was only just coming to a head. But Augustine could plainly see that influences were converging upon him from underneath and all sides, which were forcing him to consider what was happening and going to happen.

In general, however, only two major possibilities begin to present themselves to Augustine. One is the possibility of marriage with all its attendant involvements. But the other is the possibility of remaining free from even more bondage, and thus being in a position to investigate the mode of life that Ambrose is engaged in with the

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[114]Ibid., Book Eight, p. 130.

possibility of actually entering into it. Ambrose has pointed the way toward the vague possibility of freedom, but marriage would mean that Augustine would be saddled with even more cares and coerced along a definite path of life. But, we see that if Augustine takes up one of these possibilities, the other is thereby excluded.

"And Ambrose himself, as the world counts happy, I esteemed a happy man...only his celibacy seemed to me a painful course."[115]

> I thought I should be too miserable, unless folded in female arms...As for continency, I supposed it to be in our power (though in myself I did not find that power), being so foolish as not to know what is written, None can be continent unless Thou give it;[116] and that Thou wouldst give it, if with inward groanings I did knock at Thine ears, and with a settled faith did cast my care on Thee.[117]

But the possibility of marriage was beginning to become a reality:

> Continual effort was made to have me married. I wooed, I was promised, chiefly through my mother's pains...[118]

Here, and in other places, Augustine seems to indicate that he could never really get his heart behind the effort to marry. And also, his profession as rhetorician, and his present position as public speaker of the city were causing him misery. The difference between the triviality of his profession and the seriousness of Ambrose and Christianity was becoming quite apparent. Further, Augustine was often called upon to recite publicly vain praises of important persons,

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115 Ibid., Book Six, p. 84 (italics mine).

116 Wisd., 8:2-Vulg.

117 Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Six, p. 97.

118 Ibid., p. 99.

"...wherein I was to utter many a lie, and lying, was to be applauded by those who knew I lied, and my heart was panting with these anxieties..." But this was the profession by which Augustine would presumably carry forth married life...

> Yet the matter was pressed on, and a maiden asked in marriage, two years under the fit age; and, as pleasing, was waited for.[119]

For ten years now Augustine has had a mistress and a male child, but his mother, though she wanted her son to marry, evidently did not want him to marry his mistress. So his mistress was sent away, though the child was kept.

> Meanwhile my sins were being multiplied, and my concubine being torn from my side as a hindrance to my marriage, my heart which clave unto her was torn and bleeding...inasmuch as not till after two years was I to obtain her I sought, not being so much a lover of marriage as a slave to lust, procured another, though no wife...[120]

Augustine had also two or three good friends who had followed him along his meandering and chaotic path. Collectively they were becoming aware of the turmoil of their situation, and they began to consider together what might be done. It seems that the main idea was to find a way to escape the crushing burden of earthly cares. Here Augustine and his friends attempted to 'solve' their situation as if it were a problem to which an answer might be found. They considered several possibilities, but it was to no avail. Augustine's friends discouraged him from marriage since it would mean the end of their life together, and, in effect, the decision determining the future course.

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119 Ibid.

120 Ibid., Book Six, p. 100.

But one ever-present and growing possibility was the need Augustine was beginning to feel for careful study and thought, especially of Scripture. Augustine had begun to see possible truth in Scripture, and was in desperate need of finding truth. That is to say, he was becoming familiar with misery, and was beginning to sense guilt, but as yet he did not know what to do. Augustine and his friends conceived the idea of living in community and pooling their resources so that they might extricate themselves from pressing obligation and care, and engage in prolonged, unhindered study. But this plan fell through since those of the group that had wives would be unable to participate. Other plans were suggested, but all collapsed for one reason or another. The possibility of obtaining a rich wife, and high position, was considered, but something was also wrong with this. Augustine sees all these "plans" for what they were, namely, evasions, and comments upon all their frenzied endeavors:

> O crooked paths! Woe to the audacious soul, which hoped, by forsaking Thee, to gain some better thing! Turned it hath, and turned again, upon back, sides, and belly, yet all was painful; and Thou alone rest.[121]

In his thirty-first year Augustine was still greatly hindered by a materialistic mode of thought; "For over such forms as my eyes are wont to range, did my heart then range."[122] Nevertheless, Augustine had one guiding hope which he could put in language and work with in his thought. One must not neglect to consider that the main source and

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[121] Ibid., p. 101.

[122] Ibid., p. 103.

foundation of this hope was the example of Ambrose, who served to verify it by his very presence. Augustine was beginning to see that there was such a thing as a way by which a man might dwell in the truth and leave his situation of bondage behind him. Augustine seems to express his main hope at this time thus:

> And I, a man, and such a man, sought to conceive of Thee the sovereign, only, true God; and I did in my inmost soul believe that Thou wert incorruptible, and uninjurable, and unchangeable; because though not knowing whence or how, yet I saw plainly, and was sure, that that which may be corrupted must be inferior to that which cannot; what could not be injured I preferred unhesitatingly to what could receive injury; and the unchangeable to things subject to change.[123]

This hope and belief made it incumbent upon Augustine to understand what evil was in such a way that God was not in any way restricted, bounded, or injured by evil. Thus an urgent question came to explicit formation in Augustine's thought, namely, whence evil? Insofar as Augustine held by his main hope and belief concerning the nature of God, then his old Manichean belief was crushed: "For I saw, that through enquiring the origin of evil, they were filled with evil, in that they preferred to think that Thy substance did suffer ill than their own did commit it."[124]

> And I strained to perceive what I now heard, that free-will was the cause of our doing ill, and Thy just judgment of our suffering ill. But I was not able clearly to discern it. So then endeavoring to draw my soul's vision out of that deep pit, I was again plunged therein and endeavoring often I was plunged back as often. But this raised me a little into Thy light, that I knew as well that I had a will, as that I lived: when then I did will or nill any thing, I was most sure that no other than myself did will or nill:

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[123] Ibid., Book Seven, p. 102.

