

SOLILOQUIES



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SOLILOQUIES
ST. AUGUSTINE'S
CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES,
VOLUME 4

Translation, Annotation, and Commentary by

Michael P. Foley

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*In grateful memory of
Fathers Ernest L. Fortin, A.A., and Matthew L. Lamb,
inspiring teachers who sparked, fanned, and guided
my love of these dialogues.*

Noverim me, noverim te.

May I know myself, may I know Thee.

—*Soliloquies* 2.1.1

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PREFACE

My goal in translating the four Cassiciacum dialogues of St. Augustine is to introduce the serious English-speaking student to an extraordinary tetralogy that is relatively underestimated and prone to misappropriation. Accordingly, this translation aspires to be as literal as is reasonable.

A literal translation, in which Latin words are given their closest approximation in English and in which the same English words are generally used for their Latin equivalent, suffers from several drawbacks. First, it is cumbersome. Trained in rhetoric, Augustine chose words not only for their meaning, but for their resonance; unfortunately, any melliflence or connotations that go with that resonance are compromised in translation. Second, it is disconcerting. Certain styles or conventions popular in Augustine's time, such as the earthiness adorning even the most sublime of passages, are no longer in favor. Nowadays, for instance, grown men do not generally speak of fleeing to the nursing bosom of Lady Philosophy (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4). Third, an absolutely consistent literal translation is impossible when translating a language with fewer than sixteen thousand words into one with more than thirty times that number. Latin's modest

vocabulary encourages an author working in that language to use one word several different ways whereas an English author is freer to use a different word each time. To translate, then, the same Latin word with the same English word in every instance can be misleading, and it clanks against the Anglophonic ear. But not to translate certain terms consistently, despite its oddity in English, would be to forgo perhaps vital clues the author has left in his text—for a language's apparent weaknesses can turn out to be hidden strengths in the hands of the right wordsmith.

In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, I adopted the following strategy. First, I allowed the goal of a literal translation to be trumped by the canons of good prosody when the literal meaning was virtually nonsensical and when a freer translation posed no threat to understanding the intellectual content of the work. When Augustine says in *Against the Academics*, “Don’t look . . . for something that is difficult to find anywhere among the peoples (*gentium*),” he is using a classical figure of speech, where *gentium* means “on earth” (1.2.6); hence, it is translated accordingly. Second, when I do depart significantly from the literal sense of the text, I acknowledge it in the Notes so that the reader may retain some access to the original wording. And third, I employ a Translation Key. When a significant Latin term can be translated several different ways, I note its variants; and when there is only one English word for two different Latin words, I designate one of the English words with an asterisk (*) and pair it with only one of the Latin words to distinguish it from the other (here I am inspired by Hippocrates Apostle’s translations of Aristotle). Augustine, for instance, uses both *animus* and *anima* for the soul, and so the former appears as “soul” and the latter as “soul*.” Both the annotation and the Translation Key, incidentally, are intended for readers making a close study of the text who may not be proficient in Latin.

If, however, these aids become a distraction from reading and enjoying the dialogues, readers should ignore them. Tools that are not helpful should be placed back into the box.

Yet despite the aforementioned drawbacks and the extra effort that must be made to overcome them, a literal translation remains advantageous for one simple reason: it alone liberates readers from what has been called the tyranny of the translator. Animated by the commendable goal of easy comprehension, translators are often tempted to paraphrase loosely in order to make the meaning of texts more digestible or palatable to a contemporary audience. Such translations, it is claimed, save readers from the disorientation that would ensue from an unmediated encounter with an alien world-view. Free translations of this sort constitute a kind of well-intentioned paternalism.

There is a thin line, however, between being paternalistic and being patronizing, and translators who do not faithfully reproduce a text into another language unwittingly take a condescending attitude, it seems to me, both to the authors they are translating and to the readers for whom they are translating: to authors, because their ideas are implicitly treated as inferior to those that are currently popular; and to readers, because it is assumed that they have neither the desire nor the capacity to wrestle with the work as originally crafted.

The antidote to this condescension, as a twentieth-century political philosopher once noted, is for the translator to “conceive of himself as a medium between a master whose depths he has not plumbed and an audience of potential students of that master who may be much better endowed than is the translator.” This model works well for translating the writings of St. Augustine. As Augustine himself reminds us in *On the Teacher*, in order to know the meanings of words, we must first know the realities to which they point;

and as he discusses in *On Christian Doctrine*, both the mode of ascertaining meaning and the mode of communicating it once it is ascertained are difficult to carry out. Some of the realities to which Augustine points are indeed difficult to grasp, especially in dialogues that, he stresses, deal with a subject only the rarest type of human being can comprehend (see *On Order* 1.1.1). It therefore behooves translators of Augustine to approach their task with special care and humility, even a sense of unworthiness.

Humility is an important quality for readers as well. Rather than approach these ancient texts as possibly interesting monuments to a quaint or benighted chapter in world history, I earnestly recommend that we read them as if our very lives depended on them, as if they were our only chance of escaping the shadowy cave into which historical happenstance or our own short-sightedness has placed us. I do so from the conviction that a great book offers the hope of freeing us of the prejudices that from our earliest days we have sucked up like mother's milk or into which our dissolute living has placed us (see Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 3.1.2). What we learn might not, in the final analysis, be any less fallible than our own opinions, but the only way we will know for certain is if we let authors speak for themselves, listening with one sincere assumption: that they have something worthwhile to say. Perhaps then and only then will we be able to graduate from milk to meat.

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TRANSLATION KEY

The following table shows the translations of several key terms in Augustine's early dialogues, first in English-Latin and then in Latin-English. Exceptions to the rules given here are mentioned in the annotation of each work. As mentioned in the Preface, when there is only one English word for two different Latin words, I designate one of the English words with an asterisk and pair it with only one of the Latin words to contradistinguish it from the other.

<i>English</i>	<i>Latin</i>
to approve	In Academic thought, when assent to something as true is impossible, the wise man may approve (<i>approbare</i>) of certain things as plausible or probable so that he may have a ground for action (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.12).
to assent	The wise man, according to Academic skepticism, should give his assent (<i>assentiri</i>) only to that which he absolutely knows to be true (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.11–12).

to know	Augustine uses several Latin verbs for “knowing” or “becoming acquainted with,” such as <i>noscere</i> , <i>cognoscere</i> , and <i>novisse</i> . These usually refer to a knowledge of passing, temporal things, but sometimes, because they are fairly generic terms, they can also be used to designate knowledge of the highest and eternal things.
to know*	<i>Scire</i> is the verb that is generally, though not always, used to designate the highest and most secure kind of knowing (see <i>On the Happy Life</i> 2.7, <i>Soliloquies</i> 2.1.1).
knowledge	<i>Cognitio</i> is most often a generic term for knowledge.
knowledge*	<i>Scientia</i> usually refers to the highest kind of knowledge, that is, the grasp of eternal realities such as the truths disclosed in the liberal arts. See <i>On the Immortality of the Soul</i> 1.1: “Everything that the soul knows (<i>scit</i>), it has within itself; nor does knowledge (<i>scientia</i>) contain anything other than that which pertains to some discipline, for discipline is the knowledge (<i>scientia</i>) of anything whatsoever” (see also <i>Against the Academics</i> 1.7.19).
measure	<i>Modus</i> , which is also translated as “limit,” is a key concept in the dialogues, especially in <i>On Order</i> . In <i>On the Happy Life</i> 4.34, Augustine describes God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, as the <i>summus modus</i> or “Supreme Measure.”
mind	<i>Animus</i> is also translated as “soul” or even “heart,” depending on context (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.2.3 and entry for <i>animus</i> below).
mind*	<i>Mens</i> , along with reason (<i>ratio</i>), is defined by Augustine as the ruling part of the soul (<i>animus</i>) (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 1.2.5). In <i>Soliloquies</i> 1.6.12–13 it is characterized as the “senses” or “eyes” of the soul* (<i>anima</i>), while reason (<i>ratio</i>) is the “looking” of the soul* and understanding (<i>intellectus</i>) is the “seeing” of the soul*.

opinion	In some respects the antithesis of knowledge or <i>scientia</i> , opinion is that from which the philosopher, especially the Academic skeptic, wishes to be free (see <i>opinio</i> below).
to perceive	<i>Percipere</i> is usually used in reference to basic sensory activities rather than higher acts of understanding. It can, however, designate comprehension of an intelligible reality, as when one “perceives” the truth or falsehood of a definition (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 3.9.21).
probable	<i>Probabile</i> , mostly translated as “probable,” is associated with the Academic doctrine of probability or plausibility (see <i>probabile</i> below).
to sense	<i>Sentire</i> is usually used in reference to either bodily sensation or the mental awareness and use of the bodily senses. It is usually translated as “to sense” or “to feel,” though context sometimes compels other variations, such as “to judge” at <i>Against the Academics</i> 1.3.8.
sense, sensation, etc.	<i>Sensus</i> is translated, depending on context, as “senses,” “sensation,” or “sense-perception.” <i>Sensus</i> can refer either to the five bodily senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell or the mental faculty that enables people to use their senses for seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 1.1.3, <i>Soliloquies</i> 2.2.3); in one case, Augustine uses <i>sensus</i> for the capacity to understand (<i>On the Happy Life</i> 4.25). Augustine regrets that he did not differentiate between physical and mental <i>sensus</i> by adding “bodily” to the former kind (see <i>Retractations</i> 1.1.2; <i>Soliloquies</i> 1.6.12, 2.2.3).
soul	<i>Animus</i> is also translated as “mind” or even “heart,” depending on context (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.2.3; see also entry for <i>animus</i> below). <i>Animus</i> is used only for human, that is, rational, souls.

soul*	<i>Anima</i> is that which gives life to the body or flesh (see <i>Confessions</i> 10.7.11). All plants and animals as well as humans have <i>anima</i> or this principle of life (see <i>Soliloquies</i> 1.2.7). One of Augustine's goals in the <i>Soliloquies</i> is to prove that the <i>anima</i> of a human being is immortal.
understanding	<i>Intellectus</i> is also sometimes translated as "intellect." In <i>Soliloquies</i> 1.6.12–13, <i>intellectus</i> is defined as the "seeing" (<i>visio</i>) of the soul* (<i>anima</i>), while mind* (<i>mens</i>) is the "senses" or "eyes" of the soul* and reason (<i>ratio</i>) the "looking" of the soul*. In <i>On the Immortality of the Soul</i> 6.10, <i>intellectus</i> is similarly defined as the "seeing" of the soul (<i>animus</i>). In <i>Against the Academics</i> 3.19.42, the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, is the Divine Understanding.
verisimilar	<i>Verisimile</i> is also translated as "similar to the true" or "like the true." It is a technical term employed by the Academic skeptics, reputed to be synonymous with "plausible" or "probable" (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.12).

Latin

English

<i>anima</i>	"Soul*" is that which gives life to the body or flesh (see <i>Confessions</i> 10.7.11). All plants and animals as well as humans have <i>anima</i> or this principle of life (see <i>Soliloquies</i> 1.2.7). One of Augustine's goals in the <i>Soliloquies</i> is to prove that the <i>anima</i> of a human being is immortal.
<i>animus</i>	"Mind," "soul," or even "heart" (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.2.3), depending on the context. In <i>On the Immortality of the Soul</i> , Augustine writes that in humans, reason is either <i>animus</i> or in <i>animus</i> (2.2) and that when we reason, it is <i>animus</i> that is doing it (1.1). The best or "ruling" part of <i>animus</i> in humans is mind* (<i>mens</i>) or reason (<i>ratio</i>) (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 1.2.5). In the <i>Confessions</i> Augustine writes that to <i>anima</i> belongs sensation as well as the interior sense that correlates sensory data and of which <i>animus</i> makes use (10.6.10–10.7.11).

<i>approbare,</i> <i>approbatio</i>	To “approve” or “give approval.” In Academic thought, when assent to something as true is impossible, the wise man may approve of certain things as plausible or probable so that he may have a ground for action (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.12).
<i>assentiri,</i> <i>assensio</i>	To “assent” or “give assent.” The wise man, according to Academic skepticism, should give his assent only to that which he absolutely knows to be true (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.11–12).
<i>cognitio</i>	Most often, a generic term for knowledge.
<i>comprehendo</i>	To “comprehend” or “grasp,” either by the senses or by the mind (depending on context). According to the Stoics, when a mind truly comprehends something, it has such a clear impression of it that it is completely different in every way from a false impression. This gives rise to an irresistible conviction in the knower’s mind that the impression is true (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.11).
<i>fallor</i>	“To be mistaken” or “to be deceived,” depending on context. In the <i>Soliloquies</i> , Reason defines <i>fallax</i> as something that is deliberately deceitful rather than merely untrue or fictitious (2.9.16), but this definition is not adhered to throughout the dialogues as a whole.
<i>intellectus</i>	“Understanding,” “the understanding,” or, sometimes, the “intellect.” In <i>Soliloquies</i> 1.6.12–13, <i>intellectus</i> is defined as the “seeing” (<i>visio</i>) of the soul* (<i>anima</i>), while mind* (<i>mens</i>) is the “senses” or “eyes” of the soul* and reason (<i>ratio</i>) is the “looking” of the soul*. In <i>On the Immortality of the Soul</i> 6.10, <i>intellectus</i> is similarly defined as the “seeing” of the

soul (*animus*). In *Against the Academics* 3.19.42, the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, is the Divine Understanding.

mens “Mind*,” along with reason (*ratio*), is defined by Augustine as the ruling part of the soul (*animus*) (*Against the Academics* 1.2.5). In *Soliloquies* 1.6.12–13 *mens* is characterized as the “senses” or “eyes” of the soul* (*anima*), while reason (*ratio*) is the “looking” of the soul* and understanding (*intellectus*) is the “seeing” of the soul*.

modus “Measure” or “limit” is a key concept in the dialogues, especially in *On Order*. In *On the Happy Life* 4.34, Augustine describes God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, as the *summus modus* or “Supreme Measure.”

noscere,
cognoscere,
novisse “To know,” either as a knowledge of passing, temporal things or as a more generic term for knowing that could include knowledge of the highest and eternal things.

opinari, opinatio,
opinio, opinator “To form an opinion” or “to opine,” “forming an opinion,” “opinion,” “opiner,” respectively. A technical term in Academic thought, an opinion should never be formed by the wise man, although he may hold various positions or make decisions on the basis of things that he approves as plausible or probable. In the Cassiciacum dialogues, the Latin phrase *ut opinor* (in my opinion) is fairly common and may not have a technical connotation.

percipere “To perceive,” usually used in reference to basic sensory activities rather than higher acts of understanding. It can, however, designate comprehension of an intelligible reality, as when one perceives the truth or falsehood of a definition (see *Against the Academics* 3.9.21).

