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The role of *intentio* in Augustine's understanding of the soul's ascent to God:
from *de animae quantitate* to *de trinitate*

Margaret Enid Lane

Augustine's strategic use of the activity of *intentio*, (the volitional and tensional activity of directing the mind's attention) as he begins to reflect on ascending to the one God who is Trinitarian, transforms *intentio* from an aspect of anthropological and psychological analysis into an integral part of a Trinitarian theory of cognition, whereby *intentio* becomes assimilated to the will, which in Augustine's thought is connected with the Holy Spirit. This thesis argues that there is a trajectory in Augustine's use of *intentio* from its barely discernible traces in *de animae quantitate* to its explicit development in *de trinitate*. The stages of ascent in *an. quant.* form the framework of this thesis and they do so against old advice that *an. quant.* 'represents an immaturity soon outgrown and it ought not to be quoted in illustration of the characteristically Augustinian positions.' (Burnaby 1960, 63) Instead, while mindful of Augustine's own statement that 'I am among that number who write while developing and develop while writing,' (*ep.* 143:2) the approach here takes its cue from the general reinstatement of the early works recently effected by Carol Harrison (2006) in the hope that *an. quant.* be specifically rehabilitated. Using a methodology which is largely, though not exclusively exegetical, we will move in each chapter from a description of the stage of ascent in *an. quant.* and the power of the soul involved, to a consideration of the significance and role of *intentio* as we find it in *trin.* The overall conclusion will be that the volitional, directional and tensional aspects of *intentio* converge to make *intentio* a unifying theme in Augustine's understanding of the soul's ascent to God.

THE ROLE OF *INTENTIO* IN AUGUSTINE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE SOUL'S
ASCENT TO GOD: from *de animae quantitate* to *de trinitate*

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DECLARATION

No material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in this or any other university. Material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases suitably indicated.

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For My Parents

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Abbreviations

All abbreviations of Augustine's works are those of the Augustinus Lexicon (ed.) C.P. Mayer (Basel & Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co. 1986-). Where dates are given for works in the text, they have been taken from *AugEncy*, unless otherwise indicated.

Augustine's Works

<i>Acad.</i>	<i>De Academicis libri tres</i>
<i>c. Adim.</i>	<i>Contra Adimantum Manichei discipulum liber unus</i>
<i>an. et. or.</i>	<i>De anima et eius origine libri quattuor</i>
<i>an. quant.</i>	<i>De animae quantitate liber unus</i>
<i>arithm.</i>	<i>De arithmetica (deperditus)</i>
<i>bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo libri septem</i>
<i>beata u.</i>	<i>De beata uita liber unus</i>
<i>b. coniug.</i>	<i>De bono coniugali liber unus</i>
<i>b. uid.</i>	<i>De bono uiduitatis</i>
<i>cat. rud.</i>	<i>De catechizandis rudibus liber unus</i>
<i>ciu.</i>	<i>De ciuitate dei libri uiginti duo</i>
<i>conf.</i>	<i>Confessionum libri tredecim</i>
<i>conl. Max.</i>	<i>Conlatio cum Maximino Arrianorum episcopo</i>
<i>cons. eu.</i>	<i>De consensu euangelistarum libri quattuor</i>
<i>cont.</i>	<i>De continentia liber unus</i>
<i>correct.</i>	<i>De correctione Donatistarum liber unus (=ep. 185)</i>
<i>Cresc.</i>	<i>Ad Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati libri quattuor</i>
<i>dial.</i>	<i>De dialectica</i>
<i>disc. chr.</i>	<i>De disciplina christiana</i>
<i>diu. qu.</i>	<i>De diuersis quaestionibus octoginta tribus liber unus</i>

<i>doctr. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana libri quattuor</i>
<i>duab. an.</i>	<i>De duabus animabus liber unus</i>
<i>en. Ps(s).</i>	<i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i>
<i>ench.</i>	<i>De fide spe et caritate liber unus</i>
<i>ep (epp).</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>ep. Io. tr.</i>	<i>In epistulam Iohannis ad Parthos tractatus decem</i>
<i>c. ep. Man.</i>	<i>Contra epistulam Manichaei quam vocant fundamenti liber unus</i>
<i>c. ep. Pel.</i>	<i>Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum libri quattuor</i>
<i>ep. Rm. inch.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Romanos inchoata expositio liber unus</i>
<i>exp. Gal.</i>	<i>Expositio epistulae ad Galatas liber unus</i>
<i>ex. prop. Rm.</i>	<i>Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula apostoli ad Romanos</i>
<i>c. Faust.</i>	<i>Contra Faustum Manicheum libri triginta tres</i>
<i>c. Fel.</i>	<i>Contra Felicem Manicheum libri duo</i>
<i>f. et op.</i>	<i>De fide et operibus liber unus</i>
<i>f. et symb.</i>	<i>De fide et symbolo liber unus</i>
<i>geom.</i>	<i>De geometrica (deperditus)</i>
<i>Gn. litt.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad litteram libri duodecim</i>
<i>Gn. litt. inp.</i>	<i>De Genesi ad litteram liber unus imperfectus</i>
<i>Gn. adu. Man.</i>	<i>De Genesi aduersus Manichaeos libri duo</i>
<i>gramm.</i>	<i>De grammatica (Ars pro fratrum mediocritate breuiata, Regulae)</i>
<i>gr. et pecc. or.</i>	<i>De gratia Christi et de peccato originali libri duo</i>
<i>haer.</i>	<i>De haeresibus ad Quoduultdeum liber unus</i>
<i>imm. an.</i>	<i>De immortalitate animae liber unus</i>
<i>Io. eu. tr.</i>	<i>In Iohannis euangelium tractatus CXXIV</i>
<i>c. Iul.</i>	<i>Contra Iulianum libri sex</i>
<i>lib. arb.</i>	<i>De libero arbitrio libri tres</i>
<i>mag.</i>	<i>De magistro liber unus</i>

<i>c. Max.</i>	<i>Contra Maximinum Arrianum</i>
<i>c. mend.</i>	<i>Contra mendacium liber unus</i>
<i>mor.</i>	<i>De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manicheorum libri duo</i>
<i>mus.</i>	<i>De musica libri sex</i>
<i>nat. b.</i>	<i>De natura boni liber unus</i>
<i>nupt. et. conc.</i>	<i>De nuptiis et concupiscentia ad Valerium libri duo</i>
<i>ord.</i>	<i>De ordine libri duo</i>
<i>orig. an.</i>	<i>De origine animae (=ep. 166)</i>
<i>pat.</i>	<i>De patientia liber unus</i>
<i>pecc. mer.</i>	<i>De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo paruulorum ad Marcellinum libri tres</i>
<i>perf. iust.</i>	<i>De perfectione iustitiae hominis liber unus</i>
<i>phil.</i>	<i>De philosophia (deperditus)</i>
<i>praed. sanct.</i>	<i>De praedestinatione sanctorum liber ad Prosperum et Hilarium primus</i>
<i>praes. dei.</i>	<i>De praesentia dei ad Dardanum liber unus (=ep. 187)</i>
<i>pulch.</i>	<i>De pulchro et apto (deperditus)</i>
<i>qu.</i>	<i>Quaestionum libri septem</i>
<i>reg.</i>	<i>Regula</i>
<i>retr.</i>	<i>Retractationum libri duo</i>
<i>reth.</i>	<i>De rethorica</i>
<i>c. Sec.</i>	<i>Contra Secundinum Manicheum liber unus</i>
<i>s (s).</i>	<i>Sermones</i>
<i>s. dom. m.</i>	<i>De sermone domini in monte libri duo</i>
<i>Simpl.</i>	<i>Ad Simplicianum libri duo</i>
<i>sol.</i>	<i>Soliloquiorum libri duo</i>

<i>spec.</i>	<i>Speculum</i>
<i>spir. et litt.</i>	<i>De spiritu et littera ad Marcellinum liber unus</i>
<i>trin.</i>	<i>De trinitate libri quindecim</i>
<i>uera rel.</i>	<i>De uera religione liber unus</i>
<i>uid. deo.</i>	<i>De uidendo deo liber unus (=ep. 147)</i>
<i>util. cred.</i>	<i>De utilitate credendi liber unus</i>

Other Abbreviations

Series, Translations, Periodicals, Editions, Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries, Miscellanea and Standard Works

Abbott-Smith	Abbott-Smith, G. <i>Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament</i> (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1929.)
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers (New York: Newman Press / Paulist Press, 1946–)
AugEncy	Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., <i>Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia</i> (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999)
AL	Cornelius Mayer, ed., <i>Augustinus-Lexikon</i> (Basel: Schwabe & Co. AG, 1986–)
AM	<i>Augustinus Magister</i> (Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 21-24 septembre 1954) 1-3, Paris 1954-1955
Aug(L)	Augustiniana
AugStud	Augustinian Studies
BA	Bibliothèque augustiniennne: Oeuvres de saint Augustin (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer/Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1933–)
CCL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Turnholt: Brepols, 1953–)
CEASA	Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1955–)
CWS	Classics of Western Spirituality
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Tempsky, 1865–)
FOTC	The Fathers of the Church (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1947–)

Gibb and Montgomery	<i>Confessions</i> Latin text (with apparatus and explanatory notes) ed. J. Gibb and W. Montgomery (London: Cambridge University Press), 1927 2 nd ed.
Gryson	Altlateinische Handschriften = Manuscrits vieux latins: répertoire descriptif / Roger Gryson; d'après un manuscrit inachevé de Hermann Josef Frede. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1999-2004.)
LCC	Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953–1966)
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
Lewis & Short	A Latin dictionary: founded on Andrews' edition of Freund's Latin dictionary / revised, enlarged, and in great part rewritten by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879)
Liddell/Scott/Jones	Greek-English lexicon. Revised supplement / H.G. Liddell, R. Scott (et al.) ; edited by P.G.W. Glare; with the assistance of A.A. Thompson. (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1996)
LLT	Library of Latin Texts (Brepols)
Loeb	The Loeb Classical Library
LXX	<i>Septuaginta</i> , ed. A. Rahlfs (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006)
MA	Miscellanea Agostiniana, 2 vols. (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1930–1931)
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1st series (Oxford: 1887; reprint: Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995)
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies ed. Gillian Clark and Andrew Louth (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993–)
OUP	Oxford University Press
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca. Accurante J.P. Migne, (Paris)

PL	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina Accurante J.P. Migne, (Paris)
PLS	Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina Patrologia supplementum. Accurante A. Hamman, Paris.
REAug	Revue des études augustinienes
RechAug	Recherches augustinienes
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SC	Sources chrétiennes, (Paris Éditions du Cerf, 1942–)
TLL	Thesaurus linguae latinae
Vulgate	Biblia Sacra Vulgata eds. Gryson, Fischer, Frede
WSA	The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, ed. John Rotelle and Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990 –)

Abbreviations for books of the Bible

Gen.	Genesis
Exod.	Exodus
Deut.	Deuteronomy
1 Sam.	1 Samuel
Ps(s).	Psalms
Prov.	Proverbs
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes
Wisd.	Wisdom
Ecclus.	Ecclesiasticus
Isa.	Isaiah
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Matt.	Matthew
Rom.	Romans
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
Eph.	Ephesians
Phil.	Philippians
Col.	Colossians
1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Rev.	Revelation

Abbreviations for Greek and Latin Writers and their Works

Ambrose	Ambrose of Milan
<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abraham (On Abraham)</i> CSEL 32.
<i>Cain</i>	<i>De Cain et Abel (On Cain and Abel)</i> CSEL 32.
<i>Iacob</i>	<i>De Iacob et vita beata (On Jacob and the Happy Life)</i> CSEL 32; FOTC 65.
<i>Ioseph</i>	<i>De Ioseph (Joseph)</i> CSEL 32; FOTC 65.
<i>Isaac</i>	<i>Isaac vel anima (On Isaac, or the Soul)</i> CSEL 32.2; FOTC 65.

Cassian	John Cassian
<i>Conlat.</i>	<i>conlationes (conferences)</i> PL 49; CSEL 13; English trans. John Cassian : the conferences / translated and annotated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P. New York: Paulist Press, 1997; NPNF; LCC (7 conferences); CWS (9 conferences).
Cic.	Cicero
<i>Fin.</i>	<i>De Finibus (On the Ends of Good and Evil)</i> Loeb.
<i>Hort.</i>	<i>Hortensius (deperditus)</i>
<i>Tusc.</i>	<i>Tusculan Disputationes (Tusculan Disputations)</i> Loeb.
<i>orat.</i>	<i>de oratore (The Orator)</i> Loeb.
<i>nat Deo.</i>	<i>De natura Deorum (On the Nature of the Gods)</i> Loeb.
Gellius	Aulus Gellius
<i>Noct. Att.</i>	<i>Noctes Atticae (Attic Nights)</i>
<i>Lact.</i>	<i>Lactantius</i>
<i>inst. div.</i>	<i>Divinae institutiones (Divine Institutes)</i> CSEL 27.
<i>Op. dei</i>	<i>De opificio dei (The Workmanship of God)</i> CSEL 27.
<i>Lampe</i>	Lampe, G. W. H. (ed) <i>A Patristic Greek Lexicon.</i>
Nemesius	Nemesius of Emessa
<i>nat. hom.</i>	περί φύσεως ἄνθρωπου known in the West by its Latin title <i>De natura hominis</i> PG 40,. Latin text in <i>De natura hominis / Némésius d'Émèse</i> ; traduction de Burgundio de Pise ; éd. critique avec une introduction sur l'anthropologie de Némésius par G. Verbeke et J.R. Moncho. (Leiden : E. J. Brill, 1975.) English translation in Sharples, R.W. and Van der Eijk, P.J. (tr.), <i>On the Nature of Man</i> , (Liverpool England: Liverpool University Press, 2008).
Nicomachus	Nicomachus of Gerasa
<i>Introduction to Arithmetic</i>	<i>Introduction to arithmetic</i> , translated into English by Martin Luther D'Ooge; with studies in Greek arithmetic by Frank Egleston Robbins and Louis Charles Karpinski, University of Michigan studies (London: Macmillan, 1926).

Plato	<i>Plato Complete Works</i> , (ed.) Cooper, John M. (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997).
Pliny	Pliny the elder
<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Natural Histories</i>
Plotinus	Plotinus
<i>Enn.</i>	<i>Enneads</i> loeb
Porph.	Porphyry
<i>Regr. an.</i>	<i>De Regressu animae</i>
<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Sententiae</i>
<i>Plot.</i>	<i>vita Plotini</i>
Possidius	Possidius of Calama
<i>vita</i>	<i>Vita s. Augustini (Life of Saint Augustine)</i> Latin text: PL 32; FOTC 15.
Tertullian	Tertullian
<i>De anima</i>	<i>De anima On the Soul</i> CSEL 20; Ante Nicene Fathers 3.

INTRODUCTION

By archery in the traditional sense, which he esteems as an art and honours as a national heritage, the Japanese does not understand a sport but, strange as this may sound at first, a religious ritual. And consequently, by the ‘art’ of archery he does not mean the ability of the sportsman, which can be controlled, more or less, by bodily exercises, but an ability whose origin is to be sought in spiritual exercises and whose aim consists in hitting a spiritual goal.¹

Each person allocates his or her limited attention either by focusing it intentionally like a beam of energy or by diffusing it in desultory random movements.²

For Augustine, the bow was a symbol of the mind’s *intentio* (*per arcum autem significat animi intentionem*).³ Powered by elasticity and deliberately directed at a target, it captures perfectly *intentio*’s volitional and tensional activity of directing the mind’s attention.⁴ The activity of attention is the way in which the soul relates to the body; to itself; to others and to God. Because of the incorporeal,⁵ and therefore indivisible,⁶ nature of the soul, that activity is tensional. As it is desire which moves something in the direction to which it tends,⁷ that activity is also volitional. This volitional and tensional activity of attention accounts for the way in which the soul carries out its activities of animation, sense perception, imagination and cognition.⁸ All these activities, with the exception of animation, rely upon memory, which is itself explained by *intentio*⁹ and are acts of cogitation; including the soul’s highest activity of

¹ Herrigel 1976: 14.

² Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 33.

³ *en. Ps.* 77:34; *en. Ps.* 17:35; *ciu.* 17:4:3.

⁴ According to *TLL*, *intentio* is from *intendere* and when used in relation to the mind ordinarily meant ‘attention’ or ‘will.’ Also, according to *TLL*, *intentio* was used in relation to the senses and the body to connote a physical stretching or tension: of the nerves (*Cic. Tusc.* 2:23:54); of the eyes (*Gellius Noct. Att.* 5:16:2); of the voice (*Pliny Nat.* 28:53; of the strings of a musical instrument (*Cic. Tusc.* 1:10:19). In the discipline of grammar intention meant emphasis *Gellius Noct. Att.* 6:7:5; 16:5:7.

⁵ *an. quant.* 3:4.

⁶ *Ibid.* 32:64.

⁷ *en. Ps.* 9:5.

⁸ See O’Daly 1987; Martino 2000.

⁹ Hayen 1954: 38; Winkler 1954: 518 ‘la mémoire... phénomène intentionnel.’

the understanding of intelligible, immutable truths (such as $2+2=4$): the process of cogitation is always the same, though the nature of the object is different.¹⁰ The Trinity cannot be the object of the mind's attention because it does not subjoin the mind but rather transcends it (*Intentioni animi subiacet, excepta incommutabilitate Trinitatis, quae quidem non subiacet, sed eminet potius.*)¹¹ Nonetheless, to understand the Trinity is the ultimate aim of the Christian life¹² and we must allow our faith to direct our attention towards advancing that aim, as far as it will go.¹³

The overall importance of *intentio* to the life of faith, in which for Augustine the conversion and movement of our attention towards God is central, has been recognized, primarily by French scholars,¹⁴ and latterly by Lewis Ayres.¹⁵ Agaësse, notes that *intentio*, as an attitude of soul opposite to *distentio*,¹⁶ must be seen in the light of the basic Augustinian anthropological principle that the soul is only truly itself in relationship to God; *intentio* is the movement of transcendence which enables the soul to find above itself its true centre of unity, 'c'est en cherchant Dieu-*intentio*—qu'elle se trouve, c'est au delà d'elle-même-*extensio*-qu'est son centre d'unité.'¹⁷ The act of *intentio*, as an act of focusing the whole of our attention on God, has the effect of unifying the soul. Hayen, who was only concerned with Augustine's thought insofar as his use of *intentio* influenced Aquinas, listed the multiple meanings of *intentio* that he found in Augustine: (a psychological act; an inward attitude; effort; tension; impetus; search; the application of attention which is concentrated and full of

¹⁰ *sol.* 1:5:11.

¹¹ *lib. arb.* 3:25:75.

¹² *cui Trinitati pie sobrieque intellegendae omnis excubat vigilantia christiana, et omnis eius proventus intenditur*, *Ibid.* 3:21:60.

¹³ *Ad illum enim tendimus itinere pietatis. Si ergo aliud de illo senserimus quam est, intentio nostra non in beatitatem, sed in vanitatem nos ire compellet*, *Ibid.* 3:21:59; *ea recta intentio est, quae proficiscitur a fide, trin.* 9:1:1.

¹⁴ Agaësse BA 16. 589; Madec 1994; Hayen 1954.

¹⁵ 2010: 152-5, 168.

¹⁶ Also Solignac, BA 14.590 'l'*intentio* surmonte et corrige la *distensio*.' Before Augustine, *distentio* was a term found mostly in Celsus' treatise *On Medicine* in which there are over 20 occurrences and where it is used exclusively in relation to the nerves, otherwise it is a rare term. For a brief history of the word *distentio* see O'Daly 1977.

¹⁷ Agaësse BA 16.589.

concern towards an object or activity), including *intentio* as a synonym for *conversio*, where the mind was directing its attention towards God.¹⁸ Madec, giving a paper at a conference on the theme of interiority and intentionality in Augustine, also identified conversion with intentionality (and interiority) in Augustine.¹⁹ Lewis Ayres draws attention to Augustine's use of the phrases *intentio cordis* and *intentio credentium* from 395-405, noting, in particular, the role of Christ in directing the attention of the faithful away from Himself (His humanity) onto the Father (His divinity).²⁰

This thesis examines Augustine's use of *intentio* in the context of the soul's ascent to God. The metaphor of ascent structures the way in which Augustine thinks that human beings, created from nothing, fallen and unable to know or to do any good, are enabled to convert and return to their Creator, through his gracious indwelling and his outward revelation and teaching. God's gracious revelation in creation, his presence within and above the memory and mind, is the reason Augustine is fond of ascensional schemes.²¹ *Intentio* is a key factor in ensuring that the ascent proceeds in the right direction; that nothing, other than God, is taken as an end in itself; that human beings keep moving onwards, inwards and upwards towards their Creator.

The use of a metaphor of ascent to express the mind's progress to the truth can be traced back to Parmenides at the end of 6th century B.C. It was developed by Plato in *Phaedrus* and seems to have derived from the ancient stories of heavenly ascents that were commonplace, some of which can be found in the Bible.²² The rationale behind the Platonic

¹⁸ Hayen 1954: 38-9. He quoted in support, *trin.* 10:12:19 (*Iamne igitur ascendendum est qualibuscumque intentionis viribus ad illam summam et altissimam essentiam,*) and *mus.* 6:5:13 (*Conversa ergo a Domino suo ad servum suum, necessario deficit: conversa item a servo suo ad Dominum suum, necessario proficit,intenta in Dominum intellegit aeterna eius,*)

¹⁹ Madec 1994b. Conference held in Perugia in 1988 and papers subsequently published Luigi Alici 1990.

²⁰ *trin.* 1:12:27 *Ideoque ad Patrem referens intentionem credentium et dicens: Non in me credit sed in eum qui me misit* Ayres 2010:154.

²¹ Ascensional schemes are found, for example, in *ord.* 2:11:30ff; *an. quant* 33:70-76; *lib. arb.* 2:2:6ff; *mus.* 6; *uera rel.* 26:49ff; *s. dom. m.* 1:3:10-11; *doctr. chr.* 2:7:9f; *conf.* 7:10:16; 7:17:23; 9:10:24; 10:6:9-10:25:36; *en. Pss.* 119-133; *s.* 347; *ep.* 171A; *trin.* 11ff. Although most of these ascents occur in works before 400 the last three show that he continued to be interested in the metaphor of ascent which he coupled with a metaphor of interiority.

²² Smith 1981: 407.

notion was Plato's two-worlds view: one intelligible, where truth itself resided and one sensible made in the image of the intelligible. The two-worlds view was developed into a hierarchy of levels of being by Plotinus who described reality as emanating from the One who transcends existence with Intellect as the first level of being, then Soul, then sensation and finally matter. Each level of being is progressively more inferior, the further it gets from the One but everything that exists retains a trace of the One which is the source of all and this creates a desire in all to return to it.²³ For Plotinus, the levels of being were levels of the self and therefore ascent was inward: a conversion of attention from the sensible to the intelligible realm.²⁴ Augustine, like Plotinus, regarded the ascent as inward and as amounting to a conversion of attention from the sensible to the intelligible realm (though he preferred to use the biblical terms, carnal and spiritual (*Illa sensibilia, haec intellegibilia; sive, ut more auctorum nostrorum loquar, illa carnalia, haec spiritalia nominamus.*)²⁵ This was not a matter of leaving the sensible realm behind but of being able to see 'the invisible things of God (which) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, understood through the things that are made (*inuisibilia dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciantur Rom. 1:20*).'²⁶ This is because wisdom in this life is about learning to distinguish between God and His creation so that God alone can be praised.²⁷

Augustine's understanding of the Christian's ascent to God is that it is an ascent from faith to understanding: 'the steps being laid down through the prophet who says, unless you believe, you will not understand (*Praescriptum enim per prophetam gradum, qui ait, Nisi credideritis, non intellegitis*).'²⁸ The ascent takes place through an engagement with scripture

²³ See O'Meara 1996 chapters 6 and 7 for derivation of all things from the One.

²⁴ Hadot 1995: 28-30.

²⁵ *mag.* 12:39. He regretted his early use of the terms 'intelligible' and 'sensible' though he upheld the notion of the two worlds, *retr.* 1:3:2. He was influenced both by Plotinus and Porphyry though 'there is no simple statement adequate to describe Augustine's use of the Neoplatonists.' See O'Meara 1982.

²⁶ Rom. 1:20 is linked with the ascent *a corporalibus ad incorporalia* possibly as early as *an. quant.* 34:77 though the first explicit link is *uera rel.* 52:101. Also see *doctr. chr.* 1:4:4 and *retr.* 1:11:1. On Rom. 1:20 in Augustine see Madec 1962.

²⁷ *an. quant.* 34:77; *diu. qu.* 83:81:1.

²⁸ Isa. 7:9 LXX. *lib. arb.* 1:2:4. Augustine frequently quotes Isa. 7:9, the first occasion he does so is in *mag.* 11:37. He points out that Isa. 7:9 has also been translated as, 'Unless you believe, you shall not endure;' and whichever translation is correct; something which cannot be determined without recourse to the original, each

as we move through its different levels of meaning.²⁹ For this our *intentio* needs to be trained by grappling with the inconsistencies and obscurities of scripture³⁰ because understanding of the deeper meaning can only be attained by an *intentio sobria*.³¹ This is to be facilitated by an ascent through creation, which means through the levels of our own being.³² If, for example, we cannot understand the invisible nature of our own soul, then we are a long way from understanding the invisible, let alone the immortal, nature of God that is spoken of in scripture.³³ When Augustine spoke about the move from *carnalia* to *spiritalia*,³⁴ he was attacking the literal-mindedness that caused people to interpret passages literally that were meant to be interpreted spiritually³⁵ and which prevented them from either behaving or believing appropriately.³⁶ This literal-mindedness (*carnalis cogitatio*)³⁷ included thinking that

translation has something important to say, *doctr. chr.* 2:12:17.

²⁹ *conf.* 3:5:9; *trin.* 1:1:2. The importance of engagement with scripture was recognized in *an. quant.* 34:78 and then more obviously in *uera rel.* 50:98-51:100. *Ord.* and *mus.* are examples of ascents which do not engage with scripture but look instead to an education in the liberal arts for facilitating the ascent a *corporalibus ad incorporalia*. Augustine later regretted the emphasis he had placed on teaching through the liberal arts which was not open to everyone because one had to be a freeman (*ord.* 1:11:31) and which therefore ‘many holy persons know very little about (while several of those who do know something about them are not holy,’ *retr.* 1:3:2. For Augustine and the liberal arts see Pollman & Vessey 2005. For more detail of the ascent in *ord* see chapter 5 n. 74.

³⁰ *conf.* 6:5:8 *exercens intentionem*, *ciu.* 16:11:2 *exerceretur intentio*.

³¹ *ciu.* 20:21:2. This is a sign of purification for *sobria* is moderate, temperate, continent, prudent, clever and cautious.

³² A human being knows, exists and lives and therefore comprises all levels of being *en. Ps.* 118:12:1; *diu. qu.* 83:67:5; *ciu.* 5:11. God has given us scripture and creation to search for him *trin.* 2:1:1.

³³ *trin.* 2:9:16.

³⁴ Augustine also spoke of moving a *temporalibus ad aeterna regressio*, *uera rel.* 52:101; *ex vita veteris hominis in novum hominem reformatio uera rel.* 52:101; *de uisibilibus ad inuisibilia et de corporalibus ad spiritualia ... ab exterioribus ad interiora*, *ep.* 55:5:9; *ab imis usque ad summa corporalibus usque ad spiritualia*, *c. Faust.* 21:13; *a temporalibus ad aeterna, a uisibilibus ad intellegibilia, a carnalibus ad spiritualia*, *trin.* 14:17:23; *a corporalibus et spiritalibus ... ad inmutabiles*, *retr.* 1:11:1.

³⁵ *doctr. chr.* 3:5:9; *cat. rud.* 4:8; 26:50.

³⁶ Concerning behaviour see *en. Ps.* 25:2:1. Concerning beliefs, inappropriate beliefs would include not seeing the incorporeal nature of God, *c. ep. Man.* 23:25; *Io. eu. tr.* 18:6; *en Ps.* 121:5; *s.* 53:7 f; *ep.* 147:11:28f; not seeing the divinity in Christ, *Io. eu. tr.* 14:12 and 13; 111:2; *s.* 4:2; *trin.* 1:13:31, 7:6:11; 8:1:2; *s.* 88:14; *s.* 160:3; not understanding how in the Trinity, ‘two or three persons are not greater than one of them alone,’ *trin.* 7:6:11; 8:1:2; not believing that the Holy Spirit is a substance, *f. et symb.* 9:20; difficulties comprehending the bodily nature of the resurrected Jesus, *s.* 229J; difficulties comprehending the non-material way in which the Father relates to the Son, *s.* 237; *s.* 375C; *Io. eu. tr.* 40:6; 23:9.

³⁷ *c. ep. Man.* 23:25; *Io. eu. tr.* 14:13; *trin.* 1:9:19; 8:1:2 - 2:3.

fulfilment of material desires would bring them happiness.³⁸ The ascent therefore had to be both intellectual and ethical.³⁹ It is this sort of ascent that we find from *an. quant.*⁴⁰ through to *trin.*⁴¹ Although the first stage of ascent in the Christian life is faith, the ascent in *an. quant.* begins as an intellectual ascent, which it only later becomes clear would have failed had faith not been acquired at stage four.⁴² The ascent in *trin.*, by contrast, follows the more familiar pattern of given faith leading to understanding:⁴³ the soul's activities of sense perception, imagination and cognition are viewed with the eye of faith which enables them to be seen as reflections, albeit inadequate, of the Trinity. In both works, however, faith is necessary in order to attain understanding. In addition to Plotinian influence, Augustine's notion of ascent was influenced by the biblical psalms of ascent (Pss. 119-133),⁴⁴ and thanks to the verse 'God has arranged an ascent in his heart,'⁴⁵ he was able to interpret the songs of ascent, which had been sung by pilgrims on their way up to Jerusalem, as songs of inward ascent and to identify the steps of ascent with the gifts of the Spirit in Isaiah 11:2-3.⁴⁶ The fact that the steps of ascent of the faithful person are movements of the will towards God, which we ascend by loving,⁴⁷ becomes clearer as time goes on. Augustine's development of ascent as a journey of the will is largely due to his own engagement with scripture from which it became clear to

³⁸ *en. Ps.* 36:3:14 *si autem adhuc carnaliter cogitas, et ista terrena felicitas uera felicitas tibi uidetur.*

³⁹ In scripture we find the rules about how to behave and what to believe and the greater our intellectual capacity, the more we will find there *doctr. chr.* 2:9:14.

⁴⁰ 387-388.

⁴¹ *trin.* was composed over a long period of time and the different books are difficult to date precisely. For discussion on dating see Ayres 2010: 118-120. He works with the following amalgam of La Bonnardière 1965 and Hombert 2000: the work was begun 400-405 and concluded at the latest 427. With regard to specific books: Books 2-4 written 411-414; Books 5-7 written after 416. Books 5-12a written 414-418; Books 12b -15 written 419-427.

⁴² *an. quant.* 28:55; 31:63; 33:73; 33:76; 34:78; 36:80.

⁴³ See n. 27. I am not suggesting that the work is divided in this way: an old view that was brought into question by Cavadini 1992: 103-4 but merely that this is the framework for the work as a whole. In any case Augustine's own view that faith leading to understanding is a dialectical process would militate against this old view.

⁴⁴ Madec AL 466.

⁴⁵ *en. Ps.* 83:10 (ps. 83:6) (*Ascensus in corde eius*). In the version available to Augustine, God was clearly the subject of *disposuit*, whereas in the Vulgate it is man (*ascensiones in corde suo disposuit*.)

⁴⁶ *en. Ps.* 119:2. He combines these with the Beatitudes to form steps of ascent in *s. dom. m.* 1: 3:10-4:11 and *s.* 347. He also made steps of ascent out of the Beatitudes combined with the theological and cardinal virtues *ep.* 171A. The steps of ascent in *doctr. chr.* 2:7:9-11 are a combination of all of these.

⁴⁷ *Gradus, affectus sunt; iter tuum, voluntas tua est, en. Ps.* 85:6. See also *en. Ps.* 38:2; *en. Ps.* 83:10; *en. Pss.* 119-133; *trin.* 11:6:10.

him that the only knowledge he would find in scripture was that God alone must be loved and our love of everything and everyone else referred to Him.⁴⁸ In view of this discovery that knowledge is of properly ordered love, our engagement with scripture and our ascent is both a process, and an experience, of ever-deepening and purified love.⁴⁹

However similar the Plotinian and Augustinian ascents were, and Augustine himself noted the similarities,⁵⁰ there was a difference in the spirit in which the ascent was undertaken, which he designated as the difference between a spirit of humility (through scripture) and a spirit of pride (through the Platonic books).⁵¹ Although the aim of both ascents is to know God by becoming like God (*similem Deo fieri*),⁵² for Plotinus, the knowledge that the soul gains (knowledge that its true nature is divine), brings it to live at a higher level,⁵³ whereas, for the Christian, the knowledge gained is knowledge of how dissimilar it is to God. That knowledge, coupled with the recognition that we cannot help ourselves (whereas Plotinus believes in self-help), leads to humility and realization of our dependence on God.⁵⁴ We need a mediator and it is specifically the mediation of an *incarnate* God that is the fundamental difference between the two schools of thought.⁵⁵ It took time for Augustine to come to his mature doctrine of the incarnate Christ as mediator whereby Christ is our mediator by virtue of his humanity, not his divinity.⁵⁶ But, nonetheless, he recognized the indispensability of the

⁴⁸ *doctr. chr.* 2:7:10. He had already come to this conclusion before writing *an. quant.* for in *mor.* he wrote that it is by the two commandments of Love of God and Neighbour that human life is ordered in the most salutary and the best way, *mor.* 1:28:57.

⁴⁹ *conf.* 12:14:17; *ep.* 55:11:21; *trin.* 1:13:31; 14:17:23.

⁵⁰ *conf.* 7:9:13-15; *ciu.* 10:2.

⁵¹ *conf.* 3.5.9; 6.5.8; 7:9:13.

⁵² *ciu.* 10:17. For Augustine we became like God through becoming one spirit with him (1 Cor. 6:17) which is an assimilation of wills (see chapter 6 *infra*) and therefore what we are trying to discern through scripture is God's will, *doctr. chr.* 2:9:14.

⁵³ O'Meara 1996: 104.

⁵⁴ *doctr. chr.* 2:7:10.

⁵⁵ *conf.* 7:7:9:14; *s.* 92:3 *Homo verus, Deus verus: Deus et homo totus Christus. Haec est Catholica fides.*

⁵⁶ *exp. Gal.* 24; *conf.* 10:43:68; *s.* 293:7; *ciu.* 9:15. For a full discussion of his mature doctrine see *ciu.* 9 and Guretzki 2001. Guretzki notes 'Augustine's mediator by virtue of being human himself, upholds the essential goodness of the created human body' unlike the Platonists for whom it was precisely the human body that blocked our communication with the divine.

incarnation to our ascent from one of his earliest works;⁵⁷ even if he had not yet worked through the full scope of this mediation whereby Christ was the starting-point, goal and way.⁵⁸ Moreover, He is also rescuer for we do not ascend simply by following his example because we did not sin merely by imitating Adam but rather because we were in some way in him.⁵⁹ We can therefore ascend only because we are somehow in Christ, for, after all, no one has gone up except Christ so, if we want to ascend, we must ascend in the body of Christ;⁶⁰ hence the communal dimension of the ascent.⁶¹

Although Augustine does not specifically use the term *intentio* itself in connection with the ascent in *an. quant.* and although many of the characteristics of Christian ascent (scripture, the mediation of the incarnate Christ, communal dimension) are not clearly evident in this early work,⁶² this thesis will demonstrate that all these characteristics are there in embryo and that Augustine had already begun to think in ways which will later be articulated with the language of *intentio*; that he had already begun to think of *intentio* as an antidote to *distentio*;⁶³ that much of what he says in *an. quant.* lays the foundation for the development and use of *intentio* in the life of faith; that there is clear continuity in his understanding of *intentio* from *an. quant.* to *trin.* A secondary aim of this thesis is therefore to draw attention to *an. quant.* as an early articulation of ideas which will be central to Augustine's later thinking, and to demonstrate that it is more interesting and significant than might initially be suggested

⁵⁷ *Acad.* 3:19:42. According to Cary, the order of the Cassiciacum dialogues is *Acad.* 1, *beata u. ord.*, *Acad.* 2 and 3, see Cary 1998: 162. Also see *conf.* 4.12.19. Augustine himself had had difficulty in accepting that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully human, veering from one extreme (all God) to the other (all man) *conf.* 5:10:20 to *conf.* 7:19:25.

⁵⁸ 'He is the starting-point of your ascent and the goal of your ascent; you climb from his example to his divinity. He gave you an example by humbling himself. *en. Ps.* 119:1. Also *trin.* 7:3:5 'But we by pressing on imitate him who abides motionless; we follow him who stands still and by walking in him we move toward him, because for us he became a road or way in time by his humility while being for us an eternal abode by his divinity.'

⁵⁹ *s.* 294:15.

⁶⁰ *s.* 294:10; *c. Faust.* 12:26 *In illo enim scalae a terra usque ad coelum, a carne usque ad spiritum*; the ascent is therefore the ascent of the Church. See also *en. Ps.* 121:7; *en. Ps.* 122:1; *en. Ps.* 119:2.

⁶¹ See *en. Ps.* 41:9 for an ascent expressed to be through creation, self, and then Church to God.

⁶² There is a reference to the importance of examining the truths of the faith which are scattered through scripture in *an. quant.* 34:78 and there is a reference to the fact that we come to God through his power and wisdom in *an. quant.* 33:76 which is a reference to 1 Cor. 1:24; a verse he had already referred to in *Acad.* 2:1 and 'a key anti-"Homoian" verse' see Ayres 2000: 57. See also chapter 4 n. 93.

⁶³ *imm. an.* 3:3 and 4 (387).

by the previous dearth of scholarship on it.

In chapter 1, we trace the development of Augustine's thinking concerning *intentio* as he seeks to explain (with an eye on the theological implications) the union of an incorporeal soul with the body. Aristotle had already related body and soul on the basis that the soul was the life principle of the body (form/matter) but Plotinus, who did not make any serious attempt to understand Aristotle's view, criticized it and proceeds to discuss the relationship of body and soul on the basis of the Platonic view that the soul is separate from the body.⁶⁴ As we shall see, Augustine's reflections are situated in the context of the Neoplatonic discussion. We shall also see that Augustine's conclusion that the soul was present to the body by a kind of *intentio*, was arrived at early but that the full import of the term takes time to emerge.

The discussion of *intentio* at the first stage of the ascent in *an. quant.* continues in the first part of chapter 2 where we find ourselves agreeing with Gilson's view that the activity of sensation is an activity of intensification of attention.⁶⁵ This finding further enriches the meaning of *intentio* at the first stage. In the second part of chapter 2, we find Augustine keen to emphasize the activity of the incorporeal soul on the body. It had been Aristotle's criticism of Plato that, having separated the soul from the body, he had not been able to show how the soul acted on the body. Aristotle and the Stoics had said that for one object to act on another, the two must both be bodies and be in close physical proximity. Plotinus had attempted to close the gap⁶⁶ and Augustine's reflections take place in this context. In chapter 2, we are introduced to Augustine's first use of *intentio* as an antidote to the problem of *distentio* of time successiveness, in relation to our functioning in the temporal world. We also observe *intentio*'s own move from corporeal to incorporeal as we see Augustine dematerializing the Stoic doctrine of τόπος, his primary philosophical source for *intentio*.⁶⁷ Chapter 2 ends with

⁶⁴ Blumenthal 1971a: 12-13. Augustine did not find Aristotle's works congenial and, in any event, his knowledge of them was limited; see Courcelle 1969: 168.

⁶⁵ 1961: 61-3. This is the first indication of what we will find throughout that there is a certain artificiality involved in imposing a scheme of ascent with distinct stages when in fact the stages run into each other and the material cannot be rigidly allotted to one stage or another.

⁶⁶ O'Meara 1996: 29f.

⁶⁷ O'Daly 1987: 44. *Intentio* is the Latin transliteration of the Greek word τόπος, whose basic meaning is the stretching of a cord.

an analysis of *intentio* in *trin.* as the unifying link in the soul's, now Trinitarian, activity of sense perception and, potentially, as the connecting link between the soul's three levels of perception: corporeal, spiritual and intellectual. That *intentio* is the link between levels (of perception and ascent) begins to be borne out in chapter 3 by an examination of spiritual vision; the next level of perception. In chapter 3 we also begin to see how memory might be explained by *intentio*. In these first three chapters there is an emphasis on the chronological development of *intentio* and on its tensional, attentional and volitional aspects, and for this, the main texts examined are *an. quant.*, *imm. an.*, *mus.*, *Gn. litt.*, and *trin.*, (with the addition of *orig. an.* in relation to *animatio* in chapter 1.)

With chapter 4 the tone changes, for to understand *intentio* as *conversio* requires some explanation of the theological context. Now firmly within the faith leading to understanding framework for ascent in the Christian life, another aspect of *intentio* can safely come to the fore: that of direction to a purposed end, and this is examined in the light of Phil. 3:14; Augustine's primary biblical source of *intentio*.⁶⁸ In chapter 4, we also find justified his insistence that *intentio* set out in faith in the incarnate Christ, if it is to begin to move the soul in the direction of understanding 'the invisible things of God (which) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, understood through the things that are made.' In chapter 5 we find Augustine departing from his philosophical forbears in his attitude to the will's role in knowledge, as we explore his transfer of *intentio* from *mens* to *voluntas*; a transfer perhaps indicative of what he really meant by *a corporalia ad incorporalia*; namely a redeemed relationship with the *corporalia*, rather than a withdrawal from them. We also focus on *intentio voluntatis* as direction of desire and conclude that the conversion of desire is something that can only happen through prayer, which is itself an act of *intentio*, in every sense of the word. Chapter 6 brings us to a single-minded focus on God which demonstrates not only *intentio*'s role as motive but also that there is a communal dimension to *intentio*'s unifying role; a role which runs like a thread through the stages of ascent. Finally, in chapter 7 it becomes clear that through an act of understanding, formed from the memory *per intentionem cogitationis*,⁶⁹ to produce an inner word, not only does *intentio* explain our

⁶⁸ Agaësse BA 16. 589.

⁶⁹ *trin.* 15:23:43.

psychological activities of memory and understanding but also, where *intentio* proceeds from faith, it brings us as close as we can come, through an act of will, to an understanding of ourselves in relation to God and thereby by virtue of being His image, to the glimmerings of an understanding of God Himself.

In 1 Sam. 7:12 (LXX) Samuel took a stone and set it up between the old and the new Mizpah, and gave it the name Ebenezer, which means ‘the stone of the helper.’

Now Mizpah means *intentio*. That stone of the helper is the mediation of the Saviour, through whom we must pass over from the old Mizpah to the new, that is from the *intentio* which looked for material happiness—a false happiness, in a material kingdom—to the *intentio* which looks for spiritual happiness—the really true happiness, in the kingdom of heaven.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ *ciu.* 17:7:4.

But let us see to what extent your latent *intentio* can advance. (*Videamus tamen quousque progredi vestra latens possit intentio*).¹

¹ *ord.* 2:5:17.

Chapter One: *animatio*

The Master began by showing us various Japanese bows, explaining that their extraordinary elasticity was due to their peculiar construction and also to the material from which they are generally made, namely bamboo.²

In the first place then, as anyone can easily observe, the soul by its presence gives life to this earth- and death-bound body (*praesentia sua vivificat*). It makes of it (the body) a unified organism and maintains it as such (*Colligit in unum atque in uno tenet*) keeping it from disintegrating and wasting away. It provides for a proper, balanced distribution of nourishment to the body's members. It preserves the body's harmony (and proportion), not only in beauty, but also in growth and reproduction (*congruentiam eius modumque conservat, non tantum in pulchritudine, sed etiam in crescendo atque gignendo.*) Obviously, however, these are faculties which man has in common with the plant world; for we say of plants too, that they live, we see and acknowledge that each of them is preserved to its own generic being, is nourished, grows, and reproduces itself.³

Before we launch in to consider the soul's power at the first stage of ascent in *an. quant.*, some initial observations on the novelty of the idea of incorporeal substance for Augustine and the reasons for his preoccupation with the soul are in order.

The novelty of the idea of incorporeal substance

Augustine's concept of the soul as '-an immaterial, dynamic, inextended and indivisible substance and good is Platonic in character and predominantly Neoplatonic in origin.'⁴ At the time he wrote *an. quant.* in 388, this was still a fairly new concept for him. He had been unable to conceptualize incorporeal substance,⁵ which was not surprising given that most thinkers in late antiquity, and certainly the ones that Augustine had come across, were materialists.⁶ There was a strong tradition of materiality in North African Christianity,

² Herrigel 1976: 30.

³ *an. quant.* 33.70.

⁴ O'Daly 1987: 9.

⁵ *conf.* 12:6:6 'True reasoning convinced me that I should wholly subtract all remnants of every kind of form if I wished to conceive the absolutely formless. I could not achieve this. I found it easier to suppose something deprived of all form to be non-existent than to think something could stand between form and nothingness.'

⁶ Brown 2000: 75.

deriving from the influence of Tertullian, who had believed in the corporeality of both God and the soul.⁷ Tertullian, who had been disparaging about philosophers, argued strongly against the Platonic conception of an incorporeal soul for he believed that scripture proved its corporeality.⁸ It was partly Augustine's inability to see anything other than physical substance which drew him to the Manichees.⁹ He could not conceive how a good God could be the source of evil in the world and he therefore had no option (because he did have faith in a good God) but to accept the Manichee explanation of evil as a substance opposed to the good.¹⁰ He could understand Manichee contempt for Gen. 1:26 that man was made in God's image because, to the materialist mind, this suggested a god made in man's image.¹¹ Once he had come to dismiss this anthropomorphism, he still had problems initially, thinking of God as other than corporeal:¹² imagining him instead like a luminous body,¹³ like sunlight passing through air¹⁴ or like the sea filling creation as water soaks a sponge.¹⁵

Augustine had also believed that his own soul was corporeal, 'I did not know how to think of mind except as a subtle physical entity diffused in space,'¹⁶ including his power of *intentio*, which he was unable to distinguish from the images of corporeal things that he formed with it (*nec videbam hanc eandem intentionem qua illas ipsas imagines formabam non esse tale aliquid, quae tamen ipsas non formaret nisi esset magnum aliquid.*)¹⁷ He proceeded to do 'much reading in the philosophers,'¹⁸ finding their views on the world more credible

⁷ Augustine mentions Tertullian's view in *Haer.* 86 and criticizes it in *Gn. litt.* 10.25.41 -26.45.

⁸ *De anima* 7.

⁹ *conf.* 3:7:12. On Augustine's reasons for joining Manichees see Lieu 1992: 151-191. For the length of time Augustine spent as a Manichee see Ferrari 1975. The Manichee belief system described by Lieu is based on Manichaeic sources from which it can be seen that Augustine's own descriptions of the system are accurate, Lieu op. cit. 10.

¹⁰ *conf.* 5:10:20.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 5:10:19.

¹² *Ibid.* 6:3:4; 7:1:1.

¹³ *Ibid.* 4:2:3; 4.16.31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 7:1:2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 7:5:7.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 5:10:20.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 7:1:2. See chapter 4 n. 154 for comment on this.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 5:3:3. See Solignac 1958 and BA 14, 92-93 as to what this reading consisted of.

than those of the Manichees.¹⁹ He then went to teach rhetoric in Milan, where he met Bishop Ambrose²⁰ and was introduced to Neoplatonic philosophy and the idea of incorporeal reality.²¹ Augustine attributes his conversion to this idea to ‘certain books of the Platonists translated from Greek into Latin by Victorinus, who had been a Rhetoric Professor in Rome and had died a Christian.’²² What Augustine discovered from these books was a method of ascent *a corporalia ad incorporea*. Embarking on the ascent himself, he describes being lifted up by an experience of love to a glimpse of the Truth, which convinced him that ‘the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, understood through the things that are made (*inuisibilia dei per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciantur* Rom. 1:20).’²³

Reasons for preoccupation with the soul

Once Augustine had wholeheartedly committed himself to the Catholic faith²⁴ and been baptized,²⁵ his abiding interest was to lead the faithful to an understanding of the faith through the things that were made and this included through an examination of their own human nature. As part of this interest, in the early works, Augustine was concerned to refute the materialism of the Manichees and also to stress the unity of man as a body and soul.²⁶

¹⁹ *conf.* 5:14:25.

²⁰ *Ibid.* 5:13:23.

²¹ *beata u.* 1.4. He says he discovered this idea from Ambrose’s sermons and in discussions with Theodorus, a Neoplatonic philosopher and the dedicatee of *beata u.* In Courcelle’s view, Theodorus is the person who directly introduced Augustine to the books that triggered his conversion though he had been pointed towards Neoplatonism initially through Ambrose’s sermons, Courcelle 1969: 137 n. 48 and 138f. Madec 1994a: 36 refers to Courcelle’s observation that Ambrose paraphrased entire pages of Plotinus’ *Enn.* in his sermons. Madec 1994a: 36-8 also disputes the existence of a Milanese circle of Neoplatonic intellectuals previously mooted by Solignac BA 14, 529-536 except insofar as Augustine formed the centre of it.

²² *conf.* 8:2:3. Also *Ibid.* 7:9:13 coupled with *Ibid.* 7:10:16 makes it clear that it was these books that led directly to Augustine’s conversion. Historically there has been great debate as to what these books were but O’Meara reviewing the debate found that general agreement had been reached that in 386 Augustine had read Plotinus’ *Enn.* 1:6 and Porphyry’s *regr. an.*, see O’Meara 1980: 136.

²³ *conf.* 7:10:16. On Rom. 1:20 in Augustine see introduction n. 26.

²⁴ He had always remained a nominal Christian, despite the fact that the beliefs he had sometimes held were, on his own admission, somewhat bizarre (*conf.* 5.10.20). He had been brought up in the faith and continued to go to Church and pray. (*conf.* 3:4:7 and 8. Gibb and Montgomery point out that *mutavit in conf.* 3:4:7 indicates a change in the nature of his prayers, rather than change in the direction of his prayers.) After his spell with the Manichees, whom he regarded at the time as Christian, he returned to the Catholic Church (*conf.* 6:5:7) and by the time he experienced his intellectual conversion he was quite firm in the Catholic faith (*conf.* 7:5:7); committing himself wholeheartedly after experiencing the conversion of will described in *conf.* 8:12:29.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 9.6:14.

²⁶ Markus 1967: 355. Most of his early works were or contained direct or indirect attacks on the Manichees

This was partly to counter the Manichean view of man as divided into a good soul and evil flesh (along with a bad soul),²⁷ partly to counter the Neoplatonic conception of man as essentially a rational soul, which had fallen into an inferior composite state with a body, from which it desires to flee and to return to its true home.²⁸ Throughout his works, Augustine quotes with approval the traditional definition of man as a rational mortal animal (*animal rationale mortale*)²⁹ and treated it as axiomatic that man was composed of a body and soul.³⁰ But he struggled to understand and express the relationship between an incorporeal soul and corporeal body in a way which took account of his affirmation of the Neoplatonic hierarchy of being: being, life and knowing³¹ and which also valued the body in the light of the Christian doctrines of Incarnation and Resurrection.³² Augustine's solution, purportedly following scriptural authority, was to distinguish between the 'outer man' (*exterior homo*) and the 'inner man' (*interior homo*):³³ the 'outer man' being what we have in common with other animals and the inner man being that which sets us apart, namely, our rational mind.³⁴ He emphasized that, contrary to the view of some people,³⁵ the outer /inner man distinction did *not* correspond

(whom he regarded as Christian heretics *haer.* 46:2), as he sought to rescue friends (*retr.* 1:14:6) and put his own Manichee past behind him. His first direct attacks on the Manichees were *mor.* (387/8 attacking the Manichees' way of life while asserting the superiority of catholic way) and *Gn. adu. Man.* (388/9 countering their attacks on the Old Testament). He continued writing against them until the early 400's with *nat. b.* and *c. Sec.*

²⁷ For Mani, the body was intrinsically evil because it was created by something other than a good God, see *haer.* 46:19.

²⁸ On the Neoplatonic conception of nature of man see Markus 1967: 222-35.

²⁹ egs. *ord.* 2:11:31; *an. quant.* 25:47-49; *mag.* 8:24; *trin.* 7:4:7; 15:7:11; *ciu.* 16:8:1.

³⁰ *beata u.* 2:7; *ep.* 3:4. though scripture often refers to a man as just soul since it is customary to name the whole from its better part *trin.* 7:4:7.

³¹ *diu. qu.* 83:51:2. For the Platonic nature of this and Augustine's sources see Ayres 2010: 135.

³² There is division among scholars as to the extent to which he succeeded. O'Connell argued that, apart from a brief period between 411 and 417, Augustine was, and remained, 'faithfully Plotinian' in his view of the human person as a soul fallen subsequently into a body as a result of sin. He is supported in this view by Gilson, Teske, Rist and TeSelle. Against him are ranged Madec, O'Daly, M Clark and Van Fleteren. See Romb 2006 for a recent summary of the arguments on both sides and for Romb's own belief that Augustine's view changed as he began to grasp the implications of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* and its incompatibility with many aspects of the Plotinian world view.

³³ The main passages are 2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:9-10; 1 Cor. 15:49; see *diu. qu.* 83:51. Although Augustine quotes scripture, Madec 1994b: 23 notes that the expression *homo interior* was Platonic before being Pauline and, whether or not Paul depends on Plato, Augustinian interiority has its origins from the fusion of the two. In saying this however Madec is not flagging up the distinction in meaning that the expression denotes in Paul and Plato.

³⁴ *diu. qu.* 83:51:3; see *trin.* 12:1:1.

³⁵ Probably the Manichees who borrowed the terms 'old man' and 'new man' from Paul to denote the battle

to the body and soul but to Paul's distinction between 'the old man' and 'the new man' (or 'the image of the earthly' and 'the image of the heavenly'),' and that therefore salvation did not require people to lay aside the body, but that it referred to the transformation of the *inner man* and required people to change their life for the better.³⁶

Augustine was baptized by Ambrose³⁷ while still in Milan, and then went to Rome where he wrote *an. quant.*,³⁸ a dialogue with his close friend, Euodius.³⁹ Of the six questions Euodius asks concerning the soul, Augustine is only really interested in the question of the soul's greatness and this is the question from which the dialogue takes its name.⁴⁰ Greatness, Augustine says, can be taken in two senses: size and power but it cannot mean size in relation to the soul because the soul, as an incorporeal reality, does not occupy any space. Instead, it means the greatness of its powers.⁴¹ Augustine proceeds to show Euodius how great the soul's powers are in relation to the body, to itself and to God and he does so in seven stages of ascent,⁴² which he terms 'acts' rather than 'powers.'⁴³ This designation is significant for it is the soul's ability to act on the body that proves its superiority to the body and it is through an *act* of understanding, not the *power* of understanding, that we come closest to God in this life. It is, though, the soul's general love of activity which distracts it from contemplation.⁴⁴

between the body and soul: Lieu 1992: 23.

³⁶ s. 218A:3.

³⁷ *c. Iul.* 1.3.10.

³⁸ *retr.* 1:8 :1.

³⁹ Euodius is mentioned by Augustine in *conf.* 9.8.17 as 'a member of our circle, a young man from my home town.' He was Augustine's interlocutor in *lib. arb.* and later in about 414 A D, when he was bishop of Uzalis, he engaged in correspondence with Augustine. *epps* 158-164 and *ep.* 169.

⁴⁰ *retr.* 1:8:1. Augustine deals briefly in the last paragraph *an. quant.* 36:81 with Euodius' last three questions and allots one paragraph apiece to Euodius' first two questions (*an. quant.* 1:2; 2:3).

⁴¹ *an. quant.* 3:4.

⁴² Neil 1999 shows the stages of ascent in *an. quant.* owe a great deal to Varro and the Neoplatonists.

⁴³ *an. quant.* 34:78.

⁴⁴ *mus.* 6:13:40.

The soul's first stage functions

The first act of the soul corresponds to Varro's first degree of soul, which ultimately goes back to the nutritive level identified by Aristotle; a level of being we share with all living things, including plants.⁴⁵ The body merely exists and, without the soul, would be inanimate. It only lives because of the presence of the soul (*praesentia sua vivificat*).⁴⁶ This life-giving function proves the superiority of the soul to the body because everything which gives life is higher than that which receives life and, says Augustine, no one disputes that the body receives its life from the soul.⁴⁷ Taking his cue from Plotinus, Augustine also took this life-giving function as proof that the soul was not a body because no body is capable of providing another body with life.⁴⁸

It is part of the soul's life-giving function 'to gather the body into one and hold it together as one' in order to maintain the body in existence as 'a particular thing.' To be a particular thing is one of the three characteristics of every created thing; the others being that 'it is distinguished from other things by its own proper form; and it does not transgress the order of nature.' The three characteristics reflect creation by a threefold God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁴⁹ The characteristic of 'being a particular thing' is associated with the Son and with the way in which He reflects, with complete likeness, the unity of the Father. Everything exists to the extent that it reflects this unity and to that extent it is true.⁵⁰ This means for a body to exist, it has to exist in some way as a unity.⁵¹ But a body (defined as

⁴⁵ Augustine describes Varro's three degrees of soul in *ciu.* 7:23.

⁴⁶ Also *diu. qu.* 83:51:3.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 54. On this basis Augustine drew an analogy of the soul animating the body with the spirit giving life to the Church. This enabled him to argue that those outside the Church were not members, (*Io. eu. tr.* 124:27:6; 14:10 (Donatists) *correct:* 9:42; *s.* 267; *s.* 268); that God doesn't make the world and then withdraw just as the soul doesn't withdraw from body (*imm. an.* 8:14) and to argue against Apollinarianism that Jesus had to have a soul if he had a body, because if you dispense with the soul, all you have is an inanimate body (*en. Ps.* 29:2:3.)

⁴⁸ *conf.* 10:6:10; *Enn.* 4:3:7:14f; 4:3:10:38 (Chadwick's note to his translation of *conf.*).

⁴⁹ *uera rel.* 7:13 (written 389/390). In *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:16:26 and 1:21:32 already these appear as three principles of being *mensuras et numeros et ordinem* where they are linked with *Wisd.* 11:20 'You have arranged all things in measure, number and weight. The three characteristics are variously expressed and later the Trinitarian implications specifically drawn out (see chapter 4 n. 175). For further details see Roche 1941 O'Donnell on *conf.* 1:7:12; 5:4:7 and Harrison 1988:

⁵⁰ *uera rel.* 36: 66.

⁵¹ *mor.* 2:6:8; *ep.* 18:2.

anything that has length, breadth and height so as to occupy some local space; occupying a larger place with a larger part of itself and a smaller place with a smaller part and being smaller in a part than in the whole)⁵² is not a simple unity for it consists of parts extended in space and time.⁵³ It can, though, imitate perfect unity when its parts are brought together and held together by the soul in a harmonious and composite unity (*Colligit in unum atque in uno tenet*).⁵⁴

The more harmonious the unity is; the better is the imitation of perfect unity. The soul's life-giving function therefore extends to more than merely keeping the body in existence; it is also responsible for maintaining the body's harmony and for enabling it to fulfil its potential (*modus*).⁵⁵ The concept of harmony is the key to the health⁵⁶ and the beauty of the body and potentially affects the soul's concentration. With regard to the body's health, although hunger and our other physical needs and pains may seem natural, Augustine says that these were imposed as part of our penal condition after the Fall.⁵⁷ As a result of the Fall, the body places a greater burden on the soul because it requires the soul to pay more attention to it in order to keep it in a state of health so when scripture (Wisd. 9:15) refers to the corruptible body weighing down the soul, it is referring to the *fallen* body not the body *per se*.⁵⁸ We are

⁵² *Gn. litt.* 7:21:27; *orig. an.* 2:4. *an. et. or.* 4:21:35. Euodius must understand the nature of bodies before understanding that the soul is not a body *an. quant.* 31:63.

⁵³ *imm. an.* 3:3.

⁵⁴ Also *an. quant.* 31:62 'air and fire are both kept in a body made of earth and moisture, by the presence of the soul, so that there is a blending (*contemperatio*) of all four elements. Also *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:7:9 the soul by animating the material of the body shapes it into a harmonious unity, and does not permit it to fall apart into its constituent elements. The language Augustine uses of *colligit in unum* in relation to the unifying of the physical organism is the first stage of a gathering into one, which occurs in some way at each stage of ascent.

⁵⁵ *Modus*, another name for *mensuras* and therefore one of the three characteristics applying at every level of being, meant the manner of being of each kind of created thing, in the sense of the limit, or boundaries, of its nature as well as its potentiality or capability to receive form. *nat. b.* 3; *ciu.* 12:5. Examples—the *modus* of angels is creation outside time (*conf.* 12:15:22); the *modus* of soul is its wisdom *beata u.* 4:33; and immortality, *ep.* 166:2:3; *s.* 65:3:4. There are ethical connotations of *modus*: of knowing one's own limits, 'How much more should an ordinary human being, such as I am, recognize his limits so that he does not think more of himself' *ep.* 199:10:35. See also n. 49.

⁵⁶ 'The health of the body is the harmony of those things of which it consists.' We can easily lose our state of balance and hunger, thirst and tiredness can all unbalance us *s.* 277:4. Also the humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile) need to be balanced *ep.* 205:3. If, for example, we get angry, this causes the bile to increase and we become out of balance. *ep.* 9:4. For Augustine's medical knowledge, see chapter 2 n. 79.

⁵⁷ *en. Ps.* 37:5; *Gn. litt.* 11:32:42; *ciu.* 12:22; 13:1 and 3.

⁵⁸ *ciu.* 13:16. Augustine points out that the writer of Wisd. added the word 'corruptible' to show that the body

unaware of things affecting the body except when there is something wrong (for example when our guts start playing up)⁵⁹ so to be in a state of health is to live in the body and feel nothing of its being a burden.⁶⁰

In the case of the body's state of health, it is disharmony that distracts the soul, whereas in the case of the body's beauty it is more likely to be its state of harmony that distracts the soul for even in its feeble state of post-Fall functioning, the body's beauty is so apparent as to distract the lustful soul (imagine what the resurrection body will be like!)⁶¹ Augustine was applying the Stoic definition of beauty when he defined the beauty of the body as 'the harmony of the parts along with a certain pleasing colour.'⁶² He placed the emphasis on the first part of the definition, indicating that animals had more beauty than plants because they had a greater harmony of parts.⁶³ Whether it is a question of visible symmetry or audible harmony, it is the equality of the proportioned parts produced that manifests reason to the senses.⁶⁴ It is the integral nature of beauty and the fact that, even though each part may be beautiful in itself, the greater beauty is the sum of the parts,⁶⁵ which allows the body to be so readily used as an analogy for the Church as the body of Christ.⁶⁶ The idea of the integral nature of beauty could be extended to the idea of an integral fittingness maintained by the antithesis between good and evil,⁶⁷ and this provided Augustine with an approach to the

wasn't naturally corruptible but only through sin. He quotes this part of Wisd. 9:15 115 times throughout his work. For details see La Bonnardière 1970: 206-215.

⁵⁹ *s.* 277:8.

⁶⁰ *s.* 277:6.

⁶¹ *s.* 243:7. Its beauty had significance for the resurrection body, *ciu.* 22:20: 3.

⁶² *ep.* 3:4; *ciu.* 22:19 cf. *Tusc.* 4:13:30. For the Stoics, the world was perfect in all its proportions and parts *Cic. nat. deo.* 2:7:18. In *c. Faust.* 21:6 Augustine links Stoic harmony with Wisd. 11:21 surely indicating that their Creator is God.

⁶³ *mor.* 2:16:43.

⁶⁴ *ord.* 2:11:33; *mus.* 6:10:26; 6:13:37.

⁶⁵ *Gn. adu. Man.* 1: 21:32; *Gn. litt.* 3:24:37. A good analogy of the beauty of the whole is the comparison of a mosaic to one of its seemingly ill-fitting cubes *ord.* 1:1:2.

⁶⁶ Augustine obviously builds on Pauline imagery but see *Io. eu. tr.* 14:10 for an example of Augustine's use of the analogy of the human body to the body of Christ-one soul works with the hands, walks with the feet, hears with the ears and sees with the eyes so one Christ who gives out a variety of gifts to the members of his body and *Ibid.* 18: 9 each organ does different things but each organ acts on behalf of the whole body so the eye sees for the body and the ear hears for the body.

⁶⁷ *ord.* 1:7:18.

problem of evil and suffering, without yielding to the Manichee solution of the existence of an evil substance opposed to God, which detracted from God's omnipotence. What the properly adjusted soul will see when it has rendered not just the body harmonious and beautiful but also itself, is not only the integral beauty of the whole but also Beauty itself.⁶⁸

How is the soul present in the body: the development of the role of *intentio*.

This then is the first act of the soul: to give life to the body and to maintain it in existence by holding it together in a harmonious unity enabling it to become what it was created to be. But the question is *how* the soul is present to the body in order to carry out this function.

Philosophical context

The question of the soul's union with the body was introduced into philosophical debate by Porphyry and brought to the fore by the Christian, Nemesius.⁶⁹ Porphyry records 'Once I, Porphyry, went on asking Plotinus for three days about the soul's connection with the body (πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ σώματι) and he kept on explaining to me.'⁷⁰ He doesn't go on to say what the explanation was and there have been different suggestions: their discussions may have focused on finding an analogy to express the nature of the union between an incorporeal and corporeal substance,⁷¹ or on the question of how the soul could be present as a whole in any part of the body, while remaining omnipresent to the body.⁷² These are both questions about how the soul animates the body and both questions are discussed in *an. quant.* Plotinus considered various analogies of how the soul could be said to be present to the body

⁶⁸ Ibid. 2:19:51. Alternative names for the stages in *an. quant.* are given in terms of beauty, *pulchre de alio; pulchre per aliud; pulchre circa aliud; pulchre ad pulchrum; pulchre in pulchro; pulchre ad pulchritudinem; pulchre apud pulchritudinem, an. quant.* 35:79. Augustine's interest in the question of the nature of beauty and his understanding of the difference between the beauty of the whole and the proportional beauty of parts prompted him to write his earliest work on the subject: *pulch.* written at age 26 or 27 (*conf.* 4:15:27.) On *pulch.* see BA 13, 670-673.

⁶⁹ Motta 2010:511.

⁷⁰ *Plot.* 13.

⁷¹ For Dörrie's suggestion that *Enn* 4:3-5 is product of the 3-day discussion see Blumenthal 1971a: 16 n. 20. In *Enn* 4:3:9 Plotinus makes it clear that he is considering how the soul comes to be in the body and particularly the first communication of the soul with the body.