[124] Ibid., p. 105.

and I all but saw that there was the cause of my sin.[125]

The thought represented in these last three quotations constitutes a truly significant achievement on Augustine's part, and is, in fact, the surmounting of the first great barrier that stands in his path. It is not that Augustine is expressing things that no one ever thought of before, rather, it has more to do with the fact that such thinking involves and presupposes doing.

It requires some strength and courage on Augustine's part even to formulate the main question at hand, namely, whence is evil? Such a question can only be asked insofar as one is already in question himself. The question presupposes that the situation of bondage is being come to terms with, but the depth of the question lies in the way Augustine finds that he can no longer attribute the source of evil to something other than himself. In this sense Augustine is not asking a question so much as he himself is now coming into question. Augustine's being brought into question is the basis upon which the question, "Whence is evil?" is truly asked. This is why Augustine's belief that God is "incorruptible, unchangeable, and uninjurable," is so very important. If God were supposed to be, say, "corruptible," then this would mean that evil had its rightful place in the world, and therefore man could not hope to resist it, and thus evil in man would be excused. But since Augustine acknowledges God to be incorruptible, then this means that Augustine is beginning to accept responsibility for evil himself.

With this understanding of evil Augustine is now in a position

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[125] Ibid.

to reject astrology as well as Manichaeism (both of which have in common the desire to take the onus of responsibility away from men and place it onto some other determining principle).

But now Augustine is engaged in a most severe struggle:

> ...I sought anxiously 'whence was evil?" ...and when in silence I vehemently sought, those silent contritions of my soul were strong cries unto Thy mercy. Thou knewest what I suffered, and no man...but I was intent on things contained in place, but there I found no resting-place, nor did they so receive me, that I could say, "It is enough,' 'it is well:' nor did they suffer me to turn back, where it might be well enough with me. For to these things was I superior, but inferior to Thee; and Thou art my true joy when subjected to Thee, and Thou hadst subjected to me what Thou createdst below me...But when I rose proudly against Thee ...even these inferior things were set above me...They met my sight on all sides by heaps and troops, and in thought the images thereof presented themselves unsought, as I would return to Thee, as if they would say unto me, 'Whither goest thou, unworthy and defiled?[126]

This is perhaps as much as to point out that Augustine begins to encounter real resistance. Before he attempted to alter the way of his life he was not aware that habit and bondage to things of sense were even there at all. But now "evil," that is to say, the attachments of his present and past life, begins to assert its connecting claim upon Augustine. This claim is asserted whenever Augustine really attempts to shake his will free of these attachments. But the attachments are only binding insofar as Augustine's own will and desire render him bound. That is, his attachment does not reside in the things themselves. The things themselves cannot be blamed for Augustine's attachment to them, and it would not help at all to get rid of those things. In breaking his bondage Augustine is struggling with himself, his own mode of

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[126] Ibid., p. 111.

relating to things. Augustine knows this, and the basis upon which he is able to know it is the dawning awareness of himself as the source of evil.

However, one notices that Augustine seems to understand the way out of bondage to mean utter disengagement from things, and he seems to see bondage as engagement with things. Thus, in a very subtle way, while not actually condemning things at all, Augustine nevertheless seems to be calling things into question as much as he calls his mode of relation to things into question.

In his thirty-first year, however, some books of the Platonists came into Augustine's possession. Platonism gave Augustine an opening whereby to forge some little way out of his situation of bondage to external things, and material conceptions of divinity.

> And being thence admonished to return to myself, I entered even into my inward self, Thou being my Guide: and able I was, for Thou wert become my Helper. And I entered and beheld with the eye of my soul (such as it was), above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the Light Unchangeable.[127]

In the Seventh Book (concerning Augustine's thirty-first year; a year before his conversion), Augustine speaks of himself as having attempted, and partially succeeded in (only partially, since his earthly attachments pressed him down), some kind of, say, "mystical," union with God. Augustine often describes a sort of upward passage of his attention, will, care, and sight, from "bodies to the soul."[128] This "upward" (is this meant to be literally construed?) passage continues up even within the soul itself. Within the soul Augustine speaks of this movement

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[127] Ibid., p. 114.

[128] Ibid., p. 118.

continuing through the" inward faculty, to which the bodily senses represent things external...and thence again to the reasoning faculty, to which what is received from the senses of the body is referred to be judged."[129] However, Augustine says that even the reasoning faculty is a "thing variable" (perhaps "variable" means "liable to corruption," or "wayward?"). But, withdrawing itself from the "power of habit" and "those troops of contradictory phantasms" (this "withdrawing" seems to imply an act of will and a sense of quest asserted against restricting forces), "it" cried out (the reasoning faculty cried out) "That the unchangeable was to be preferred to the changeable..."[130] Therefore, Augustine continues, "it" knew "That Unchangeable, which, unless it had in some way known, it had no sure ground to prefer it to the changeable."[131]

However, Augustine continues thus:

> And thus with the flash of one trembling glance it arrived at THAT WHICH IS. And then I saw Thy <u>invisible things understood by the things which are made</u>.[132] But I could not fix my gaze thereon; and my infirmity being struck back, I was thrown again on my wonted habits...[133]

Before we examine the thought in these quotations we must go a little bit further in Book Seven and notice that Augustine puts his orientation at this time (his thirty-first year), and Platonic truth, <u>in question</u>, and condemns them. Actually, he seems to say that they

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[129] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 118.

[130] <u>Ibid.</u>

[131] <u>Ibid.</u>

[132] Rom., 1:20.