- probabile* A critical term for the Academics in their defense against the Stoic charge of *apraxia*, namely, that their skepticism leads to inactivity. In Academic thought, *probabile* signifies something that is “plausible,” “persuasive,” or “approvable” rather than something that is certainly true to which one can give full assent. It is allegedly synonymous with “verisimilar.” *Probabile* is mostly translated as “probable,” but it should not be confused with the modern notion of probability as a form of statistical likelihood.
- scientia* “Knowledge*” usually refers to the highest kind of knowledge possible, that is, the grasp of eternal realities such as the truths disclosed in the liberal arts. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1: “Everything that the soul knows (*scit*), it has within itself; nor does knowledge (*scientia*) contain anything other than that which pertains to some discipline, for discipline is the knowledge (*scientia*) of anything whatsoever” (see also *Against the Academics* 1.7.19).
- scire* “To know*.” *Scire* is the verb that is generally, though not always, used to designate the highest or most secure kind of knowing (see *On the Happy Life* 2.7; *Soliloquies* 2.1.1).
- sensus* *Sensus* can refer to either the five bodily senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell or the mental faculty that enables people to use their senses for seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.3; *Soliloquies* 2.2.3). In one case, Augustine uses *sensus* for the capacity to understand (*On the Happy Life* 4.25). He regrets that he did not differentiate between physical and mental *sensus* by adding “bodily” to the former kind (see *Retractations* 1.1.2; *Soliloquies* 1.6.12, 2.2.3).

<i>sententia</i>	Most often, a “position” (a stance in thought or debate), but also a “notion,” “statement,” “viewpoint,” and “decision” (especially an official juridical decision).
<i>sentire</i>	Usually, “to sense” or “to feel,” though context sometimes compels other variations. It is used in reference to either bodily sensation or the mental awareness and use of the bodily senses.
<i>verisimile</i>	“Verisimilar,” “similar to the true,” or “like the true.” It is a technical term employed by the Academics, reputed to be synonymous with “plausible” or “probable” (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 2.5.12).
<i>visum, videri</i>	<i>Visum</i> is the past participle of <i>videre</i> (to see). It sometimes takes on the technical meaning of an “impression” in Stoic epistemology and is translated as such (see <i>Against the Academics</i> 3.9.18). The verb <i>videri</i> is translated as “seems” or “appears” and has to do with the realm of appearances or percepts that are not necessarily real or true.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES

AUGUSTINE AT CASSICIACUM

In the autumn of A.D. 386, St. Augustine retired to the country villa of his wealthy friend Verecundus, located somewhere north of Milan in a place called Cassiciacum. He had brought with him several of his acquaintances and loved ones: his friend Alypius, his mother Monica, his illegitimate son Adeodatus, his brother Navigius, his cousins Lartidianus and Rusticus, and two spirited pupils named Licentius and Trygetius. There, Augustine not only recovered from the chest pains that had compelled his recent resignation as a teacher of rhetoric, but he began to reflect more deeply on the faith he had come to accept as true. The conversations held during this time of “fruitful leisure,” interrupted occasionally by farm work and violent poultry, were allegedly preserved with the help of stenographers who were hired largely for practical reasons: to spare Augustine’s health by reducing his need to speak and to provide a record for those who were not present. Later, Augustine edited the transcriptions with the help of his co-retreatant Alypius. Rather than preserving the discussions verbatim or arranging them chronologically, the two friends fashioned dialogues along pedagogical and

thematic lines. The result of these labors is the tetralogy of *Against the Academics*, *On the Happy Life*, *On Order*, and the *Soliloquies*.¹

What was Augustine hoping to achieve at Verecundus's villa? Certainly, he was preparing for his baptism and initiation into the Catholic Church, which would take place in Milan the following Holy Saturday on April 24–25, 387. Augustine had converted to Christianity in the late summer of 386, an event that he vividly recounts in book eight of the *Confessions*; but his actual reception into the Church would take time. One of the interesting aspects, then, about the Cassiciacum dialogues is that they were written by a mere catechumen, a candidate for baptism. Because of the early Church's so-called *disciplina arcani*, or "discipline of the secret," being a catechumen in the late fourth century meant not experiencing all of the Church's practices and teachings. Augustine the catechumen may have engaged in advanced theological speculation at Cassiciacum, but he probably did not know the wording to the Apostles' Creed, which was taught to catechumens only a few weeks before their baptism. And he may have known that the Eucharist was the bread of life, but he had probably never seen the Eucharist, since catechumens were dismissed from Mass after the homily.² On the other hand, Augustine profited much from listening to the sermons of St. Ambrose, from his socializing with the intellectual elite of Christian Milan (such as Manlius Theodorus, to whom he dedicates *On the Happy Life*), and from his own studies. Consequently, even though he was not yet a Christian layman, Augustine was well equipped for his first written venture into what is now sometimes called philosophical theology.

But more than prepare for his own baptism, Augustine wanted to lead others to the same breakthroughs that had brought him to where he was. This aspiration is evident in his solicitude for his students Licentius and Trygetius, as well as in his appeals to

Romanianus and Zenobius, the two friends to whom he dedicates *Against the Academics* and *On Order*, respectively. It is not difficult to infer that Augustine is also eager to assist his readers in the same way.

Those breakthroughs of Augustine's, as I have called them, are more aptly described as a "conversion," or turning around, and following the narrative order of the *Confessions*, they may be roughly identified as belonging to one of three kinds.³ In book seven of the *Confessions*, Augustine describes an "intellectual" conversion that was instigated by a reading of the Platonists; in book eight, he recounts a "moral" conversion that finally freed him from his addiction to the pleasures of the flesh; and in book nine, he touches upon a "religious" conversion that formally "bound" him to God in baptism and enabled him to experience, together with his mother Monica, the so-called Vision of Ostia.

The *Confessions* was written two decades after the Cassiciacum corpus, but the same three kinds of conversion are present in Augustine's early thought and can therefore serve as a useful reference point for interpreting the dialogues. The most conspicuous of the three at Cassiciacum is intellectual conversion, the cognitional revolution whereby one is able to differentiate between sensible and intelligible reality, that is, between that which can be grasped by any of the five bodily senses and that which is grasped by the mind or intellect alone. Contrary to our daily commonsensical assumptions that privilege the tangible, visible, audible, olfactible, and gustable, the intellectually converted mind recognizes that the reality of physical things is caused by something that is not physical but can be grasped only by our intelligence, far removed from the senses and even from physical images of any kind. This revolution in thinking, which ascends from sensible data to realities not intrinsically conditioned by space, time, or matter, is

crucial because it alone enables one to understand, however dimly, the two things that Augustine identifies in the *Soliloquies* as most worth knowing: God and the soul.

Moreover, intellectual conversion is made possible by a special “return to ourselves” whereby we recognize our own minds and our own desire to know as intelligible rather than sensible realities.⁴ Erik Kenyon identifies this return to oneself as the not-so-hidden agenda unifying all of Augustine’s dialogues: behind every “first-order debate” about a topic (skepticism, happiness, theodicy, etc.) is a “second order” that consists of an “inquiry into inquiry.” The Cassiciacum dialogues, Kenyon goes so far as to argue, “look foremost” not to a set of answers about first-order issues but “to the act of inquiry itself: The fact that we can inquire at all tells us various things about ourselves. By reflecting on our own act of inquiry, we are put in a position to improve how we go about inquiring” because reflection on our inquiry yields a discovery of “cognitive norms of thought” operative in “most if not all acts of rational inquiry.” Such a discovery clears the mind of errors such as materialism and serves as a guide for further investigation.⁵ The liberal arts, which come up frequently at Cassiciacum, are instrumental in these purging breakthroughs because their aim, according to Augustine, is to point to eternal, intelligible realities and to canons of reason that competently direct human inquiry.

Yet although intellectual conversion through a return to oneself is crucial to grasping reality as it truly is, such a conversion is an insufficient condition for acting responsibly and justly. “And what did it profit me when I read and understood all the books of the arts which they call liberal,” Augustine asks in the *Confessions*, “while I remained the vile slave of evil desires?” Besides a conversion of one’s intellect or understanding, a conversion of one’s behavior or mores needs to occur that enables one not only to

know the good but to do the good, to feel and act in a way that is consistent with what is right. It is Augustine's concern for moral conversion at Cassiciacum that explains his attentiveness to "the order for living," his advice to his pupils on how to live well, and his sharp criticism of them when they fail to do so. It also explains why Reason, Augustine's mysterious interlocutor in the *Soliloquies*, probes Augustine's heart with embarrassing questions designed to gauge whether he has suffered any moral relapses.⁶

Moral conversion begins the life of ethical excellence and makes one fit to have the best kind of friendships. That said, neither intellectual nor moral conversion satisfies the deepest yearnings of the human mind and heart. Something more is needed, both as a completion and grounding of these conversions and in order to bring the human person to ultimate happiness. Hence the need for religious conversion, which in biblical terms is the replacement of one's heart of stone with a heart of flesh (see Ezek 36:26) that enables one to love the Lord God with one's whole heart, whole soul, and whole strength (see Deut 6:4–5). Religious conversion is a surrender to divine love. It is "religious" in its modern meaning as ordered toward a formal and communal worship of God, but it is also "religious" in its ancient meaning as a binding (*religio*) of the soul to God. For Augustine, both senses are operative in the sacrament of baptism; and for Augustine, such a binding in the Christian religion does not involve a restriction but an expansion of one's freedom as well as a perfection or completion of the other two conversions, for in addition to knowing the good and doing the good, the individual is now capable of fully loving the good. "Without doubt," Monica concludes in the second dialogue, "this is the happy life, the life that is perfect. And we must presume that we who are hurrying to it can be brought to it by a firm faith, a lively hope, and an ardent charity."⁷

By being attentive to Augustine's overarching goal at Cassiciacum of intellectually, morally, and religiously converting his audience, readers can better appreciate the various twists and turns that the dialogues take. And these three kinds of conversions can even act as a gauge for the similarities and differences between the *Confessions* and the writings from Cassiciacum. Rather than trace Augustine's alleged move away from Neoplatonism to orthodox Christianity as many have tried, it may be more fruitful to ask whether or to what degree Augustine's thinking changed on the importance of each conversion or their ordering to each other.⁸ For instance, on the question of whether intellectual conversion is necessary in order for one to be relatively happy in this life, *On Order* would seem to answer in the affirmative, but the *Confessions* would seem to answer in the negative. And as to whether one needs to be morally converted before one can undergo an intellectual conversion, *Against the Academics* and *On Order* would seem to answer yes despite the fact that in the *Confessions* these conversions are narrated in the reverse order.⁹

THE DIALOGUE GENRE

The Platonic Template

Augustine chose the philosophical dialogue as the means of goading his readers to this triple conversion. To understand why, it is necessary to gain a better appreciation of this peculiar genre. The dialogue form as developed by Plato may be described as a way of effecting a sort of ceasefire in what Socrates calls "the old quarrel between philosophy and poetry."¹⁰ Poetry, when conceived broadly to include all forms of narrative, holds considerable sway over the hearts of men and women by dint of its power to stir their emotions and imagination. Poetry thus becomes a major source of

“values” for a people, functioning as the lens through which its followers filter, interpret, and evaluate their experiences. This reliance on the poets’ authority and their fiction has the subtle effect of deterring men and women from independent and rational inquiry, the result being that more attention is paid to the poet’s book than to the book of the world. Poetry therefore tends to be at odds with philosophy—that way of life which seeks a knowledge of the nature of things free of both opinion and authority. The concrete manifestation of this antagonism is a popular hatred of the philosopher (as we see in the trial of Socrates at Athens) and a philosophical censure of the poet (as we see in Socrates’s criticisms of Homer). Further, because it generally appeals to the lowest and basest passions, poetry would seem to have a dubious effect on the moral development of its readers or hearers.

The Platonic dialogue, on the other hand, remains faithful to Socrates’s way of life while successfully overcoming his reservations about poetry. The philosophical dialogue does not have the overpowering pathos of an epic or tragedy, a restraint that keeps readers’ minds less lulled and more alert. Moreover, the dialectical quality of a dialogue, in which a single question often begets several contradictory answers, places on readers a certain onus to figure out the dialogue’s true import, to sift through the various answers and scrutinize them closely. Rather than be hypnotized by charm and beauty, readers are prompted by the dialogue to be perceptive and rational.¹¹

This prompting may be said to consist of three dimensions. The first dimension of breadth or horizontality, of back-and-forth, requires readers to connect what they are reading now to what has gone before and to modify their impressions in light of what comes next. The second dimension of verticality, or up-and-down, requires readers to connect the narrative to the realities up to which they

are pointing as well as to be cognizant of tensions or hints that are percolating below the surface. Finally, the third dimension of depth, from there-to-here, requires readers to discover or verify things for themselves, not in a relativistic or subjectivist way, but in light of the narrative clues and “cognitive norms of thought” (to borrow Kenyon’s phrase) that are immanent in their own ability to know. Indeed, it is this third dimension—which in ocular vision gives depth perception—that can lead to self-knowledge.

The three-dimensionality of a philosophical dialogue is thus designed to bring readers to a state of knowing or discovery. But is it also designed to conceal? A philosophical dialogue can fall into anyone’s hands, including the hands of someone for whom certain truths, at least at this stage in his or her life, would only do harm.¹² Further, since all political society (even that of an enlightened democracy) rests on dogmatic assumptions that must remain more or less publicly unquestioned for the sake of civic stability, philosophers must exercise considerable caution lest their philosophizing undermine the opinions necessary for a vibrant polity.

Consequently, it has been speculated that authors like Plato wrote in such a way that the more dangerous, destabilizing aspects of philosophy were carefully kept from the general readership and revealed to only a minority of readers through various clues in the text. A single dialogue could therefore have two different “messages”: an “external” one for the philosophically challenged and an “internal” one for the philosophically inclined. In antiquity, these two different teachings came to be known as “exoteric” and “esoteric,” respectively. Conceived thus, the philosophical dialogue may be compared to a tamper-proof aspirin bottle: its real content can be obtained only by those who are mature enough to figure out the directions, while the rest are kept from something that would only damage their health.¹³

The Augustinian Dialogue

Whatever conclusions one may wish to draw about a “secret teaching” in the writings of ancient philosophers, it cannot be denied that the Cassiciacum dialogues are self-consciously situated within a broad tradition of philosophical *poesis* that includes the possibility of esotericism. Augustine was keenly aware of the three-dimensional, protreptic value of the dialogue genre. In *On Order* 1.11.31 he mocks those who pay no attention to what in a dialogue “is being explained and accomplished” (the vertical dimension) as well as those who ignore the whence and “whither of the discussants’ efforts” (the horizontal). Augustine also emphasizes readers’ independent discovery of the truth vis-à-vis the texts (depth perception). As he tells Romanianus in *Against the Academics*, everything accomplished in the dialogues will remain a mere opinion in the mind of a reader rather than genuine knowledge until the reader enters “entirely into philosophy” and verifies the truth personally (2.3.8).