⁷² For the suggestion that *Enn.* 6:4-5 'On the presence of being one and the same, everywhere as a whole,' shows how Plotinus would have replied see O'Meara 1996: 22.

and dismissed them as inadequate.⁷³ His own proposal was that the soul is present to the body as fire (as the source of light) is present in air because fire, like soul, is present without being present;⁷⁴ it is present throughout the whole; it does not mix with the air but remains itself and it reinforces Plato's own view that it makes more sense to talk about the body being in soul, than the other way round.⁷⁵ Plotinus later amends his analogy, drawing a parallel between body/soul and heat/air which, as Blumenthal observes, is 'clearly more satisfactory since it shows that the soul does have a real effect on the body, and at the same time that the effect is different from the cause. But it still maintains the complete independence of the soul.'⁷⁶

Nemesius discusses in *nat. hom.* 3⁷⁷ the problem caused by the union of an incorporeal soul and the body, namely, the effect on the nature of the two substances when they come together to constitute a single substance. How can the soul become embodied while keeping its own substance unconfused? Historically, with regard to the union of bodily substances, there were two options: *henosis* (ἕνωσις) where, like water and wine, the two are unified, lose their identity, are both changed and therefore perish together and *parathesis* (παράθεσις) where two substances, like chorus men are juxtaposed or beside each other.⁷⁸ Neither works in the case of union of the body and an incorporeal soul because with *henosis* the soul would perish along with the body and with *parathesis* there cannot be said to be real union. Nemesius adopts the solution, which Ammonius Saccas, the teacher of Plotinus, gave to the problem:⁷⁹ the soul, as an intelligible thing, had such a nature as to be both unified with the body and yet, when unified, to remain unconfused so that it does not perish along with the

⁷³ *Enn.* 4:3:20-21. For the sources behind these see Blumenthal 1968.

⁷⁴ Probably a reference to the fact that hypostasis Soul is not present in individual body. For understanding of different souls in Plotinus see Blumenthal 1971b.

⁷⁵ *Enn.* 4:3:22.

⁷⁶ Blumenthal 1971a: 19.

⁷⁷ Written about 400 A.D. (Motta 2010:509)

⁷⁸ See Sharples 2008: 79 n. 376 for sources and use of these types of mixture in the philosophical tradition.

⁷⁹ There are conflicting views as to whether or not this was mediated through Porphyry's now lost *symmikta zetemata* (*Miscellaneous Inquiries*), see Dörrie 1959. (The title of the work seems to be a misnomer for Dörrie's work has revealed all the inquiries had a unified theme: the soul). The subject matter of one inquiry was pieced together by Dörrie from *Nem. nat. hom.* 3 and the title of this inquiry was quite possibly how was the soul present to the body πῶς ἡ ψυχὴ σύνεστι τῷ σώματι For a detailed and informative review of Dörrie's work see Rich 1962, 121-4. This view was challenged by Rist 1988. For his hypothesis and other references see Sharples 2008: 78 n. 372.

perishable body. The soul is therefore unaltered by its embodiment but is unified with the body without being compounded with it; as ‘light is unified with the air, mixed with it without being compounded, in the same way the soul is unified with the body while remaining altogether uncompounded (καὶ ἔνοῦται τῷ ἄερι τὸ φῶς, ἀσυγχύτως ἅμα αὐτῷ κεχυμένον).’⁸⁰

The presence of the soul to the body in an. quant.

The nature of the union of the body and soul has important implications for questions of the unity of the person; the persuasiveness of the idea of an incorporeal soul; the cogency of the notion of incarnation and for an understanding of the two natures in Christ: God and man.⁸¹ As we have noted, the purpose of the dialogue in *an. quant.* was for Augustine to lead Euodius to see the incorporeal nature of his soul and that its greatness, which far surpassed that of the body, lay in its powers, not in its material size.⁸² Augustine is anxious to prove the soul’s incorporeality because the sacred mysteries carry the injunction that ‘whoever desires to restore himself to the state in which he was made by God, that is, like to God, should contemn (*contemnāt*) all corporeal things and renounce this whole world, which as we see is corporeal.’⁸³ Because of this provision, Augustine is convinced that the soul is not a body and he proceeds to give his reasons; therefore strictly following the order of authority then reason, which he was to emphasize throughout his writings.⁸⁴ Euodius is prepared to admit the existence of non-bodily things, for example, the principle of justice, but not that the soul is one of them.⁸⁵ So Augustine embarks on a course of educating him. Euodius believes that the soul is corporeal, like the wind and that it is inside and outside the body: inside because it is the body’s life; outside because the body is sensitive to touch. Because it can sense touch all

⁸⁰ *Nem. nat. hom.* 3 as quoted in Fortin 1954. Fortin has drawn attention to the similarity of this excerpt from *Nem. nat. hom.* 3 with a passage from the Neoplatonist Priscian of Lydia, (both of which mention, and clearly depend on, a common source: Porph. *Symmikta*) and the similarity of both passages with Augustine’s *ep.* 137:11. But against this see Rist 1988.

⁸¹ Nemesius, although Christian, adopts a philosophical rather than theological approach to the nature of man according to Motta 2010:510 and uses incarnation to prove relation between body and soul rather than *vice versa* see Sharples 2008: 84 n. 406. On the body/soul relation as an analogy for the union of the two natures in Christ in *ep.* 137 see Ayres 2008.

⁸² *an. quant.* 3:4; 20:34; 31:64.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 3:4. For Augustine’s continued use of *contemnere* and his view of the body see chapter 5 *infra*.

⁸⁴ See chapter 4 *infra*.

⁸⁵ *an. quant.* 4:5.

over the body, Euodius believes that the soul must be as great as the body in size.⁸⁶ Augustine says there is something related to the question of the soul's extension that he is still not certain about and he hopes that, in dialoguing with Euodius, he might learn something himself.⁸⁷ But before coming to the question of how the soul is present, Augustine has to convince Euodius how the soul is not present⁸⁸ and this means demonstrating that the soul is not a body and therefore cannot be in the body as a body would be in a place. The conversation meanders around two related questions: whether the soul has extension and how the soul, if it has no extension itself, can be extended through the body by some means, like diffusion, in order to sense a stimulus on each part of the body.⁸⁹ Augustine introduces Euodius to a different kind of vision: a seeing in the mind, where images can be seen, which have the characteristics of bodies but the bodies are not actually present to be seen by the eyes of the body.⁹⁰ His purpose is to show Euodius that the soul cannot possibly be confined to the same size as the body because of the countless images the memory contains and also because of the size of some of the images. But Euodius still cannot conceive of the existence of the soul as incorporeal and Augustine has some further training to undertake. He turns to geometry and to lessons in abstract reasoning.⁹¹ By this means, Euodius is successfully brought to acknowledge that the soul is not corporeal but the question remains as to what it is⁹² and whether, even though it is not a body, it has any size and extension in space.⁹³

Augustine points to the powers of the soul to show that the soul's greatness lies in them, rather than in its extent⁹⁴ for, even though it is not corporeal and therefore cannot be

⁸⁶ Ibid. 4:6 for Euodius' view of the soul as wind and Ibid. 5:7 for his view of its greatness.

⁸⁷ Ibid. 5:7. It is clear from the way in which discussion proceeds that this uncertainty is about how to think of the soul's presence in the body see e.g. Ibid. 15:26.

⁸⁸ As Augustine often points out, coming to know what something is not is part of knowledge and a preliminary to knowing what something is. *ord.* 2:16:44; *trin.* 5:1:2; 8:2:3; *Io. eu. tr.* 23:9 and 10; *s.* 21:2; *ciu.* 12:7.

⁸⁹ *an. quant.* 15:26.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 5:8. See chapter 3 *infra*.

⁹¹ *an. quant.* 7:12.

⁹² Augustine defines it as 'a special substance, partaking of reason, adapted to rule the body (*Nam mihi videtur esse substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata.*)' Ibid. 13:22.

⁹³ Ibid. 14:23.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 14:24.

present to the body as in a place, it ‘is present so effectively in the body as to control all the members of the body serves as a pivot of action, so to speak, for all motions of the body.’⁹⁵ The question of how it can be said to be present still remains unanswered and Euodius remains unconvinced that the soul is not extended through the body as in a place: ‘Then, if the soul is diffused through the extent of its own body, how can it be without extension itself? But if it does not have such diffusion, how does it sense a stimulus on any and every part of the body?’⁹⁶ This is something which Augustine, despite having pondered at length, does not feel he has satisfactorily resolved but intends to offer Euodius a provisional answer.⁹⁷ They go off on more detours but Augustine says that their concern for the moment is simply to make clear that the soul is not called small or great with regard to local dimensions.⁹⁸ He suggests they approach the matter by examining the question of how the soul exercises the sense of touch throughout the whole body⁹⁹ and, after yet more diversions, they focus attention on the question, ‘If the soul does not have a spatial magnitude commensurate with that of the body why is it that it feels wherever the body is touched?’¹⁰⁰ After a full discussion of how the soul senses through the body,¹⁰¹ Augustine concludes that the argument from sensation does not prove that the soul is physically extended through the body by means of diffusion, as blood is.¹⁰² Euodius has one more attempt at arguing that the soul is corporeal; this time on the grounds of vivisection which, he argues, shows that the soul is cut into pieces along with the body.¹⁰³

It is time for Augustine to offer Euodius an illustration of how the soul might be present to the body which, although he is not personally convinced by it, he says it is the

⁹⁵ Ibid. 14:23.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 15:26.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 20:34.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 21:35.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 22:40.

¹⁰¹ See next chapter.

¹⁰² *an. quant.* 30:61.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 31:62.

simplest explanation of many and the best choice for Euodius' own case.¹⁰⁴ He likens the soul's presence in the body to that of the meaning and sound of a word:

Then since a word consists of sound and meaning, and the sound has to do with the ears and the meaning with the mind, do you not think that in a word, just as in some living being, the sound is the body and the meaning is, as it were, the soul?¹⁰⁵

A human being then is like a word for a human being consists of body and soul as a word consists of sound and meaning.¹⁰⁶ His concern is to demonstrate that the soul gives life to the body as meaning gives life to a word and, as the sound of the word without the meaning is just formless noise (as can be seen in the case where a word is divided into its letters which individually have no meaning), so the body without life is without form and ceases to exist.¹⁰⁷ He also demonstrates how the whole soul can still be present in the case of vivisection by pointing to the division of a word into two separate words which therefore still have meaning. He does not regard an illustration of this kind as ultimately doing justice to the question of how the soul is present in the body but there he leaves the matter for he recognizes that he has brought Euodius to the limit of his understanding for the moment and that further training will be necessary before he can understand 'whether what certain very learned men say is actually true: namely, that the soul can in no way be divided in itself; but that this is possible by reason of the body.'¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. 31:64.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 32:66.

¹⁰⁶ There is something miraculous even about the sound of words because we can learn from the fact that everyone in common can hear the sound of one voice that we can all hear God's word at the same time but even better we can all hear it all at once because its syllables are not successive. If we can learn this from sound what can we learn from meaning? And what does this say about God's word? With meaning we both utter it and keep it to ourselves (unlike the sounds which are uttered and then gone). When we want to communicate the meaning in our heart we look for sound as a vehicle and we convey the meaning by it. If we can do this with an idea in our mind then this shows the plausibility of the incarnation and the word becoming flesh in order to communicate Himself *s.* 28:4 and 5 (397). Also *ss.* 187:2; 120:3 and 225:3. Augustine develops the distinction between sound and meaning into the *verbum quod foris sonat* and the *verbum quod intus lucet* with the latter, inner word being the word properly so called *trin.* 15:11:20. See chapter 7 *infra*.

¹⁰⁷ *an. quant.* 32:67.

¹⁰⁸ This reference at the end of *an. quant.* 32:68 to what 'very learned men' meant by saying that the soul can in no way be divided in itself but that this was possible by reason of the body' seems to be a reference to the belief in the existence of a world soul as held by Plotinus. For Plotinus' belief see Blumenthal 1971b. Augustine doesn't make a decision on the existence of a world soul but leaves the question open, *an. quant.* 32:69; *imm. an.* 15:24; *mus.* 6:14:43; *retr.* 1:5:3; 1:11:4.

We are therefore left with the unsatisfactory analogy:

The soul, you see, occupied not space, but the body which it controlled. It is quite like to that meaning which, without being extended in time, yet animated, as it were, and integrated all the letters of the noun with their individual pauses and durations.¹⁰⁹

mus.

mus. was written as part of an unfinished and abandoned project to write a commentary on each of the *liberales artes*—grammar (*gramm.*), music (*mus.*), rhetoric (*reth.*) dialectic (*dial.*), geometry (*geom.*), arithmetic (*arithm.*), philosophy, (*phil.*) because a liberal arts education was recognized as leading a person *a corporalibus ad incorporalia*,¹¹⁰ Augustine wanted to arrive at incorporeal things by way of corporeal and wanted to lead others to do the same.¹¹¹ Having been schooled in the liberal arts himself¹¹² and then later a teacher of them,¹¹³ he had been initially convinced that instruction in them would produce devotees ‘more alert and steadfast and better equipped for embracing truth...so that they more ardently seek and more consistently pursue and, in the end, more lovingly cling to that which is called the Happy Life.’¹¹⁴ However, the project had been largely abandoned, unfinished, before he wrote *an. quant.* with only the six surviving books of *mus.* on rhythm left to be written afterwards.¹¹⁵ He had planned to write perhaps another six on melody, but did not have the time once he had become immersed in pastoral duties.¹¹⁶ Books 1 and 6 are an ascent through the different ways in which we encounter music. At the beginning of book 1

¹⁰⁹ *an. quant.* 32:68.

¹¹⁰ This had been Varro’s understanding of the rationale of an education in the liberal arts see Solignac 1958: 122.

¹¹¹ *retr.* 1:6. He completed *gramm.* but that became lost immediately. The others remained unfinished and Augustine lost what he had written on *reth.*, *dial.*, *geom.*, *arithm.*, *phil.* However, *dial.* was rediscovered and although its authorship has been disputed most now agree it is by Augustine. See entry for *dial.* in *AugEncy.*

¹¹² Possidius *vita* 1

¹¹³ *conf.* 4:1:1.

¹¹⁴ *ord.* 1:8:24. See chapter 4 for The Happy Life.

¹¹⁵ *retr.* 1:6.

¹¹⁶ *ep.* 101:3. It is clear from *ep.* 101:4 that, at some time before 408 when the letter was sent, book 6 was found corrected (*emendatum repperi*) but it is unclear what this emendation consisted in, how radical it was or when it took place. The likely extent of emendation is the preface (*mus.* 6:1) and epilogue, the likely date being not long after composition of the original work because Augustine still believes in the importance of the *disciplinae liberales* in seeking truth. For a clear, thorough and critical examination of the scholarly arguments see Jacobsson 2002: xiv-xxviii.

we are introduced to the effect that different metre has on the sound that we hear. The same word may sound differently because it is pronounced differently according to whether it is an adverb or a verb and yet two words which are different may sound similar because they are pronounced in a similar way like *modus* and *bonus*. We can say that the difference is in the sound but it is also a difference heard by us and a difference in the way the word is pronounced. The difference is accounted for by the different metre in the sound and the science of these different metres is the discipline of music which Augustine defines as ‘the science of measuring well’ (*scientia bene modulandi*).¹¹⁷ If good measure has been kept to, the sound we hear will please us by its harmony and appropriateness for the occasion (a dirge at a funeral).¹¹⁸ Augustine ascends through the various ways in which we encounter music-sounding, hearing and performing- all of which involve the senses in some way until he ascends further into the theory of music and turns to the rational analysis of numerically ordered movements and the fixed laws of numbers that underpin them.¹¹⁹ This rational analysis is the subject matter of Books 2 to 5 and, as Augustine himself said, these books are difficult to understand unless one is guided through them by someone with knowledge.¹²⁰ Book 6 reprises and expands the theme of ascent of book 1, developing it in a philosophical and theological context so that the search for the source of the traces of Number¹²¹ found in the things of sense, has become the search for God.¹²² Book 6 was written for those educated in the liberal arts but without faith, to help them to recognize that the purpose of their secular studies is to bring them to the one true God.¹²³ The ascent in book 6 to find the source of music is undertaken by means of an analysis of the metric feet in a verse of one of Ambrose’s hymns, *Deus Creator omnium*.¹²⁴ Five stages of ascent are initially identified: the rhythm in

¹¹⁷ *mus.* 1:2:2; also *mus.* 2:1:1 the province of music is the rational and numerical measure of sounds.

¹¹⁸ *mus.* 1.3.4; *ord.*:2:11:34.

¹¹⁹ *mus.* 1:11:19. Augustine’s adherence to a Pythagorean numerical view of reality is in keeping with his time and his sources would have been Varro and the handbook *Introduction to Arithmetic* by the Neo-Pythagorean, Nicomachus of Gerasa see Solignac 1958. For the revival of interest in this mathematical view in late antiquity see O’Meara 1989.

¹²⁰ *ep.* 101:3.

¹²¹ Augustine notes that what the Greeks call ‘rhythm,’ is called ‘Number’ in Latin *mus.* 3.1.2, *ord.* 2.14.40.

¹²² See Harrison 2011 for a helpful elucidation of the ascent in *mus.* 6 and its theological context.

¹²³ *mus.* 6:1:1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 6:2:2. Augustine often quotes this verse. For attribution to Ambrose and full text of hymn see *conf.*

sound, which is attributed to the body; the rhythm in our sense of hearing, which is a reaction of the soul in the body to the sound; the rhythm in the activity of producing the sound; the rhythm in remembering the sound and finally the rhythm in judging the sound by exercising our natural judicial power (inner sense not rational).¹²⁵ However, when it comes to ordering the stages, there is a problem which stems from the disciple's misunderstanding of the nature of the relationship between the body and soul and the discussion revolves around whether, in sense perception, the soul acts on the body or the body on the soul. This is the context in which Augustine discusses the presence of the soul to the body and in which we find him suggesting that the soul animates the body by means of *intentio*:

I think that our body is not animated by the soul in any other way *nisi intentione facientis*. Nor do I think that the soul is being acted upon in any way by the body, but I think that the soul produces something out of the body and acts in it as in something that is subject to its dominion by God's will.¹²⁶

It is by no means clear what he meant by *intentione facientis*, as evidenced by the attention the phrase has attracted from scholars. There have been five suggested interpretations of its meaning: 'for the purpose of action,'¹²⁷ 'according to the will or intention of its Maker,'¹²⁸ 'by the intentionality of its acts,'¹²⁹ 'through the will or intention of the agent'¹³⁰ and 'through the agent's concentration.'¹³¹

9:12:32.

¹²⁵ *mus.* 6:4:5. Later on in the dialogue Augustine adds a sixth by distinguishing the approval or disapproval of a rhythm which is heard (judicial) from the evaluation of whether or not it is right to enjoy the rhythm and this is the level of the rhythms of reason itself. *mus.* 6.9.24.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 6.5.9 tr. Jacobsson 2002). This is not Augustine's first use of *intentio* for which see *imm. an.* but his first use of *intentio* in the context of the soul's animation of the body and in the context of ascent.

¹²⁷ Thonnard BA 7, 517 n. 78 referred to in, and supported by, Teske 2008: 205.

¹²⁸ Colleran ACW 9: 219 n. 123. Also seen as a possible interpretation by Thonnard BA 7, 379 (referred to Teske op.cit. 205) but this interpretation is generally disregarded Pizzani, U. 1990: 43.

¹²⁹ Rohmer, 1954: 494.

¹³⁰ Jacobsson op. cit. 27 in translating *nisi intentione facientis* as 'through the will of an agent' is following translations of Bettetini and O'Daly.

¹³¹ O'Daly 1987: 85.

The soul was given to the body to control and direct it (*quod agendo atque administrando corpori anima data sit*),¹³² and it is the soul's job, acting as God's intermediary, to ensure that the body fulfils its potential by transferring form to the body which the soul receives from God.¹³³ In *mus.* Augustine describes this as the soul imprinting rhythms into the body after having received them from God (*sed de illis, credo, quos non a corpore accipit anima, sed acceptos a summo Deo ipsa potius imprimit corpori.*)¹³⁴ What he is trying to emphasize is that the soul acts on the body rather than the other way round. The soul is not subject to the body as matter as to an artificer; it is not the body that creates things in the soul but the soul that creates in the body and the extensive use of *facere* and its cognates in the passages leading up to *nisi intentione facientis*, where the discussion centres round whether the body creates rhythms in the soul or *vice versa*¹³⁵ is related to this issue and confirms that *facientis* refers to the soul rather than God; the point being that the soul acts on the body rather than *vice versa* (*facientis* as opposed to *factis*).¹³⁶

With regard to the meaning of *nisi intentione facientis*, Rohmer has argued that this famously difficult phrase becomes crystal clear if understood in the light of what Augustine does with the Stoic theory of sense perception. According to Rohmer, *intentio* is the translation of the Greek term συνέντασις, which was one of the concepts in the Stoic theory of sense perception. Rohmer argues that in his theory of sense perception, Augustine clarifies and spiritualizes the Stoic theory of sense perception and thus heralded the Scholastic doctrine of intentionality as he sought to provide a solution to the problem of how to transcend

¹³² *an. quant.* 36:81.

¹³³ *imm. an.* 15:24; *retr.* 1:11:4.

¹³⁴ *mus.* 6:4:7.

¹³⁵ *mus.* 6:4:6. The following references are to Jacobssen, 20,3 *facientes factis*; *Ibid.* 6:4:7 :20,8 *factis facientes*; 20,10 *faciunt* ; 20, 12 *faciunt; factis*; 20,14 *in anima fit; in ea fit*; 20,18 *faciant/fiant*; 20, 20 *Mirare potius, quod facere aliquid in anima corpus potest*; 22,11 *in ea fit, quam omne quod fit in corpore*; 22, 17 *corpore facta est*; 22,19 *in corpore fit*; 22, 20 *in anima fit*; 24,5 *fiunt/fiant*; 24, 6 *facientes/factis*; *mus.* 6:5:8: 24,19 *nisi aliquid a corpore in anima fieri*; 24,24 *fiunt in anima*. Note also a similar predominance of *facere* and cognates and the similarity of language in *imm. an.* 8:14 (*At si quod vere dicitur, factum est corpus; aliquo faciente factum est, nec eo inferiore.*)

¹³⁶ This is given added weight by Vanni Rovighi's suggestion that the source of *nisi intentione facientis* is a passage of Plotinus in which he states, with regard to the soul, that it: 'is a matter of power, not of being affected in some way but of being capable of and doing the work to which it has been assigned (τέτακται ἐργάσασθαι.)' *Enn* 4:6:2. See Vanni Rovighi referred to in Martino 2000.

sensation, namely through the intentional act of the soul and that this intentionality is the nature of the soul's acts towards the body. Rohmer thinks, therefore, that *Ego enim ab anima hoc corpus animari non puto, nisi intentione facientis* is best translated as 'J'estime que l'âme anime le corps par l'intentionnalité de ses actes.'¹³⁷ This certainly captures Augustine's view of the nature of the soul's activity in the body and it is possible that this is an early indication of the direction of Augustine's thinking on *intentio* and in which it will develop in *Gn. litt.* and *trin.* but it is more likely that Rohmer is reading back into the earlier work what was actually a later development in Augustine's thinking.¹³⁸ Also, arguably, to translate *intentio* in Augustine by the word 'intentionality' is to import back a technical term used by the Scholastics to describe a doctrine of intentionality, which may well have its seeds in Augustine's treatment of *intentio* in *trin.*, but which cannot be taken back any earlier.¹³⁹

The majority view is that *intentio* in the passage expresses volitional activity of the soul. This view derives support both from Augustine's previous use of the word *intentio* in *imm. an.* and from his Platonic sources. *Intentio* is used several times in *imm. an.* of the soul's volitional activity in relation to the movement of the body:

The *intentio* to act lies in the present (*intentio ad agendum praesentis est temporis*).¹⁴⁰

The *intentio* that is present of bringing something to an end (*intentio peragendi quae*

¹³⁷ Rohmer 1954: 494. 'Il a forgé lui-même l'une des pièces maîtresses de l'épistémologie médiévale, en mettant à jour l'acte intentionnel de l'âme.'

¹³⁸ Martino 2000: 185 thinks Rohmer is being anachronistic in this.

¹³⁹ Spiegelberg says that, until the beginning of the High Scholastic period, *intentio* had been used in the ordinary practical sense and it was only when the word *intentio* was used to translate the Arabic words *ma'nā* and *ma'qūl*, ('meaning' or 'concept,') in a Latin translation of Arabic philosophy that *intentio* also came to assume a technical meaning. This gave rise, he says, to the development of various theories of intentionality, see Spiegelberg 1976: 114. Caston 2001 disputes 'the standard narrative' that intentionality dates back only as far as the Latin translation, and assimilation, of the Arabic tradition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Instead he argues that the concept of intentionality (that feature in virtue of which our mental states are of or about something or more generally possess content) has its origins much further back in ancient history, that Augustine is the bridge between the ancient and modern traditions and that many of the elements of the concept of intentionality and the terminology used to express the concept, including the term *intentio* can already be seen in Augustine. It is Caston's examination of the role of *intentio* in *trin.* which convinces him that, as *intentio* is responsible for selecting the objects of the mind's attention, it is also responsible for the content of our mental state and, in this sense, should justifiably be included as part of the history of intentionality.

¹⁴⁰ *imm. an.* 3:3.

praesens est).¹⁴¹

The *intentio* of the mover is led towards the end that it wants for the soul which it moves (*moventis intentio perducendi ad finem quem volet corpus quod movet*)¹⁴²

That *intentio* to complete which evidently remains unchanged (*illa intentio perficiendi quam immutatam manere manifestum est*).¹⁴³

Imm. an. 3:4 is particularly apposite because there Augustine makes the point that it is *intentio* that moves the members of the workman and the wood or stone that he uses: the same illustration that he uses in *mus.*¹⁴⁴ It is clear from these passages in *imm. an.* that Augustine was using *intentio* similarly in *mus.* of the soul's volitional activity in which it acted in the body for a desired purpose.¹⁴⁵ What though does it mean to speak of the volitional power of the soul's animating presence of the body? Does it mean any more than that the general nature of the soul's activity in the body is intentional and directive? The real significance of describing this, the lowest power of the soul as intentional, is first, the emphasis that it places on the unity of the soul, for volitional activity is rational activity and it therefore affirms that it is the rational soul that animates the body, not a separate lower animating principle. It also suggests that the soul has a natural inclination and will towards the body, a view which later Augustine expressly affirms¹⁴⁶ and one for which he found support in Neoplatonism.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² *imm. an.* 3:4.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ *mus.* 6:5:8.

¹⁴⁵ The passages in *imm. an.* will be considered again in chapter 3 in relation to overcoming the *distentio* of time and memory with regard to the soul's activity of sense perception and *intentio* as purposed end is discussed in chapter 4.

¹⁴⁶ *Gn. litt.* 3:16:25; 7:27:38. Also *Gn. litt.* 12:35:68 'there is ingrained in the soul a kind of natural appetite for administering the body, and that as long as it does not have a body at its disposal, it is somehow or other held back by this unsatisfied appetite from pressing on with undivided attention to that highest heaven.'

¹⁴⁷ Porphyry *sent.* 3 (ὄταν βούληται) and 27 (ὄπου βούλεται καὶ ὡς θέλει and ὄπου βούλεται). Brisson 2005: 385 says, the idea of will is completely foreign to Plotinus in this context: Re Plotinus: *Enn.* 4:3:9:21-3 'If it (soul) intends to go forth (μελλοι –optative indicating a wish), it will produce a place for itself, and so a body. But this is not voluntary, more of an irresistible impulse for, at *Enn.* 4:3:13:17-21, Plotinus says that the souls go neither willingly nor because they are sent nor is the voluntary element in their going like deliberate choice but like a spontaneous jumping or a passionate natural desire of sexual union or as some men are moved unreasonably to noble deeds: However the idea of inclination towards the body, which is represented by cognates of ῥέπειν, is common to Porphyry and Plotinus. For references in *Sent.* and in Plotinus see Brisson 2005: 588. The expression τῆ πρὸς τι ῥοπῆ is also used by Plato and Aristotle and comes from Plato *Phaedo* 247 b4 (Dörrie

Gn. litt.

It is not until *Gn. litt.* that Augustine uses the term *intentio*, to mean concentration as opposed to diffusion, to describe the way in which the soul is present to the body.¹⁴⁸ *Gn. litt.* was Augustine's fourth attempt at a literal¹⁴⁹ interpretation of the creation narrative of Genesis, and is a thorough literal commentary in twelve books of Gen. 1-3.¹⁵⁰ The first 3 books deal with the works of creation and God's rest on the seventh day as set out in the first creation myth in Gen. 1:1-31. The fourth book deals with God's rest on the seventh day. The fifth book explains the meaning and difference of the two accounts of creation in Genesis. Books 6-11 deal with the second creation myth and book 12 is a treatise on different kinds of vision.¹⁵¹ Books 6 and 7 concern the meaning of the words in Gen. 2:7 'and the man was made into a living soul.' Book 6 is about the creation of the human body and book 7 is about the creation of the human soul.

In book 7, Augustine adduces arguments from the Catholic faith, from medical science and from an examination of human nature to show that the soul is something different from the body and is incorporeal. He first of all repudiates the idea held by some, including the Manichees, that because God breathed into man, the soul is to be regarded as part of the substance of God; repudiating it on the grounds that the soul is mutable and God is immutable. He argues by drawing an analogy with the way the human soul moves the body to enable it to breathe though, like all analogies, there is dissimilarity, for God is not in the world as its

1959: 88).

¹⁴⁸ O'Daly 1987: 85 says of *intentio* in *mus.* 6:5:9 that it means 'concentration' but he had previously noted (44) that *intentio* is being used in this passage in a volitional sense, which he contrasts with its tensional sense in *orig.an.* 2:4 (see *infra*).

¹⁴⁹ By literal, he meant historical, *Gn. litt.* 1:1; *retr.* 1:18:17; 2:24. In his first attempt, *Gn. adu. Man.*, written expressly against the Manichees, and in defence of the Old Testament (*retr.* 1:10:1; *Gn. litt.* 8:2:5), he lapsed into an allegorical interpretation because, at that time, he could not see how all of Genesis could be understood in a literal sense (*Gn. litt.* 8:2:5) and he did not dare to expound such great mysteries literally (*retr.* 1:18:17). In 393-4 he had another go in *Gn. litt. inp.*, but again gave up the task as being too difficult Ibid. Then in *conf.* 12 he undertook the fairly limited task of the literal interpretation of Gen. 1:1.

¹⁵⁰ Written and revised over a lengthy period from, at the earliest 399 to, at the latest, 416 when the work was published. On dating see WSA 1/13, 164. It was begun after *trin.* but finished sooner *retr.* 2:24.

¹⁵¹ Details of each book taken from WSA 1/13, 164.

animating principle, like the soul is, in the body, but is removed from it.¹⁵² He then considers what kind of material the soul is made from during which he repudiates the doctrine of transmigration of souls from animals to humans, and *vice versa*, which was held by some philosophers¹⁵³ and by the Manichees.¹⁵⁴ Augustine confirms that the soul is not made out of any one of the elements of which bodies are made but that it rules and governs the body by means of the finer of these elements-light and air.¹⁵⁵ He concludes that the meaning of the passage ‘the man was made into a live soul’ is that ‘he began to have sensation in the body, which is in fact the surest sign of flesh being animated and alive.’¹⁵⁶

Book 8 is about the nature of paradise, the command given to Adam and how God governs His Creation. Augustine discussed the question of how the body moves in *Gn. litt.* to illustrate the twofold working of Divine Providence: by natural and voluntary activity.¹⁵⁷ In order to understand how God is not contained in place but the whole of Him is present everywhere at the same time, Augustine, in accordance with his normal practice, refers the reader to an examination of their own human nature to consider how the soul governs the body. Although it might look as though the soul moves with the body, because we are unable to distinguish the two, in fact it doesn’t and Augustine explains how the will (*voluntas*) moves the body, while remaining itself, unmoving. In the course of this explanation, he says:

The soul is not a corporeal substance and does not fill the body in space as water does a skin bottle or a sponge, but in a mysterious way by its incorporeal command it is united to the body which it vivifies, and by this command it rules the body through *quadam intentio*, not a corporeal mass (*cum anima non sit natura corporea, nec locali spatio corpus impleat, sicut aqua utrum sive spongiam; sed miris modis ipso incorporeo nutu commixta sit vivificando corpori, quo et imperat corpori, quadam intentione non mole*).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵² *Gn. litt.* 7:3:4-7:4:6; 7:12:19.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* 7:9:13-7:10:15.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 7:11:16.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 7:15:21; 7:19:25; 7:20:26.

¹⁵⁶ See next chapter.

¹⁵⁷ *Gn. litt.* 8:19:38; 8:9:17-8. On how the soul moves body see *Gn. litt.* 8:21:41-2. Also *an. quant.* 22:38; *Gn. litt.* 7:18:24.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 8:21:42. *Nutus* literally means ‘nod’ but was also used by Cicero to mean both ‘a downward tendency, or motion in the sense of gravity and command, will or pleasure, see Lewis and Short for references. This is

He affirms that the soul is not present to the body, as in a place and, therefore, the familiar analogies used to describe the conjunction of two bodily substances - that of liquid in a container¹⁵⁹ and water permeating a sponge¹⁶⁰ - are inadequate. Instead the soul is united to the body *ipso incorporeo nutu*, by which it also governs the body. It carries out its rule of the body *quadam intentione*, which is contrasted with bodily mass (*mole*). How, therefore, should we understand *intentio* in this passage? Hill translates *quadam intentione* as ‘with a kind of concentration’ noting that Augustine clearly lacked the words to say how the soul moves the body.¹⁶¹ Burnell also translates it as ‘a certain concentration’ and says that by *intentio* here Augustine means a conscious act of willing.¹⁶² Hammond-Taylor translates it as ‘through an influence,’ likening its use here to that in *orig. an 2:4 (quaedam vitali intentione)*; meaning that activity by which the soul vivifies the body and distinguishing this use from *intentio* in *Gn. litt. 7:19:25* and *Gn. litt. 12:13:27* where, he says, it means ‘attention.’¹⁶³ O’Daly does not translate *intentio*, when he quotes this passage, pointing up the fact that, in his view, it is difficult, in this instance, to distinguish the tensional and volitional components of *intentio*.¹⁶⁴ In our view the volitional component is taken care of by Augustine’s use of the word *nutus*¹⁶⁵ and what he meant to convey by the word *intentio* here was concentration as opposed to diffusion. *Intentio* in this sense conveys the cohesive nature of the soul’s activity at this level where its job is to unify the parts of the body and keep it together as one.

Augustine was likely to have been influenced by the Stoics in this use of *intentio* for *intentio* is the Latin translation of the Greek word τόπος, which, in Stoic philosophy, meant

therefore the perfect word for Augustine to convey both the voluntary and commanding nature of the soul’s inclination towards the body.

¹⁵⁹ *utrem impleat an. quant. 5:7; Enn. 4:3:20*; Porphyry has a rather graphic example, ‘nor is it contained in body in the same way as a bladder contains something liquid, or wind’ *sent. 28*.

¹⁶⁰ Remember that this is one of the ways Augustine himself used to imagine the relationship of God and creation as a huge sea soaking a sponge in all its parts *conf. 7:5:7*.

¹⁶¹ WSA 1/13, 370 n. 48.

¹⁶² Burnell. 2005: 28.

¹⁶³ Hammond Taylor ACW 42, 261 n. 100 and 248 n. 46. See chapter 2 n. 93 for comment.

¹⁶⁴ O’Daly 1987: 44.

¹⁶⁵ See n. 158 *supra*.

the vital tensional movement through which *pneuma* held each individual thing together and made the universe cohere as a whole. It was *τόνος* which gave each thing its form, shape and unity.¹⁶⁶ Augustine may also have been influenced by Aristoxenes, a pupil of Aristotle, reported by Cicero as believing the soul ‘to be a special tuning up, an *intentionem quondam* of the natural body analogous to that which is called harmony in vocal and instrumental music.’¹⁶⁷ Although Augustine rejected the theory that the soul was the harmony of the body,¹⁶⁸ its function was still to maintain the harmony of the body.

orig. an.

The clearest statement of how the soul is present to the body by a kind of *intentio*, in contrast to diffusion, is to be found in *orig. an.*, Augustine’s book-length letter to Jerome on the origin of the soul.¹⁶⁹ Augustine tells us he wrote this book to Jerome to consult him on the question of the origin of the soul and that he did not resolve the matter¹⁷⁰ but, at the end of the day, he did not regard such lack of knowledge as a danger to salvation.¹⁷¹ The important thing was the doctrine of original sin and any teaching on the origin of the soul which conflicted with this must be incorrect.¹⁷² This was partly why he decided to publish his letter to Jerome; to advise the reader either not to ask questions about the soul’s origin or, if they must, to allow for a resolution of the question in accordance with catholic teaching on original sin in

¹⁶⁶ Hahn 1977: 165-7. In *ciu.* 13:18 this has become God’s will that holds everything together on a cosmic level and prevents disintegration. For Stoic influences on Augustine see Colish 1985/2.

¹⁶⁷ *Tusc.* 1:10:20. Aristoxenes’ view also mentioned by Lact., one of Augustine’s forbears in the African Church *inst. diu.* 7:13; *op. dei.* 16:13. Augustine though may have become familiar with Aristoxenus’ views through Aristides see Colish 1978.

¹⁶⁸ *imm. an.* 2:2. The view that the soul’s function was to preserve the body’s harmony must be distinguished from the view that the soul was the harmony of the body. If it was the harmony of the body then it wouldn’t be able to withdraw in introspection *imm. an.* 10:17. The view of the soul as the harmony of the body had also been rejected by Plato (*Phaedo*), Aristotle (*de anima*) and Plotinus *Enn.* 4:7:8.

¹⁶⁹ *orig. an.* written 415 at about the same time, therefore, as *Gn. litt.* was published. Augustine called it a book when he came to review his work, *retr.* 2:45.

¹⁷⁰ *retr.* 2:45; Augustine never resolved the question of the origin of the soul, *retr.* 1:1:3. There was no clear scriptural authority to assist in deciding which of the four theories traditionally put forward was correct and therefore Augustine is unable to endorse any particular one *ep.* 148:7. The four traditional theories of origin are discussed in *lib. arb.* 3.20.56-3.21.59. In fact, the origin of the soul was such a great mystery that it was better always to be in pursuit of this question as long as we are in this life than at some point to presume we have discovered an answer *ep.* 140:12:32.

¹⁷¹ *c. Iul.* 5:4:17.

¹⁷² *c. ep. Pel.* 3:10:26.

infants.¹⁷³ What Augustine wanted from Jerome was an answer to the question: Where does the soul, even the soul of an infant, contract the guilt that requires baptism? Augustine complained that Jerome was sending him people to instruct but he didn't know how to instruct them with regard to the soul's origin and this is what he wanted Jerome's help with. The question of origin had become more pressing during the Pelagian controversy when Augustine was forced to confront and justify the catholic doctrine of original sin.¹⁷⁴ He found the doctrine hard to square with the theory that individual souls were created at the time of birth, which he knew was Jerome's view, and so he sought Jerome's advice on which of the four traditional theories of embodiment was consistent with the catholic teaching on original sin.¹⁷⁵

Before setting out the question he wanted answered, he sought to reassure Jerome that he wasn't entirely ignorant on matters regarding the soul but that he knew certain things: that it was immortal, in the sense that it was always life of some kind, even though it suffered a kind of death by turning away from God; that it was not a part of God because, if it were, it would be immutable and incorruptible whereas anyone can see, from examining himself, that it is mutable and corruptible; that it was incorporeal. It is in setting out his argument for the incorporeal nature of the soul (not because Jerome doesn't believe it but to show how he, Augustine, came to believe it) that we find the following passage with regard to the soul:

It is of course stretched out through the whole body that it animates, not by a local diffusion but by a certain vital *intentione*. For it is at the same time present as a whole through all the body's parts, not smaller in smaller parts and larger in larger parts, but more intensely in one place and less intensely in another, both whole in all parts and whole in the individual parts (*Per totum quippe corpus quod animat, non locali diffusione, sed quadam vitali intentione porrigitur: nam per omnes eius particulas tota simul adest, nec minor in minoribus, et in maioribus maior; sed alicubi intentius, alicubi remissius, et in omnibus tota, et in singulis tota est.*)¹⁷⁶

Here is a very clear statement from Augustine that the soul is present in the body *quadam*

¹⁷³ *retr.* 2:45(72).

¹⁷⁴ All four traditional theories had equally well suited his fight against the Manichees' conception of the existence of an evil substance in opposition to God, *orig. an.* 3:7 and 7:19.

¹⁷⁵ *orig. an.* 4.10.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* 2.4.

vitali intentione as opposed to being stretched out through the body by diffusion. This is how it is able to be simultaneously present in the whole of the body and whole in each of the body's parts. If the soul were a body, then if it were to sense something in one part, only that part would be affected. So it is clear, says Augustine, that it is the same soul present throughout. It is also clear that the soul can sense a touch on part of the body without leaving the rest of the body: this is proved by the fact that those other parts of the soul continue to live.¹⁷⁷ The argument from the sense of touch does not prove that the soul was diffused through the body like blood, as Euodius sought to argue in *an. quant.*¹⁷⁸ but can be used, as here, to prove the incorporeal soul's animation by *intentio*, whatever that might mean. Teske says it is clear what Augustine means by diffusion but less clear what he means by *intentio* in this context. There have been various suggestions: It means 'a kind of tension on the basis that Augustine is evoking the Stoic doctrine of τόπος';¹⁷⁹ or 'a certain vital influence' simply meaning that activity by which the soul vivifies the body and to be distinguished from *intentio* in the sense of attention;¹⁸⁰ or conversely, that it does mean 'a kind of vital attention.'¹⁸¹ Teske himself translates it as 'a certain vital intention,' by which he says he means 'a kind of vital attention.' He first notes the link of *intentio* with incorporeality in *conf. 7:1:2*, where it is clear that Augustine is referring to an activity through which images are formed. Teske then refers to *imm. an. 10:17* where Augustine refers to the mind withdrawing *intentio* from the senses and suggests this is a withdrawal of attention. Finally he refers to the passage from *mus.* which he regards as particularly apposite because, like *orig.an. 2:4*, *intentio* occurs in the context of a discussion of the soul's activities of animation and sensation. Although he regards the meaning of *intentio* in *mus.* as ambiguous, he concludes that it refers to the soul's presence to the body for the purpose of action and in the case of the activity of sensation this action amounts to a heightened attention to the body. He therefore supports Gilson's view of sensation as an intensification of animation and reaches his conclusion of the meaning of

¹⁷⁷ Teske 2008: 212 says Augustine's argument in *imm an 16:25* that part of body reacting to hurt toe proves that part of soul in toe is also in part that reacts does not prove that parts of soul in parts of body that do not react are same as parts in hurt toe however what it does prove is that soul is not extended as a body would be.

¹⁷⁸ *an. quant.* 30:61.

¹⁷⁹ O'Daly 1987: 44.

¹⁸⁰ ACW 2, 248 n. 46.

¹⁸¹ Gilson 1961: 48; FOTC 4, 210 n. 75.

intentio here on that basis.¹⁸²

In coming to a view of the meaning of *intentio* in *orig. an 2:4*, we note that, as in *Gn. litt.*, we find *intentio* contrasted with diffusion and the suggestion that Augustine meant to convey a sense of tension is supported by the further contrast in the passage between *intentius* and *remissius*. Therefore, whatever else *intentio* might mean, it certainly suggests that the soul is present, animating the body by means of varying degrees of tension, or when applied to the mind this translates as varying degrees of mental effort.¹⁸³ As to whether or not *intentio* also means attention in this passage we will reserve judgement pending a closer look at sensation in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In the wake of his revolutionary discovery of the Platonic notion of incorporeal existence, Augustine's early works see him busily working out the implications, both in terms of the relationship between the body and soul and also in terms of the nature of God. One of his preoccupations, made explicit at the beginning of *conf.*, was how God could be simultaneously whole everywhere and in each part of his creation, regardless of its size.¹⁸⁴ The Manichean view of a corporeal God, which Augustine was engaged in refuting, meant that God could be split into an infinite number of particles and different parts of his creation would have different and unequal parts of Him depending on their physical magnitude.¹⁸⁵ Augustine came to describe God as a light, but a different kind of light, not a light diffused in the air, but a light which no space could contain.¹⁸⁶ God does not fill a smaller part of the

¹⁸² Gilson 1961: 48. See chapter 2 *infra*.

¹⁸³In addition to the Stoic doctrine of *τόνοσ* which we have already noted underlies Augustine's thought here, it is worth noting Cic. *Tusc 2:23*: 'For the soul has certain analogies to the body: weights are more easily carried by straining every nerve of the body: relax the strain and the weights are too heavy; quite similarly the soul by its intense effort (*animus intentione sua*) throws off all the pressure of burdens, but by relaxation of effort (*remissione*) is so weighed down that it cannot recover itself.' A passage Augustine certainly knew.

¹⁸⁴ *conf.* 1:3:3. See O'Donnell *conf.* 1:3:3 for other references in Augustine's works; for sources and other fourth century Christian parallels.

¹⁸⁵ *c. ep. Man.* 19:21; *ep.* 236.2.

¹⁸⁶ *conf.* 7:10:16; 10:6:8 as opposed to *conf.* 7:1:2 where he thought of God as light diffused through air.

world with a smaller part of himself and a larger part with a larger part of himself. ‘He is able to be whole everywhere and to be contained in no place; he is able to come without leaving where he was and is able to go away without abandoning where he came from.’¹⁸⁷ That this is so is clear from the soul’s presence in the body which is everywhere whole and whole in each part. In this chapter we have seen how Augustine has struggled to understand and express this; how he has played with the analogy of the sound of a word and its meaning; how he has dismissed all analogies which would suggest the soul is present by place or diffusion, finally settling on the word *intentio*. *Intentio* did not provide the answer to the question of how to regard the conjunction of the soul and body to produce a living soul, which Augustine continued to regard as ‘utterly amazing and beyond our powers of comprehension,’¹⁸⁸ but it was a term which allowed Augustine to express the idea of how an incorporeal soul could be present in a body and act in relation to that body and also showed that this presence is by varying degrees of tension or attention; that there is a volitional element and that it has a unifying function. This function of *colligit in unum*; maintaining a harmony between the body’s parts, both in health and appearance, where *intentio* acts at the psychological level to achieve what God’s will does on a cosmic level, namely holds everything together and prevents disintegration, will be a constant at each stage of ascent: *intentio* collects together the components of sense perception; overcomes the *distentio* of time; gathers together images and/or ideas to form a thought process¹⁸⁹ and finally gathers together Augustine from the multiplicity in which he is lost and returns him to the unity which he has lost.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ *ep.* 137:4-5.

¹⁸⁸ *ciu.* 21:10:1.

¹⁸⁹ *conf.* 10:11:18.

¹⁹⁰ *conf.* 2:1:1; 10:29:40; 11:29:39; 12:16:23.

Chapter Two: *Sensus*

The unified process of drawing and shooting was divided into sections: grasping the bow, nocking the arrow, raising the bow, drawing and remaining at the point of highest tension, loosing the shot.¹

So, go up another level and see what power the soul has in the senses, where life is understood more clearly and obviously. . . . Look at what power the soul has in the senses and in that mobility which belongs to things that are therefore more evidently alive, by reason of which we can have nothing in common with those living things which are fixed by roots. The soul directs itself (*intendit se*) to the sense of touch and through it feels and distinguishes hot and cold, rough and smooth, hard and soft, light and heavy. Then again, it distinguishes countless varieties of savors, odors, sounds, and shapes, by tasting, smelling, hearing and seeing. And in all these the soul seeks and selects whatever suits the nature of its own body; it rejects and shuns what is unsuited. At certain intervals it withdraws itself from the senses, and giving them time off, so to say, gives their activities an opportunity to recuperate their strength, the while it lumps together in manifold combinations, and mulls over, the images of realities it has taken in through the senses; and all this constitutes sleep and dreams. Frequently too, it takes advantage of the mobility present to delight in making gestures and unusual motions and without effort it sets the parts of the body in harmony (*et sine labore ordinat membrorum concordiam.*) For sexual union it does what it can, and by companionship and love it strives to forge two natures into one. It cooperates not merely to beget offspring, but also to foster it, to protect and nourish it. It attaches itself by habit to things among which the body acts and by which it sustains the body, and from these, as if they were of its own constitution, it is reluctant to be separated; and this force of habit which is not terminated even by separation from the realities themselves and by the passing of time, is called memory. But again, no one denies that the soul can produce all these effects even in brute animals.²

The second stage of ascent, and the second power of the soul in *an. quant.*, corresponds to the second degree of soul identified by Varro, which brings with it, sensibility.³ This degree of soul is shared with other animals, but not with plants, although some people with ‘a certain kind of utterly crude perversion which is more wooden than the very trees it takes under its wing,’ believe ‘that the vine suffers pain when a grape is plucked and such things not only feel it when cut, but even that they see and hear.’⁴ This comment was clearly

¹ Herrigel 1976:35.

² *an. quant.* 33:71.

³ *ciu.* 7:23.

⁴ *an. quant.* 33:71.

aimed at the Manichees who believed in the sensibility of the plant soul.⁵ Augustine begins to use the word ‘soul’ (*anima*) at this stage because it has sensation and it is the spontaneous movement of the body which proves, above all, that the body is animated and alive⁶ and so life is more obvious.⁷

The soul’s second stage functions

Some of the soul’s functions are similar to those at the first stage except that, now, there is a feeling element involved. So reproduction isn’t mechanical but occurs as a result of lovemaking, and the soul is not only concerned with the growth and nourishment of its own body or with reproduction *per se* but also with the care for those it reproduces. As at the first stage, the soul is concerned with the harmony of the body but, at this stage, it is not just a question of preserving the health and harmony of a stationary body but of effortlessly setting in harmony the parts of a body in motion (*et sine labore ordinat membrorum concordiam*).⁸ The second stage also includes several activities of the soul, which are dependent on, what Augustine calls, *sensus*: sensation; a non-rational judging of sense data; dreaming⁹ and memory of the kind we share with beasts, ‘for swallows come back to their nests the next year, and it is very truly said of goats: “And even goats remembering return to their sheds.” “And a dog is said to have recognized the hero, his master, already forgotten by men.”’¹⁰

⁵ *mor.* 2:15:36f; *Gn. litt. inp.* 5:24; *conf.* 3:10:18; *haer.* 46:12. They also believed that plants had rationality *mor.* 2:17:55.

⁶ *imm. an.* 3:3; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:8:10; *Gn. litt.* 7:16:22; *Io. eu. tr.* 19:12. At the first level where there is no power of perception, the soul is normally just called ‘life’ *Gn. litt. inp.* 5:24. Augustine explains that sometimes when we use the word ‘*anima*’ we should understand it to include the mind (*mens*) and at other times ‘mind’ is excluded from it in which case it applies to those activities we share with the lower animals, *diu. qu.* 83:7. Generally, he observes that Latin writers use the word *animus* to distinguish rational soul from *anima* as being those activities we share in common with animals, *trin.* 15:1:1. For more on *anima/animus* terminology, see O’Daly 1987:7-9.

⁷ *an. quant.* 33:71.

⁸ Augustine’s choice of vocabulary is significant. There is a close relationship between order and peace (*ordinat... concordiam*). If bodily peace is lacking it has a knock-on effect, affecting the peace of the soul; the whole human being; communal peace and our peace with God, *ciu.* 19:14. In keeping the body in order, the soul emulates its Creator who imposes order on everything by His law, *conf.* 1:7:12.

⁹ The soul dreams when it withdraws from the senses to give them a rest. Augustine suggests that sleep (what he calls the semblance of death) is necessary because the body is corruptible i.e. it wouldn’t have been necessary before the Fall. People who regularly make a practice of staying awake at night are learning how to live like angels and he regards this practice of keeping vigil (of which he is a strong advocate) as a spiritual exercise in which we flex our spiritual muscles, *s.* 221:3.

¹⁰ *mus.* 1.4.8 containing quotes from Vergil *Georgics* 3:316 and Homer *Odyssey* 17:291; Homer’s story of the

This is a memory of bodily things and acquired through force of habit.¹¹

The process of sensation (awareness of pleasure and pain) which occurs in the body and the process of sense perception (interpretation of pleasure and pain) which occurs in the soul are different and yet early Greek thinkers did not always distinguish them clearly; there was only one term αἴσθησις which covered both processes. Plotinus was the first to distinguish clearly between the two,¹² and Augustine followed suit. In Augustine's view, awareness through the senses could be believed, perceived and assessed and, if assessed correctly, would count as knowledge.¹³ Hence, with the right attitude towards them, the senses can act as a first level of perception and stepping-stone on the ascent to God.¹⁴ However, to convert sensations into knowledge requires the exercise of higher powers of the soul.¹⁵ If we don't utilize these, then we are no better than beasts or children, for whom the activity of sensation is an end in itself.¹⁶ The problem for the human soul is that the habit of paying attention to the senses increases our attachment to them: our desire to seek pleasure through them and our anxiety to avoid pain. It also increases our tendency to think only in material terms.¹⁷

dog remembering his master after twenty years is also referred to in *an. quant.* 26:50; 28:54.

¹¹ Also *conf.* 10:17:26.

¹² Blumenthal 1971a: 67-8.

¹³ *doctr. chr.* 2:27, 41.

¹⁴ *sol.* 1:4:9. We gather things from many sources through our senses and commit them to memory, these are things we believe 'But to know that is something else....I rather employed the senses in this matter as I use a ship. For when they had carried me to the place to which I was going and I had there dismissed them and when I had began to turn these things over in my thought..one can more easily navigate a ship on dry land than one can perceive mathematics by means of the senses though they do seem to help a bit those who are beginning to learn.' Also *uid. deo* 3, 8 'Our knowledge is made up of things seen and things believed..knowledge of course is attributed to the mind if it retains something perceived and known, whether through the senses of the body or through the mind itself;' *trin.* 15:12:21 'Far be it from us to doubt the truth of things we have learnt through the senses of the body.'

¹⁵ *uid. deo.* 16, 38 'those things that are seen through the body cannot be held as knowledge unless the mind is present to receive such things reported to it;' *uid. deo* 17,41 'interior eyes judge what is seen by the exterior eyes.'

¹⁶ *an. quant.* 28:54; *Io. eu. tr.* 15:21; *diu. qu.* 83:64:7; *ciu.* 22:24.

¹⁷ Augustine affirms the liveliness, usefulness and necessity of sensation provided it is not accompanied by sensual desire at the expense of the love of wisdom *c. Iul.* 4:14:65.

In *an. quant.*, and following Aristotle and Varro, Augustine separated the animating and sensing powers of the soul, yet he regarded them as being very closely related and, indeed elsewhere, he talks about them as one power: ‘the lower power by which it (the soul) holds the body together and has sensation in the body.’¹⁸ We saw in the last chapter when we considered the problem of how the soul can be present to the body if it is not extended in space, that Augustine had recourse to the facts of sensation in order to help him to his conclusion that the soul was present by a kind of *intentio*. Gilson’s view was that this meant ‘a kind of attention’ because this was the nature of the soul’s activity in sensation; sensation being an intensification of its animating activity.¹⁹ We withheld judgement on this question, pending consideration of Augustine’s account of sensation, to see whether the facts support Gilson’s interpretation of *quadam intentione* as a ‘kind of attention,’ in addition to the other meanings it bears. We will consider Augustine’s use of *intentio* in sensation, mainly using the same works as in chapter 1: *an. quant.*, *imm. an.*, *mus.*, *Gn. litt.* and with the addition of *trin.*

an. quant.

The discussion in *an. quant.* about what sensation is, and how it occurs, arose from Euodius’ question as to how it is that the soul can sense wherever the body is touched, if it doesn’t have a spatial magnitude commensurate with the body.²⁰ Augustine followed Plotinus in describing sensation as an activity in which the soul makes use of the body (*sensus quo anima per corpus utitur*.)²¹ Our activity of sensation is fivefold: seeing is sensing through the eyes; hearing is sensing through the ears; and so on through the senses of smelling, tasting, and touching: a classification, which Augustine says, is very ancient.²² Ever mindful of the need to stress the soul’s superiority by asserting its activity on the body, he describes the

¹⁸ *c. ep. Man.* 16:20. Gilson 1961: 61 notes that life and sensation in Augustine are inseparable.

¹⁹ Gilson 1961: 61-3.

²⁰ *an. quant.* 22:40.

²¹ *Ibid.* 23:41; 28:54. Plotinus *Enn.* 4.7.8. ‘Using’ the body does not necessarily imply a negative view of the body; ‘For since they are temporal, we will be rid of these rhythms, as of a plank in the waves, not by throwing them away as a burden, nor by embracing them as something well anchored, but by using them well,’ *mus.* 6:14:46. Such a statement plays into Augustine’s distinction between use and enjoyment through which everything is to be given its proper value and used for its proper end: love of God. This distinction inspires Augustine’s ethical teaching especially in *doctr. chr.*, see WSA 1/11, 17.

²² *an. quant.* 23:41. The classification into five senses seems to go back to Democritus (460-370 BC) fragment 11: Jütte 2005: 33.

senses as the soul's instruments²³ or messengers.²⁴ 'It is not the eyes and ears that perceive, but something or other that perceives through the eyes.'²⁵ Augustine's prime concern in his account of sensation in *an. quant.* is to demonstrate that sensation is an activity of the soul, which is not acted upon in any way by the body.

He formulates a provisional definition of sensation in *an. quant.* as follows:

Whatever the soul is not unaware of which is experienced by the body (*non latere animam quod patitur corpus.*)²⁶

He then tests it, first of all, by a consideration of sensing through the eyes: sight. Sight is the change that the body undergoes when it sees an object.²⁷ In *sol.* Augustine had simply said that 'in the eyes, what is called 'seeing' consists of the sense itself and the thing sensed, either of which being withdrawn, nothing can be seen.'²⁸ In *an. quant.* he explores the process of sensing through the eyes in more detail. While we may not see everything that we sense, we sense everything we see and Augustine, in his roundabout way, initially seeks Euodius' agreement that we are acted upon by the object we see,²⁹ leading him on to see that it is impossible for one body (Augustine's body) to act on another (Euodius' eyes) when they are in different locations. Euodius suggests that it is not the eyes but sight that has the sensation (*nisi forte illud, quod oculi nostri sentiunt cum videmus: visus namque ipse forsitan sentit.*)³⁰ He has got there and Augustine proffers the following explanation of how the soul senses through the eyes:

Sight extends itself outward (*se foras porrigit*) and through the eyes darts forth far in every possible direction to light up what we see. Hence it happens that it sees rather in the place where the object seen is present, not in the place from which it goes out to

²³ *mus.* 6:5:10; *ep.* 137:2,5; *trin.* 11:2:2.

²⁴ *ord.* 2:11:32 and 34; *util. cred.* 1:1; *Gn. litt.* 7:14: 20; 7:19:25; 12:24:51; a metaphor found in Cicero: ACW 42, 247 n. 35.

²⁵ *ord.* 2:2:6. Poetically 'The eyes are .. the windows of the mind' *en. Ps.* 41.7.

²⁶ *an. quant.* 23:41. Gilson 1961: 277 says *non latere* is based on the $\mu\eta\lambda\alpha\theta\epsilon\tilde{\iota}\nu$ of Plotinus *Enn.* 4:4:19.

²⁷ *an. quant.* 23:42.

²⁸ *sol.* 1:6:13.

²⁹ *an. quant.* 23:42.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 23:43.

see.³¹

There follows, between the two of them, a discussion of, what is known as, the ray theory of vision, which had been common to all philosophical schools since Plato's *Timaeus* and which can be traced back to Democritus.³² Euodius, echoing Augustine's vocabulary of *se foras porrigit* with *porrecto in eum locum in quo es*, explains that he can see Augustine because his sight reaches out to that place where he is and, in this way, sight is like touching someone with a stick.³³ Augustine agrees the sight of the eyes is like a stick and it is this ray of light which causes the eyes to be acted upon by the sense object to produce sight.³⁴ The key thing that Augustine wishes to emphasize about sensing through the eyes is that the eyes are acted upon by the sense object in a place where they are not present and this will become crucial to his argument that the soul can act upon the body, despite not being spatially present.

Before he gets to the *raison d'être* of this account of sensation, the conversation returns to the provisional definition to see if it holds water. In fact, the definition proves not to be narrow enough to limit sensation to what is experienced through the five senses, for it could also cover processes like growth or ageing, of which the soul is not unaware, though its awareness has not come directly through sensation but by inference (a reasoning process).³⁵ This would be the case, for example, where we see smoke (sensation) and infer that there is 'no smoke without fire.' This latter rational inference, or judgement, has been made on the basis of a sensation, but is not itself a sensation, because it is the smoke, not the fire which has affected the sense organ.³⁶ Augustine therefore amends the definition by adding 'through itself' (*per seipsam*) so that it covers only what is immediately experienced through one of the five senses; though he still formulates it, using the double negative:

³¹ Ibid.

³² O'Daly 1987: 82. Other references to ray theory in Augustine: *s.* 277:10; *Gn. litt.* 1:16:31; 4:34:54; 7:13:20; 7:15:21; 12:16:32; *trin.* 9:3:3; 11:1:4.

³³ *an quant* 23:43. The metaphor of the stick is Stoic: O'Daly 1987: 83.

³⁴ *an. quant.* 23:44.

³⁵ Ibid. 24:46; 25:48.

³⁶ Ibid. 24:45.

Sensation is an undergoing by the body *through itself*, which is not hidden from the soul (*sensus est corporis passio per seipsam non latens animam.*)³⁷

It is not apparent from the description of sensation in *an. quant.* why Augustine would phrase the definition using a double negative and the rationale for this only becomes clear from *mus.* It is clearly significant though for ‘although sensation and knowledge are two different things, the element of ‘not being unaware’ is common to both...for whatever is apparent to the soul, either through the body’s organism or through pure intelligence, of that it is not unaware.’ (*Quia quamquam sit aliud sensus, aliud scientia, illud tamen non latere utrique commune est; ...Non latet enim quidquid animae apparet, sive per temperationem corporis, sive per intellegentiae puritatem.*)³⁸

Having reached a final definition of sensation which satisfies both interlocutors, they return to the question which prompted the discussion of sensation in the first place: how it is that if the soul has no spatial magnitude, it can sense a touch on any part of the body. Euodius advanced this argument originally as part of an armoury of arguments designed to argue that the soul was extended spatially to the same extent as the body. But Augustine’s intention, by using the ray theory of vision, has been to show that if the body doesn’t need to be present in order for it to be acted upon but instead can be acted upon through a certain mixture of soul (*propter quamdam cum anima contemperationem*),³⁹ then all the more reason to think that the soul, being superior to the body, does not need to be present where the body is touched in order to feel that touch but could be present by some kind of *contemperatio*. What is more, says Augustine, the activity of sensing through the eyes actually proves that the soul is not extended in space because the eyes can *only* see where they not and this means that they can only see in a place where the soul is not present.⁴⁰ We have already seen, in the previous chapter, that Euodius was not fully convinced that this proved the soul wasn’t diffused

³⁷ Ibid. 30:59. There is an extensive discussion of the definition of sensation stressing its unsatisfactory nature and Plotinian sources in ACW 9, 208 n. 72. Gannon 1956 too in her consideration of the development of Augustine’s thought on sense perception, draws out parallels with Plotinus and Plato: both of whom stress there is no sensing without attention.

³⁸ *an. quant.* 30:58.

³⁹ Also *trin.* 11:2:3 *ex corpore sentientis animantis, cui anima suo quodam miro modo contemperatur.*

⁴⁰ *an. quant.* 30:60.

through the body like blood⁴¹ forcing Augustine to resort to analogy (the sound of a word and its meaning).⁴²

There is, in all this, no sign of the term *intentio* but what is clear is the tensional and attentional nature of the soul's activity towards the body in both its animating and sensation functions. The idea that the soul works the body through a tensional working and stretching is conveyed by *porrigat, porrecto* and *propter quamdam cum anima contemperationem*. The attention of the soul towards the body (as indeed to itself) is expressed by the formula '*non latet*.' There is however, a nod in the direction of *intentio* in the stages of ascent where the soul is described as directing itself to the sense of touch (*Intendit se anima in tactum*).⁴³

mus.

Gilson reflected upon Augustine's use of the double negative in *an. quant.*, noting Augustine's keenness to stress the soul's activity on the body and, to this end, his concern to separate the activity of the soul from the sense object.⁴⁴ In Gilson's view, this creates a problem because, on the one hand, the activity of sense perception requires the presence of an external object which has affected the body but, on the other hand, the sense object cannot be thought of as affecting the soul in any way. He notes, 'the problem can thus be reduced to this paradox: how are we to conceive sense knowledge, if it is true that sense knowledge depends on a condition of the body and the action of body on soul is inconceivable?'⁴⁵ Gilson turns then to *mus.* to show how Augustine resolves this problem and concludes that the reason why Augustine uses the phrase *non latet* is because he wishes to make sensation an activity of the soul within the soul itself; 'the phrase *non latet* indicates precisely that the soul is a spiritual force, ever-watchful and attentive.'⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid. 30:61.

⁴² Ibid. 32:65-68.

⁴³ Ibid. 33:71.

⁴⁴ Gilson 1961: 57.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 63.

Augustine's account of sensation in *mus.* is formulated in terms of attention (*attentio*) and *non latet* as the following extracts make clear:

It (the soul) becomes more attentive to its activity because of the difficulty, and when this difficulty is not concealed to it due to its attention, it is said to have sensation, and this is called pain or labour (*fit attentior ex difficultate in actionem; quae difficultas propter attentionem, cum eam non latet, sentire dicitur et hoc vocatur dolor aut labor.*) (28, 3)

This activity of the soul, through which it joins its own body to a convenient body from the outside, is not hidden since it is performed more attentively because of something extraneous, but due to the convenience it is perceived with pleasure. (*Et ista eius actio qua suum corpus convenienti extrinsecus corpori adiungit, quoniam propter quiddam adventitium attentius agitur, non latet; sed propter convenientiam, cum voluptate sentitur.*) (28, 8)

When the soul is made more attentive through the difficulty of this activity and this activity is not hidden to it, this is called hunger or thirst or something similar. (*et hac actionis difficultate cum fit attentior, et talis eius operatio non eam latet, fames aut sitis, aut tale aliquid appellatur.*) (28, 11)

This as well does not happen without attention and when such an activity is not hidden, indigestion is experienced (*neque hoc sine attentione fit; et cum talis actio non latet, cruditas sentitur.*) (28, 13)

The soul also takes care of a sickly disturbance of the body with attention, trying to help it when it is failing and becoming faint, and when this activity is not hidden, it is said to experience illnesses and diseases (*Morbidam quoque perturbationem corporis attente agit, succurrere appetens labenti atque diffluenti; et hac actione non latente morbos et aegrotationes sentire dicitur.*) (28, 17)

I think that the soul, when it perceives in the body, is not in any way acted upon by it but acts more attentively in the reactions of the body, and that these activities, be they easy because of a convenience or difficult because of an inconvenience are not hidden to it, and this whole process is called perceiving. (*videtur mihi anima cum sentit in corpore, non ab illo aliquid pati, sed in eius passionibus attentius agere, has actiones sive faciles propter convenientiam, sive difficiles propter inconvenientiam, non eam latere: et hoc totum est quod sentire dicitur*) (28, 22).⁴⁷

We are not completely misguided in believing that its own motions or activities or acts or whatever they can be called, are not hidden from the soul when it perceives (*Non igitur absurde credimus motus suos animam, vel actiones, vel operationes, vel si quo*

⁴⁷ *mus.* 6:5:10. The references are to Jacobsson's text.

alio nomine commodius significari possunt, non latere cum sentit.) (32, 5).⁴⁸

These passages demonstrate very clearly, without the need for further explanation, how Augustine understands sensation as an activity of increased attention and they therefore bear out Gilson's view that sensation is an intensification of the soul's ordinary animating activity, which is an activity of attention and which, unless interrupted, the soul carries on peacefully⁴⁹ and in silence.⁵⁰ It is only when objects come within the ambit of its attention that the soul must alter the tensional arrangement with the body in order to deal with the object in one way or another: either to embrace it, if it is for the body's good or to reject it, if it would harm the body.