[133] Pusey (trans.), <u>op. cit.</u>, Book Seven, p. 118.

condemn themselves, since they proved weak, and, in the long run, unfruitful. Under the guidance and influence of Platonism, Augustine was allowed access to divinity in such a way as to "behold only," and was not able to "dwell in the beatific country."[134]

> I prated as one well skilled; but had I not sought Thy way in Christ our Savior, I had proved to be, not skilled, but killed. For now I had begun to wish to seem wise, being filled with mine own punishment, yet did I not mourn, but rather scorn, puffed up with knowledge. For where was that charity building upon the foundation of humility, which is Christ Jesus? or when should these books teach me it?[135]

Augustine seems to say that the difference between Christianity and Platonism is the difference between humility and pride, or confession and presumption.[136] He seems to imply that he discovered this important difference inasmuch as he was still rendered impotent by his habits and desires and thereby bound to the depths of creation (might 'the depths of creation' mean "the earth" for Augustine?), even after he made use of Platonism.

> For, though a man be delighted with the law of God after the inner man,[137] what shall he do with that[138] other law in his members which warreth against the law of his mind, and bringeth him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members?[139]

However, Augustine indicates that his Platonism was implicated in

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[134] Ibid., p. 121.

[135] Ibid., p. 120.

[136] Ibid., p. 121.

[137] Rom., 7:22.

[138] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Seven, p. 121.

[139] Rom., 7:23.

far more than impotence, or the inability to reconcile the warring members of the flesh. Augustine plainly states that Platonism pertained to his fall.

What fall? Can it be the fall he speaks of as having taken place in his sixteenth year in Carthage; the same fall which I considered with reference to the myth of Adam and Eve, and to Kierkegaard's concept of dread? But Augustine knew no Platonism then. Then how many falls does a man have? Can it be, as Augustine seems to suggest, that the fall having to do with his Plantonism occurred in this, his thirty-first year, one year before his conversion? However...

> Upon these, I believe, Thou therefore willedst that I should fall, before I studied Thy Scriptures, that it might be imprinted on my memory how I was affected by them; and that afterwards when my spirits were tamed through Thy books, and my wounds touched by Thy healing fingers, I might discern and distinguish between presumption and confession...[140]

> But what mystery there lay in 'The Word was made flesh,' I could not even imagine.[141]

> But somewhat later, I confess, did I learn how in that saying, The Word was made flesh, the Catholic Truth is distinguished from the falsehood of Plotinus.[142]

In these three passages Augustine indicates that his personal discovery of his own Platonistic error involved "wounds," and the "taming" of his spirits. He also says that this discovery took place "somewhat later." When? Why is not Augustine more definite about this discovery? Could it be that Augustine really underwent this crisis

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[140] Pusey (trans.), Book Seven, p. 121.

[141] Ibid., p. 119.

[142] Ibid., p. 120.

about the time he set down his CONFESSIONS?

Father Hugh Pope, in his book, SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, speaks a little about Augustine's life as a priest and Bishop, and also quotes some things Augustine said of himself.

Augustine said:

> So much did I dread being made a Bishop that when I found that God's servants were talking seriously about the reputation I had made I was careful not to go to places where I knew there was no Bishop...But I came to this city (Hippo)...[143]

Pope himself says:

> For in very truth, from the day of his consecration, if not of his ordination, Augustine's whole outlook on life underwent a radical change.[144]

Pope seems to indicate that this change was very much for the better, and that Augustine henceforth "...simply lived for the spiritual needs of his flock..."[145]

Father Pope quotes many other things Augustine said at this time in his life wherein Augustine plainly indicates that he himself was in question and under severe trial.

C. C. Martindale[146] discusses the theory, which he seems to reject, that Augustine's "real conversion" took place later than the time stated in THE CONFESSIONS. This theory maintains that Augustine "telescoped"

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[143]Augustine: Sermo, cccl, v. 2, quoted by Father Hugh Pope in Saint Augustine of Hippo (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1949), p. 105.

[144]Ibid.

[145]Ibid.

[146]C. C. Martindale, S. J., "A Sketch of the Life and Character of St. Augustine," St. Augustine (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1958), p. 82.

his memories and antedated his real conversion. One basis for this theory is the seeming difference between Augustine as seen in his writing at the time just after his conversion, and Augustine as seen in the account of the "conversion period" in THE CONFESSIONS.

What might Augustine have been involved in? How might we understand a possible "inconsistency" in Augustine's account of himself in such a way as not to render Augustine's thought hopelessly suspect, or call Augustine into question in a presumptuous (or possibly innocent?) manner? How might we understand certain profound dualisms, ambiguities, and obscurities within the heart of Augustine's thought in his CONFESSIONS?

On page 94 of this thesis, I offered a brief recapitulation of one of the many times Augustine describes himself as participant in a, say, Neo-Platonic, "upward: movement from "without" to "within," from "bodies to the soul," or, perhaps, from earth to heaven. Augustine seems clearly to indicate that these movements had much to do with his being able to see "...Thy[147] <u>invisible things understood by the things which are made</u>."[148] However, we saw that Augustine calls Platonic thought into question, and states that his own adherence to Platonic thought led to a fall. Augustine indicates that the saying "The Word was made flesh" points up the great difference between Christianity and Platonism (particularly the Platonism of Plotinus).

> For <u>the Word was made flesh</u>,[149] that Thy wisdom, whereby Thou createdst all things, might provide milk for our infant state.

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[147]Pusey (trans.), <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 118.
[148]Rom., 1:20.
[149]John, 1:14.