Moreover, as his interpretation of Cicero and the Academic skeptics attests, Augustine also knew of the esoteric possibilities of philosophical literature. He even appears to have appropriated some aspects of esoteric writing. Like Plato and Cicero, Augustine draws a line between the very rare kind of human being who can understand reality as it truly is and the vast majority who do not, and he likewise recognizes the danger in teaching the truth to those who are not ready for it. But there is one event separating Augustine and the philosophers that might explain how he differs from them: the Incarnation. God’s humbling Himself and taking the form of a servant allows the carnal multitude for the first time to “return to their very selves and even gaze upon their home-land without the bickering of disputations.” The divine Word becoming human flesh does not eliminate the fallen world’s hatred of the

light, and thus a careful reserve in expressing the truth is still necessary. But it does place a certain responsibility on the believer to bear witness to the truth and to avoid incurring any suspicion that the good news being preached is concocted. For Augustine, having an “exoteric” message that is meant to deceive nonphilosophical readers, even if well intentioned, is incompatible with the demands of the Gospel.¹⁴

Augustine’s principled opposition to mendacity does not mean, however, that his dialogues are entirely veracious. In the *Soliloquies*, Augustine notes that not all falsehoods are lies: joke tellers, for instance, are not considered liars because their intention is not to deceive, and the same holds true for comic playwrights. Augustine himself admits that he can be ironic in these works. Overtly playful elements abound, such as the discussion in *On Order* about whether it is permissible to chant sacred music while answering the call of nature, but others are more veiled. A distant disciple of Augustine, St. Thomas More, was characterized as feigning seriousness so well when he was joking that his listeners had difficulty knowing when he spoke “in sport” and when “in good earnest.” One wonders whether the same could not be said about Augustine at Cassiciacum. Key to any philosophical dialogue is its comic quality, a trait no doubt partially due to the philosopher’s bemused indifference to the petty things, such as money or health or recognition, that most human beings regard with inordinate seriousness: a truly great soul, Cicero reminds his son, “holds as trivial the things that to the many seem to be outstanding and important.” But more fundamentally, the dialogue’s comic structure forces readers to get the joke, to discover on their own the knowledge being sought, and thus experience the delight of comprehension. Or put differently, with its beguiling three dimensions the dialogue is an ideal vehicle for exercising and provoking

readers to the insights that induce or prepare for conversion. And this spiritual exercise includes mental curveballs that put us through our paces and render us sharper by befuddling us and prompting us to consult our own intelligence and the world that is. The Cassiciacum dialogues may not contain “noble lies,” but they may contain noble untruths to test and challenge us.¹⁵

Reading a Cassiciacum Dialogue

At the very least, the dialogic character of the Cassiciacum corpus requires us to approach it as we would any other dramatic narrative. Never, for example, can we assume that the opinions of the interlocutors are those of Augustine the author, and neither can we even take for granted that the opinions of Augustine the character are those of Augustine the author. In deliberate imitation of daily life, what a character chooses to say is often contingent on who is present and who is not, on what personal motives are operative, and on what has just transpired. Consequently, abstracting from the dialogue’s dramatic dimensions misleadingly reduces a subtle interplay of dynamics to a colorless series of propositions, thereby stripping the dialogue of a content that often lies in the penumbra of the text. As with any other narrative, a dialogue’s characters, setting, plot, and time—not to mention the various incidentals mentioned throughout—are crucial.

Uncovering the many meanings of the dialogue therefore requires being fully and almost urgently attentive to the action of the work. As with a theatrical play, the Cassiciacum dialogues are to be experienced as if they were transpiring before our very eyes. Augustine follows the common ancient convention of putting narrative interjections such as “he says” in the present tense, but he amplifies this sense of presence with frequent exhortations to “pay attention” and “be here.” Even more, Augustine says that we

should put ourselves *into* the text. We will learn many things, Augustine tells Zenobius, if we engraft ourselves onto, and “co-fit” ourselves into, these works.¹⁶

It also helps to read the dialogues together. Augustine wrote the tetralogy in such a way that the teachings of one are clarified or even modified by those of another. We have already mentioned that the Cassiciacum dialogues function as a kind of spiritual exercise for readers, and exercise suffers when parts of a workout program are cut out randomly. Oddly, history has been fairly deaf to this obvious fact. Of the manuscript traditions bequeathed to us from the Middle Ages, not a single one includes all four dialogues together. *Against the Academics* and *On Order* were generally paired with each other while *On the Happy Life* was relegated elsewhere. Finally, the *Soliloquies* was either published alone or with later compositions of Augustine, but never with any of the other three dialogues. This dismemberment of the Cassiciacum corpus continued into the twentieth century with most editions of modern translations. From this pattern of publication we may tentatively conclude that for the bulk of their existence and despite their author’s explicit intentions, the dialogues have not been read as a coherent unit. Consequently, one of the goals behind this present four-volume edition is to reunite what the accidents of history have put asunder.

Lastly, it is profitable to read the dialogues in order. Like several of Plato’s and Cicero’s dialogues, the Cassiciacum tetralogy is meant to be read in a particular sequence for the full effect. Intellectual, moral, and religious conversion begins with a rejection of skepticism, which deadens the desire for truth by preaching its unattainability (*Against the Academics*); progresses with an intensified desire to become happy and know God, who is the Truth (*On the Happy Life*); turns on an understanding of God’s

order through the soul's coming to know itself (*On Order*); and is ratified with a more explicit affirmation of the soul's knowledge of itself and its participation in God (*Soliloquies*).¹⁷

AUGUSTINE'S SOURCES

Another constructive way to approach the Cassiciacum dialogues is with respect to the history out of which they emerged. Because of Augustine's numerous achievements over the course of his life, it is tempting to read the dialogues as primitive or even flawed anticipations of later works such as the *Confessions*, *On the Trinity*, and the *City of God*. Granted that Augustine's theology did indeed develop over time, this temptation must nevertheless be resisted, for the works at Cassiciacum are in their own right the culmination of a long and eventful intellectual journey. From his youth, Augustine had been schooled in the liberal arts. At the age of eighteen, he discovered philosophy and turned (briefly) to a study of the Bible; a year later, he read Aristotle's *Categories* and joined the Manichaeans; a year after that, he began teaching literature, rhetoric, and dialectic, first in his hometown of Thagaste and then in the thriving metropolis of Carthage. When he was about twenty-seven, his philosophical leanings inspired him to write his first book (now lost) called *On the Beautiful and the Fitting*. Approximately five years later, he became an Academic skeptic and then a Platonist; at about the same time, he was introduced to a circle of Christian intellectuals loosely centered around St. Ambrose. By the fall of A.D. 386, then, Augustine had spent years wrestling with the trivium and quadrivium, the dogmatic claims of the Manichaean sect, the disputations of various philosophical schools, and finally, his mother's faith. For the Augustine who penned them, the Cassiciacum dialogues are in a sense

mature writings, the fruit of more than a decade of determined germination.

Cicero

Augustine's journey to Christianity involved confronting a diverse assortment of intellectual forces, almost all of which appear in the dialogues in some form or another. The most obvious is Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.), who, though often dismissed today as an intellectual dilettante, was held by Augustine to be a serious philosopher. Augustine's own passion for wisdom began with reading Cicero's *Hortensius* at the age of eighteen, and at Cassiciacum he continues to treat the *Hortensius* as foundational to the formation of the youths in his care. Further, with their cover letters, choice of setting, and use of long concluding speeches, the Cassiciacum dialogues bear an unmistakable resemblance to a Ciceronian, as opposed to a Platonic, dialogue. (Another indication is that Augustine, like Cicero and unlike Plato, casts himself as a prominent character with lines in his own dialogues.) Augustine himself admits the Ciceronian connection when in the *Confessions* he recounts a disagreement with his friend Alypius. As a sort of assistant editor, Alypius had wanted to omit the name of Jesus Christ from the dialogues so that they would be redolent of the lofty “cedars of the gymnasia,” an allusion to the setting of several of Cicero's dialogues; but Augustine opted instead for what he called the “Church's wholesome herbs.” The name of Christ remained, although it did not entirely eradicate the fragrance of cedar.¹⁸

Moreover, each of the first three Cassiciacum dialogues may be seen as a specific response to a work or cluster of works by Cicero. Augustine's *Against the Academics* obviously wrestles with Cicero's *Academica*, while *On the Happy Life* engages

Cicero's *On the Ends of Good and Evil Things* and the *Tusculan Disputations*, both of which address the *summum bonum* and the art of "living happily." Similarly, *On Order* is a development of the themes in Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods*, *On Divination*, and *On Fate*, which were intended to be read together. As with his use of the dialogue genre, Augustine's responses both build upon and move beyond their Ciceronian foundation. In *On Order*, for example, Augustine agrees with Cicero's critique of fate and superstition but replaces Cicero's insincere deference to Roman civil religion with a principled and unfeigned embrace of Christian teaching. And perhaps in a backhanded way it was Augustine's comfortable command of Ciceronian thought and composition that emboldened him to greater innovation with the *Soliloquies*, a dialogue that is unique in almost every way, from its neologic title to its sustained inner monologue and from its pioneering introspection to its thespian conceit. For as Augustine notes, it is after one masters something that one is eager to move on.¹⁹

The Platonists

But Augustine might never have been able to offer such a sustained engagement of Cicero or to overcome the philosophical skepticism of the school to which Cicero adhered were it not for the "Neoplatonists." This term is modern in origin, but it aptly signals a difference between the Platonists of the third and fourth centuries after Christ and Plato himself (427–347 B.C.). Whereas Plato, for instance, wrote only dialogues that enmeshed his metaphysical discussions in a political context, the Neoplatonists wrote abstract treatises or commentaries that were highly technical and often apolitical in nature. But whatever their differences with Plato, the one Platonic insight that the Neoplatonists affirmed and

expanded is the one that made all the difference to Augustine: the insight into intelligible reality wrought by intellectual conversion. After that insight, nothing would ever be the same: “When behold! Some fulsome books, as Celsinus puts it, as soon as they breathed forth upon us good Arabian [fragrances] and as soon as they dribbled just a few drops of their most precious ointment onto the tiny flicker, they enkindled an incredible, Romanianus, an incredible (and beyond what perhaps even you believe about me—what more can I say?—beyond what I as well believe about myself!), an *incredible* conflagration.” The incredible conflagration of which Augustine speaks is the intellectual conversion mentioned above, which yields a rare kind of knowledge of one’s own understanding or knowing as incorporeal or immaterial. This self-knowledge plays a role in all four dialogues, but it is especially prominent in *On Order* and the *Soliloquies*. And it also had a profound albeit implicit impact on Augustine’s understanding of the three divine persons in the doctrine of the Trinity.²⁰

It should be noted that scholars are not entirely certain which Neoplatonists influenced Augustine the most or, for that matter, how much of Plato Augustine ever read. Curiously, unlike his use of Cicero and the poets (see below), Augustine never directly quotes his Platonic sources. His writings betray a deep familiarity with several of the tractates of Plotinus (A.D. 204/205–270), but the influence of Porphyry (A.D. 232/234–305) and possibly others cannot be overlooked either. Regardless, Augustine’s debt to Plato or the Neoplatonists, no matter how great, does not imply that his own thought is reducible to them. Perhaps the best analogy for the relationship of St. Augustine to his classical sources is that of a skilled musician riffing off different melodic phrases in a way that is not beholden to their composers’ intentions.²¹

The Poets

Augustine's sources were not limited to the philosophical. The assortment of Roman scholars and historians from which Augustine draws includes Aulus Gellius, Apuleius, Celsus, Pliny, Quintilian, Sallust, Seneca, Tacitus, Varro, and Vitruvius. Moreover, the old quarrel between philosophy and poetry reemerges at Cassiciacum, with Augustine mustering Latin authors on both sides of the battle. A tragic love story by Ovid (43 B.C.–A.D. 17) occasions a dispute between Augustine and Licentius, and lines from the plays of Terence (195/185–159 B.C.) frequently reinforce the dialogues' comic character. The writings of Horace, Plautus, and even Lucretius are alluded to. Motifs from classical mythology are not uncommon either: Hector, Andromache, Hercules, Achilles, Medusa, Mount Helicon and the Muses, Scylla and Charybdis, Daedalus, and especially Proteus are all mentioned.

But the most important poet at Cassiciacum is Vergil (70–19 B.C.), whom the retreatants read daily and who appears to be viewed by Augustine as a poet with philosophical promise, either someone who in his own way had built a bridge between philosophy and poetry or whose verses could be used for that purpose—or perhaps, it was simply the case that the privileged status that Vergil's poems enjoyed in contemporary Roman life made them virtually irresistible. Whatever the reason, of all the poets at his disposal, Augustine appears most eager to “repurpose” Vergil by treating his work as an opportunity for ruminating on Christian truth.²²

Throughout the dialogues and regardless of the poet in question, Augustine evinces a keen awareness of the power of poetry on its readers' emotions and judgment and its claims on their allegiance. Yet he refrains from treating poetry as an enemy; instead, he employs a variety of techniques to channel or “convert” the

power and beauty of the poets in a direction more open to philosophy and the Christian faith. The dialogues themselves—which, as we have already noted, are innovative not only philosophically and theologically but literarily as well—are the most impressive result of this endeavor. Augustine’s own dialogic *poesis* is his ultimate and most eloquent answer at Cassiciacum to the ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry.

Lastly, Augustine’s brocading the dialogues with Greco-Roman poetic fancies serves the additional purpose of establishing this Christian author as well educated and familiar with the literary canon that was the staple of Roman high society. Although Augustine later came to regret many of his nods to classical literature, his generous use of ancient poetry and his well-crafted prosody were part of a common patristic strategy to use the literary arts of Christianity’s detractors against them.²³

The Christians

The disagreement of Augustine and Alypius over the inclusion of Christ’s name might give the impression that the Christian dimension of the dialogues can be excised with only a few cosmetic changes and is therefore superficial at best. Lending support to this conclusion are the cover letters to *Against the Academics* and *On Order*, which exhort their recipients to “philosophize” or “return to themselves” but make no mention of the Christian God.

Such a view, however, would be misleading. Although they are not explicitly catechetical or apologetic, and although they frequently appeal to reason without a direct connection to divine revelation, the Cassiciacum dialogues have a pervasively Christian content. Not only is the group portrayed as praying daily and holding discussions on God and Jesus Christ, but Augustine consistently aligns the dynamic of human knowing with the processions

of the divine persons of the Trinity as understood by orthodox Christianity.²⁴ Augustine may call *On the Happy Life* more religious than the others (1.5), but all of the dialogues involve an interplay between, and an integration of, faith and reason.

It should also be noted that even though he was operating under the constraints of the discipline of the secret, Augustine already had at Cassiciacum a significant exposure to Christian thought. He knew the four canonical Gospels (or at least parts of them), several Psalms (which he prayed daily), and several sections of the Epistles of St. Paul. As he recounts in the *Confessions*, he was deeply influenced by the sermons of St. Ambrose (337/340–397) as well as by Marius Victorinus, the story of whose conversion to Christianity profoundly affected Augustine. In fact, it was Victorinus's translations of several Neoplatonic books that prompted Augustine's intellectual conversion around 385 or 386, and there is evidence in the Cassiciacum tetralogy that Augustine was also familiar with Victorinus's Christian writings on the Trinity. Finally, Augustine and Monica socialized with Christian intellectuals such as Manlius Theodorus, to whom he dedicates *On the Happy Life*.²⁵

As far as Christian or patristic literature goes, the Cassiciacum dialogues are fairly novel, especially with respect to diction. Mary Bogan counts more than thirty neologisms in the four works, a higher concentration than is found in Augustine's later writings. Augustine, for instance, coined the word "soliloquy" to designate his fourth dialogue, which is itself an unprecedented melding of a philosophical dialogue and a stage play: he also appears to be the originator of the theological expression "beatific vision." Even in the realm of the mundane, Augustine left his mark while at Cassiciacum: from what we can tell, he is the first author to describe what is known today as a cuckoo clock. Coupled with a

relative dearth of ecclesiastical terminology, with which he would become familiar only after his baptism and ordination to the priesthood, Augustine's semantic resourcefulness attests to an eagerness to communicate something of great importance and a slight uncertainty with how best to go about it. Even as a catechumen, Augustine could not wait to proclaim the Gospel from the Areopagus to the Seven Hills of Rome.²⁶



SOLILOQUIES

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INTRODUCTION

At the same time, in accordance with my enthusiasm and love for investigating with the aid of reason the truth about those things which I especially wanted to know, I also wrote two books in which I questioned myself and responded to myself, as if we were two, Reason and I, although I was alone. Hence, I named this work the *Soliloquies*.¹

The completion of the first two books of the *Soliloquies* in the winter of A.D. 386/387 was a groundbreaking accomplishment. Although the philosophical dialogue was by then a well-established genre, it was unprecedented to have an entire work devoted to a conversation between a man and himself. Seneca mentions saying certain things to himself,² and Pythagoras recommended a nocturnal examination of one's deeds,³ but neither developed their inner monologues into a self-standing composition. The idea was so novel that Augustine had to invent a new word, "soliloquy," to describe it.