In *mus.* Augustine's account of the activity of sensation as an activity of attention abounds with cognates of *attentio*. However, he does use the term *intentio*. We have already considered exhaustively the phrase *nisi intentione facientis* in connection with the soul's animating activity in *mus.*, which is closely linked with the account of sensation.⁵¹ But *intentio* also occurs in connection with cases, where potentially there could be a failure of perception due to what appears to be a lack, or redirection, of attention which causes a failure of memory. In *ord.* Licentius,⁵² working on the traditional assumption that memory was only necessary for 'the things that are transitory and, so to speak, fugitive,' had argued that the wise man did not need to make use of his memory because everything was present to him in the same way as 'in sensation itself we do not call memory to our aid with regard to that which is before our eyes.'⁵³ How wrong he was, it seems, to assume that memory was not required for acts of sense perception!

⁴⁸ Ibid. 6:5:11.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 6:5:10.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 6:5:11.

⁵¹ Ibid. 6:5:9.

⁵² Licentius was with Augustine at Cassiciacum as his pupil *beata u.* 1:6 and was the son of Romanianus (*ep.* 27:6), Augustine's financial patron (*Acad.* 2:2:3). For Augustine's expansion of the traditional idea of memory as custodian of the past to being also a memory of the present see chapter 7 n.143.

⁵³ *ord.* 2:2:6-7.

Before considering the passages in *mus.*, we turn to *imm. an.* where Augustine first reflects upon the problem. He was clear that, because a body is made up of parts, all its parts cannot be moved at the same time but only in stages. It is the same when we hear a syllable sounding: even the shortest syllable has a beginning, middle and end and we cannot hear its end while we are still listening to its beginning. In order for us to complete an intended movement of the body or for us to hear the whole syllable that is sounding, we must have an expectation that the act can be carried through and a memory ‘so that it can be bound together as much as possible’ (*et memoria ut comprehendi queat quantum potest.*) The *intentio* to act (meaning intention or direction towards purposed end)⁵⁴ lies in the present and our expectation depends on our memory because we will not hold any expectation as to completion of an act that we do not remember having started. When we intend to perform an act, we unify in our intention, the past, present and future of the act, even if the act itself can only be performed in stages.⁵⁵ Whenever the soul senses through the body, it must therefore keep its *intentio* unchanged in the sense that the same purposed end must be kept in mind, if the act of sensation is to be completed.⁵⁶

This problem of temporal successiveness or partial perception emerges in *mus.* in the context of our ability to judge sensations. This is not a rational judging but a judging that enables us uncritically to take pleasure in, or disapprove of, the sensation.⁵⁷ The occurring (i.e. sensed) rhythms are to be presented to the judicial rhythms for judgement but can only be judged to the extent that we have a picture of the whole and therefore the memory needs to be able to retain the temporal intervals of which any rhythm consists. The problem, as we have already encountered it in *imm. an.* in relation to the act of sensation itself, is that, no matter how short a syllable is, we are not able to hear it all at once because it is extended in time and,

⁵⁴ This meaning of *intentio* will be more fully considered in chapter 4 *infra*.

⁵⁵ *imm. an.* 3:3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 3:4. See Augustine’s interpretation of the two faces of Janus in *ciu.* 7:7: ‘Would it not be a far more elegant interpretation of his two faces to say that Janus and Terminus are actually the same, and to assign one face to beginnings and the other to endings? For anyone who acts should pay attention to both (*debet intendere*), and anyone who does not look back to the beginning at every point in his action does not look forward to its ending. Thus it is necessary for the intention that looks forward to be linked (*connectatur intentio*) to the memory that looks back, for anyone who forgets what he has begun will not find any way to finish it.’

⁵⁷ *mus.* 6:9:23. For discussion of ways in which Augustine accounts for this aspect of sense perception see O’Daly 1987: 88-92.

unless our memory helps us so that we remember the beginning of the syllable while the end is sounding, we won't remember having heard it. This failure of memory is the reason why we don't hear what someone is saying to us: it is because we are not paying attention to them, not because they are not speaking to us. It is this failure to pay attention to what is present caused by a failure of memory to the past that Augustine describes using the term *intentio*. The sound reached the ears and the soul, which because it cannot help but be engaged in its activity of paying attention (*non latet*), creates the sensation but 'because the impetus of the motion is immediately extinguished through the *intentio* towards something else' (*sed quia intentione in aliud subinde extinguitur motionis impetus*),⁵⁸ in other words, because the soul directs its attention to something else, it does not remember what has occurred to enable it to make a judgement on the whole. A similar problem occurs when we are trying to judge or perceive three-dimensional objects with our eyes; we cannot perceive all dimensions at once and, unless our memory can help us to get a picture of the whole, 'the *intentio* of the judging person is completely fruitless (*frustratur omnino iudicantis intentio*).'⁵⁹

In Augustine's emphasis on the ability of the mind to perceive the whole, as opposed to the partial, nature of the body's movement, he not only draws attention to the distinctions between the body and the soul, but also to the dependency of the body on the soul for the body cannot move except for the soul's ability to move it and this depends on the soul's ability to perceive and keep the whole of the action in mind. It also points up the closeness of the body/soul relationship in service of the unity of the person. However, for the health of the soul, this cannot be too close. The body's partial perception is natural and belongs to it as created⁶⁰ but the soul's inability to see the whole and over focusing in on a part belongs to its fallen nature.⁶¹ The soul must therefore be careful not to over identify with the body; restricting its perception to a part in favour of the whole, for the body's efficient working depends on the soul acting according to its true nature, which includes its ability to see the

⁵⁸ *mus.* 6:8:21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *conf.* 4:10:15.

⁶¹ *mus.* 6:11:30; *conf.* 4:11:17.

whole simultaneously.⁶² The fact that Augustine's favourite illustration is a linguistic one - syllables⁶³ - should alert us to the likelihood that his preoccupation with this aspect of sensation is not simply anthropological. Augustine likes the linguistic example because of the comparison it allows him to draw with God's eternal Word which never ends and therefore never gives way to allow another word to be pronounced;⁶⁴ his prime concern being, 'how the eternal, immutable, incorporeal Creator is heard by His temporal, mutable, corporeal creation.'⁶⁵

To sum up Augustine's use of *intentio* in *mus.* in connection with sensation, it is our observation that Augustine's account of sensation is dominated by *attentio* meaning attention but that *intentio* is used when Augustine is making a point about the direction, and specifically the change of direction, of that attention.⁶⁶

Gn. litt.

In *Gn. litt.*, Augustine's account of sensation is dominated by *intentio*. In *Gn. litt.*, he discusses sense perception in several places and for various reasons. In book 1, he argues there is no reason why day and night should be understood as a diffusion and contraction of light. He explains that there is no support for this to be gained through resorting to the analogy of sensing through the eyes. He uses here the ray theory of vision, which is a tensional theory, to explain that the light, which is directed out through the eyes, does not provide sufficient light with which to see the object without the help of an external source of light and it is difficult to distinguish the two sources of light.⁶⁷ In book 3, he reaffirms that sensation is not an activity of the body but an activity of the soul *through* the body. He

⁶² *conf.* 12:13:16 'the intelligence's knowing is a matter of simultaneity...this knowing is not of one thing at one moment and of another thing at another moment but is concurrent without any temporal successiveness.'

⁶³ O'Donnell *conf.* 11: 26:33 says 'Syllables as a measure, symptom, and symbol of the passing of time, often came to A.'s pen' *egs. ord.* 2:12:36; *imm. an.* 3:3; *uera rel.* 22:42; *lib. arb.* 1:14:38; *ep.* 137:7, *c. ep. Man.* 41.47; *nat. b.* 8; *conf.* 11 *passim*; *en. Ps.* 76:8.

⁶⁴ *en. Ps.* 44:5 and 6.

⁶⁵ Harrison 2010: 429.

⁶⁶ In addition to the two passages already noted in *mus.* 6:8:21 see also *mus.* 6:5:14 *in aliud intenditur animus*; *mus.* 6:13:37 *in aliud intentus animus*; *mus.* 6:8:22 *post alias intentiones* .

⁶⁷ *Gn. litt.* 1:16:31.

discusses the relationship of the four elements and the five senses and describes how the soul uses the elements in its activity of sensation, emphasizing the difference between the incorporeal soul and the corporeal elements it uses.⁶⁸ In book 4, he draws attention to the speed of the rays of material light darting out from the eyes and covering great distances, in order to point up the even greater powers of the superior intellectual vision.⁶⁹ In book 7, he gives a detailed physiological description of sensation and movement, and points to the ability of *intentio* to withdraw from the senses, in order to establish the incorporeal nature of the human soul, distinguishing again between its incorporeal nature and the corporeal elements which it uses to carry out its activities towards the body.⁷⁰ In book 8, he looks at how the soul, which does not move through space, can move the body through space, in order to help his readers to understand how God, who is immovable in time and space, moves his creation through time and space.⁷¹ In book 12, he discusses sense perception in connection with his presentation of three different kinds of vision or perception: corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual. These are arranged in a hierarchy⁷² and his expressed aim is to consider them one by one so that reason can ascend from the lower to the higher.⁷³

What we are going to be concerned with is Augustine's presentation of a physiological account of sense perception because it is formulated in terms of the activity of *intentio*. In formulating his account, Augustine is influenced generally by the philosophical tradition

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 3:4:6-5:7. In *mus.* 6:5:10 Augustine had already alluded to a connection between the elements and the act of sensation 'When the soul acts in this way, it activates 'something having to do with light in the eyes, something having to do with very clear and quick air in the ears, something misty in the nostrils, something humid in the mouth and something earthy and almost muddy in the touch.'

⁶⁹ *Gn. litt.* 4:34:54 and 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 7:12:19-7:20:26.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 8:21:40f. See previous chapter for discussion on *intentio* in this passage.

⁷² *Ibid.* 12:6:15—7:16; 12:24:50. see *c. Adim.* 28.2 (393/6) where three different kinds of vision were first listed.

⁷³ *Gn. litt.* 12:11:22. O'Donnell *conf.* 7:10:16 says that, with regard to the ascents in *conf.*, it is possible to see the ascent of *conf.* 4 as a corporal vision of the first type; the ascents of *conf.* 7 as spiritual visions and the ascent of Ostia in *conf.* 9 as an intellectual vision.

(linking of the senses and the elements);⁷⁴ specifically by the Stoics,⁷⁵ the Neoplatonists⁷⁶ and also by medical theory.⁷⁷ He reiterates that sensation belongs not to the body but to the soul acting through the body (*sentire non est corporis, sed animae per corpus*)⁷⁸ by means of a more subtle body (*per subtilius corpus agitat*).⁷⁹ The more subtle body that Augustine is referring to turns out to be ‘fire, or rather light and air (*ignis, vel potius lux et aer*).’⁸⁰ The soul first acts on these elements and then uses these elements to carry out its activity in the body.⁸¹ The light and air mix was what the Stoics called *pneuma* (Latin *spiritus*) which they identified with the corporeal soul. They explained sense perception (as well as bodily coherence) by means of the activity of *spiritus*. For the Neoplatonist, Porphyry, *spiritus* was also corporeal; being the thin corporeal covering, which acted as a necessary intermediary between the immaterial soul and the fleshly body and in Plotinus too, the concept of *spiritus* had not yet been liberated from matter.⁸² What is apparent is that for Augustine in this context, spiritual means non-bodily.⁸³ He makes it clear several times throughout his account

⁷⁴ In *Gn. litt.* 3, he refers to the theories of writers who related the five senses to the four elements. This connection goes back to the Old Academy: O’Daly 1987: 82 n. 8.

⁷⁵ Colish 1985/2: 143 f. has demonstrated how thoroughly Stoic, Augustine’s theory of sense perception is.

⁷⁶ Gannon 1956: 176f.

⁷⁷ *Gn. litt.* 7:13:20. See BA 48: 710-14 for the most accessible account of Augustine’s medical knowledge and its sources and for references to other secondary sources on the topic.

⁷⁸ *Gn. litt.* 3.5.7.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Rather than how he used to think, namely that the soul was the ‘more subtle body’ that ruled the body *conf.* 5:10:20.

⁸⁰ *Gn. litt.* 7:15:21.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Verbeke 1945: 495. Verbeke points out that, although before his conversion Augustine understood God as Spirit, this *spiritus* was a corporeal substance diffused through the body of the world like light is diffused in air, which is the Stoic doctrine of cosmic *pneuma* *Ibid.* 492. *Pneuma* was identified as God by the Stoics *Ibid.* 55f; 61f. After his conversion, Augustine still identified God as spirit but spirit now meant an incorporeal substance, which was absolutely simple and immutable and which therefore could not be dispersed in space or time: *Ibid.* 493-4. Likewise with regard to the human soul; before his conversion, he had regarded this as corporeal, extended as bodies are, but it is not made of light and air; instead it is spirit, in a similar way to God, that is, it is simple and indivisible and unable to be extended in space: *Ibid.* 498-501. What Verbeke shows is that it is only with Augustine that the Stoic doctrine of *pneuma* became spiritualized. Until Augustine corporeal *pneuma* had either been identified as the soul (Stoics) or as the corporeal instrument of the soul (Aristotle and Neoplatonists). *Ibid.* 508.

⁸³ *Gn. litt.* 3.4.7. Augustine discusses the different meanings of the word *spiritus* based on its occurrences in scripture, and it does not necessarily denote an incorporeal substance: Mind is spirit; God is spirit; our faculty of imagination is spirit; the life force which we share in common with beasts is spirit; soul (*anima*) is spirit; wind is spirit (and is corporeal); resurrection body is spirit but corporeal see, *trin.* 14:16:22; *Gn. litt.* 12:7:18 and 12:9:20;

of sensation that the soul (which is spiritual and non-bodily) is not itself the light/air mix which the Stoics called *spiritus* but that it carries out its activity by means of this corporeal mix.⁸⁴ He transfers the word *spiritus* from the light/air mix to the incorporeal soul where it becomes ‘that part of the soul lower than the mind in which likenesses of bodily things are pressed.’⁸⁵ It is not the body which makes its own image in *spiritus* but *spiritus* (as a faculty of soul) which makes it in itself; the image being made on *spiritus* at the same time as the external object is sensed. In fact, unless this was the case, an act of sensation could not be judged because there would be nothing registered in the memory to carry forward to completion.⁸⁶ It is then the image made in *spiritus* or memory which enables the soul to view the whole picture; thus showing its dependency on sense perception (nonetheless itself an activity of the soul). There is no specific suggestion though here that the imprinting of the image occurs through an act of *intentio*.

Although Augustine persistently emphasizes the distinction of the soul from the corporeal instruments it uses, he also points up the soul’s dependence on those instruments in order to carry out its activity through the body. If these instruments fail in any way, then the soul’s *intentio* is disturbed (*turbatur eius intentio*) and its running of the body no longer goes according to plan (intention or desire).⁸⁷ Augustine goes on to reiterate that if a person is not paying attention to what is before their eyes because they are so wrapped up in their thoughts, then they won’t see what is in front of their eyes. In fact, a person can be so withdrawn from sense reality that they stop in their tracks or, if not quite so preoccupied, they may carry on walking but without being consciously aware of what they are doing. Monnica’s observation of Trygetius’ failure at Cassiciacum to notice which breakfast bowl he was using and to pay attention to what he was eating because his mind was elsewhere, was a case in point.⁸⁸ All of

an. et. or. 4:23:37; *s.* 128:9.

⁸⁴ *Gn. litt.* 3:4:7; 3:5:7; 7:18:24; 7:19:25; 7:20:26.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 12:9:20. Also *Ibid.* 12:23:49; *ciu.* 10:9; *trin.* 14:16:22. The idea of a spiritual element of the soul has possibly come from Porphyry see *ciu.* 10:9; *ciu.* 10:27 and *ciu.* 10:32. We will look further at this spiritual element in connection with spiritual vision in the next chapter.

⁸⁶ *Gn. litt.* 12:16:33. 12:24:51.

⁸⁷ *Gn. litt.* 7:19:25.

⁸⁸ *beata u.* 2:8. She was, though, only partly remonstrating because the soul was fed by its thoughts, provided those thoughts were such that they led to knowledge.

this proves that the soul is distinct from the body but not only does the body need the soul, the soul also needs the cooperation of the body, if it is to perform its activities successfully through the body.⁸⁹

What prevents a person paying attention to what is in front of them is paying attention instead to their thoughts (*cogitationis intentione*.) Augustine does not make any judgement of value here but he does express some ambivalence in his writings about whether or not this is a good thing. Personally (and perhaps this is his own failing), he is a man who becomes frustrated when things outside himself, distract him from his own thoughts⁹⁰ and yet he exhorts his congregation not to have their eyes open to no purpose because, if our mind is turned away, then we are looking at creation like beasts; not seeing the beauty of creation for what it is and therefore not able to do what we were created to do: praise and honour the Creator for his creation.⁹¹ Obviously, there are degrees and all things are relative, but there is no doubt that excessive preoccupation of thought is abnormal and, whatever the cause, it leads a person to lose touch with everyday reality to some extent, either because they are having such vivid spiritual visions that they are unable to tell whether what they are experiencing is a corporeal or spiritual vision or because they are completely detached from everyday reality in an experience of ecstasy.⁹² Again, this is not necessarily a good experience because such an experience may be caused by fear just as much as by contemplation of heavenly realities⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid. 7:20:26. Ibid. 7:18:24 he explains physiologically why the soul's failure of attention has the effect that it does on the person's ability to function.

⁹⁰ *conf.* 10:35:57.

⁹¹ *s.* 126:3; *en. Ps.* 41:6.

⁹² *Gn. litt.* 12:12:25. 'Ecstasy' is a Greek word meaning literally 'standing outside' and used of being 'out of one's mind' or 'being beside oneself' *en. Ps.* 30:2:2. Hammond Taylor distinguishes between the 'vital impulse (*quadam vitali intentione*) in *orig. an.* 2:4 through which the soul animates the body and the attention of the soul through which it causes sensations and says that 'in the case of a soul in ecstasy the *vitalis intentio* continues while the other is inoperative, ACW 42, 303 n. 19. However this comment and distinction into two different *intentiones* in relation to the powers of animation and sensation is problematic. We have already found Augustine's view of sensation to be intensification in one area of the same activity through which the soul animates the body. By ignoring the tensional nature of this activity, Hammond-Taylor's comment does not take this into account nor indeed does this take account of the incorporeal nature of the soul, which is able to act in one area without abandoning the rest of the body. Clearly the body doesn't die in ecstasy but perhaps it is better to explain it by keeping to Augustine's vocabulary: he distinguishes between the lower power *anima* which continues to give life to the body while the *mens* is torn away in ecstasy, *Gn. litt.* 12:4:14.

⁹³ *en. Ps.* 30:2:2.

and even when it is caused through the latter, this is not something that should be allowed to disrupt, or interfere too much with, ordinary life and our social obligations but is considered good only to the extent that it enhances both.⁹⁴

Sometimes, such abnormalities are caused by a failure of the corporeal instruments that the soul uses for its activity through the body. Augustine reiterates in book 12 this same point that he made in book 7, but specifically in book 12 he focuses on problems with the vessels of the nervous system which, the Stoics had explained, carried the *spiritus* from the brain to the various organs of sense by means of a tensional movement (τόνος; Latin *intentio*),⁹⁵ which operated more effectively, the tighter it was.⁹⁶ Augustine affirms that the soul makes use of the body's nervous system to carry out its activity of sensation. The action begins in the liver where the element of fire is situated and this fire then travels to the brain as the source of the rays of light which rays are then directed through the eyes for seeing and to the other senses for the other sensing activities.⁹⁷ He explains that because the attention which governs the soul's activity of sensation is directed from the brain (*cerebri, unde ipsa dirigitur intentio sentiendi*) through the vessels of the nervous system, if these vessels which are the route of attention from the brain (*itinere intentionis a cerebro*) are stilled or disturbed or even blocked off, then the body prevents the soul from sensing as it wants or directing the force of its attention where it wants (*quia per corpus non sinitur, vel non plene sinitur corporalia sentire, vel ad corporalia vim suae intentionis dirigere*).⁹⁸ But the energy has to go somewhere and this is one of the reasons why abnormal spiritual visions can occur.⁹⁹ This happens naturally when we are asleep and the energy channelled into our waking attention is diverted into our dream life.¹⁰⁰ In the blind, the attention is directed from the brain along the

⁹⁴ Ibid; s 78:6.

⁹⁵ Hahm 1977: 166f.

⁹⁶ Lapidge 1978: 172.

⁹⁷ *Gn. litt.* 7:13:20.

⁹⁸ Ibid. 12:20:42.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. It seems that the frail body would not be able to tolerate the unremitting attention (*intentionem perpetuam*) of the soul activating its senses without the soul's periodic withdrawal in sleep which repairs the body and enables it to endure the activity s.362:28. 29. The soul has no control over this, nor indeed over the activity of *intentio* in dreams so that the things that we dream about, which would be sins, if we were awake, are

vessels to the eyes but the eyes themselves prevent the attention being directed out onto a sense object; and, in this case, the soul's attention is impeded without being diverted.¹⁰¹

With his physiological account of sense perception in *Gn. litt.*, in which the *attentio* of *mus.* has disappeared to be replaced very clearly by *intentio*, Augustine does two, seemingly contradictory, things: he binds the body and soul closer together in the service of the unity of the person and at the same time safeguards the distinction between the body and soul. He achieves a closer connection between the body and soul by transferring words – *intentio* and *spiritus* – that have hitherto been applied to corporeal substance, to incorporeal substance and by making the same act (not yet described clearly as an act of *intentio*), the link between two kinds of vision: corporeal and spiritual. The connection between the body and soul is also made closer by virtue of the fact that the dematerialized *intentio* is still said to be led through the same tubes through which the corporeal *pneuma* was thought to travel. He safeguards the distinction between the body and soul by expressly reiterating the distinction between the soul and the corporeal elements it uses and by drawing attention to the soul's ability to withdraw its *intentio* from the senses. This physiological account of the activity of *intentio* not only confirms that the activity of *intentio* is an activity of attention but it also gives great weight to its tensional aspect of *intentio*, as well as indicating its volitional nature. Despite the fact that the soul is not always able to direct its attention as it wishes, it is not through want of trying.

trin.

Augustine felt called to write *trin.* to share his provisional understanding of the Trinity in response to peoples' endless questions. There wasn't much written in Latin on the subject that people could read and, apart from hoping that he himself would learn from what he

not sins because we have no power (*non habent in potestate*) over the provenance of these visions. *Gn. litt.* 12:15:31.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 12:20:42. For Augustine's use of the physiology of sensation as an analogy for improper desire (*cupiditas*) see *b. uid.* 21:26 'For, as, in the senses themselves of the body, they who see not hear more keenly, and discern many things by touch, nor have such as have the use of their eyes so great life in their touch; and in this instance it is understood that, when the exertion of the power of attention (*intentione*) hath been restrained in one approach, that is, of the eyes, it puts itself forth into other senses, more ready with keenness to distinguish, as though it essayed to supply from the one what was denied in the other; thus also often carnal lust, being restrained from pleasure of sensual intercourse, with greater strength reaches itself forth to desire money, and when turned away from the one, turns itself with more glow of passion to the other.'

discussed and wrote,¹⁰² he was anxious to counter the various false opinions of God that people held as a result of a literalistic, or incorrect, interpretation of scriptural passages. He also wanted to stress that understanding of the Trinity must begin from faith¹⁰³ and required participation in God's life (we cannot really understand what The Good is unless we are good ourselves).¹⁰⁴ Augustine's aim was to establish the faith from scripture and then demonstrate how one could move on from there through the training of one's powers of reasoning.¹⁰⁵ Just as in *Gn. litt.* 12, where he had presented a hierarchy of three different kinds of vision: corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual with the express intention that reason should ascend from the lower to the higher;¹⁰⁶ so in *trin.*, the training of reason is undertaken by an examination of the soul's powers of perception: corporeal, spiritual and intellectual; the first two belonging to the outer man and the third, which is divided into two levels (*scientia* and *sapientia*), belonging to the inner man.¹⁰⁷ In *trin.*, each power of perception is presented as a threefold composite and Augustine's aim is to train people to see the workings of the three components; their relationship and their distinctions, in the hope that this will bring them to some lived insight about that 'Trinity which God is.'¹⁰⁸ His struggle to engage with the demands of Trinitarian theology and to present it in terms of a psychological analysis, finds in *intentio* a ready helpmate.

Intentio becomes the common component at each level of perception: not only is the exercise of each of the soul's powers of perception dependent on *intentio*, but also the extent to which reason can ascend through the levels is similarly dependent. This is the context in which we find an account of sense perception in *trin.*, which is couched in terms of the activity of corporeal vision. Augustine followed the philosophical tradition in drawing an

¹⁰² *trin.* 1:5: 8 and *trin.* 3:1.1.

¹⁰³ *trin.* 1:2:4; 9:1:1.

¹⁰⁴ *trin.* 8:3:4.

¹⁰⁵ *trin.* 1:2:4.

¹⁰⁶ *Gn. litt.* 12:11:22.

¹⁰⁷ There is no comparable stage of ascent in *trin.* to *animatio* in *an. quant.*

¹⁰⁸ *trin.* 9.1. 1 'A trinity is certainly what we are looking for, and not any kind of trinity either but the one that God is, *trinitatem certe quaerimus, non quamlibet sed illam trinitatem quae deus est.*'

analogy between physical sight and intellectual knowledge;¹⁰⁹ reasoning that, just as the eyes are the organ of the body with which we perceive light, so the soul's faculty of understanding (*intellectus*) alone admits light to our minds, with God being the light which enlightens the mind.¹¹⁰ In *trin.*, Augustine reiterates that the sense of sight is the most excellent of the body's senses¹¹¹ and, of all the senses, has the most to teach us regarding spiritual things.¹¹²

Augustine explains that the three components required for the activity of corporeal vision are the sense object, our sight and our *intentio animi* which is 'that which holds the sense of the eyes on the thing being seen, as long as it is being seen (*quod in ea re quae videtur, quamdiu videtur sensum detinet oculorum, id est animi intentio.*)'¹¹³ Sight is the sense informed by the thing which is capable of being seen (*Ipsaque visio quae quid aliud, quam sensus ex ea re quae sentitur informatus apparet.*)¹¹⁴ The three components are clearly distinguishable because they are different in nature.¹¹⁵ The sense object is bodily; the informed sense is partly body (the eyes), partly non-bodily (image of object imprinted on sense) and the third element: *intentio animi* is pure consciousness.¹¹⁶ Augustine then goes on to describe the act of sense perception as the imprint of a form on the sense organ. All three components must be present for an act of sense perception, which means that there must be a seeing subject to provide the sense of the eyes and the *intentio animi* and there must also be a corporeal object which can be imprinted on the sense (*a solo imprimatur corpore quod*

¹⁰⁹ Early eggs include *ord.* 2:3:10 'unwisdom is the darkness of the mind just as blindness is the darkness of the eyes.' Also *sol.* 1:6:12 'The senses of the soul are, as it were, the mind's own eyes (*Nam mentis quasi sui sunt oculi sensus animae*)... I—Reason—am in minds as the act of looking is in the eyes.' Plato had been the first to use the metaphor of vision and he was followed by Plotinus, see Blumenthal 1971a: 69. Augustine may also have been influenced by Ambrose see Gannon 1956: 175. For an exploration of this metaphor and its significance in Augustine, see Miles 1983. The metaphor of sight can be misleading as a description of human knowledge and understanding, because we may fail to see its metaphorical character, see Lash 1986: 93 n. 16.

¹¹⁰ *Io. eu. tr.* 15:19.

¹¹¹ Greek thinkers had always regarded sight as the superior sense, see Blumenthal 1971a: 69. Also Cic., *orat.* 2.87.357 (a passage Augustine would undoubtedly have known), reports that Simonides of Ceos called the sense of sight 'the most keen of all the senses *acerrimum autem ex omnibus nostris sensibus.*'

¹¹² *trin.* 11:1:1.

¹¹³ *trin.* 11:2:2.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

videtur).¹¹⁷ When the object is removed, the sense goes back to being as it was before and Augustine draws an analogy with water retaining a trace of a body: when the body is taken away, the water bears no trace of it. So when we sense something by seeing it, we see because a form, which is a likeness of the body, is imprinted on the sense. Therefore what we are seeing in an act of sight is not the object itself but the likeness of the corporeal object which has been impressed. We cannot, however, distinguish between the form of the body and the form in the sense which is its image and derived from it, while the object is present, except by reason.¹¹⁸ Augustine gives the example of the imprint of a signet ring in wax.¹¹⁹ As soon as the signet ring is impressed in the wax, the imprint is made even though it cannot be seen while the signet ring is still in the wax. But, actually, the imprint of a ring in water is a better analogy because, like the imprint on the sense, the image in the water, which was derived from the ring, does not remain when the ring is taken away, even though the form remains in the ring.¹²⁰ After spending time proving the distinctions involved in the activity of sense perception, Augustine stresses that the three distinct things which differ in nature: the form of the body, its image imprinted on to sense and the *intentio animi* are compounded into a kind of unity,¹²¹ which is so close that it is very difficult to distinguish between them.¹²² Augustine has set the task which must be overcome if we are to make any progress in understanding, through reason, the trinitarian nature of our faith.

In *trin.*, Augustine expressly identifies *intentio animi* with the will (*Tertium vero solius*

¹¹⁷ *trin.* 11:2:3.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* The significance of the distinction between the form in the object and the form imprinted on the sense will become clear in chapter 7.

¹¹⁹ Augustine was using traditional imagery here; that of memory as a wax tablet upon which images were stamped like a seal on the wax. Both Plato and Aristotle described memory as involving images which had been imprinted as if with signet-rings, though the metaphor predates Plato. Cicero, who described the structure of memory like a wax tablet which ‘employs places and in these gathers together images like letters,’ developed the model in detail. It is through Cicero that Augustine would have become familiar with it and he would have been encouraged to continue using it through its appearance in scripture, ‘Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart. (Prov. 3:3)’ see Carruthers 1990, chapter 1 *passim*. *conf.* 9:4:12 shows Augustine’s familiarity with writing on wax tablets: he asked his friends to pray for him by writing on a wax tablet when his toothache became so bad that he couldn’t speak.

¹²⁰ *trin.* 11:2:3.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 11:2:5.

¹²² *Ibid.*

animae est, quia voluntas est)¹²³ and draws attention to the fact that the will is not disinterested in this activity of sense perception:

And the will exerts such force in coupling the two together that it applies the sense to be formed to the thing that is being looked at and holds it there once formed. And if it is violent enough to be called love or covetousness or lust, it will deeply affect the rest of the living being's body.¹²⁴

We had, in fact, already concluded that *intentio* embraced the sense of volitional activity, both at the level of sense perception and at the more basic level of animation of the body but in *trin.*, we find explicit confirmation of this: that it is the will which is responsible for our acts of sensation and that the will does not act disinterestedly but through the impulse of some form of desire which can be so strong that it affects the appearance of the body.¹²⁵ Augustine goes on to examine the merits of the will's love towards an object of sense, explaining why it would be mad for the will to derive its enjoyment from a bodily form, namely because the will is more spiritual than either of the other two components in the production of the sight of a visible object. But, in any event, it has more in common with the formed sense, which is at least partly spiritual, than with the unspiritual body.¹²⁶

Summary and Conclusion

We have seen that the activity of sensation, which when forming the first level of knowledge we may call sense perception, is part and parcel of the soul's activity of paying attention (first designated *attentio* and then solely *intentio*) to the body, requiring it to intensify that attention as part of the body's response to external stimuli. That activity has three aspects: tensional; volitional and directional and is the activity through which we

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid. *trin.* 3:8:15. It might be fear rather than desire that motivates the will to stretch out its attention (*intenditur*) to what is sensed, but, whichever it is, the greater the passion, the deeper the impression made, Ibid. 11:4:7.

¹²⁵ *trin.* 11:2:5. Augustine liked the biblical example of Jacob's coloured sheep in Gen. 30:37. See also *trin.* 3:8:15. For *intentio* as the will and desire see chapter 5 *infra*.

¹²⁶ *trin.* 11:5:9 amended by *retr.* 2:15: 2 to clarify that it was fine to enjoy it as long as the enjoyment was referred to the praise of the Creator and a person did not think that enjoying it would bring him true happiness. See chapter 4 *infra*.

connect with outside reality, including other people. If, for example, we are preoccupied with our own thoughts instead of listening to someone speaking to us, then we will not hear what they are saying or (one of Augustine's favourites), if we are reading but at the same time thinking about something else then we won't take in anything we have read, despite our eyes scanning the page.¹²⁷ In fact we are not able to function in the ordinary everyday world, if there is a failure of attention (*intentio*) because as creatures naturally distended in time and space, we rely on the conscious element of the three elements involved in sense perception, to hold on to the image of the completed act of sense perception. This is not solely in order to give us a unified perspective from which to judge whether we like something or not, but also because *intentio* is one of the components without which an act of sensation cannot be completed. The soul's activity at the previous stage of gathering the body into one spatially in order to keep it in existence is replicated here by the activity of gathering it into one temporally. *Distentio* in time is the natural condition of creatures and yet by *intentio* we can transcend the limitations of our creaturely existence.¹²⁸ This condition of *distentio* and solution of *intentio* will be replicated at each stage of ascent. For example, at the next stage, we can look forward to creating a unified narrative of our life through acts of recollection, which are acts of *intentio*. The act of human knowing itself, like the act of sensation has to proceed in stages from sense perception to *scientia* to *sapientia*; and if we seek to convert a sensation into the first step to knowledge of God, *intentio* will provide the link between the levels of perception thus harmonizing them and bringing the soul glimmers of how we fallen beings might begin to move towards a perception of God Himself. The fact that *intentio* allows Augustine to say something about the activity of sense perception, which looks like a single activity but involves three things therefore sets up a frame which will eventually enable him to talk about the Trinity and how the image of God can be found in the human activities of memory, understanding and will, all belonging to the one rational mind.

¹²⁷ *trin.* 11:8:15.

¹²⁸ BA 14, 590 "le temps est une intention distendue et une distension intentionalisée". See *conf.* 11.23.30; 11:28:37 – 38. See O'Daly 1977 for *distentio* of time in Augustine.

Chapter Three: *Ars*

The first step along this road had already been taken. It had led to a loosening of the body, without which the bow cannot be properly drawn. If the shot is to be loosed right, the physical loosening must now be continual in a mental and spiritual loosening.¹

Advance, then, to the third level, which belongs to man exclusively. Think of memory, not of things that have become habituated by repeated acts, but of the countless things that have been attained and retained by observation and illustration (*animadversione atque signis commendatarum ac retentorum rerum innumerabilium*) all the arts of craftsmen, the tilling of the soil, the building of cities, the thousand-and-one marvels of various buildings and undertakings, the invention of so many symbols in letters, in words (*inventiones tot signorum in litteris, in verbis*), in gesture, in sound of various kinds, in paintings and statues; the languages of so many peoples, their many institutions, some new and some revived; the great number of books and records of every sort for the preservation of memory and the great concern shown for posterity; the gradations of duties, prerogatives, honors, and dignities, in family life and in public life—whether civilian or military—in profane and sacred institutions; the power of reason and thought (*vim ratiocinandi et excogitandi*), the floods of eloquence (*fluvios eloquentiae*), the varieties of poetry, the thousand forms of mimicries for the purpose of entertainment and jest, the art of music (*modulandi peritiam*), the accuracy of surveying (*dimetiendi subtilitatem*), the science of arithmetic (*disciplinam numerandi*), the interpretation of the past and future from the present (*praeteritorum ac futurorum ex praesentibus coniecturam*). These things bear the mark of greatness and they are characteristically human. But here we still have a capacity shared by both the learned and the unlearned, by both the good and the wicked.²

The third stage of ascent, and the third power of the soul in *an. quant.*, is the first of five rational levels which, together, correspond to the third degree of soul identified by Varro.³ This third stage power is both the first stage that belongs only to human beings⁴ and the last stage that is common to *all* human beings. Augustine calls this stage, *ars*.⁵ In *uera rel.* he

¹ Herrigel 1976: 51.

² *an. quant.* 33:72.

³ *ciu.* 7:23. O'Daly 1987: 13.

⁴ Our rational capacity is what distinguishes us from beasts *an. quant.* 26:49; *ord.* 2:11:31; 2:19:49; *trin.* 12:1:2; *trin.* 15:1:1. Also called mind or spirit (*mens; spiritus*) *lib. arb.* 1:8:18.

⁵ *an. quant.* 35:79. O'Daly 1987: 13-14 says this stage amounts to discursive reason which is manifest in memory and skill applied to various arts and sciences, in aesthetic, social and political behavior; Neil 1999: 202 says it is

distinguished two meanings of *ars*: something which is not observed by experience but found out by reason and *ars* in the popular sense, meaning ‘nothing but the memory of things we have experienced and which have given us pleasure, with the addition of some skilled bodily activity.’⁶ This latter meaning is the one applicable to this stage of ascent in *an. quant.* It would include the development of skills in the arts: the art of public speaking, the art of debate, playing a musical instrument, all of which are physical, practical manifestations of the *artes liberales* ‘for all the liberal arts are learned partly for practical use and partly for knowledge and contemplation.’⁷ There are in fact discernible references in the passage to the liberal arts⁸ but in such a way as to suggest that this is a reference to the practical skills acquired through the liberal arts.⁹ Progress beyond the practical could only be made by developing skill in reasoning once there was some measure of detachment from the senses at the next stage of ascent.¹⁰ At this stage, the soul’s activity is still very much bound up with the senses and, although reason is manifest to some degree, it is only insofar as it appears to the senses in what is reasonable: in actions directed towards an end, in discourse and in pleasure.¹¹

The power of the soul at the third stage

The power of the soul considered at this stage in *an. quant.* is the power of memory ‘of

about the soul encouraging development of arts and sciences; Nash 2003: 61 and 135 n. 4 following Bourke 1993: 103 calls this level ‘ratiocination.’

⁶ *uera rel.* 30:54.

⁷ *ord.* 2:16:44. *mus.* 1:4:6f on the distinction between the art and science of music and esp. *mus.* 1:4:8 ‘All who follow sense and what is pleasing in it commit to memory, and in this way, by moving their body, acquire a certain power of imitation; and that they do not have science even if they seem to do many things cleverly and skilfully unless they possess in the purity and truth of the intellect the very thing they profess or exhibit.’

⁸ Discernible in the following references: the discipline of grammar ‘in words in gesture, in sound of various kinds (*inventiones tot signorum in litteris, in verbis*);’ dialectic ‘the power of reason and thought (*vim ratiocinandi et excogitandi*);’ rhetoric ‘the floods of eloquence (*fluvios eloquentiae*);’ music ‘the art of music’ (*modulandi peritiam*); geometry ‘the accuracy of surveying (*dimetiendi subtilitatem*);’ ‘the science of arithmetic (*disciplinam numerandi*)’ and astrology ‘the interpretation of the past and future from the present (*praeteritorum ac futurorum ex praesentibus coniecturam*).’ See Shanzer 2007: 72 n. 8.

⁹ *conf.* 10.9.16. These are present in themselves, not through images.

¹⁰ The fact that there is no reference to the innumerable principles and laws of numbers and dimensions, which have not been impressed on the memory through any bodily sense-perception but are nonetheless contents of all rational minds (*conf.* 10.12.19) confirms that Augustine is only concerned here with memory of sense perception and experience.

¹¹ *ord.* 2:12:35.

the countless things that have been attained and retained by observation and illustration.¹² It is not the kind of memory that we share with beasts that becomes habituated by repeated acts; the kind of memory that enables ‘swallows to come back to their nests the next year.’¹³ Neither is it the so-called learning by rote or reciting from memory which was required, for example, of those who were to be received into the Catholic Church (Catechumens), who, prior to their baptism, were expected to recite the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer by heart.¹⁴ What Augustine is concerned with at this stage, is memory as a repository of sense experience and the vastness, and seemingly unending nature, of this repository. An ancient metaphor described memory as a treasury or storehouse¹⁵ but it is clear from many of the Latin words traditionally used to express this metaphor - *cella* (granary, animal stall, bees’ cells and small cabin), *cellula* (small store room), *arca* (box, chest, safe), *sacculus* (little sack or bag), *scrinium* (case, chest, box) and *peristereon* (pigeon- holes) – that the type of store envisaged was not one that could be walked around.¹⁶ Augustine, on the other hand, enlarged the space of memory, describing it as ‘a vast hall of memory,’¹⁷ ‘broad plains and caves and caverns of memory’¹⁸ and ‘fields and vast palaces of memory.’¹⁹ The more spacious the memory was shown to be, the more its powers of retention could be wondered at. It is really the memory’s seemingly infinite power of retention which, for Augustine, proved how great the soul was and which also proved its incorporeality.²⁰

In *an. quant.* he is not concerned with how the images are made in the memory although his reference to *signis* which can mean ‘an image or device on a seal-ring, a seal or

¹² *an. quant.* 33:72.

¹³ Vergil *Georgics* 3.316. This kind of memory belongs to stage 2.

¹⁴ To learn by rote means to reproduce something exactly. A full discussion of the derivation of the word ‘rote’ can be found in Carruthers 1990: 252. On catechumens reciting the Lord’s Prayer see *ss.* 56-59 and on reciting the Creed see *ss.* 212-215. On Augustine and the Catechumenate see Harmless 1995.

¹⁵ Carruthers 1990: 33.

¹⁶ For the various expressions: *Ibid.* 34f.

¹⁷ *conf.* 10:8:14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 10:17:26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 10:8:12. See Cary 2000: chapter 10 for Augustine as the originator of the soul and memory as inner spaces.

²⁰ *an. quant.* 5:9; 14:23.

signet,²¹ does allude to the process of image-making for it evokes another ancient metaphor: memory as a wax tablet on which our sense perceptions leave their impressions.²² Augustine often uses this analogy when explaining the process of images being imprinted on the memory. He also draws out the scriptural imagery of God imprinting His image on us.²³ He is not particularly concerned either, in *an. quant.*, with the process of recollection of the images retained in the memory. In the chapter of *an. quant.* dealing with memory he does raise the question briefly when he asks Euodius whether he remembers Milan and goes on to equate this remembering with a seeing in the mind as opposed to a seeing with the eyes²⁴ but there is no further discussion. In the well-known account of memory in *conf.* 10 where Augustine, similarly, extols the vastness and seemingly infinite capacity of memory, he again distinguishes between seeing an object with the eyes and seeing its image inwardly in the memory, once the image has been imprinted on the mind through the bodily sense. Although he does describe this as recalling an image to thought,²⁵ there is no clear distinction drawn between the image recalled to thought and the image in the memory and he does not deal either with the mechanics of the image-making process (instead musing ‘who can say how images are created?’)²⁶ or with the mechanics of the process of recall, simply commenting that we recall them to mind in an amazing way.²⁷ It is not until *Gn. litt.* that Augustine considers how the image is made and it is only at this stage that *intentio* really enters the picture.²⁸

²¹ Lewis and Short.

²² See chapter 2 n. 120 *supra*.

²³ The idea of God imprinting his image on us stems from Ps. 4:7 ‘The light of your countenance is stamped upon us O Lord’ The light is Christ (*conf.* 9:4:10) and it is through the Word that the image was both originally stamped and then comes to be reformed after having been defaced through sin (*en. Ps.* 32:3:16). Augustine describes us as God’s coin for we bear his imprint as money bears Caesar’s imprint (*s.* 9:9; *en. Ps.* 4:8; *en. Ps.* 138:14; *en. Ps.* 63:11; *Io. eu. tr.* 40:9.) We were created in God’s image and likeness but it can only be restored and preserved in us to the extent to which we are turned towards Him from whom the impression is received (*trin.* 12:12:16). ‘If any one of us wants to be so truly like God; we must not distance ourselves from him but cling to him so closely that his likeness is stamped upon us as wax is stamped by a signet-ring.’ *en. Ps.* 70:2:6 .

²⁴ *an. quant.* 5:8.

²⁵ *conf.* 10:8:13.

²⁶ *Ibid.* His discussion on cogitation in *Ibid.* 10:11:18 relates to notions where we do not draw images through our senses and will therefore be considered in chapter 7 where we look at the understanding of eternal truths.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 10:9:16.

²⁸ Although note *Ibid.* 7:1:2 Augustine distinguishes between *intentio* as the incorporeal image-making power and the images formed by it in what is undeniably a technical use of the word and *Ibid.* 10:11:18 *iam familiari intentioni facile occurrant*.

Gn. litt.

We saw in the last chapter that in *Gn. litt.* Augustine came to designate the part of the memory onto which images of sense objects were imprinted as *spiritus*,²⁹ and that the image of the form of the body is imprinted by an act of soul (not explicitly by *intentio*), simultaneously with its imprint on the sense, thus overcoming the problem of temporal successiveness and enabling an act of sensation to be completed and judged.³⁰ This image imprinted onto *spiritus*, itself derived from the form of the body, becomes the image from which our spiritual vision is derived and it is thus that two levels of perception are linked by the one act of *intentio*, deriving from the form in the corporeal object. Spiritual vision is the second level of the three levels of perception and is described by Augustine as ‘taking place through the human spirit when, for example, you think about your neighbour who isn’t there’³¹ and ‘as absent bodies being thought about.’³² It is rightly called spiritual because, although it derives from a body, the image is not bodily and neither is the glance or gaze by which it is perceived.³³

In the same way as we saw in the last chapter that the form in the sense was indistinguishable from the form in the body and the fact of there being two had to be inferred by reason, so here the form imprinted onto *spiritus* is indistinguishable from both the form in the sense and the form in the object until the object is removed from sight and its image on *spiritus* remains.³⁴ This image which has been imprinted on *spiritus* must, however, be

²⁹ For development of meaning of word *spiritus* in Augustine see chapter 2 n. 82 *supra*. For Augustine’s discussion of various meanings of *spiritus* chapter 2 n. 83 *supra*.

³⁰ *Gn. litt.* 12:16:33; 12:24:51.

³¹ *Ibid.* 12:6:15.

³² *Ibid.*. NB CSEL has ‘*quo absentia corpora corporalia cogitantur.*’ See n. 10 WSA I/13 (2002), 470 n. 10 for comment on this. Also *Gn. litt.* 12:9:20 *spiritale nunc appellavimus tale genus visorum, quali etiam corporum absentium imagines cogitamus.*

³³ *Ibid.* 12:7:16. It is rightly called spiritual because this is how scripture designates it. Augustine refers to the authority of Paul in 1 Cor. 14:2; 14-16 both for labelling and for inferiority of this kind of vision to intellectual vision see *Gn. litt.* 12:8:19-9:20. See chapter 2 n. 85 for possible Porphyrian influence. Augustine referred to spiritual vision in *an. quant.* 5:8 as a vision in *animo* and in *Gn. litt.* he sometimes refers to it in this way (*Gn. litt.* 12:6:15; 12:11:22).

³⁴ *Ibid.* 12:11:22. In this case, the analogy of the imprint of a seal in wax works better than the imprint of a ring in water because of the fact that the image remains.

distinguished from the image which may well remain in our thoughts after the body has disappeared from our actual sight. It is this latter image which is a spiritual vision and, if it was not in our thoughts, it would no longer be being seen.³⁵ When we are in a state of bodily vision i.e. awake and in full possession of our senses then we are able to distinguish this bodily vision from various types of spiritual vision in which we think about absent bodies in images either ‘by recalling in the memory bodies we know, or by picturing ones which we do not know but which all the same are somehow or other there in the working (*cogitatione*) of the spirit, or by fashioning *ad lib.* and by guesswork the images of bodies that simply do not exist anywhere.’³⁶ This distinction between three different kinds of spiritual vision corresponds to an earlier distinction that Augustine made between three kinds of images: those impressed by sense (recalling the face of a friend), those impressed by things we think of (imagining the face of Aeneas) and those impressed by things we reason to (geometrical shapes; musical rhythms, numbers).³⁷ It is also the same distinction as Augustine later drew between three different acts of thinking when writing in response to the Manichee, Faustus: ‘there is a great difference between the act of thinking by which I think of your land of light, which does not exist at all, and the act of thinking by which I think of Alexandria, which I have never seen but still exists, and there is, again, a great difference between this latter act of thinking by which I think of Alexandria, which I do not know, and the act of thinking by which I think of Carthage, which I do know.’³⁸ There are therefore grades of unreality with regard to spiritual visions,³⁹ yet all images are to be viewed cautiously; not because they are bad in themselves but because we can easily fail to see that they are images and mistake them for the truth itself. If we do this, we are ‘standing on the very threshold of error’⁴⁰ because

³⁵ Ibid. 12:11:23. Augustine chooses his words carefully when he describes how the image of the hand writing on the wall which has been imprinted on King Belshazzar’s spirit remains in his thoughts and thus was being seen in spirit. cf *trin.* 11:9:16 *Mediam vero nolui, quia non ibi solet visio dici, cum memoriae commendatur forma, quae fit in sensu cernentis.*

³⁶ Ibid. 12:12:25; 12:23:49.

³⁷ *ep.* 7:2:3. This last category is illuminated by the discussion in *sol.* 2:20:35 where we may picture in our thought squares of varying sizes without being able to picture squareness itself.

³⁸ *c. Faust.* 20:7. He likes the comparison of Alexandria and Carthage to illustrate the different types of spiritual vision-memory and imagination. See *Gn. litt.* 12:6:15; *trin.* 8:6:9; 9:6:10.

³⁹ Augustine had distinguished acts of memory φαντασία and acts of imagination (images of images) as φαντασµατα, *mus.* 6:11:32.

⁴⁰ *mus.* 6:11:32; *uera rel.* 39:73; 49:95; *sol.* 2:20:35 (we mustn’t confuse squares of differing sizes that appear in

‘who hasn’t experienced that his understanding of things became more adequate to the extent of his ability to withdraw and remove his *intentionem mentis* from the senses of the body?’⁴¹

Acts of thinking about incorporeal truths ‘by which I understand justice, chastity, faith, truth, love, companionship, and anything else of this sort’ are vastly superior to acts of thinking involving images and thinking about God is vastly superior to thinking about those other incorporeal truths.⁴² Augustine had previously thought that ‘seeing’ meant a physical act of looking with the eyes and of forming an image in the mind and this had prevented him from realizing that God was (incorporeal) Spirit.⁴³ This was the Manichees’ problem. They thought that to understand the truth was to think in bodily forms and so instead of thinking of God as the uncreated light, they thought of him as created light which, as a corporeal substance, they were then able to divide so that His power was located in the sun and His wisdom in the moon.⁴⁴

Because of the context in which the discussion of spiritual vision arises in *Gn. litt.*, namely Paul’s account of a vision in 2 Cor. 12:2-4 and particularly his comment that he did not know whether it was in the body or out of the body,⁴⁵ Augustine’s interest in *Gn. litt.* is, primarily, in the kind of spiritual visions that just appear, unwilling, to our thought: ‘those that *intentio* runs into, so to speak’ (*animi intentio quadam necessitate incurrat in eas quae occurrunt imagines*).⁴⁶ *Intentio* tends therefore to be discussed in connection with these rather than in connection with the ordinary process of cognition, though it is clearly assumed to be involved in the ordinary process, for an abnormally vivid vision may be caused by an excessive *intentio* of thought (*nimia cogitationis intentio*) such that a person may be unable to

our thought with squareness itself); *Gn. litt.* 12:25:52.

⁴¹ *imm. an.* 10:17. We will return to this passage in chapter 5 when we reflect upon the withdrawal of *intentio* from the senses.

⁴² *c. Faust.* 20:7. Even though thinking about God has its limitations see chapter 7.

⁴³ *conf.* 3:7:12.

⁴⁴ *c. Faust.* 20:7. (A reference to 1 Cor. 1:24). See Introduction n. 62 and chapter 4 n. 93 for significance of quotation.

⁴⁵ *Gn. litt.* 12:1:1-2.

⁴⁶ *trin.* 11:4:7.

say whether it is spiritual or bodily⁴⁷ and, in cases where divination is involved, Augustine wonders whether the process is the same as that of ordinary cognition such that the external spirit, which is somehow mixed in (*commixtio*) with our spirit (for better or worse) enables the work of *intentio* by loosening the soul from the body and thereby letting ‘its *intentio* scout around until it comes to where it can see in itself significant likenesses that were already there but were not being seen, just as we have many things in the memory which we are not always looking at.’⁴⁸

trin.

There is some overlap between the accounts of spiritual visions in *Gn. litt.* and *trin.*, in particular with regard to spiritual visions that occur other than by willed conscious activity.⁴⁹ However, the emphasis in *trin.* is on the ordinary process of cognition and the threefold nature of the act of thought. It is this which brings to the fore the role of *intentio* in ordinary acts of thinking which, as *intentio* is an act of the will, also raises the question of the element of choice we have with regard to the images we imprint, recall or otherwise think about in spiritual vision. Augustine speaks, in allegorical terms, of the image as only being imprinted in our memory in the first place because the will, instead of referring our enjoyment of what we sense to God, rests in the enjoyment of the object and becomes attached to it to such an extent that it retains its likeness in the memory so that it can think about it again, as and when it pleases.⁵⁰ In this subsequent act of thought in which our attention is directed back to the image in the memory, there is a trinity comprising the memory, internal sight and the will which couples them together (*Atque ita fit illa trinitas ex memoria, et interna visione, et quae utrumque copulat voluntate.*)⁵¹ The act of thought therefore like an act of sense perception, may look like a single act, but it is made up of three components which are brought together (coagitated) into a unity and from this process the word *cogitatio* ‘thought’ is derived (*Quae*

⁴⁷ *Gn. litt.* 12:12:25.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 12:13:27.

⁴⁹ c.f. *trin.* 11:4:7 with *Gn. litt.* 12:12:25.

⁵⁰ *trin.* 11:3:6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

tria cum in unum coguntur, ab ipso coactu cogitatio dicitur.)⁵² Instead of the sense object, there is the image of the sense object which the memory has retained; instead of the sense, there is the mind's thinking attention and coupling the two together is the same *intentio* of the will (*hoc est eadem voluntatis intentio*) which originally coupled together the sense object and the sense.⁵³ This time the will's coupling together informs the mind's thought to produce in it a sight of the image recollected from memory whereas before, it had informed the sense to produce sight of the physical object.⁵⁴ The point that Augustine wishes to make is that, although the image produced in thought and the image held in the memory appear to be one single image, as the form in the body and the form impressed on the sense appeared to be the same form, they are in fact two different images only distinguishable by our reason. What enables us to make the distinction is the realization that the image remains in our memory, even when we think about something else and that we can go back to it at will and recall it to the sight of our thinking mind again.⁵⁵ This kind of spiritual vision, which is a seeing of sensed images by recollecting them from memory and thinking about them, could therefore not occur if there was no image in the memory to go back to or, alternatively, if there was an image but the act of recollection was not performed. When the mind turns its attention away from the image and turns it to something else, no trace of the first image will remain in its thought but, instead, its thought will be formed by another image, just as is the case with sense perception where the form does not remain in the sense once the object disappears from sight.⁵⁶ The will moves the attention of the mind through the memory and, once it finds what it wants, it keeps the mind's attention joined to the image in the memory.⁵⁷ The will's *intentio* therefore directs the mind's thinking attention to the image; connects its attention to the image and maintains the connection for as long as the image is seen. Augustine makes the same point that he made in *Gn. litt.*, that if the mind concentrates its whole energy on the image in the memory withdrawing the mind's attention completely from the senses, then such a great

⁵² Ibid. For *cogitatio* in connection with process of learning incorporeal truth see chapter 7 *infra*.

⁵³ *trin.* 11:4:7.

⁵⁴ *trin.* 11:3:6.

⁵⁵ *trin.* 11:7:12.

⁵⁶ *trin.* 11:3:6.

⁵⁷ *trin.* 11:4:7.

likeness to a bodily image is poured out into thought that reason cannot tell whether it is a corporeal vision which is being seen externally or a spiritual vision which is being seen inwardly in thought.⁵⁸ Again, as before, the intensity of the coupling of the image in memory and the mind's thinking attention by the will may be so strong as to affect the body.⁵⁹ The image in the memory to which the will is drawn and the intensity with which it is driven to couple it to the mind's thinking attention, will depend on its emotional state: desire or fear can equally well be the motivating force.⁶⁰

After establishing the trinity to be found in an act of recollection of a sense object, Augustine goes on to consider the other kind of spiritual vision which belongs to a willed act of thought: a creative act of imagination. He notes that we have a power to fabricate images of things we have forgotten or, indeed, things never sensed or experienced; we can compose them out of things that have not dropped out of the memory by increasing, diminishing, altering and putting them together as we please.⁶¹ This kind of manipulation of images is still an act of memory because no one can think about anything bodily, unless he has first sensed it and remembered it and in this sense 'the limits of thinking are set by the memory (*sic in memoria est cogitandi modus.*)'⁶² This means that even our acts of imagination are really acts of recall because what the will is doing is leading our thinking attention through the stores of memory taking things from here and there to form one composite image that appears to our thought. This will not be of something we have specifically sensed, but something completely manufactured, though completely dependent on things previously sensed.⁶³ It is with acts of

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* cf. *nimia cogitationis intentio* in *Gn. litt.* 12:12:25.

⁵⁹ *trin.* 11:4:7 as we saw that the intensity of its coupling of the sense and sense object was also capable of affecting the body *trin.* 11:2:5.

⁶⁰ *trin.* 11:4:7. For the fears and inordinate desires of the soul (*perturbationes animi*) as acts of will and for the purification of the will see chapter five *infra*.

⁶¹ *trin.* 11:5:8.

⁶² *trin.* 11:8:14.

⁶³ *trin.* 11:10:17. In *conf.* 10:8:13 Augustine describes how, for the purposes of easy recall, memory preserves 'in distinct particulars and general categories' what it receives through each sense and it is as though each sense had its own storeroom because memories relating to images imprinted through one sense don't interfere with our ability to recall images which have come in through another. Yates 1966: 59-62 says Augustine's excursus on memory in *conf.* indicates a trained memory though he is not advocating the practice of the arts of memory; merely using the imagery of places (*loci*) and images (*imagines*) to construct a language for speaking about the natural memory-its powers of retention and recall. But O'Donnell (*conf.* 10.8 Excursus: Memory in Augustine)

memory leading to spiritual vision, rather than with visions that appear unwilling that Augustine is really concerned with in *trin.*, for he is on the search for the image that God has directly imprinted on the mind, which he will only find where there is no nature interposed (*nulla interiecta natura est*) between Him and itself.⁶⁴ He has already found it in *trin.* 10, in the mental activities of memory, understanding and will, but he will not find it where those acts relate solely to corporeal objects, without the will referring its enjoyment of these objects to their proper end: this requires them to be judged in their true light (*scientia*) and for God to be praised for them (*sapientia*).

Augustine has already stressed in *trin.* 10, the distinction between the mind knowing itself and thinking about itself and the emphasis on the distinction between the image retained and the image printed off from memory is made with an eye to that: something we will return to in the later chapters of this thesis. When the will turns the mind's attention to the images of memory, it is turning it to something that was in the memory before it started thinking about it. What the will turns onto memory is the mind's *unformed* conscious attention.⁶⁵ This is significant, because it means that for the mind to come back to itself is to come back to itself as unformed conscious attention.⁶⁶ But Augustine is seeking to train the mind to reason by stages and at this stage his concern is to demonstrate that there are distinctions between the three components of thought, even though they are all of the same incorporeal nature and even though they are so closely compounded that they seem to be one thing.⁶⁷ The act of recollection can only take place if what we want to recollect is in our memory and we know it is there because if we didn't at least have a vague recollection of it, or something related to it, which prompts us to search, then the will to remember it more fully would not arise.⁶⁸

When we engage in an act of recollection, it is a process involving more than one

does not believe there is any evidence that Augustine knew of the ancient technique.

⁶⁴ *trin.* 11:5:8.

⁶⁵ *trin.* 11:7:11.

⁶⁶ See chapter 5 *infra*.

⁶⁷ *trin.* 11:7:12.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* How can we love what we do not know? The short answer given in *trin.* 8 is faith but the kind of knowledge that prompts us to seek further is considered in *trin.* 9 and 10.

thought: whether it is a matter of sewing bits together to create composite images (*hinc atque inde recordata quaelibet sumendo et quasi assuendo*)⁶⁹ or weaving several images together to form a narrative of our past lives that we can remember in the present, upon which we can then base our future actions.⁷⁰ Augustine had considered whether the whole process could be regarded as a single unity, but he dismissed it on the basis that the conscious attention cannot look at everything in the memory at one glance; we are left instead with a trinity of thoughts in succession.⁷¹ We are therefore faced once again with the problem of temporal successiveness which, although it has been solved by *intentio* with regard to an act of sense perception, still remains with regard to the thinking process.⁷²

Summary and Conclusion

Corporeal and spiritual vision is closely linked, and reliant upon an act of *intentio* of the will. An act of *intentio* connects the sense object and sense of the seeing subject to produce sight and the same act of *intentio* simultaneously imprints an image onto the memory which, in *Gn. litt.*, Augustine calls *spiritus*. Unless this image is imprinted and there is some vague recollection of this, then the will to recall it to mind more completely does not arise. It is recalled and forms our thought (spiritual vision) by an act of *intentio* coupling the mind's thinking attention and the image in the memory. If the will fails at any stage to perform its coupling activity, then the chain of perception will break.⁷³

Images formed in *spiritus* are essential to our normal functioning and communicating in the world of sense: any bodily activity requires previous arrangement of thought and planning and as we saw in chapter 2, the image imprinted onto *spiritus* is necessary to enable completion of an act of sense perception as well as enabling our judgement of it. Images are not harmful, provided we don't deceive ourselves, or others, into thinking that they are the

⁶⁹ *trin.* 12:2:2.

⁷⁰ *conf.* 10.8.14.

⁷¹ *trin.* 11:7:12.

⁷² We will return to this in chapter 7.

⁷³ *trin.* 11:8:15.

true reality and they don't block us from seeking the truth and provided we don't become overly emotionally attached and distracted by the life of the senses and the images it produces in us. Augustine shows that the activity of thought is parallel to, overlapping with and derived from, the activity of sense perception and that the link between the two is furnished by an act of *intentio*.

In addition to developing a certain skill in reasoning which will enable us to see that the seemingly unified activity of spiritual vision can be distinguished into three components, we need also to understand that what looks like one image is actually two. In the activity of sense perception, the imprint of the image onto *spiritus* cannot be seen until the sense object has been removed from sight and, with spiritual vision, the imprint of the image onto our conscious attention is indistinguishable from the image that was retrieved from memory. In both cases, although there are two images, they overlap so completely that, until the activity has been completed in each case, this is something we can only know by an incorporeal act of reasoning. In the case of spiritual vision, Augustine seeks to persuade his readers of this by arguing that, if the two were not distinguishable, then once the image was printed off in our thought, it would have disappeared forever from the memory but in fact, when we go back to our memory, we find it is still there.⁷⁴ Unlike sense perception, which involves three different natures and substances, spiritual vision involves the same natures and substances, which are all incorporeal and it therefore requires a bit more training and skill to see the distinctions between them.⁷⁵

In this chapter, we have begun to unpack, and give credence to, the bald statement made by Hayen that, in Augustine, memory is in effect explained by *intentio* ('la mémoire, en effet, s'explique par l'*intentio*')⁷⁶ though the full weight of that statement is yet to be felt. At this stage three, we are still in the realm of everyman, our minds turned towards the outside world which we allow to fill our heads with desires, fears and wild imaginings; without retaining any sense of proportion or worth. It is significant that Augustine has selected

⁷⁴ *trin.* 11:3:6.

⁷⁵ *trin.* 11:7:12.

⁷⁶ Hayen 1954: 40.

intentio; an aspect of will as that through which the soul takes in the outside world to make its own reality, because this raises the question of choice and how free we are to choose our own reality.⁷⁷ We are microcosms of creation and our memory's capacity is equivalent to the formless stage of creation, waiting to receive the form that is given through the images impressed on it by *intentio*. Our conscious attention similarly is formless until formed by what *intentio* joins with it from memory. What will become evident is that the will's *intentio* is like a pivot upon which the mind's conscious attention can turn either out towards the world or in towards God. If our attention is directed towards the outside world and its multiplicity of concerns which are then brought back inside the soul in the form of images, the risk is that they dominate our thoughts and prevent us from seeing the truth. It is up to *intentio* to order our thinking; to gather together each thought and the multiplicity of thoughts into a single coherent narrative of who we are. It is only thus can we derive meaning and in the light of faith, this allows us to see ourselves in relation to God, for if we don't see ourselves in God's light, we don't really see ourselves at all. This requires a conversion for unless we turn towards God, we cannot receive his imprint. Up until now all of the soul's activity has been a potential source of distraction from contemplation of God and what is needed is for the soul to develop the art of paying attention to God. This may mean initially turning away from the world but only temporarily and in order to turn back to look at it in a different way. The question, 'why do these things give me pleasure?' is the beginning of the process of reasoning, which will eventually lead us towards an understanding of the truth, provided we first reorient ourselves through faith.

⁷⁷ For *intentio* as aspect of will see chapter 5.

Chapter Four: *virtus*

Archery can in no circumstances mean accomplishing anything outwardly with bow and arrow, but only inwardly, with oneself.¹

Steep is the way to mastery. Often nothing keeps the pupil on the move but his faith in his teacher.²

Take hold now and swing yourself onto the fourth level, where goodness and all true worth begins. Here it is that the soul ventures to take precedence not only over its own body, acting some part in the universe, but even over the whole body of the universe itself. The goods of the world it does not account its own, and comparing them with its own power and beauty, it keeps aloof from them and despises them (*bonaque eius bona sua non putare, atque potentiae pulchritudinique suae comparata discernere atque contemnere.*) Hence, the more the soul turns to itself for its own pleasure, the more does it withdraw from sordid things and cleanse itself and make itself immaculately clean through and through (*et inde quo magis se delectat, eo magis sese abstrahere a sordibus, totamque emaculare ac mundissimam reddere et comptissimam*). It steels itself against every effort (*roborare se adversus omnia*) to lure it away from its purpose and resolve. It shows high consideration for human society and desires nothing to happen to another which it does not wish to happen to itself (*societatem humanam magni pendere, nihilque velle alteri quod sibi nolit accidere*). It submits to the authority and the bidding of wise men and is convinced that through them God speaks to itself (*sequi auctoritatem ac praecepta sapientium, et per haec loqui sibi Deum credere.*). Yet, this performance of the soul, noble as it is, still requires strenuous effort and the annoyances and allurements of this world engage it in a mighty struggle, bitterly contested. In this work of purification there is an underlying fear of death, sometimes not strong, but sometimes all-pervading. It is scarcely present when one has a very vigorous faith that-and to see the truth of this is granted only to the purified soul-all things are so governed by the great providence and justice of God that death cannot come as an evil to anyone, even though someone may inflict it with evil intentions. But on this level there is a great fear of death, when, on the one hand, confidence in God's justice is so much the weaker the more anxiously one seeks for it; and when, on the other hand, corresponding to the lack of tranquillity in the presence of fear, there is a greater lack of understanding; for tranquillity is absolutely necessary for the study of matters shrouded in mystery.