> For I did not hold to my Lord Jesus Christ, I, humbled, to the humble; nor knew I whereto His infirmity would guide us. For Thy Word, the Eternal Truth, far above the higher parts of Thy creation, raises up the subdued unto Itself; but in this lower world built for Itself a lowly habitation of our clay, whereby to abase from themselves such as would be subdued, and bring them over to Himself; allaying their swelling, and fomenting their love; to the end they might go on no further in self-confidence, but rather consent to become weak, seeing before their feet the Divinity weak by taking our coats of skin;[150] and wearied, might rest themselves down upon It, and It rising, might lift them up.[151]

There is a meaning of 'humility' implied in Augustine's statement (quoted above) that may involve a slight distortion of what 'humility' could mean. Does not humility, as Augustine seems to indicate it here, tend to mean "weakness"? Humility, I believe, is very like renunciation, or, perhaps, sacrifice. Is renunciation or sacrifice to be construed as "weakness"? Might not a Platonist have some grounds for saying that Augustine is simply advising one to "give up," or "cringe"? Could it be that Pelagius had a real bone to pick with the church of his time, and real grounds for his claims? If Augustine has gotten off the track with reference to the most apt meaning of 'humility,' why has he done so, and what may be involved?

Augustine may be involved in another obscurity in his treatment of the notion of creatureliness. Consider the saying so often quoted, namely:

> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made...[152]

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[150] Gen., 3:21.

[151] Pusey (trans.), op. cit., p. 119.

[152] Rom., 1:20.

Then consider this saying in relation to the above:

> No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.[153]

I might put my point by noting that these two passages clearly state that God is not accessible "in-himself," and that he is to be understood via the "things that are made." Can one be sure what is meant by "the things that are made"? That is, what "things" are meant here? I, myself, am not sure that I know exactly what "things" are being referred to, but I think I have an idea how the saying[154] as a whole might be taken. Also, I am fairly sure that the "things that are made" include the creatures of the earth, and certainly refer to the world.

However, in those "upward" Neo-Platonic-like movements of which Augustine speaks, the reader gets the feeling that the movement is away from creatures, or the earth, upwards to God "in-himself." But not only does one sense a distinct movement away from the earth, one also sees that Augustine speaks of going from "without" to "within." There seems to be somewhat of a division into "internal" and "external," as well as a division into "lower" and "higher." Is it simply the case that Augustine means these divisions "in a figure," and not literally? I do not think so. In fact, Augustine seems completely to miss one meaning that 'literal' might have. He certainly brings out that 'literal' does not mean 'figurative,' nor 'allegorical,' and that therefore 'literal' is suspect from a spiritual or "in a figure" standpoint. However, what

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[153]John, 1:18.

[154]Rom., 1:20.

about the meaning 'literal' assumes in the phrase, "the literal truth"? Does not "the literal truth" sometimes mean "the unvarnished truth," or "the rock-bottom truth"?

The respects in which I have called Augustine's thought into question, namely, the division between "external" and "internal," the separation between "lower" and "higher" aspects of creation, and the pronounced tendency to indicate "humility" as "weakness," all relate to the way in which Augustine tends to construe God as a place of "unanxious repose." In turn, the notion of God as a place of repose ties in with Augustine's important idea of "returning to the heart," or, simply, "returning."

In fact, Augustine's thought in THE CONFESSIONS appears as "all of a piece" if one sees the significance of his guiding notion that God is a place of "repose." Augustine seems to see "repose" as one of the major aspects in which the whole of his thought in THE CONFESSIONS is rendered meanigful insofar as THE CONFESSIONS is a quest.

> In Thy Gift we rest; there we enjoy Thee. Our rest is our place. Love lifts us up thither, and Thy good Spirit lifts up our lowliness from the gates of death. In Thy good pleasure is our peace. The body by its own weight strives towards its own place. Weight makes not downward only, but to his own place. Fire tends upward, a stone downward. They are urged by their own weight, they seek their own places. Oil poured below water, is raised above the water; water poured upon oil, sinks below the oil. They are urged by their own weights to seek their own places. When out of order, they are restless; restored to order, they are at rest.[155]

Also:

> To whom shall I speak this? how speak of the weight of evil desires, downwards to the steep abyss; and how charity raises up

[155]Pusey (trans.), Book Thirteen, para. 9.

> again by Thy Spirit which was borne above the waters? to whom shall I speak it? how speak it? For it is not in space that we are merged and merge. What can be more, and yet what less like? They be affections, they be loves; the uncleanness of our spirit flowing away downwards with the love of cares, and the holiness of Thine raising us upward by love of unanxious repose; that we may lift our hearts unto Thee, where Thy Spirit is borne above the waters; and come to that supereminent repose, when our soul shall have passed through the waters which yield no support.[156]

In these two long passages Augustine seems to implicate himself in something very like the Manichaeism he condemns. "Repose," or "unanxious repose," seems to be a sort of compromise between two conflicting and warring forces, namely, the spirit and "the body."

Be that as it may, there is one sentence in the second quotation which has helped clear up many of the questions and ambiguities I have struggled with in Augustine's thought.

> ...how speak of the weight of evil desires, downward to the steep abyss; and how charity raises up again...[157]

In Augustine's descriptions of "repose" throughout THE CONFESSIONS, one gets the sense that the repose of which he speaks hovers and trembles over a "steep abyss." It almost seems as if Augustine is attempting to dwell in a kind of tenuous ethereality, which threatens to break through into a bottomless nothing, a "steep abyss." It always seems as if Augustine is straining to hold together this tenuousness, on which he "stands," so as not to veer off into the abyss occasionally revealed beneath. I believe, therefore, that Augustine's general orientation is what is known as "clinging."

However, Augustine's situation seems to be strangely ambiguous.

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[156] Ibid., para. 7.

[157] Ibid. (italics mine).

Even though he dreads the abyss, and therefore retreats from it, still he dreads not remaining in proximity to it. This is so because he earnestly desires freedom. This situation is somewhat like Kierkegaard's description of the ambiguity of dread before The Fall takes place. However, there is a great difference inasmuch as Augustine knows about the abyss now.