Part of the originality of the *Soliloquies* lies in its personification of Reason, who serves as Augustine's sole interlocutor. In an earlier dialogue, Augustine had narrated a scenario in which Reason speaks to himself;⁴ in the *Soliloquies*, Augustine augments this conceit by depicting Reason speaking on his own and directly

to Augustine. Reason's role in the conversation, however, is not so much a break from the literary tradition of classical philosophy as it is a dramatic development of it. Socrates often speaks to his conversation partners of allowing the question at hand to guide the direction of their talks as if it had a mind of its own, and Augustine invokes a similar idea in *On the Happy Life*.⁵

Likewise, it is unusual in a philosophical dialogue for the character that best epitomizes the philosophical life to assume a subordinate role. In the Platonic dialogues, Socrates is typically surrounded by inferior minds; never is he directly called to task by someone wiser than he. When it does appear that he has met an equal or better, such as the Eleatic Stranger in the *Statesman*, he remains silent—or he is absent altogether while another wise speaker presides, such as the Athenian Stranger in the *Laws*. In the other three Cassiciacum dialogues—*Against the Academics*, *On the Happy Life*, and *On Order*—Augustine is the Socratic figure, the leader who asks the questions that steer the ruminations of the other characters and often expose their ignorance. But in the *Soliloquies*, the tables are turned: Augustine is no longer the master but the disciple, interrogated by nothing less than Reason itself. In this respect, Reason is like the strangers in Plato's dialogues, except that this time the stranger compels an answer from the Socratic figure.

THE SOLILOQUIES AND THE CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES

Because of its distinctive qualities, the *Soliloquies* might not appear to be related to the other Cassiciacum writings. The setting of Verecundus's villa in Cassiciacum, Italy, is not stipulated, nor does it contain any of the other characters who appear in the first three dialogues. Nevertheless, the *Soliloquies* was written during

Augustine's stay at Cassiciacum⁶ and was designed to be the final installment in a tetralogy. The *Soliloquies* presupposes, supplements, and corrects the three dialogues that precede it.

It presupposes them. The *Soliloquies* touches upon a number of themes covered more extensively in the other Cassiciacum dialogues, for example, Academic epistemology, the distinction between the sensible and the intelligible, and the quest for human happiness. The dialogue is therefore read more fruitfully in light of what comes before it. Moreover, one of the central if implicit teachings of the *Soliloquies* is that an exclusively logical ascent to the highest truths is not sufficient or at least not possible in most cases. Human beings are endowed with the faculty of reason, but because of the vicissitudes of living after the Fall, that faculty must be developed in tandem with a process of transformation that affects the longings and dispositions of the entire person and not simply the conscious, rational mind. A theme that emerges in the *Soliloquies*, that of a return or conversion, points to the poignant necessity for this root-and-branch change as a precursor to the embrace of truth. Thus, according to this rationale, the teachings of the *Soliloquies* cannot be properly appropriated until the lessons of the first three Cassiciacum dialogues (all of which aim at this conversion) have been appropriated.

The *Soliloquies* also supplements the other dialogues. In *On Order*, Augustine describes his habit of staying awake half the night thinking.⁷ It is precisely two such lucubrations (albeit during the day) that comprise the *Soliloquies*.⁸ One way, then, to view the *Soliloquies* is as a telescoping of the mental exercises that occupied Augustine at Cassiciacum. These exercises involved wrestling with a recurring set of problems, including questions about the soul,⁹ what constitutes "healthy" eyes of the mind,¹⁰ the nature of motion¹¹ and order,¹² and the return to God and oneself.¹³ At Cassiciacum

Augustine was also concerned with a stable group of people, some of whom make indirect appearances in the *Soliloquies*: Zenobius,¹⁴ Manlius Theodorus,¹⁵ his students Licentius and Trygetius,¹⁶ and the small number of North African associates whom Augustine envisioned reading these works.¹⁷ But the *Soliloquies* does not merely revisit the people and questions of Cassiciacum; it explores those questions further and sometimes even answers them. In *On Order*, Augustine wonders aloud whether he is his own reason;¹⁸ in the *Soliloquies*, he scrutinizes this possibility in greater detail. He devotes a good portion of *On the Happy Life* to examining what it means to “have” or “possess” God; in the *Soliloquies* he is able to dispatch the question with a single line: to possess God is to see Him.¹⁹ In *On Order* the group goes back and forth on the nature of evil and theodicy; in the *Soliloquies* Augustine simply states that God makes no evil and prevents total evil, and that those who truly know God know that evil is nothing.²⁰

Finally, the *Soliloquies* can serve as a corrective to impressions made by *Against the Academics*, *On the Happy Life*, and *On Order*. In *On Order*, Augustine declares that he prefers “nothing whatsoever to finding the truth,”²¹ but in the *Soliloquies* we see that claim painfully challenged.²² In *On Order*, Alypius praises Augustine for proving by example the possibility of human greatness;²³ in the *Soliloquies* we see a candid portrayal of the ways that Augustine falls short of that perfection.²⁴

THE AUGUSTINIAN TURN TO THE SUBJECT

But perhaps the dialogue’s strongest link to the rest of the Cassiciacum corpus is its preoccupation with what we may tentatively call the “turn to the subject.” I say “tentatively” because the phrase “turn to the subject” is generally associated with the modern

epistemologies of thinkers like Descartes and Kant, and therefore one runs the risk of imposing a misleading hermeneutic onto Augustine's thought. Descartes in particular incorporated into his philosophy numerous elements that were taken from Augustine's writings but significantly altered in the process, thereby introducing no small amount of confusion into the study of Augustine himself.²⁵ Further, the very phraseology smacks of anachronism. Augustine speaks not of a turn to the subject but of a return to ourselves.²⁶ It is a return and not a turn because, as we shall see in the dialogue, it does not begin in a vacuum but in a concrete context, one preceded by a lifetime of wrong turns. And perhaps it is better to say that it is not "the subject" who is returning, but "I" who am returning. One of the dangers in speaking about "the subject," "subjectivity," and so forth is that it can "reify" the subject, ironically rendering it an *object* and losing the intended quarry. But as one of Augustine's resources notes, the search for the soul is unlike any other in that it is a search into the nature of the very instrument with which we search.²⁷

Nevertheless, there is a kind of turn to the subject that unifies all of the Cassiciacum dialogues: indeed, it is key to understanding all of them. It is because Augustine *knows* certain things about the operations of his mind, like the rules of logic, that he knows that some of the claims of the skeptics cannot be true (*Against the Academics*). It is because he *knows* the unrestricted *terminus ad quem* of his intellectual eros that he knows what conditions must be satisfied for humans to be truly happy (*On the Happy Life*). It is because he *knows* what his mind grasps when it grasps being that he can anticipate how evil, a form of nonbeing, will or will not fit into the whole (*On Order*). This knowing of one's knowing at Cassiciacum does not create the subject-object split in Descartes that leaves the "in here" invincible and the "out there" problematic (such a dichotomy does not exist in Augustinian thought); nor is it subjectivist in the sense of

a moral or intellectual relativism. Rather, for Augustine, it is when subjects come to terms with the nature of their own minds that they can be truly objective in the grasp of reality. Returning to oneself clears the head of false assumptions about being and existence and removes various blind spots in one's mental vision.

Such a return is firmly operative in the *Soliloquies*. When Augustine the character tries to push the discussion to forms of knowledge, emphasizing that the knowledge of God is different from any other kind of knowledge, Reason keeps redirecting his attention to the dynamic of knowing itself. If you do not know God, Reason tells Augustine, "Don't you think that you should first know in what way it would be enough for you to know God, so that when you get there you will seek no more?" (1.2.7). But Augustine persists in thinking of knowledge rather than knowing until Reason says: "You will rejoice in knowing God much more than in knowing those things; nevertheless, it will be by virtue of a difference in the things, not in the understanding—unless perhaps you gaze at the earth with one kind of vision and at a clear sky with another, even though looking at the latter is much more relaxing to you than looking at the former" (1.5.11). Understand your understanding, Reason is saying, for it is by one and the same power of understanding that you grasp both the majesty of God (insofar as you can) and quotidian realities. The Augustinian turn to the subject that is begun in *Against the Academics*, hinted at in *On the Happy Life*, and described in *On Order* is explicitly developed in the *Soliloquies*.²⁸

MORAL DIMENSIONS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

If the *Soliloquies* contributes to the quest for self-knowledge, it also shines a light on some of the obstacles in the way. In the earlier dialogues Augustine speaks of the importance of the "order

of living”²⁹ as an antidote to the “smoky desires”³⁰ that obnubilate the light by which one comes to know the truth about oneself and other things. Worse, disordered lusts and destructive habits are defended, perpetuated, and nurtured by denial, self-justification, rationalization, and self-delusion. The one occasion on which Augustine breaks down weeping in the *Soliloquies* is after Reason catches him harboring old lusts that he had convinced himself were vanquished.³¹ Aesop tells the story that when Jupiter made Man, he gave him two knapsacks—one for his neighbor’s faults and one for his own. The Man kept the one for his neighbor’s faults in front of him and the one for his own on his back, so that the former was always under his nose but the latter was difficult to see. In the *Confessions*, when Augustine recounts finally seeing his moral failings for what they were, he uses a similar image of hiding behind himself: “You [O God], turned me back towards myself, taking me from behind my own back where I had put myself all the time that I preferred not to see myself. And You set me there before my own face that I might see how vile I was, how twisted and unclean and spotted and ulcerous. I saw myself and was horrified.”³² It takes a small miracle to see oneself as one truly is, in no small part because the miracle is so resisted.

Compounding this problem is what Rousseau calls *amour propre*, the self-love and self-perception that is based on the esteem of others. Augustine writes that he named the work *Soliloquies* because in it he is talking to himself alone,³³ but he—or rather, Reason—also explains *why* he was talking alone in the first place. The answer is not, as one might expect, because his other interlocutors at Cassiciacum were hampering his progress with their varying degrees of incomprehension or rebellion;³⁴ rather, it was to avoid personal embarrassment. At one point in the dialogue, after realizing that he made a mistake in his deductions, Augustine tells

Reason that he is ashamed for having assented to something rashly. Reason replies: "It's ridiculous for you to be ashamed, as if we hadn't chosen for this very reason to hold discussions of this kind. And since we are speaking with ourselves alone, I want these discussions to be called *Soliloquies* and written down. This is certainly a new name, and perhaps an unrefined one at that, but it is sufficiently suitable for indicating the gist [of what we are doing]" (2.7.14). Reason goes on to explain that although the dialectical method of moving from opinion to knowledge through the raising and answering of questions is the best way to seek the truth, it is frequently derailed by the egos of the questioners involved. *Homo sapiens* is too often the animal that uses its rationality not for transcending its animality but for protecting its carefully contrived reputation before its neighbors: its desire to see reality is overridden by its desire to be seen unrealistically. Such an obsession with appearance can only suggest that it has something to hide at all costs. Like Adam and Eve with their aprons of fig leaves, our shame and our attempts to alter or safeguard our appearance are a sign of our guilt and our wish to evade and hide the truth about ourselves.

We have already noted that in the Cassiciacum dialogues, the chief kind of self-knowledge that is sought is the knowing of oneself as a knower, that is, the knowledge of one's own noetic activities, which are a participation in the intelligible light of God.³⁵ But as these considerations make clear, Augustine is also deeply concerned with moral self-knowledge—the knowledge of one's sins. While the two kinds of self-knowledge are different in content and in the ways that they are acquired, they are not unrelated. Knowing one's sins is the first step to being freed of them through repentance and conversion, and being freed of sins is instrumental in extricating the mind from the birdlime (to use a favorite image of Augustine's)³⁶ that keeps it bogged down in materialistic thinking. A significant

portion of the *Soliloquies*, Augustine writes, is about what *kind* of person someone should be in order to comprehend incorporeal wisdom.³⁷

THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY

Much of the *Soliloquies* is also devoted to the question of whether the human soul is immortal. Augustine admits in *On the Happy Life* that he is still “pitching and listing,” that is, wavering back and forth, about certain matters pertaining to the soul.³⁸ It is understandable that a catechumen would have questions about the soul, but Augustine’s befuddlement continued long after he was consecrated a bishop and throughout his life.³⁹ He was always somewhat agnostic, for example, on precisely how the soul originates. Some of Augustine’s critics today blame the influence of Platonism for this uncertainty, and they are right, but not quite in the way they imagine. Although it is tempting to think of Augustine as laden down by Platonic myths involving metempsychosis or reincarnation, it is Plato’s metaphysical teaching about the essence of the soul that lies at the heart of the issue. For if the soul is real, and if in fact it is somehow more real than the body, and if it is real in such a way that it is not beholden to the laws to which bodies are subject, then in what way can we speak of the soul having a beginning or an origin? Does not the very notion of a beginning imply time, a before and an after? Even in light of Christian revelation, which is in accord with the philosophical doctrine of the immateriality of the soul, much about the human soul remains mysterious.

Of course, Augustine’s readers today are at an even greater disadvantage, since they are probably less familiar with discussions about the soul than with discussions about “the self.” When defined as the locus of one’s unique or particular feelings, needs,

or identity, the concept of “the self” provides little help to those who wish to live according to what is highest in them or to what is highest *per se*. The “soul,” by contrast, has a determinate and normative nature, and that nature is either brought to perfection by careful cultivation or squandered through neglect and abuse. It is the difference between these two notions that inspired G. K. Chesterton to write that one can never think too little of one’s self and too much of one’s soul.⁴⁰

The specific question in book two of the *Soliloquies*, whether the soul’s immortality can be rationally proved, is not new. Augustine was aware that many proofs existed, a good deal of them contradictory, in Plato,⁴¹ Cicero,⁴² Plotinus,⁴³ and others. Interest in the question is not difficult to understand. As Pascal writes:

The immortality of the soul is something of such vital importance to us, affecting us so deeply, that one must have lost all feeling not to care about knowing the facts of the matter. All our actions and thoughts must follow such different paths, according to whether there is hope of eternal blessings or not, that the only possible way of acting with sense and judgement is to decide our course in the light of its point, which ought to be our ultimate objective. Thus our chief interest and chief duty is to seek enlightenment on this subject, on which all our conduct depends.⁴⁴

Yet the reason behind Augustine’s concern does not appear to be primarily moral. In the *Soliloquies*, he does not want to know whether he will be rewarded or punished in the hereafter, but whether his existence will cease at his death. This may seem to be an odd question for a Christian, whose beliefs include not only the immortality of each individual soul but a resurrection of the body at the end of time. It is possible that Augustine, who is still a catechumen at the time of writing, has not fully learned or appropriated

the articles of his new faith or even that Christianity in northern Italy in the late fourth century had not sufficiently developed or articulated them. But the likelier explanation is that Augustine, who sees no contradiction between faith and reason, is eager to know the ways in which the light of reason can corroborate some of the teachings of biblical religion (Augustine explicitly takes this approach, for example, in one of his later dialogues, where he enjoins his Christian interlocutor not to “take refuge in [divine] authority” but to reach a *rational* understanding of the eternal law).⁴⁵ By the time of his conversion, Augustine had already seen in the writings of the Platonists a recognition of the one true God and perhaps even a glimpse of the Trinity.⁴⁶ No doubt there are similar truths about the soul that can be known by unaided reason.