Further, as the soul in the course of its progress realizes more and more, what great difference there is between its state of purity, and its state of defilement, the greater is its apprehension that when it has sloughed off this body, God may find it less endurable than it finds itself when defiled. There is, moreover, nothing more difficult than to fear death and to refrain from the allurements of this world in a degree

¹ Herrigel 1976:18.

² Ibid. 66.

commensurate with the jeopardies involved. Yet, so great is the soul that it can do even this, by the help, of course, of the goodness of the supreme and true God—that goodness which sustains and rules the universe, that goodness by which it has been brought about not only that all things exist, but that they exist in such a way that they cannot be any better than they are. It is to this divine goodness that the soul most dutifully and confidently commits itself for help and success in the difficult task of self-purification.³

The fourth stage of ascent, and the fourth power of the soul in *an. quant.*, is the second of the five rational levels which, together, correspond to the third degree of soul identified by Varro⁴ and is the first stage that is not common to all human beings. Augustine describes it as virtue (*virtus*) and it involves acts of the soul ‘toward itself (*ad seipsam.*)’⁵ O’Daly says of this stage that it is ‘characteristically, if not exclusively ethical,’ and is concerned with ‘moral struggle and progress through purification, with belief and authority.’⁶ There are clearly discernible references in the passage to the four classical virtues: prudence (*prudentia*), temperance (*temperantia*), fortitude (*fortitudo*) and justice (*iustitia*).⁷ At this stage, Augustine says that true religion purifies the soul (*religio uera ...purgat in quarto*).⁸ It does this by the soul taking a firm stand (*fortiter agens*) in faith and by living virtuously, as it seeks to understand the truths ‘scattered through the many writings of the Church.’⁹

The meaning of virtue

³ *an. quant.* 33:73.

⁴ *ciu.* 7:23.

⁵ *an. quant.* 35:79.

⁶ O’Daly 1987: 13 and 14.

⁷ Du Roy 1966: 259 n. 2 referred to and identified in Neil 1999: 208. Prudence in ‘The goods of the world it does not account its own, and comparing them with its own power and beauty, it keeps aloof from them and despises them (*bonaque eius bona sua non putare, atque potentiae pulchritudinique suae comparata discernere atque contemnere*); Temperance in ‘The more the soul turns to itself for its own pleasure, the more does it withdraw from sordid things and cleanse itself and make itself immaculately clean through and through (*et inde quo magis se delectat, eo magis sese abstrahere a sordibus, totamque emaculare ac mundissimam reddere et comptissimam*); Fortitude in ‘It steels itself against every effort (*roborare se adversus omnia*)’ and Justice in ‘It shows high consideration for human society and desires nothing to happen to another which it does not wish to happen to itself (*societatem humanam magni pendere, nihilque velle alteri quod sibi nolit accidere.*)’ Augustine notes *retr.* 1:7:3 and *en. Ps.* 83:11 that these virtues are described by many writers and are also found in scripture.

⁸ *an. quant.* 36:80.

⁹ *Ibid.* 34:78. The same four virtues can be identified here says Neil 1990: 208.

Augustine discussed the meaning of virtue with Euodius, proposing that virtue be defined as ‘a sort of equality of life in harmony with reason (*utrum tibi videatur virtus aequalitas quaedam esse vitae, rationi undique consentientis*).’ He approved Euodius’ equation of reason with truth and his definition of a virtuous person as one whose life is, in all respects, in harmony with the truth.¹⁰ In Augustine’s view, there was nothing among the treasures of the soul that showed greater all-round balance than virtue and, therefore, the state of virtue excelled all other states of the soul.¹¹ He demonstrates this to Euodius by getting him first to see that geometric figures with the greatest equality are to be preferred to others less equal and then by suggesting that he think of virtue as comparable to a circle: the geometric figure which has equality in the highest degree.¹²

If we can live faithfully and virtuously in this life, then, after the life of this body, ‘virtue’s and piety’s reward is God Himself, that is, Truth itself, (*et virtuti pietatique sit Deus ipse, id est veritas ipsa, praemium*).’¹³ Not only does this statement make it clear that God will not be fully possessed in this life¹⁴ and that there is a link between how we live now and the nature of our afterlife, but it also makes it clear that virtue, for Augustine, is a means to an end; not an end in itself.¹⁵ In *mor.*, a work which he was writing at the same time as *an. quant.*,¹⁶ Augustine made the point that the soul must pursue something in order to attain virtue and ‘our highest desire when we are in pursuit of something is that we may attain what

¹⁰ *an. quant.* 16:27. Augustine defines virtue in various ways throughout his works egs. ‘correct and perfect reason’ *sol.* 1:6:13; ‘a perfectly correct disposition of mind’ *mor.* 1:11:19; ‘rightly ordered love’ *ciu.* 15:22; ‘a habit of the soul conformable to the ways of nature and to reason’ *c. Iul.* 4:3:19 (here he was quoting with approval Cicero’s definition of virtue which had been included as *diu. qu.* 83:31).

¹¹ *an. quant.* 16:27.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *an. quant.* 36:81. Also see *trin.* 14:8:11.

¹⁴ There are two statements in the Cassiciacum dialogues indicating that he thought it *was* possible to attain the Happy Life in this life; statements which he later felt obliged to correct, (*sol.* 1:7:14 corrected by *retr.* 1:4:3 and *beata u.* 4:25 corrected by *retr.* 1:2).

¹⁵ See similar early statements in *sol.* 1:6:13, ‘After this life virtue is perfected when it is followed by the Happy Life’ and *ord.* 1:8:23 ‘What else is the process of conversion but to uplift oneself wholeheartedly by virtue and temperance from the excess of vices? And what else is the face of God than the truth for which we yearn and for which as the object of our love we make ourselves clean and beautiful?’

¹⁶ On the period of time over which *mor.* was written (probably completed after *Gn. adu. Man.*) see Coyle 1978: 66-98, esp. 74-9; 93-4.

we are pursuing' (*Summa sunt autem vota sequentium, ut id quod sequimur, assequamur.*)¹⁷ That something is God and 'if we pursue Him, we live well; if we attain Him, we live not merely well but also happily' (*Deus igitur restat quem si sequimur, bene, si assequimur, non tantum bene sed etiam beate vivimus.*)¹⁸ Cicero had begun *Hortensius*, the book that had converted Augustine to a life of philosophy,¹⁹ by stating as a universal truth that 'We all certainly want to be happy' (*Beati certe, inquit, omnes esse volumus.*)²⁰ The philosophical schools had agreed that 'we all certainly want to be happy' and, accordingly, moral philosophy was concerned with the search for our *Summum Bonum* (Greatest Good), being that which would bring us The Happy Life.²¹ But they were not agreed as to where happiness might be found: some finding it in the body, some in the soul and others in a combination of the two.²² Only the Platonists sought the *Summum Bonum* in God, rather than in the mind or the body.²³ The Stoics defined the *Summum Bonum* as virtue and Colish writes:

The definition of the *Summum Bonum* as virtue alone, as an end in itself, as attainable by correct intellectual judgements and the exercise of a rationally instructed will, as the sole and sufficient possession of the sage, and as a good within man's power that can never be lost, is a constellation of Stoic ideas which Augustine expressly attributes to that school and toward which he shows a marked partiality in his earliest works. His sympathy with this ethical position continues, on the whole, into the mid-390s. When he modifies any of these themes up to that point he is more likely to do so under the influence of Neoplatonism, or to a far lesser extent, Aristotelianism, rather than Christianizing them.²⁴

¹⁷ *mor.* 1:6:9.

¹⁸ *mor.* 1:6:10.

¹⁹ Augustine describes this conversion in *conf.* 3:4:7. Cic.'s *Hortensius*, which was an exhortation to study philosophy, is no longer extant but the most important remaining fragments are contained in Augustine's works. For a list of passages in which *Hort.* is quoted by Augustine, see Gibb and Montgomery 58 n. 4.

²⁰ *trin.* 13:4:7. This had been stated at the beginning of *Acad.* (*Acad.* 1:2:5) not surprisingly because *Hortensius* had not only won Augustine over to philosophy but also purportedly, for the most part, had won over Augustine's pupils, Licentius and Trygetius *Acad.* 1:1:4. In *trin.* 13:8:11 Augustine's explanation for this universal truth is that this is a desire naturally implanted in us by our Creator *trin.* 13:8:11. Hence our restless hearts *conf.* 1:1.

²¹ *ciu.* 8:8. This system of ethics was called 'eudaemonism,' from the Greek for happiness, εὐδαιμονία.

²² *Ibid.* Augustine looked at the various views in *ciu.* 19 taking the information from Varro's *De Philosophia* where he noted 288 different schools of thought on the matter.

²³ *ciu.* 8:8.

²⁴ Colish 1985/2: 213.

Wetzel takes issue with Colish over her premature attempt ‘to divorce Augustine from Stoic ethics’ in the 390s, arguing that ‘the reversal of perspective that introduces divine agency into the very heart of human willing is still years away.’²⁵ However, on the contrary, we would argue that Augustine held an identifiably Christian view of the *Summum Bonum* from the outset, even if he struggled to find a way of expressing this, through the inherited amalgam of ideas. It is true that he does make one or two statements supporting a Stoic view of virtue as an end in itself,²⁶ but, already in *beata u*, his first complete work written after his conversion,²⁷ he had equated the Happy Life with possession of God,²⁸ and specifically with knowledge of a Trinitarian God, for the Happy life is ‘to recognize piously and completely the one through whom you are led into the truth, the nature of the truth you enjoy and the bond that connects you with the supreme measure’ (*hoc est beata vita, pie perfecteque cognoscere a quo inducaris in veritatem, qua veritate perfruaris, per quid connectaris summo modo.*)²⁹ He also regarded it as a gift, rather than attainable by one’s own efforts, and commented that, therefore, the name of the dedicatee of the dialogue (Theodore meaning ‘gift of God’) was particularly apposite.³⁰

²⁵ Wetzel 1992: 72.

²⁶ In *Acad.* 1:2:5 he had unambiguously stated the Stoic view, which he felt obliged to correct in *retr.* 1:1:2 as follows: ‘Again I said “What else do you think it is to live happily if not to live in accordance with what is best in man?” And a little later I explained what I meant by “what is best in man” when I said, “Who would doubt that there is nothing else that is best in man than the part of the soul to whose dominion whatever other parts there are in man should submit? Should you seek another definition, however, this part can be called mind or reason.” This is certainly true, for, as far as the nature of man is concerned, there is nothing in him that is better than the mind and reason. But the person who wishes to live happily must not live in accordance with that, or else he is living in accordance with man when he should be living in accordance with God, so that he may be able to attain happiness. In pursuit of that our mind should not be satisfied with itself but must submit to God.’ Another unambiguously Stoic statement can be found in *Acad.* 3:12:27, which he amended in *retr.* 1:1:4 as follows: In the third book I said, “If you are looking for my opinion, I think that man’s highest good is in the mind.” It would have been more correct if I had said “in God,” for it is he himself, as its highest good, that the mind enjoys so that it may be happy.”

²⁷ See Introduction n. 57.

²⁸ *beata u.* 2:11. Once this conclusion had been reached in *beata u.* 2:11, the question, who possesses God? was discussed. Various opinions were put forward in *beata u.* 2:12: that a person possess God if lives well; if he does what God wants; if he has a spirit free from uncleanness. In *beata u.* 3:18, Augustine concludes all three opinions are a single opinion because living well is nothing other than doing what God wills and a spirit free from uncleanness means a person who has cleaned his soul from all vices and sins and the one is pure who attends to God and devoted himself to him alone.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 4:35. Also in *sol.* 1:6:13 he distinguishes between virtue and the Happy Life which follows.

³⁰ *beata u.* 1:5. The question of virtue being ‘attainable by correct intellectual judgements and the exercise of a rationally instructed will,’ belongs to chapter 5 where we engage with Augustine’s growing emphasis on the will not necessarily following the dictates of reason.

Equivalent stage in trin

Stage four *an. quant.* corresponds to the first stage of the inner man (*homo interior*) in *trin.*, which Augustine calls ‘knowledge’ (*scientia*). Although, in *trin.*, he demarcated the inner from the outer man at this stage on the grounds that this is where reason begins and therefore it is the point at which man differs from beast,³¹ he did acknowledge that the lower activities of conscious recall and imagination, in relation to sense images in the memory, were not without their share in reason.³² The difference, though, is that it is only at this first stage of the inner man that, what is taken in through the senses, can be used to foster knowledge (*scientia*) where it is the work of a ‘loftier reason to make judgements on these bodily things according to non-bodily and everlasting meanings (*Sed sublimioris rationis est iudicare de istis corporalibus secundum rationes incorporales et sempiternas*).’³³ *Scientia* simply means ‘knowledge’³⁴ but Augustine gives it a specialized meaning in *trin.* and distinguishes it from wisdom (*sapientia*) on the grounds that they are two distinct gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12:8.³⁵ It is not, however, until Augustine reflects on a passage from Job that he claims to have any insight as to what the distinction means. From Job 28:28, ‘Behold piety is wisdom, while to abstain from evil things is knowledge (*Ecce pietas est sapientia; abstinere autem a malis scientia est*),’ he understood the distinction between *scientia* and *sapientia* to be a distinction between action and contemplation: *scientia* was the activity of avoiding evil and doing good in relation to temporal realities by acting virtuously; *sapientia* was the contemplation of eternal realities because *pietas* was the Latin translation of the Greek θεοσέβεια (worship of God).³⁶ The stage of *scientia* corresponds to stage four *an. quant.*

³¹ *trin.* 12:8:13.

³² *trin.* 12:1:2.

³³ *Ibid*; *trin.* 13:1:4.

³⁴ By ‘knowledge’ Augustine means ‘grasping reality with certain reason:’ *an. quant.* 26:49; 30:58; *lib. arb.* 1:16; *retr.* 1:14:3. He may have originally come across the idea of knowledge as a grasping, which is both Stoic and Platonic, in Nicomachus, see Solignac 1958: 135.

³⁵ 1 Cor. 12:8. Again, another source may have been Nicomachus, see Solignac 1958: 134-5 and n. 59 though it was clearly more politic for Augustine to be able to find scriptural authority for ideas he had originally come across elsewhere.

³⁶ *trin.* 12:14:22. This distinction had previously been made by Augustine in *Simpl.* 2:2:3. With his distinction into *scientia* and *sapientia*, Augustine had simply dichotomised the traditional definition of wisdom ‘the knowledge of things human and divine’ (given by him in *Acad.* 1:6:16); NB *beata u.* 2:8 where Monica had already made a distinction between knowledge and understanding ‘I believe that the soul is not nourished except

because both are concerned, primarily, with an ethical approach to knowledge and, specifically, from the perspective of the Christian faith: *scientia* being described in *trin.* as anything that ‘breeds, feeds, defends and strengthens the saving faith which leads to true happiness.’³⁷ The saving faith is our faith in the life and work of the incarnate Christ; this being the standard (*regula*) against which we are to assess both how we ought to behave as human beings and how we do, in fact, behave as the individual human being that we are. The move towards self-knowledge that *scientia* fosters, corresponds to the first part of the traditional twofold goal of the philosophic quest: to know the soul and God³⁸ and, whether Augustine calls it virtue (*virtus*), as in *an. quant.*, or knowledge (*scientia*), as in *trin.*, this stage is about growing towards self-knowledge, which is primarily ethical knowledge based on the life of the incarnate Christ.

Power of the soul involved at this stage

Augustine calls the work that the soul carries out at this stage, ‘a work of purification (*purgationis negotio*)’³⁹ which ‘calls for action than which none is more laborious, none that is more akin to inaction, for it is such as the soul cannot begin or complete except with the help of Him to whom it yields itself’ (*Hac autem actione nihil mihi videtur operosius, et nihil est cessationi similis: neque tamen eam suscipere aut implere animus potest, nisi eo ipso adiuvante cui redditur.*)⁴⁰

The work of purification referred to is a purification by faith of the reasoning power of the soul, which is also a purification of love on the grounds that the true faith ‘is that which works through love (*Ipsa autem fides definita est, quae per dilectionem operatur.*)’⁴¹ In order

by the understanding and knowledge of things (*intellectu rerum atque scientia.*)

³⁷ *trin.* 14:1:3. In *trin.* Augustine also stresses historical knowledge because of his emphasis on the incarnation see Studer 1997.

³⁸ *ord.* 2:18:47.

³⁹ *an. quant.* 33:73.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 28:55. This gives the lie to Wetzel’s comment with regard to the contemporary *mor.*, ‘The reversal of perspective that introduces divine agency into the very heart of human willing is still years away.’ See n. 25 for reference.

⁴¹ *s.* 53:11. Augustine tied together two scriptural quotations ‘the just man lives on faith’ (Rom. 1:17) and ‘faith works through love’ (Gal. 5:6) *trin.* 13:20:26; *ep.* 55:2; *en. Ps.* 32:2:4 and 9; *en. Ps.* 118:3:3; *en. Ps.* 118:7:1; *c. ep. Pel.* 3:3:5; 3:5:14. Knowing without loving (*scientia sine caritate*) is not an option. St Paul says in 1 Cor. 8:1

to live virtuously, the soul has to develop its ability to judge and evaluate the life of the senses and this ability belongs to its power of reasoning (*sed iudicare de corporibus non sentientis tantum vitae, sed etiam ratiocinantis est; qua illae carent, nos excellimus.*)⁴² Although Augustine is not always consistent in his terminology, he does distinguish between the activity of reasoning and the faculty of reason to which the activity belongs. Reasoning is a ‘movement of the mind, capable of distinguishing and connecting the things that are learned (*Ratio est mentis motio, ea quae discutuntur distinguendi et connectendi potens.*)’⁴³ It is a search for knowledge that begins from knowledge because ‘reason proceeds from a basis in something known and leads us to something unknown (*quod cognito aliquo nititur, dum nos ratio ad incognitum ducit.*)’⁴⁴ It is not something which the mind is always engaged in and, if it is, it is not necessarily very good at it and so does not always arrive at knowledge.⁴⁵ The faculty of reason (*ratio*), on the other hand, is always present in those who are of sound mind and Augustine defines it in *an. quant.* as ‘the mind’s act of looking’ (*ratio sit quidam mentis aspectus*).⁴⁶ Elsewhere, and influenced by scripture, Augustine equates reason with mind and spirit but, whatever it is called, this faculty is our ruling element, differentiating us from beasts⁴⁷ and which, if it directs our emotions as it should, will ensure that we lead a well-ordered life.⁴⁸

that ‘knowledge puffs up, love builds up’ (*Scientia inflat, caritas vero aedificat*) and Augustine says this means that *scientia* is only valuable when *caritas* informs it. Without *caritas* a man becomes arrogant like a demon (whose Greek name means ‘knowing’) arrogating to themselves the praise due to God, *ciu.* 9:20.

⁴² *uera rel.* 29:53; *conf.* 7:17:23.

⁴³ *ord.* 2:11:30.

⁴⁴ *an. quant.* 27:53.

⁴⁵ *an. quant.* 27:53. A correct judgement amounts to an understanding of the truth. If we judge something to be other than it is, then we have not reached understanding *Gn. litt.* 12:14:29. The more skilled at reasoning we are, the better we judge and our skill in reasoning is ‘in proportion to reason’s participation in some art, discipline or wisdom.’ *uera rel.* 30:54.

⁴⁶ *an. quant.* 27:53; 14:24; *sol.* 1:6:12. In *imm. an.* 6:10, Augustine considered three possible definitions of reason: the mind’s own act of looking, the act of contemplation of the truth or the truth itself *Ratio est aspectus animi, quo per seipsum, non per corpus verum intuetur; aut ipsa veri contemplatio, non per corpus; aut ipsum verum quod contemplator;* in other words the act of looking, the act of sight of the truth and the true object of sight.

⁴⁷ *an. quant.* 26:49; *ord.* 2:11:31 ‘By the one term ‘rational’ man is distinguished from brute animals.’ NB the appropriateness of the definition of soul in *an. quant.* 13:22 as ‘*substantia quaedam rationis particeps, regendo corpori accommodata.*’

⁴⁸ *lib. arb.* 1:8:18.

Image and likeness of God

In his earliest writings, Augustine said that our rational mind was ‘that in us which is divine’⁴⁹ and was that to which we must hold fast, if we want to be divine.⁵⁰ With these statements, he was attempting to articulate the view, which relied upon ‘the authority of the apostle as well as plain reason,’ to interpret Gen. 1:26 (that man was made in the image of God) as applying to man, not as regards the shape of his body but as regards his rational mind.⁵¹ It is the rational mind, which is in the image of God because it is closest to Him ‘without the interposition of any other nature (*nulla natura interposita formetur*).’⁵² With regard to our rational mind, we were created in His image and likeness,⁵³ which means that we were created with a capacity to share in God’s life.⁵⁴ We have remained in His image, despite the Fall, but we have lost our participation in His life,⁵⁵ which means we have preferred our individual selves over the common interest.⁵⁶ If we are to come to fully share in God’s life, we must, first of all, discover His image in ourselves and then work on improving its likeness.⁵⁷ This means improving the functioning of our rational mind, through ‘the faith that works through love’ and, specifically, it means developing our ability to make judgements in relation to the life of the senses in the light of our faith so that we can thereby live virtuously. This will also have a beneficial effect on the body, which the soul will then rule ‘in a better

⁴⁹ *Acad.* 1:1:3.

⁵⁰ *ord.* 2:11:31.

⁵¹ *trin.* 12:7:12.

⁵² *diu. qu.* 83:51:2.

⁵³ ‘Then God said “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness,” Gen. 1:26. In LXX εἰκὼν is image and ὁμοίωσις is likeness. Ladner 1959: 58 says that Paul did not know of a distinction between the two terms and modern exegetes of Gen, also regard the two terms as expressing the same idea. Ladner goes on (*ibid.* 83) that ὁμοίωσις had a history, before being selected as the word to translate ‘likeness’ and it imports the activity of assimilation. A distinction, and even antithesis, then developed between the two words. Augustine’s view was that we were created in the full image and likeness of God though we had lost the likeness through the Fall but we retained the image. The Greek view was that we were created in the image and moved to the full likeness.

⁵⁴ *trin.* 14:12:15.

⁵⁵ *trin.* 14:8:11. Augustine is keen to stress that the image has not been completely lost and in *retr.* 1:26 clarified an earlier statement in *diu. qu.* 83:67 which might have suggested otherwise, because if the image had been lost there would be nothing that could be reformed.

⁵⁶ *trin.* 12:9:14.

⁵⁷ *trin.* 14:8:11.

and more honourable way.’⁵⁸ Just as our physical strength is achieved by a harmonious development of the body’s limbs, so the soul has greater power to act when it is trained than when it is untrained.’⁵⁹ Our ability to reason must therefore be trained to be in harmony with the truth.⁶⁰ As the soul makes progress in virtue, it will grow in constancy (*constantiae*),⁶¹ until it comes to a state of tranquillity (*tranquillitas*) in itself (*in seipsa*); the fifth level of soul or stage of ascent,⁶² from which it is able to move upwards towards God at stages six and seven.

Intentio at stage four

The training of our rational mind must begin, then, with a conversion to the true faith.⁶³ Our exploration of *intentio* in this chapter will look at *intentio* as an act of conversion and as direction towards a purposed end. This will involve an analysis of Philippians 3:14; the primary biblical source for Augustine’s use of *intentio*. From Augustine’s reflections on this scriptural text, we will establish the connection of *intentio* with the end aimed at and also use the text as a springboard to reflect on Augustine’s stipulation that *intentio* must set out from the true faith, if it is to attain the end aimed at: the divinity of Christ.

An act of intentio as an act of conversio

Hayen gave *conversio* as one of the meanings of *intentio* in Augustine (‘the application of the mind towards the object of its contemplation, God, for instance where it can be

⁵⁸ *mor.* 1:5:8.

⁵⁹ *an. quant.* 19:33.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 21:36.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* 16:28.

⁶² *Ibid.* 35:79.

⁶³ Augustine made a point of arguing the importance of faith as a prerequisite for the acquisition of true virtue against the Manichees who duped people by their great displays of continence *conf.* 6:7:12. *mor.* was written to ensure that the unwary were not led astray by the image that the Manichees’ gave out, of a chaste life and remarkable continence. Augustine introduces *mor.* thus, ‘in it you will perhaps understand how easy it is to pretend to have virtue and how difficult it is to actually have it.’ (*mor.* 1:1:2). No one in fact can have true virtue without true piety that is the true worship of the true God *ciu.* 5:19. Without faith, what looks like the virtue of continence is not true continence *cont.* 26. In fact, all the virtues will only be true virtues, if they are related to the true faith *trin.* 14:1:3.

regarded as a synonym for *conversio*’) but did not explain why.⁶⁴ Madec, who also linked the two, was more forthcoming. He identified conversion, interiority and intentionality:

‘L’intentionnalité réclame l’intériorité, autrement dit la conversion,’ defining Augustinian interiority ‘comme une tension, un mouvement, un *esse ad* et donc une intentionnalité’⁶⁵ on the basis of Augustine’s well-known ‘definition’ of God: He is ‘closer to me than I am to myself and higher than my highest element (*interior intimo meo et superior summo meo*).’⁶⁶ We will look first at conversion, then at interiority and finally at intentionality in order to see why an act of conversion might be regarded as an act of *intentio*.

conversio

An act of conversion has been defined by Nock as, ‘the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier form of piety to another, a turning which implies a consciousness that a great change is involved, that the old was wrong and the new is right.’⁶⁷ It might be a turn away from worldly interests and pursuits to follow the radically different and disciplined life of philosophy⁶⁸ or it might be a religious conversion. With regards to Christianity, Nock observes that conversion takes one of two forms, ‘the turning back to a tradition generally held and characteristic of society as a whole, a tradition in which the convert was himself reared but which he has left in scepticism or indifference or violent self-assertion; and the turning away to an unfamiliar form of piety either from a familiar form or from indifference.’⁶⁹ Whether it is philosophical or religious, conversion is at heart a reorientation of our whole selves away from a subjective, individual standpoint to an objective, universal one, which enables us to contemplate the whole and to

⁶⁴ Hayen 1954: 38-40; I have been unable to consult Vannier 1991.

⁶⁵ Madec 1994b: 151.

⁶⁶ *conf.* 3:6:11. Also *uera rel.* 20:38; *conf.* 9:1:1; *en. Ps.* 130:12; *trin.* 8:9:13; 12:3:3. Madec 1994b: 155 says that the two metaphors signify the same tension, which is part of the human spirit’s relationship with God.

⁶⁷ Nock, 1961: 7.

⁶⁸ Nock 1961: 179. Nock *ibid.* 184 uses Augustine’s conversion, consequent upon reading Cic. *Hort.* as an example of a philosophic conversion.

⁶⁹ Nock 1961: 266 regards Augustine’s conversion to Christianity as an example of the former. We can see this from *Acad.* 2.2.5 ‘Swiftly did I begin to return to myself. Actually, all that I did-let me admit it-was to look back from the end of a journey, as it were, to that religion which is implanted in us in our childhood days and bound up in the marrow of our bones.’

see ourselves as part of it.⁷⁰ It can be sudden or a more gradual process⁷¹ though, even in a gradual transformation, there are always ‘critical points here at which the movement forward seems much more rapid.’⁷²

Augustine used the language of *conversio/aversio* for the turning towards and turning away from God⁷³ and regarded the effects of *conversio/aversio* as not simply moral but also ontological and epistemological.⁷⁴ God is Being and, if we turn towards God, we tend towards being which orders us and, conversely, if we are turned away from God, we tend towards non-being and this brings disorder.⁷⁵ For Augustine, the spiritual creation, to which the human soul belonged, was a two-stage process: the creation of formless matter and its subsequent formation. The soul remained in an unformed state, unless it turned towards God to be illuminated and thus formed and perfected. In turning towards God, we are imitating Christ, who became the perfect creature by turning to be united to the Father, so when we turn and are formed, we are imitating his conversion and, conversely, we do not imitate him if we turn away from God.⁷⁶ God through His Word never stops speaking to his creature and calling it, by ‘some hidden inspiration’ to return to Him to be formed and perfected.⁷⁷

Interiority

For Augustine, conversion towards God means a return inwards and this is initiated by an *admonitio*, which is something that is designed to attract our attention (normally) in the outside world and act as a reminder to turn inwards.⁷⁸ Augustine himself had famously been

⁷⁰ Hadot 1995: 91 and see *ord.* 1:1:1 which shows this is how Augustine viewed it.

⁷¹ James 1985: 189.

⁷² *Ibid.* 206.

⁷³ egs. *sol.* 2:19:33; *Gn. litt.* 1:4:9; 1:5:10; 12:21; *ep.* 140:23; *en. Ps.* 84:8; *en. Ps.* 118:5:3. Hammond Taylor ACW 41, 225 n. 16 notes similarity with Plotinus *Enn* language of conversion, light and calling back.,

⁷⁴ Bourke 1993: 226.

⁷⁵ *mor.* 2:6:8.

⁷⁶ *Gn. litt.* 1:1:2; 1:1:3; 1.3.7-1.4.9; 1.9.15-17; 1.17.32 See Armstrong 1954 on the use made by Augustine of Plotinus’ concept of ‘an unformed or potential element in derived spiritual or intellectual being.’

⁷⁷ *Gn. litt.* 1:5:10. The hidden inspiration is the *admonitio* referred to the next paragraph.

⁷⁸ Madec *AL* 95-99. Normally but not exclusively because in *Simpl.* 1:2:2, Augustine envisages that the admonition may also be through spiritual or intellectual visions.

admonished to return to himself by the Platonic books (*et inde admonitus redire ad memet ipsum*).⁷⁹ When Augustine said that no one could seek God unless admonished (*Deus ...quem nemo quaerit, nisi admonitus*)⁸⁰ he was referring to God's attempts throughout history to attract our attention through the temporal, visible world in which we have become unduly immersed through sin, in order to call us to conversion to the true faith and return to Him.⁸¹ This is how Augustine explained the Old and New Testament theophanies and signs⁸² which, as he saw it, culminated in the Incarnation.⁸³ In the Incarnation, God has supremely lowered himself to our propensity to understand only what is visible and temporal, and became flesh so that He could draw us back to Himself by teaching us, through his life and work, to understand the invisible through the visible.⁸⁴ Christ, during his life, admonished through miracles,⁸⁵ and now, His Spirit admonishes through the human words of scripture to arouse us to turn our attention inwards.⁸⁶

Augustine exhorts Euodius to conversion with these words:

The soul is admonished (*admonetur*) not to pour itself (*refundat*⁸⁷) into the senses more than is necessary but rather to collect itself into itself (*ad seipsam colligat*), and become a child of God again. This is what it means to become a

⁷⁹ *conf.* 7:10:16. As to what the Platonic books were see chapter 1 n. 22.

⁸⁰ *sol.* 1:1:3; See as early as *beata u.* 4. 35 *Admonitio autem quaedam, quae nobiscum agit, ut Deum recordemur, ut eum quaeramus, ut eum pulso omni fastidio sitiamus, de ipso ad nos fonte veritatis emanat.*

⁸¹ *trin.* 4:18:24.

⁸² *trin.* 2:5:10 (This was the purpose of sending the Holy Spirit as a dove and as tongues of fire at Pentecost); *trin.* 3:5:11; 4:1:2 (Old and New Testament miracles).

⁸³ As against his Homoian opponents for whom 'the visible and material existence of the Son which requires them to deny his full divinity is discovered not so much in the Incarnation but as is well-known in the theophanies of the Old Testament.' See Barnes 1999: 48.

⁸⁴ *lib. arb.* 3:10:30.

⁸⁵ *util. cred.* 14:32- 16:34.

⁸⁶ *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:5:6 'Instead of being watered by an interior fountain we stand in need of rain from clouds, that is, of teaching by human words.' Also *s.* 264:4 'Can Christ enter the heart in the flesh and with the flesh? It's in his divinity that he possesses the heart (in the flesh he speaks to the heart through the eyes, and instructs it from outside).' As Augustine pithily put it, '*foris admonet, intus docet,*' *lib. arb.* 2:14:38. Augustine also distinguishes between Christ as Beginning and Word in *Gn. litt.* 1:4:9-5:10. As the Beginning, He is the origin of created being in its imperfect and formless state and as the Word he perfects creation. It is as the Beginning that Christ unceasingly admonishes the creature to turn to the First Cause to be completed through the Word. He begins to inwardly teach us from our conversion, *trin.* 14:15:21.

⁸⁷ There are hints of Plotinus' doctrine of emanation here. See chapter 6 *infra* for Augustine's use of this language in relation to the Fall.

new man by putting off the old.⁸⁸

Here we have all the essentials of a religious conversion: the *admonitio*, the soul's collecting together of itself towards itself (*ad seipsam*); becoming a child of God again (reconciliation with God); and the Pauline terminology of becoming a new man by putting off the old. In the paragraph from which the passage is extracted, Augustine stresses to Euodius the epistemological effects of conversion: if the soul is going to use its instruments of reason and knowledge, which are superior to the senses and the soul's primary source of enjoyment, then it must keep a distance from the senses because the more the human soul deviates into the senses, the more beastlike and unreasoning it becomes. Augustine also emphasizes that, theologically, for the soul to collect itself together towards itself, is for the soul to return to it self (*redderet mihi*),⁸⁹ and this is a step towards being reformed in the image of God.⁹⁰

In *trin.*, Christ is portrayed, following the authority of scripture (Col. 2:3), as holding in Himself, the key to *scientia* (through the life and work of the incarnate Christ) and to *sapientia* (the divinity of Christ, reached through *scientia*).⁹¹ Although this distinction is not developed by *an. quant.*, nor is the role of the incarnate Christ as mediator very visible, yet there is a definite foreshadowing of the later distinction detected in Augustine's reference to coming 'by God's Power and Wisdom to that supreme cause' (*perventuros per Virtutem Dei atque Sapientiam ad summam illam causam*).⁹² Christ is described in scripture as the Virtue and Wisdom of God (*Dei Virtutem atque Sapientiam* 1 Cor. 1:24) in a pairing that correlates with the *scientia/sapientia* distinction: 'virtus is understood to have to do with action while *sapientia* is understood to have to do with teaching' (*virtus ad operationem, sapientia vero ad disciplinam pertinere intelligatur*).⁹³ The two pairings also correspond to the distinction in

⁸⁸ *an. quant.* 28:55.

⁸⁹ For eggs of 'Return to self' language see *Acad.* 2.2.5 *totus in me cursim redibam*; *ord.* 1:2:3. *Ita enim animus sibi redditus; uera rel.* 39:72 *Noli foras ire, in teipsum redi; uera rel.* 43. 80. *Redeamus ad nos.*

⁹⁰ In *retr.* 1:8:3, Augustine amended *an. quant.* 28:55 to make it clear that the return to self was the first step to return to God rather than to be desired for its own sake though Madec 1994 b: 160 notes that it is in any event one and the same movement *noverim me noverim te.*

⁹¹ *trin.* 13:19:24 (Col. 2:1).

⁹² *an. quant.* 33:76.

⁹³ *mor.* 1:16:27. O'Donnell *conf.* 1:1:1 notes that 1 Cor. 1:24 was the first scriptural text ever cited by Augustine in *Acad.* 2:1:1. Here Augustine can be found praying to the virtue and wisdom of God. Augustine explores 1

John. 1:14 that Augustine points out between grace and truth and ‘if we refer grace to knowledge and truth to wisdom, I think we shall not be inconsistent with the distinction between these two things which we have been recommending.’⁹⁴ The movement of our attention is therefore from *foris to intus* and inwards on upwards as we move with grace through *scientia/virtus/gratia* to *sapientia/veritas*, with our attention firmly fixed on Christ.⁹⁵

Intentionality

We can see, then, why Madec identifies conversion and interiority and so we now turn to consider why he identifies these two with intentionality, thus making an act of conversion an act of *intentio*. Madec describes a human being as an intentional being (‘un être intentionnel’).⁹⁶ To speak of a human being as intentional is to recognize that, unlike other creatures, a human being is capable of striving forward and deliberately aiming at something beyond his immediate act. Augustine, indeed, recognized that ‘a purposeful act is the characteristic of a rational animal (*id autem est rationalis animantis factum propter aliquem finem*);’⁹⁷ and by purposeful act, he meant an act referred, to some end (*factis ad aliquem finem relatis*).⁹⁸ It is this manifestation of reason that admonishes us not to do anything without a purpose (*nos admonet nihil temere facere*), and it is concerned with right living (*In moribus*)⁹⁹ or use (*moralis propter usum*).¹⁰⁰ We are said to use something when we seek it

Cor. 1:24 in connection with the relationship between the Father and Son in answer to the Arians in *trin.* 6 and 7. On this provision in the Arian controversy see Barnes 2007. The double meaning of *virtus* in Latin as power and virtue allows Augustine to make this correlation. In fact, *virtus* translates the Greek *dunamis* which means power and not virtue.

⁹⁴ *trin.* 13:19:24.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Madec 1994b: 158.

⁹⁷ *ord.* 2:11:33.

⁹⁸ *ord.* 2:12:35. *relatis* comes from *refero* and *Referre aliquid ad aliquid* means *to trace back, ascribe, refer* a thing to any thing and therefore evokes Augustine’s doctrine of use and enjoyment. It can also mean *to give up, return, restore, to relate* and therefore links well with the idea of return to self and to the God who gave all in the first place and in all this is true relationship. Augustine said that true wisdom required the mind to direct all its attention towards God and, in this life, this meant to make decisions and to act in relation to oneself and to others with this end in view, *ciu.* 21:20.

⁹⁹ *ord.* 2:12:35. *moralis* is the word Latin authors used for that part of philosophy called ‘ethics’ (from ἠθικός meaning ‘custom’ or ‘habit’) *ciu.* 8:8.

¹⁰⁰ *ciu.* 11:25.

for some other purpose, as opposed to enjoying it for its own sake (*quod ea re frui dicimur, quae nos non ad aliud referenda per se ipsa delectat; uti vero ea re, quam propter aliud quaerimus*)¹⁰¹ and the responsibility to use and enjoy appropriately is that of the will.¹⁰² The only thing which we should enjoy for its own sake and for which everything else should be used; in other words, that to which all our actions should be referred, is that which will make us happy, namely our Ultimate Good (*Summum Bonum*).

Intentio as direction to a purpose

This striving forward and aiming at something beyond the act itself is the ordinary sense of *intentio*. It is what the word *intentio* meant up to the beginning of the high Scholastic period and it is how Thomas Aquinas defined it.¹⁰³ That this is one of the meanings of the term in Augustine is clear from his exegesis of Phil. 3:14. This is a key text for Augustine. He quotes or alludes to this verse, or part of it, many times, particularly in his commentaries on the Psalms (*en. Pss.*) and in his sermons.¹⁰⁴ It has been suggested that it is from an Old Latin¹⁰⁵ version of this text that Augustine took the word *intentio*¹⁰⁶ and also that the presence of *intentio* in Phil. 3:14 is one of the reasons why Augustine alludes to the passage so often.¹⁰⁷ It is, therefore, worth looking at the text in some detail to see what light it sheds on Augustine's use of *intentio* and I set out below, for ease of reference, the Greek text, the Old Latin version that Augustine used and the English (leaving *secundum intentionem* untranslated) of Phil. 3:13 b and 14:

Ἐν δέ, τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθανόμενος τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

¹⁰¹ *ciu.* 11:25. Also *diu. qu.* 83:30 Something useful is something which is directed to something else (*utile autem quod ad aliud aliquid referendum est*).

¹⁰² *trin.* 10:11:17.

¹⁰³ Spiegelberg 1976: 109.

¹⁰⁴ Over 50 times according to LLT.

¹⁰⁵ The Old Latin Bible (*Vetus Latina*) is the generally accepted term for all the Latin translations which predated Jerome's vulgate, see Burton 2000: 5.

¹⁰⁶ BA 16, 589.

¹⁰⁷ O'Daly 1977:271.

unum autem, inquit, quae retro sunt oblitus, in ea quae ante sunt extentus, secundum intentionem sequor ad palmam supernae uocationis dei in christo iesu.

This one thing I do: forgetting¹⁰⁸ what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on *secundum intentionem* for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Augustine made use of this passage for several reasons: as evidence of the importance of single-mindedness;¹⁰⁹ to show that the state of perfection in this life consisted simply in knowing we are not perfect; to show that the activity of this life was a continual stretching forward in desire; to show what we should be aiming for; to show that this end would not be attained, unless we began from the true faith. It was a passage which could only be used of the post-baptismal life, when we were converted towards God, as Augustine himself pointed out, because otherwise, the instruction to pay no attention to what was behind, would be an instruction to pay no attention to God.¹¹⁰

The words *secundum intentionem* translate the Greek κατὰ σκοπόν. According to the apparatus provided by Gryson, this Greek phrase was translated in various ways in the Old Latin translations: *secundum scopum*; *secundum regulam*; *secundum propositum*; *ad destinatum*/ *secundum destinationem*.¹¹¹ The translation *secundum intentionem*, appears first in Augustine and it is possible, therefore, that it is his own translation of κατὰ σκοπόν. The question is, what did the phrase mean to Paul? And, how was Augustine interpreting it? κατὰ plus the accusative can mean, among other things, '(of direction) towards an object or purpose' or 'according to.'¹¹² With regard to σκοπός, Marguerite Harl has traced the development of two meanings of σκοπός in Christian usage: 'one who watches' and 'the

¹⁰⁸ Although generally translated as 'forgetting,' ἐπιλανθανόμενος, according to Fee 1995: 347, is more likely to mean 'to pay no attention to.'

¹⁰⁹ See chapter 6.

¹¹⁰ *en. Ps.* 113:1:7.

¹¹¹ See Gryson for references.

¹¹² There are in fact three prepositions of direction, two 'κατὰ and 'εἰς' indicating an onward movement and one 'ἄνω' indicating an upward movement.

object on which one fixes the eye, a mark.¹¹³ In this chapter, we will be concerned with the meaning of σκοπός as ‘the object on which one fixes the eye’ and in chapter 6 we will consider the meaning of σκοπός as ‘the one who watches.’ From meaning, ‘the object on which one fixes the eye or a mark,’ σκοπός, metaphorically, came to mean ‘an aim, end, object of an action.’¹¹⁴ It was already being used metaphorically, in this way, by Plato for whom σκοπός was the goal which a person must have constantly before their eyes in order to direct their life properly. For Aristotle too, σκοπός was a rule of life against which to measure one’s behavior and acquisition of virtue. Already in Plato the expression ὀρθὸς σκοπός appears, meaning ‘the right aim or direction’ and in Aristotle, there is a glimpse of a distinction between σκοπός and τέλος which is developed by the Stoics into the distinction between the ideal aimed at and the attainment of the ideal. This distinction was ignored by the New Testament, where the word τέλος is used to cover all the senses previously covered by σκοπός, except in Phil. 3:14. According to Abbott-Smith, this is the only instance of σκοπός in the New Testament, where it is used metaphorically to mean aim or object. The question is whether Paul was using it in the sense of the ideal aimed at (σκοπός as opposed to τέλος) or the attainment of the ideal (σκοπός synonymous with τέλος). It is true that Paul does not use the word τέλος but he does distinguish between the σκοπός and the end prize, which is ‘the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.’ One modern commentator on the Greek text suggests that the prize is the ‘one thing,’ Paul is running the race for and the σκοπός, which has to be attained in order to win the prize, is the eschatological conclusion of the present life.¹¹⁵ In this sense, and in keeping with the athletic imagery, the σκοπός is the finishing line which the athlete must keep in view, if he is to run a straight race with singleness of purpose and maximum concentration and may be best thought of as goal or target.

What then does Augustine make of the passage? He could look not only to the philosophical tradition which underlay the text, but also to the Patristic tradition of

¹¹³ Harl 1961.

¹¹⁴ Liddell/Scott/Jones. The word σκοπός was used of the aim of a literary text and the conscious intention of the author and, not unlike the understanding of τόπος in Stoic philosophy, gave to the different elements of a work, the quality of cohesion and unity, see Heine 1995: 20-29. Augustine uses it in this sense to mean the aim of a book or writer *c. Adim.*14.2; *ench.* 6.18; *nupt. et. conc.*1:1.

¹¹⁵ Fee 1995: 341.

interpreting the text, for guidance in understanding it. In the Latin Patristic tradition, σκοπόν had been translated as *scopum* meaning target or goal, *propositum* and *destinationem* both meaning intention or purpose and *regulam* meaning rule or model.¹¹⁶ Most light is shed by Augustine on his use of the phrase *secundum intentionem* in *en. Ps. 38*. This is a Psalm entitled ‘To the end. Idithun’s song for David himself (*titulus est: In finem pro Idithun, Canticum ipsi David.*) Idithun means ‘one who leaps across’¹¹⁷ and Augustine says that ‘leaping across’ is another way of saying ‘an inward ascent, where ‘within ourselves feet and ladders and wings are all the loving impulses of a good will’ (*Intus autem et pedes, et scalae, et pennae affectus sunt bonae voluntatis.*)¹¹⁸ He exhorts his listeners to identify with Idithun and leap across everything that could keep them weighed down in this world. He then turns to comment on the words in verse 5, ‘make known to me my end, O Lord’ saying, ‘Make known to me my end, show me the goal still far away, not the race immediately in front of me.’ (*Finem meum notum mihi fac: finem qui mihi deest, non cursum qui mihi adest.*)¹¹⁹ He observed that ‘the end was what the Apostle was looking towards as he ran and confessed from the standpoint of his own imperfection; it being one thing to see it within oneself and another thing to seek elsewhere (*Finem illum dicit, quem currens intuebatur Apostolus, et de sua imperfectione confitebatur, aliud in se intuens, aliud alibi quaerens.*)’¹²⁰ In other words, despite not being perfect, Paul at least knows what his end is and where to find it, because he can see it within himself and is pursuing it directly as he runs towards it. Augustine draws attention to the distinction that Paul makes between the activity required during this life to reach the end and the end. This is the distinction between *scopos* and *telos*: the ideal aimed at and the attainment of the ideal. And, as if to emphasize the distinction, he contrasts *secundum*

¹¹⁶ Although there is no suggestion that Augustine was influenced by Cassian, he was familiar with the practice of prayer of the monks in the desert and as an example of the way in which *scopos* and *telos* were being distinguished in the tradition in conjunction with Phil. 3:14 we cite Cassian *conl. 1:5*: ‘The *scopos* is purity of heart, which he rightly terms “holiness,” without which eternal life cannot be won. It is as though he said, having your *scopos* in purity of heart, and your *telos* eternal life. And significantly he uses the very word *scopos* to describe it-“forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God.” In Greek the words for “press forward to the mark” are *kata scopon dioko* and really mean press forward according to the mark.” It is as if he said: “With this aim, whereby I forget what is behind-the sins of the old man-I strive to attain to the prize of heaven.’

¹¹⁷ *en. Ps. 38:1.*

¹¹⁸ *en. Ps. 38:2.*

¹¹⁹ *en. Ps. 38:5.*

¹²⁰ *en. Ps. 38:6.*

intentionem with *nondum secundum perventionem nondum secundum apprehensionem* ‘according to *intentio*, not yet having arrived at our goal or reached understanding.’¹²¹ Christ is ‘the one thing’ and the end prize (‘the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus’) referred to by Paul and sought by the Apostles.¹²² By quoting Philip’s plea to ‘show us the Father’ in John 14:8, Augustine makes it clear that by ‘Christ,’ he understands Paul to be referring to Christ in his divinity.¹²³ Christ is called ‘the end’ because whatever we do is referred to him and, when we have reached him, we shall have nothing further to seek (*Intentio ergo dirigatur in finem, dirigatur in Christum. Quare finis dicitur? Quoniam quidquid agimus, ad illum referimus; et cum ad eum pervenerimus, ultra quod quaeramus non habebimus.*)¹²⁴ We can take it then that by *secundum intentionem*, Augustine understood that all our activity in this life (measured according to Christ in His humanity) was to be referred to the end of Christ in his divinity and that this end would not be attained until after this life.¹²⁵

The right *intentio* must begin from faith

But the right *intentio* is that which sets out from faith. For a true faith lays the foundation of all knowledge (*Sed ea recta intentio est, quae proficiscitur a fide. Certa enim fides utcumque inchoat cognitionem*)¹²⁶

My question was my *intentio*; their response was their beauty (*Interrogatio mea, intentio mea; et responsio eorum, species eorum.*)¹²⁷

The direction and movement of our attention must be governed by our faith in the incarnate Christ,¹²⁸ if it is to lead us to our goal of full participation in the life of God.¹²⁹ Faith gives us direction for it shows us where to look and what to find. In fact, faith brings with it a

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid. For Christ in his divinity as our end see *en. Ps. 54:1; en. Ps.12:1; en. Ps. 56:2; s. 347:3; en. Ps. 38:6.*

¹²⁴ *en. Ps. 54:1.*

¹²⁵ *sol. 1.14:25; doct. chr. 1; diu. qu. 83:30; ciu. 11:25.*

¹²⁶ *trin 9:1:1; Also s. 4:1; en. Ps. 31:2:4; s. 8:1; lib. arb. 3:21:59.*

¹²⁷ *conf. 10:6:9.*

¹²⁸ *doct. chr. 1:34:38.*

¹²⁹ *en. Ps. 54:1.*

kind of knowledge for ‘faith has eyes of its own by which it somehow sees that what it does not yet see is true.’¹³⁰ Faith is a matter of grace¹³¹ and is brought about ‘by some secret admonition through visions of the mind or spirit or by more open admonitions, reaching us through the bodily senses.’¹³² Quite apart from the fact that faith followed by reason is the God given order,¹³³ it is also the natural order, for when we learn anything, faith in authority precedes reason.¹³⁴ When, therefore, Augustine seemingly presents Euodius, at the start of *an. quant.*, with the option of proceeding either by faith or by reason,¹³⁵ we should be wary of taking him at face value. Augustine presents the faith alone (believing in authority) route as ‘an excellent shortcut and eliminating toil.’¹³⁶ It is also the safest route for the less learned, provided that the authority they are relying upon is trustworthy, for they might, otherwise, be easily led astray by specious reasoning.¹³⁷ Euodius decides, however, to go by the reason route¹³⁸ and that is how the dialogue proceeds. But towards the end of it, Augustine warns him ‘not to run headlong and heedlessly to the writings or discussions of spellbinders

¹³⁰ *ep.* 120:2:8.

¹³¹ Augustine changed his mind between writing *an. quant.* and *trin.* on the question of faith. He came to see it as a gift. This is a case in which Augustine changed his mind because of his later understanding of scripture *retr.* 1:23:2 amending *exp. prop. Rm.* 60 and the statement ‘What we believe, therefore, is ours, but the good that we do is his who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe.’ Augustine says ‘I would certainly not have said this if I knew then that even faith itself is among God’s gifts that are given in the same Spirit.’ Also *retr.* 1:23:3 amending *exp. prop. Rm.* 61 and the statement ‘For believing and willing are ours, but it is his to give to those who believe and who will the ability to do good through the Holy Spirit, by whom charity is poured into our hearts.’ This change of mind came about in *Simpl.* 1:2. In *retr.* 2:1:1 explaining his change of mind in *Simpl.*, he says ‘I in fact strove on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God’s grace conquered.’

¹³² *Simpl.* 1:2:2.

¹³³ *Isa.* 7:14 (LXX) See Introduction n. 28.

¹³⁴ *mor.* 1:2:3. See *Acad.* 3:19:42; *ord.* 2:5:16; 2:8:25-:9: 27 for his view that authority must precede reason.

¹³⁵ *an. quant.* 8:12.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* Obviously the highest authority is divine and especially the authority of the incarnate Christ as human authority can often be deceiving *ord.* 2:9:27. Augustine affirmed the necessity of taking things on trust from other people *trin.* 15:4:21. For example we might not think it reasonable to trust those who do not practise what they preach *ord.* 2:9:27; Those who are further along the way than we are will be good authority: men who have reached the full use of reason establish themselves in tranquillity (stage 5 *an. quant.*) and provide a shining example to others who are enticed to join them *beata u.* 1:2; *en Ps.* 113:2:12. See chapter 7 *infra* for human teachers of wisdom. On reasonableness of Catholic faith - some of the criteria that should influence our decision are set out in *uera rel.* 24:46 and 47; what convinced Augustine to trust the authority of the Catholic Church was the apostolic succession and its wide acceptance among nations and communities, indeed, it is acknowledged by the whole human race and because of its unanimity and antiquity (*c. ep. Man.* 4:5; *Util cred.* 7:19; 14:31 and 17:35).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*; *ord.* 2.5.15; 2.9.26; 2.11.30.

¹³⁸ *an. quant.* 8:12.

(*loquacissimorum hominum*);¹³⁹ people who rely too much on the senses of the body: you must first¹⁴⁰ set straight and steady the steps (*vestigia*)¹⁴¹ which lead the soul to God's presence. Otherwise your studies and efforts will accomplish only that they will divert you more readily than will static ignorance, from that peaceful sanctum of the mind to which the soul in its present life is a stranger.¹⁴² In other words, the reason route is fine, provided it begins from a sure basis in faith, because our faith will keep us on track when our reasoning fails.¹⁴³

Augustine says that we should all be able to see, just by looking at the ordered nature and the beauty of the world, that it has a Creator¹⁴⁴ and, indeed, St Paul in Rom. 1:20 bears witness to the fact that God, the invisible Creator, can, and has, been found through his visible creation 'for ever since the creation of the world, his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made.' Augustine tells his congregation that even Pagan philosophers have arrived at knowledge of the invisible God through the visible things He has made, but that because they assumed they had done so through their own ability and because they engaged in idol worship, rather than the worship of God, their knowledge did not bring them wisdom.¹⁴⁵ The philosophers who attained

¹³⁹ O'Donnell *conf.* 3:6:10 notes that *Loquax* was a derogatory term he particularly applied to the Manichees as people who had lots to say but nothing they could tell him about God; *conf.* 1:4:4; 3:6:10; 5:7:12; 7:2:3. Augustine also used the term to disparage his former colleagues, rhetoricians, who were more interested in words than meaning, *conf.* 4:2:2; 8:5:10; 9:2:2.

¹⁴⁰ *donec*. The warning is only a warning to postpone engaging with such material, until Euodius has developed his ability to judge it in the light of faith.

¹⁴¹ *Vestigia* are the traces of reason we follow from the senses back to their source, 'And since music issuing forth from the most secret sanctuaries leaves traces *vestigia* in our very senses or in the things sensed by us, mustn't we follow through those traces to reach without fail, if we can, those very places I have called sanctuaries?' *mus.* 1.13.28.

¹⁴² *an. quant.* 31:63.

¹⁴³ *egs. mor.* 1:7:11; *conf.* 4:15:24- 4:16:31; *conf.* 6:5:8; *trin.* 7:4:12; *ep.* 120:2:7.

¹⁴⁴ *Io. eu. tr.* 106:4 'For this name of God, by which He is called, could not but be known in some way to the whole creation, and so to every nation, before they believed in Christ. For such is the energy of true Godhead, that it cannot be altogether and utterly hidden from any rational creature, so long as it makes use of its reason. For, with the exception of a few in whom nature has become outrageously depraved, the whole race of man acknowledges God as the maker of this world. In respect, therefore, of His being the maker of this world that is visible in heaven and earth around us, God was known unto all nations even before they were indoctrinated into the faith of Christ.'

¹⁴⁵ *s.* 241:2. The tradition that God can be seen through the order and regularity of the workings of the cosmos and the fact that order implies intelligent design goes back to Plato, see Festugière 1954: 46-48. All

knowledge of God, but not wisdom, through their failure of humility, were actually in no better position than those human beings who were incapable of seeing ‘the invisible through the visible’ at all: those who take things for granted because they are so familiar;¹⁴⁶ those who are unable to find beauty in something because they are unable to see it in its true light (like the parts of a flea for example);¹⁴⁷ those who fail to see the overall harmony of the whole;¹⁴⁸ those who fail to see this life in the context of eternity;¹⁴⁹ those who are so captivated by created things that they are not interested in seeking beyond the senses.¹⁵⁰

However, provided we begin from faith, we can follow the traces of invisible things, manifest in the visible, back to the invisible God himself. The idea that there are traces of the ultimate reality in everything and that these can be traced back from the senses to their source is an idea which Augustine found in Plotinus for whom everything that exists retains a trace of the One which is the source of all and this creates a desire to return to it;¹⁵¹ everything longs for its parent and loves it¹⁵² and ‘we go back everywhere to one. And in each and everything there is someone to which you will trace it back, and this in every case to the one before it, which is not simply one, until we come to the simply one but this cannot be traced back to something else.’¹⁵³ Augustine follows Plotinus, arguing that such traces exist in the objects we sense, as well as in our reactions to the objects. These traces are what give an object its beauty and, in us, they are what inspire our pleasure or delight at an object and inspire our

philosophical schools practised contemplation of nature but it meant different things to them, see Hadot 1995: 101. Contemplation through the cosmos is also a tradition found in the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament and it is this tradition which underlies Rom 1:20.

¹⁴⁶Typified by Augustine’s comment that the process of imprinting an image filled him with greater wonder than visions seen in dreams or even ecstasies *Gn. litt.* 12:18:40 and that it’s a greater miracle to exist at all than to be resurrected *Io. eu. tr.* 8:1. See also *s.* 126:3:4; *Io. eu. tr.* 9:1; 24:1; 8:1; *ep.* 102:5; *conf.* 10:8:15.

¹⁴⁷ Augustine likes this example *en. Ps.* 148:10; *ord.* 1:1:2; *duab. an.* 4:4.

¹⁴⁸ *ord.* 1:7:18. This had been one of Augustine’s major blocks.

¹⁴⁹ *ord.* 2:4:11.

¹⁵⁰ *en. Ps.* 39.8. ‘Learn to love the Creator in the creature, the Maker in what is made. Do not let something he has made so captivate you that you lose him by whom you were made yourself.’

¹⁵¹ *Enn.* 3.8.11, 5.5.10.

¹⁵² *Enn.* 5.1.6.

¹⁵³ *Enn.* 3.8.9.

longing to search for the source of that beauty.¹⁵⁴ But learning to reason (following the traces) will not lead to the Source, unless our attention is directed and moved from the standpoint of faith, as Augustine's own ascents described in *conf.* show.

Augustine describes both his ascents at Milan in *conf.* 7 in such a way as to show that he had glimpsed the unchangeable truth, but he had not yet discovered the way to living in the truth, because he had not yet discovered the true mediator, the incarnate Christ, who must be the starting-point of a successful ascent. Prior to his first ascent,¹⁵⁵ Augustine had been unable to shift his attention away from exterior things and move it inwards (*At ego intendebam in ea, quae locis continentur, et non ibi inveniebam locum ad requiescendum, nec recipiebant me ista, ut dicerem: 'Sat est', et: 'Bene est', nec dimittebant redire, ubi mihi satis esset bene.*)¹⁵⁶ This was because he was unable to distinguish his power of *intentio*, as an incorporeal reality, from the images of material objects that he formed with (*nec videbam hanc eandem intentionem qua illas ipsas imagines formabam non esse tale aliquid, quae tamen ipsas non formaret nisi esset magnum aliquid.*)¹⁵⁷ As a consequence, he was unable to see the invisible in the visible at all, prior to his first ascent, because he had not known that he could go beyond the senses. He had to turn away from the sensible world in order to begin an

¹⁵⁴ One of the ways in which reason manifests itself to the senses is the pleasure which admonishes us to find delight in contemplation, *ord.* 2:12:35. The traces are the *admonitio* to us to seek for that source *uera rel.* 45:84. Augustine also calls them traces of unity *en. Ps.* 99.5; *conf.* 1.20.31; traces of supernal justice *Simpl.* 1.2:16 traces of wisdom's operations *lib. arb.* 2:16:41; traces of number; primal numbers and dimensions *uera rel.* 42:79; 40:75; *ord.* 2:15:43; traces of beauty *uera rel.* 22:42 and traces of spiritual things *trin.* 12:2:5.

¹⁵⁵ There is some scholarly argument as to exactly how many ascents there were, the majority have settled for two and O'Donnell's reasoning for this is persuasive; he says that there are two ascents because the first ascent begins with turning away from the exterior world in order to find God whereas the second ascent is able to begin the ascent from contemplation of the cosmos because Augustine discovered in the first ascent the standard against which he could judge exterior things as creatures. O'Donnell *conf.* 7.17.23 notes 'the ascent through contemplation of creation (made possible now by an accurate appreciation of the nature of evil, and hence of created being: thus this narrative is most sharply distinguished from that of 7.10.16)', 'Not all scholars accept that there were two ascents. Courcelle saw three separate unsuccessful ascents at 7.10.16; 7.17.23 and 7.20.26. Most scholars including O'Donnell see two in 7.10.16 and 7.17.23. A minority sees one ascent that in 7.10.16 which is described again in different terms in 7.17.23. The argument of this part of the chapter is based on O'Donnell's opinion that there are two ascents.

¹⁵⁶ *conf.* 7:7:11.

¹⁵⁷ *conf.* 7:1:2. I am repeating this quotation, already given in chapter 1, to draw attention to the fact that Augustine is recognizing at a significant turning-point in his own journey, that it is his inability to distinguish his incorporeal power of *intentio* (that volitional power to direct his attention) from the things it is paying attention to that stops him from making any progress on the ascent.

inwards ascent; the outcome of which was the discovery that the invisible things of God could indeed be seen through the visible: 'I heard in the way one hears within the heart and all doubt left me. I would have found it easier to doubt whether I myself was alive than that there is no truth understood from the things that are made' (*Et audivi, sicut auditur in corde, et non erat prorsus, unde dubitarem faciliusque dubitarem vivere me quam non esse veritatem, quae per ea, quae facta sunt, intellecta conspicitur*).¹⁵⁸

In order to progress beyond what is apparent to the senses, we must ask questions: Are things beautiful because they give pleasure or give pleasure because they are beautiful? Why beautiful? Is it because parts correspond and form a harmonious whole? Do they achieve the unity they aim at? Where is that unity? What is its source?¹⁵⁹ The very word 'question' implies an intention to seek on the part of the questioner (*nomen tamen quaestio non ex omnibus accipit, sed ut sese habuerit quaerentis intentio*) and also implies a judgement because the mere fact that we ask whether something exists, implies three separate questions including an exercise of judgement: whether something exists; what it is; what quality it is. This last question involves an evaluation.¹⁶⁰ Because, as a result of the first ascent, Augustine now had an unchangeable incorporeal standard of truth against which to judge what was presented to the senses, it was with exactly this kind of questioning that he began the second ascent described in *conf*:

I asked myself why I approved of the beauty of bodies, whether celestial or terrestrial, and what justification I had for giving an unqualified judgement on mutable things, saying, "This ought to be thus, and that ought not to be thus." In the course of this inquiry why I made such value judgements as I was making, I found the unchangeable and authentic eternity of truth to transcend my mutable mind.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ *conf.* 7:10:16.

¹⁵⁹ *uera rel.* 32:59 and 60; *en. Ps.* 99:5.

¹⁶⁰ *ep.* 11:4. In this paragraph of this letter Augustine uses the three questions contained in the one question which takes its name from the questioner as an analogy of the three persons in the one Trinity. See Ayres 2000: 39-82 for discussion of *ep.* 11, as containing Augustine's earliest Trinitarian theology.

¹⁶¹ *conf.* 7:17:23.

The questioning, however, is rather aimless and not specifically directed at God and, as Monnica had said, ‘if you want to find God, it is God you must specifically seek (*Sed nemo, inquit, potest pervenire ad Deum, nisi Deum quaesierit.*)’¹⁶² Nonetheless, Augustine’s questioning and reasoning did lead him to another momentary glimpse of ‘the unchangeable and authentic eternity of truth’ that transcended his mind: an experience that he described once again in the words of Rom. 1:20 as ‘seeing God’s invisible nature through the things that are made.’¹⁶³ However, even the second ascent was not completely satisfactory and his attention kept slipping back, which he understood as being because he had not yet discovered the true mediator ‘between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.’¹⁶⁴

The kind of ascent through creation, which Augustine was concerned with, was not just to prove the existence of unchangeable substance but was an ascent made in the ‘faith that works through love’ in that by cultivating our sense of awe and wonder at what we see around us, we can use creation as a step to the love and praise of the Creator who we do not see.¹⁶⁵ By the time Augustine embarked on his joint ascent with his mother, Monnica, at Ostia he had discovered, and committed himself to following, the true mediator, the incarnate Christ. He had received instruction in the faith from Bishop Ambrose and been baptized;¹⁶⁶ he had studied the scriptures and altered the nature of his prayers.¹⁶⁷ He was specifically seeking God through Christ and the questioning is directed, rather than aimless, as Augustine and Monnica muse on the nature of eternal life and Augustine acknowledges that they are in the presence of the Truth Himself, as they reflect.¹⁶⁸ Augustine knows what he is looking for and he begins from a sense of wonder at God’s works (*Et adhuc ascendebamus interius cogitando et loquendo et mirando opera tua*) and also from a proper evaluation of their worth that,

¹⁶² *beata u.* 3:19.

¹⁶³ *conf.* 7:17:23.

¹⁶⁴ *conf.* 7:18:24.

¹⁶⁵ On this attitude to creation see egs. *en. Ps.* 144; *en. Ps.* 148; *en. Ps.* 41; *s.* 126; *en. Ps.* 128.5; *en. Ps.* 68:1:5; *en. Ps.* 44:4; *en. Ps.* 99:6.

¹⁶⁶ *conf.* 9:5:13.

¹⁶⁷ See chapter 1 n. 24 for alteration in nature of his prayers.

¹⁶⁸ There is even an allusion to Phil. 3:13 *praeterita obliuiscetes in ea quae ante sunt extenti*, at *conf.* 9:10:23.

however delightful they are, they are nothing in comparison with eternal life.¹⁶⁹ He knows, before he begins the ascent, that the visible world is the creation of an invisible God; he is no longer questioning himself as to where the source of its beauty comes from. Although the ascent at Ostia was no more lasting than the Milan ascents, it was at least on the right lines because if it could last, then it would be the beatific vision; in other words, it was a real foretaste of the kingdom of heaven.