The abyss is one aspect of the nothingness which Augustine struggles with, and the fact that he dreads not remaining in proximity to the abyss points to another aspect of nothingness in his situation. This other aspect is the always threatening possibility of limbo, oblivion, or the drifting, dreadful, sleep of forgetfulness and habit in which one slides back into the familiar "world," away from the abyss of freedom, and is lost.

One might say that Augustine, in "general" (particularly at the time he wrote THE CONFESSIONS), resists the possibility of venturing outside himself, and yet resists the possibility of sliding so far within himself, or his "world," that the possibility of going outside himself is denied to him (by the dreaming-sleep of habit and forgetfulness and destructive impotence). Therefore, Augustine experiences his situation as an anxious balance, or what he often calls "repose," or "rest."

I would suggest that it is not necessarily true (as I previously thought) that a man falls altogether at the time of The Fall. In fact, if anything, it seems that a man scarcely falls enough. He may quickly, when faced with the dread of the abyss he suddenly discovers, recover himself from his fall, and continue on in the "clinging" orientation. He may even simply return to the familiar and remain there, utterly

within himself.

Kierkegaard's analysis of dread points directly at the notion of 'world.' Since awakening freedom and possibility alert a man to the dreaded "something that is nothing," and may lead to a man's becoming "lost," then it is implied that a man was "within" a "whole," or, perhaps, "home," which afforded security and some measure of support, before possibility appeared and threatened to cast him out of "home." In the last chapter of his book on dread, however, Kierkegaard indicates quite clearly that dread pertains to the loss of the "finite." Therefore, one can see that the "home" within which a man "is" at the beginning of his journey is certainly not 'world' in the truest sense. It is a finite world meant to be stepped outside of, even though such "stepping" is dreaded since there is no next "step" in sight. Furthermore, it is not always easy for a man even to find the place from which such "stepping out" might be done, though sometimes it is too easy to find such a place, i. e., one takes a step to what appears to be firm support, but discovers the vast abyss instead.

Therefore, with the aid of Kierkegaard's elucidation of dread, we see that a man seems to begin his path in a situation of being within himself, or "home." What if a man (even though freedom awakens in him possibility and dread), does not leave his "home"? Does he not then remain within himself, or within the familiar and secure? But then what happens to his life urges and forces? Are they not killed off within him, or else do they not become distorted and destructive? Is not this situation of remaining "at home," or "within oneself," precisely what is implied in Oedipus' curse? As Oedipus understands it, his curse reads:

> . . . even that I was fated to defile my mother's bed; and that I should show unto men a brood which they could not endure to behold; and that I should be the slayer of the sire who begot me.[158]

Consider Oedipus' curse (would 'dreaded prophecy' be more apt than 'curse'?) in relation to Creon's report from the god, which directs Oedipus' quest at the start of the play:

> With thy leave, I will tell thee what I heard from the god. Phoebus our Lord bids us plainly to drive out a defiling thing, which (he saith) hath been harboured in this land, and not to harbour it, so that it cannot be healed.[159]

We know that the "defiling thing" is Oedipus, although Oedipus does not "know" it yet (he may faintly suspect himself, however). Creon's statement indicates that the "healing" of the "defiling thing" has to do with separating it from its harbour. This seems to say that Oedipus is "within" something, and clinging to it, and is defiling what he clings to also. This is "marrying" one's "mother," i. e., flight from the unknown, dreadful and demanding, back into the familiar, and then clinging to the familiar, i. e., remaining within "oneself." Also, it seems clear that Oedipus could not be "king", in the "land" he clings to, unless he had killed the former king, for would not the former king have prevented him from entering his realm? This destruction, and marriage within the familiar, the "home of one's birth," can certainly be taken literally, i. e., many men "marry" their mother, and "kill" their father. If a man does not become separated from his "home," then he is potentially unable really to

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[158] R. C. Jebb (trans.), Sophocles: "Oedipus Rex," Seven Famous Greek Plays (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 152.

[159] Ibid., p. 124.

meet up with the things that come his way in later life; for instance, one may find it difficult to love any woman other than his mother and thus eligible women can become either mother, or the "very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my ancient mistresses."[160]

Therefore, let us return to the situation Augustine may have found himself in at the time of his conversion. I am well persuaded that he was involved in a "clinging" orientation then, although he was trying to break out of his shell at the same time. The encounter with Ambrose revealed to Augustine how far he was within himself, and how great the danger of sliding still further within. At the same time, however, his bondage to his "world" held him back. Augustine's world at this time included a number of aspects, as he himself reveals, but, speaking generally, it was a "locus" of being poised tenuously above a black pit. Augustine began to encounter real crisis and the need for decision when he began to discover that he was being claimed by certain aspects of his world. Ambrose represented a great claim upon Augustine to truly respond straight-forwardly. His sexual bondage to woman began to claim him for responsible life in the world, but such claim was abhorrent to Augustine. But it may be that Augustine was justified in resisting permanent involvement with the secular Roman world of his time, if that world was as he describes it.

After his conversion, however, Augustine avoided a life within the church, as well as within the "world." He retired to a quiet retreat with his friends, son, and mother.

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[160] Ibid., Book Eight, p. 140.

One gets the sense that Augustine feels he was snatched or plucked out of a dangerous situation by his conversion. It seems as if he was taken from a situation in which he was firmly attached, bound down, and lifted up to a situation of extreme detachment and bliss. In this sense his salvation seems utterly unreal, dream-like, and illusory, and his conversion seems like an escape from an admittedly trying situation. The sense of exultation and care-free repose that Augustine seems to see in his situation at that time, appears to me as a kind of "temporary" thing, to say the least. Does not the sudden shock of reappearing responsibility jolt us out of these periods of ethereality time and time again?