That said, the ultimate value in trying to prove that the soul is immortal may lie not in the success or failure of the venture itself but in its corollary benefits. As Augustine learns in book two of the *Soliloquies*, there is little hope of knowing whether the soul is immortal if one does not first understand the nature of reality and of truth. Knowing what it really means to be real may be the greatest fruit of the reflections in book two.

ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

Augustine did not intend his proofs in book two of the *Soliloquies* to be the last word on the subject, however. After his return to Milan in early A.D. 387, he jotted down a series of notes to help him remember his plans for the third and final book of the *Soliloquies*.⁴⁷ But he never got around to converting his notes into the closing act of his soliloquy with Reason. Instead, they found their way “into the hands of men” unbeknownst to him and were published under the title *On the Immortality of the Soul*. Reviewing

this work decades later, Augustine writes: “It is so obscure by virtue of the [undiluted] strength and brevity of its reasoning that it is exhausting to read, and even I barely understand my own intention.”⁴⁸ Undaunted by this *caveat lector*, modern Augustinian scholars have attempted to interpret *On the Immortality of the Soul* in light of the *Soliloquies*, but if their different approaches have had any one flaw in common, it has been a neglect of the ironic and aporetic qualities of Augustine’s poetics at the time.⁴⁹ Fortunately, that has changed within only the past three years thanks to scholars like Christian Tornau, Giovanni Catapano, and Erik Kenyon.⁵⁰ The elder Augustine’s flustered dismissal notwithstanding, it is possible to discern the faint blueprint of book three of the *Soliloquies* lurking behind the opaque arguments of *On the Immortality of the Soul* and to appreciate, perhaps for the first time in centuries, something of Augustine’s original concept for a three-book *Soliloquies*.

A NEW FORM OF THEATER

And perhaps we should also speak of his concept for a three-act play, for Augustine—and this returns us again to the theme of the work’s originality—has designed the *Soliloquies* (and *On the Immortality of the Soul*) to be more than a philosophical dialogue. His innovative mode of writing, so innovative that it requires a neologism to encapsulate it, is also a new form of theater, possessing all the hallmarks of a script for the stage.⁵¹ In addition to presenting a plot, setting, and characters, Augustine the author places his narrative remarks in the present tense rather than the past, thereby making the text read more as a performance than a report.⁵² To be sure, these conventions are present in the other Cassiciacum dialogues as well, and in fact the first dialogue, *Against the Academics*, concludes with a monologue depicting a whimsical

farce complete with stock characters borrowed from the Roman stage.⁵³ Nevertheless, the *Soliloquies* lays greater claim to being a form of theater by an almost total absence of indirect reporting and by other clues that will be explained in the Commentary. As a kind of theatrical representation that both imitates and remedies what Augustine refers to elsewhere as the *theatrum* of living in the world,⁵⁴ the *Soliloquies* hopes to facilitate intellectual, moral, and religious conversion in its readers and to help them with the drama of their own lives. It is somewhat fitting that history has made Augustine's word for his new spiritual exercise, "soliloquy," more popular in drama class than in theology,⁵⁵ but it was not his original intention. It therefore remains the task of the reader to return the concept of soliloquizing to its native context and to see it as an important kind of therapy for his or her soul. Only then will the content and value of this dialogue be truly recovered.

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BOOK ONE

1.

1. For a long time I had been turning over within myself many different things,¹ and for many days I had been assiduously seeking my very self and what was good for me (or, if you prefer, what evil I should avoid), when suddenly it spoke to me. I do not know whether it was I myself or something else outside or inside of me; for this is precisely what I am struggling mightily to know*.² In any case, it said to me:

R(eason). Now, suppose you discovered something: To what shall you entrust it in order to move on to other matters?

A(ugustine). To my memory, of course.

Reason. And is memory so great that it duly retains everything which has been thought out?

Augustine. That is difficult to do; actually, it can't be done.³

Reason. Then it should be written down. But what will you do, since your health recoils at the labor of writing?⁴ Nor should these matters be dictated, for they require complete solitude.⁵

Augustine. You're right, and consequently, I have absolutely no idea what to do.

Reason. Pray for health and help, whereby you may obtain what you desire; and commit this to writing so that you may become more heartened by your output. Then, briefly summarize in a few short conclusions whatever you manage to find out.⁶ And by no means should you care about attracting a crowd of readers: this writing will suffice for a few of your compatriots.⁷

Augustine. I'll do as you say.

2. O God, Maker of the whole, grant to me first that I may petition Thee well;⁸ second, that I may act as one worthy of being set free by Thee;⁹ and lastly, that Thou wouldst set me free.¹⁰

O God, through whom all things, which by themselves would not be, strive to be:

O God, who dost not allow to be destroyed even that which destroys itself:

O God, who out of nothing didst create this world, which the eyes of all perceive to be most beautiful:

O God, who makest no evil and preventest it from becoming most evil:

O God, who showest to the few taking refuge in that which truly is that evil is nothing:¹¹

O God, through whom the whole, even with its sinister side, is perfected:

O God, by whom dissonance in the extreme is rendered nil, since the worse harmonizes with the better:

O God, whom everything loves which can love, be it knowing* or unknowing:¹²

O God, in whom all things exist, and yet for whom the whole of creation's foulness is not foul, its wickedness not harmful, its error not misleading:

O God, who hast willed that none but the pure should know* the truth:¹³

O God, Father of truth, Father of wisdom, Father of the true and supreme life, Father of happiness, Father of the good and the beautiful, Father of intelligible light,¹⁴ Father of our awakening and our illumination,¹⁵ Father of the pledge by which we are admonished to return to Thee:¹⁶

3. Thee do I invoke, O God, O Truth, in whom and from whom and through whom all the things that are true are true:

O God, O Wisdom, in whom and from whom and through whom all those things that are wise are wise:

O God, O True and Supreme Life, in whom and from whom and through whom all those things that truly and supremely live do live:

O God, O Happiness, in whom and from whom and through whom all those things that are happy are happy:

O God, the Good and the Beautiful, in whom and from whom and through whom all those things that are good and beautiful are good and beautiful:

O God, O Intelligible Light, in whom and from whom and through whom all those things that shine intelligibly, shine intelligibly:

O God, whose kingdom is the entire world of which sense-perception is unaware:¹⁷

O God, from whose kingdom the law is written even onto kingdoms such as these:¹⁸

O God, from whom to turn away is to fall,¹⁹ to whom to turn back is to rise again,²⁰ in whom to remain is to stand firm:²¹

O God, from whom to go away is to die, to whom to return is to revive, in whom to stay is to live:²²

O God, whom no one loses unless he is deceived,²³ whom no one seeks unless he is admonished, whom no one finds unless he is purified:

O God, whom to desert is what it means to perish, whom to heed is what it means to love, whom to see is what it means to have:²⁴

O God, to whom faith excites us, hope uplifts us, charity joins us:²⁵

O God, through whom we conquer the enemy:²⁶ Thee do I beseech.

O God, through whom we receive lest we perish altogether:

O God, by whom we are admonished to keep watch:²⁷

O God, through whom we distinguish good things from evil:

O God, through whom we flee evil things and follow after good:

O God, through whom we do not yield to adversities:

O God, through whom we serve well and rule well:²⁸

O God, through whom we learn that what we once thought was ours is not and that what we once thought was not ours is:

O God, through whom we cling not to the lures and enticements of evils:²⁹

O God, through whom things diminished diminish us not:

O God, through whom what is better in us is not subjected to what is worse:

O God, through whom death is swallowed up in victory:³⁰

O God, who dost convert us:

O God, who dost strip us of what is not and put on us what is:³¹

O God, who dost make us worthy of being heard:³²

O God, who dost strengthen us:³³

O God, who dost lead us into all truth:³⁴

O God, who speakest to us all good things,³⁵ who dost neither drive us mad nor allow anyone else to:³⁶

O God, who dost call us back to the way:³⁷

O God, who dost bring us to the door:³⁸

O God, who dost make it so that it is opened to those who knock:³⁹

O God, who dost give us the bread of life:⁴⁰

O God, through whom we thirst for the drink that, when drunk, quenches our thirst forever:⁴¹

O God, who dost convict the world of sin, of justice, of judgment:⁴²

O God, through whom we are not moved by those who do not believe:

O God, through whom we reject the error of those who think that the merits of souls* are nothing before Thee:⁴³

O God, through whom we do not serve weak and needy elements:⁴⁴

O God, who dost purify and prepare us for divine rewards: graciously come Thou to me.

4. Whatever I have said, come Thou to my aid, Thou who art the one God, the one, eternal, true substance,⁴⁵ where there is no discrepancy,⁴⁶ no confusion, no change, no dearth, no death; where there is supreme concord, supreme clarity, supreme constancy, supreme fullness, supreme life;⁴⁷ where nothing is deficient, nothing excessive;⁴⁸ where He who begets and He who is begotten is One:⁴⁹

O God, whom all those who serve, serve and whom every good soul* obeys:

[O God,] by whose laws the heavens revolve, the stars proceed along their courses, the sun administers the day, the moon regulates the night, and all the world (insofar as sensible matter allows) keeps the great constancy of things in the orders and recurring patterns of different spans of time:⁵⁰ through the days by the alternating of light and dark; through the months by the moon's waxing and waning; through the years by the succession of spring, summer,

autumn, and winter; through the lustrums by the perfect completion of the sun's course;⁵¹ through the great orbits by the return of the stars to their points of origin:⁵²

O God, by whose laws, standing firm for all time, the unstable motion of changeable things is not allowed to be thrown into confusion [but] is each and every time called back to a semblance of stability by the restraint of circulating ages:⁵³

[O God,] by whose laws the soul*'s choice is free, and both rewards for the good and penalties for the wicked are distributed by the necessities fixed throughout all things:

O God, from whom all good things continually flow down to us, from whom all wicked things are continually held back from us:

O God, above whom is nothing, outside of whom is nothing, without whom is nothing:

O God, under whom is everything, in whom is everything, with whom is everything:

O God, who didst make man in Thy image and likeness,⁵⁴ which he who knows himself recognizes:⁵⁵

Hear, hear, hear me, O my God, my Lord, my King, my Father, my Cause, my Hope, my Reality,⁵⁶ my Honor, my Home, my Fatherland,⁵⁷ my Salvation, my Light, my Life. Hear, hear, hear me in that manner of Thine known but to the few.

5. Now do I love Thee alone, follow Thee alone, seek Thee alone; now am I ready to serve Thee alone, because Thou alone dost rule justly; under Thy law do I long to belong.

Order, I beseech, and command whatever Thou wilt, but heal⁵⁸ and open my ears, so that with them I may hear Thy voice.

Heal and open my eyes, so that with them I may see Thy will.⁵⁹

Drive all mental unsoundness out of me, that I may recognize Thee.⁶⁰

Tell me what I should be attentive to, that I may look upon Thee; I also hope to do all those things that Thou hast commanded.

Receive, I pray O most clement Lord, Thy fugitive. Long enough have I paid the penalty; long enough have I served Thy enemies, whom Thou hast under Thy feet; long enough have I been the plaything of deceptions.

Take me in, Thy servant who flees from them, because they also took me in, a stranger, when I was fleeing from Thee.⁶¹

To Thee do I sense that I should return. May Thy door be opened to my knocking; teach me how to come to Thee.⁶² I have nothing except my will; I know* nothing except that fleeting and perishable things should be spurned and that certain and eternal things sought after. This I do, Father, because this alone do I know; but I know not how one may come to Thee.

Suggest to me, show me, supply me the provisions for the journey. If those who take refuge in Thee find Thee by faith, grant me faith; if by virtue, grant me virtue; if by knowledge*, grant me knowledge*. Increase faith, increase hope, increase charity in me.⁶³

O how wondrous and unique is Thy goodness!

6. Thee do I solicit, and again do I ask Thee for the means by which Thou art solicited. For if Thou dost abandon [a man], he perishes. But Thou dost not abandon, because Thou art the Supreme Good whom no one hath sought rightly and not found. Moreover, every man hath sought rightly whom Thou hast made to seek rightly. Make me to do so as well, Father. Free me from error. In seeking Thee may I reach nothing else but Thee. If I long for nothing else but Thee, may I find Thee now—please, Father. But if there is a desire in me for something superfluous, do Thou cleanse me and make me fit to see Thee.

And as for the health of this mortal body of mine, as long as I do not know what aspect of it is beneficial either to me or to those

whom I love, I entrust it to Thee, Father most wise and most good, and I shall pray for what Thou shalt advise in good time.

This alone do I beg of Thine Most Excellent Clemency⁶⁴ — that Thou convert me completely to Thee, that Thou let nothing impede me in my striving toward Thee, and that Thou command me (while I bear and carry this body of mine) to be pure, magnanimous, just, and prudent, a perfect lover and recipient of Thy wisdom, someone who is both worthy of Thy dwelling place and a dweller in Thy most blessed kingdom. Amen. Amen.

2.

7. *Augustine.* There—I have prayed to God.

Reason. Then what do you want to know*?

Augustine. All those things for which I have prayed.

Reason. Briefly summarize them.

Augustine. I yearn to know* God and the soul*.⁶⁵

Reason. Nothing more?

Augustine. Nothing whatsoever.

Reason. Then begin seeking. But first explain, should God be shown to you, how you will be able to say, “That’s enough.”

Augustine. I don’t know how He should be shown to me in such a way that I could say, “That’s enough.” For I don’t believe that I know* anything in the way that I long to know* God.

Reason. Then what are we doing? Don’t you think that you should first know* in what way it would be enough for you to know* God, so that when you get there you will seek no more?

Augustine. Of course I do, but I don’t see how it can be done. For what have I ever understood that is so similar to God that I could say, “How I understand this, in the same way do I want to understand God”?

Reason. You who do not yet know God, how is it that you know that you know nothing similar to God?⁶⁶

Augustine. Because if I were to know* something similar to God, I would love it without question. Currently, however, I love nothing but God and the soul*, neither of which I know*.⁶⁷

Reason. Then you don't love your friends?

Augustine. In what way could I not love them, I who love the soul*?

Reason. Then do you love both fleas and bugs in the same way?