When, then, he reprises the theme of ascent in *conf.* 10 as a paradigm and begins by questioning everything in his external environment, he knows he is looking for God and that it is God he desires. Augustine begins the description of an ascent in *conf.* 10 with some questions to everything in the created world ‘that existed outside the bounds of his own flesh’ He asked them: ‘What is the object of my love?’ Everything confessed ‘It is not I. We are not your God, look beyond us’: and so he then asked, ‘Tell me of my God who you are not, tell me something about him. And with a great voice they cried out: ‘He made us.’¹⁷⁰ Augustine continues ‘my questioning was my *intentio* and their response was their beauty’ (*interrogatio mea intentio mea et responsio eorum species eorum.*)¹⁷¹ The question is what does Augustine mean to convey here by the word *intentio*? It cannot simply mean attention because Augustine was paying attention to created things before and they were blocking his return.¹⁷² Solignac says it means rather more than attention:

Intentio dit plus qu’attention il s’agit d’une tension vers Dieu, dans la ligne du *fecisti nos ad te* (*conf.* 1.1) et qui ne peut trouver son terme qu’en Dieu.¹⁷³

It is our attention to the visible, not for its own sake, but so that we can be drawn up from the visible to the invisible in love and praise of God for his works and in so doing recover our natural intentionality. Augustine’s use of the word *species* meaning ‘intelligible form’ is significant for, if their response is their *species*, then we are paying attention to the

¹⁶⁹ The ascent is described at *conf.* 9:10:23-25.

¹⁷⁰ In his meditation on the ascent at Ostia, Augustine begins by listening to creation and receiving a similar response ‘We did not make ourselves, we were made by him who abides for eternity.’ Also *conf.* 11:4:6.

¹⁷¹ *conf.* 10:6:9.

¹⁷² *conf.* 7:6:11.

¹⁷³ Solignac 1986: 16.

invisible through the visible. This is the significance of *intentio*; it is the movement of attention from, and through, the visible to the invisible.

What changes between *an. quant.* and *trin.* is the emphasis on the trinitarian nature of the traces of God to be found in creation¹⁷⁴ and this accentuates the necessity of beginning from the true faith. Although this is not the first time that Augustine has suggested that God's Trinitarian nature is reflected in creation, there is nothing comparable to it in *an. quant.*¹⁷⁵ However, already in *ord.* Augustine had stated that the Trinitarian nature of God was something that we could learn from scripture;¹⁷⁶ in other words, it was not something that could be learnt through a reasoned ascent, which at best could only provide a glimpse of the unchangeable nature of Truth and not its Trinitarian nature; all the more reason then for *intentio* and our reasoning to begin from the true faith.¹⁷⁷ False reasoning could lead to false beliefs as it had led some to a belief that the Trinity consists of God the Father, God the Son, who is not coeternal, or who is of another substance and the Holy Spirit, who is unlike and inferior and as it had led others to the belief that, although the Father and Son are of the same substance, the Holy Spirit is of a different substance.¹⁷⁸ All that we need in order to be reformed is faith in Christ and to live according to that faith; there is no need to understand that faith intellectually though there will be those, like Augustine, with the ability and desire to do so and in this case, lest we fall into false reasoning, we must begin from a knowledge of the contents of faith so that we know which ideas are true and which false.¹⁷⁹ For this reason, Augustine meticulously establishes the Trinitarian nature of faith from scripture in part 1 *trin.*

¹⁷⁴ *trin.* 6:10:12 'Any one of them you like is both some one thing, like the various kinds of bodies and temperaments of souls; and it is fashioned in some form, like the shapes and qualities of bodies and the sciences or skills of souls; and it seeks or maintains some order, like the weights or proper places of bodies, and the loves or pleasures of souls. So then, as direct our gaze at the Creator by understanding the things that are made, we should understand him as triad, whose traces appear in creation in a way that is fitting.'

¹⁷⁵ It is not until the late 390s that this idea begins to be mooted in his works, notably in *nat. b.* see O'Donnell *conf.* 1:7:12 for details. See chapter 1 n. 49 for other references.

¹⁷⁶ *ord.* 2:5:16.

¹⁷⁷ *trin.* 13:9:12 Likewise people could come to knowledge of the soul's immortality through reason but not the resurrection of the body which was a matter of faith to be believed on authority.

¹⁷⁸ *ep.* 120:6. He is referring in the first case to the Arians *haer.* 49 and, in the second case, to the Macedonians *haer.* 52.

¹⁷⁹ *ep.* 120:8. *trin.* 4:18:24.

concluding this part with Isaiah 7:14 LXX,¹⁸⁰ before going on, in books 8-15, to guide his readers through a reasoned ascent, beginning from faith and moving towards understanding by degrees.

Summary and conclusion

Stage four of the ascent is in many ways the *sine qua non* of the ascent because, unless there is a conversion to the true faith, the ascent to God will fail. Augustine saw the nature of the relationship between faith and reason as a grace-filled, dialectical process; that as our understanding develops, we are able ‘to grasp more firmly the truths we have believed and that our faith grows to believe more firmly what we have begun to understand. By its very act of understanding, the mind develops and thus penetrates the truths of faith more deeply. This process occurs not through our natural powers but by the help and gracious gift of God.’¹⁸¹ What is important is how one lives after coming to faith and this is the remit of *virtus* (*an. quant.*) or *scientia* (*trin.*). Virtuous living demands the reasonable use of temporal things,¹⁸² which requires us to refer them to the highest God, our highest good,¹⁸³ if we are not to enjoy them with a kind of illusory happiness (*si bene, ut eam notitiam referat ad finem summi Boni; si autem male, ut eis fruatur tamquam bonis talibus in quibus falsa beatitudine conquiescat.*)¹⁸⁴ The standard against which we must judge our use and make our moral assessments, Augustine calls the standard of usefulness,¹⁸⁵ and it is, of course, the life of the incarnate Christ. It is the life of the incarnate Christ then that may be thought of as the *regula*, *scopos*, *intentio*, *destinatio* as opposed to the *finis* or *telos* in Phil. 3:14 in the sense of the object that one keeps in the mind’s eye as a benchmark whilst one runs the course of this life towards sanctification and the kingdom of God. However, even with theoretical knowledge of the goal that faith brings, it is possible to make a bad use of things so that we are enjoying

¹⁸⁰ *trin.* 7:6:12.

¹⁸¹ *en. Ps.* 118:18:3.

¹⁸² *trin.* 12:14: 22.

¹⁸³ *trin.* 13:20:25.

¹⁸⁴ *trin.* 12:12:17.

¹⁸⁵ *diu. qu.* 83:30.

what we ought to be using and using what we ought to be enjoying and that is because an act of *usus* is an act of will and the will does not automatically follow the intellect: just because we know what is right, does not mean we will do what is right.¹⁸⁶ Acting virtuously is, then, choosing to use temporal things well when we could use them badly¹⁸⁷ and to choose to use them well means desiring them for the sake of Christ, who is the goal or end of our *intentio*. Through prudence, we discern how we should act; through temperance, we learn the self-control that causes us to act appropriately;¹⁸⁸ through fortitude, we develop the strength to bear temporal loss and affliction with equanimity for the sake of a greater good¹⁸⁹ and through justice, we do everything appropriately for the love of God and our neighbour and our own well-ordered self.¹⁹⁰ If we acted in this way, we would be acting in accordance with, what Madec called, our natural intentionality towards God and it is this natural intentionality which begins to be recovered through an act of conversion inwards. It is only in an act of interiority, conversion or *intentio* that we become aware of the distinguishing quality of our spiritual activity, which is our intentionality.¹⁹¹ Without this act of interiority or conversion, we are unable to see the visible world as the creation of an invisible God because, if we cannot distinguish our own spiritual activity, we will be unable to distinguish between the Creator and his creation, which is the sole purpose of all instruction in wisdom.¹⁹² Recovering our natural intentionality through the ‘faith that works through love’ to purify the heart therefore will allow us to look upon the material world as God’s creation and begin to be healed through our experience of temporal things while directing our attention towards our Creator.¹⁹³ This is the significance of *intentio*. Its presence points inwards and upwards to the unchangeable truths, according to which judgements on bodily things are made, which enable us to move

¹⁸⁶ See chapter 5 for Augustine’s departure from the philosophical tradition in this respect.

¹⁸⁷ *trin.* 10:10:13; *lib. arb.* 2:19:50

¹⁸⁸ *ciu.* 19:4

¹⁸⁹ *mor.* 1:15:25; *mor.* 1:22:40; *mus.* 6:15:50; *ep.* 155:3; *en Ps.* 83:11; *ciu.* 19:4; *s.* 150.

¹⁹⁰ *diu. qu.* 83:61; *mor.* 1:15:25; *mus.* 6:15:50.

¹⁹¹ Madec 1994b: 157.

¹⁹² *diu. qu.* 83:81:1; ‘the divinely inspired and categorical teaching of the Catholic Church that no creature was to be adored by the soul (I prefer to use the very words by which these things were taught me) but that He alone is to be adored who is the Creator of all things that are.’ *an. quant.* 34:77.

¹⁹³ *trin.* 4:18:24; 13:20:25.

forwards towards our goal. *Intentio* has taken us all the way from ordering our sense experience and enabling us to derive meaning from it, by means of our questioning of the exterior, visible creation and our consequent recognition of the spiritual and volitional nature of the power behind the activities of corporeal; spiritual and intellectual vision. But if we do not begin from faith, we can only go so far.

Chapter Five: *Tranquillitas*

Archery is still a matter of life and death to the extent that it is a contest of the archer with himself; and this kind of contest is not a paltry substitute, but the foundation of all contests outwardly directed.¹

When this has been accomplished, that is, when the soul will be free from all corruption and purified of all its stains, then at last it possesses itself in utter joy (*in seipsa laetissime tenet*) and has no fears whatever for itself nor any anxiety for any reason. This then is the fifth level. For it is one thing to effect purity, another to maintain it (*aliud est enim efficere, aliud tenere puritatem*;) and the act by which the soul restores its sullied state to purity and that by which it does not suffer itself to be defiled again are two entirely different things (*et alia prorsus actio qua se inquinatam redintegrat, alia qua non patitur se rursus inquinari*.). On this level it conceives in every way how great it is in every respect; and when it has understood that, then with unbounded and wondrous confidence it advances toward God, that is, to the immediate contemplation of truth; and it attains that supreme and transcendent reward for which it has worked so hard.²

The fifth stage of ascent in *an. quant.* is the third of the five rational levels which, together, correspond to the third degree of soul identified by Varro.³ Augustine says of the soul, at this stage, that it is reformed (*reformat*) into the image of God by true religion.⁴ He describes stage five of *an. quant.* as tranquillity (*tranquillitas*).⁵ The acts of the soul at stage five are acts ‘in itself’ (*in seipsa*).⁶ It is important to remember that what Augustine is referring to are acts;⁷ he is not suggesting that the soul has reached a state of tranquillity at this stage, on the contrary, having directed the attention inwards, keeping it so directed, requires continuing acts of attention, for, to use Augustine’s sea imagery, we are still only in the port and have not yet proceeded to the hinterland of the Happy Life; we are still at risk of being

¹ Herrigel 1976: 15.

² *an. quant.* 33:74.

³ *ciu.* 7:23. O’Daly 1987: 13.

⁴ *an. quant.* 36:80.

⁵ Also in *uera rel.* 26:49 ‘In the fifth stage he has peace and tranquillity on all sides. He lives among the abundant resources of the unchangeable realm of supreme ineffable wisdom.’

⁶ *an. quant.* 35:79.

⁷ *Ibid.* 35:78.

enticed out of the port by the mountain of pride.⁸ For this reason, we must keep constant watch on ourselves for even when the effort required to maintain *tranquillitas* is minimal, it is never not required because ‘this whole life is temptation and if we think we are in peace, we will be caught unawares.’⁹ Our state of *tranquillitas* is not, therefore, comparable to the state of passionlessness or immoveability (*apatheia*) which became the Stoic sage and about which we will say more in due course. Augustine had stressed at stage 4, the importance of acquiring a tranquil mind for the study of matters ‘shrouded in mystery,’¹⁰ that stage being characterized, and hampered, by a lack of tranquillity caused by the mind’s fears and inordinate desires,¹¹ particularly by the underlying fear of death, which is always present to some degree until, by virtue of our faith, comes the realization that death cannot come as an evil to anyone,¹² and then it can be positively desired,¹³ even though in the face of death itself, the old fear may come back.¹⁴

⁸ *beata u.* 1:3.

⁹ *en. Ps.* 30:2:10.

¹⁰ *an. quant.* 33:73; *s.* 126:6:8 (*Tranquillo corde opus est, pia et devota fide, intentione religiosa*) is a good example of the need to keep calm, in the sense of thinking non materially, when seeking to penetrate the mysteries of a passage of scripture. The passage in question on this occasion was ‘The Son cannot do anything of himself, except what he sees the Father doing.’ This passage could easily be misunderstood (and had been by the Arians) to mean that the Son is less than the Father. This is a classic case where reasoning and dialectic without faith would lead to error but, beginning from faith, a trained reason can lead to insight.

¹¹ *diu. qu.* 83:34 absence of fear is a quality that the perfectly happy man possesses by the tranquillity of his mind. Also *diu. qu.* 83:35 tranquillity is also present where desire is in accord with mind and reason.

¹² *an. quant.* 33:73. Augustine notes that neither Ambrose (*sol.* 2:14:26 because he believes in immortality) nor Monnica (*ord.* 1:11:32 because she had made such advances in the faith) feared death. They have therefore attained the status of the Stoic sage who is immoveable in the face of suffering or death *beata u.* 4:25. NB also *pecc. mer.* 2:31:51 ‘the fact that believers conquer the fear of death belongs to the combat of faith.’ *diu. qu.* 83:25 Part of Christ’s work was to show us that death was not to be feared. Augustine notes in *diu. qu.* 83:70 that sometimes where scripture refers to death, it might be referring to the death of carnal habit. This is certainly a death to be desired. But it was also a death which we feared and in this respect, the soul’s difficulty in letting go of its carnal habits is comparable to the fear of facing physical death, *conf.* 8:7:8. Pursuing the path of philosophy through spiritual exercises that are designed to convert a person from a subjective to objective viewpoint is training for death, see Hadot 1995: 94f. But see Miles 1979: 123 who notes that Augustine’s views on fearing death changed so that he regarded it as a normal fear, even for Christians, including Peter and Paul.

¹³ *an. quant.* 33:76.

¹⁴ *Io. eu. tr.* 60:4-5. Here, Augustine was reconciling two passages of scripture-Paul’s desire expressed in Phil. 1:23 ‘to die and be with Christ and Jesus’ words in Matt. 26:38, ‘My soul is sorrowful, even unto death.’ ‘What else, then, does His being troubled signify, but that, by voluntarily assuming the likeness of their weakness, He comforted the weak members in His own body, that is, in His Church; to the end that, if any of His own are still troubled at the approach of death, they may fix their gaze upon Him, and so be kept from thinking themselves castaways on this account, and being swallowed up in the more grievous death of despair?’

Augustine, following tradition, classified the fears and inordinate desires of the soul (*perturbationes animi*)¹⁵ under four main types of disturbance:¹⁶ cupidity (*cupiditas*);¹⁷ gladness (*laetitia*), fear (*metus* or *timor*); sadness (*tristitia*).¹⁸ They are appropriately called ‘movements of the mind’ because they each cause the mind to move in a particular way: happiness causes the mind to expand (elation or being in an expansive mood); sadness causes it to recoil (depression); desire causes it to stretch forth (in yearning) and fear causes it to flee (*laetitia, animi diffusio; tristitia, animi contractio; cupiditas, animi progressio; timor, animi fuga est.*)¹⁹ These movements are part of the evidence for the mutability of the soul which, though immortal, is not immutable,²⁰ and they may be regarded as the origin of all sins and cover the whole range of moral failings.²¹ Prelapsarian man did not suffer from perturbations

¹⁵ These movements contrary to reason, which we would call emotions, and which the Greeks called pathê (πάθη) (*ciu.* 8:17), Cicero called *perturbationes*, some called *affectiones* or *affectus* and others, for example Apuleius, called *passiones*, *ciu.* 9:4. Augustine used all the various Latin terms for these movements, see *conf.* 10:14:21-2 where he uses the terms interchangeably.

¹⁶ *conf.* 10:14:22; *trin.* 6:6:8; *ciu.* 14:3; *Io. eu. tr.* 60:3. He finds them in Vergil’s *Aeneid* 6:733 ‘*Gaudium vero eos et in malo posuisse ille ipse Vergilianus testis est versus, ubi has quattuor perturbationes summa breuitate complexus est: Hinc metuunt cupiuntque, dolent gaudentque*’ quoted at *ciu.* 14:8; 14:9; 21:3; 21:13. Hagendhal 1967/ 2: 405 says of this line from Vergil, ‘Augustine makes it, as Jerome before him, a leitmotif in his exposition of the four passions.’ Cicero makes the point that there are numerous sub categories to each category *fin.* 3:35; *Tusc.* 3:11. He treats the subject of the emotions fully in books 3 and 4 of *Tusc.*

¹⁷ Augustine noted that it is established use that when *cupiditas* or *concupiscentia* is used without specifying an object it can only be understood in a bad sense: *ciu.* 14:7:2. He preferred *cupiditas* to *libido* because, although they are effectively synonyms, (*lib. arb.* 1:4:9 *scis ne etiam istam libidinem alio nomine cupiditatem uocari? mor.* 1:22:41 *cupiditas uel libido nominetur*), Augustine said that when *libido* is mentioned without an object people tend to think immediately of sexual lust, which is a particularly virulent form of lust, *ciu.* 14:15 - 16. But as one of the disordered passions, *cupiditas* has a wider application to anything that is immoderately desired in a bad sense.

¹⁸ Augustine explained that he preferred to use the word *tristitia* where Cicero uses *aegritudo* and Vergil uses *dolor*, because these two words tend to be used of physical sensations: *ciu.* 14:7 and the pains of the flesh are really pains of the soul *ciu.* 14:15. See also *en. Ps.* 42:6 ‘The pain of the soul is called sorrow; the body’s distress may be called pain, but not sorrow.’

¹⁹ *Io. eu. tr.* 46:8. Also *pat.* 24:21 ‘hurried on by lust, ... called back by fear... expanded by gladness ... contracted by sadness..’

²⁰ *imm. an.* 5:7 ‘For the mind is changed so to speak either according to the passions of the body or its own passions; according to the passions of the body, by age, sickness, pain, work, injury and carnal desire; according to its own passions, in turn, through desire, joy, fear, worry, zeal; and study.’ Also see *uera rel.* 10:18 ‘As for the soul’s being subject to alteration by time, this is indeed obvious to us from the great variety of its moods.’ Also see *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:6:7 the Fall and subsequent renewal are evidence of mutability. In *lib. arb.* 2:6:14 and *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:8:11 Augustine emphasized that it wasn’t just the part of the soul subject to affections which was changeable but even the spirit; the highest part was subject to both wrong and right ideas. He was keen here to argue against those (the Manichees again) who believed that the spirit was part of the divine substance.

²¹ *ciu.* 14:3 and 5. But see *diu. qu.* 83:77 on the extent to which *perturbatio* is sin.

of body or mind but instead, lived a life of health and tranquillity;²² such perturbations only arising afterwards as part of our penal state.²³ It is not difficult to see allusions to the four passions (*perturbationes animi*) in the first sentence of Augustine's description of stage 5 *an. quant.*, particularly as they occur in the same traditional order: to *cupiditas* in *Quod cum effectum erit, id est, cum fuerit ab omni tabe anima libera maculisque diluta*; to *laetitia* in *tum se denique in seipsa laetissime tenet*; to *metus* in *nec omnino aliquid metuit sibi* and to *tristitia* in *aut ulla sua causa quidquam angitur*.

aliud est enim efficere, aliud tenere puritatem

After references to the four *perturbationes animi*, Augustine goes on to distinguish between the activity by which the soul restores itself to purity and the activity by which it works to maintain itself in a state of purity, thus providing further confirmation that purification is an ongoing process.²⁴

In hoc gradu omnifariam concipit quanta sit

He continues with the description of the fifth stage with, 'at this stage (the soul) conceives how great (*quanta sit*) it could be in all respects and with remarkable and extraordinary trust, it goes forward into God.'²⁵ This picks up one of Euodius' initial questions and the one which the dialogue has really concentrated on answering: How great is the soul (*quanta sit*)?²⁶ The dialogue has been primarily about proving the incorporeal nature of the soul and demonstrating its greatness in terms of its powers, rather than its physical extent.²⁷ This is what Augustine proceeds to demonstrate to Euodius; by describing an ascent

²² *ciu.* 14:10.

²³ *ciu.* 14:15 f; *lib. arb.* 1:10:22; *pecc. mer.* 1:16:21.

²⁴ *f. et op.* was written against those who asserted that faith was enough without continuing purification *retr.* 2:38.

²⁵ (This is my translation.) Colleran's translation in ACW 9 quoted at the head of this chapter, does not convey the sense of utter dependence on God that the soul has come to at this stage but instead suggests all its confidence is in itself and its self-achievable greatness. The subjunctive *quanta sit* he has translated as a present tense, again conveying a sense of completed self-fulfilment, rather than potential which can only be fulfilled in God and this diminishes our profound sense of unknowing.

²⁶ *an. quant.* 1:1.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 3:4.

through the powers that the soul has in relation to the body, to itself and to God, he shows him what the soul is capable of and, in the process, he hopes to experience what he himself is capable of.²⁸ Augustine was very aware that, though we may know in theory what powers the soul possesses, we cannot know the effectiveness of those powers in our own case, until faced with a situation which requires the exercise of a particular power.²⁹

At one point, Euodius had said to Augustine: ‘who can take away from me, the fact that I myself am a living being? (*Quis enim mihi eripit, quod ego ipse anima sum?*)’³⁰ Augustine responds that ‘a thought and consideration such as this invites us to enter into ourselves and to the extent that is possible, separates us from the body (*Ista enim cogitatio et consideratio ad nosmetipsos nos invitat, et quantum licet avellit a corpore.*)’³¹ Euodius’ question is redolent of those other times when Augustine seeks to establish the baseline of certain self-knowledge as the certainty of being alive,³² from which he argued it is possible to reason to other certainties about the self,³³ discovering ourselves as essentially one mind,

²⁸ *an. quant.* 33:70.

²⁹ As he later said: ‘Observe now, while we are, while we live, while we know that we live, while we are certain that we possess memory, understanding, and will; who boast of ourselves as having a great knowledge of our own nature;—observe, I say, how entirely ignorant we are of what avail to us is our memory, or our understanding, or our will.’ *an. et or.* 4:9:7. He goes on to illustrate the point with the vivid and well-known example of the astonishing feats of memory of his friend, Simplicius, who was able to recite the last line but one of all the books of Vergil and then each preceding line and who could perform the same feat with the works of Cicero but who had no idea that he possessed such abilities until called upon to exercise them *ibid.* 4:9:7. This was a case of a remarkable exercise of a power but our ignorance works both ways and we do not know when our powers will fail us. For example, with regard to our ignorance of our understanding, we may think we understand a problem, which is submitted to us, but when thinking it over we don’t and *vice versa ibid.* 4:7:10 and 11. Also with regard to the will, we do not know how strong it is, what temptations it will yield to and what temptations it will resist *conf.* 10:5:7; 10:37:60. Even the Apostle Peter was ignorant of the effectiveness of his will, for he said he would lay down his life for the Lord and yet, when it came to it, he betrayed him, *an. et or.* 4:7: 11. In relation to himself, Augustine writes, ‘That is how I see myself, but perhaps I am deceived. For there are those deplorable blind spots where the capacity that lies in me is concealed from me. My mind on examining myself about its strengths does not regard its findings as easy to trust. What lies within is for the most part hidden unless experience reveals it’ *conf.* 10:32:48. Also ‘The Lord, however, laughed at me, and was pleased to show me by actual experience what I am’ *ep.* 21:2.

³⁰ *an. quant.* 30:61.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² In *lib. arb.* 1:7:16 Augustine had asked Euodius this very question, ‘tell me whether you are quite certain that you are alive.’

³³ *sol.* 2:1:1; *beata u.* 2:7; *lib. arb.* 1:7:16; 2:3:7; *ciu.* 11:26; *trin.* 15:12:21. This is ostensibly Descartes, ‘I think therefore I am’ but as is clear from *ciu.* 11:26 and *trin.* 10:10:14, Augustine is not concerned to prove that he exists but to prove against the Academics that there is knowledge that one can be certain of. On this difference in purpose see O’Daly 1987: 171 and Williams 1993.

which is acting through a variety of powers³⁴ and enabling us to fulfil the Delphic commandment ‘to know thyself’ for, ‘the whole point of it (the mind)³⁵ being commanded to know itself comes to this: it should be certain that it is none of the things about which it is uncertain, and it should be certain that it is that alone it is certain that it is.’³⁶ This is the stage reached now, with the mind’s awareness of itself but, although this is the most basic knowledge we can have of ourselves, Augustine comments that ‘to few people, however, is it permitted to perceive the soul by means of the soul itself, that is, in such a way that the soul sees itself (*Sed paucis licet ipso animo animum cernere, id est ut ipse se animus videat.*)’³⁷ This we can do through intellectual vision, which Augustine here calls both *intelligentia* and *ratio*, describing the mind’s act as ‘a finding of itself’ (literally ‘a coming into itself’ *se invenire*).³⁸

Although we have entered into the very seat of memory where the mind remembers itself, we will discover that God is not there.³⁹ In other words, knowing oneself as a rational being is not the same as understanding oneself as a relational being and seeing what one is, is not the same as seeing what one could be. There is a hint of irony, therefore, right at the beginning of *an. quant.* where Euodius says he is well aware that Augustine in the past has advised him, in the words of an old Greek proverb, not to seek what was beyond our powers but that he did not think that we ourselves were beyond our own powers and he wanted to be told what we might be.⁴⁰ Of course, that is precisely what we are; beyond ourselves and our self-knowledge is therefore limited by mystery for we are bound by the limitations of our

³⁴ ‘I who act through these diverse functions am one mind’ *conf.* 10:7:11; ‘And this is mind (*animus*), this is I myself’ *Ibid.* 10:6:9; ‘It is I who remember, I who am mind. It is hardly surprising if what I am not is distant from me. But what is nearer to me than myself?’ *Ibid.* 10:16:25 (The answer he is inviting is clearly, God).

³⁵ Augustine follows Cicero in assuming that the Delphic command relates to the mind. See *Cic. Tusc.* 1:22:52 ‘our selves are not bodies. When then Apollo says, “Know thyself,” he says “know thy soul (*animum*).” For the body is as it were a vessel or a sort of shelter for the soul: every act of your soul is an act of yours.’

³⁶ *trin.* 10:10:16. See *infra*.

³⁷ *an. quant.* 14:24.

³⁸ *Ibid.* Augustine noted in *trin.* that *invenire* was literally ‘*in + venire*’ *trin.* 10:7:10 and therefore it is highly appropriate for him to suggest as an alternative description of this stage ‘acts in itself’ (*in seipsa*).

³⁹ *conf.* 10:25:36.

⁴⁰ *an. quant.* 1:1.

condition of being created *ex nihilo* and under the constraints of time and memory.⁴¹

Augustine emphasizes constantly throughout his writings, the deep unknowingness in man and the mystery that he is to himself.⁴² It is part of our self-knowledge to become aware of our limitations;⁴³ that awareness becoming more painful, the more that progress is made in purification and the more we see the difference between what we are and what we could be. The effect of such knowledge is to foster an awareness of our dependence on God's mercy in the matter of reforming ourselves in His image, which 'the soul cannot begin or complete except with the help of Him to whom it yields itself.'⁴⁴

Self-knowledge, then, is about discovering our potential and limitations; it is about discovering both what we are as human beings and who we are, in our particularity and

⁴¹ *conf.* 10:8:14. It is through remembering and reflecting on our past experience that we can assess our future course of action even though, when it comes to it we cannot be sure that we will act in the way we want but for Augustine, memory only begins when he begins to speak (*conf.* 1:8:13) . He cannot therefore remember being in the womb or infancy and has to rely on what others tell him and also from watching other infants to assess how he might have been (*conf.* 1:6:7 -1:7:12). He certainly does not know where he came from (*conf.* 1:6:7). He was challenged over his professed ignorance of himself (with particular reference to the origin of the soul) by a young ex-Donatist, Vincentius Victor, who believed it 'excessively absurd and unreasonable that a man should be a stranger to himself; or that a person who is supposed to have acquired the knowledge of all things, should regard himself as unknown to his very self. For what difference is there between a man and a brute beast, if he knows not how to discuss and determine his own quality and nature?' *an. et or.* 4:2:2.

⁴² *Ibid.* 4:4:8 'It is our own selves that we are incapable of comprehending; it is our own selves, who, in our too great height and strength, transcend the humble limits of our own knowledge; it is our own selves, whom we are incapable of embracing, although we are certainly not beside ourselves.' See also *ciu.* 21:10 the conjunction of body and soul 'is utterly amazing and beyond our powers of comprehension;' *conf.* 4:14:22 'Man is a vast deep' ...it is easier to count his hairs than the passions and emotions of his heart;' *conf.* 10:8: 1 'This power of memory is great, very great, my God. It is a vast and infinite profundity. Who has plumbed its bottom? This power is that of my mind and is a natural endowment, but I myself cannot grasp the totality of what I am. Is the mind, then, too restricted to compass itself, so that we have to ask what is that element of itself which it fails to grasp? Surely that cannot be external to itself; it must be within the mind. How then can it fail to grasp it? This question moves me to great astonishment. Amazement grips me;' *en. Ps.* 41.13 'If "deep" signifies profundity, surely the human heart is a deep abyss? Could anything be more profound? The profundity of a human being is surely referred to in a saying we find elsewhere: A mortal will draw near to the heart's depths, and God will be exalted (*Ps.* 63:7-8(64:6))...what a depth of human weakness lay hidden in Peter. He did not know what was going on within him when he kept promising so rashly that he would die with the Lord or for the Lord. What a deep abyss he was!' See also n. 29.

⁴³ The Delphic commandment, 'Know thyself (γνῶθι σεαυτόν),' was also effectively knowledge of one's own limitations, Dihle 1982: 45. On the evolution of the meaning of the Delphic oracle, see Courcelle 1974.

⁴⁴ *an. quant.* 33:73; 28:55. Augustine says such knowledge causes 'the sorrow of the exile stirred by longing for his true country and its founder, his blissful God' *trin.* 4:1:1; knowledge is the discovery of oneself as tied up in love of this world and far removed from the love of God and neighbour. We mourn for ourselves and pray for help *doctr. chr.* 2:7:10.

individuality.⁴⁵ It is about the soul discovering itself in a median position;⁴⁶ an incorporeal, yet created, and therefore, mutable substance, midway between the body, which is changeable in time and space, and God, who is unchangeable; it is about knowing that turning to what is superior, will bring order and health to its whole being: body and soul and that turning to the inferior, will bring about deficiency.⁴⁷ Such a welter of self-knowledge will enable a person to move forward in the appropriate spirit of humility ‘transcending himself as a reasoning soul,’⁴⁸ as it were, towards God.⁴⁹ It may only be ‘the few’ who come to even a modicum of self-knowledge⁵⁰ but ‘the few’ are not necessarily the most intellectually able, instead they are those who, whether learned or not, seek knowledge out of a divinely inspired love for the truth, rather than out of vainglory and who seek the truth with faith and endurance.⁵¹

Equivalent stage in *trin.*

In *trin.* the same distinction is drawn as in *an. quant.* between the initial restoration to purity and ongoing purification:

But it is one thing to throw off a fever, another to recover from the weakness which the fever leaves behind it; it is one thing to remove from the body a

⁴⁵ Augustine distinguishes between particular knowledge as knowledge which is only available to the person concerned and general knowledge which is common truth available to everyone ‘from which we define as perfectly as we can, not what kind of thing any particular man’s mind is, but what kind of thing by everlasting ideas it ought to be,’ *trin.* 9:6:9. In *ep.* 14 written at about the same time as *an. quant.* Augustine distinguishes between the idea of man generally, which was an idea in the mind of God and the idea of each individual person, which, in the cycle of time, lives in the pure truth. He explained this in geometrical terms as the difference between the idea of an angle and the idea of a quadrangle which can only be described by focusing on all four angles at once *ep.* 14:4.

⁴⁶ see under section ‘conversion of *intentio voluntatis*’ *infra*

⁴⁷ *mus.* 6:5:13.

⁴⁸ *sed memento cum te transcendis, ratiocinantem animam te transcendere (uera rel. 29:72).*

⁴⁹ ‘It is the chief cause of error that a man doesn’t know himself’ (*ord.* 1:1:3).

⁵⁰ *an. quant.* 14:24; Also *ord.* 2:11:30, ‘only a rare class of men is capable of using it (reason) as a guide to the knowledge of God or of the soul.’

⁵¹ *an. quant.* 14:24; Also *an. quant.* 36:80, ‘But to see these things as they should be seen is given to only a few, and no one is rendered fit for this except by true religion.’ NB also *trin.* 5:1:2; *ep.* 120:1:4 ‘For certain people, even the simplest who, nonetheless, walk with great perseverance in the path of faith, come to that most blessed contemplation. But there are those who somehow already know what the invisible, immutable, incorporeal nature is and refuse to hold onto the way that leads to so great an abode of happiness, because it seems foolish to them. That way is Christ crucified.’ The unlearned Monnica was constantly portrayed as the true philosopher because she was directly instructed by God himself (*ord.* 1:11:32; *beata u.* 2:10; *ord.* 2:1:1). It is the uneducated Monnica’s temperance that lifts up her mind to great heights, not her intellectual knowledge *ord.* 2:17:45.

missile stuck in it, another to heal the wound it made with a complete cure. The first stage of the cure is to remove the cause of the debility and this is done by pardoning all sins; the second stage is curing the debility itself and this is done gradually by making steady progress in the renewal of the image.⁵²

Scriptural authority (Ps. 103:3) is given for the two-stage distinction, from which it is clear that the first stage relates to baptism⁵³ and the second stage to the daily advances we make thereafter.⁵⁴ In *trin.*, as in *an. quant.*, then, reform into the full likeness of the image of God, which began on conversion to faith,⁵⁵ continues. The challenge for the fallen soul, having reached this stage, is to live life turned towards self and God, which is to be turned *ad interiora* and *ab exteriora*, as both *an. quant.* and *trin.* recognize and, in this way, to continue the progress in purification that has brought the person as far as conversion and commitment to the true faith as evidenced by their baptism.

Withdrawal of *intentio* from the senses: the value of the body

The work of purification that the soul has been engaged in since its conversion requires it to maintain a measure of detachment from the senses. Before examining the role of *intentio* at this stage in detail, we must therefore consider first what such a withdrawal says about Augustine's view of the body. In *an. quant.*, at stage four, Augustine had spoken in seemingly pejorative terms about 'getting rid of the body' (*deposito isto corpore*); 'despising (*contemnere*) the things of the body' and of the soul 'withdrawing itself from sordid things

⁵² *trin.* 14:17:23.

⁵³ Bonner 2007:101 notes 'As late as 401/2 in *De Baptismo*, Augustine had been prepared to entertain Ambrose's view that faith and conversion of the heart might supply what baptism conveys, but this was clearly impossible to reconcile with belief in the absolute necessity of the reception of the sacrament for salvation, and by the time of his consecration in 395, it may be guessed that he had effectively discarded it.' The fact that faith is not enough without baptism is shown by the example of Cornelius in *Simpl.* 1:2:2. In *bapt.* 4:22:30 Augustine was prepared to accept that faith and conversion was sufficient for salvation *without* baptism in circumstances where there hadn't been time to baptize. The one exception to the requirement of baptism that he continued to countenance was martyrdom *an. et or.* 1:9:10. In both the Pelagian and Donatist controversies, Augustine maintained the importance of baptism into the one true body of Christ. For the particular importance of the issue of baptism in Africa see Bonner 1970.

⁵⁴ Elsewhere, the Apostle Paul's words 'Even if our outer man is being corrupted, our inner man is renewed from day to day' (2 Cor. 4:16) are relied upon for the requirement that the purification be ongoing see *mor.* 1:34:80. And in *ciu.* 21:25:1 Gal. 5:19f is cited to show the purification must be ongoing and that baptism itself is not enough regardless of their subsequent lifestyle. Augustine's reason for insisting on continuing purification was that 'The guilt of this concupiscence is absolved in baptism, but the weakness remains.' *retr.* 1:15:2.

⁵⁵ *trin.* 14:16:22.

(*sese abstrahere a sordibus*).⁵⁶ Porphyry's view, which Augustine encountered when reading *Regr. an.*,⁵⁷ was that one must escape from every kind of body (*omne corpus est fugiendum*) in order to dwell with God. Although this was a view which Augustine later said was therefore one to be vehemently resisted,⁵⁸ such derogatory statements early on in his career might suggest that, at least at this stage, he held a Porphyrian view of the body. But this would be to misunderstand his meaning. For, by the time he wrote *an. quant.* he had been baptized and was well aware of the doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body. Furthermore, in *an. quant.*, he referred to the Christian mysteries as authority for the proposition that: 'whoever desires to restore himself to the state in which he was made by God, that is, like God, should contemn (*contemnat*) all corporeal things and renounce this whole world, which as we see, is corporeal. There simply is no other way of saving the soul or of renewing it, or of reconciling it with its Maker.'⁵⁹ It is not surprising, then, that we find him still using the word *contemnere* of despising mortal things in *trin.*,⁶⁰ if the Christian mysteries authorized it and we should not think of him as holding a Porphyrian view of the body in *an. quant.* Even in his earlier works, where some of his statements about the body are a bit more ambivalent and were later corrected,⁶¹ we should see him rather as a man struggling to find a language to integrate

⁵⁶ *an. quant.* 33:73. More moderate is *ibid.* 14:24 *atque ab omni corporum consuetudine, quantum in hac vita permittitur, semet avertunt* and *ibid.* 28:55 *quo admonetur anima, ne se ultra quam necessitas cogit, refundat in sensus.*

⁵⁷ *ciu.* 10:29:2. Augustine described Porphyry as 'the most renowned of the pagan philosophers' *ciu.* 22:3; his reputation was widespread *retr.* 2:31; He had written a tract *Against the Christians*, which was still galvanizing antichristian feeling among pagans and therefore Augustine spends time in *ciu.* engaging with his views see Courcelle 1969: 209. Augustine responds to Porph.'s view of Christ in his *Philosophy from Oracles* in *ciu.* 19:23 and on several occasions repudiates his view that 'everything bodily must be fled from.'

⁵⁸ *ciu.* 10:29; 13:17; 22:26-7.

⁵⁹ *an. quant.* 3:4.

⁶⁰ *trin.* 8:7:10.

⁶¹ In the Cassiciacum dialogues, he certainly made statements in relation to the body that he later regretted, e.g., 'these things of sense must be forsaken entirely (*Penitus esse ista sensibilia fugienda.*)' *retr.* 1:4:3 regretting *sol.* 1:14:24. He did not tamper with the further statement there which described the body as a *cavea* nor did he need to for, despite the FOTC translation of 'prison,' *cavea* is less negative than that, meaning 'an animal enclosure.' *Acad.* 1:3:9 he does speak of the body as a prison (*cum hoc corpus, hoc est tenebrosum carcerem,*) but this is Licentius in dialogue and he tends to recite views that Augustine has left behind (e.g. *ord.* 2:2:7). This statement was not corrected which suggests perhaps that it was not to be taken as representing Augustine's own view. Neither did he alter an equally derogatory statement made by Licentius in *ord.* 2:2:6 'certain soiled and cast-off garments, so to speak-of which he has divested himself and from which he has, as it were, withdrawn into himself *ita dicam, sordes atque exuviae quibus se ille mundavit et quasi subtraxit in seipsum.*' Augustine's view about the body at Cassiciacum is probably best summed up by himself in *sol.* where he admitted that he didn't know much about the usefulness of his mortal body but, until he did, he would commit it to God and pray for it

inherited views on the inferiority of the body with the Christian doctrines of Incarnation and Resurrection, which placed value on the body, and all at a time when Christian doctrine had not yet been established. The difference he sought to draw was between the body as created by God and the corruptible body after the Fall, which weighed down the soul with its fragility, mortality and neediness.⁶² The corruptible body is certainly a problem for the soul to deal with, but ultimately, according to Augustine, it is our thoughts that imprison us.

Withdrawal of *intentio*: from *intentio mentis* to *intentio voluntatis*

In *imm. an.*, Augustine speaks of the withdrawal of an *intentio mentis* from the senses of the body for the purposes of reasoning and understanding⁶³ and in *trin.*, he speaks of the turning of an *intentio voluntatis* onto oneself in order to come to self-knowledge.⁶⁴ Although Augustine is never rigid in his use of terminology he had, what has been described as ‘an almost oppressive awareness of the moral and theological implications of his own words and of the use of language more generally, which deepened throughout his life.’⁶⁵ Therefore, in the context of his developing understanding of the significance of the will, it is not unreasonable to think that the transfer of *intentio* from *mens* to *voluntas* is deliberate.⁶⁶ We will use a passage from *imm. an.* as a springboard for discussion about the withdrawal of *intentio mentis*, as *imm. an.* is close in time to *an. quant.*,⁶⁷ and *an. quant.* does not, itself, provide us with a suitable equivalent. Then we will use a passage from *trin.* as a springboard for discussion about *intentio voluntatis*. Finally, given the limited nature of our ability, as fallen human beings, to direct our desire towards God, we will consider the meaning of *intentio voluntatis* as an act of prayer.

sol. 1:1:6.

⁶² *en. Ps.* 141:17-19.

⁶³ *imm. an.* 10:17.

⁶⁴ *trin.* 10:8:11.

⁶⁵ Conybear 2006: 11-12. On the other hand Augustine says that when one is dealing with the thing about which words are spoken, one shouldn’t argue about words *Acad.* 3:13:29.

⁶⁶ *intentio mentis* is still used in *trin.* but only in circumstances where it is clear that the energy is volitional. (See *trin.* 12:12:17 and *trin.* 11 *passim*, where it is used interchangeably with *intentio voluntatis*).

⁶⁷ Although close in time, the two works are like chalk and cheese; *imm. an.* being completely philosophical and *an. quant.* being completely Christian.

Withdrawal of intentio mentis in imm an: act of intentio as an act of inward attention

For who, looking into himself well, has not experienced that he understands (*intellexisse*) something more clearly, the more he is able to remove and withdraw his mental *intentio* from the senses of the body (*quanto removere atque subducere intentionem mentis a corporis sensibus potuit?*)⁶⁸

Imm. an. seems to be a kind of philosophical exercise and it has been suggested that Augustine wrote it as a model exercise for his pupils to imitate because this would tie in with his instruction to his pupils at Cassiciacum that ‘they should train their minds to be at home with their own thoughts’ (*et apud sese habitare consuefacerent animum*).⁶⁹ He had told his pupils in *ord.* that it was the chief cause of error that man did not know himself. If they wanted to attain self-knowledge, they had to develop a habit of withdrawing from the things of sense and concentrating their thought on themselves and holding it there (*animum in seipsum colligendi atque in seipso retinendi*).⁷⁰ He mentions two ways of doing this: either in solitude⁷¹ or by an education in the liberal arts.⁷² *Ord.* itself, as with his other early works,⁷³ is in the nature of a philosophical dialogue and shows the way in which teaching in the liberal arts would have proceeded.⁷⁴ In fact, Augustine regarded the time at Cassiciacum, where some of the dialogues took place, as a school of philosophy in which he was the master.⁷⁵ He

⁶⁸ *imm. an.* 10.17.

⁶⁹ *ord.* 1:3:6. Penaskovic 1980. *Imm. an.* was written as a reminder to himself to finish the unfinished *sol.* but was itself unfinished and published prematurely and this, according to Augustine, accounts for its brevity and complicated reasoning *retr.* 1:5:1. It may also account for its complete absence of religious tone and content; no prayers, no scriptural references and no religious expressions, unlike his previously written works; the Cassiciacum dialogues, see Mourant 1971.

⁷⁰ *ord.* 1:1:3.

⁷¹ *sol.* is an example of withdrawal in solitude where Augustine communes with his own reason. Also *ep.* 3:1 *Augustinus ipse cum Augustino*.

⁷² *ord.* 1:1:3. For Augustine and the liberal arts, see Introduction n. 29 and for liberal arts as being a recognized exercise of this kind, see chapter 1 n. 110.

⁷³ *Acad.*; *beata u.*; *sol.* (a dialogue with himself); *an. quant.*; *lib. arb.*; *mus.*; *mag.*

⁷⁴ In *ord.* Augustine presents a complete programme of education in the liberal arts. The programme consisted of proceeding orderly, first through the literary *disciplinae*: grammar, dialectics and rhetoric, then moving on to the mathematical *disciplinae*: music, geometry, astrology and philosophy. If the complete programme is too demanding, then instead, a person should try to master the essentials of at least either one of dialectics and number (preferably both) or, if even this is too much, he should at least try to grasp what unity in numbers is (*ord.* 2:18:47).

⁷⁵ *Acad.* 3:4:7; *ord.* 1:3:7.

had withdrawn from the world after his conversion (and after he had given up his job as a rhetor but before he had been baptized),⁷⁶ to a country farm and estate at Cassiciacum ‘where we rested in you from the heat of the world.’⁷⁷ Augustine’s temperament inclined him to withdrawal into a contemplative life and he had once even contemplated living a hermit’s life (though it is clear that this would have been more of an attempt to escape himself, rather than an attempt to return to himself).⁷⁸ Plotinus was similarly inclined and would retire to the country estate of a friend, where he hoped to set up a school of philosophy; a plan which never materialized.⁷⁹ Other philosophically inclined individuals, like Marcus Aurelius and Seneca, had longed to retire physically but public duties made this impossible, (as they did eventually for Augustine),⁸⁰ and thus developed the idea that the important withdrawal was the ability to withdraw into oneself in the midst of the turmoil; the corollary of that being the realization that physical withdrawal is, in fact, ineffective without this spiritual withdrawal.⁸¹

Festugière traced the development of the Greek word for withdrawal or retirement ‘anachoresis’ (ἀναχώρησις) and noted that the expression ‘to retire into oneself’ *anachoresis eis eauton* (ἀναχωρεῖν εἰς ἑαυτόν),’ translated into Latin as *animum enim cogo sibi intentum esse*⁸² but, more significantly, that the expression described the same state as the expression ‘turning his attention inward upon himself (ἐαυτῷ πῶς προσέχοντα τὸν νοῦν),’ which had

⁷⁶ *conf.* 9:4:7.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 9:3:5.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* 10:43:70.

⁷⁹ Festugière 1954: 65. On similar plans of Augustine which were later abandoned see *conf.* 6.14.24.

⁸⁰ ‘I took upon myself the responsibility of a bishop. But no one can outdo me in matters concerning the life that is entirely free, without any pastoral concerns; nothing is better, nothing is sweeter than exploring the divine treasury, without disturbance around one. That is sweet, that is good.’ (*s.* 339:4). After carrying out his pastoral duties by day, he would become a contemplative at night see Possidius *vita* 24. Despite his inclination to regard the contemplative life as essential, if one was to have enough quiet to overcome the fear of death (*ep.* 10:2), he recognized that, practically speaking, this might not be possible and yet tranquillity of mind in action could still be achieved by withdrawal into the *sanctum* of the mind (*ep.* 10:3.) Also he had already made it clear that what was important was stillness of thought, not leisure (*non otium desidiae, sed otium cogitationis uera rel.* 35:65.

⁸¹ Festugière 1954: 60.

⁸² *Ibid.* 64 says that Plotinus himself uses *anachoresis* twice in the sense of the soul’s need to withdraw from the body in *Enn* 1:1:12:18 and *Enn* 2:3:4:14 f and, in the absence of Victorinus’ Latin translation, one can only speculate as to whether this was translated by *intentio*, and, if so, whether Augustine had read these parts of *Enn.* to be influenced in his choice of vocabulary.

been used much earlier of a habit that Socrates used to engage in.⁸³ ‘Return to self’ and ‘collecting oneself together into oneself,’ expressions which we encountered in the last chapter, also express the same idea of turning the attention onto oneself and Augustine can be found using both expressions when he exhorts Licentius to muster up all his powers of thought in order to enter into dialogue.⁸⁴

What Augustine was seeking to do by means of the philosophical dialogue, both at Cassiciacum and subsequently, was not to *inform* the minds of the participants to the dialogue but to *transform* them. This was designed to effect nothing less than a conversion in their attitude away from self-interest and self-complacency towards dissatisfaction with themselves and a desire for objective truth; allowing them to come to the knowledge of themselves, namely, of their shortcomings with the objective of overcoming the passions.⁸⁵ Augustine’s particular concern was to encourage Licentius to turn his attention away from poetry towards philosophy⁸⁶ and, to this end, he sought (successfully)⁸⁷ to inflame Licentius’ love for

⁸³ Festugière 1954:154 n. 13. Porphyry extols Plotinus’ continual attention to himself (πρὸς ἑαυτὸν προσοχήν) in *vita* 8;20-21.

⁸⁴ *ord.* 1:10:28 ‘Now Licentius if you please concentrate every power within you (*collige in te*) sharpen whatever acumen you have and then express by a definition what order is.’ *Acad.* 2:7:18 ‘Come gather your forces again (*in vires tuas redi.*)’

⁸⁵ *Acad.* 1:3:8 Dialoguing is not about giving childish display of intelligence but about the desire to find truth. It’s about formation and instruction of pupils by their master and Licentius confirms there is great progress in philosophy when a disputant thinks little of victory compared to discovery of what is just and true. Also *Ibid.* 1:9:25 Augustine treats *Acad.* as an exercise to test their capacities and tastes (*exercere vos*) to encourage them in the quest for truth and to ask them how much importance they attached to it. Also *Ibid.* 2:7:17 ‘this discussion between us has been undertaken to train you and to incite you to cultivate your mind (*haec inter nos disputatio suscepta sit exercendi tui causa, et ad eliminandum animum provocandi.*)’ *Ibid.* 2:9:22 ‘I do not want this discussion to be undertaken merely for the sake of discussing. . . . we are concerned with life, with morality with the spirit-that spirit which hopes to overcome the antagonism of every kind of illusion and possessing itself of truth to return in triumph over the passions.’

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 3:1:1 ‘It is high time that philosophy should take up and hold a greater part in his (Licentius’) mind than poetry or any other subject (*disciplina*).’ *Ibid.* 3:4:7 Augustine is constantly trying to rouse Licentius towards greater desire for philosophy. *ord.* 1:3:8 Augustine feared that Licentius’ passion for poetry would take him away from philosophy. *Ibid.* 1:3:9 ‘perhaps today I shall find myself..why may I not be admonished by your voice to study philosophy rather than compose poems? For philosophy –as I have begun to believe you as you prove it day by day-is our true and tranquil abode. Wherefore if it is not a burden to you and if you think it fitting, ask whatever questions you will.’

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* 1:5:12. Also *Ibid.* 1:8:21 and 22. By questioning, Augustine forced Licentius to give up talk about Pyramus and Thisbe. *Ibid.* 1:5:14 we witness Licentius’ conversion from poetry to philosophy as he praises God for creation and *Ibid.* 1:8:21 he gives voice to his conversion by singing repeatedly a verse from Ps. 79, ‘O God of hosts convert us and show us your face and we shall be saved.’ But it subsequently becomes clear that Licentius’ conversion is short lived, *Ep.* 26.

philosophy;⁸⁸ he allowed him to see what strength of mind he needed to seek the truth and where he fell short⁸⁹ and to see where he was more concerned with praising himself than God.⁹⁰ Augustine, in his hopes and aspirations for his pupils, was fully in keeping with the philosophic (and particularly Socratic) tradition of treating the philosophical dialogue as a communal spiritual exercise; where the journey was more important than arrival and the participants more in question than the subject-matter of the dialogue.⁹¹

The most significant aspect to draw out from the point of view of *intentio* is Hadot's observation that the communal dialogue and solitary meditation, together with all other types of philosophical exercise in antiquity, which were designed to effect a conversion from the subjective to the objective view-point, were all exercises of authentic presence to oneself and others.⁹² Hadot shows that attention, or *prosoche*, was the fundamental attitude underlying all such exercises; that this was a particularly Stoic attitude and that its characteristic was *tonos* or tension (Latin *intentio*) which manifested itself as a constant watchfulness to the present moment to ensure that a person acted in accordance with reason (rather than the passions) in respect of each situation that they found themselves in.⁹³ This philosophic tradition of attentiveness and self-examination was designed to keep a person in a state of constant self-awareness and awareness of themselves in relation to God and to act accordingly. It had already found its way into the Christian tradition before Augustine and it is quite likely that Augustine had come across it in a Christian form. He was certainly aware of the importance placed by the desert fathers on attentiveness (which he called *intentio*) in, and as, prayer.⁹⁴ He was also familiar with the writings of Basil of Caesarea⁹⁵ and is likely to have read

⁸⁸ Ibid. 1:10:28.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 1:7:20.

⁹⁰ *ord.* 1:10:29 and 30.

⁹¹ Hadot 1995: 90-91. For the genre of the Cassiciacum dialogues see Coneybeare 2006.

⁹² Hadot 1995: 91. For lists of exercises found in Philo see Ibid. 84. This was essentially what philosophy was, for both the ancient Stoics and the Platonists: the practice of spiritual exercises with a view to transformation Ibid. chapter 3 passim. From the beginning, Christianity presented itself as a *philosophia* in the sense of incorporating the traditional practices of spiritual exercises Ibid. 107.

⁹³ Ibid. 84. Also Hadot 1986: 34.

⁹⁴ *ep.* 130:10: 20. Further on this see *intentio* as an act of prayer *infra*.

⁹⁵ Courcelle 1969: 202-4.

Rufinus' Latin translation of Basil's homily 'On the words, 'Give heed to yourself' *eis to prosoche seatou (In Illud attende tibi ipsi)* based on Deut. 15:9 LXX 'Give heed to yourself lest there be a hidden word in your heart;' a homily in which, according to Hadot, Basil 'develops an entire theory of *prosoche*, strongly influenced by the Stoic and Platonic traditions.'⁹⁶

Imm. an. is purely in the Platonic philosophic tradition of withdrawal where the body is seen as obstructing the soul in its attainment of truth and the mind therefore has to turn away from the body, if it wants to develop its reasoning ability and come to an understanding of the truth.⁹⁷ *Imm. an.* seems to be specifically an intellectual exercise to prove the immortality of the soul by reason⁹⁸ and, if it had been finished, the suggestion has been made that it might well have been couched in dialogical form.⁹⁹ When Augustine speaks of the withdrawal of *intentio mentis* in *imm. an.*, bearing in mind that all exercises were regarded as being about the payment of attention to oneself, it is clear that what he is describing is an act of inward attention.

Withdrawal of *intentio voluntatis* in *trin.*

Let the mind then recognize itself and not go looking for itself as if it were absent, but rather turn on to itself the *intentio* of its will which had it straying about through other things and think about itself. (*Cognoscat ergo semetipsam, nec quasi absentem se quaerat, sed intentionem voluntatis qua per alia vagabatur statuat in se ipsa et se cogitet.*)¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Hadot 1995: 130. Although Augustine was familiar with the story of the *Life of Anthony* (*conf.* 8:6:14), which Hadot 1995: 131 notes also contains the admonition to pay heed to oneself. Augustine would have read it in the Latin translation by Evagrius says Courcelle 1969: 201 though there doesn't seem to be any evidence that he did. In that version by Evagrius the word *prosoche* had disappeared, see Sheridan 2012: 454.

⁹⁷ Penaskovic 1980. Penaskovic first compares *imm. an.* with Plato's *Phaedo* and then with *Enn.* 4:7. The body's hindrance to the soul is noted by Augustine in *imm. an.* 1:1. For Augustine's minimal knowledge of *Phaedo* see Courcelle 1969:170.

⁹⁸ A reasoned ascent could lead a person to knowledge that the soul was immortal, it could not lead a person to belief in the resurrection of the body; this is the promise of the Christian faith: that the whole man, not just the soul, is going to be immortal. *s.* 241:4; *trin.* 13:10. On Augustine's change from philosophical to Christian immortality see Mourant 1969.

⁹⁹ Mourant 1971: 214.

¹⁰⁰ *trin.* 10:8:11.

In terms of the traditional threefold distinction into which philosophy was divided: moral, natural and rational,¹⁰¹ the intellectual exercise in the unfinished *imm. an.* could be said to pertain to that branch of philosophy, which the Latins called, ‘rational philosophy,’ and the Greeks called ‘logic,’¹⁰² whereas the emphasis in *trin.* is on ethics or moral philosophy, which is concerned with how we live, responsibility for which (as we saw in the last chapter) belongs to the will.¹⁰³ Although the overriding importance of the will was recognized and acknowledged by Augustine from his earliest writings, his thinking on it developed and different facets of it were explored as the need arose;¹⁰⁴ first, against the determinism of the Manichees, when he stressed the freedom of the will in prelapsarian man¹⁰⁵ and then, against the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians, when he stressed the need, post the Fall, for grace, additional to the grace conferred on us by reason of our creation, before the will could be freely exercised for good.¹⁰⁶

He had acknowledged the importance of the ethical dimension in the Cassiciacum dialogues¹⁰⁷ though this did not, of itself, distinguish him from his philosophical forbears, who would have done as much, for he does not address the question specifically as to whether right living will follow automatically from right understanding, or whether the will will decide not to act in accord with reason.¹⁰⁸ As Dihle points out, the various philosophical schools were in

¹⁰¹ Plato was the first to make this distinction according to Augustine, *ciu.* 11:25; 8:4f.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 11:25.

¹⁰³ *trin.* 10:11:17.

¹⁰⁴ He makes this point himself in *retr.* 1:9(8):4 where he confirmed that *lib. arb.* was written against the Manichees and that not much was said about grace because that wasn’t an issue at the time. He was responding here to the use that the Pelagians had made of this work to argue that Augustine was Pelagian in the matter of not insisting upon the need for grace before the fallen will could be exercised for good.

¹⁰⁵ Thus *an. quant.* 36:80: ‘the soul, it is true, has received free will, and those who try to discredit that by baseless arguments are so blind that they do not even realize that it is by their own free will that they are uttering such inanities and impieties. Yet, the gift of free will is such that no matter what the soul undertakes with it, it does not disturb any part of the divine order and law. It is a gift coming from the Lord of all creation, who is wise and whose power cannot be made to yield.’ Augustine had once held the Manichaean view that it was an alien nature in us which caused us to sin, rather than our own free will (*conf.* 5:10:18) and then he began to listen to Ambrose preaching that the free choice of the will is the reason why we do wrong *conf.* 7:3:5.

¹⁰⁶ There are good clear recent discussions in Bonner 2007 and Harrison 2006.

¹⁰⁷ *ord.* 2:8:25; *Acad* 2:9:22; *ord.* 2:19:50.

¹⁰⁸ However this does not mean he wasn’t thinking along these lines for in his prayer in *sol.* he prays *sol.* 1:1:5

agreement in adopting an intellectualistic approach to the moral life; according to which coming to a true knowledge of reality would automatically lead to right conduct and any failure in conduct was explained as a failure of understanding.¹⁰⁹ Because there was no separate faculty of will, this meant that the Stoic notion of *tonos* which, as we have seen, is one of the main sources of Augustine's use of *intentio*, applied to the strength of the intellect's control over the passions, with any inability to exercise control being put down to a failure of reason (described as having insufficient *tonos*,) but *tonos* was never applied to volitional energy, as we see it in Augustine.¹¹⁰

Signs of a split between the intellect and the will began to appear more obviously in the works written immediately following Cassiciacum. In *imm. an.*, Augustine pointed out that the will was responsible for leading the mind astray, 'the mind by its own will may be separated from reason (*restat ut aut ipsa ratio a se ipsum separet, aut ipse animus ab ea uoluntate separetur*).'¹¹¹ In *mag.* he affirms that only so much of the truth will be manifested to a person 'as he is capable of receiving because of his own good or bad will (*sed tantum cuique panditur, quantum capere propter propriam, sive malam sive bonam voluntatem potest*)'¹¹² and in *mus.* he says 'temperance is powerful against the fall that is in the free will (*Sed ut temperantia contra lapsum qui est in libera voluntate*).'¹¹³ These are all inklings of the importance that the will comes to assume in *trin.* By the time he completed *trin.* in the 420s, all the elements of Augustine's mature thinking on the will had been thought through and so what we see in *trin.*, is the end of that trajectory which began with Augustine's recognition that the will does not necessarily act in accordance with reason; that the Fall was

Nihil aliud habeo quam voluntatem (I have nothing other than will).

¹⁰⁹ See Dihle 1982. Wisdom for the philosophers involved an understanding of the structure of the world and an adaptation to it rather than obedience to the will of God which was as demanded by the prophetic tradition. It is by looking at both traditions, that Dihle traces the development of the notion of will as an independent faculty of mind from ancient Greek thought through to Augustine.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 62.

¹¹¹ *imm. an.* 6:11. Also *lib. arb.* 1:11:21 (388) 'nothing makes the mind a companion of cupidity, except its own will and free choice (*nulla res alia mentem cupiditatis comitem faciat quam propria voluntas et liberum arbitrium*).' Also, another early reference *mus.* 6:11:30, 'He was made disgraceful by his own will when he lost perspective of the whole that he possessed.'

¹¹² *mag.* 11:38; *lib. arb.* 1:12:26.

¹¹³ *mus.* 6:16:54.

occasioned by the free choice of our will and that the direction of the will becomes the determining factor in the search for God. What *trin.* represents, is Augustine's fully developed, integrated and expressed understanding of the centrality of the will in the act of knowing God and our utter dependence on God for the exercise of our will for the good.

Augustine's attachment of *intentio* to *voluntas* in *trin.* and away from *mens* is thus evidence of his parting company with his philosophical forbears, in making will a faculty of the mind, which operated interdependently with the intellect, rather than necessarily following the dictates of reason. The close association of *voluntas* and *intentio* was made clear by Augustine when he put the blame for the Fall, fairly and squarely, on the will's choosing freely to direct the mind's attention away from God. He had defined 'will' in *duab. an.* as 'a movement of the mind with nothing forcing it either not to lose something or to acquire something (*Voluntas est animi motus, cogente nullo, ad aliquid vel non amittendum, vel adipiscendum*)'¹¹⁴ and later explained 'this was said for the purpose of drawing a distinction between willing and not willing. Thus *intentio* would be attributed to those who, as the first ones in paradise, were the source of evil for the human race. They were under no compulsion to sin, that is, to sin by free will, for they knowingly acted against the precept, and the tempter persuaded them to do this but did not compel them.'¹¹⁵ This not only defeated Manichee determinism by putting the blame on the free choice of the will for its own direction but also, against the philosophers, it makes clear that it was not a lack of understanding which had caused the moral failure because Adam and Eve had acted, knowing the precept.

The Will (voluntas) as desire

For Augustine, linguistically, the will was synonymous with desire; to say 'My will is' is the same as saying 'I desire.'¹¹⁶ Ontologically, too, they were identical, though some confusion seems to have been generated through a difference in scholarly opinion on this.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ *duab. an.* 10:14.

¹¹⁵ *retr.* 1:15:3.

¹¹⁶ *ciu.* 14:8:2.

¹¹⁷ This is pointed out by O'Donnell *conf.* 1:1:1 who says Peter Brown approaches the position of Jansen, who distinguished *delectatio* from *voluntas*, and made the former a determining force on the latter; against this view and treating the two as identical, see Gilson 1961: 321 n. 81-323 n. 84.

Although the same movement of mind is referred to when we speak of desire and will, Augustine prefers to reserve the term ‘will’ for the movement to the extent that it is a free movement (and that depends on the extent to which it has been freed by grace) and otherwise to call the will, utter cupidity, (*In tantum enim libera est, in quantum liberata est, et in tantum appellatur voluntas. Alioquin tota cupiditas quam voluntas proprie nuncupanda est*).... ‘and if anyone says that this desire is nothing else than the will, although vicious and enslaved to sin, he ought not to be contradicted.’¹¹⁸ When Augustine says that, before the Fall, there was no opposition between desire and will (*voluntati cupiditas*), which only came subsequently as a punishment,¹¹⁹ he is not, then, referring to two separate movements of mind but to the single will which is at war with itself.¹²⁰ Against the Manichees, he was particularly keen to stress that it was not a second and alien nature that prevented us from loving God, but the division of our single will into many conflicting wills.¹²¹

***intentio voluntatis* as direction of the will**

Intentio voluntatis is, then the direction of our will. It is this that determines where we place our attention. Therefore, when in *trin.*, Augustine exhorts the mind to turn the *intentio voluntatis*, which had been straying about through other things, to think about itself (*Cognoscat ergo semetipsam, nec quasi absentem se quaerat, sed intentionem voluntatis qua per alia vagabatur statuat in se ipsa et se cogitet*),¹²² this may well be thought of as an exhortation to engage in some kind of exercise of inward attention, but it is also a recognition that acts of inward attention require a conversion in the direction of our desire; it is in fact an exhortation to direct *all* our desire and attention to ‘coming into (*invenire*)’ ourselves, as a preliminary to discovering ourselves in God: this is about an alignment of our will with the Will of God.¹²³

¹¹⁸ *retr.* 1:15:4.

¹¹⁹ *ciu.* 14:12.

¹²⁰ Nor is the conflict indicative of two natures, *duab. an.* 13:19. He speaks movingly, and famously, about his experience of his own will being in a state of conflict with itself throughout *conf.* 8.

¹²¹ This is the subject-matter of *duab. an.*

¹²² *trin.* 10:8:11.

¹²³ *conf.* 9:1:1. ‘The nub of the problem was to reject my own will and to desire yours.’ See chapter 6 *infra* for more on this.

Augustine identified our will as being the thing in us most resembling the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit is the person of the Trinity which can best be described as the Love and Will of God: ‘If any person in the trinity is to be distinctively called the will of God, this name like charity¹²⁴ fits the Holy Spirit more than the others. What else after all is *caritas* but the will?’¹²⁵ The Holy Spirit is that by which the other two persons of the Trinity are joined to each other, ‘by which the begotten is loved by the one who begets him and in turn loves the begetter.’¹²⁶ Our will, through *intentio*, has a similar connecting function for it links the two other components in an act of vision, whether it is an act of corporeal, spiritual or intellectual vision though, unlike the Holy Spirit, it can break the chain at any time by failing to perform its fastening and separating function.¹²⁷ Augustine refers to Hilary of Poitiers’ description of the special properties of each person in the Trinity, ‘Eternity in the Father, form in the image, use in the gift’ and says that by ‘use’ (being the special property of the Holy Spirit) Hilary meant love, delight, felicity or blessedness (*dilectio*,¹²⁸ *delectatio, felicitas vel beatitudo*,) and, through this use, the role of the Holy Spirit is to see that all created things keep to their right order and rest in their right places,¹²⁹ including reforming us into the image and likeness of God by pouring *caritas* into our hearts (Rom 5:5).¹³⁰

Caritas is the will at its best, for it is the purest, and most worthy, form of love,¹³¹

¹²⁴ Gerber 2012: 127 says that no one before Augustine in the Latin tradition had called the Holy Spirit *caritas*. The first time Augustine does is in *an. quant.* 34:77.

¹²⁵ *trin.* 15:17:29; 15:20:38. Augustine points out that scripture does not say that the Holy Spirit is charity but that God is charity and he goes on to consider which of the three persons of the trinity the name is most appropriately applied to *trin.* 15:17:27 f.