I see real ground gained in his conversion insofar as Augustine attempted to come to terms with his habits and unify his divided will. With the more stable foundation upon which he stood after the conversion, Augustine was able to accomplish some creative thought and writing. He also discovered that when he came to terms with himself, and collected himself, and attempted to find direction and meaning in his situation, then he stood as recipient of previously unsuspected support. His conversion, the whole experience of being called into question, cast him out of his ordinary and habitual ways of taking things. He was shown that a depth of experience lay underneath and hidden, all the while he has thoughtlessly and willfully attempted to dictate the meaning of his situation.

CONCLUSION

In the portion of this thesis devoted to the passage from literal to spiritual understanding, considerable mention is made of the orientation in which a man tends to assume control. There I imply that only the overcoming of the control orientation allows creation to take place through man without restraint, distortion and artifice, i. e., 'naturally.' The sense of creation I have tried to work out involves the understanding of man as the recipient of, or participant in, the taking place of creation. It may be that man is the place of revelation and creation, but man is only "creative" when he is unaware of himself as such, and simply fulfills his place in the midst of the on-going creation. The control orientation, however, seems to me to be quite antithetical to the trust and participation implied in this sense of creation.

When I emphasized the control orientation as somehow a major form of bondage, I did not realize the implications of what I was saying. For my part, I find that the gradual discovery of these implications constitutes the major portion of what I have learned from this thesis to date. The basis upon which I emphasized control as of the essence of bondage and evil was, and still is, the belief that control implied an inability and refusal to meet reality as given.

However, between the control orientation, and true ground, there seems to lie many abysses, trials, barriers, and blocks, and,

in fact, it would almost seem as if a man is simply shut out from the truth unless he came upon it by accident. But I have known for some time now that there is a way along which a man does come into the truth, and that a man moves on this way for a while before he is aware of his being on a way. When a man's memory begins to reveal to him the path of his travel he sees that he is being guided on his way, and that his path is not "accidental" at all.

Ever since I became aware of the way I have endeavored to render an account of it. But I see now that my endeavor has been somewhat perverse, and even evasive, inasmuch as the notion of way can never be directly elicited or made manifest "in-itself," and is only uncovered as a man meets up squarely with things as they "come off." In my investigation, however, I have discovered a certain natural sequence of "stages" out of which the way seems to be "composed," and I will summarize what I have uncovered even though I feel that I have gone about my investigations in a somewhat unnatural manner. What has chiefly enabled me to offer such a summary is my recent discovery that the control orientation derives from "clinging," and that the essence of all the forms of bondage seems to lie in "clinging." Therefore, the way has taken on new significance for me as the way along which a man is drawn outside himself, his "home," or familiar "world."

In "clinging" a man experiences his situation as if he were a "king" over a "kingdom." A man must assume this kingship in his "clinging" orientation since by remaining within himself he has cut

himself off from the influences that might guide and sustain him. Therefore, he must attempt to sustain himself, and govern his "kingdom" by his own laws.

But a man does not acquire a "kingdom" unless he has "won" it. That is, it was not always the case that he had this kingdom. Rather, somewhere along his way, he answers to a challenge that addresses him, undergoes trial, and then emerges victorious as a "king" who rules and possesses an "earned" kingdom. Actually, however, the man knows (at first) that this realm he has come into was given him when his situation was transformed from barren chaos, as he successfully answered to the claim upon him, which invloved sacrifice on his part. But as time passes a man forgets the derived being of the realm in which he has his being, and eventually he becomes "king."

In Sophocles' OEDIPUS REX, and in Augustine's CONFESSIONS, this "kingship" is won, and then we see a slide into oblivion and forgetfulness occur. When Oedipus overcomes the Sphinx, and when Augustine is converted, the situation is radically transformed, and each man is given a stable realm in which to dwell. We know, however, that in OEDIPUS REX the "plague" (i. e., one's situation, the realm of everything with which one has to do, becomes darkened and barren) nevertheless returns to Oedipus' "kingdom." The play begins with Oedipus in the midst of coping with the return of this terrible plague. We know also that the plague will remain until Oedipus (the evil-doer) is cast out and is no longer a king.

If we understand this plague as the pall of evil deriving from Oedipus himself, then we can see much significance in Oedipus' answer

to the Sphinx's riddle. We can also see how this situation enlightens our consideration of Augustine's conversion. Oedipus removes the plague from the realm by answering the dreaded Sphinx with the generic term "man." The next time the plague strikes we know that "man" is not a good enough answer, and we see that Oedipus must answer with "myself."

In all, we see that Oedipus moves gradually toward the final discovery that he himself is the evil defiling the land. But, Oedipus moves gradually toward this discovery. At first it suffices to answer to the situation with the more general term "man." In other words, Oedipus passes the first trial without actually giving himself up. It is true that he takes upon himself a considerable risk in facing the Sphinx, but this is not the same as renunciation. We also note that the question of evil is put forth as a "riddle," a kind of "problem" to be solved as if one were not really involved himself.

In THE CONFESSIONS Augustine seems to approach his situation of barrenness and chaos previous to his conversion in a manner similar to the way Oedipus approaches his first plague.

> And I strained to perceive what I now heard, that free-will was the cause of our doing ill...[161]

Here Augustine seems to be trying to "puzzle it out." He seems to be construing evil as a problem that admits of solution. He has located man as the source of evil, and is figuring in terms of certain general properties of man such as "free-will." Further-

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[161] Ibid., Pusey (trans.), Book Seven, p. 105.

more, if one thinks of evil as having a "cause" or a "source," then there is still an attempt to "explain" it, to render it comprehensible and therefore on the level of questions to be answered without changing one's life. I am not "condemning" Augustine any more than I am Oedipus, but I am suggesting that it may truly take a while before the question of evil really penetrates to the heart of a man.