Augustine. I said that I love the soul* [*anima*], not animals [*animalia*].

Reason. Either men aren't your friends or you don't love them, for every man is an animal, and you said that you do not love animals.

Augustine. They are men and I love them, not because they are animals but because they are men, that is, because they have rational souls, which I love even in thieves. For it's all right for me to love reason in someone, even when I justly hate the person who makes bad use of what I love. And so the more my friends make good use of their rational souls—or at least insofar as they want to make good use of them—the more I love them.

3.

8. *Reason.* I accept that. And yet if someone were to say to you, "I will make you know God like you know Alypius," wouldn't you give thanks and say, "That's enough"?

Augustine. I would certainly give thanks, but I wouldn't say that that was enough.

Reason. Why, pray tell?

Augustine. Because I don't know God like I know Alypius, and yet I don't even know Alypius enough.

Reason. Then see to it that you do not have an impudent wish to know enough about God, you who do not know enough about Alypius.

Augustine. That doesn't follow. For in comparison to the stars, what is more insignificant than my dinner? And yet I don't know what I'm having for dinner tomorrow, but I do profess to know* — and not impudently, either — what phase the moon will be in then.

Reason. Then is it actually enough for you to know God in the same way that you know what course the moon will take tomorrow?

Augustine. It isn't. For I assent to this through the senses, but I don't know whether either God or some hidden cause of nature may suddenly change the order and course of the moon. If this were to happen, all that I had presumed would be false.

Reason. And do you believe that this could happen?

Augustine. I don't, but I'm inquiring into what I know*, not what I believe. It is said, perhaps rightly, that all that we know* we also believe, but it is not said that all that we believe we also know*.

Reason. And so you reject, in this case, all testimony of the senses?

Augustine. Entirely.

Reason. What about that acquaintance of yours whom you said you still do not know? Do you wish to know him by sense-perception or by understanding?

Augustine. What I indeed know about him by sense-perception (provided that something *is* known by sense-perception)⁶⁸ is both insignificant and sufficient. But that part of him by which he is my friend—that is, his very mind—I long to grasp through the understanding.

Reason. Can it be known in some other way?

Augustine. None at all.

Reason. Then you dare to say that your friend, your very close acquaintance, is unknown to you?

Augustine. Why shouldn't I? For I consider that law of friendship to be most just which commands everyone to love his friend not less and not more than himself.⁶⁹ And so, when I don't know my very own self, what affront can I inflict on him whom I say I don't know, especially when, as I believe, not even he knows himself?

Reason. Therefore, if these things which you want to know* are from that genus of things which are grasped by the understanding, when I said that you impudently wanted to know* God while you did not know Alypius, you shouldn't have offered me your dinner and the moon as examples—if these things, as you have said, pertain to sense-perception.

4.

9. But what does that matter to us? Now answer me this: if the things that Plato and Plotinus said about God are true, is it good enough for you to know* God as they knew* Him?

Augustine. It doesn't necessarily follow that if the things they said are true, they also *knew* them.⁷⁰ For there are many who have spoken at length about things of which they are ignorant, just as I myself said that I desire knowing* all those things for which I prayed; and I wouldn't desire them if I already knew* them. Was I rendered less capable of saying those things because [of my ignorance]? For I didn't speak of what I comprehended through understanding⁷¹ but of what I collected here and there and committed to memory, things that I latched onto insofar as I could put my faith in them. Knowing*, however, is something else.

Reason. Tell me, please: Don't you at least know* what a line is in the discipline of geometry?

Augustine. That I clearly know*.

Reason. And in professing this you're not afraid of the Academics?

Augustine. Not in the least. For they don't want the wise man to err, but I am not wise.⁷² And so, I'm still not afraid of professing a knowledge* of those things that I know. But if, as I desire, I ever attain Wisdom, I will do what she advises.

Reason. I deny none of this. But, as I had begun to ask, do you also know the round object that they call a sphere just as you know a line?

Augustine. I do.

Reason. And do you know both equally, or do you know one more or less than the other?

Augustine. I know both equally and thoroughly. For in neither am I in any way deceived.

Reason. How? Did you perceive these things by sense-perception or by understanding?

Augustine. To be more precise, I used the senses in this matter as if they were a ship. For when they had conveyed me to the place to which I was trying to go (at which point I dismissed them), and when I had now been put down on solid ground, so to speak, and had begun turning these things over in thought, my steps fumbled for a long time.⁷³ This is why it seems to me that one could more easily navigate a ship on dry land than perceive geometry with the senses, although they do seem to help beginners a little at first.⁷⁴

Reason. Then you don't hesitate to call the discipline of those things knowledge*, provided it is yours?⁷⁵

Augustine. No I don't, if the Stoics, who attribute knowledge* to no one except the wise man, will allow me.⁷⁶ To be sure, I don't

deny having a perception of those things that they concede even in the case of folly. But I'm not terrified of those fellows in any way whatsoever. These things into which you have inquired, I utterly hold by knowledge*. But proceed; I'd like to see where you're going with this inquiry.

Reason. Don't be in a hurry; we are at leisure—only listen attentively, lest you concede something rashly. I'm trying to make you joyful about things over which you may fear no loss, and here you are ordering us to rush in headlong as if this were some paltry affair.

Augustine. May God grant what you say. So question me at will, and if I do any such thing from this point on, scold me more severely.

10. *Reason.* Is it obvious to you, then, that there is no way a line can be divided lengthwise into two lines?

Augustine. It is.

Reason. What about crosswise?

Augustine. What else, except that it can be cut an infinite number of times?

Reason. What about a sphere? Is it equally clear that it cannot have even two circles that are equal to each other from any part that is off-center?

Augustine. Equally and entirely clear.

Reason. What about a line and a sphere: Do they seem to you to be one and the same, or do they differ from each other?

Augustine. Who would not see that they differ greatly?

Reason. But if you know the former and the latter equally and yet they differ from each other greatly (as you admit), is there therefore an undifferentiated knowledge* of different things?

Augustine. And who denied this?

Reason. You did, a little while ago. For when I asked you how you wished to know God so that you could say it was enough, you

answered that you couldn't explain it because you had no perception of anything similar to how you wanted to perceive God, since you know* nothing similar to God.⁷⁷ Now what is this, then? Is a line or a sphere similar to God?

Augustine. Who would say this?

Reason. But I had inquired not into what you know* as such, but what you know* about how you long to know* God. For you know a line in the same way that you know a sphere, even though a line is not constituted the same as a sphere. Therefore, tell me whether it's good enough for you to know God in the way that you know this geometrical orb—that is, to have no doubt about God as you have no doubt about it.

5.

11. *Augustine.* I beseech you, no matter how hard you push and persuade, I still dare not say that I want to know* God in the way that I know* these things. For not only the things, but even the knowledge* itself seems dissimilar to me. First, because a line and an orb differ from each other only to the extent that the knowledge of them may still be contained in a single discipline. No geometer, however, has ever professed to teach about God. Second, if the knowledge* of God and of those things of yours is the same, I would rejoice over the things that I know as much as I anticipate rejoicing over knowing God. Now, however, I so very much look down on these things in comparison to Him that it sometimes seems to me that if I were to understand Him and see Him in the way He can be seen, all these [other] things would escape my notice—since even now, out of love for Him they hardly ever come to mind*.

Reason. You will rejoice in knowing God much more than in knowing those things; nevertheless, it will be by virtue of a differ-

ence in the things, not in the understanding—unless perhaps you gaze at the earth with one kind of vision and at a clear sky with another, even though looking at the latter is much more relaxing to you than looking at the former. But unless the eyes are deceived, I believe that if you were asked whether it was as certain to you that you were seeing the earth as it was that you were seeing the heavens, you would have to answer that it was, even though it's not so much the beauty and splendor of the earth as it is of the heavens that fill you with joy.

Augustine. I must admit that I find this analogy moving,⁷⁸ and I am led to agree that however much the earth differs in kind from the heavens, by that much do those true and certain proofs of the disciplines differ from the intelligible majesty of God.

6.

12. *Reason.* It's good that you find it moving. For Reason, who is speaking with you, promises to show God to your mind* as the sun is shown to your eyes. For minds* are, as it were, the senses proper to the soul*.⁷⁹ Moreover, the most certain of the disciplines are like the things that are illuminated by the sun so that they can be seen, such as the earth and all earthly things. It is God Himself, however, who illuminates. And I, Reason, am in the mind* as [the act of] looking is in the eyes. For having eyes isn't the same as looking, and looking isn't the same as seeing.⁸⁰ Therefore, the soul* needs three different things: eyes of which it can now make good use,⁸¹ looking, and seeing.⁸² Healthy eyes are a mind* free from every bodily blemish, that is, a mind* that is now removed from and has been purged of the various lusts for mortal things.⁸³ At first, this [health] furnishes it nothing else but faith. For this [health] cannot yet be proved to a mind* sick and polluted by vices

(because it can't see unless it is healthy); and if it doesn't believe that it will not see by any other means, it won't take care of its health. But what if it does indeed believe that the matter stands such as I have said, and it believes that it would see in such a way (*if it were capable of seeing*), yet it despairs of ever being able to be healed? Wouldn't it utterly sell itself out and loathe itself, and wouldn't it disobey the commands of its physician?

Augustine. Completely, especially since it's inevitable that the illness would experience these commands as harsh.⁸⁴

Reason. Then hope should be added to faith.

Augustine. I believe so.

Reason. What if the [mind*] also believes that all things are constituted thus, and it hopes that it can be healed, yet it doesn't love, it doesn't long for the very light that is promised, and it holds that it should be content in the meantime with its own darkness, which is now pleasant to it by the force of habit? Won't it likewise reject the physician?

Augustine. Absolutely.

Reason. Therefore a third thing, charity, is necessary.⁸⁵

Augustine. There is nothing so utterly necessary.

Reason. And so, without these three things, no soul* is healed in such a way that it may see—that is, understand—its God.

13. When, therefore, it has healthy eyes, what is left?

Augustine. That it look.

Reason. Reason is the looking of the soul*.⁸⁶ But because it doesn't follow that everyone who looks sees, right and perfect looking—that is, looking that is followed by seeing—is called virtue; for virtue is either right or perfect reason.⁸⁷ But looking itself cannot turn the eyes (even though they're now healed) to the light unless three things remain: faith, by which it is believed that the reality one should be turning to look at is such that it will make one

happy when it is seen; hope, by which it is expected that when one has looked well, one will see; charity, by which one longs to see and enjoy. Now looking is followed by really seeing God, which is the end of our looking: not because our looking ceases to exist, but because it has nothing further toward which it may strive. And this is truly perfect virtue, reason reaching its end, from which follows the happy life. Moreover, seeing is itself the understanding that is in the soul*,⁸⁸ which is produced by the one who understands and by that which is understood, just as in the eyes what is called seeing consists of both the sense-perception itself and the sensible thing; and when either of these is withdrawn, nothing can be seen.

7.

14. So, let's see whether these three things are still necessary to the soul* after it has reached the point of seeing God—that is, of understanding God. Why is faith necessary when now it sees? Likewise, why hope, since now it holds? But not only is nothing taken away from charity, much more is even added to it. For when the soul* has seen that unique and true Beauty,⁸⁹ it will love all the more; and unless it fixes its eye with unbounded love and never ceases from looking, it will not be able to remain in that most beatific vision.⁹⁰

But as long as the soul* is in this body, even if it were to see God most clearly—that is, understand Him—nevertheless, because the body's senses also make use of their proper function (there is, indeed, nothing about them capable of deceiving,⁹¹ although there can be something about them that leads to doubt), that by which the senses are resisted and that by which something else is believed to be true instead can still be called faith. Likewise, because in such a life the soul* still endures many bodily grievances (even

though, when it understands God, it is now happy),⁹² it needs to hope that all those inconveniences will no longer exist after death. Therefore, hope doesn't leave the soul* as long as it's in this life. But, when after this life the soul* has totally collected itself into God, charity abides to hold it there.⁹³ For the soul* shouldn't be said to have faith that those things are true when it's not harassed by any interruption of falsehood; nor does anything remain to be hoped for when, free from care, it possesses all things. And so, three things pertain to the soul*: that it may be healed, that it may look, and that it may see. And there are three other things: faith, hope, and charity. They are always necessary for the first and second of the former three [health and looking], but they are all in this life for the sake of the third [seeing]. After this life, only charity remains.⁹⁴

8.

15. Now listen as I also teach you, inasmuch as the present occasion requires it, something about God from that analogy of sensible things.⁹⁵ God is definitely intelligible, and the proofs of the disciplines are also intelligible, yet they differ from each other greatly. For the earth is visible and so is light, but the earth can't be seen if it's not being illumined by light. Therefore, we should believe that those things which are handed down in the disciplines (and whoever understands these things, admits that without a doubt they are most true) can't be understood unless they are illumined by another sun all their own, so to speak.

Therefore, just as there are three different things that one can notice about this sun—that it is, that it shines, and that it illuminates—so too are there three different things about this most hidden God whom you wish to understand—that He is, that He is understood, and that He makes all other things understood.⁹⁶

These two realities—yourself and God—I am venturing to teach you, so that you may understand them. But first, tell me how you are receiving these things: as probable or as true?

Augustine. As probable, obviously. And I must admit that I had hoped for more; for besides those two [examples] of the line and the orb, you've said nothing that I would venture to say that I know*.

Reason. That's no surprise, for so far nothing has been explained in such a way as to demand recognition from you.⁹⁷

9.

16. But why do we delay? We should be getting on our way. Yet let's see whether we are healthy, since this comes before everything else.

Augustine. You yourself will see this if you can look a little either into yourself or into me; as for me, if I detect something I will answer your questions.

Reason. Do you love something besides the knowledge* of yourself and God?

Augustine. Given my current sense of things,⁹⁸ I could answer that I love nothing more completely, but I will be more cautious and reply that I don't know. It often happens with me that, just when I believe that nothing else can disturb me, something nevertheless comes to mind* and vexes me much differently than I expected. And just as often, although I'm not torn up by something when it occurs in thought, still, when it happens in reality I become more upset than I had reckoned. But now it seems to me that I am capable of being disturbed by only three things: the fear of losing the ones I love, the fear of pain, and the fear of death.⁹⁹

Reason. Then you love the life that you and your dear loved ones have together, and you love your good health, and you love

your very own life in this body, for otherwise you would not fear losing them.¹⁰⁰

Augustine. Yes, I admit it.

Reason. Now then, the fact that not all your friends are with you and the fact that your health is less than perfect brings some grief to your heart; for I see this as a logical consequence.¹⁰¹

Augustine. Right you are; I cannot deny it.

Reason. What if you could suddenly feel that you were of sound body and you could prove it, and what if you could see all the ones you love harmoniously enjoying a liberal leisure with you? Shouldn't you be just a little bit carried away with joy?

Augustine. A little bit indeed! Especially if, as you say, these things were to come about suddenly, at what point would I be able to contain myself, at what point would I be allowed even to conceal this kind of joy?

Reason. And so, you're still agitated by all of the mind's diseases and disturbances. What in the world?! The impudence of such eyes, to wish to see that sun!

Augustine. You have drawn your conclusion as if I weren't fully aware of how much my health has improved or which pests have left me or how many of them remain. Let's suppose I concede that.