¹²⁶ *trin.* 6:5:7. *trin.* 8:10:14 ‘And what is love but a kind of life coupling together or seeking to couple together two things namely lover and what is being loved’ (*Quid est ergo amor, nisi quaedam vita duo aliqua copulans, vel copulari appetens, amantem scilicet, et quod amatur?*)

¹²⁷ *trin.* 11:3:15-16.

¹²⁸ This is a synonym for *caritas* *ep.* 186:2; *diu. qu.* 83:35:2; 36:1; *ep. Io. tr.* 8:5; *en. Ps.* 9:15; *s.* 53:11; *s.* 68:13; *disc. chr.* 5; *trin.* 8:10: 14; 15:18:32.

¹²⁹ *trin.* 6:10:11.

¹³⁰ *mor.* 1:13:23; 1:17:31; *uera rel.* 12:25; *conf.* 13:7:8 (note how early these passages are). See *infra* for our inability to transform ourselves.

¹³¹ *diu. qu.* 83:35:2; *diu. qu.* 83:36 amended by *retr.* 1:26. *trin.* 15:7:12 also here *dilectio sive voluntas* (the two

being ‘a movement of the mind directed towards enjoyment of God for his own sake and loving of oneself and one’s neighbour for God’s sake.’¹³² To the extent that it is not *caritas*, the will is *cupiditas*: ‘a movement of the mind directed towards enjoying oneself and neighbour for their own sake.’¹³³ Augustine observed that scripture commanded nothing but *caritas* and censured nothing but *cupiditas* (*non autem praecipit scriptura nisi caritatem, nec culpatur nisi cupiditatem*) and that everything that we read in scripture is designed to nourish and fortify *caritas* and overcome *cupiditas*.¹³⁴ The exhortation in *trin.* to change the direction of the will is therefore, in effect, an exhortation to the gradual transformation of the will from *cupiditas* to *caritas*, since we can love nothing, except through the will.

Augustine speaks of the transformation of the direction of the will as ‘the transference of weight from *cupiditas* to *caritas*.’¹³⁵ A weight is a kind of force within each thing that makes it strain toward its proper place (*pondus enim est impetus quidam cuiusque rei, velut conantis ad locum suum; hoc est pondus*)¹³⁶ and to talk about the change in the direction of the will as a transference of weight is to recognize that desire (synonymous as we have seen with will) acts like a weight¹³⁷ so that, just as it is the will that directs and coordinates the body’s movements from place to place, so it is the will that directs the mind’s attention, moving it *ab exteriora ad interiora*. It is the weight of an object which draws it to its proper place of rest

words are used interchangeably). Also *trin.* 15:21:41 ‘will at its most effective is synonymous with love or esteem’ (*vel amorem seu dilectionem quae valentior est voluntas*).

¹³² *doctr. chr.* 3:10:16.

¹³³ *Ibid.* Taking his cue from scripture (1 John 2:16), Augustine reckoned that *cupiditas* generally manifested itself in three forms: lust of the flesh, (by which he means physical/material lust); lust of the eyes (intellectual curiosity) and ambition of this world (idol worship). The threefold nature of temptation is exemplified by the temptation of Christ (*uera rel.* 38:71).

¹³⁴ *doctr. chr.* 3:10:15. Also *ep.* 18:2 ‘One who believes in Christ does not love the lowest, is not proud over the intermediate, and thus becomes fit to cling to the highest. And this is the whole of what we are commanded, admonished and set afire to do.’ Also *mus.* 6:14:43 ‘the holy Scriptures in so many volumes and with such authority and sanctity tell us nothing but this, that we shall love our God and Lord with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and love our neighbour as ourselves. Thus if we direct all these movements and rhythms of our human activity to this end we will undoubtedly be purified.’

¹³⁵ *ep.* 157.2.9. ‘the mind is carried by its love as if by a weight wherever it is carried we are commanded therefore to take away from the weight of *cupiditas* what is added to the weight of *caritas* until the former is done away with and the latter made perfect.’

¹³⁶ *en. Ps.* 29:2:10.

¹³⁷ *conf.* 13:9:10; *mus.* 6.11.29 *delectatio quippe quasi pondus est animae. delectatio ergo ordinat animam..*

and stability (*pondus omnem rem ad quietem ac stabilitatem trahit*)¹³⁸ and, until things are in their proper place, they will remain restless.¹³⁹ There are two kinds of weight: weights which bear downwards, like the body and weights which bear upwards like oil on water; if water is poured onto oil, it pushes downwards until it reaches its proper place because it is heavier than oil and, similarly, oil will push its way upwards through water until it reaches its proper place on the surface.¹⁴⁰ The weight of the body bears it downwards and the key question is what kind of weight is moving the soul? Is it being weighed down by bodily desires (*cupiditas*) or buoyed up by heavenly ones (*caritas*)?¹⁴¹ The soul does not come to rest in a physical location, but in its love¹⁴² and if it seeks to rest in its love of bodily things, or even in itself,¹⁴³ it will be unsatisfied and unhappy.¹⁴⁴ We will be brought to our place of rest in communion with the saints in God, only by a good will,¹⁴⁵ in other words, only by *caritas* or loving God.

True self-knowledge requires us to love ourselves properly (and in fact Augustine suggests that this is true of any kind of knowledge: it is technically possible to know something without loving it properly e.g. When you have learnt mathematics you know it but

¹³⁸ *Gn. litt.* 4:3:7. Augustine suggests that the impulse of inanimate objects is something like a desire to be in their allotted place, 'if we were stones waves wind or flame or anything of that kind lacking sense and life we would still show something like a desire for our own place and order, for the specific gravity of a body is in a manner its love whether a body tends downwards by reason of its heaviness or strives upwards because of its lightness. A material body is borne along by its weight in a particular direction as a soul by its love' *ciu.* 11:38.

¹³⁹ *conf.* 13:9:10 once ordered, they find their rest (*minus ordinata inquieta sunt; ordinantur et quiescent*). Here Augustine picks up the theme of the restless heart in *conf.* 1:1:1. See also *lib. arb.* 3:8:23, 'What is at rest is not nothing. Indeed it has fuller being than what is restless.' See also *lib. arb.* 3:7:21 we have a desire to exist and if we desire more being we will draw near to Him who exists supremely and complete rest is complete existence.

¹⁴⁰ *en. Ps.* 29:2:10; *conf.* 13:9:10; *ep.* 55:10:18. Though water, like the soul, can go in two directions: it can freeze into ice or snow or dissolve into vapour, *ex. prop. Rm.* 49.

¹⁴¹ *en. Ps.* 121:1: 'Every love has its own force; and it cannot lie idle in the soul of the lover. Love must draw the soul on. Do you, then, wish to know the character of a love? See where it leads.' *mus.* 6.11.29, *delectatio quippe quasi pondus est animae. delectatio ergo ordinat animam. 'ubi enim erit thesaurus tuus, ibi erit et cor tuum': ubi delectatio, ibi thesaurus: ubi autem cor, ibi beatitudo aut miseria.'*

¹⁴² *en. Ps.* 9:15. *Amore enim movetur tamquam ad locum quo tendit. Locus autem animae non in spatio aliquo est, quod forma occupat corporis, sed in delectatione, quo se pervenisse per amorem laetatur: delectatio autem perniciosa sequitur cupiditatem, fructuosa caritatem.*

¹⁴³ Loving oneself in place of God is *cupiditas ep.* 18:2; *trin.* 12:11:16 'over weighted with self-heaviness'; *ep.* 55:10:18 ; 'When therefore the soul finds delight in itself it does not yet find delight in an immutable reality and for this reason it is still proud because it regards itself as the highest, though God is higher.' .

¹⁴⁴ *ep.* 18:2; *ep.* 140.2.3; *Io. eu. tr.* 20:11; *conf.* 7:7:11; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:9:12; 2.15.22; *mus.* 6:5:13.

¹⁴⁵ *conf.* 13:9:10.

if it is directed towards being wealthy or pleasing men then it is not loved properly.)¹⁴⁶ With regard to self-knowledge, Augustine puts it simply that although the human mind is so constructed that it cannot help but remember itself, understand itself and love itself, the love that it loves itself with may be a twisted sort of love which really leads to self-destruction rather than self-fulfilment. We only know how to love ourselves properly when we love God; because this serves our best interest. For we have been so made that it is to our advantage to be in subjection to God and it is calamitous for us to act according to our own will and not to obey the will of God: turning to ourselves we become less real than when we are turned towards God.¹⁴⁷

Intentio voluntatis not apatheia as the key to the summit of perfection

There is a noticeable difference between Augustine and the philosophical tradition out of which he emerged, about the place of emotion in the life of a wise man. The philosophical tradition regarded emotion as something to be kept to an unavoidable minimum by being rationally controlled (Platonists) or something to be eliminated altogether (Stoics); a difference which Augustine following Cicero, regarded as being a matter of words rather than substance.¹⁴⁸ Instead of experiencing *perturbationes animi*, a Stoic wise man experienced constant states (which the Greeks called *eupatheiai* and Cicero called *constantiae*): will, gladness and caution; will replacing desire in the wise man (*pro cupiditate voluntatem*), and which would, notably, only pursue the good (*Voluntas quippe, inquit, appetit bonum, quod facit sapiens*).¹⁴⁹ This was the immovable state in which the Stoic wise man lived, a state which the Greeks called *apatheia* (*ἀπάθεια*) and ‘which in Latin might be translated *impassibilitas*, if such a word existed (*quae si latine posset impassibilitas diceretur*).’¹⁵⁰ One

¹⁴⁶ *diu. qu.* 83:35; *doctr. chr.* 2:57.

¹⁴⁷ *trin.* 14:11:18.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 9:4. As proof of this, Augustine recounted the story told by Gellius in *Noct. Att.* about a philosopher who paled in the face of a storm at sea. In his defence, the philosopher, relying upon the Stoic, Epictetus, explained that images arise in our minds unbidden which provoke a knee-jerk reaction, but this does not amount to emotion because we haven’t had time for a rationalized response and it is this considered response, not the involuntary first movement, which determines the presence of emotion.

¹⁴⁹ *ciu.* 14:8:1. Gladness replaced joy and caution replaced fear. There was no constant state to replace grief because grief relates to evil which does not affect the wise man and so there is no need for provision of a disposition to meet with it. See also *c. Faust.* 22:18.

¹⁵⁰ *ciu.* 14:9:4. Jerome used it to translate *apatheia* in *ep.* 133:3 according to Lewis and Short, who do not record

of the possible meanings of *impassibilitas* was a life without experiencing *perturbationes* in defiance of reason. In this sense of the word, Augustine didn't accept that it was a state achievable in this life, however desirable it might be¹⁵¹ because the battle of the flesh and spirit continues throughout life.¹⁵²

However, it was possible to reach a state where, although the emotions occurred, they were completely controlled by reason.¹⁵³ In this respect, Augustine linked *impassibilitas* with fortitude, 'the disposition of the soul, through which it fears no adversities or death,'¹⁵⁴ which is a certain kind of steady and, so to speak, impassible power which rightly, unless you would like to object, is called fortitude.¹⁵⁵ In our journey from *cupiditas* to *caritas*, the lessening of fear is the sign of our progress and the absence of fear is the sign of its perfection for the root of all evils is *cupiditas* and love made perfect casts out fear.¹⁵⁶ It is in this sense perhaps that Augustine approves Vergil's characterization of the wise man that 'of the wise man only can it be truly said "calmly he stands, like a motionless rock in the turbulent sea-surge,"'¹⁵⁷

Augustine did hold out those leading the hermit life, as exemplary Christians, able to

any other instances.

¹⁵¹ *ciu.* 14:9:4. *impassibilitas* was something reserved for the next life *en. Ps.* 83:17 and for God *qu.* 2:158 *Deus, semper atque omni modo incommutabilis atque tranquillus* NB n. 153 *infra* on God's anger not being a perturbation.

¹⁵² He doesn't actually admit that he changed his mind on this but he did admit that a statement early on suggesting that a person could reach a state where there was no rebellious movement against reason was problematic *s. dom. m.* 1:4:11 and he therefore later explained that this was to be understood in the sense that some people managed to overcome the desires which were still present, rather than succumb to them *retr.* 1:19:1. Similarly, when he said in the next paragraph *s. dom. m.* 1:4:12 that these things could be realized in this life as they were realized by the apostles, he did not mean to imply that the apostles experienced no movement contrary to reason but that it was possible to overcome them to the extent that apostles managed to.

¹⁵³ *ciu.* 9:3. Speaking of demons, Augustine says, 'And therefore they are not worthy of comparison with wise men who, even under the conditions of their present life, offer the resistance of an undisturbed mind to those disturbances of the soul from which human weakness cannot be exempt.'

¹⁵⁴ *mus.* 6:15:50.

¹⁵⁵ *mus.* 6:16:54.

¹⁵⁶ *diu. qu.* 83:36:1. However, this is inordinate fear. Fear of God must last a lifetime. *s.* 205:1 the Christian ought to hang on the cross continually throughout the whole of his life which is spent amid trials and temptations. The time doesn't come for pulling out the nails in this life. Flesh means lusts of the flesh and the nails are the commandments of justice and we are transfixed with by the fear of the Lord. On the difference between the two kinds of fear see *exp. Gal* 53.

¹⁵⁷ Aeneid 7:585 quoted *ord.* 2:20:54.

cling unswervingly to God and, in a sense, leading a life beyond normal human limits; one that most people would not tolerate.¹⁵⁸ And he did observe that Christian monastics living in community also live a life entirely directed towards God (*intentissimam in Deum*).¹⁵⁹ But he did not mean by this that they had reached a state of *apatheia*, on the contrary they had reached a point where their love was entirely directed towards God. Neither did he mean to imply that this was a perfected state of love which, as he later clarified in respect of another part of *mor.*, could only be achieved after this life, but they were doing the best that could be achieved during this life.¹⁶⁰

Vergil's characterization of the wise man as a motionless rock hardly describes the kind of rock (the Apostle Peter) upon which the Church was built. Quite the contrary of being apathetic, as O'Donnell has noted, Augustine's Christian is an emotional person.¹⁶¹ This brings us to the other meaning of *impassibilitas* that Augustine mooted: *apatheia* as a life untouched by emotion characterized by Vergil's comment on Aeneas, 'Unmoved his mind, the tears roll down in vain.'¹⁶² Augustine said that such insensitivity was undesirable and the worst of all moral defects,¹⁶³ 'a man's mind, like the limbs of his body, is only the more hopelessly diseased when it has lost even the feeling of pain.'¹⁶⁴ To have a mind untouched by emotion is to be inhuman rather than tranquil and, unless a person is stirred by fellow-feeling, they are unlikely to be moved merely out of a sense of duty.¹⁶⁵ A Christian may have good reason to experience an emotion, just as God has good reason to be angry.¹⁶⁶ Augustine

¹⁵⁸ *mor.* 1:31:65-6.

¹⁵⁹ *mor.* 1:31:67. See also n. 156 *supra*.

¹⁶⁰ *retr.* 1:7:5 clarifying *mor.* 1:30:64. This is not evidence of a change of mind but an example of where his involvement in the Pelagian controversy caused him to reflect on passages he had written which were liable to misinterpretation.

¹⁶¹ O'Donnell *conf.* 10:14:22.

¹⁶² Vergil Aeneid 4:449 Quoted by Augustine *ciu* 9:4. The tears are Dido's.

¹⁶³ *ciu.* 14:9:4.

¹⁶⁴ *Io. eu. tr.* 60:3.

¹⁶⁵ *mor.* 1: 27:54. This is Paul's distinction between law and grace, see *infra*.

¹⁶⁶ *Io. eu. tr.* 60:3. On God's anger as not being a *perturbatio animi en. Ps.* 2:4; *qu.* 1:39; 2:10; 2:158; *ciu.* 15:25; *trin.* 13:16:21. Colish 1985, 2: 221 notes that it was the partly the problem of explaining God's anger which lead Augustine to change his mind on the possibility and desirability of achieving *tranquillitas* in the sense of *apatheia* in the early works. I have to disagree with Colish on this point because Augustine makes it quite clear what he meant by *tranquillitas* in the early works when he comes to revise his work and this is not a point on

demonstrated from scripture and from secular literature that will and the other *constantiae* were common to good and bad alike and that the *perturbationes animi* were also common to good and bad alike but that the good felt these emotions in a good way, the bad felt them in a bad way;¹⁶⁷ it all depended on the direction of the will and therefore the object to which these emotions related or referred. Christians who feel fear, desire, pain and gladness in conformity with scripture and the teaching of the Church, experience these emotions in the proper way because their love is properly directed towards God.¹⁶⁸ In fact the *perturbationes animi* are nothing other than wills (*Voluntas est quippe in omnibus; immo omnes nihil aliud quam voluntates sunt*)¹⁶⁹ and the direction of the will thus becomes the determining factor in valuing the appropriateness of emotion, rather than the presence or absence of emotion.¹⁷⁰ Spiritual perfection or *tranquillitas* for Augustine, then, is not *apatheia* as it was for Evagrius.¹⁷¹ It is not a question of rationally controlled emotion, in the sense of keeping emotions to minimum, but emotion agreeing with reason and truth; the difference being that due allowance is given to the presence of emotion:

The emotions of the spirit, after all, are not something alien to us. They also browse together with us on the knowledge of the best ideas and moral principles and of eternal life, as it were on seed-bearing grasses and fruit trees and green plants. And this is what gives us a happy and tranquil life, when all our emotions are in tune with reason and truth, and we call them joys and loves that are holy and chaste and good.¹⁷²

which he said he had changed his mind but one which required clarification in case it should be misunderstood. *Tranquillitas* here did not equate to *impassibilitas* there.

¹⁶⁷ *ciu.* 14:8:3. *en. Ps.* 79:13 all sins spring from desire or fear and love and fear lead us to every right action O'Donnell notes that *conf.* 6 and 7 both end with expressions of fear, but by the quality of the fear in each case the difference may be measured. There, fear of death and the void; here, holy fear in the presence of God.

¹⁶⁸ *ciu.* 14:9:1.

¹⁶⁹ *ciu.* 14:6. Although I agree with Wetzel 1992: 101 n. 26 that to translate *voluntates* by 'forms of will' is preferable to 'acts of will' which would imply a distinction between the passions and the will, I think even his translation obscures the fact that we are talking about one will which has been split into many (*conf.* 8:10:24 *tota voluntas una, quae in plures dividebatur*).

¹⁷⁰ *ciu.* 14:6.

¹⁷¹ Hadot 1995: 136f.

¹⁷² *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:20,31.

Conversion of *intentio voluntatis* through prayer.

Ingrained nature of the weakness of the will

Augustine stressed the importance of ongoing purification,¹⁷³ due to the fact that scripture and tradition (he relied on the Apostle Paul and the Fathers: Cyprian, Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory of Nazianzus) regarded the guilt of the original sin as having been removed in baptism but a residual weakness as residing in the will.¹⁷⁴ This was due to the effects of the original sin compounded by our own bad habits.¹⁷⁵ Those effects can be summed up in the one word ‘mortality’¹⁷⁶ physical in the case of the body; spiritual in the case of the soul, due to the soul’s inclinations away from God. This is now our second nature.¹⁷⁷ Augustine explains, very insightfully, the process by which the habit of living according to the flesh (*consuetudo carnalis*)¹⁷⁸ becomes ingrained in a human being.¹⁷⁹ Reflecting on his own experience and his inability to let go of his sexual habit, he observed that his will had become imprisoned by a chain, the links of which had been formed from desire, consent, habit, unresistance and necessity so that, although he desired to enjoy God, this desire was not strong enough to conquer his old desire which had the strength of long existence.¹⁸⁰ Augustine understood this conflict of desires to be the state of inner conflict Paul referred to, which led

¹⁷³ See n. 24 *supra*.

¹⁷⁴ *c. Iul.* 2:3:5; 2:8:30; *ep.* 185:9:39 This is why we say daily-‘forgive us our trespasses’-we wouldn’t need to say this if all our sins had been forgiven in baptism. .

¹⁷⁵ *exp. Gal.* 48; *diu. qu.* 83:66:5; *Simpl.* 1:1:10 and 11; *c. Fel.* 2:8. On the development of the idea of ‘habit’ in Augustine see Prendiville 1972.

¹⁷⁶ *exp. Gal.* 48; *lib. arb.* 3:19:54; *Gn. litt.* 6:22:33; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:7:8; *pecc. mer.* 1:2:2. This is of course the mortality of the body but he also regarded the soul that was constrained by carnal habit as in a dead condition *conf.* 9:1:1.

¹⁷⁷ *exp. Gal.* 48; *f. et symb.* 10:23 Evil inclinations of this sort, contrary to nature, are in keeping with our mortal birth because of the sin of the first human being (also *lib. arb.* 3:18:52.) The idea of habit as having become our second nature had come to Augustine through Cicero from Aristotle, see Prendiville 1972:77. NB In *f. et symb.* 10:23 (written in 393) Augustine resorts to a tripartite division of human being spirit, soul and body to explain the continuing experience of the spirit warring against the flesh and he explains that soul is slower than spirit to come under control.

¹⁷⁸ The context may show this *consuetudo carnalis* to be either a fleshbound habit of thought as in *trin.* 8:1:2 or a behavioural habit as in *conf.* 7:17:23 where Augustine is referring to his sexual habit. *ciu.* 14:13:1 God sheds light for us to see and fire to love and, turned away from Him, we become chilled in loving and blind in ignorance.

¹⁷⁹ *s. dom. m.* 1:12:34.

¹⁸⁰ *conf.* 8:5.10.

him to say, ‘I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.’¹⁸¹ Paul described it as a conflict between the law of God, which Augustine interpreted as meaning ‘You shall not covet’ i.e. desire inordinately (*Condelector enim, inquit, legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem, ei utique legi quae dicit: Non concupisces*)¹⁸² and the law of sin which, Augustine said, was ‘the violence of habit (*lex enim peccati est violentia consuetudinis*).¹⁸³ This resembles the distinction that Paul also makes between the spirit and the flesh *sarx-pneuma* (σάρξ - πνεῦμα) in Gal. 5:17 which Augustine, following Ambrose,¹⁸⁴ again interpreted as the tension between conflicting desires, rather than a distinction between the body and soul.¹⁸⁵

Although, when Augustine was describing his conflict of wills in *conf.* 8, he was referring to his pre-baptismal state, he continues to allude to his ongoing struggle to control the various ways in which *cupiditas* manifested itself in his life after baptism.¹⁸⁶ Although he had originally understood Paul in Rom. 7:15 f to be referring to a person who had not yet received the grace of baptism, he later admitted that he had been wrong and that it did apply to people who were already under grace.¹⁸⁷ A baptized person would continue to experience tension throughout his life between the call of the Spirit and the tug of the flesh: ‘the spirit calls him upwards, the weight of the flesh pulls him downwards again; the tension between

¹⁸¹ Rom. 7:15; 7:19.

¹⁸² *Simpl.* 1:Q1:13 and 16. This is Rom. 7:22, a verse which Augustine quotes extensively throughout his corpus from *Simpl.* onwards.

¹⁸³ *conf.* 8:5:12.

¹⁸⁴ For Ambrose’s view see Colish 2005: 36-7; 80. For Ambrose detachment from the body and withdrawal inwards means moderation rather than flight from the body Ibid. 90-1 and 96. Ambrose’s four patriarch treatises *Abr.*, *Isaac*, *Jacob* and *Ioseph* were based on sermons he gave during pre-baptismal catechesis in which he imparted ethical teaching for the ordinary Christian, Colish Ibid. 2. Augustine would therefore have had this teaching from Ambrose.

¹⁸⁵ *doctr. chr.* 1:24:25. This was by no means a universal interpretation of the Pauline distinction. See Jewett 1971 for history of interpretation of Paul’s σάρξ - πνεῦμα distinction. Jewett shows that, unlike Augustine who interpreted σάρξ in Paul as man in revolt from God, the Greek Fathers, Cyril of Alexandria and Theodore of Mopsuestia had identified σάρξ with σῶμα and therefore with material sensuality.

¹⁸⁶ *conf.* 10:28:39 f.

¹⁸⁷ *retr.* 1:24:2 corrects *exp. Gal.* 47.1; *retr.* 2:1:1 corrects *Simpl.* 1:1:10; *retr.* 1:23:1 corrects *exp. prop. Rom.* 41 and *retr.* 1:26:1 corrects *diu. qu.* 83:66. Augustine’s view only changed in the Pelagian controversy see *c. ep. Pel.* 1:10:17- 1:11:24; s. 154. Also *c. Iul.* 2:3:5; In *gr. et pecc. or.* 43 Pelagius argued that Augustine’s view ran counter to the Catholic tradition. In *c. Iul.* 2:4:9 Augustine quotes Cyprian, Ambrose and Gregory of Nazianzen as three Catholic voices in support of his view. For a good account of the Pelagian controversy see Bonner 2002.

these two - the upward pull and the dragging weight - is a struggle, and struggle is characteristic of the pressing-out process (*spiritus sursum uocat, pondus carnis deorsum reuocat; inter duos conatus suspensionis et ponderis colluctatio quaedam est. et ipsa colluctatio ad pressuram pertinet torcularis.*)¹⁸⁸

However, what the words, ‘I do not do what I want’ mean in the case of a person under grace is that they are still subject to desires of the flesh that they do not want; it does not mean that they consent to them.¹⁸⁹ Consent was the third step in the commission of a sin (the other two being suggestion and pleasure) and there can be no sin unless all three steps are present.¹⁹⁰ Each potential commission of sin is always a replay of the scene in Eden with the suggestion being made, as it were, by the serpent through our senses or to our thought through memory and the carnal pleasure we experience at the suggestion representing Eve. The question is whether, this time, Adam can withhold his consent so that ‘we can become like a married couple in ourselves’ where the spirit (Adam) can control the flesh (Eve).¹⁹¹ The difficulty that the weakened soul has in this respect can be appreciated by Augustine’s likening of it to Lazarus rotting in the tomb.¹⁹²

Our will has in fact been left so weakened by the effects of original sin that, although the gift of faith and our regeneration in baptism, removed the guilt of the original sin, it was not enough to lessen the force of our ingrained habits towards the flesh¹⁹³ which, instead, must be counteracted by developing the opposite habit of withdrawing inwards away from the senses (*Qui tamen ut se noscat, magna opus habet consuetudine recedendi a sensibus, et*

¹⁸⁸ *en. Ps.* 83:9.

¹⁸⁹ *retr.* 1:24:2. This change of understanding of the relevant provisions of Rom. does not mean that Augustine changed his mind on whether or not a person continued to be disturbed by passions after baptism. He didn’t – he had always understood that a person would continue to be disturbed but that with grace he was given the strength to withhold his consent. The difference between a person under the law and under grace was that the person under the law did not have this strength and therefore would succumb, even though knowing it was wrong and not wanting to.

¹⁹⁰ *s. dom. m.* 1:12:34.

¹⁹¹ *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:12:16; 2:14:20-21; *s. dom. m.* 1:12:34; *trin.* 12:12:17 on the steps of commission of sin being personified by characters in Eden.

¹⁹² *s. dom. m.* 1:12:35; *diu. qu.* 83:65; *Io. eu. tr.* 49; *s.* 125.

¹⁹³ *c. Iul.* 2:5:10.

animum in seipsum colligendi atque in seipso retinendi.)¹⁹⁴ This was the advice given by Augustine to his pupils in the ‘School of Philosophy’ at Cassiciacum and was clearly advice both of an intellectual and ethical nature; designed to train their intellects and wills. However, it was not specifically an exhortation to prayer but instead to engage in communal philosophical dialogue; solitary meditation; some reading (possibly of the scriptures) and perhaps other forms of spiritual exercises. By the time Augustine wrote *trin.*, or at least by the time he completed it in 420, he was clear that, although we can exercise our will freely for good, it must first be prepared by God (*praeparatur uoluntas a domino*)¹⁹⁵ pouring sufficient *caritas* into our hearts.¹⁹⁶ This means that for a person of faith, the habit that must be developed is the habit of prayer.¹⁹⁷ Prayer is therefore given as our post-baptismal remedy¹⁹⁸ to enable us, still struggling with *cupiditas*, to pray for strength not to consent to inordinate desire on the basis that prayer is the only avenue we have left;¹⁹⁹ and, even then, our ability to pray is dependent on the Holy Spirit moving in us to turn our groanings into prayers.²⁰⁰

In the light of our continuing weakness of will and our inability to exercise our will for good, without it first being prepared by God, the exhortation in *trin.* to change the direction of

¹⁹⁴ *ord.* 1:1:3. Prediville 1972: 47.

¹⁹⁵ ‘The will is prepared by God’ *Prov.* 8:35 LXX. Augustine relies upon this provision from 411 onwards (see Sage 1964) and also on *Phil.* 2:13 ‘For it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.’ (*Deus enim est qui operatur in nobis et velle et operari pro bona voluntate*) for his view that we can do nothing without God e.g.s where both are cited see *c. ep. Pel.* 1:18:36 and *c. Iul.* 4:3:15. He also relies on *1 Cor.* 4:7 ‘what have we got that we have not received.’ This provision is the ultimate antidote to pride, *praed. sanct* 5:10 where Augustine distinguishes between the capacity to have faith which, like the capacity to love, belongs to our nature and therefore is common to all and actually having faith or proper love which belongs to the grace of believers. He always held the view that God had to prepare the will before we could will for good, but he hadn’t made the point early on because it wasn’t pertinent to discussion, therefore he made amendments to various early writings to clarify this *retr.* 1:10:2 clarifying *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:3:6; *retr.* 1:22:4 clarifying *c. Adim.* 26:1 and 27:1.

¹⁹⁶ We are praying for power to exercise our will because we need rescuing *en. Ps.* 16:6; *c. ep. Pel.* 4:9:26; *util. cred.* 15. 33; *ep.* 218:3; not simply for the purpose of showing men what to desire and love, as the Pelagians thought *gr. et pecc. or.* 6:32 .

¹⁹⁷ For how this works in practice see *ep 2*:passim* to Firmus for an extremely clear statement of Augustine’s view on the workings of providence working externally and internally.

¹⁹⁸ *s.* 131:7.

¹⁹⁹ *retr.* 1:15:4. Also *s.* 75:4 When all human efforts and endeavours have been tried and found unavailing, then all that’s left to them is the urgent pouring out of their voices to God in prayer; *en. Ps.* 68:1:17. ‘My orientation was toward you-but how did I manage that? By praying to you;’.

²⁰⁰ *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:22:34.

the will begins to look very different. Instead of thinking of it as being an exhortation to engage in some kind of intellectual exercise of abstraction, we might do better to think of it as an invitation to prayer; yet prayer for Augustine, like the philosophical exercises of antiquity, is very much in the tradition of philosophic or spiritual withdrawal into oneself: it is an exercise in paying attention, with words being used as physical things should be used, to admonish us to turn our attention to God;²⁰¹ it is also an exercise of abstraction: letting go of everything that distracts us from God that is not God;²⁰² it is an act of conversion;²⁰³ it is an act of interiority;²⁰⁴ it is an act of faith;²⁰⁵ it is a purifying act.²⁰⁶ But more than anything else, it is an act indicative of the direction of our desire²⁰⁷ for Augustine saw the Christian life primarily as an exercise in holy desire, because the more we can get into the habit of loving God, the more we can counteract our former bad habit of loving ourselves or other things disproportionately: ‘That is our life, to be trained by longing; and our training through the

²⁰¹ ‘The brothers in Egypt are said to say frequent prayers, but very brief ones that are tossed off as if in a rush, so that a vigilant and keen attention (*intentio*,) which is very necessary for one who prays, may not fade away and grow dull over longer periods (*ne illa vigilanter erecta, quae oranti plurimum necessaria est, per productiores moras evanescat atque hebetetur intentio*.) And in this way they show that, just as this *intentio* should not grow dull if it cannot last long, so it should not be quickly broken off if it does last. Let many words, after all, be kept far from our prayer, but let our petitions not lack persistence, if the attention (*intentio*) remains fervent’ *ep.* 130:10:20. Also *ep.* 130:9:18, *mag.* 1:2.

²⁰² Once we have shut out the distractions of the outside world, we have to contend with our thoughts which are primarily what distract us from God in prayer: *en. Ps.* 17:11; *uera rel.* 35:65; *conf.* 10:36:57; *en. Ps.* 34:2:3; *s. dom. m.* 2:3:11; *en. Ps.* 3:4; *s.* 8:6; *en. Ps.* 37 :11; *en. Ps.* 85:7.

²⁰³ ‘There takes place in prayer a turning of the heart to Him who is ever ready to give if we will but accept what He gives. And in this turning there is effected a cleansing of the inner eye’ *Fit ergo in oratione conversio cordis ad eum qui semper dare paratus est, si nos capiamus quod dederit, et in ipsa conversione purgatio interioris oculi.*) *s. dom. m.* 2:3:14.

²⁰⁴ Like Ambrose (*Cain.* 1:9:35; 1:9: 38) Augustine interiorized Matt. 6:6 that ‘whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.’ He interpreted ‘room’ as the ‘sanctum of the mind’ for, ‘what are these chambers (*cubicula*) but the hearts themselves which are also signified in the Psalm when it is said, ‘the things you say in your hearts, also be sorry for them upon your beds (*cubilibus*).’ And, after having closed the doors, He says, pray to your Father in secret.’ *s. dom. m.* 2:3:11; Also *mag.* 1:2; *en. Ps.* 3:4.

²⁰⁵ *conf.* 1:1 ‘calling upon you is an act of believing in you.’ Prayer and faith exist in a symbiotic relationship: prayer is an act of faith and it also strengthens faith; . *s.* 115:1 ‘If faith falters, prayer perishes. I mean who are going to pray to what they don’t believe? ..faith is the fountainhead of prayer...so in order to pray, let us believe; and in order that the very faith by which we pray may not fail, let us pray. Faith pours out prayer, prayer being poured out obtains firmness for faith’.

²⁰⁶ *s. dom. m.* 2:3:14 ‘The very intention of prayer calms the heart, makes it clean, and renders it more capable of receiving the divine gifts which are poured upon us in a spiritual manner (*quia ipsa orationis intentio nostrum serenat et purgat, capaciusque efficit ad excipienda divina munera, quae spiritaliter nobis infunduntur.....*’

²⁰⁷ For Augustine paying attention to God was tantamount to loving God *Deus...quem attendere, hoc est quod amare*) *sol.* 1:1:3; and to call on the name of God was to exercise a rational choice for God *en. Ps.* 79:14.

holy longing advances in the measure that our longings are severed from the love of this world.’ (*Tota vita christiani boni, sanctum desiderium est.Haec est vita nostra, ut desiderando exerceamur. Tantum autem nos exercet sanctum desiderium, quantum desideria nostra amputaverimus ab amore saeculi.*)²⁰⁸

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter we have been considering the stage of ascent which Augustine calls *tranquillitas* in *an. quant.* and which in *trin.*, as well as in *an. quant.*, is the stage where we gain more insight into ourselves and our imperfections and instead of seeing ourselves as isolated individuals at the centre of our own universe, we begin to see ourselves as part of a whole; in relation to others and in the light of Christ. These insights are fostered by engaging in various forms of spiritual exercises; the most transformative of which is prayer. Although prayer, like the old intellectual exercises, is a practice of paying attention, the difference between an act of prayer and an intellectual exercise is the underlying attitude it is indicative of, which is one of acknowledging our creaturely dependence and inability to help ourselves and the act of *intentio*, (conversion, desire, attention and faith) is therefore specifically directed towards God.

The whole process hinges on the transformation of the will. The fact that Augustine took a distinct step towards establishing the notion of a will (*voluntas*) and the key role which the will plays in Augustine’s theology are both well-established.²⁰⁹ Cicero had defined *voluntas* as ‘one’s faculty, or exercise, of rationally-determined desire.’²¹⁰ He had used the word to translate various Greek words βουλησις (purpose), εὔλογος (well-reasoned desire), προαίρεσις (choice), expressing the idea of ‘conscious, deliberate intention.’ However, he had

²⁰⁸ *ep. Io. tr.* 4:6. Also *en. Ps.* 37:14.

²⁰⁹ Dihle 1982; O’Daly 1987: 6; Gilson 1961: 132f. However, there is a dissenting view see Gauthier 1970 referred to in Kahn 1988: 259 ‘If no one has ever defined the Augustinian conception of the will, that is simply because this conception does not exist: of all the traits of the “will” in Augustine, there is not a single one that is not found earlier in the Stoics.’ And Kahn himself says ‘Augustine’s concept of the will does not get a fully philosophical development until it is integrated within a theoretical model for the psyche, namely, Aristotle’s. This synthesis of Augustinian will with Aristotelian philosophy of mind is the work of Thomas Aquinas.’ Kahn 1988.

²¹⁰ Dihle 1982: 133.

also used *voluntas* to mean ‘desire or spontaneous wish rather than deliberate intention’ and sometimes in the sense of ὄρμη ‘impulse arising after deliberation.’²¹¹ These meanings are all embraced in ‘the richness and many-sidedness of Augustine’s account of love and the will.’²¹² But the key aspect of the will in the soul’s ascent to God is the direction in which it points the mind’s attention.

In this chapter, *intentio* has strengthened its claim, if that were possible, as being the key to the ascent. The tensional, directional, attentional and unifying qualities of *intentio* have all been noted at earlier stages of the ascent, but now it is clear that, in addition to physiological, anthropological and psychological implications, *intentio* also has moral, philosophical and theological ones. Just as the will gives the impulse to move the body and its functioning is affected by its moods (fear and despair retard the movement and hope and courage intensify the movement)²¹³ so the will’s moods affect the movement of a person towards God. The will is powerless to prevent the surreptitious suggestions made to our thought, but it can direct the mind’s attention (*intentio*) to God to pray for the strength not to consent to the suggestion and turn it into a sin in thought. Augustine exhorts his congregation, ‘don’t offer your limbs and organs to sin as weapons of iniquity (Rom. 6:12-13). God has given you power through his Spirit to restrain your limbs. Lust stirs, just you restrain your limbs.’²¹⁴ Having been given the power, through grace, to restrain our limbs, it is the responsibility of the will not to turn a sin of thought into a sin in deed for it is ‘*intentio mentis* which has the supreme power to move the limbs to action or restrain them from action (*nisi et illa mentis intentio, penes quam summa potestas est membra in opus movendi, vel ab opere cohibendi, malae actioni cedat et servia*)’²¹⁵ and all our actions stem from our thoughts.²¹⁶ Not only is it the responsibility of *intentio* to avoid the commission of a sin in our hearts, it is

²¹¹ Ibid: 133-4.

²¹² Rist 1994: 188.

²¹³ *an. quant.* 22:38.

²¹⁴ *s.* 128:10:12.

²¹⁵ *trin.* 12:12:17.

²¹⁶ ‘Nobody voluntarily does anything that he has not previously uttered as a word in his heart. This word is conceived in love of either the creature or the Creator, that is of changeable nature or unchangeable truth; which means either in covetousness or in charity *aut cupiditate aut caritate*; *trin.* 9:7:12-13.

also the responsibility of *intentio* to avoid the commission of a sin in deed. The tension between the spirit and the flesh continues but over time the good habits we acquire through prayer and other spiritual exercises serve to lessen it, as we seek to unify our will and turn our whole attention and desire towards God.

Chapter Six: *Ingressio*

For access to the art-and the master archers of all times are agreed in this-is only granted to those who are ‘pure’ in heart, untroubled by subsidiary aims.¹

Now, this activity, namely, the ardent desire to understand (*appetitio intellegendi*) true and highest realities (*ea quae vere summeque sunt*),² is the soul’s highest act of looking (*summus aspectus est animae*):³ it possesses none more perfect, none more noble, none more proper. This, therefore, will be the sixth level of activity. For it is one thing to clear the eye of the soul so that it will not look without purpose and without reason and see what is wrong; it is something else to protect and strengthen the health of the eye; and it is something else again, to direct your gaze calmly and squarely to what is to be seen (*aliud iam serenum atque rectum aspectum in id quod videndum est, dirigere*.) Those who wish to do this before they are cleansed and healed recoil so in the presence of that light of truth that they may think there is in it not only no goodness, but even great evil; indeed, they may decide it does not deserve the name of truth, and with an amount of zest and enthusiasm that is to be pitied, they curse the remedy offered and run back into the darkness engulfing them and which alone their diseased condition suffers them to face. Hence the divinely inspired prophet says most appositely: Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels (*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis*).⁷ The spirit is ‘right,’ I believe, if it sees to it that the soul cannot lose its way and go astray in its quest for truth The spirit is not really ‘renewed’ in anyone unless his heart is first made clean, that is to say, unless he first controls his thoughts and drains off from them all the dregs of attachment to corruptible things (*ipsa cogitatio ab omni cupiditate ac faece rerum mortalium sese cohibuerit et eliquaverit*).⁴

The sixth stage of ascent in *an. quant.* is the fourth of the five rational levels which, together, correspond to the third degree of soul identified by Varro.⁵ Augustine says of the soul, at this stage, that religion initiates it (*introducitur in sexto*)⁶ and hence he calls the sixth stage ‘initiation’ (*ingressio*) or ‘towards God’ (*ad Deum*).⁷ At stage six the purification of the soul continues to shift our attention and desire away from our own individual interests until

¹ Herrigel 1976: 16.

² Colleran puts this in the singular.

³ Colleran translates as ‘vision’ but there is no guarantee that an act of looking, even at this stage, will produce vision so *aspectus* better translated as an ‘act of looking.’

⁴ *an. quant.* 33:75.

⁵ *ciu.* 7:23. O’Daly 1987: 13.

⁶ *an. quant.* 36:80.

⁷ *Ibid.* 35:79.

the soul's gaze has become purified enough to be directed solely towards the highest objective truths.

appetitus intellegendi

The act of this stage is not intellectual vision as such but the desire to understand the highest truths (*haec actio, id est, appetitus intellegendi ea quae vere summeque sunt*).⁸ *Appetitus* means literally 'a grasping at something' or 'a reaching after' and, from that, it came to mean 'a passionate longing or striving for something, strong desire or inclination.'⁹ We have seen that Cicero uses it, as indeed Augustine does, to translate the Greek *hormê* (ὁρμή) meaning impulse to action.¹⁰ It is, therefore, another word for *voluntas*¹¹ and, specifically, for the will which is seeking possession of the loved object, in other words, desire (*Sed cum consentimus appetendo ea quae volumus, cupiditas*).¹² At stage six, it is a desire which is rightly directed because it has been purified by faith and so the object of desire is God. *Appetitus intellegendi* in *an. quant.* corresponds to *appetitus inueniendi* in *trin.*,¹³ because to understand truth is to discover it.¹⁴ *Appetitus* is therefore an *inquisitio* which is a desire for finding out or bringing to light (*appetitus inueniendi, quod idem ualet si dicas reperiendi*).¹⁵ Augustine's definition of *inquisitio*, which ordinarily means seeking, searching, examination or investigation, as a desire to find, shows his view that desire is implicit in seeking because no one seeks anything unless they desire to find something and no one's desire is satisfied until they find what they are looking for, when the seeker is united, through his desire, with the object sought (*neque requiescit fine quo intenditur, nisi id quod quaeritur inventum quaerenti copuletur*).¹⁶ In fact *appetitus*; the desire to seek (*inquisitio*), becomes love of the

⁸ See next chapter for comment on the plural form *quae vere summeque sunt*.

⁹ Lewis and Short.

¹⁰ *ciu.* 19:4:2; For Cicero's use see Dihle 1982: 134.

¹¹ *trin.* 9:12:18.

¹² *ciu.* 14:6. *cupiditas* is a neutral word here. See previous chapter for will/desire as impulse to action.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *uera rel.* 29:73; 30:54; *imm. an.* 4:6; *doctr. chr.* 2:35:53.

¹⁵ *trin.* 9:12:18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* This is a reference to Matt. 7:7 'Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened. Commenting on this passage in *s. dom. m.* Augustine was at pains to distinguish ask, search and knock distinguishing between asking as being restored to health in order to search, search being associated

object when it is found, but even as *inquisitio* it can still be called *voluntas* because everyone who seeks, wants to find (*qui quaerit invenire vult*).¹⁷

aliud iam serenum atque rectum aspectum in id quod videndum est, dirigere.

At stage five, Augustine distinguished between two activities: effecting purity and maintaining purity (*aliud est enim efficere, aliud tenere puritatem*)¹⁸ which we were able to understand as the distinction between conversion to faith, resulting in baptism on the one hand and continuing post-baptismal purification on the other. Here, at stage six, Augustine distinguishes between three activities: cleansing the eye of the soul; protecting and strengthening it; directing it to what is to be seen (*aliud est enim mundari oculum ipsum animae, ne frustra et temere aspiciat, et prave videat; aliud ipsam custodire atque firmare sanitatem; aliud iam serenum atque rectum aspectum in id quod videndum est, dirigere.*)¹⁹ The threefold distinction is reminiscent of the one he drew in *sol.* with regard to reason as the mind's act of looking, 'I –Reason-am in minds as the act of looking is in the eyes. To have eyes is not the same as to look and to look is not the same as to see. Therefore, the soul needs three distinct things: that it have eyes which it can properly use, that it look, and that it see.'²⁰ 'To have eyes' means to be cleansed, first of all, through faith so that we know in which direction to look; 'to look' means to exercise one's reason (*Aspectus animae, ratio est*) and

with finding, and staying on, the one right road to the truth and knocking associated with arrival and possession of the truth in the next life but in *retr.* He says it was a mistake to distinguish between them and wrapped them all up into one urgent petition of prayer *s. dom. m. 2:21:71 and 72* as amended by *retr. 1:19:9*.

¹⁷Ibid. The Augustinian distinction between loving and desiring has been forever immortalised in TS Eliot's words in *The four Quartets: Burnt Norton*:

Desire itself is movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love is itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.

¹⁸*an. quant. 33:74.*

¹⁹This is the first reference in the stages of ascent to the eye of the soul though Augustine had earlier in *an. quant.* referred to 'a sort of interior eye that is the intelligence (*interiore quodam oculo, id est intellegentiae*)' with which the soul sees a line *an. quant. 14:23* and the mind's act of looking as its reason (*ratio sit quidam mentis aspectus*) *an. quant. 27:53.*

²⁰*sol. 1:6:12.*

‘to see’ means to understand. (*Ipsa autem visio, intellectus est ille qui in anima.*) The looking will not result in seeing unless the gaze is *rectus* (meaning ‘in a straight line, straight, upright, direct, undeviating’)²¹ and *perfectus* (meaning ‘finished, complete, perfect, excellent, accomplished, exquisite’ conveying the sense here of reaching its end as a light ray has to touch its object if we are to see);²² an exercise of reason will not result in understanding unless we have reached a certain standard of virtue (*aspectus rectus atque perfectus, id est quem visio sequitur, virtus vocatur.*)²³ In *an. quant.*, the eyes have been opened at stage four and the soul now knows where to look for its happiness. Throughout stages four and five, the soul has been engaged in a purification of the will and the intellect so that it increasingly knows and desires to go in the right direction for its happiness. At stage six, a person’s desire for eternal things has intensified to such an extent that he is concerned only to direct his attention towards God and, to this end, works to ensure that his *aspectum* is indeed *rectum* with no looking away/deviation from its intended path.²⁴

Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis

Augustine encapsulates the desire for total healing at the sixth stage in a verse from Psalm 50, ‘Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels.’ (*Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis.*)²⁵ In his commentary on this psalm, Augustine says that *crea* might suggest ‘bring something new into being’ but that, bearing in mind that the prayer is being made by David, a penitent sinner, the rest of the sentence shows that what he meant by *crea* was ‘implant a new and upright spirit

²¹ Lewis and Short.

²² *an. quant.* 23:43. “Touching concludes as it were the process of getting acquainted” *trin.* 1:9:18.

²³ *sol.* 1:6:13.

²⁴ In some people the different stages transpire quite quickly and in others more slowly according to the capacity and merits of each *sol.* 1:13:23; *mor.* 1:34:80; *an. quant.* 36:80.

²⁵ *en. Ps.* 50:15 (on Ps. 50:12). In the ascents which Augustine has based on the beatitudes, the beatitude which applies to stage six is ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God’ and it is linked to the sixth gift of the sevenfold gift of the spirit in Isaiah: understanding. *s. dom. m.* 1:4:11; 2:11:38; *s.* 347:3; *ep.* 171A:2; *doctr. chr.* 2:7:11. In other schemes of ascent, although there is no reference to the beatitude, the same essential purity and single-mindedness is expressed in other ways. For example, in *uera rel.* the sixth stage is described as ‘complete transformation into life eternal, a total forgetfulness of temporal life passing into the perfect form which is made according to the image and likeness of God’ *uera rel.* 26:49. In *mus.* a person is exhorted to direct all the ‘movements and rhythms of our human activity’ to the end of loving God with all their heart and all their soul and all their mind in order to be purified *mus.* 6:13:39; 6:14:44.

within me' because his former upright spirit had grown old and bent. This is a reference to our condition before sin when our spirit was upright because we were stretched upwards towards heavenly things (*erigitur in superna*).²⁶ We are now bent over under the weight of our sins and the burden and the needs of the body, which has become corruptible as a result of sin²⁷ hence the invitation in the liturgy to lift up our hearts (*sursum corda*).²⁸ It is clear that in his commentary Augustine is identifying spirit and heart.

The heart is the inner man where the image of God is to be found²⁹ and that is why Isaiah exhorts, 'Return to your hearts, you transgressors (*redite, praevaricatores, ad cor*).'³⁰ 'Return to the heart' is, therefore, another way of saying, 'Return to self (*redderet mihi*);' 'collecting oneself together into oneself (*se...ad seipsam colligat*);' 'retire into oneself (*animum enim cogo sibi intentum*)' and "turn the attention inward upon himself" and it signifies spiritual withdrawal.³¹ This means that 'spirit' here is that element which distinguishes us from beasts and it is, therefore, identified with the rational mind (*mens*) rather than being in contradistinction to it, as we have seen it used before.³² Augustine goes on to

²⁶ *en. Ps.* 50:15. The fact we are upright in posture is a reminder (an *admonitio*) to us from God that we should not be like beasts and so just as our bodies are raised up by nature to what is highest in bodies i.e. the heavens so our consciousness should be raised up to the heavens *trin.* 12:1:1. Also *Gn. adu. man* 1:17:28; *Gn. litt. imp.* 16:60; *diu. qu.* 83:51:3; *Gn. litt.* 6:12:22; *ciu.* 22:24. See Hammond Taylor ACW 41 266 n. 53 for this being a commonplace notion.

²⁷ See chapter 1.

²⁸ *ep.* 131; *en. Ps.* 37:10.

²⁹ *Io. eu. tr.* 18:10.

³⁰ *Isa.* 46:8. For a list of occurrences of the quotation in Augustine see O'Donnell *conf.* 4:12:18. Madec (*cor AL*) says that Augustine, in common with other Patristic writers, uses the word 'heart' (*cor*) as a lyric equivalent for the word 'soul' (*anima*) whenever he writes in a poetic and biblical, rather than in a philosophic style and that the great majority of the uses of the word *cor* in Augustine's works are to be found in biblical quotations or in his explanations of them.

³¹ This is not to suggest that only the inner man is to attain purity but as the heart is the ruler of the body, then, if the heart is pure, the whole body will be pure. *en. Ps.* 125:8; *s.* 45:8.

³² *f. et symb.* 10:23 'our principal element is the spirit...the spirit is at times called mind (*principale nostrum spiritus est... Hic enim spiritus etiam vocatur mens*); Also *lib. arb.* 1:8:18; *Io. eu. tr.* 2:14; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:8:11. For the various meanings of *spiritus* and references in Augustine see chapter 2 n. 83. For spiritualization of *spiritus* see chapter 2 and esp. n. 82. For *spiritus* as equivalent to lower memory and therefore in contradistinction and inferior to *mens*, see *Gn. litt.* 12:8:19 and chapter 3 *supra*. *Spiritus* is so called because it is created by the breath of God. However, we must be quite clear, said Augustine, that it is not the Holy Spirit that God is breathing into us because otherwise we would be a part of the divine substance, as the Manichees thought *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:8:11. *ciu.* 13:24.

say in *an. quant.* that the spirit is right, if it sees to it that the soul cannot lose its way and go astray in its quest for the truth (*Spiritus enim rectus est, credo, quo fit ut anima in veritate quaerenda deviare atque errare non possit.*) This thought is echoed in *lib. arb.* 1 that a man will be perfectly ordered if the spirit (or reason or mind) dominates and rules the other parts of which a man is composed.³³ Whether or not a person's spirit is in control depends on the will³⁴ and this means a man's uprightness depends on his will. Indeed, later, Augustine specifically identifies uprightness with a good will.³⁵ It becomes clear that the upright of heart or spirit are those who direct their hearts in accordance with the will of God³⁶ and 'to do God's will' means to perform his work, which is to believe in the one whom he has sent (John 6:29).³⁷ Having faith shows a willingness to follow the incarnate Christ who unfailingly did God's Will and even if we are not able to follow him in practice, we are more predisposed to pray, 'yet not what I want but what you will be done.'³⁸ It is the faithful will that initiates, not the clever intellect, for it is wanting to do God's will that brings us to knowledge of God's will and the more we realign and strengthen our will towards God, the more knowledge of God's will we gain.³⁹ Ultimately, what we come to understand by the complete realignment of our will with His is that God's will is the cause of everything⁴⁰ and that suffering and affliction are part of the order of divine providence and ought not to detract from our belief in the existence of a loving, just God.⁴¹ In fact, we will come to understand that when the prophet says, 'The God of Israel is good to the upright of heart (Ps. 72:1),' he doesn't mean that God is only good to the upright, but that it is only the upright who *see* that God is good.⁴²

³³ *lib. arb.* 1:8:18.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 1:11:21.

³⁵ *ciu.* 14:11:1 *Non enim rectus esset bonam non habens voluntatem; ciu.* 14:27 *illo primus homo, qui rectus, hoc est bonae voluntatis).*

³⁶ *en. Ps.* 124:2; *en. Ps.* 96:18; *en. Ps.* 93:18; *en. Ps.* 32:2:2; *en. Ps.* 100:6; *en. Ps.* 31:2:26.

³⁷ *Io. eu. tr.* 29:6. Also *en. Ps.* 31:2:6 'faith's work is willed love.'

³⁸ *en. Ps.* 93:18-19; *en. Ps.* 32:2:2; *en. Ps.* 100:6.

³⁹ *en. Ps.* 77:10.

⁴⁰ *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:2:4.

⁴¹ *en. Ps.* 31:2:25-6.

⁴² *s.* 15A. 2; *en. Ps.* 72:7.

So directing an undeviating glance towards what is to be seen (*rectum aspectum in id quod videndum est, dirigere*); in other words, being kept on the straight and narrow by our upright spirit, requires a realignment of our will with God's will and this is what it is to become like God: through a realignment of wills so that we become one spirit with God (1 Cor. 6:17),⁴³ not through an assimilation of natures⁴⁴ and this realignment can only come about through having our lives shaped by faith, hope and charity.⁴⁵

ipsa cogitatio ab omni cupiditate ac faece rerum mortalium sese cohibuerit et eliquaverit.

Having identified the clean heart and upright spirit, Augustine then goes on at this stage of *an. quant.* to distinguish spirit from heart, making the uprightness of our spirit dependent upon the cleansing of our heart. Conversely, in another work, he makes cleanness of heart dependent on uprightness.⁴⁶ The discrepancy can be explained by the fact that our hearts are first made clean by faith, which allows a restoration of the the first fruits of our spirit (*primitias spiritus*)⁴⁷ and the heart is not fully cleansed until, after a lifetime of purification and reaching out to the things which are above, we are fully upright. Purity of heart requires us to can gain control over our thinking for the heart is the seat of our thoughts and feelings⁴⁸ and its impurity consists in its sheer multiplicity of thoughts for a pure heart is a single or simple heart (*Hoc est enim mundum cor quod est simplex cor*)⁴⁹ and uprightness too

⁴³ *trin.* 6:3: 4 and 5; *c. Max.* 2:20; *ep.* 238:2:12 and 13; *en. Ps.* 31:2:25; *en. Ps.* 44:17; *ep.* 205:2:11; *uid. deo* 15:37. Augustine uses 1 Cor. 6:17 to demonstrate that if human beings can be said to be one spirit with God, how much more can God the Son be said to be 'One Spirit with Him,' *Io. eu. tr.* 14:9; *ep.* 241:2. 1 Cor. 6:17 was especially used against the Arian, Maximinus *conl. Max.* 14; 15:20; *c. Max.* 1:10; 2:10:2; 2:20:1; 2:22:2. Augustine here notes that Maximinus distinguishes between *unum* being one in harmony (are one) and *unus* being one in Number (is one). However, *unum* 'are one' is applied to things of one substance.

⁴⁴ See chapter 4 n. 53.

⁴⁵ *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:2:4.

⁴⁶ A man is upright in heart when he 'reaches forward to those things which are before, forgetting those things which are behind' so as to arrive in a right course, that is, with right faith and purpose, at the perfection where he may dwell clean and pure in heart. (*Puto autem interesse inter rectum corde et mundum corde. Nam et rectus corde in ea quae ante sunt extenditur, ea quae retro sunt obliviscens, ut recto cursu, id est recta fide atque intentione perveniat, ubi habitat mundus corde*) *perf. iust.* 15:36. NB reference to Phil. 3:14.

⁴⁷ *en. Ps.* 118:12:1; *en. Ps.* 125:2; our act of faith is the first fruits of our spirit that we offer *en. Ps.* 134:18; *en. Ps.* 137:13. But also our faith gives us the first fruits of the Holy Spirit *f. et symb.* 10:23.

⁴⁸ There is scriptural authority. He frequently quotes 1 Cor. 4:5 with its expression *cogitationes cordis* and Matt. 15:19 *De corde enim exeunt cogitationes malae.*

⁴⁹ Augustine links the beatitude, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall God' with Wisd. 1:1 'seek Him in simplicity of heart,' *s. dom. m.* 1:2:8. The two quotations are also linked in *diu. qu.* 83:68; *s.* 53.7. Augustine

is about singularity of thought:

The faithful, reliable scripture says: ‘God made man upright and they themselves have sought out many ideas (Eccl. 7:29).’ God, he says, has made man upright and they themselves; how themselves if not by free will? And they themselves have sought out many ideas. He had said he was made upright and yet he didn’t go on to say ‘And they themselves have sought out crooked ideas,’ by way of contrast because he had said upright; or wicked ideas; but he just said many. It’s from this multitude that the body which is perishing, weighs down the soul and the earthly habitation presses on the mind that thinks up many thoughts (Wisd. 9:15). (*Ait fidelis Scriptura: Fecit Deus hominem rectum, et ipsi exquisierunt cogitationes multas Fecit Deus, inquit, hominem rectum, et ipsi: unde ipsi, nisi per liberum arbitrium? Et ipsi exquisierunt cogitationes multas. Rectum dixerat factum, et tamen non ait: Et ipsi exquisierunt cogitationes pravas, quia dixerat rectum; aut cogitationes iniquas; sed dixit, multas. Ab ista multitudine, corpus quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem.*)⁵⁰

The role of *intentio* at stage 6

There are three different ways we can examine *intentio* at this stage in order to gain some insight into the aim of this stage which is to move from multiplicity to single-mindedness. We will look first at Augustine’s use of the plural *intentiones*, which will help us to look at the Fall as a fragmentation of the will of the individual, then at his concept of the *simplex intentio* as motive and finally at the question of *intentio* in relation to the idea of communal singleness.

Intentio to intentiones to intentio: from the one to the many to the one

Augustine, with strong echoes of Plotinus,⁵¹ describes the Fall as a flowing down⁵²

frequently cited the beatitude, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart,’ particularly in his sermons and expositions on the psalms, see e.g. *s. dom. m. 2 passim* and *uid. Deo passim*.

⁵⁰ *s.* 284:4. *s.* 96:6:6. On Wisd. 9:15 see egs. *ciu.* 12:15:1; *en. Ps.* 145:6. In *s.* 284:4 Augustine went on to cite his favourite Phil. 3:14 as proof of the overriding importance of searching for the one thing with Paul’s exhibition of his single-mindedness in the words *Unum sequor* ‘One thing though I pursue’; and contrasted it with the quote from Wisd. 9:15 explaining that Paul had not achieved the one thing because he was still weighed down by the multitude of thoughts. In this, Augustine has not kept to Paul’s word order but Augustine was clear that the order of the words was ‘One thing though I pursue’ (*Ordo verborum est: Unum autem sequor*) (*s.* 255:6:6. Also *s.* 306B:2; *c. ep. Pel.* 3:7:22; *s.* 284:4) and, whether this is grammatically correct or not, it is at least right in conveying the single-mindedness of Paul’s intention.

⁵¹ *Enn.* 4:3:32:20; 6:6:1-3; 6.9.3.

⁵² *conf.* 13:8:9; *defluxit angelus, defluxit anima hominis*; *c. Adim.* 20:3 *in natura uero humana, quae peccato in inferiora defluxit*; *trin.* 4:7:11 *Quia enim ab uno Deo summo et vero per impietatis iniquitatem resilientes et*

from the one to the many and, conversely, our restoration as a return from the many to the one.⁵³ For Augustine, the ‘many’ of itself is not bad because it characterizes the created world and God intentionally created many different things: ‘heaven, earth, sea, and all that is in them, how many they all are! Who could count them all, who could conceive their multiplicity? Who made them? God, all of them, and behold they are very good.’⁵⁴ We might say that *distentio* is the *sine qua non* of the nature of reality as created; God intended it that way. But, nonetheless, in keeping with his Platonic heritage, Augustine’s view was that ‘many’ was not as good as ‘one’ ‘because ‘one’ doesn’t come from ‘many’ but ‘many’ comes from ‘one’ (*Non enim a multis unum, sed multa ab uno.*)’⁵⁵ Augustine illustrated this in his sermons on Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42). He took Martha, with her many material, time-bound concerns, as representative of life in this world: they were good but not as good as Mary’s one concern with listening to God; she was therefore representative of the world to come.⁵⁶ ‘Many things are therefore necessary for life in this world, before we come to the one thing towards which we are striving’ (*multa non erunt necessaria. Antequam perveniamus ad unum, multis indigemus.*)⁵⁷ Hence we are given a variety of gifts or powers (1 Cor. 12:8-10) and we strive to practise four virtues while in pursuit of the ‘one thing’ (Christ) through which, we are gradually gathered up into one, moving from the many powers into the one power, which is Christ, the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24)⁵⁸ and from the four

*dissonantes deflueramus; conf. 2:10:18, `defluxi abs te ego et erravi, deus meus, (Augustine on his own fall). The Latin language allowed Augustine to make a fruitful connection between flowing down and sin: Sins were called delinquencies and ‘to be delinquent is to be deliquescent like a liquid leaking down from the stable framework of virtue and righteousness; for a person sins through an appetite for what is lower. As we are strengthened by *caritas* for what is higher than ourselves so we too drip down and are deliquescent through greed for things below (*Delinquere est, tamquam de liquido quodam defluere a stabilitate firmamenti virtutis atque iustitiae. Cupiditate enim inferiorum quisque peccat: sicut roboratur caritate superiorum, sic deficit, et quasi liquescit cupiditate inferiorum*) en. Ps. 74:6.*

⁵³ *trin. 4:7:11 ab uno Deo summo et vero per impietatis iniquitatem resilientes et dissonantes deflueramus, et evanueramus in multa discissi per multa et inhaerentes in multis; conf. 2:1 1 ab uno te auersus in multa euanui.*

⁵⁴ *s. 104:3.* Whereas Armstrong’s judgement on Plotinus’ essentially pessimistic system with plurality intrinsically corrupted, says; ‘ultimately, it must be concluded according to Plotinus’ schema that it would have been better if nothing had ever existed—a metaphysical position irreconcilable with Christianity,’ quoted by Romb 2006: 19-20.

⁵⁵ *s. 104:3.* See n. 70.

⁵⁶ *s. 103:5; s. 104:3; s. 255:6.*

⁵⁷ *s. 255:6.*

⁵⁸ See Introduction n. 62 and chapter 4 n. 93.

virtues, which characterize the life of action, into the one virtue of contemplation of God.⁵⁹

In Eden, Adam was happy because not only was he at one in himself, enjoying complete tranquillity of soul and health of body, but he also lived in a faithful marriage with Eve, which was undisturbed by lust⁶⁰ and the two of them lived in complete harmony of will with God showing ‘love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a faith that was no pretence’ (1 Tim. 1:5).⁶¹ When he turned to his own individual interests in preference to the life in common and with God, he became immersed in the world’s natural multiplicity with an infinite variety of allurements competing for his attention and interest in which, ‘diverse sense impressions give rise to diverse desires in souls; diverse desires, to diverse means of getting; diverse means of getting to diverse habits; and diverse habits to diverse wills...even the choice of one soul varies with the changing time.’⁶² As well as being focused on a variety of different objects at differing times and differing from the wills of other people, the will also now expresses itself as different forms of emotion (as we saw in the last chapter): instead of being simply joy in tranquillity, the will may express itself as desire, fear, grief as well as joy.⁶³

So the will is now liable to act in a well and truly fragmented way and a person whose attention is directed towards the exterior world of multiplicity, loses sight of themselves in their true nature and is liable to suffer from an unnatural *distentio animi*.⁶⁴ When, therefore, in *sol.* Augustine’s reason asks him, ‘Are you conscious of yourself as simple or composite?’ and Augustine replies, ‘I do not know,’⁶⁵ his response is that of the fallen soul that doesn’t know itself for, although as a human being, he is a composite unity of body and soul, the soul

⁵⁹ *en. Ps.* 83:11.

⁶⁰ *ciu.* 14:16 f where sex was nonetheless enjoyed (*ciu.* 14:21); (it must have been because the only emotion they experienced as a *constantia* was joy (*ciu.* 14:10) and they had already been given instruction to increase and multiply *ciu* 14:21). But also see *retr.* 1:10:2, clarifying *Gn. adu. Man.*, which confirms this.

⁶¹ *ciu.* 14:10; 14:26.

⁶² *diu. qu.* 83:40.

⁶³ *ciu.* 14:6.

⁶⁴ *distentio* in this sense meaning ‘tension or distraction causing anxiety’ see O’Daly 1987: 153-4 with regard to this meaning in connection with Augustine’s description of time in *conf.* 11:23:30 as *distentio animi*.

⁶⁵ *sol.* 2:1.

or mind to which the will belongs, is incorporeal and therefore indivisible. As Augustine explained to Euodius in *an. quant.*, the soul seemed ‘to be something essentially simple and to have an essence all of its own (*cum simplex quiddam et propriae substantiae uideatur esse*).’⁶⁶ Augustine had come to see that the soul was one mind which acts through a variety of different powers (*quae diversa per eos ago unus ego animus*)⁶⁷ and this is what he was now training Euodius to see, for, as we have seen, he wanted to prove to him that the soul was incorporeal and therefore superior to the body. The body’s nature as a composite unity,⁶⁸ means, on the basis of the principle of prior simplicity⁶⁹ enunciated by Plotinus, that its unity is derivative, for everything composite has to be traced back to something more simple and ultimately to the One or absolute simplicity.⁷⁰ The soul was not absolutely simple, as God was, because the soul was a created substance and therefore changeable, so for the soul ‘to be’ was not the same as for the soul ‘to be happy, wise etc.’ as it was for God.⁷¹ However, it is

⁶⁶ *an. quant.* 1:2.