Oedipus, upon his successful encounter with the sphinx, receives his "kingship." This "kingship" is later challenged by the return of the plague, as the play opens, and is gradually revealed to be unjustified and presumptive. To further substantiate the suggestion that there is real similarity between Augustine's conversion and Oedipus' encounter with the sphinx we should recall what Augustine says of his relation to Platonism about the time of his conversion. Augustine relates how Platonism guided him toward incorporeal truth and helped him to understand The Word. Nevertheless he condemns Platonism for permitting, if not actually sanctioning, a prideful, vain, and presumptive orientation on his part. Could this be Augustine's way of saying that he made himself "king"?

> For now I had begun to wish to seem wise, being filled with mine own punishment, yet I did not mourn, but rather scorn, puffed up with knowledge. For where was that charity building upon the foundation of humility, which is Christ Jesus? or when should these books teach me it? Upon these, I believe, Thou therefore willedst that I should fall...[162]

If we do not assume that this "kingly" orientation was broken down before his conversion, but was rather, if anything, heightened, then we must reckon with the possibility that Augustine carried his "kingly"

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[162] Ibid., pp. 120-121.

attitude through his conversion. It may be that Augustine began to feel he had "earned" his newly enlightened situation. This happens, as I said, inasmuch as a man forgets the derived nature of his situation after he has been out of question for awhile (i. e., forgets that he is still in question).

Why does Sophocles begin OEDIPUS REX just when he does, i. e., with Oedipus beginning to cope with the return of the plague? What might have happened between Oedipus' first encounter with the plague, and his second? Why is there a break of so many years, and, then, suddenly, the bursting forth into this situation of darkness and misery? In parallel, why is there a break of so many years between Augustine's conversion and his situation about the time he conceived his CONFESSIONS? Why do some eleven or twelve years pass by unnoticed between the Ninth and Tenth Books? Why is Augustine's CONFESSIONS, as we see, a confession?

I have indicated that a man may well forget his derived being, and gradually become a "king" ruling over a "kingdom" more and more. Furthermore, his initial forgetfulness leads even to increased forgetfulness, and finally to oblivion. This occurs as a man's "kingly" attitude begins increasingly to shut him within himself. There takes place what is partially a subtly willful withdrawal of oneself from claim, and there also occurs a forgetful, evasive, "slide." A man forgets, and gradually hides himself from the truth. There are a few places in Augustine's discussion of memory and recollection in the Tenth Book where he seems to be indicating matters touching on what I have described.

In the following passage Augustine indicates that only an active recollection allows remembered things to enjoy an "abode."

> And how many things of this kind does my memory bear which have been already found out, and as I said, placed as it were at hand, which we are said to have learned and come to know; which were I for some short space of time to cease to call to mind, they are again so buried, and glide back, as it were, into the deeper recesses, that they must again, as if new, be thought out thence, for other abode they have none: but they must be drawn together again, that they may be known: that is to say, they must as it were be collected together from their dispersion: whence the word "cogitation" is derived. For cogo (collect) and cogito (recollect) have the same relation to each other as ago and agito, facio and factito. But the mind hath appropriated to itself this word (cogitation) so that, not what is "collected" any how, but what is "re-collected," i. e. brought together, in the mind, is properly said to be cogitated, or thought upon.[163]

Also within his discussion on memory, after indicating that the happy life, or joying in the truth (God), must be somehow in the memory if it could be recognized, Augustine points out that men hide themselves from the truth.

> Therefore do they hate the truth for that things' sake which they love instead of the truth. They love truth when she enlightens, they hate her when she reproves. For since they would not be deceived, and would deceive, they love her when she discovers herself unto them, and hate her when she discovers them. Whence she shall so repay them, that they who would not be made manifest by her, she both against their will makes manifest, and herself becometh not manifest unto them. Thus, thus, yea thus doth the mind of man, thus blind and sick, foul and ill-favoured, wish to be hidden, but that aught should be hidden from it, it wills not. But the contrary is requited it, that itself should not be hidden from the Truth; but the Truth is hid from it.[164]

And too, after indicating that forgetfulness would certainly be difficult to remember, he says that he remembers forgetfulness, "whereby what we remember is effaced."[165]

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[163] Ibid., Book Ten, p. 177.

[164] Ibid., p. 187.

[165] Ibid., p. 181.

It is certainly true that Augustine makes no definite reference to the forgetful fall I am attributing to him, but I regard these things above, and things I have yet to mention, as trustworthy signs.

But if it were true that Augustine had slipped into the forgetful fall after his conversion, still, he would not be unique in that respect. This fall has a certain unique position as a "stage" along the way, and it is well attested to in various mythical accounts.[166]

This fall led into oblivion and chaos, and soon a man awakes to find that the "plague" has returned once again. This is why, I believe, Sophocles begins OEDIPUS REX at the point where he does. Sophocles is being true to the way this awakening out of the fall occurs in experience. Before this awakening occurs, and it might not "occur" if one refused to answer to the plague, nothingness and chaos reign. During this interval there is nothing to talk about, and Sophocles, and Augustine too, say nothing about it.

As OEDIPUS REX moves along, Oedipus is 'returned' back further and further into the past. But this initial return is more than simply a return to past time. Oedipus is also awakened out of his oblivion and recalled to the meaning of his situation. Gradually his violation is uncovered, and upon seeing himself as the hidden violator, Oedipus accepts his guilt. Oedipus discovers himself as the evil-doer he is searching out. Augustine is likewise recalled to this discovery of his violation, and accepts his guilt.

Before Oedipus discovers his violation and accepts his guilt,

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[166] See, Heinrich Zimmer, The King and The Corpse (Vol. XI of Bollingen Series, ed. Joseph Campbell; New York, N. Y.: Pantheon Books Inc., 1956), pp. 112-116.

he is called into question. In this way he is "attuned" to what is coming. At every point along his return, Oedipus is presented with the temptation to withdraw from being in question. As a man comes into question in the profound way Oedipus is, a vast abyss begins to appear, and one engages in a struggle with himself concerning whether he will allow himself to be in question.