10.

17. *Reason.* Don't you see that these eyes of the body, even when they're healthy, are often repelled and rebuffed by the light of this sun, and that they take refuge in their own darkness? You, however, are thinking of what progress you've made, not what it is you wish to see. And yet I will discuss with you this very thing, what advances that you reckon we've made.¹⁰² Do you desire *no* riches?¹⁰³

Augustine. Not first and foremost, at least not now. For now that I'm thirty-two,¹⁰⁴ it has been almost fourteen years since I stopped desiring such things.¹⁰⁵ And if by chance they were offered to me, I didn't think anything of them except in terms of necessary sustenance and liberal usage.¹⁰⁶ One book of Cicero's thoroughly and most easily persuaded me that there's no way one should strive after riches, but if they are obtained, they should be administered most wisely and carefully.¹⁰⁷

Reason. What about honors?

Augustine. I admit that it is only recently, almost a matter of days, that I have stopped desiring them.¹⁰⁸

Reason. What about a wife? What if she were beautiful, modest, agreeable, well-lettered (or someone who could easily be educated by you), and what if she also came with such a dowry that she would never in any way become a burden on your leisure (since you look down on riches)—would you not occasionally be delighted by such a wife, especially if you could hope and be certain that you wouldn't have to put up with any trouble concerning her?

Augustine. However much you may wish to portray her and heap upon her all good qualities, I have decided that, for me, nothing should be avoided more than sexual relations. I feel that nothing dislodges a male mind from its citadel¹⁰⁹ more than a woman's charms and that bodily contact without which one cannot have a wife. Thus, if it pertains to the office of a wise man (which I have not yet ascertained) to devote himself to children, anyone who for this reason alone sleeps with a woman would seem admirable to me, but there's no way he could be someone that I'd imitate. Indeed, it is more dangerous to try this than it is lucky to be able to do it. On this account, for the sake of my soul's* freedom, I have commanded myself—sufficiently, justly, and

beneficially, I believe—not to desire, not to seek, not to take a wife.¹¹⁰

Reason. I'm not currently inquiring into what you have decided but whether you're still struggling or whether you have indeed already conquered libido itself. For this has to do with the health of your eyes.

Augustine. I'm not looking for, I'm not longing for, anything of this kind whatsoever: I even remember such things with horror and disdain. What more do you want? And this boon grows in me day after day, for the more my hope increases of seeing that Beauty for which I burn hot with desire, the more that all my love and will are turned toward It.

Reason. What about the pleasure of food: How much of a concern is that to you?

Augustine. I'm not disturbed by the things I have decided not to eat. But as for the things that I have not excluded, I admit that I am delighted by them when they're around, yet in such a way that even if they have been seen or tasted, they can be taken away without unsettling my mind. And when they aren't present at all, my appetite for them doesn't dare to insert itself as a hindrance to my thoughts. But you shouldn't question me at all about food and drink or the baths or any other bodily pleasure;¹¹¹ I have an appetite for only what can contribute to my health.¹¹²

11.

18. *Reason.* You have made much progress! And yet, you are hindered a great deal from seeing that light by the things which remain. But I shall try something that, it seems to me, is easy to demonstrate: either nothing remains for us to subdue, or we have made no progress at all and the rot of all those things that we

believed had been excised still remains. For I ask you: If you were persuaded that you couldn't live in the pursuit of wisdom along with your many loved ones unless some ample holdings could sustain your daily necessities, would you not long and wish for riches?

Augustine. I would.

Reason. What if it became apparent that you could win many over to wisdom if your authority grew from honors, and that your very own acquaintances wouldn't be able to set a limit on their desires¹¹³ and turn wholly to the search for God unless they themselves were honored, and that this couldn't happen unless it was by virtue of your own honors and position—shouldn't these things be desired, and shouldn't they be pursued with great effort so that they could come about?

Augustine. It is as you say.

Reason. Now I will not argue about a wife, for perhaps there can exist no such necessity to take one. Nevertheless, if it were certain that her ample fortune could support all those with whom you wish to live leisurely in one place (and she herself were graciously allowing it), and especially if she were so powerful by virtue of her noble stock that through her you could easily attain those honors that you have already conceded to be necessary—I don't know whether it would pertain to your office to look down on these things.

Augustine. When would I dare hope for such a thing?

19. *Reason.* You say this as if I were asking you right now what you hope for. I'm not seeking what does not delight when denied but what does delight when offered. For removing a pest is one thing, lulling it to sleep another. Applicable to this is what certain learned men have said: that every fool is mad in the same way that all filth stinks—not all the time, but when you rile it up, you can

tell.¹¹⁴ It makes a great difference whether lust is covered up by the soul's despair or driven out by health.

Augustine. Although I can't answer you, you will still never persuade me, in the state of mind* that I now feel I'm in, to believe that I've made no progress.

Reason. I suppose that it seems this way to you on account of the fact that even though you might wish for these things, they would nevertheless appear desirable not for their own sake but for the sake of something else.

Augustine. That is what I have been wanting to say! For when I longed for riches, I longed for them so that I could be rich. And I wanted those honors (the lust for which, as I've mentioned, I have only recently overcome)¹¹⁵ when I was charmed by some glitter of theirs. And upon nothing else in a wife was I intent (when I was intent) except on what could bring me pleasure with good repute. At that time there was in me a real lust for those things; now, however, I utterly spurn them all. But if a passage to the things I desire can only come through these things, then I don't desire them as something to be embraced; rather, I submit to them as something to be tolerated.

Reason. Well put, all of it! For I don't think that the [desire] for any of those things should be called lust when they are sought for the sake of something else.

12.

20. But I ask you, why do you want the people you love either to live or to live with you?

Augustine. So that we may investigate our souls* and God at the same time and with one heart. For thus it easily happens that the first one with a discovery effortlessly leads the others to it.

Reason. What if they aren't willing to seek these things?

Augustine. I will persuade them to be willing.

Reason. What if you can't, either because they think they've already found these things or consider them incapable of being found, or because they are fettered by the cares and the longing for other things?

Augustine. I shall support them, and they me, insofar as we can.

Reason. What if their presence even hinders you from your investigation? Wouldn't you be troubled by this, and if they can't be any different, wouldn't you wish that they not be with you rather than be this way?

Augustine. I admit that it is as you say.

Reason. Then you don't desire their life or their presence for its own sake, but for the sake of finding wisdom?

Augustine. I completely agree.

Reason. What about your own life—would you wish to remain in it if it were certain to you that it was a hindrance to your comprehension of wisdom?

Augustine. I'd flee from it in every way.

Reason. What if you were taught that you could obtain wisdom by leaving this body just as easily as you could by staying in it—would you care whether it were here or in another life that you enjoyed what you love?

Augustine. If I understood that nothing worse would ever intercept me and drag me back from where I had made progress, I wouldn't care.

Reason. Then it's for this reason that you now fear dying, lest you be engulfed by some greater evil that may take divine knowledge away from you.

Augustine. I not only fear that it may be taken away (if perchance I have perceived something), but I also fear that access

to the things I'm so eager to perceive may be blocked off from me. Although, I do think that what I already hold will remain with me.

Reason. And so you also want this life to remain not for its own sake but for the sake of wisdom.

Augustine. Yes.

21. *Reason.* Bodily pain remains, and perhaps it disturbs you because of its power.

Augustine. I'm quite terrified of that very thing as well, for no other reason than that it hinders me from seeking. In fact, although I have been tortured by a severe toothache for the past few days and haven't been allowed even to mull over anything except perhaps what I had already learned¹¹⁶ (moreover, I have been completely hindered from learning [new things], for which I need all of my mind's attention)—nevertheless, it seems to me that if the brilliance of the truth had appeared before my faculties,¹¹⁷ either I wouldn't have felt that pain or at least I would've tolerated it as if it were nothing.¹¹⁸ But even though I've never suffered anything worse, because I often still think about how many more serious things could befall me, I am forced for the moment to agree with Cornelius Celsus, who said that the supreme good is wisdom and the supreme evil is bodily pain. Nor does his reasoning strike me as absurd. "For since," he says, "we are composed of two parts—the soul, of course, and the body—and since the former is better and the latter is inferior, the supreme good is the best of the better part while the supreme evil is the worst of the inferior part. Wisdom, moreover, is the best in the soul, and pain is the worst in the body."¹¹⁹ And so it is concluded (without any falsity, in my opinion) that the supreme good of man is to be wise and the supreme evil is to be in pain.

Reason. We'll see about those things later. For perhaps Wisdom herself, which we are striving to attain, will persuade us

otherwise. But if she will demonstrate that this opinion on the supreme good and the supreme evil is true, we'll hold it without question.

13.

22. Now, however, we're seeking what kind of a lover of Wisdom you are. For she whom you long to see and hold in a most chaste gaze and embrace, with no covering in between and naked, so to speak, does not allow this [to happen] with any kind of man except the fewest and most favored of her lovers. For if you burned hot with love for some beautiful woman, wouldn't she be right not to give herself to you if she discovered that you loved someone besides her? Will Wisdom's most chaste Beauty show herself to you if you're not on fire for her alone?¹²⁰

Augustine. Then why am I still kept unhappy in suspense, and why am I delayed by this wretched torment? Certainly I have already demonstrated that I love nothing else, since what is not loved for its own sake is not loved. But I love Wisdom alone for her own sake, and all the other things that I either want present or fear not having present are also for her sake: life, quiet, friends. Moreover, what limit can one have on the love of that Beauty,¹²¹ in which not only do I not begrudge her to others, but I even seek many more to desire her with me, gape at her with me, hold her with me, and thoroughly enjoy her with me—and the more we become friends, the more we will love her in common?¹²²

23. *Reason.* This is precisely what lovers of Wisdom should be. She seeks such men, she with whom intimacy is truly chaste and without any defilement. But one does not reach her by [only] one route.¹²³ Each person, in fact, comprehends that unique and most true Good according to his own health and strength. There is a

certain ineffable and incomprehensible light of minds*; and this common light may teach us, insofar as it can, what it is. For there are some eyes so healthy and vigorous that they can turn to the sun itself without any flinching as soon as they are opened.¹²⁴ To these eyes the light is, to a certain extent, health itself;¹²⁵ nor are they in need of a teacher, but perhaps they are only in need of admonition.¹²⁶ To them, believing, hoping, and loving are sufficient. But there are others who are carried away by the very brilliance that they so very much long to see, and when they don't see it, they often return to the darkness with delight. Even though these eyes are now the sort that can rightly be called healthy, it's dangerous to want to show them what they don't yet have the strength to see.¹²⁷ Therefore, they should be exercised first, and their love should be beneficially delayed and nourished.¹²⁸

First, certain things that do not have their own light but can be seen on account of light—things such as clothes or a wall or something like this—should be shown to them. Next are the things that shine more beautifully (not by their own light but by virtue of the light nonetheless), such as silver, gold, and the like—yet not so radiant that they hurt the eyes. Afterwards, earthly fire should perhaps be shown in moderation, then the stars, then the moon, then the splendor of the dawn and the brightness of the whitening sky.¹²⁹ Once each person becomes accustomed to these things in accordance with his own health—either very quickly or very slowly, either going through the whole order or disdaining some of the things—without flinching and with great pleasure, he will see the sun.¹³⁰ The best teachers do something like this for those who are most eager for Wisdom but do not see her clearly, though they see her nonetheless. For it is the office of a good discipline to attain [wisdom] by a certain order; attaining it without order, on the other hand, is a stroke of luck that can hardly be believed.

But I reckon that we have written enough for today: we must spare our health.

14.

24. And on another day, I said:

Augustine. Please give me that order, if you can now. Lead me, guide me—wherever you will, through whatever you will, however you will. Command whatever hard, whatever arduous things you want, things that may yet be within my power to do and through which I may not hesitate to attain what I long for.

Reason. I can prescribe one thing to you (I know no more): that we must flee completely from these sensible things,¹³¹ and that, while we bear this body, we must take great care that their birdlime not hamper our wings, which we need to be unscathed and perfect so that we may fly from this darkness to that light.¹³² For that light doesn't even deign to show itself to those who are shut up in this cage unless they are such that they can escape from these things (either by breaking or unloosening them) up to their own ethereal heights.¹³³ And so, when you will be the kind of man whom no earthly thing delights in any way, believe me: in that same moment, at that same point in time, you will see what you desire.

Augustine. When will that be, I pray you? For I don't reckon that I will be able to arrive at a supreme disdain for these things until I see that in comparison to which they seem vile.

25. *Reason.* In this manner the eye of the body could say, "Only when I see the sun will I no longer love the darkness!" And it seems as if this pertains to order as well, but that is far from the case. For [the eye] loves darkness because it's not healthy; but unless it's healthy, it can't see the sun.¹³⁴ And the soul is often deceived about this, the result being that it considers itself healthy

and boasts about itself; and because it doesn't see yet, it complains as if it were right for it to do so. But that Beauty knows when to show herself; in fact, she even fulfills the function of a physician and understands who the healthy are better than the very ones who are being healed. It seems to us that we can see how far we have risen, but it is not given to us to think or feel how far we've sunk and how much progress we've made;¹³⁵ and so in comparison to a more serious disease, we believe that we're healthy. Don't you see how we announced yesterday, as if we were completely care-free, that we were no longer detained by any pest, that we loved nothing but Wisdom, and that only for her sake did we seek or want other things?¹³⁶ How sordid, how foul, how abominable, how horrible a woman's embrace seemed to you when we inquired among ourselves into the lust for a wife! But last night at least, when we were lying awake and going over those same things again, you realized how the caresses you were imagining and how their bitter-sweetness titillated you in a way that was different from what you had presumed. They did so, of course, far, far less than they used to, but it was also far different from what you had been thinking, all so that the most hidden Physician could show you in what way you have escaped His care and what remains to be cured.

26. *Augustine*. Be quiet, I beg you, be quiet! Why do you torment me? Why do you probe so much and go so low? No longer do I harden myself to weeping; from now on I promise nothing, I presume nothing, lest you ask me any more questions about those things. At least you say that He whom I'm on fire to see will know when I'm healthy. Let Him do as He please; and when He pleases, may He show himself! I now commit all of myself to His clemency and care.¹³⁷ Once and for all, what I believe about Him is that He doesn't cease to lift up those who are thus disposed toward Him.

And until I see that Beauty, I will make no statements about my health.

Reason. May you do nothing else without delay! But restrain your tears now and pull your soul together. You have definitely cried a lot, and that chest illness of yours definitely doesn't take this well.

Augustine. You want there to be a limit on my tears when I don't see a limit on my misery?¹³⁸ You order me to consider the health of my body when I myself have been wasting away in rot?¹³⁹ But if you have any influence over me, I beseech you to try to take me on some shortcut. If I have made any progress, I can now tolerate being at least within the vicinity of that light, and I would be ashamed to return my eyes to the darkness that I've left behind—if at least those things that still dare to beguile my blindness can be said to be “left behind.”

15.

27. *Reason.* Let's conclude this first book, if you don't mind, so that in a second book we may set off on some path that may agreeably suggest itself. For in your condition you should not stop exercising moderately.¹⁴⁰

Augustine. There is no way I will let this little book be concluded until you reveal to me some tidbit that I am intent on having about the vicinity of the light.