⁶⁷ *conf.* 10:7:11.

⁶⁸ See chapter 1 *supra*.

⁶⁹ The phrase is from O’Meara 1996: 44.

⁷⁰ ‘For there must be something simple before all things, and this must be other than all the things which come after it, existing by itself, not mixed with the things that derive from it, ...for if it is not simple, outside all coincidence and composition, it could not be a first principle; and it is the most self-sufficient, because it is simple and the first of all: for that which is not the first needs that which is before it, and what is not simple is in need of simple components so that it can come into existence from them’ *Enn.* 5:4:5-15. This conception of the One actually predates Plotinus but was expressed most coherently in him. Dodds 1928 traces its development from Plato’s *Parmenides* and its interpretations.

⁷¹ God was not a created substance but was substance or Being Itself (Augustine notes that, in Latin, ‘being’ and ‘substance’ are the same thing), *trin.* 5:9:10; *trin.* 7:4:7 as shown by His pronouncement in Exod. 3:14 ‘I am who I am...Tell the sons of Israel, He who is sent me to you.’ (*trin.* 5:2:3; 7:5:10; Also see the reference to Exod. 3:14 in *conf.* 7:10:16 where Augustine had discovered for himself that God was Being (*tu adsumpsisti me ut viderem esse quod viderem*). In *ciu.* 8:6 Augustine refers to the Platonist view of the creation of everything from the absolute one who is uncreated and underivative and describes him as ‘the One Who Is’ therefore associating him with Being in accordance with the Platonist conception of natural philosophy. In his identification of God with being, he differed from Plotinus for whom the one was beyond Being. God did not fit into Aristotle’s category of substance (Augustine had read Aristotle’s *Categories*, at a tender age *conf.* 4:16:28 (in the Latin translation by Victorinus, Courcelle 1969:168), because, unlike all created substances including the soul, which were liable to change and modifications (called ‘accidents’), God’s substance was unchangeable and not liable to modification (*trin.* 5:2:3.) This means that for God ‘to be’ is the same as for God ‘to be great, good, wise, blessed, true’ etc. (*trin.* 6:7:8; 15:5:8). See also *ciu.* 11:10:2 ‘the reason why a nature is called simple is that it cannot lose any attribute it possesses, that there is no difference between what it is and what it has, as there is, for example, between a vessel and the liquid it contains; a body and its colour; the atmosphere and its light or heat, the soul and its wisdom;’ *ciu.* 11:10:3 ‘the epithet “simple” applies to things which are in the fullest and truest sense divine, because in them there is no difference between substance and quality, and their divinity, wisdom and blessedness is not acquired by participation in that of others.’

simpler than the body, and therefore superior but in order to understand its own nature, it must start living according to that nature and stop acting like a body.

Augustine seldom uses the plural form of *intentio* in relation to a single individual but there are two occasions of significance when he does so; in *mus.* and in *trin.*, and, in each case, this vividly expresses the will's tendency to fragment; its resultant lack of self-knowledge caused by its overclose association with the body and its difficulty in distinguishing itself from its thoughts. We will examine these two texts as a way of considering the fall and return of the individual to himself, as a step on his return to God.

***mus.* and 'His tot et tantis intentionibus'**

The soul being entangled in all these great *intentiones*, is there any wonder if it is distracted from the contemplation of the truth? (*His tot et tantis intentionibus anima implicata, quid mirum, si a contemplatione veritatis avertitur.*)⁷²

We can follow the trajectory of the soul from contemplation to distraction, if we begin at *mus.* 6:13:39, where Augustine is summarizing the various activities of the soul in relation to the body. He begins by saying that 'the soul's love of acting towards the stream of its bodily passions turns the soul away from contemplation of eternal realities, calling away its *intentio* by its concern for sensual pleasure' (*Amor igitur agendi adversus succedentes passiones corporis sui, avertit animam a contemplatione aeternorum, sensibilis voluptatis cura eius avocans intentionem*).⁷³ Each level of activity compounds the distraction and intensifies it, increasing it from mere concern (*cura*) to restlessness (*inquietam*)⁷⁴ as sense perceptions become images embedded in the soul and fodder for the making of more illusory images, all of which the soul finds superficially desirable, but profoundly empty, food for its thought and ultimately unable to satisfy its insatiable curiosity and need for knowledge and at the same time blocking its return to the simplicity of truth. In the next paragraph, Augustine

⁷² *mus.* 6:13:42.

⁷³ *mus.* 6:13:39.

⁷⁴ Restlessness is not a symptom of fallenness but is part of our condition as creatures and is therefore positive for the sense of incompleteness that it gives us alerts us to the fact that we are not ends in ourselves, but need to be constantly turning towards God. Our restlessness, though, is compounded by our fallenness. See also chapter 5 n. 139.

goes on to situate the problem in the context of the Fall; explaining that this general love of activity towards the body originated in pride which began with man's turning away from God and thus was the beginning of all sin. The meaning of 'pride,' says Augustine, is best demonstrated with a verse from scripture, 'Why are earth and ashes proud, because they have thrown forth their innermost in their life (*Quid superbit terra et cinis, quoniam in vita sua proiecit intima sua?*)'⁷⁵ To be inflated with pride is for the soul to turn to the exterior and become empty and therefore have less and less existence as it tends towards nothing, which is (self)-destruction (*quare tendere ad nihilum, est ad interitum tendere*).⁷⁶ The soul's innermost good is God, whose presence in the soul gives it life and so 'to throw forth its innermost' means that the soul, in turning to the exterior, has made God mentally distant from itself.⁷⁷ The proud soul tries to imitate God by acting on other souls only as God can: through itself, rather than through the body by means of signs, which is the only way that we can communicate with each other since the Fall.⁷⁸ It also seeks from others for itself, the praise and honour due to God.⁷⁹ In this activity towards other souls, it is treating other souls as bodies to be subjugated and this, together with its activities towards the body, is what gives rise to Augustine's exclamation that it's no wonder that the soul being entangled in so many and such great *intentiones* is distracted from contemplating the truth! The soul began, before the Fall, giving God its undivided attention because God was its purposed end: the sole end of its *intentio* (attention, desire). After the Fall, and the turning away of its *intentio* from God, it loses its single focus and becomes more and more distracted by the multitude of demands on its attention and thus its *intentio* (attention, desire, direction) becomes transferred to the many sensual objects and interests upon which the soul's desire and attention is now focused: thus *intentiones*. However, the transfer of *intentio* to *intentiones* is not simply a linguistic one; it is also one of substance but this is best dealt with when considering the second of our two passages to which I now turn.

⁷⁵ Ecclus. 10:9 and 10. In language that is strangely redolent of this passage of scripture, *intima* has become *intentio* in *trin.* 11:1:1 *foras se nostra proiecit intentio*.

⁷⁶ *imm. an.* 7:12.

⁷⁷ *mus.* 6:13:40.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *mus.* 6:13:41.

trin and ‘*vestigia multarum intentionum*’

While then mind is at the inner level, it comes out of itself in a kind of way when it puts out feelings of love toward these images which are like the traces of its many *intentiones* (*Cum ergo sit mens interior, quodam modo exit a semetipsa, cum in haec quasi vestigia multarum intentionum exserit amoris affectum.*)⁸⁰

This passage is part of Augustine’s discussion of what it means for the mind to know itself. We will begin at *trin.* 10:5:7, which has similarities to *mus.* 6:13:39, for, after explaining that for the mind to know itself, is for the mind to think about itself and live according to its nature, (desiring to live subject to God and with the body subject to it), Augustine proceeds to describe a similar preoccupation with its own activity, and the pleasure it derives from these, as he did in *mus.* and shows thereby that the soul has forgotten its true nature. He describes the soul’s attachment to the body and the sensory world in allegorical terms as a love affair in which the soul has become so attached to the objects of its sense perception that it can’t bear to be separated from them and so, because it can’t take the bodies themselves back inside itself when it does return to thinking about itself, it ‘wraps up their images and clutches them to itself, images made in itself out of itself. For it gives something of its own substance to their formation (*nec se cum potest introrsus tamquam in regionem incorporeae naturae ipsa corpora inferre, imagines eorum convolvit et rapit factas in semetipsa de semetipsa. Dat enim eis formandis quiddam substantiae suae*).⁸¹ We know, from having examined the soul’s activity at previous levels of ascent, that what the soul gives to the making of these images is its attention (*intentio*) which, at one and the same time, enables sense perception and the imprint of an image on to *spiritus*. In this very real sense, then, what it contains in its memory are the traces of its many *intentiones* (*vestigia multarum intentionum*) because what it contains are the countless images of its sensory experience made by means of countless acts of the soul’s *intentio*. The problem is that, although the mind is still able to exercise its power of rational judgement⁸² and is able, under normal circumstances, to distinguish between a body and an image,⁸³ it does not understand that

⁸⁰ *trin.* 10:8:11.

⁸¹ *trin.* 10:5:7.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *trin.* 10:6:8.

underlying these countless acts of *intentio*, is a single incorporeal power of *intentio* and that is because it is unable to distinguish between the different natures of the three components of an act of sense perception because it can only think in material terms and that means in bits so the soul thinks it's a body.⁸⁴

To understand the implications of this for Augustine, we have to remember his two-stage creation: the creation of formless matter (*creatio*) and its subsequent (though not in time) formation by its conversion to God (*formatio*) or, in the case of the fallen soul, *reformatio*). When Augustine says that the soul becomes conformed to the images, not by *being* what they are but by *thinking* that it is what they are (*Ita enim conformatur eis quodam modo, non id existendo, sed putando*)⁸⁵ he is using the language of Rom. 12:2⁸⁶ to convey his message that the soul's activity and mistaken thinking about itself, devalues it and turns it away from God. Instead of being *conformed* to the world, we should seek to be *reformed* in the newness of our minds, for this is to be reformed in the image and likeness of God by realigning our will with His.⁸⁷

Augustine says that in order for the mind to recognize itself, it must change the direction of its will and, instead of wandering about through other things, it must think about itself (*Cognoscat ergo semetipsam, nec quasi absentem se quaerat, sed intentionem voluntatis qua per alia vagabatur statuat in se ipsa et se cogitet.*)⁸⁸ But the problem for the mind is that when it is told to think about something, it can only think in terms of images and 'if they are told to think about something without imagining bodies, they suppose it is simply nothing (*Sine phantasiis enim corporum quidquid iussi fuerint cogitare, nihil omnino esse arbitrantur.*)'⁸⁹ It is therefore unable to think of itself alone as a thing apart from its images

⁸⁴ *trin.* 10:7:9. See *conf.* 7:1:2 and *trin.* 9:3:3 for Augustine's own inability to distinguish between his mental power of *intentio* and the images that it made and chapter 4 n. 157 for comment on this.

⁸⁵ *trin.* 10:6:8.

⁸⁶ 'Do not be conformed to this world but be reformed in the newness of your minds (*Nolite conformari huic saeculo sed reformamini in novitate mentis vestrae.*)'

⁸⁷ *trin.* 11:5:8 where Rom. 12:2 is cited and it is clear that reformation or conformation is a matter of the direction and appropriate use of our will.

⁸⁸ *trin.* 10:8:11.

⁸⁹ *trin.* 10:7:10. This had been Augustine's view see chapter 1 n. 5.

and this is precisely its impurity (*Et haec est eis immunditia, quoniam dum se solam nititur cogitare, hoc se putat esse sine quo se non potest cogitare*).⁹⁰ What Augustine advocates then is a process of drawing things off from itself as a way of coming to self-knowledge and, in that way, it will see its underlying reality, which he describes as more inward, not only than the outside sensible objects, but also than their images, all of which it has become mixed up with. (*Cum igitur ei praecipitur ut se ipsam cognoscat, non se tamquam sibi detracta sit quaerat; sed id quod sibi addidit detrahat. Interior est enim ipsa, non solum quam ista sensibilia quae manifeste foris sunt, sed etiam quam imagines eorum, quae in parte quadam sunt animae, quam habent et bestiae, quamvis intelligentia careant, quae mentis est propria*).⁹¹ The underlying reality that is left, once the mind can let go of all images, is pure formless awareness of itself, such that the mind can be said simply to be self-presence (*cognoscit se ipsam; nec ob aliud, quam eo quod sibi praesens est*).⁹² This brings us to the bottom line of self-awareness: if we know nothing else about ourselves, at least we know that we are alive.⁹³

Augustine identified two ways of being and of seeking one, ‘in analysing and in synthesizing, it is oneness that I seek; it is oneness that I love. But when I analyse, I seek a homogenous unit; when I synthesize, I look for an integral unit. In the former case, foreign elements are avoided; in the latter, proper elements are conjoined to form something united and perfect.’⁹⁴ When he uses the language of *colligit in unum* to speak of God collecting him together into one from his state of disintegration,⁹⁵ he is using the body’s language of integral unity, for the soul cannot, in reality, be collected together because the soul, in reality, cannot be fragmented; it is so only in our thoughts and in our attitudes. To our materialistic mind however, it does seem as though we are being gathered together, but the gathering together is really a letting go of everything that the soul has got mixed up with and everything that it is

⁹⁰ *trin.* 10:8:11.

⁹¹ *trin.* 10:8:11.

⁹² *trin.* 10:9:12.

⁹³ See chapter 5 and nn. 32 and 33 *supra*.

⁹⁴ *ord.* 2.18.48.

⁹⁵ *conf.* 2:1:1; 10:29:40; 11:29:39; 12:16:23; *en. Ps.* 145:6; *s* 52:3.

not.⁹⁶ For the soul to turn the *intentio* of its will inwards, then, will mean a withdrawal of its interest in making images (*trin.* 10:6:8) and in recollecting images (*trin.* 10:8:11). Once we have brought our attention back behind all this activity, we can look with the eye of a detached observer at our thoughts and our desires and see them in their specificity and know that we are something other than the multitude that they are. We will be able to distinguish our potential from our acts and this distance gives us the possibility of choice rather than unreflectively reacting to what comes our way. The space that is opened up allows us to see that our one desire is for God and to pray that, instead of being conformed to the world by our habitual patterns of acting and reacting, we may be given the means to move one step nearer to full reformation into His image and likeness.

Of course, we live in the world of images and therefore ‘some of our rational *intentio*, that is to say, some of the same mind, has to be directed to the utilisation of changeable and bodily things, without which this life cannot be lived (*quiddam vero rationalis intentionis nostrae, hoc est eiusdem mentis, in usum mutabilium corporaliumque rerum sine quo haec vita non agitur, dirigendum*)’⁹⁷ but we must live in it in such a way as not to be conformed to it, therefore always keeping an eye on God, our ultimate goal, to whom everything is to be referred and in whom everything is to be enjoyed.⁹⁸ We are required to be single-mindedly in pursuit of God and life is to be lived virtuously to that end. If we aim at the acquisition of virtue, we are either adopting a Stoic mindset allowing virtue to become an end in itself⁹⁹ or we are allowing it to distract us from, rather than help us towards, our ultimate aim of loving God and we cannot be said to be single-minded. However, it is permissible to aim at virtue but only if this is in service of our ultimate aim (therefore legitimate *intentiones*). Augustine addresses this question in *trin.* 11:6:10 where he notes that, although the ultimate end of the will is happiness,¹⁰⁰ this ultimate end can be distinguished from the end in a particular instance so, for example, where we want to see something for its own sake, then we must be

⁹⁶ *trin.* 10:8:11.

⁹⁷ *trin.* 12:13:21.

⁹⁸ *trin.* 11:5:8.

⁹⁹ See chapter 4.

¹⁰⁰ *trin.* 11:6:10.

said to intend it and the end of the will is sight, for instance, to want to look through a window. If the will then refers this sight to something else, perhaps to look through the window in order to see passers-by, then the end of the will has changed and its end is now to see passers-by. This does not mean that there was not initially an *intentio* to see the window but simply that there has been another movement of the will. The fact that there is more than one movement of the will does not detract from the requirement to have a single will towards God, provided each movement is an intermediate movement towards the final end and the movements are linked to provide the steps in the scale of ascent towards God. (*Rectae autem sunt voluntates et omnes sibimet religatae, si bona est illa quo cunctae referuntur; si autem prava est, pravae sunt omnes. Et ideo rectarum voluntatum connexio iter est quoddam ascendentium ad beatitudinem*).¹⁰¹ Therefore a will appropriately directed towards the world is a will with a single *intentio* and a will in harmony with God's because it has God's interests ultimately at heart.

simplex intentio

When Augustine spoke of purity of heart as requiring a will with a single *intentio*, he was not simply concerned to stress that all our actions are to be referred to the one end but he was also concerned that our inner motive match our outward act and that we could not be accused of the vice of doubleheartedness or *dolus*, which he defines as 'when one thing is done and another is pretended. When there is one thing in *intentio* and another in deeds (*Dolus ergo quid est? Dolus est, quando aliud agitur et aliud simulatur. Quando itaque aliud est in intentione, aliud in factis, dolus dicitur*)'.¹⁰² The only justifiable reason for doing any good works was love of God because love was the fulfilling of the law and only then could our heart be regarded as simple (*si fiant simplici corde, id est intentione in superna fine illo caritatis, quia et 'plenitudo legis caritas' (Rom. 13:10)*).¹⁰³ This is how we ought to understand Matthew's reference to the eye as the lamp of the body (Matt. 6:22-23):

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² *s. 4:23; s. 133:4; s. 301A:2*. As Beckett muses: 'The last temptation is the greatest treason: to do the right deed for the wrong reason' T.S. Eliot *Murder in the Cathedral*.

¹⁰³ *s. dom. m. 2:13:45*. Also *s. dom. m. 2:3:11 quod non mundat nisi una et simplex intentio in aeternam vitam solo et puro amore sapientiae; cat. rud. 11.16* 'For then only is a work truly good, when the *intentio* of the doer is winged with *caritas* and as if returning to its own place, rests again in love.'

“The eye” therefore, we ought to take as meaning in this place the *intentio* by which we do whatever we do. If it is clean and upright and keeping in view what it ought to keep in view, all our works which we perform in accordance with it are necessarily good. (*Oculum ergo hic accipere debemus ipsam intentionem qua facimus quidquid facimus. Quae si munda fuerit et recta, et illud aspiciens quod aspiciendum est, omnia opera nostra, quae secundum eam operamur, necesse est bona sint*).¹⁰⁴

What we have to keep in view therefore is not only where we are aiming but also why and, unless we set out from the true faith, we will not be aiming in the right direction so, no matter how good the works appear to be, they will not be directed towards God.¹⁰⁵ This is because *caritas* is not something to be ‘doled out of our wallets’¹⁰⁶ but is the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit through our faith.¹⁰⁷ The love of God is the end to which all actions are referred by those whose lives are shaped by their faith, hope and love and governed by the two commandments of loving God and loving our neighbour as ourselves and, if this is the case, then all our actions will be good. If good works were done for any other reason, they could not even be regarded as good,¹⁰⁸ though it is possible that our motive may become purified in the doing of the act.¹⁰⁹ We may purport to be acting in faith, hope and love and look as though we are living good lives, doing good works: giving alms to the poor; praying; fasting; helping others; but our reasons for doing these things may be less than praiseworthy and it is our reason for doing something that is brought into the reckoning against us, not the way it has turned out.¹¹⁰ The love of God being our end means that, if we seek anything from God other than God Himself, then we are not being singleminded, for we

¹⁰⁴ *s. dom. m.* 2:13:45. See also similar interpretation of Matt. 6:22-3 in *en. Ps.* 118:12:2.

¹⁰⁵ *en. Ps.* 31:2:4; *en. Ps.* 77:10; *bapt.* 1:8:10.

¹⁰⁶ *en. Ps.* 103:1:19.

¹⁰⁷ *spir. et litt.* 28:49.

¹⁰⁸ The question that the difference of intention makes was discussed by Augustine in connection with lying *c. mend.* 7:18; *ench.* 6:18. Also see *nupt. et. conc.* 1:4:5 and 1:12:13 and 1:14:16 for the difference that intention makes in relation to the act of sexual intercourse between married couples; it is a good act if it is engaged in for the sake of having children but not for the satisfaction of sensual pleasure.

¹⁰⁹ Augustine gives the example of someone who claims he wants to become a Christian for the right reasons but he is not being truthful; we should treat him as if he is because, in so doing, his motive may well become purified *cat. rud.* 5:9.

¹¹⁰ *s. dom. m.* 2:13:46; *ep. Io. tr.* 7:7. We may not necessarily know what our reasons or motives are for acting as we do ‘as there is something of the human person which is unknown even to the spirit of man which is in him’ for we only know of ourselves what we have seen in the light of Christ (*conf.* 10:5:7).

are required to pay attention to God alone and everything else for the sake of God.¹¹¹ If we love our neighbour for the sake of some temporal gain for ourselves, rather than for his eternal welfare in God, then we do not love our neighbour as ourselves and, in fact, acting like this, we cannot be said to love ourselves properly either, because we are acting with a divided heart which prevents us from seeing God.¹¹² In short, if mixed in with our love of God, there is a hint of another motive for our actions: fear of punishment, hope of reward, satisfaction of sensual desires then we cannot be said to have a *simplex intentio* or a completely pure heart yet.¹¹³ But, on the other hand, if our *intentio* is *simplex*, it has the effect of gathering all our good works into one good work, ‘for the sole work, in which all the others are comprised is faith working through love, which is why the Lord says in the gospel, This is the work God wants, that you believe in the one he has sent.’¹¹⁴

anima una et cor unum in Deum

The ascent in *an. quant.*, being through the powers of the soul, purity of heart and singleness of direction is envisaged in relation to the individual soul and this is how Augustine thought of it in the early days. In *ord.*, when he advocates withdrawal from the multitude, he expressly says that he means the multitude of things, not men.¹¹⁵ However, at some stage, singleness of heart came to bear a collective meaning and we shall see how that was tied up with Augustine’s developing understanding of a collective meaning of Acts 4:32a ‘Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul.’ (*Multitudinis autem credentium erat anima una et cor unum.*)

According to Augustine, God’s intention had always been that man should not live as a solitary individual but in a fellowship of unity bound by feelings of affection and to

¹¹¹ *s.* 137:9. See *beat. u.* 3:18 where Augustine and Adeodatus discuss the meaning of chaste. . Whom do you call chaste (Augustine asked) ‘One who does not commit any sin, or one who refrains only from illicit intercourse? Adeodatus replied: How can someone be chaste who refrains only from illicit intercourse but does not desist from a steady pollution of his soul through other sins? One is truly chaste who keeps God in mind and devotes himself to Him alone.’

¹¹² *s. dom. m.* 2:12:43.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 2:22:75; 2:1:1; 2:2:9; *en. Ps.* 120:10; *ep.* 140:33:77; *ench.* 32:121.

¹¹⁴ *en. Ps.* 89:17.

¹¹⁵ *ord.* 1:2:3 *Multitudinem autem non hominum dico, sed omnium quae sensus attingit.*

demonstrate His intention, He created Eve out of Adam rather than as a separate individual; this was to impress upon men that they should be bound together not only by the likeness of their nature but also by the affection of their thought.¹¹⁶ Two people cannot be said to be one just by virtue of being people but only ‘if they are of the same nature and being without any variance or disagreement’¹¹⁷ God therefore created Adam and Eve in this way as a reminder (*admonitione*)¹¹⁸ that unity was to be preserved among the many.¹¹⁹ But He foresaw that Adam and Eve would sin and despite his intention that by creating Eve from Adam to impress upon them that harmony should be preserved, discord arose in Eden when man was led away from what was common interest to what was in his own individual interest alone, thus breaking the bond of common unity.¹²⁰ However, God foresaw that his original desire and purpose for man to be a unity in plurality would be fulfilled by a community of godly men who were to be called to adoption as His sons and who would ultimately enter into fellowship with the angels.¹²¹ What was envisaged was a community where the effects of the Fall would be reversed, ‘where there was no love of a personal and private will but a love that rejoices in a good that is at once shared by all and unchanging—a love that makes one heart out of many; a love that is the whole-hearted and harmonious obedience of mutual affection.’¹²² This community not only has fellowship with each other but also with God and part of the

¹¹⁶ *ciu.* 12:21- 22; 27:1; 14:1. Rist 1994: 121 notes that the idea we were all once in Adam appears from 408 and is increasingly emphasized as the Pelagian controversy develops. For if we were all in Adam then this explains how we are all affected by Adam’s sin. *ciu.* 13.14. Also *b. coniug.* 1:1. ‘AS each man is a part of the human race, and human nature is something social, and hath for a great and natural good, the power also of friendship; on this account God willed to create all men out of one, in order that they might be held in their society not only by likeness of kind, but also by bond of kindred. Therefore the first natural bond of human society is man and wife. Nor did God create these each by himself, and join them together as alien by birth: but He created the one out of the other, setting a sign also of the power of the union in the side, whence she was drawn, was formed.’

¹¹⁷ *trin.* 6:3:4

¹¹⁸ That word again.

¹¹⁹ *ciu.* 12:27:1. In relation to this first marriage, of which it was decreed that ‘there will be two in one flesh (Gen. 2:24),’ Augustine points to Paul’s referral of it to the union of Christ with his Church (Eph. 5:31-32) and develops this into his doctrine of the *Totus Christus*; that the whole Christ, consisting of the Word, the human Jesus and us constitute one perfect man. *en. Ps.* 138:2; *en. Ps.* 58:1:2. This idea is prevalent in the *en. Pss.* see for example *en. Ps.* 30:3:1; *en. Ps.* 30:2:3 and 4; *en. Ps.* 26:2:2; *en. Ps.* 37:6; *en. Ps.* 44:3; *en. Ps.* 60:1; *en. Ps.* 63:17; *en. Ps.* 58:1:2; *en. Ps.* 74:4. The marriage between the Word and human flesh took place in the Virgin’s womb and it was this flesh, united with the Word, which became the head of the Church *en. Ps.* 44:3

¹²⁰ *ciu.* 12:22; *trin.* 12:9: 14; *en. Ps.* 103:2:11.

¹²¹ *ciu.* 12:22

¹²² *ciu.* 15:3.

community is still on pilgrimage on earth.¹²³

In the meantime, as a result of the Fall, there are many different communities but all encompassed within two types which, following scripture, Augustine calls two cities: a city that lives according to the flesh and a city that lives according to the spirit.¹²⁴ Those who live according to the spirit are those who live according to God's will and those who live according to the flesh live by human standards. Eschatologically speaking, it is the former who are predestined to reign with God for all eternity and the latter who are doomed to eternal punishment with the devil.¹²⁵ Each type of community desires their own kind of peace and, if they achieve their aim, then that is the kind of peace in which they live.¹²⁶ In other words, people can be held together by bonds of love and this is a kind of oneness because they are a distinct group as opposed to a mob.¹²⁷ But, if it is to be a community of people on the way to

¹²³ *ciu.* 12:9:2. See also *b. coniug.* 18 (21) 'From a multitude of souls there is growing the one single City of the future, the City of all those who will have one soul and one heart tending toward God. This unity will only be perfect after the present sojourn abroad. (*Sed quoniam ex multis animis una civitas futura est habentium animam unam et cor unum in Deum (quae unitatis nostrae perfectio post hanc peregrinationem futura est, ubi omnium cogitationes nec latebunt invicem, nec inter se in aliquo repugnabunt).*)' This community Augustine identified with the scriptural heaven of heaven. The phrase 'heaven of heaven' appears in Ps. 113:16 and its nature is discussed fully by Augustine in *conf.* 12 as part of his exegesis on Gen. 1:1 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.' For a full treatment of the heaven of heaven in Augustine see Pépin 1953. He sums up (228) what it means to Augustine 'c'est ainsi que le ciel et le ciel du ciel désignent à la fois la matière spirituelle, première créée, d'une cité de pures intelligences (cosmologie) et la vie obscure de l'âme qui doit se tourner vers Dieu pour en recevoir la lumière (vie spirituelle); ils constituent le lieu des âmes saintes après leur pèlerinage terrestre (eschatologie), mais également des apôtres encore en mission, des spirituels dans l'Église, de l'esprit et de l'intelligence dans notre propre personne (vie spirituelle); ils réunissent dans un même séjour les anges (cosmologie), les élus (eschatologie) et les convertis (vie spirituelle).' Pépin draws out the many different ways Augustine describes the heaven of heaven in *conf.* 12 alone *creatura aliqua intellectualis conf.* 12:9:9; *mens pura conf.* 12:11:12; *caelum intellectual conf.* 12:13:16; *intellectualis natura conf.* 12:15:20; *created wisdom (sapientia) conf.* 12:15:20; *mens rationalis et intellectualis; conf.* 12:15:20; *spiritualis vel intellectualis creatura conf.* 12:17:24; *intelligibilis creatura conf.* 12:20:29 and *conf.* 12:28:39; *caelum intelligibile conf.* 12:21:30 and *conf.* 12:29:40; *domus Dei conf.* 12:11:12; *conf.* 12:11:13; *conf.* 12:15:19; *conf.* 12:17:25. This all reinforces Armstrong 1954: 280 who observes how naturally Augustine amalgamates scriptural and Platonic languages, even in the same sentence switching from *caelum caeli* to *mens*.

¹²⁴ *ciu.* 14:1.

¹²⁵ *ciu.* 15:1:1. The unity of the whole Church on High is prefigured in the son of Seth who represents the earthly city of those who live by the spirit and are destined to be joined to the redeemed community on high on the basis that he was the man who who hoped to call upon the name of the Lord God which is the supreme business in this world *ciu.* 15:21; the scriptures are our letters from home. (Also on this see *en. Ps.* 73:5)

¹²⁶ *ciu.* 14:1:1.

¹²⁷ *s.* 103:3:4.

God, not just any kind of bond of love will do; it must be love from a pure heart.¹²⁸ The community that would be saved is therefore no different to the individual, for the love that binds a community together as one, can only be the love that is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore faith in the one God that begins to make a single-hearted community¹²⁹ and so it is true religion, through which the one true God is worshipped, that will lead to the fellowship of the heavenly city.¹³⁰

Acts 4:32a

Acts 4:32a ‘Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and one soul (*Multitudinis autem credentium erat anima una et cor unum*),’ was the line from scripture which Augustine used as authority to develop the idea of a collective single heart. When he first quoted it however, it was not to demonstrate the collective nature of the single heart but to show how dear singleness is to the saints and by singleness he meant a mind which, instead of being filled with countless images, was ‘withdrawn from the multitude and crowd of things which are born and die (*Singulares ergo et simplices, id est, secreti a multitudine ac turba nascentium rerum ac morientium*).’¹³¹ However, at some point, Augustine came to understand and stress singleness of heart in a collective sense and Verheijen has persuasively demonstrated that this development can be traced back to a letter Augustine received from Paulinus of Nola in 394 in which Paulinus applies Acts 4:32a in precisely that way.¹³² Verheijen analyses the correspondence between Augustine and Paulinus and shows how, even a decade later, Augustine is picking up on terminology from Paulinus and quoting it back to him, thus demonstrating the degree to which Augustine was affected by Paulinus’ use of Acts 4:32a to connote a collective singleness of heart.¹³³ This began to have an impact on

¹²⁸ *en. Ps.* 140:2.

¹²⁹ *en. Ps.* 74:4; Also *en. Ps.* 103:1:2; *Io. eu. tr.* 110:2.

¹³⁰ *ciu.* 5:15.

¹³¹ *en. Ps.* 4:10. That this is the first occurrence is noted by Verheijen 1979: 6 and I have accepted it although he gives no indication of the date of this *en. Ps.* and the *en. Pss.* generally are notoriously difficult to date, WSA 3/15: 15.

¹³² *ep.* 30. See Verheijen 1979.

¹³³ Verheijen 1979: 9-16.

Augustine's thinking from about 397¹³⁴ in, what was only his second use of Acts 4:32a, in *s.* 308A, where he combines the individual meaning of singleness of heart with the collective meaning and where the collective meaning predominates.¹³⁵ Within a year thereafter, Augustine had written his Rule in which he wrote, 'Before all else, live together in harmony (Ps. 67(68:7), being of one mind and one heart on the way to God (*Primum, propter quod in unum estis congregati, ut unianimes habitetis in domo et sit vobis anima una et cor unum in Deum*),'¹³⁶ explaining in a later sermon that this pattern of living set out in Acts 4:32a is the one which he desired to follow and indeed that it was the kind of community in which he lived with his priests, deacons and subdeacons (including his nephew Patrick).¹³⁷

However, when Augustine quoted Acts 4:32a to express his ideal community, he was not simply thinking of a monastic community, but of the kind of community that reflected the unity of God the Trinity and from which people could come to know and love God the Trinity.¹³⁸ This could only be a community fused by the Holy Spirit into one bond of love;

¹³⁴ There is no hint of the collective meaning in *s. dom. m.* which was written between 393-6.

¹³⁵ Verheijen 1979: 7-9.

¹³⁶ *reg.* 1:2. Also in Augustine's equivalent rule for nuns set out in *ep.* 211, 'You live together in the true sense of the word only if you have but one heart.' (*en. Ps.* 100:11) NB derivation of the word 'monk' in *en. Ps.* 132; psalm 132 being the psalm which he regarded as 'giving birth to monasteries,' (*en. Ps.* 132:2) Augustine considered the words, 'See how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity and what *in unum* might mean in that context. The name 'monk' comes from this psalm *en. Ps.* 132:3 because *μόνος* means 'one' alone and where people live together in such unity that they form a single individual and 'have one mind and one heart-many bodies but not many minds, many bodies but not many hearts-then they are rightly called *μόνος*, 'one alone.'" *en. Ps.* 132:6.

¹³⁷ *s.* 356:1-3; 'Soon after his ordination as presbyter, Augustine founded a monastery within the Church, and began to live there among the servants of God according to the rule and custom established by the holy Apostles. The principal regulation of that society specified that no one should own anything, but that all things should be held in common and distributed according to personal needs. Augustine had formerly done this when he returned home from across the sea.' (Possidius *Vita* 5). Augustine had discovered the existence of monasteries from Ponticianus prior to his conversion in 386: 'From there his conversation moved on to speak of the flocks in the monasteries and their manner of life well pleasing to you and the fertile deserts of the wilderness. Of these we knew nothing. There was a monastery full of good brothers at Milan outside the city walls, fostered by Ambrose, and we had not known of it.' *conf.* 8:6:14 and 15. Chadwick notes (comment on *conf.* 6:14:24) that quietist groups of Neopythagoreans had similar arrangements and that as Augustine did not know about the existence of Christian monastic communities when he was in Milan, the contemplative community he was planning on setting up there with his friends would have been along the lines of a Neopythagorean group which would have been familiar to him. For his plans see *conf.* 6:14:24. In fact he had always regarded wisdom as a communal pursuit *sol.* 1: 12: 20; 1:13:22; *conf.* 6.10:17; 6:16.26; *ep.* 258 (This letter contains a Christian interpretation of Cicero's definition of friendship).

¹³⁸ Augustine, going back to the origins of the community founded in Acts, also argued by analogy that if the Holy Spirit could fuse together thousands of souls into one by charity as they approached God; as that charity comes from God how much more are the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be regarded as One *Io. eu. tr.* 39:5. Also

which would then be a community not only in fellowship with one another but also in fellowship with God;¹³⁹ in other words, he was talking about ecclesial unity so that people could only be one if they were one in God (*in Deum*).¹⁴⁰ Augustine refers to Jesus' words in John 17:21 'That they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us' (*Ut omnes unum sint, sicut tu, Pater, in me, et ego in te, ut et ipsi in nobis unum sint*). There are two points that he draws out in his interpretation of these words. First, he considers the words, 'That they may all be one as we are one and explains that just as Father and Son are one not only through equality of substance but also through identity of will so we (through the mediation of Christ), might be one not only by being of the same nature as each other but also through being bound in the fellowship of the same love.¹⁴¹ Second, he notes that Christ wants us to be one in him because we cannot be one in ourselves due to our clashing wills and desires and so we need him as a mediator in order to be one in him and this is shown by the words in John 17:23, 'I in them and you in me, that they may be perfected into one.'¹⁴²

Io. eu. tr. 14:9; 18:4 *conl. Max.* 12; *ep.* 238.

¹³⁹ In *ep. Io. tr.* 1:3 Augustine commented on the opening address in I John 1:3, 'we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ' that it might seem to be of no great moment to have this fellowship with other men but it was not to be despised because of the words that John added that 'our fellowship was with God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son; These things we write to you that your joy may be full.' That fullness of joy is in the fellowship, the charity, the unity itself.' In *ep. Rm. inch.* 12 Augustine, referring to I John 1:3, says that this is John's way of calling to mind the Trinity in the opening lines of a letter using the word "fellowship" instead of "grace and peace" to indicate the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴⁰ *s.* 71:33 The Holy Spirit only dwells in the Church. He used this against the Donatists and all those who had separated themselves in schism, heresy or idolatry e.g. *bapt.* 1:8:10; *en. Ps.* 132:6 and to urge Donatists to enter into communion since the Christian emperors had passed laws ordering them to transfer their property to Catholic Church *correct.* 9. The Church is one human soul made from many *en. Ps.* 103:1:4; 'We are one in Christ, we are the body of Christ, we who want that one thing, we who ask for that one thing, we who are one in one (*Unus sumus in Christo, corpus Christi sumus, qui unam illam desideramus, qui unam illam petimus, ... (qui unus in uno sumus). ...*' *en. Ps.* 26:2:23; 'Did he ascend alone? Yes, in a way, but not without us, as long as we are so closely united with him that we are members of his body. He is alone, yet he is with us, forming one person, and one for ever. Unity binds us to the one Lord. The only people who do not ascend are those who have refused to be one with him' *en. Ps.* 122:1; 'All of us will be one in the one (Christ), and all of us will be intent upon him who is one, for nevermore shall we be a crowd of scattered individuals (*omnes unus in uno ad unum erimus; quia deinceps multi dispersi non erimus*) *en. Ps.* 147:28; the prayer of the Church is the prayer of a single person as well as of each individual *en. Ps.* 122:2; Bread and wine are signs of unity that we are called too; bread being made from many grains collected together and made into dough with water and many grapes being pounded together into wine *s.* 227; *s.* 229; *s.* 228B; *s.* 229A.

¹⁴¹ *trin.* 4:9:12.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* Also *Io. eu. tr.* 110:2. Of Jesus' words I pray 'that they also may be one in us;' Augustine says 'he added the words 'in us' in order that we may know that our being made one in that love of unchanging faithfulness is to be attributed to the grace of God, and not to ourselves just as the apostle, after saying, 'For ye were at one time

Augustine recognizes that oneness is only achievable in God by adding *in Deum* to Acts 4:32a whenever he quotes it.¹⁴³ '*In Deum*' literally means 'into God' or 'up to' or 'towards;' the Latin 'in' with the accusative being dynamic and indicating direction, aim or purpose and thus this phrase expresses the same 'theocentric dynamism'¹⁴⁴ that *intentio* might otherwise convey for 'à propos du passage des Actes, in Deum est bien intentionnel.'¹⁴⁵

Communal intentio: The Church as the watching community

Reflecting upon the analogy of vision which has really come to the fore at this stage of ascent as an analogy for seeking understanding, we can regard *intentio* as the very raison d'être of the Church on pilgrimage, as it is of the individual soul at this stage whose sole concern is 'to direct his gaze calmly and squarely to what is to be seen (*serenum atque rectum aspectum in id quod videndum est, dirigere*'). There were two names for the ancient city of Jerusalem: Sion and Jersusalem. Sion means 'watching' and Jerusalem means 'vision of peace.' The Church being the New Jerusalem, Augustine therefore applied the name Sion to that part of the Church which was still on pilgrimage here below and Jerusalem to the Church on High on the grounds that watching comes before seeing,¹⁴⁶ 'But as for Sion, if it means observation, as some translate it, we should understand it as nothing other than the Church, whose attention is daily lifted with longing toward the contemplation of God's glory (*Sion autem, si speculationem, ut quidam interpretantur, significat, nihil magis quam Ecclesiam*

darkness, but now are ye light,' that none might attribute the doing of this to themselves, added, 'in the Lord (Eph. 5:8). See *Io. eu. tr.* 110 on the difference between 'one in' and 'one with' and the difference between 'One with' and 'communion with.' Also see *s.* 71:18 'So by what is common to them both (the Holy Spirit) the Father and the Son wished us to have communion both with them and among ourselves; by this gift which they both possess as one, they wished to gather us together and make us one, that is to say, by the Holy Spirit who is God and the gift of God.' (*Quod ergo commune est Patri et Filio, per hoc nos voluerunt habere communionem et inter nos et secum, et per illud donum nos colligere in unum, quod ambo habent unum, hoc est, per Spiritum Sanctum Deum et donum Dei.*)

¹⁴³ Verheijen 1979 :15 again thinks that Paulinus is responsible for, in the letter he wrote to Augustine, he adds *in domino* to Acts 4:32a and in other places he adds *in Christo* and *in uno deo*. For Augustine's addition of *in Deum* to Acts 4:32a see Bavel 1958.

¹⁴⁴ For this phrase see Verheijen 1979: 16.

¹⁴⁵ Bavel 1958: 164

¹⁴⁶ *en. Ps.* 9:12; *en. Ps.* 50:22; *en. Ps.* 98:4; *en. Ps.* 131:21; *en. Ps.* 134:26; *en. Ps.* 147:8; *Gn. adu. Man.* 2:10:13.

debemus accipere, ubi quotidie intentio erigitur speculandae claritatis Dei).¹⁴⁷

If the Church is *speculatio*, then its clergy, especially the bishops, are the *speculatores* or watchers, though their job is to watch the people, rather than to act as a focus through which their community contemplates God.¹⁴⁸ *Speculatio* and *speculator* are Latin translations of the Greek word *scopos* (σκόπος) meaning, in this context, one that watches, one that looks after things, or a lookout-man or watchman stationed in a watchtower (*specula* or *skopia*) to warn of oncoming danger.¹⁴⁹ Although Augustine consistently uses *speculatio/speculator* to translate *scopos*, when he is seeking to explain the Latin word for bishop (*episcopus*) and the Greek *episkopos* (ἐπίσκοπος from) he expressly states that ‘*scopos* is *intentio* (*scopos quippe ‘intentio’ est*)’ so that on the basis that ἐπί means *over*, and σκοπεῖν, *to see*, ἐπίσκοπεῖν meaning ‘to oversee’ translates as *superintendere*, because a bishop is a man who oversees, watches or ‘superintends’ others.¹⁵⁰ In LXX the word *scopos* is applied by the prophets to themselves, particularly by Ezekiel, for one of their roles is to be God’s lookout man to warn the people of the impending danger they are in because of their sins, ‘And you son of man, I have given you as a watchman for the people of Israel (*et tu fili hominis speculatorem dedi te domui Israel.*)’¹⁵¹ In later Christian texts, the priest or bishop becomes the *scopos* or *speculator*.¹⁵² Augustine, indeed, applied Ezekiel’s words to the clergy and bishops and took this watchman’s role of keeping an eye on the people extremely seriously, including justifying his speaking out against the Donatists and other heretics.¹⁵³ The whole Church in fact has this role of watchman against the Donatists to try to stop them leaving the unity of the Church¹⁵⁴ but the Church’s role of watchman is broader than that. The real reason why the Church on pilgrimage has the name of Sion, is because from her lookout post, she is stretching out, not to

¹⁴⁷ *en. Ps.* 2:5.

¹⁴⁸ This would be for the bishops to act as mediators which Augustine expressly denied for Christ is our only mediator.

¹⁴⁹ *Lampe*. See chapter four *supra* for *scopos* in its alternative meaning.

¹⁵⁰ *ciu.* 19:19; *en. Ps.* 126:3; *s.* 94; *s.* 162C:2.

¹⁵¹ Ezek. 33:7.

¹⁵² Harl 1961.

¹⁵³ *s.* 46:20; *spec.* 21; *s.* 88:23; *s.* 313E:7; *s.* 339; *s.* 350; *ciu.* 1:9.

¹⁵⁴ *s.* 137:12:15

the present, but toward the future (to the age to come) and ‘every watchman keeps his eyes on the distant prospect’ (*extendentes nos non ad praesens quod est, sed ad id quod futurum est. Ideo speculatio. Omnis enim speculator longe prospicit.*)¹⁵⁵

In fact, every individual soul is also Sion, if it focuses its gaze in order to see the light which it is meant to see (*Est autem Sion omnis anima, si intendit videre lucem quae videnda est*).¹⁵⁶ But the community takes priority over the individual and Augustine uses the analogy of sight and *intentio* to make this point. He wants to emphasize that the Church is one body with one heart and mind in the bond of love, even though the members do not know one another and he uses the example of the eyes, which cannot see themselves. But as proof that they know each other and love each other in the context of the whole body, Augustine points to the fact that they cannot but work together so that, when both eyes are open, if one focuses on an object they both do:

You cannot turn one upon its object without the other: They go together and turn together; they have one direction, though their positions are separate (our physical eyes in our body) If then all who love God with you share with you a single direction, do not think of your bodily separation from them in space: together you have set your heart’s eye upon the light of truth (*Dirige radium dextrum sine altero, si potes. Simul coeunt, simul diriguntur; intentio una est, loca diversa sunt. Si ergo omnes qui tecum diligunt Deum, unam intentionem tecum habent, noli attendere quia corpore in loco separatus es; aciem cordis simul fixistis in lumine veritatis.*)¹⁵⁷

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter we have been considering the sixth stage of ascent which Augustine calls *ingressio* in *an. quant.* It has been about increasing purity of heart and single-

¹⁵⁵ *en. Ps.* 101:2:4 Also *ciu.* 17:16:2 ‘The name Sion means contemplation; for she contemplates the great blessing of the age to come since all her attention is directed to that end (*Ipsa est Sion spiritualiter; quod nomen latine interpretatum Speculatio est; speculatur enim futuri saeculi magnum bonum, quoniam illuc dirigitur eius intentio*).’

¹⁵⁶ *en. Ps.* 98:4.

¹⁵⁷ *ep. Io. tr.* 6:10. Also *s. dom. m.* 1:13:37 *Quamquam enim ad videndum isti oculi corporis communiter intenduntur et, si ambo intenduntur, aequaliter possint, amplius tamen formidant homines dexterum amittere.* For in order to see these eyes of ours are turned to their object at the same time and if both are turned they have equal power yet men are more concerned over losing their right eye.’

mindedness of desire to see God and we have noticed that somewhere between the writing of *an. quant.* and *trin.*, Augustine has developed the notion of collective singleheartedness and the notion of uprightness as singularity of will. We have examined the way in which he uses the plural *intentiones*, both in the early text *mus.* and in the later text *trin.*, in connection with the increasing fragmentation of the will and the way in which he has transferred *intentio* to connote the divers objects of the mind's attention and desire which has the effect of vividly expressing the way in which the will has become overidentified with them, losing itself in the process and the difficulty it has in subsequently distinguishing itself as the ground of awareness both from the images of the objects it senses and from its thinking about them. However, if it can distinguish itself, there arises the awareness, in the space that has opened up, that the mind has a choice as to how to respond to the images that it senses rather than reacting to them according to its habitual mindlessness. It is this recognition of the freedom of choice that offers a glimpse into the realization of the person we were created to become; which can only be fulfilled in, and by, God. This coming to self-knowledge is a process of the mind reclaiming its *intentio* from the many objects, which lay claim to it, so that it operates in relation to the world with a single *intentio* focused on God. Provided it has redirected its will through the true faith, so that its ultimate *intentio* is God and everything that a person does in the world is referred to that end, it is perfectly legitimate to have more than one *intentio* with respect to individual instances, provided that each instance is then referred to the ultimate end. In this case, there is no degeneration into *intentiones* because all other *intentiones* are intermediate and go towards the ultimate single *intentio*.

In connection with our examination of *simplex intentio* as the antidote to *dolus* or doublemindedness and in relation to communal singleness, what is striking in each case is the extent to which *intentio* is related to vision and the appropriateness of vision as an analogy for understanding. The heart's singleness and purity is completely dependent on the *intentio* of its will and Augustine interprets the scriptural expression 'eye of the heart' as this *intentio*. The *rectum spiritum* is the morally upright will appropriately directed towards God and the *rectum aspectum* is the look which is directed straight towards the object it wishes to see. In both cases, unless our attention is pointed in the right direction, we will fail to find what we are looking for. The analogy of vision allows Augustine to make the point that understanding is a

communal enterprise and, although he does not make a great deal of use of *intentio* with regard to the Church's role as a watching community, preferring *speculatio*, he was very much aware that the underlying Greek word for both was *scopos* and it is clear that this is one of the prime sources supporting his use of *intentio* as the centrepiece of cognition in *trin.*, which is couched in the traditional analogy of vision.

From this chapter it has become clear that *intentio* is indeed the key to the whole ascent and to its success; it can make or break it because each stage of the ascent is a movement of the will towards God. If it makes it, then it has the effect of gathering all our good works into one good work: 'all our good works are reducible to one work only: the work of charity; for charity is the perfect fulfilment of the law...all works are one work; that is to say, they are all directed to this one. Works are right and straight when directed to this end. "The end of the commandment is charity welling up from a pure heart, and from a good conscience and from genuine faith (1 Tim. 1:5)." Thus the sole work, in which all others are comprised, is faith working through love, which is why the Lord says in the gospel, "This is the work God wants, that you believe in the one he has sent." (John 6:29)'¹⁵⁸ In the process, each individual member of the ecclesial community, as well as the community itself, continues to live in a state of tension for on high are the first fruits of the spirit of each member of the faithful community through their baptism, their hearts are in Sion in faith, hope and love and their bodies are in Babylon.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ *en. Ps.* 89:17.

¹⁵⁹ *en. Ps.* 64:3.

Chapter Seven: *Contemplatio*

One day the Master cried out the moment my shot was loosed: “It is there! Bow down to the goal!”¹

There are different grades of mastery, and only when you have made the last grade will you be sure of not missing the goal.²

Now at last we are in the very vision and contemplation of truth (*contemplatio ueritatis*), which is the seventh and last level of the soul; and here we no longer have a level but in reality a home at which one arrives via those levels. What shall I say are the delights, what the enjoyment, of the supreme and true Goodness, what the everlasting peace it breathes upon us? Great and peerless souls-and we believe that they have actually seen and are still seeing these things -have told us this so far as they deemed it should be spoken of. This would I tell you now: if we hold most faithfully to the course which God enjoins on us and which we have undertaken to follow, we shall come by God’s power and wisdom to that supreme Cause or that supreme Author or supreme Principle of all things, or whatever other more appropriate appellative there may be for so great a reality. And when we understand that (*quo intellecto*), we shall see truly how all things under the sun are the vanity of the vain. For ‘vanity is deceit; and ‘the vain’ are to be understood as persons who are deceived, or persons who deceive, or both. Further one may discern how great a difference there is between these and the things that truly exist (*ea quae uere sunt*); and yet, since all the other things have also been created and have God as their maker, they are wonderful and beautiful when considered by themselves although in comparison with the things that truly exist, they are nothing. Then shall we acknowledge how true are the things (*uera*) we have been commanded to believe, and how excellently we have been nourished in perfect health by Mother Church, and how nourishing is that milk which the Apostle Paul declared he gave as drink to children. To take such food when one is fed by a mother is most proper; to do so when one is already grown would be shameful; to refuse it when needed would be regrettable; to find fault with it at any time or dislike it would be wicked and impious; but to discuss it and communicate it in kindness betokens a wealth of goodness and charity....And that the soul may not be impeded from giving full allegiance to the fullness of truth, death-meaning complete escape and acquittal from this body- which previously was feared, is now desired as the greatest boon.³

The seventh stage of ascent in *an. quant.* is the last of the five rational levels which, together, correspond to the third degree of soul identified by Varro.⁴ Augustine says of the

¹ Herrigel 1976:79.

² Herrigel 1976: 84

³ *an. quant.* 33:76.

⁴ *ciu.* 7:23. O’Daly 1987: 13.

soul, at this stage, that religion nurtures it (*pascit in septimo*),⁵ and he calls the seventh stage ‘contemplation’ (*contemplatio*) or ‘with God’ (*apud Deum*);⁶ thus finally imitating the Word who *in principio erat apud Deum* (John 1:1). Although Augustine calls this stage ‘a home’ (*mansio*), he also makes it clear that there are degrees of contemplation and that the home does not become a permanent dwelling-place until the soul is separated from the body in death which, therefore, rather than being the thing most feared as at stage four, is now the thing that is most desired because, while we are still embodied in this life, the soul is prevented from seeing God fully.⁷

ueritas/ ea quae uere sunt/uera

At stage 7 *an. quant.*, Augustine speaks not only of the vision of truth (*ueritas*) in the singular; but also of ‘the things that truly exist (*ea quae uere sunt*)’ in the plural, as opposed to the vanity of ‘all things under the sun’ (i.e. the visible creation) and of the truths (*uera*) that we will come to recognize, which we have hitherto believed on authority (i.e. the truths of faith). The *ueritas* Augustine goes on to identify is that ‘supreme Cause or that supreme Author or supreme Principle of all things;’ the name is not important but the reality is for this is God, the ultimate reality.⁸ The reference to plural truths (*ea quae uere sunt*) evokes what Plato called the ‘ideas’ which translate literally into Latin as *formae* or *species*. Augustine prefers to call them *rationes* because, while this is not a strictly correct translation, it expresses the underlying reality that these ideas are the ‘certain original and principal forms of things, i.e. reasons, fixed and unchangeable, which are not themselves formed, and being thus eternal

⁵ *an. quant.* 36:80. Augustine often uses feeding imagery for our understanding egs. *conf.* 7:10:16; ‘I am the food of the fully grown; grow and you will feed on me;’ *conf.* 7:13:24 ‘The food which I was too weak to accept he mingled with flesh, in that The Word became flesh so that our infant condition might come to suck milk from your wisdom by which you created all things;’ *conf.* 9:10:24 the region of inexhaustible abundance where you feed Israel eternally with truth for food;’ *en. Ps.* 113:2:12 ‘they draw the genuine richly nourishing quality of their wisdom not from any man or woman nor from any human source but from God himself.’ *beata u.* 2:8 Monnica as usual has got there first ‘Obviously I believe that the soul is not nourished except by understanding and knowledge.’

⁶ *an. quant.* 35:79.

⁷ Brown 2000: 143 quotes a previous sentence of this same passage ‘What shall I say are the delights, what the enjoyment, of the supreme and true Goodness, what the everlasting peace it breathes upon us?’ to show that Augustine once held the view that complete enjoyment of this state was possible in this life but this last sentence clearly shows this was not his view. On fear of death and Augustine’s changing attitude see chapter 5 n. 12 *supra*.

⁸ *an. quant.* 33:76.

and existing always in the same state, are contained in the Divine Intelligence.⁹ Everything is created in accordance with these ideas, which the purified rational soul has the ability to contemplate.¹⁰ Even if we are not able to contemplate them, Augustine says, we must believe that they exist because to deny their existence would be to deny that God had a rational plan for creation.¹¹ The reason for the plural form of *ratio* is because each type of thing that is created, is created in accordance with a reason unique to it.¹² This doesn't mean that each human being has its own *ratio* but that humankind is created according to a different *ratio* to that of a horse.¹³ The word *rationes* is, more accurately, a translation of the Greek *logoi* 'meanings' which is essentially what the *rationes* are¹⁴ but when it comes to translating the word *logos* in John 1:1, Augustine prefers to translate it as *verbum* rather than *ratio* because *verbum* not only indicates a relation between God the Father and God the Son 'but also the efficacious power with respect to those things which are made by the Word. Reason, however, is correctly called reason even if nothing is made by it.'¹⁵ Nonetheless, he does identify immutable eternal reason with the Word;¹⁶ singular because God only speaks one Word but contained within that one Word are all His utterances or *rationes*.¹⁷ Augustine is happy to adhere to Plato's notion of the two worlds: the intelligible world of ideas according to which the sensible world of images is formed, because he finds scriptural authority for it,

⁹ *diu. qu.* 83:46:2. See Solignac 1954 for the variety of Platonic sources which have furnished the elements of Augustine's otherwise original synthesis presented here. These eternal *rationes* must not be confused with the created *rationes* used by Augustine as a kind of creation *in potentia*; a way of bridging the gap between God's once and for all act of creation and the appearance of different species at different points of time, see Gilson 1961: 206.

¹⁰ *diu. qu.* 83:46:2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *ep.* 14:4. This has to be the case of course, if Augustine is to be able to argue that we were all in the first human being when he sinned.

¹⁴ *diu. qu.* 83:46:2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 63.

¹⁶ *conf.* 11:8:10. NB Of the three meanings of *ratio* in *imm. an.* 6:10 the third is 'the true itself which it contemplates' *ratio est.. aut ipsum verum quod contemplator*' so for example in *imm. an.* 2:2 *Est autem ista ratio immutabilis* (rather than the *ratio mutabilis* which is the human mind).

¹⁷ *Gn. litt.* 1:18:36; 4:24:41. NB *Ibid.* 2:6:13 which shows that the plural is a concession to our fleshbound thinking and being for 'God said one word in which he said all things before they were made singly but the scriptural style comes down to the little ones and adjusts itself to their capacity by putting before them each single kind of creature one by one and then looking back at the eternal formula of each kind in the Word of God.'

though he departs from Plato's terminology.¹⁸ According to Augustine, the *rationes* act as laws which govern our perception of reality and they include the unchangeable laws of number for 'seven and three make ten not only now but always.'¹⁹ These laws of number may be thought of as laws of beauty because they are responsible for why we find something attractive at the level of sense.²⁰ According to Augustine, the *rationes* also act as rules which govern our behavior and they include 'the rules and guiding lights of the virtues' which belong to wisdom.²¹ In other words, he regarded the *rationes* as the law of God 'which, ever abiding fixed and unshaken with Him, is transcribed, so to speak, on the souls of the wise, so that they know they live a better and more sublime life in proportion as they contemplate it more perfectly with their understanding and observe it more diligently in their manner of living.'²²

Stage 7 *an. quant.*, by its reference to the singular *ueritas* and the plurals *ea quae uere sunt* and *uera*, therefore encompasses the full epistemological range from knowledge of the true meaning of a word to knowledge of that which gives meaning to all. In terms of the analogy of vision, for us to see (know) anything requires the object we see to be enlightened by an external light the same kind as the object seen in order to be seen: the earth cannot be seen unless it is illumined by the visible sun and the intelligible scientific truths cannot be seen unless they are illumined by something else 'as by their own sun.'²³ God is the light of the mind by which we understand and observe all that we see in our mind and the soul is

¹⁸ In *retr.* 1:3:2 Augustine changes the scriptural authority he uses for the existence of the distinction between the two worlds from, 'My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36)' to 'there will be a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1) and 'thy kingdom come' (Matt. 6:10). The emphasis seems to be on the intelligible as eschatological fulfilment, rather than where we have come from and perhaps this is designed to avoid messy questions about the soul's origin.

¹⁹ *lib. arb.* 2:8:20-21; *ord.* 2:19:50; *imm. an.* 2.2; *conf.* 10:12:19.

²⁰ *lib. arb.* 2:16:41.

²¹ *Ibid.* 2:10:29; 2:18:52. 2:19. The rules include the rule that a man ought to live justly; the worse ought to be subjected to the better; like is to be compared with like; each man should be given his due; the incorrupt is better than the corrupt; the eternal better than the temporal and the inviolable better than the violable. Augustine pointed out to Euodius in *lib. arb.* that, in scripture (Eccl. 7:25), the laws of number were connected with the rules of wisdom *lib. arb.* 2:8:27 and, whether or not they were the same thing, they at least both belonged to the realm of the unchangeably true, *lib. arb.* 2:11:32.

²² *ord.* 2:8:25. *spir. et litt.* 28:48 what was impressed at creation was God's law; *trin.* 14:15:21 we received God's justice when we were created.

²³ *sol.* 1:8:15; *Gn. litt. inp.* 5:20; *trin.* 12:15:24.

capable of seeing the light itself.²⁴ It is possible though to reach understanding of intellectual truths, without knowing that God is the light in which we see them and therefore we might become learned without becoming wise for wisdom demands that everything that we know is turned to the love and praise of God.²⁵ It is also possible to come to contemplation of God without understanding intellectual truths and, in comparison with contemplation of the Truth, no matter how brief, any other kind of intellectual knowledge pales into insignificance.²⁶ Contemplation of God is the real aim of this stage and our ultimate goal. It is something given to those who persevere in faith²⁷ and, as we have already noted, these will not necessarily be the most intellectually able.²⁸ However, what the intellectually inclined individual (like Augustine) will be keen to do, is to engage more deeply and critically with their faith.²⁹

tractare autem ac dispensare commode, laudis et caritatis plenissimum est.

Stage 7 *an. quant.* recognizes that there are those who have ascended to learn directly from God Himself³⁰ and that these people have a responsibility for nourishing others so becoming the wise men to whose authority and bidding, others submit at stage four, being ‘convinced that through them God speaks to itself.’³¹ This teaching obligation is part of our

²⁴ *Gn. litt.* 12:31:59; *trin.* 15:27:50.

²⁵ *doctr. chr.* 2:38:57. In the ascents based on the gifts of the spirit in Isaiah there are two different stages of ascent corresponding to the two separate gifts conferred understanding (*intellectus*) and wisdom (*sapientia*): *s. dom. m.* 1:4:11. Here in *an. quant.* these two stages are together in one but understanding does not, even so, connote wisdom.

²⁶ *an. quant.* 33:76. Also *sol.* 1:5:11. Augustine himself had attained a degree of contemplation on many occasions and so when he speaks of the delight in the truth and certainty of the truth that even a small glimpse of the truth brings, and equally of the difficulty in maintaining the contemplative gaze, he is speaking from experience *conf.* 10:40:65; *ep.* 4:2; *en. Ps.* 134: 6 ‘Perhaps you were straining to see the good of all good things, the good from which all things derive their goodness, the good without which nothing is good, yet which is itself good without any of them. You were straining to see him and perhaps, as you stretched the highest part of your mind, you fell back through weakness. I am guessing, from my own painful experience. But there may be someone-indeed, it is more than likely that there is someone-whose fine intelligence is stronger than mine, who has fixed the contemplation of his heart for a long time on HIM WHO IS. Let such a person praise the Lord as he can, praise him as we cannot.’

²⁷ *an. quant.* 14:24; 33:76; 36:80; *ep.* 120:1:4; *trin.* 14:17:23.

²⁸ *trin.* 15:25:44.

²⁹ *an. quant.* 34:77; *ep.* 120.

³⁰ *conf.* 13:22:32 the person who contemplates and understands truth needs no human to prove it but such a person now has capacity to be taught by God to see the Trinity (*et doces eum iam capacem videre trinitatem unitatis vel unitatem trinitatis.*) Also *ciu.* 11:2; *en. Ps.* 113:2:11-12.

³¹ *an. quant.* 33:73. On the obligation of wise men to teach others see also *ord.* 2:2:7. Though we have this

compassion and care for human society, and ensures that we don't get overly caught up in desire for ecstatic experiences:

If we choose to do nothing else, and simply contemplate what we see when we are beside ourselves, we would not be available to you, but would be so rapt in heavenly things as to seem uncaring about you. And when you with your uncertain steps tried to follow us to those higher, heavenly realms, would we not still seem uncaring, but for the fact that the charity of Christ constrains us, so that we consider ourselves your servants? And so out of gratitude to Him who had granted us higher graces we would not disdain lower needs for the sake of the weak, and would accommodate ourselves to people who could not join us in the vision of heavenly realities, like Christ, who 'being in the form of God, deemed it no robbery to be God's equal, yet emptied himself and took on the form of a slave' (Phil. 2:6-7).³²

We imitate the Word when we learn directly from God himself and we imitate the incarnate Christ when we teach others from the Wisdom we have received. Paul is seen by Augustine as one of the 'great and peerless souls' who has ascended to learn from God

responsibility and *an. quant.* 33:76 states 'to discuss it and communicate it in kindness betokens a wealth of goodness and charity, this is subject to what Augustine says in *en. Ps.* 139:15 that we should desire as far as possible not to be obliged to speak, preach or teach. It is far better if everyone already knew what we know so that we could all just listen to God because it is constant listening to God that brings joy. This is what our love of neighbour demands that we desire everyone to be as well-instructed as ourselves so that we have no need to teach. 'Let your enjoyment be in listening to God and your speaking be prompted only by necessity.... your teacher is within. When you teach you go out to those who are outside. It is inside we listen to the truth and after listening we speak to people who are outside our own heart.' Coleran says (ACW 9, 213 n. 94) that the stress Augustine places on the concern for others, distinguishes him from Plotinus who emphasizes the escape of the soul for an encounter alone with the Alone. Winkler 1954: 517 says although Plotinus in his personal life took seriously his obligations to teach, in his system the role is less important. O'Meara points out 1996: 108-110 that although Plotinus was not concerned with politics as Plato was, he did make some provision for the communication to others through teaching and example of the wisdom received on ascent and his escape ethics shouldn't be separated from his ethics of return to the world. See O'Meara 2003 for reappraisal of the thought of Plotinus and other Platonist philosophers of late antiquity in this whole area.

³² This is Augustine's interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:13-14 ('Whether we are beside ourselves, for God, or in our right mind, for you, the charity of Christ constrains us') *en. Ps.* 30:2:2. In Augustine's view there was a place in the Church for the contemplative life, lived in such a way that the whole body of the Church benefitted *ep.* 48:1. But whether or not a particular person was called to it was a matter of discernment and one's response to a calling had to be closely monitored for signs of egoism *ep.* 48:2. The contemplative life was not a life of rest, as it would be hereafter, but a life of activity- including prayer, fasting, almsgiving, forgiveness, vigilance against the devil; learning to love one another and praising God; in short purification of body and soul. It is not to be confused with the contemplative life of rest hereafter 'Come down, Peter. You were eager to go on resting on the mountain; come down... Peter didn't understand this yet, when he was eager to live with Christ on the mountain. He was keeping that for you, Peter, after death' *s.* 78:6. We saw in the last chapter that Augustine uses Mary and Martha as representatives of the two lives: 'In these two women two kinds of life are represented: present life and future life, toilsome and restful, miserable and beatific, temporal and eternal life.' *s.* 104:4. Also *trin.* 1:10:20; *s.* 103. He also similarly uses Peter and John *Io. eu. tr.* 124:5 5 and Leah and Rachel *c. Faust.* 22:54.