To be called into question involves confession. A man dreads confession, dreads to acknowledge to himself the truth that has forced its way in, and would rather disown it, because one knows that to "hear" this truth involves giving up, or changing, oneself.[167] Oedipus is gradually being asked to surrender his "kingly" attitude, and is threatened with the possibility that he may have to leave the familiar "world" he has clung to. In this way confession is dreaded, and involves courage. But once violation is acknowledged, and guilt accepted, Oedipus is cast out, divested of justification, and abode. At this point OEDIPUS REX ends.

What may follow? If we return to the myth of Adam and Eve in Genesis, we see an obscure saying placed at the end of the account of The Fall. After Adam and Eve have been cursed, and cast from the garden, it is said:

> So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

I allow that I may be misinterpreting this passage, but I see in it three major notions that Augustine works with. However,

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[167] In this formulation I am indebted to R. G. Collingwood for his discussion of the possibilities of "corruption of consciousness". The Principles of Art (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 215-221.

Augustine does not derive these notions from this passage, as I will.

The way of the tree of life is being "kept," Placed at the entrance of the garden is a "flaming sword." Also placed there are cherubims. Further, inasmuch as the tree of life is behind the departing Adam and Eve, then the way of the tree of life must be a 'return.'

Thus we may have these three notions in this passage, namely, 'return,' 'child-like' (derived from God; pure - "Cherubim"), and "fire." Does not Augustine speak often of 'returning to the God of the heart'? Between the notions of 'humility,' which Augustine speaks of often, and 'child-likeness,' I see a close similarity. But what is the "flaming sword"? Is not being called into question, searching for justification, and undergoing the endeavor of decision and renunciation, like facing a "flaming sword"?

At this point, however, I have gotten into aspects of the way concerning which I am unable to be precise in any real sense as yet. However, I do have some understanding of this "stage" which Augustine, and, particularly, Martin Buber, have helped me to obtain.

Augustine seems to see his situation under two major aspects, and Buber has enlightened me somewhat with respect to each of these aspects.

> For when I am evil, then to confess to Thee is nothing else than to be displeased with myself; but when holy, nothing else than not to ascribe it to myself: because Thou, O Lord, blessest the godly, but first Thou justifiest him when ungodly.[168]

Also:

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[168]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., Book Ten, p. 168.

> Thou enjoinest us continency; and when I knew, saith one, that no man can be continent, unless God give it, this also was a part of wisdom to know whose gift she is.[169] By continency verily are we bound up and brought back into One, whence we were dissipated into many.[170]

Augustine speaks of the need for justification, and the need for strength to help one overcome the influences tending to separate one. The discovery of his violation, and the acceptance of guilt, strip a man of justification, and confirmation. One becomes aware that within himself he is as nothing, and is powerless to overcome the chaotically divergent tendencies which constrain him into a violatory mode of "life." A man sees that he must give himself up, and the question of decision and renunciation appear.

However, Buber observes:

> We have seen how man repeatedly experiences the dimension of evil as indecision.[171]

Also:

> It is a cruelly hazardous enterprise, this becoming a whole, becoming a form, of crystallization of the soul. Everything in the nature of inclinations, of indolence, of habits, of fondness for possibilities which has been swashbuckling within us, must be overcome, and overcome, not by elimination, by suppression, for genuine wholeness can never be achieved like that, never a wholeness where downtrodden appetites lurk in the corners.[172]

However, another thinker, namely, M. Heidegger, in his essay, WHAT IS METAPHYSICS? indicates more directly than Buber why

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[169]Wisd. 8:21.

[170]Pusey (trans.), op. cit., p. 189.

[171]M. Buber, Good and Evil (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1953), p. 134.

[172]Ibid., p. 129.

this enterprise may be "hazardous." While Buber tends to emphasize the need for decision understood as an attempt to overcome chaos and discover direction, Heidegger speaks more about overcoming the "clinging" orientation by facing up to the horrors of the abyss. Inasmuch as I have focused my thought on questions related to "clinging," I see Heidegger more easily than Buber. But since the overcoming of "clinging" involves renunciation and sacrifice (as Heidegger points out in his essay, WHAT IS METAPHYSICS?), which, in turn, involves decision, then I have also followed Buber's thought in GOOD AND EVIL closely. Buber's thought, falling squarely in the biblical tradition as it does, employs images which partake of this tradition. Of the three images which I derived from the obscure and difficult passage at the end of the account of The Fall in Genesis, namely, 'returning,' 'child-like,' and 'fire' ("flaming sword") it is the image of 'fire' which Buber has helped me to fathom.

> Evil cannot be done with the whole soul; good can only be done with the whole soul. It is done when the soul's rapture, proceeding from its highest forces, seizes upon all the forces and plunges them into the purging and transmuting fire, as into the mightiness of decision.[173]

Buber seems to understand 'fire' in the sense in which fire consumes and takes away what it touches. As I have been led to understand the overcoming of bondage, I have seen that it had very much to do with the eradication of 'self' (understood in its bad sense, namely, as hindrance, as appropriative, as restrictive, and so on). 'Fire,' as well as the other two images, namely, 'returning,' and 'child-like,' seems to me to take on its essential meaning in the

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[173] Ibid., p. 130.

sense in which it implies such eradication of 'self.' The image, 'returning,' implies a movement back to an original purity and meaning out of which we are derived. We see this 'returning' taking place along the way as early as when Oedipus is recalled out of his "kingship" through accepting his guilt. The image 'returning' does not necessarily imply a "reversion" to, say, an earlier phase of our lives such as childhood, but the images of 'child-like' and 'returning' are "close." 'Child-like' seems to imply the sense in which one foregoes justifying and empowering himself within the "purging and transmuting" fire of which Buber speaks.

The End.

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