Himself and then descended in order to teach others from the wisdom he has received.³³ Isaiah is another and it is his descent that provides the model of ascent that Christians can follow, ‘it was to exercise us in successive steps of doctrine that Isaiah came down from wisdom to fear, from the place, that is, of everlasting peace to the vale of time-bound tears so that we, by grieving, groaning, weeping in penitent confession, might not remain grieving, groaning, weeping, but might climb up from this vale to the spiritual mountain, on which the holy city Jerusalem, our eternal mother, is built, and might there enjoy undisturbed happiness.’³⁴ The person who has learnt from God himself has a duty to teach such things to others, despite the inadequacy of human speech to convey an experience of God or indeed its inadequacy to communicate one’s own understanding of meaning of any kind,³⁵ being inadequate both in the length of time it takes to articulate the words in comparison with the speed of the initial insight and in the difficulty of finding the right words to match up with our understanding.³⁶ Augustine allegorised the story of Rachel and Leah to explain that, rather than shirk the duty to teach through difficulty of communication, Wisdom chooses to teach the things of God through bodily images and likenesses³⁷ hence it is a basic principle of Augustine’s spirituality that the things of sense are not to be turned away from but to be used as a first step in the ascent towards knowledge of God.³⁸

Power of the soul involved at this stage

To learn directly from God Himself is one of the metaphorical ways in which

³³ *Io. eu. tr.* 7:23. Paul in 2 Cor. 12:2 says ‘I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven’ though it is clear from what he goes on to say in 2 Cor. 12:6-7 that he is referring to himself. In *Gn. litt.* 12 Augustine uses the question of the nature of Paul’s vision as a starting-point for a discussion of the different kinds of vision. Colleran suggests that as Augustine still had a high opinion at this stage that the Platonist philosophy did not conflict with Christianity, he was possibly also thinking of Plotinus see ACW 9, 214 n. 101.

³⁴ *s.* 347:2.

³⁵ This is made clear in *lib. arb.* 2:11:30 where knowledge has been received about number. *Acad.* 1:5:15 (Trygetius says) ‘once the notion itself leaves as it were the harbour of our mind and spreads the sails of words, immediately it is menaced a thousand times with the shipwreck of misrepresentation.’ In fact it is better to maintain a respectful silence with regard to the ineffable godhead *c. Adim.* 13:2.

³⁶ *cat. rud.* 2:3.

³⁷ *c. Faust.* 22:54.

³⁸ e.g. *Gn. litt.* 4:32:49.

Augustine refers to our act of understanding.³⁹ The understanding (*intellegentia*) of intellectual, unchangeable and eternal truths is the highest activity that the soul is capable of and it belongs to the rational faculty of the soul which Augustine calls *ratio, mens, spiritus, cor, intellectus* or *intelligentia*. *Intellectus* like *ratio* can mean the faculty of understanding which distinguishes us from beasts⁴⁰ or it can mean the vision of the soul (in the sense of an act of understanding).⁴¹ It is the kind of vision with which we judge other visions to produce *scientia* and includes the vision of things like the mind itself, the virtues or vices present in the soul, ‘charity, joy, peace, long-suffering, faithfulness, gentleness, restraint and the rest by which one draws near to God and God himself.’⁴² Intellectual vision does not stand in need of any other kind of vision to authenticate it, as spiritual and physical visions do, for it is either true or it is not intellectual vision.⁴³ Augustine said we could think of *Intellectus* as the Latin equivalent of what the Greeks call *voũς*; ⁴⁴ it is similarly an intuitive knowledge, ‘I heard as one hears in the heart and all doubt left me (*audivi, sicut auditur in corde, et non erat prorsus unde dubitare*)’⁴⁵ and may be thought of as a revelation, recognition, prophecy or teaching.⁴⁶ Although these formulations emphasize the passive receipt of knowledge rather than the active acquisition of it, it is, nonetheless, to be thought of as an act of understanding in accordance with Augustine’s observation in *an. quant.* that each level of ascent is an act.⁴⁷ In *trin.*, this act has become expressly an act of *intentio*. As an activity, *intellectus* is the higher of two activities of the rational or intellectual faculty: discursive reasoning and understanding.⁴⁸ Augustine stresses in *trin.* that the two activities both belonged to the same

³⁹ *Io. eu. tr.* 15:19 hence Augustine interprets ‘call your husband’ in the story of the Woman at the Well in John 4:16; as ‘summon the intelligence by which you can be taught, can be directed – (*adhibe intellectum per quem docearis, quo regaris.*) *en. Ps.* 118:17:3 God teaches us knowledge by empowering us from within to understand. (*Docet ergo Deus, docet scientiam insinuando cognitionem.*)

⁴⁰ *lib. arb.* 2:5:12; *trin.* 15:1:1; *en. Ps.* 42:6.

⁴¹ *sol.* 1:6:13; *s.* 53A:12 (*haec mens uocatur, intelligentia uocatur*); *Gn. litt.* 12:6:15 and 16 intellectual vision is sight of incorporeal objects through the gaze of the mind *per contuitum mentis*.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Gn. litt.* 12:25:51-52; *Gn. litt.* 12:14:29.

⁴⁴ *trin.* 4:21:31; *cons. eu.* 1:23:35.

⁴⁵ *conf.* 7:10:16.

⁴⁶ *Gn. litt.* 12:8:19.

⁴⁷ *an. quant.* 34:78.

⁴⁸ *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:17:28; *ciu.* 11:2; *s.* 43:3.

rational faculty but that it is only in relation to the higher activity, where a person is contemplating eternal truths, that he can be said to be in the image of God.⁴⁹

The role of *intentio* at stage 7: *Intellegentia hominis, quae per intentionem cogitationis inde formatur*)’

It is true that man’s understanding, which is formed from memory through the *intentio* of thought on it when what is known is uttered, and which is an inner word (*cordis verbum*) of no particular language, has in its enormous inequality some kind of likeness to the Son.⁵⁰

In this chapter, discussion of *intentio* will be focused around the above quotation from *trin.* We will look, first, at the nature of that understanding as actualized knowledge, then at how the *intentio cogitationis* is trained to retrieve and actualize latent knowledge and finally at the inadequate nature of the understanding reached *per intentionem cogitationis* when it comes to understanding God, concluding that the safest *intentio* is the one that goes on seeking in this life until it comes to rest in the next, fixing and maintaining the soul’s attention eternally on God.

Understanding as actualized knowledge

In the second half of *trin.*, Augustine was concerned to train people to discover themselves as trinitarian images of God. The place to begin was with love, he said, because, even if we can’t see it, there is a trinity present in love;⁵¹ love being a kind of coupling of two things together, namely, the lover and what is being loved.⁵² He continued his quest for the trinitarian image by first examining the trinity of mind, its knowledge and its love of itself in *trin.* 9 and then settling on the three mental acts: memory, understanding and will of self in *trin.* 10. as the best way of exploring the mind’s knowing and loving of itself, in the hope that this would shed light on the way in which the mind can come to reflect the Trinitarian nature of God. The distinctions between these three mental acts are not easily discernible when they relate to the mind itself because the mind is always remembering, understanding and loving

⁴⁹ *Gn. litt.* 3:22:34; *trin.* 12:4:4.

⁵⁰ *trin.* 15:23:43.

⁵¹ *trin.* 8:8:12.

⁵² *trin.* 8:10:14.

itself, though it does not always think about itself.⁵³ It is only when it thinks about itself that it *knows* that it remembers, understands and loves itself, hence the Delphic oracle ‘Know thyself’ is a command to the mind to think about itself and also to live according to its nature.⁵⁴ There is, therefore, a distinction between knowledge which is latent in the mind and the knowledge that the mind has of itself when it thinks about itself. Augustine compares this to a man learned in many disciplines about whom we do not say, when he is thinking about medicine, that he doesn’t know the art of grammar.⁵⁵

To train his readers to see that there is a difference between these two types of knowledge (latent and actualized) that the mind has of itself; which comes down to a difference between two mental acts in relation to itself: memory and understanding, involving two distinct acts of will, Augustine proceeded in *trin.* 11 to examine the mechanics of the soul’s activities of sense perception and spiritual vision.⁵⁶ He then explored the distinction between the two acts of intellect leading respectively to *scientia* and *sapientia* in *trin.* 12. He went on to stress in *trin.* 13, that any such intellectual/rational activity must begin from faith in the incarnate Christ and then returned to the question of the mind knowing itself and thinking about itself in *trin.* 14. There he considered first the mind’s exercise of its powers of memory, understanding and will in relation to its faith (that with which it believes rather than what it believes).⁵⁷ Faith, like the mind, is incorporeal, but, unlike the mind, it is temporal. When the mind exercises its powers of memory, understanding and will in relation to its faith, this activity parallels its activity of sense perception but, instead of the sense object, the sense informed to produce vision and the *intentio voluntatis* which joins the other two together, there is faith in the memory, thought formed in recollection and the will which connects and joins the other two together.⁵⁸ If our faith is a thing of the past, then a parallel may be drawn with the activity of spiritual vision for, just as we are able to recall from memory the image of

⁵³ *trin.* 14:10:13.

⁵⁴ *trin.* 10:5:7.

⁵⁵ *trin.* 10:5:7. Augustine goes on to develop this analogy in *trin.* 14 for which see *infra*.

⁵⁶ See chapters 2 and 3 *supra*.

⁵⁷ *trin.* 14:8:11.

⁵⁸ *trin.* 14:3:5.

a body that is no longer present, so we can recall from memory, the image of our faith that is no longer present.⁵⁹

This, then, is progress in understanding because it shows an ability to distinguish between an act of committing to memory and an act of subsequent understanding in relation to something present *in* itself in the mind, but there is not yet an ability to distinguish between the two acts in relation to the mind itself, which is always present *to* itself. So Augustine returns to the analogy of a man learned in many disciplines (*multarum disciplinarum peritus*) explaining that everything that such a man knows is contained in his memory but nothing is in the view of his mind except what he is actually thinking about⁶⁰ and he once again points out the absurdity of saying that such a man, who is skilled in both geometry and music, becomes deskilled in them, when he is not actually engaged in them and reacquires the skill when he begins to think about them again. It is much truer to say that such a man is learned in both disciplines, whether he happens to be thinking about them or not and to be learned in a discipline means that you remember the subject, understand it and love it.⁶¹ The analogy works because to be skilled in the *disciplinae* means that a person has been trained to discover⁶² immutable, intelligible truths and the discovery is not just of present truth but of our present *knowledge* of the truth: a knowledge that we have without thought but something we know within ourselves (*novit eas quisquis sine ulla cogitatione qualiscumque corporis intus agnovit eas.*)⁶³ Because learning is remembering,⁶⁴ the analogy can also be expanded to include cases of the unlearned who do not know that they know the *disciplinae* and cases where (to extend Augustine's own example) a person has spent so long thinking about

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ *trin.* 14:6:8.

⁶¹ *trin.* 14:7:9.

⁶² *imm. an.* 4:6. An *artem (disciplinam)* is 'not something that is observed by experience but something that is found out by reason' *uera rel.* 30:54; 39:73.

⁶³ *conf.* 10:12:19.

⁶⁴ All learning is remembering not because the soul pre-existed but because it is intelligible and is connected in some way to intelligible and immutable intelligible truths so that when its attention is directed to them, it can see them: *an. quant.* 20:34 as clarified by *retr.* 1:8:2. Also *trin.* 12:15:24 but also as early as *imm. an.* 6:10 Augustine posits that the mind could not have seen the truth unless it had some kind of connection with the true (*non id posset contempleri animus per seipsum, nisi aliqua coniunctione cum eo.*)

geometry that he has forgotten music.⁶⁵ In both these cases, a person can be reminded by skilful questioning to direct their attention appropriately, as in the case of the mind which has to be reminded to think about itself and about God.⁶⁶

The case of the mind which, when it turns its thought onto itself, recognizes that it is present to itself and is always remembering, understanding and loving itself is therefore more akin to *sapientia*: wisdom of eternal things than *scientia*: knowledge of temporal things. As Augustine has already demonstrated with regard to faith (and the same thing applies to knowledge of temporal things which are brought into the mind or of virtue which arises in the mind), the other trinities formed are inadequate reflections of the image because they are set up in temporal things which have not, do not and will not always exist.⁶⁷ However, these other trinities have served a useful paedagogic purpose because, in these cases, the act of committing to memory is clearly distinct from the subsequent act of understanding, which is its recollection in thought.⁶⁸ When the mind thinks about itself, then, it sees that it is always remembering, understanding and willing itself and it is the thinking about itself that activates our understanding for, as Augustine said, ‘it is when we think about something we have found to be true, that we are primarily said to understand it (*intellegentiae vero proprio modo quodam cogitationis informationem. Cogitando enim quod verum invenerimus, hoc maxime intellegere dicimur*).⁶⁹ This then is how understanding belongs to thought; it is the understanding we understand with as we think: the actualized understanding rather than the latent understanding and when this is in relation to the mind’s knowledge of itself, it is here

⁶⁵ *sol.* 2:20:35 as amended by *retr.* 1:4:4 makes it clear that it is not just those already learned in the disciplines who retrieve information in this way but those who are unschooled, can be said to learn by remembering when they are questioned skilfully. In *sol.* the fact that learning and truth could exist in an unschooled soul had been questioned by Augustine and accepted without the issue being fully considered *sol.* 2:15:27 because it required another book to be answered properly *sol.* 2:19:33. Also see *trin.* 12:15:24 where he refers to Plato’s view of learning as recollection as being associated with the soul’s pre-existence and expressly disassociates himself from that view though see Hochschild 2012: chapter on Plato from which it is clear that Plato’s view was not as clear-cut as Augustine seemed to think. Courcelle 1969: 171 says Augustine had little direct knowledge of Plato but was abundantly informed of his thought through Cicero, Varro, Apuleius, Cyprian, Ambrose and the Neoplatonists.

⁶⁶ *trin.* 14:7:9. See *imm. an.* 4:6; *conf.* 10:10:17; *retr.* 1:4:4. See *infra* for training of *intentio cogitationis*.

⁶⁷ *trin.* 14:8:11-14:10:13.

⁶⁸ *trin.* 14:10:13.

⁶⁹ *trin.* 15:21:40.

more than anywhere else that we should locate the image of God: in memory, understanding and will or love of self where in addition, the will directs the mind's thinking attention onto itself to recognize itself.⁷⁰

Actualized knowledge as the cordis verbum

Augustine had urged people to understand the incorporeal, unchangeable nature that was God through the unchangeable *rationes* of Truth, Good, Justice and Love⁷¹ and this is something the purified rational soul can do 'in the measure that it has clung to Him in love, in that measure, imbued in some way and illumined by him with light, intelligible light, the soul discerns-not with physical eyes, but with its own highest part in which lies its excellence, i.e. with its intelligence those reasons whose vision brings to it full blessedness.'⁷² In other words, the *rationes* are seen by a person whose intellectual and volitional powers are fully turned towards God. They are seen through that person's created intellectual capacity, and they can be seen because the *rationes* are illumined by the unchanging light which is God.⁷³ Through faith, we equate this glimpse of unchangeable truth with a glimpse of God but this glimpse will not enable us to understand how God is Trinity. Similarly, although an examination of the powers of memory, understanding and will has given us insight into ourselves and the way we can reflect the Trinitarian nature of God and although our faith expounds the Trinitarian nature of God, neither of these avenues has allowed us to see God as Trinitarian.

However, Augustine thought it was a perfectly reasonable proposition to be able to demonstrate that God is a trinity not merely to faith on the authority of scripture but also (for the benefit of those who wanted to engage intellectually,) to understanding through reason.⁷⁴ He therefore persists, 'if there is some way in which we can see intellectually what we

⁷⁰ *trin.* 14:7:10; *trin.* 14:10:13.

⁷¹ *trin.* 15:3:5. See *trin.* 8; *conf.* 7:10:16 'The person who knows the truth knows it, and he who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it.' *conf.* 10:24:35 'Where I discovered the truth there I found my God, truth itself.'

⁷² *diu. qu.* 83:46:2.

⁷³ *sol.* 1:8:15. See *Gn. litt.* 1:16:31 on the analogy of the senses: the importance of outside light without which we would see nothing is emphasized in Augustine's account.

⁷⁴ *trin.* 15:1:1.

believe, what might this be?⁷⁵ To make further progress in understanding the Trinity, we must turn our *intentio* back to ourselves again and once more to the consideration of the more familiar territory of our own minds, which have been made in the image of God.⁷⁶ Augustine had, earlier in *trin.*, described the act of understanding as our inner word⁷⁷ and, in *trin.* 15, he draws an analogy between this inner word and the Word of God. He describes the understanding which is formed from memory through the direction of our thought (*per intentionem cogitationis*) as knowledge that is spoken and as being a word of the heart in no particular language (*quando quod scitur dicitur, et nullius linguae cordis verbum estis*),⁷⁸ thus reflecting (however inadequately) the Word of God which speaks to us a truth which is in no particular language.⁷⁹ We are made in the threefold image of the Trinity,⁸⁰ and it is the act of understanding by which the mind itself is informed by thought (*ad intellegentiam quae ipse animus rerum cogitatione formatur*) which is associated with the Second Person who is the Word of God.⁸¹ Augustine's reasoning was that if we could understand the nature of this *verbum cordis*, then we could begin to see some likeness of the Word of God.⁸² Perhaps he was encouraged by a possible etymological connection between *verbum* and *verum*⁸³ to develop the distinction between the sound and meaning of a word, which he had used in *an. quant.* as an analogy of the body/soul relationship, into the distinction between the *verbum quod foris sonat* and the *verbum quod intus lucet*, which he is now using as an analogy of the human being's image and likeness of God.⁸⁴ In *an. quant.* the distinction between the part of

⁷⁵ *trin.* 15:6:9.

⁷⁶ *trin.* 15:6:10.

⁷⁷ *trin.* 8:6:9.

⁷⁸ *trin.* 15:23:43. s. 187:3 *in cubili cordis quodam modo nuda est intellegenti* it is that which is naked to the intelligence in the bed chamber of the mind. *trin.* 15:10:18 Thoughts are both seeings and utterances. In the inner man hearing, speaking, seeing are all the same unlike the physical senses where we hear and see and speak with different organs. *Io eu tr* 18:9 We can only understand this about the Word by discovering this same thing about ourselves; that we hear with what we see with.

⁷⁹ *conf.* 11:3:5; *Gn. adu. Man.* 1:9:15.

⁸⁰ *Gn. litt. inp.* 61 (added subsequent to original composition see *retr.* 1:18.)

⁸¹ *ep.* 11:4. where Augustine linked the second person of the trinity with form, *disciplina* and understanding.

⁸² *trin.* 15:10:19. Not to mention the fact that we are called to understand His Word *conf.* 11:7:9.

⁸³ *dial.* 6.

⁸⁴ *an. quant.* 32:66; *trin.* 15:11:20.

the word that sounds and the part that remains in the thought is made⁸⁵ but no likeness to the Word of God drawn out. The likeness works much better, in any event, when the two parts of the word become two words with the inner word ‘primarily deserving the name of word’⁸⁶ because, quite apart from the fact that this is a theologically truer statement, there is no risk of Augustine being accused of suggesting that Christ the Word is anything other than fully God (the word within that abides there) and fully human (the sound that comes out of the mouth).⁸⁷ Whatever we retrieve from our memory through directing thought onto it and from which our thought is thereby formed, is referred to by Augustine as a word:

When I want to express Carthage, I search about in myself in order to express it and in myself I find the image of Carthage..its image in my memory is its word, not the sound of two syllables made when Carthage is named, nor even thought about silently in a space of time, but that which I am aware of when I utter these two syllables with my voice or even before I utter them.⁸⁸

All the characteristics of the inner word are here set out: it is generated by desire ‘When I want;’ it is the actualized image forming our thought and it is pre-linguistic. When he resumes discussion on the inner word in *trin.* 9, Augustine more explicitly affirms that the mind only thinks about what it wants to think about and does what it wants with the knowledge obtained, so affirming the key role of *intentio voluntatis* in both attaining and applying knowledge.⁸⁹ In *trin.* 9, we are, potentially, closer to discovering the image because the *verbum cordis* is now actualized knowledge of the *ratio* of truth, which we can hold in our thought, along with the image of the thing we are judging by it. It is in the light of this *ratio* that we can see ourselves as we should be and how we should behave.⁹⁰ When the knowledge

⁸⁵ *an. quant.* 32:65. This Augustine says is called a *dicibile dial.* 5. On the distinction and relationship between the *dicibile* and the inner word see O’Daly 1987: 141-4. On the philosophical sources of the inner word see Ayres 2010: 194-6.

⁸⁶ *trin.* 15:11:20.

⁸⁷ An analogy between the Word and the inner word is drawn in *Io. eu. tr.* 1:8; 14:7; 20:10; 29:4; 37:4. An analogy between the sound as a vehicle of the inner word and the incarnation as a vehicle for communication of the Word is drawn in *s.* 28:5; *doctr. chr.* 1:12:13; *s.* 225:3.

⁸⁸ *trin.* 8:6:9.

⁸⁹ *Ibid;* *trin.* 9:7:13; *trin.* 9:10:15. Kirwan, 2001 notes Augustine’s view that speech is an expression of will in the sense of expressing what we want to say.

⁹⁰ *trin.* 9:7:12. Augustine had glimpses of seeing himself in the light of the unchangeable truth *conf.* 7:10:16 ‘I entered and with my soul’s eye, such as it was, saw above that same eye of my soul the immutable light higher than my mind (*intravi et vidi qualicumque oculo animae meae supra eundem oculum animae meae, supra*

that we have desired and attained is knowledge of ourselves in our rightful, mid-way position; not thinking less of ourselves than we are nor more of ourselves than we are, then our inner word will be a perfect likeness to the mind which has generated it and its image as the Word will be understood.⁹¹ But, although the mind can come to an intellectual knowledge of itself and to the place where the image is located through the exercise of its natural powers of memory, understanding and will, which it has retained in its fallen condition,⁹² it will not recognize itself as being the image of God or be able to recover its full likeness, unless faith begins to give it back its memory so that it can begin to remember, understand and love God.⁹³ It is only in remembering, understanding and loving God that it recognizes itself as an image and sees God as the light of the mind, rather than being its own light.⁹⁴

The training of our *intentio cogitationis*

Although we can be trained intellectually through the secular *disciplinae* to see unchangeable reality, they cannot teach us that this is God; they cannot teach us to see God's Trinitarian nature and they cannot break the power of habit that we have of thinking and willing in a carnal manner. Christ therefore takes on the role of the *disciplinae* and trains our *intentio* prompting us both intellectually and volitionally.⁹⁵ We are not trained as we would be through the *disciplinae liberales* to direct our attention to the unchangeable *rationes* which transcend our minds but instead we are directed to, and trained through, the written words of scripture, where the *rationes* are written down for all the faithful, the learned and unlearned alike and it is by acting justly (not by seeing justice) that the idea of justice is impressed on our heart,⁹⁶ though it is possible to see justice in the distance and by comparison with it, see

mentem meam, lucem incommutabilem,) ...'you raised me up to make me see that what I saw is Being, and that I who saw am not yet Being (*tu adsumpsisti me ut viderem esse quod viderem, et nondum me esse qui viderem.*)

⁹¹ *trin.* 9:11:16.

⁹² *trin.* 14:14:19.

⁹³ *trin.* 14:15:21.

⁹⁴ *trin.* 14:13:17-14:18. For Augustine's ignorance that the mind needs to be enlightened by participation and is not itself its own light, see *conf.* 4:15:25.

⁹⁵ For association of The Second Person of the Trinity with training of the intellect see *ep.* 11:4; *diu. qu.* 83:38.

⁹⁶ *trin.* 14:15:21.

how unjust one is.⁹⁷ Instead of being trained to come to the incorporeal truth and becoming wise by participation in one of the *disciplinae liberales*, we are trained by participating in the *disciplina* of God who is Christ.⁹⁸ We are trained by Christ himself who teaches us directly through our intellect in the sense that He is the intelligible light which enlightens our minds⁹⁹ and indirectly through the visible creation: human teachers; the words of scripture and the things of creation. Augustine stressed, from very early on, that the life of Christ was the only *disciplina* that people needed: it provided them with an education in morals (*disciplina morum*);¹⁰⁰ His method of teaching through scripture, partly openly and partly through analogy, kept to the rules of all rational *disciplinae* in that the more able could exercise their minds to move from what was certain (clearly explained) to what was uncertain¹⁰¹ and the Church could be regarded as a house or school for discipline (*disciplinae domus, est ecclesia Christi*)¹⁰² which we enter through grace (*in illa schola quo gratis intrauimus*).¹⁰³ Although Augustine became less enamoured of the form of education which ‘Christians call secular and the pagans call liberal;’¹⁰⁴ he remained committed to its underlying rationale of training people to ascend *a corporalibus ad incorporea*. If, for example, we do not understand that the word ‘see’ does not necessarily mean seeing with the eyes of the body then, when we read

⁹⁷ *trin.* 8:6:9; *conf.* 7:10:16.

⁹⁸ *Disciplina* had come to mean learned knowledge from the word *discere* and, as no one can know what is false, the *disciplinae* were true and as such all expressions of the truth (*sol.* 2:11:20; *lib. arb.* 1:1:2; *disc. chr.* 1; *trin.* 14:1:1.) and so a person was skilled to the extent that they participated in a *disciplina uera rel.* 30 54 and Christ has therefore replaced the *disciplinae* in the sense that he is now the *disciplina* in which we participate, being the *ratio* which is the complete likeness of God *diu. qu.* 83:23; *ep.* 12:1 *disciplina ipsa et forma Dei* Christ is the *disciplina* and form of God. Although *disciplina* meant learned knowledge, Augustine discovered that scripture customarily used the word *disciplina* as a translation of the Greek παιδεία in contexts where painful instruction is meant *en. Ps.* 118:17:2. However this must not be thought of as punitive (and Augustine specifically distinguishes *disciplina* from *poena*) *ep. Io. tr.* 10:10 but as loving discipline *en. Ps.* 118:17:3. Christ is also our *disciplina* in this sense. Augustine noted the two meanings in *trin.* 14:1:1 preferring to retain the word *disciplina* in the corrective sense and using the word *scientia* for learned knowledge.

⁹⁹ *trin.* 15:27:50; *Gn. litt.* 12:31:59 ‘it is from this light that the soul understands whatever it is able to understand.’ *mag.* 11:38 ‘concerning everything we understand, we consult, not the speaker who makes noises outside us, but the Truth that presides over the mind within.’ Exactly how this happens is a matter of some dispute see conclusion *infra*.

¹⁰⁰ *uera rel.* 16:32.

¹⁰¹ *uera rel.* 17:33; *ciu.* 16:11:2; *ciu.* 20:21:2.

¹⁰² *disc. chr.* 1.

¹⁰³ *disc. chr.* 9.

¹⁰⁴ *ciu.* 6:2.

in scripture that the Son sees the Father, we might think that we are talking about one human being looking at another.¹⁰⁵ He also regarded some of the techniques as still useful to assist those Christians, who were able to make use of them, in their engagement with scripture.¹⁰⁶ Thus, in a very short time (certainly by *an. quant.*)¹⁰⁷ Augustine had changed his view completely from believing that our reasoning mind could only be trained to come to knowledge of the truth through the *disciplinae liberales* to believing that all truth was contained in scripture.¹⁰⁸

For some people, a conversion in faith brings complete recovery of memory, understanding and will of God.¹⁰⁹ But most people also need human guidance and teaching by degrees¹¹⁰ in order to direct their attention to Christ, our only teacher¹¹¹ until eventually they come to recovery enough through faith, hope and love that they don't have further need of the scriptures except for teaching others.¹¹² Human teachers cannot convey understanding,

¹⁰⁵ *Io. eu. tr.* 19:1; s. 126; re: John 5:19 Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise.' See Ayres 2010: 233-250 on historical context and sources of commentary on John 5:19 and on Augustine's reading of it primarily in *Io. eu. tr.* 18, 19 and 23.

¹⁰⁶ *doctr. chr.* 2:17-27 –end of 2 on the value of secular learning to the study of scripture. *doctr. chr.* 2:42:63 is a statement of his later view that anything useful found outside scripture is also contained within it.

¹⁰⁷ *an. quant.* 34:78.

¹⁰⁸ *ep.* 101:2 'After all, what else should be said to those who though they are wicked and impious that that they are liberally educated, except what we read in the writings that are truly liberal? If the Son has set you free, then you will be truly free (John 8:36). For he allows us to know what liberal content those disciplines have that are called liberal by those who have not been called to freedom. *per eum namque praestatur, ut ipsae etiam, quae liberales disciplinae ab eis, qui in libertatem uocati non sunt, appellantur, quid in se habeant liberale, noscatur;*' The maxim 'Knowledge puffs up, love builds up' must govern our approach to scripture and its ambiguities so we don't think that we know it all and realize that the things which can be learned outside scripture can all be found in the lowliness and humility of scripture (as well as in its mystical depths). *doctr. chr.* 2:41:62.

¹⁰⁹ *sol.* 1:13:23.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* To reach the truth teaching by degrees was Augustine's purpose in *ord.* There he had wanted to explore the question as to whether the ordering of divine providence included all things; good and evil but because he realised that his pupils wouldn't comprehend, he decided to talk instead about the order of studies by which one could proceed from corporeal to incorporeal and to arrive at understanding in that way, *retr.* 1:3:1. Even those rare cases who had apparently received the gift of understanding the obscurer passages of scripture without human input, had been taught to read and write by human beings *doctr. chr. prol.* 4,5 and 8.

¹¹¹ Concluding the dialogue with Euodius in *an. quant.*, Augustine had assured him that if anything he has said is not clear then he should raise the matter at some opportune time and 'He who is over us, the Teacher of all, will not fail us when our study has Him for its object.' *an. quant.* 36:81. Also *mag.* 14:46; *retr.* 1:12.

¹¹² *doctr. chr.* 1:38:42 -39:43.

just as they cannot provide the light by which to see an object pointed to or even with which to see the outstretched finger with which they are pointing.¹¹³ But because learning is remembering, teaching is reminding¹¹⁴ and at first Augustine recognized the usefulness of the old philosophical method of dialectic in this; dialectic being nothing other than the art of disputation.¹¹⁵ In his early works, Augustine expressly used the dialectical method of reasoning to exercise the power and keenness of the mind in preparation for mystical contemplation.¹¹⁶ We are led to the truth by questions put in such a way as to correspond to a person's "capacity for learning from his own inner self." The challenge is to put questions adapted to the person's capacity to hear the Teacher within.¹¹⁷ Augustine uses the question and answer style in his early dialogues, demonstrating to the pupil that all that the teacher need do is to question him 'And by your answers you will explain all of what you now seem to be after, without knowing it.'¹¹⁸ This is because a question prompts a person to 'move himself to something within his own mind which returns to him what he had lost.'¹¹⁹ This is played out in *an. quant.* when Augustine suggests proceeding in the usual manner, which is for Euodius to follow the lead of reason and answer his own questions. This suits Euodius who expresses himself in support of that method of teaching and learning and as being somewhat surprised that he is able to 'answer the questions I was putting without knowing the answer.'¹²⁰ Augustine singled out dialectic as being of the greatest value in penetrating and solving all kinds of problems which crop up in scripture, provided it wasn't used 'out of a passion for wrangling and a kind of childish parade of getting the better of one's opponents.'¹²¹ In fact, scripture itself provides authority for this method of seeking the truth

¹¹³ *Ibid. prologue 3.*

¹¹⁴ *mag.* 1:1; 11:36; 14:45. Also *conf.* 10:10:17 *nisi admonente aliquo eruarentur, ea fortasse cogitare non possem?* unless things dug out by someone drawing attention to them perhaps I would not have thought of them.

¹¹⁵ *dial. 1 dialectica est bene disputandi scientia; Cresc.* 1:13:16 *quid est enim aliud dialectica quam peritia disputandi.*

¹¹⁶ *mag.* 8:21.

¹¹⁷ *mag.* 12:40.

¹¹⁸ *mus.* 1:7:13.

¹¹⁹ *mus.* 6:12:35.

¹²⁰ *an. quant.* 15:26. See also *Ibid.* 20:34.

¹²¹ *doctr. chr.* 2:31:48. Also *sol.* 2:7:14 Augustine decided to question and answer himself because on the one hand truth could not be better pursued than by question and answer but on the other hand the ego gets in the way.

(*et uenite, et disputemus, dicit dominus*)¹²² and even shows Jesus acting as a *dialecticus* in his ‘question and answer sessions.’¹²³ However, as time went on and Augustine considered what it might mean to engage in dialectic with God, it seems that the two-way conversation amounted to confession of sins on our part and on God’s part, grace spoken through His Word, Christ.¹²⁴ In this case, the key to the exercise of our powers of memory, understanding and will of God is keeping our attention on God in prayer and, in this instance, the words we use in prayer will act as reminders to us to keep our attention on God or serve as reminders to others to do the same.¹²⁵

The inadequacy of understanding God *per intentionem cogitationis*.

When considering the potential range of the objects upon which our *intentio animi* could direct our attention, Augustine expressly excluded the unchangeable Trinity.¹²⁶ In this life therefore we can only understand God through a mirror and in an enigma (*per speculum in aenigmate* 1 Cor. 13:12):¹²⁷ the mirror is ourselves and the enigma is the difficulty we have in seeing ourselves (let alone God).¹²⁸ It is a paradox that the things that are in reality most present to us (ourselves and God), are the things that we have most difficulty in seeing. The difficulty arises though from the fact that our act of understanding is tied to our thought and our thinking is problematic. Augustine defines a thought as ‘a kind of sight of the mind’ (*Quandoquidem cogitatio visio est animi quaedam*).¹²⁹ On the one hand, our power of thought is so great that the mind cannot see itself except when it thinks about itself (or anything else that is in its mind unless it is brought into view by thinking about it),¹³⁰ on the other hand,

¹²² Isa. 1:18. *Cresc.* 1:14:18.

¹²³ *Cresc.* 1:17:21 referred to in Burton 2007. Also Christ acts like a *dialectus* in *s.* 126:8:10 ‘the master has upset and bothered you in order to educate you; he has sown a doubt, a question in your mind, in order to shift its direction (*Exagitavit magister, ut erudiret; seminavit quaestionem, ut moveret intentionem*).

¹²⁴ *en. Ps.* 103:4:18. For Augustine’s changing view on dialectic see Heßbrüggen-Walter 2007 and Burton 2007.

¹²⁵ *mag.* 1: 2; *mag.* 7:19; *ep.* 130: 9:18.

¹²⁶ *lib. arb.* 3:25:75.

¹²⁷ *cat. rud.* 2 *quis enim in hac vita nisi in aenigmate et per speculum videt?*

¹²⁸ *trin.* 15:9:16; *trin.* 15:7:13.

¹²⁹ *trin.* 15:9:16.

¹³⁰ *trin.* 14:6:8.

Augustine laments thought's unreliability;¹³¹ its transitoriness¹³² and its instability 'who can lay hold on the heart and give it fixity, so that for some little moment it may be stable, and for a fraction of a time may grasp the splendour of a constant eternity?'¹³³ The most we will ever arrive at is a moment of understanding because, even where we are able to transcend ourselves in our thought, it is only through our *intentio* of thought that we catch sight of God. This is clear from Augustine's description of his ascent at Ostia. This description shows that, even if we are able to go beyond all images and ourselves by not thinking about ourselves (*transeat se non se cogitando*), the moment of understanding of God that we attain (this time through the *ratio* of wisdom) is still a thought, albeit all-consuming (*rapida cogitatione*), and therefore unsustainable.¹³⁴ We remain inadequate images of God because, unlike God for whom everything is simultaneously present 'nor does his attention (*intentio*) pass from one thought to another; all things which he knows are present at the same time to his incorporeal vision),¹³⁵ our attention flits from one thought to another, 'hither and thither with a kind of chopping and changing motion (*volubili quadam motione iactamus*), as we think about now this and now that just as it occurs to us or comes our way'¹³⁶ Our thinking is an inherently multiple process involving the gathering together of the various ideas scattered in the memory and ordering them by means of an act of *intentio* and the very word *cogito* suggests this, according to Augustine, because 'to bring together (*cogo*) and to cogitate (*cogito*) are words related as *ago* (I do) to *agito* (agitate) or *facio* (I make) to *factito* (I make frequently).'¹³⁷ *Cogo* means *inter alia* 'to drive together, collect, crowd, bring together,'¹³⁸ and thinking is therefore an intensification of *cogo* in the sense that it consists of repeated acts of collecting together by

¹³¹ *sol.* 2:20:35; *trin.* 11:8:13.

¹³² 'There is only a transitory thought about a non-transitory thing. However, this transient thought is committed to memory through the disciplines that the consciousness is trained in, and so there is something that the thought can go back to when it is forced to leave it *trin.* 12:14:23.' It can only ever be transitory because we cannot rid ourselves for long of the images that rapidly come back to cloud our thought. *trin.* 15:27:50.

¹³³ *conf.* 11:11:13. Our heart is the seat of our thoughts Madec AL. *trin.* 15:16:26.

¹³⁴ *conf.* 9:10:25 also described as a *toto ictu cordis* in *conf.* 9:10:24 To reach such a moment of understanding, which in prayer we might call a great cry of the heart (*Est autem clamor cordis magna cogitationis intentio*) is rare as well as unsustainable *en. Ps.* 118 (29):1.

¹³⁵ *ciu.* 11:21; *trin.* 15:7:13.

¹³⁶ *trin.* 15:15:25. Augustine attributes this sense of thinking as turning something over in the mind to Vergil.

¹³⁷ *conf.* 10:11:18.

¹³⁸ Lewis and Short.

force (of the will) the contents of memory rather than a single act.¹³⁹ We cannot look at everything contained in our memory in one glance, we need to do so successively¹⁴⁰ neither can we grasp the future as God can; the closest we can get is to hold in our memory what is about to happen in the immediate future. We do this through our *intentio* provided it doesn't change but, nonetheless, it is not genuine foresight.¹⁴¹

The other problem that we have to consider is that if our understanding is tied to our thought, then we cannot think something that is not in our memory.¹⁴² Augustine was making the point in relation to sense images but on the basis that learning is remembering, the same must apply to any act of thought, which is an act of recollection. However, when we remember the *rationes* or ourselves we are remembering latent but present, rather than past, truths and Augustine's expansion of memory in this way from being a repository of past sense experience to being a way of coming back to the present¹⁴³ means that we can speak of an act of understanding of God belonging to thought because, in bringing our attention back to God, it brings us back to remember God in the sense of being present to God, who is ever present to us.

God is actually partly in our memory, although not recognizable as such, but He is present in the form of our restless heart (*quoniam conturbata erat ad nos ipsos anima nostra, commemorati sumus tui, domine*).¹⁴⁴ We are not aware, though, that this restlessness is our longing for God¹⁴⁵ until our faith gives us back our memory and we can begin to remember,

¹³⁹ *conf.* 10:11:18.

¹⁴⁰ *trin.* 11:7:12.

¹⁴¹ *trin.* 15:7:13. See chapter 2 for how we hold together in our present intention, both the beginning and the end of an act of sense perception.

¹⁴² *trin.* 11:8:12-14.

¹⁴³ Solignac BA 14, 558 'Par rapport à celles de ces prédécesseurs, les positions d'Augustin sont originales, puisque, come nous le verrons, il rétablit l'existence d'une mémoire intellectuelle, tout en niant le caractère imaginative de ses représentations.' On the development of memory in Augustine most recently see Hochschild 2012.

¹⁴⁴ *conf.* 13:12:13.

¹⁴⁵ *Simpl.* 1:2:16.

understand and love God.¹⁴⁶ When faith begins to give us back our memory, God then begins to dwell recognizably in our memory and for Augustine this goes back to his Christian upbringing but also to his experiences of Christ in the garden at Milan (*conf.* 8) and at Ostia (*conf.* 9).¹⁴⁷ Augustine is adamant that, although God is present everywhere, He is not in us except by means of the grace that is poured into our hearts through faith.¹⁴⁸ Because we are *in* Him (in the sense that we are in His image), even if we are not *with* him (in the sense of being present to Him), we are capable of being reminded of Him.¹⁴⁹ In fact, the reminders of God are everywhere because God is everywhere and everything is in Him, even if we do not recognize Him.¹⁵⁰

Tutissima est enim quaerentis intentio¹⁵¹

We cannot know God fully because he is beyond thought and our understanding, as we have just seen, is tied to our thought: ‘He is more truly than he can be thought about (*verius est quam cogitatur.*)’¹⁵² Augustine once more draws an analogy between physical vision and mental vision: just as we cannot see the whole of something in one glance when we look at it, for example, we cannot see someone’s back when we look at his face and in order to see the whole we have to do so in stages (more than one thought), so we cannot grasp the whole of God with the mind’s eye, even when the mind is pure. What a pure mind will enable us to do is to touch God rather than comprehend Him and if we think we have comprehended him, it is

¹⁴⁶ *trin.* 14:15:21.

¹⁴⁷ *conf.* 10:25:36. O’Donnell in his commentary on this paragraph identifies these as Augustine’s moments when he first learnt about God.

¹⁴⁸ See *praes. dei*:5:16 on what we mean when we say God is everywhere: his divinity is in all parts of reality, whole but he only indwells human beings through grace according to their ability to receive. Augustine presents there an image of degrees of deafness as an analogy of the degree to which we are present to God.

¹⁴⁹ *trin.* 12:7:12; *trin.* 14:12:16-15:21. It is clear from passages in the Old Testament that we are capable of being reminded. Also see *trin.* 2 and 3.

¹⁵⁰ *conf.* 10:26:37; *trin.* 14:15:21. In *trin.* 14:12:16 Augustine refers to scriptural authority for proof that everything is in God and this replaces previous references which owed more to Platonism that everything inheres in intellect *ord.* 2:9:26 what intellect is, in which all things are, or rather, which is itself the sum total of all things. *en. Ps.* 118:23:1 No created being, not even a rational, intellectual creature, is the source of its own light; it is kindled by participation in everlasting truth.

¹⁵¹ *trin.* 9:1:1.

¹⁵² *trin.* 7:4:7. The best we can do in prayer is not to be distracted by other thoughts but keep our whole attention on God *Tunc porro in toto corde clamatur, quando aliunde non cogitator en. Ps.* 118 (29):1. Though, ultimately, we have to understand that he is Himself beyond what can be grasped by thought *s.* 21:2.

not God we have comprehended.¹⁵³

At one stage of his philosophical search, Augustine became persuaded that the Academics were wiser than other philosophers because they seemed to teach that everything is a matter of doubt and that an understanding of truth lies beyond human capacity.¹⁵⁴ But he realized that this view had seriously held him back from his quest for wisdom¹⁵⁵ and had caused many people to be nervous of accepting anything as true and to despair of ever finding truth and hence his reasons for marshalling as many arguments against the Academics as he could so as not to discourage people from seeking the Truth.¹⁵⁶ Relying upon the scriptural maxim ‘seek and you shall find’ (Matt. 7:7) he sought to reassure people that knowledge of the Truth could be had with the same degree of certainty as mathematical truth.¹⁵⁷ In addition to those who despaired of finding truth there were those who gave up seeking prematurely because they believed that they had already found the truth and to these people Augustine counselled ‘beware lest you think that you know anything except that only which you know, that the sum of one, two, three, and four is ten.’¹⁵⁸ How could we think that we could comprehend the Truth when we were unable to comprehend adequately what was presented to our senses or what we were ourselves in the inner man? Nonetheless it is not presumptuous to *desire* to know God, provided we begin from faith, are recognizant of grace and proceed cautiously by way of unknowing (learning what He is not).¹⁵⁹

The scriptural maxim: Seek his face always (*quaerite faciem eius semper* Ps. 104:3),¹⁶⁰ with which Augustine framed his quest for God in *trin.*¹⁶¹ could be used to navigate between

¹⁵³ *s.* 117:3:5; *s.* 21:2; *s.* 52:16.

¹⁵⁴ *conf.* 5:10:19.

¹⁵⁵ *Acad.* 3:20:43.

¹⁵⁶ *retr.* 1:1:1.

¹⁵⁷ *Acad.* 2:3:9. *lib. arb.* 2:2 ‘To those who already believed he said: Seek and ye shall find. He cannot be said to have found, who merely believes what he does not know. And no one is fit to find God who does not first believe what he will afterwards learn to know.’

¹⁵⁸ *Acad.* 2:3:9.

¹⁵⁹ *trin.* 5:1:2. Also *ord.* 2:16:44; *trin.* 8:2:3; *Io. eu. tr.* 23:9 and 10.

¹⁶⁰ *trin.* 1:3:5; *trin.* 15:2:2.

¹⁶¹ *trin.* 1:3:5 and *trin.* 15:1:2.

the Scylla of despair and the Charybdis of overconfidence. We find by faith and we continue to seek through hope and thus our search proceeds by means of the dialectic of finding and seeking: faith and understanding: knowing and loving. In a way this is how we make progress in understanding anything: When something is presented to our spiritual vision, it may or may not be accompanied by an act of understanding. This may be immediate and complete understanding or only partial: if we only have sufficient intellectual capacity to know that the image is a sign of something else, this will motivate us to seek its meaning.¹⁶² With incomprehensible things, it is the same dialectic but the search is never ending: however much progress we make in knowledge and love of them, there is still more progress to make in this life.¹⁶³ The more we find, the more inspired and intense is our seeking.¹⁶⁴ Augustine warned that a person shouldn't be too quick to congratulate themselves on finding the truth but should take a leaf out of St Paul's book and continue to seek with humility because those who think they have already reached their goal are exalting themselves in pride and are heading for a fall.¹⁶⁵ Perfection in this life 'is nothing but forgetting what lies behind and stretching out to what lies ahead *secundum intentionem* and the safest *intentio* is the one which goes on seeking (*Tutissima est enim quaerentis intentio*).¹⁶⁶ This is certainly the case until the last day of this life and thereafter we will finally comprehend God for, as a purified rational soul, we will live in the House of God; a citizen of the city of God (the *caelum caeli*)¹⁶⁷ the most significant characteristic of which is that, although it is created and, therefore, inherently mutable, it does not succumb to the vicissitudes of time and it never turns its attention away from God but is always present to Him¹⁶⁸ so that its knowing is that of the intelligence which means it 'is a matter of simultaneity-not in part, not in an enigma, not through a mirror, but complete, in total openness, face to face. This knowing is not of one thing at one moment and of another

¹⁶² *Gn. litt.* 12:11:22.

¹⁶³ *Io. eu. tr.* 61:1; *en. Ps.* 118:11:3.

¹⁶⁴ *en. Ps.* 104:3. *en. Ps.* 118:14:2 'since we first received the Spirit he works in us empowering us to go on demanding more so that by asking seeking knocking we may receive him in ever greater plenitude;' *lib. arb.* 2:17:45 glimpses of wisdom lead to greater desire; *trin.* 15:1:2.

¹⁶⁵ *en. Ps.* 38:14.

¹⁶⁶ *trin.* 9:1:1.

¹⁶⁷ *conf.* 12:11:12.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.* 12:9:9; 12:11:12; 12:11:13; 12:12:15; 12:13:16; 12:15:21; 12:15:22.

thing at another moment but is concurrent without any temporal successiveness.’¹⁶⁹

But does this mean that the activity of *intentio* ceases? Augustine certainly does not support, what Daniélou called, *epektasis*, a concept of perpetual progress or ascent of the soul, found in Augustine’s contemporary, Gregory of Nyssa, who derived it from *epekteinomenos* (stretching out Latin *extendere*) in Phil. 3:13, the passage that had so captured Augustine’s imagination.¹⁷⁰ But, on the other hand, although faith is replaced by sight (to use Augustine’s metaphor) and hope will not be necessary because we are in possession of what we desire, love *is* necessary and so therefore is *intentio* because ‘unless it (the soul) has fastened its eye with surpassing love and has never withdrawn its gaze, it will not be able to continue in that most blessed vision (*et nisi ingenti amore oculum infixerit, nec ab aspiciendo usquam declinaverit, manere in illa beatissima visione non poterit.*)’¹⁷¹ However, this will not be activity but where the soul’s attention will come to rest because ‘when the soul, after this life, unites itself wholly to God, charity will remain to keep it there (*Sed cum post hanc vitam tota se in Deum collegerit, caritas restat qua ibi teneatur*)’¹⁷² and ‘the very end of all seeking shall be reached in that world where perfection shall admit of no further activity of *intentio*.’ (*ibi fiat finis quaerendi, ubi ubi perfectioni non superest intentio proficiendi.*)¹⁷³

Conclusion

Having reached the end of *intentio*’s activity, we can now see the full import of the statement that memory is in effect explained by *intentio* (la mémoire, en effet, s’explique par l’*intentio*’).¹⁷⁴ In addition to its role in making and recalling the images of sense perception, it is also by an act of *intentio* that our thought is directed to, and linked with, intelligible objects of the memory, which are present in themselves in the memory. This includes directing the

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.* 12:13:16.

¹⁷⁰ Daniélou 1944: 291-307.

¹⁷¹ *sol.* 1:7:14.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Io. eu. tr.* 63:1.

¹⁷⁴ Hayen 1954: 40.

mind's attention to itself which then sees that it is present to itself. Although the mind in itself is created and therefore inherently mutable and unable to stop its thoughts from wandering, its ability to come back to something present is akin to a person's returning to think about a *disciplina* he already has expertise in or, indeed, on the grounds that learning is remembering, to one that he is learning for the first time because, in these cases, what we see in our thought is certain knowledge and when we direct our thought onto the knowledge in our memory or onto the mind itself, we have an act of understanding formed through the *intentio* of thought which is the understanding we understand with as we think.

When it comes to judging the temporal world, we are holding together two separate thoughts, formed by two separate acts of *intentio*, distinguishable only by reason, namely, the thought in which we see a particular image and the thought in which we see the *ratio* (universal) against which to judge that image. This is therefore an inherently multiple operation. Similarly, when *intentio* directs the mind's attention onto itself, it must also direct it above itself so that it can judge itself in the light of the *ratio* of truth: again an inherently multiple operation, even though only reason can distinguish the two thoughts. When we connect with the *ratio* of truth or wisdom, this is an act of pure thought but we can only connect momentarily because of our inability to keep our attention from wandering. However, this act of pure thought, which touches rather than embraces, God is the closest we come to seeing God in this life and, in answer to Augustine's *Videamus tamen quousque progredi vestra latens possit intentio*,¹⁷⁵ this is as far as the activity of *intentio* can go.

¹⁷⁵ *ord.* 2:5:17.

CONCLUSION

When drawn to its full extent, the bow encloses the “All” in itself, explained the Master, and that is why it is important to learn how to draw it properly.¹

Intentio was destined to become ‘one of the most problematic terms in Scholasticism’ and has been described as a foreign word which ‘degenerated into a dangerous catchword because it is often used rather haphazardly.’² This is because by the end of the High Scholastic period, it had come to mean many different things in the context of Scholastic philosophy. Augustine has been seen as an influence on the Scholastic use of *intentio* though there is debate as to the extent to which his use of *intentio* contributed to the Scholastic doctrine of intentionality: a contribution to this debate is beyond the remit of this thesis. However, there is nothing complicated about *intentio* in Augustine: it was simply the term he used to denote the tensional, volitional activity of directing the mind’s attention: an activity which was essential to the healthy and ordered functioning of being in the world and to the living of a Christian life.

The topic of attention came relatively late into the discipline that became known as psychology³ as compared with such topics as sense perception, memory and imagination. It was Wolff’s discussion of attention in 1740, in which he formulated several generalisations about attention, which marked its formal appearance as a topic to be studied in the field of psychology. In the 1970s, Neumann carried out a survey of the introduction of the characteristics of attention from the earliest period: narrowing; active directing; involuntary shifts of attention; clarity; fixation over time; effector sensitivity and motivational aspect. The introduction of two of these characteristics – involuntary shifts of attention and motivational aspect- has been attributed to Augustine.⁴

¹ Herrigel 1976: 30.

² Spiegelberg, 1976: 126.

³ Psychology was not recognized as an independent natural science until the late 19th century but it was by no means a new discipline and instead, as Hatfield has pointed out, if psychology is understood in its literal meaning as the science of the soul, then it can be dated back as an independent discipline to Aristotle’s *de anima*. Hatfield, 1998.

⁴ Ibid.

We began this thesis with Augustine's image of a bow as signifying the mind's *intentio*, evoking its tensional, volitional and directional aspects. The tribes of Israel had turned into a crooked bow because they worshipped idols instead of God and therefore could be said to be directing their aim the wrong way: away from God rather than towards God.⁵ Translated through the New Testament into Christian terms and taking a cue from scripture that 'Christ is the end of the law, bringing justification to everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4), Augustine said that the right end of *intentio* is Christ, the Wisdom of God (*Dei Sapientia, et rectus finis omnis intentionis animae*)⁶ and 'He is called 'the end' because whatever we do is referred to him, and when we have reached him we shall have nothing further to seek.'⁷

In this thesis we have traced the emergence of *intentio* from being a 'favourite term' of Augustine's used in connection with the various psychological activities of the soul⁸ to its employment as a significant concept in Augustine's understanding of the life of faith and the soul's ascent to God: all of which is dependent upon the activity of attention. *Intentio* emerges early (in *imm. an.* and then in *mus.*), as a solution to the problem of the *distentio* of temporal successiveness, which would otherwise impede our ordinary, everyday, physical activity and experience of the temporal world.⁹ As it is time which separates us from God, this suggests that *intentio* might be fruitfully employed towards the bridging of that separation but this would be to think like a Platonist for, of course, it is God himself who bridges that separation by coming to us incarnate.¹⁰ However, there is a place for *intentio* within the life of faith, for to live a Christian life is to aim at being fully human in imitation of the humanity of Christ; which is simply to exercise the powers of the soul, including *intentio*, with reference to Christ. From about 393, beginning with *s. dom. m.*, Augustine began to use *intentio* with regard to the life of faith.¹¹ It is in this treatise on the Sermon on the Mount that he begins to

⁵ *en. Ps.* 77:34.

⁶ *en. Ps.* 12:1; *en. Ps.* 54:1; *en. Ps.* 56:2; *s.* 347:3.

⁷ *sol.* 1:6:13; *en. Ps.* 54:1; *en. Ps.* 56:2.

⁸ O'Daly 1987: 43.

⁹ *intentio.... exprime l'acte de l'esprit qui vise et unifie la totalité de ses moments.*' BA 14: 590.

¹⁰ *conf.* 11:29:39.

¹¹ At about the same time see *exp. Gal.* 4:4 where Augustine interprets 'subverting the gospel of Christ' in Gal. 1:7 as drawing the attention of believers away from spiritual things and back to carnal things (*ab spiritualibus ad*

link *intentio* with the heart as the seat of our thoughts. Prayer, for example, does not consist of words but the direction of our thought (*intentione cogitationis*) towards God¹² and purity of heart is a single-minded *intentio*.¹³ Furthermore, *intentio* is also first employed here by Augustine in connection with conversion and interiority as he sets out his spiritual interpretation of the precepts given in the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁴ Soon after writing this, Augustine discovered the possibilities of Phil. 3:14 with its reference to *secundum intentionem* as a ‘framework for contemplation’¹⁵ and there was no looking back. But also no possibility of reaching the finishing line in this life, rather there was a continual stretching ahead focusing on Christ in holy desire, growing more like God by the increasing assimilation of our wills until ‘we shall be like him; because we shall see him as he is.’¹⁶ In the next decade, Augustine’s use of *intentio* came to fruition. First of all, in *Gn. litt.* a physiological examination of the soul’s activity of sensation revolves around *intentio* and shows both its normal and abnormal functioning. Then in the roughly parallel *trin.*, *intentio* becomes explicitly associated with *voluntatis* for the first time in a fruitful combination with *intentio voluntatis* being integral to each level of perception: corporeal, spiritual and intellectual and the connecting link between all three levels of perception. Descriptions of the soul’s different activities of perception have been introduced by Augustine in *trin.* as analogies for people who want to develop a habit of reasoning in the light of their faith.¹⁷ In this ascent through analogies, not only is each activity of perception dependent on *intentio voluntatis* but also the move through the levels is dependent on *intentio voluntatis*, which means that our whole experience of being in the world is dependent on *intentio*: the volitional activity of the

carnalia revocant intentionem credentium.)

¹² *s. dom. m.* 2:3:13.

¹³ *Ibid.* 2:2:9; 2:3:11; 2:13:45; 2:13:46; 2:14:48; 2:19:63; 2:22:75.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 2:3:14 *orationis intentio cor nostrum serenat et purgat... Fit ergo in oratione conversio cordis ad eum... conversione purgatio interioris oculi*; *ibid* 2:7:25 *An potest quisque de ea re pro qua adipiscenda orat non esse sollicitus, cum tanta intentione animi oratio dirigenda sit, ut ad hoc totum illud referatur quod de claudendis cubiculis dictum est*; *ibid.* 2:12:40; *Manifestum est his praeceptis omnem nostram intentionem in interiora gaudia dirigi, ne foris quaerentes mercedem huic saeculo conformemur.*

¹⁵ O’Donnell *conf.* 9:10:23 notes that this first occurred in *conf.* and thereafter occurs frequently.

¹⁶ *ep. Io tr.* 4:6 (1 John 3:2).

¹⁷ See Schumacher 2011: 56 n. 147 for works rehabilitating analogies and 57 n. 149 for works criticizing them as setting in motion the individualism that continues to dog Western thought.

direction of attention.

Augustine became interested in the metaphor of ascent because it is suggestive of process and progress, giving the lie both to the sufficiency for salvation of a one-off experience or baptism. The process is one in which our *intentio* (attention, desire) is trained and gradually redirected through ‘the faith that works through love’ so that we make progress in our ability to maintain the focus of our attention and desire on God: the more we can keep him in mind, the more we are able to relate to the world in an ordered way. This means seeing it and ourselves as His creation and therefore as dependent, thereby evoking the appropriate spirit of humility and awe which comes from seeing the invisible in the visible.¹⁸

‘God is not something that a finger can be pointed at but is something the mind can point towards.’¹⁹ However, the ascent begins *from* the corporeal where the attention begins to be directed *by means of* the corporeal (*Aliud ergo sensus, aliud per sensum*),²⁰ and the whole process may indeed begin with the pointing of a finger (*intentione digiti ostenditur*).²¹ In *mag.*, where the import of the dialogue was to show that Christ was the only teacher,²² Augustine shows up the ambiguity of what, in other contexts, has been called ‘ostensive learning.’²³ He considers the example of a wall which, as something visible, can be pointed to when the word ‘wall’ is said and this pointing of a finger is a sign by means of which the wall can be seen (*Nam et intentio digiti non est utique paries, sed signum datur per quod paries possit videri*).²⁴ Lest it should seem odd that Augustine has spent the first half of *mag.* concentrating on signs, before he goes on to point out the ambiguity of the signs, he reveals

¹⁸ That this is the ultimate experience in this life - seeing the extraordinary in the ordinary - is clear from the fact that Rom. 1:20 is cited at the peak of Augustine’s ascents at Milan in *conf.* 7:10:16 and 7:17:23 and from *conf.* 10:6:10.

¹⁹ *s.* 261:3. *extendatur* and *intendat* are used as synonyms in this passage. This was the purpose of the ascension: to draw people’s attention away from the corporeal (incarnate Christ) to the incorporeal (divinity of Christ) *trin.* 1:9:18.

²⁰ *ord.* 2:11:34.

²¹ *mag.* 7:19. Augustine speaks of pointing the finger literally and uses it metaphorically to mean ‘drawing attention to’ in *f. et symb.* 10:23.

²² *retr.* 1:12.

²³ Matthews 2001: 173.

²⁴ *mag.* 3:5; 3:6; 7:19.

that it is all in the service of exercising the powers and keenness of the mind (*exercendi vires et mentis aciem*), in preparation for contemplation.²⁵ The whole purpose of a sign, notes Adeodatus, is to direct our attention to what is signified (*signo dato id quod significatur attendere*),²⁶ As the dialogue proceeds not only is it made clear that signs are inferior to the reality to which they point²⁷ and that therefore knowledge of the reality to which they point is more valuable than knowledge of the sign,²⁸ but also that the sign cannot teach us anything about the reality it signifies, it can only direct our attention to it.²⁹ In fact, taking the example of a word (the word ‘*caput*,’) which is itself a sign, Augustine shows that the pointing of a finger cannot tell us anything, either about the reality the word signifies, which we can see for ourselves (God providing the light in which we see)³⁰ or about the sign (the word ‘head’) which is not what is being pointed to.³¹ But, nonetheless, the pointing of the finger is of value because it directs our attention to what is to be seen (a head).³² This is the beginning of a process of learning and understanding, which is a process of being reminded to direct our attention to the truth which dwells within; which alone can reveal to us the true meaning of everything and access to which is dependent on our will alone.³³ As Madec has said, ‘En somme toute réalité extérieure ou corporelle peut être, pour peu qu’on y prête attention, une incitation à rejoindre la réalité spirituelle intérieure.’³⁴

It has been observed that ‘no other important aspect of Augustine’s philosophy has proved as difficult to understand and to explain as this notion that God in some way illumines the mind of Man.’³⁵ The truth of this statement is evident from the different interpretations

²⁵ *mag.* 8:21.

²⁶ *Ibid.* 8:23. Adeodatus was Augustine’s son *conf.* 9:6:14.

²⁷ *mag.* 9:25.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 9:27.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 10:33.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 9:32.

³¹ *Ibid.* 10:34.

³² *Ibid.* 10:35.

³³ *Ibid.* 11:38.

³⁴ Madec AL 98

³⁵ Nash 2003: 93.

that have been placed on Augustine's theory of knowledge throughout the centuries; some of which are as diametrically opposed as Augustine and Euodius were on the matter in *an. quant.*³⁶ The diverse interpretations of Augustine's theory have most recently been collated by Schumacher.³⁷ She, first of all, categorizes them into two: intrinsic and extrinsic: the intrinsic category, of which Aquinas is the only proponent, argues that Augustine saw God as having created human beings with a cognitive capacity to form ideas in the manner of Aristotle, that is, to abstract universal principles from sense experience; the extrinsic category argues that Augustine saw God as having impressed on the mind the ideas themselves, either as content of thought, as *a priori* concepts to regulate our thought or as predispositions to know which convey certainty.³⁸ The intrinsic view confers the ability to be an active knowing agent, whereas the extrinsic view confers a passive role on the mind in its acts of knowing.³⁹ Schumacher observes that the extrinsic view therefore marries well with Augustine's views on grace 'What have we got that we've not received' (1 Cor. 4:7) but that it devalues the part played by the senses in knowledge and reinforces Platonic dualism⁴⁰ because, in the most popular manifestation of that view (innatism), it suggests that it is only by turning away from the experience of created reality that one can gain knowledge of created reality.⁴¹ Schumacher herself espouses the view of Aquinas, which is contrary to received opinion⁴² and a view which Nash had dismissed as being out of keeping with Augustine's heritage, which was Platonic rather than Aristotelian, and notes 'almost without exception contemporary scholars agree that whatever virtue Aquinas' theory may have had as an independent position, it cannot draw support from Augustine.'⁴³ Schumacher's view, however, has been given most recent support by Hochschild's conclusion in her work on memory in Augustine that 'in the end we find Augustine more at home with Aristotelian epistemology.'⁴⁴

³⁶ *an. quant.* 20:34.

³⁷ Schumacher 2011.

³⁸ *Ibid.* 8-11.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 13.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 10.

⁴² *Ibid.* 18-19.

⁴³ Nash 1969: 96.

⁴⁴ Hochschild 2012: 2.

Our interest here is not to enter fully into this debate but only to see, if looking at it through the lens of *intentio*, sheds any light on the matter. Our submission is that it does: on the one hand, Augustine's stress on the activity of *intentio* and his insistence that the ascent begins from the senses support Schumacher's view that we have been gifted with an intellectual capacity only, the proper functioning of which we recover under the influence of faith, and that this brings us to the truth. On the other hand, when the possibilities of ambiguity arising from ostensive learning are endless and Augustine says they can only be resolved by illumination, he cannot be advocating the extraction of a universal principle from particulars, because no matter how many particular instances are pointed to the ambiguity cannot be resolved.⁴⁵ Augustine does indeed stress the activity of the soul: its activity is both a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because it proves that it is superior to the body⁴⁶ but it is a curse because it is its love of activity which takes it away from contemplation.⁴⁷ In *an. quant.* Augustine stresses that each stage of ascent is the act of the soul;⁴⁸ even the last stage which he calls the act of *contemplatio*.⁴⁹ In *trin.* it is the volitional activity of directing the mind's thinking attention from *corporalia* to *incorporalia* that moves a person towards an act of understanding through the *intentio* of thought onto the contents of the memory. What the act of *intentio* abstracts is the form from the particular sense object and what it recalls is either the image of that particular sense object or, in addition, the *ratio* to which the mind has access because it is connected to it⁵⁰ and which it can use to compare and judge the image of the

⁴⁵ Matthews 2001: 181.

⁴⁶ One of Augustine's concerns early on was to stress the activity of the soul on the body in order to show its superiority. In *an. quant.* he presents this example based on the fact that physical strength is made up of three components: the will (*voluntas*); muscular control and physical weight. A man who excels in all three will be the strongest but it is possible that a man lighter in weight but with more muscular control will be stronger and vice versa someone with less muscular control but considerable weight. But if the will fails in a person then however developed his muscular control and however heavy his weight he will lose. This proves the superiority of the soul even in regard to the activity it performs through the body *an. quant.* 22:38.

⁴⁷ *mus.* 6:13:40.

⁴⁸ *an. quant.* 34:78.

⁴⁹ The fact that he calls this last stage an act reinforces the fact that he is referring to degrees of contemplation possible in this life rather than the state of contemplation in the next which he regarded as rest rather than activity.

⁵⁰ *trin.* 12:15:24. Augustine's process of reasoning from manifestations of the truth to abstract the unchangeable ratio of the true in *sol.* 1:15:27-29.

particular object sensed. Augustine does not go on to explicitly suggest that *intentio* is involved in a process of generating universals from particulars. But if an Aristotelian view is taken of Augustine's theory of knowledge, the activity of *intentio* is at least to ensure that the particulars are not taken as ends in themselves, but are referred to their *ratio* and ultimate end in God.

The importance of training of the mind to see the truth was stressed by Augustine in *an. quant.* where he observed that a trained soul is more likely to remember what it has learnt and an untrained soul more likely to forget (though not all learning promotes healthy growth: only that which leads to the truth).⁵¹ But we mustn't forget the role of the body in all this and here we will return, in conclusion, to the image of the bow. In *an. quant.* Augustine also emphasized the importance of the training of the body which might otherwise thwart the soul's aim. If the same person were to shoot small light reeds from a loose-stringed bow, however hard it is stretched, they would not reach as far as genuine arrows weighted with iron, enlivened with feather vanes and shot from a very tight bow. Whatever the skill of the archer, whether or not his aim is successful in reaching its target, depends on the effectiveness of the instruments he uses.⁵² The less attention the body demands of us in this life, the better because we are not capable of directing our attention to the body and to the contemplation of God at the same time.⁵³ But that will not be the case hereafter:

‘What toughness of mind there will be, what immortality and durability of body, to ensure that the mind's attention doesn't flag (*mentis deficiat intentio*) in contemplating God and the body's limbs don't collapse with continuously praising God.’⁵⁴

Therefore Augustine urges:

Let our footsteps not falter, our eyes not waver, but let us advance with *intentio fidei* till we come to what, here and now, ‘eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it come into the heart of man (1 Cor. 2:9).’ This is believed before it can be seen, so that when it comes we who have believed will not be confounded. Let us stretch forth then, walking in hope, hoping for what we do not yet possess, believing what we do not yet

⁵¹ *an. quant.* 15:25; 19:33.

⁵² *Ibid.* 22:39.

⁵³ *retr.* 1:11:2.

⁵⁴ *s.* 252:9.

see, loving what we do not yet embrace. The exercise of our minds in faith, hope and love makes them fit to grasp what is yet to come.⁵⁵

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⁵⁵ s 4:1.

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