Reason. The Physician complies with your wish. For something radiant (I know not what) is inviting me and indicating to me whither I should lead you. And so, listen attentively.¹⁴¹

Augustine. Lead, I pray you, and take me where you will.

Reason. You say with certainty that you want to know the soul* and God?¹⁴²

Augustine. That is the whole of my business.

Reason. And nothing more?

Augustine. Nothing whatsoever.

Reason. What about the truth? Don't you wish to comprehend it?

Augustine. As if, to be sure, I could know these things except through it!

Reason. Therefore the truth itself, through which these things are known, should be known first.

Augustine. I rule out nothing.

Reason. And so, since there are two words—"truth" and "true"—let's first see whether it seems to you that these two words signify two things or one.

Augustine. Two things, it seems. For just as "chastity" is one thing and "chaste" is another (and there are many things like this), so too do I believe that "truth" is one thing and what is said to be "true" another.

Reason. Which of the two do you reckon to be more excellent?

Augustine. Truth, in my opinion. For chastity doesn't become what it is by virtue of the chaste, but the chaste becomes what it is by virtue of chastity. So too, if something is true, it's undoubtedly true by virtue of the truth.

28. *Reason.* What about when a chaste person dies? Are you of the opinion that chastity dies as well?

Augustine. By no means.

Reason. Therefore, when something that is true passes away, truth does not pass away.

Augustine. But how does something true pass away?¹⁴³ I don't see this.

Reason. I'm amazed that you ask that. Don't we see a thousand things pass away before our eyes? Unless perhaps you reckon either

that this tree is a tree but not a true tree, or that it cannot truly pass away.¹⁴⁴ For even though you may not trust in your senses and are able to answer that you're utterly ignorant of whether it is a tree, nevertheless you will not deny, in my opinion, that it is a true tree if it is a tree. For this is judged not by sense-perception but by the intellect. And if it's a false tree, it's not a tree; but if it is a tree, it is necessarily the case that it's true.¹⁴⁵

Augustine. I concede that.

Reason. What about the other point? Do you not concede that a tree is in the category of things which come into being and pass away?

Augustine. I can't deny it.

Reason. It is therefore concluded that something which is true may pass away.

Augustine. I do not oppose that.

Reason. What about this? Doesn't it seem to you that when true things pass away, the truth doesn't, just as when a chaste person dies, chastity doesn't?

Augustine. I concede this now as well, and I very much look forward to [seeing] what you're driving at.

Reason. Then pay attention.

Augustine. I'm all here.¹⁴⁶

29. *Reason.* Doesn't this statement seem true to you: "Whatever is, must be somewhere"?¹⁴⁷

Augustine. Nothing so leads me to offer my consent as that.

Reason. Do you also admit that the truth exists?

Augustine. I do.

Reason. Then it's necessary for us to inquire into where it is; for it's not in a place—unless, perhaps, you consider something else besides a body to be in a place, or you consider truth to be a body.

Augustine. I don't think either of these things.

Reason. Well then, where do you believe it is? For what we have conceded to exist doesn't exist nowhere.

Augustine. If I *knew* where it was, maybe I wouldn't be inquiring into it any more.

Reason. Are you at least able to know where it isn't?

Augustine. If you would mention some things, perhaps I could.

Reason. It's certainly not in mortal things. For whatever is in something can't remain if what it is in doesn't remain; but it was conceded a little while ago that truth remains even when true things pass away. And so, truth is not in mortal things. But truth exists, and it isn't nowhere. And so, there are immortal things. But nothing is true in which there is no truth. It follows that things are not true unless they are immortal. And every false tree is not a tree, and false wood is not wood, and false silver is not silver—and, in general, whatever is false, is not. Further, everything that is not true is false. And so, no things are rightly said to exist unless they are immortal. Carefully consider this succinct bit of reasoning yourself, lest it seem to you that there is something which shouldn't be conceded.¹⁴⁸ For if it is well reasoned, we may practically bring this whole business to a close, which perhaps will be made more apparent in another book.

30. *Augustine.* I'm grateful. And when we have some quiet, I'll go over these things carefully and cautiously with myself (or rather, with you)—provided that no darkness interferes and, which I absolutely dread, even becomes for me a source of delight.

Reason. Constantly believe in God and commit your entire self to Him as much as you can. Do not wish to belong to yourself, as it were,¹⁴⁹ and do not wish to be your own master, but profess yourself to be the servant of Him who is a most clement and helpful Lord. For thus He will not stop lifting you up to Himself,

and He will permit nothing to happen to you unless it's good for you, even if you don't know it.

Augustine. I hear, I believe and, as much as I can, I obey. And to Him I pray a very great deal so that I can do a very great deal—unless perhaps you want something more from me.

Reason. It's fine for now. Afterwards, once you've seen Him, you will do whatever He Himself commands you.

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BOOK TWO

1.

1. *Augustine*. Our work has been interrupted long enough, and love is impatient, nor is there a limit to one's tears unless love is given what it loves.¹ So let's get going with our second book.

Reason. Let's.

Augustine. May we believe that God will be present to us!

Reason. May we believe so indeed, at least if this is in our power.

Augustine. He Himself is our power.

Reason. And so, pray as briefly and as perfectly as you can.

Augustine. "O God, ever the Selfsame: may I know myself, may I know Thee."

My prayer is done.

Reason. You who wish to know yourself, do you know* that you exist?²

Augustine. I do.

Reason. How do you know* this?³

Augustine. I don't know.

Reason. Do you sense that you are simple or multiple?

Augustine. I don't know.

Reason. Do you know* that you are moved?

Augustine. I don't.⁴

Reason. Do you know* that you think?

Augustine. I do.

Reason. Therefore, it's true that you think.

Augustine. It is.

Reason. Do you know* that you're immortal?

Augustine. I do not.

Reason. Of all these things that you said you didn't know, which do you prefer to know* first?

Augustine. Whether I am immortal.

Reason. And so, you love to live?

Augustine. I admit it.⁵

Reason. What about when you learn that you're immortal, will that be sufficient for you?

Augustine. It will indeed be a great thing, but it's not enough for me.⁶

Reason. Nevertheless, this thing that isn't enough, how much will you rejoice over it?

Augustine. Very much.

Reason. And then, will you weep over nothing?

Augustine. Not at all.

Reason. What if life itself were discovered to be such that in it you're permitted to know no more than you do now? Will you refrain from tears?

Augustine. On the contrary, I'll weep so much that my life will be rendered nil.

Reason. And so you don't love to live for the sake of living but for the sake of knowing*.⁷

Augustine. I grant this conclusion.

Reason. What if this very same knowledge* of things makes you miserable?

Augustine. There's no way that I believe that that could ever happen. But if it does, then no one can be happy. In fact, I'm currently miserable for no other reason than my ignorance of things; but if the knowledge* of things makes one miserable, then misery is forever.

Reason. I now see all that you desire. Since you believe that no one is miserable from knowledge* (in which case it's probable that the intellect brings about happiness),⁸ and yet no one is happy unless he lives and no one lives unless he exists—you therefore want to exist, to live, and to understand: to exist in order to live, to live in order to understand.⁹ Thus, you know* that you exist, you know* that you live, you know* that you understand. But you want to know whether these things will exist forever or whether none of them will exist or whether some will remain forever and others will cease to exist or whether (provided that all are to remain) these things can be lessened or increased.

Augustine. Yes.

Reason. And so if we prove that we'll live forever, it will also follow that we'll exist forever.

Augustine. It will.

Reason. It will then remain for us to inquire into understanding.¹⁰

2.

2. *Augustine.* I see this as a most obvious and succinct order.

Reason. Then be here now,¹¹ that you may respond cautiously and resolutely to my questioning.

Augustine. I'm all here.¹²

Reason. If this world will remain forever, is it true that the world will remain forever?

Augustine. Who could doubt this?

Reason. What if it won't remain; isn't it likewise true that the world won't remain?

Augustine. I offer no resistance.

Reason. What about when it will pass away (if it's going to pass away)? Won't it then be true that the world has passed away? For as long as it's not true that the world has ended, it hasn't ended. And so, that the world has ended and that it's not true that the world has ended is a contradiction.

Augustine. I concede this as well.

Reason. What about this? Does it seem to you that something true can exist, while the truth doesn't exist?

Augustine. By no means.

Reason. And so the truth will exist, even if the world should pass away.¹³

Augustine. I can't deny it.

Reason. What if the truth itself comes to an end? Won't it be true that the truth has come to an end?

Augustine. And who denies it?

Reason. But something true can't exist if the truth doesn't exist.¹⁴

Augustine. I already conceded this a little while ago.

Reason. And so, there's no way the truth will come to an end.

Augustine. Proceed as you've begun, for nothing is truer than that inference.

3.

3. *Reason.* I'd now like you to tell me whether it's the soul* or the body, as it seems to you, which has sense-perception.

Augustine. The soul*, it seems.¹⁵

Reason. What about the understanding? Does it seem to you that it pertains to the soul*?

Augustine. Absolutely.

Reason. To the soul* alone or to something else as well?

Augustine. I see nothing else besides the soul* —except for God, which is where I believe understanding to be.

Reason. Let's see that now. If someone were to say to you that this wall is not a wall but a tree, what would you think?

Augustine. Either that his sense-perception or mine was mistaken, or that he calls a wall by this name.

Reason. What if to him the form of a tree appeared in it, and to you the form of a wall; couldn't both be true?

Augustine. By no means, because one and the same thing can't be both a tree and a wall. For however much it might seem to each of us that there were two separate things, it's necessarily the case that one of us is suffering from a false imagination.

Reason. What if it's neither a wall nor a tree and you're both mistaken?

Augustine. It can certainly happen.

Reason. Therefore, you overlooked this one [possibility] above.

Augustine. I admit it.

Reason. What if the two of you realize that it seems to you other than it [truly] is? Surely you're not both mistaken?

Augustine. No.

Reason. And so it can be the case that what seems to be is false and that he who to whom it seems to be thus is not mistaken?

Augustine. It can.

Reason. It should be acknowledged that someone who sees false things isn't deceived but rather someone who assents to them.¹⁶

Augustine. Clearly.

Reason. What about the false itself? Why is it false?

Augustine. Because it's such that it is other than what it seems.

Reason. Therefore, if there's no one to whom it may seem, nothing is false.

Augustine. It follows.

Reason. And so falsity is not in things but in sense-perception; and he who doesn't assent to false things isn't mistaken. It follows that we are one thing and sense-perception another, since we are capable of not being mistaken when sense-perception is.

Augustine. I have nothing to say against that.

Reason. But when the soul* is mistaken, do you dare to say that *you* haven't been mistaken?

Augustine. In what way do I dare say that?

Reason. But there's no sense-perception without the soul* and no falsity without sense-perception. And so, the soul* either causes or cooperates in the causing of falsities.

Augustine. The preceding conclusions compel my consent.

4. *Reason.* Now tell me whether it seems to you that it's possible for falsity not to exist at some time or another.

Augustine. How can this seem so to me, since discovering the truth is so difficult that it would be more absurd to say that falsity can't exist than to say that truth can't exist?

Reason. What in the world?! Do you consider someone who is not alive capable of sense-perception?

Augustine. That can't happen.

Reason. It is proved: the soul* lives forever.

Augustine. You're pushing me into joy too quickly—step by step, please.

Reason. But if all these things have been conceded correctly, I see no reason to hesitate in this matter.

Augustine. It's too quick, I say! And thus I'm more easily led to consider that I have conceded something rashly than that I'll now become secure about the immortality of the soul*. At any rate, unpack this conclusion of yours and show how it has been proved.

Reason. You said that falsity cannot exist without sense-perception and that it cannot *not* exist; therefore, sense-perception always exists. But there is no sense-perception without the soul*; therefore, the soul* is sempiternal. Nor is something capable of sense-perception unless it's alive; therefore, the soul* lives forever.

4.

5. *Augustine.* "O leaden dagger!"¹⁷ For you might've been able to conclude that man is immortal if I had conceded to you that this world can never be without mankind and that the world is sempiternal.

Reason. You are very vigilant indeed! But nevertheless, what we have proved is no small matter: that the nature of things¹⁸ can't exist without the soul*, unless perhaps falsity will not be in the nature of things at some time or another.

Augustine. I acknowledge that that is indeed a logical consequence, but I'm now of the opinion that we should deliberate more fully on whether or not the concessions that were made earlier are shaky. For I see that no small step has been made toward the immortality of the soul*.

Reason. Have you sufficiently considered whether you granted anything rashly?

Augustine. Sufficiently yes, but I see nothing for which I would accuse myself of rashness.

Reason. Therefore, it has been proved that the nature of things can't exist without a live soul*.

Augustine. Proved only to this point—that, on the contrary, some [souls*] can be born, some can die.

Reason. What if falsity were removed from the nature of things? Wouldn't it be the case that all things are true?

Augustine. I see that that follows.

Reason. Tell me how it seems to you that this is a true wall.¹⁹

Augustine. Because I'm not deceived by its look.

Reason. Therefore, because it is as it seems.

Augustine. Yes.

Reason. And so, if something is false because it seems to be other than it is, and if it's true because it is as it seems, then if you remove the one to whom it seems [to be true or false], there is nothing whatsoever that is neither false nor true. But if falsity is not in the nature of things, all things are true; nor can anything seem [to be anything] except to a living soul*. And so the soul* remains in the nature of things if falsity can't be removed, and it remains if falsity can.

Augustine. I see that what had already been concluded has been made even firmer but that we've made no further progress by this addition. For what moves me greatly nevertheless remains: that souls* come into being and pass away, and that their not being absent from the world comes not from their immortality but from their succession.

6. *Reason.* And does it seem to you that certain corporeal things (that is, sensible things) can be comprehended by the understanding?

Augustine. It does not.

Reason. What about this: Does it seem to you that God uses the senses to know things?

Augustine. I dare not affirm anything rashly regarding this matter; but insofar as one is allowed to conjecture, there's no way that God uses the senses.

Reason. We therefore conclude that nothing has the capacity for sense-perception except the soul*.

Augustine. For the time being, conclude as much as is allowed within [the realm of] probability.

Reason. What about this: Do you grant that this wall of yours, if it's not a true wall, is not a wall?

Augustine. Nothing more easily would I grant.

Reason. Nor is anything a body if it's not a true body?²⁰

Augustine. That is also the case.

Reason. Therefore, if nothing is true unless it is as it seems; nor is anything corporeal unless it can be seen through the senses; nor is there sense-perception without a soul*; nor is anything a body if it's not a true body—there remains the fact that a body can't exist unless a soul* does.

Augustine. You're pushing too hard, and I lack the where-withal to resist you.

5.

7. *Reason.* Pay attention to these things more closely.

Augustine. Behold, here I am.

Reason. Certainly this is a stone and thus it's a true one, if it's not other than what it seems. And it's not a stone if it's not true and can't be seen except through the senses.

Augustine. Yes.

Reason. And so there are no stones in the most remote interior of the earth, nor are there any at all where there's no one with sense-perception; nor would this be a stone unless we saw it; nor will it be a stone once we leave and there's no one else present who will see it. Nor, if you close your moneybag up tight—even though you have put many things into it—will it have anything in

it. In fact, wood itself is not wood inside, for whatever is in the depths of an opaque body eludes all the senses and is under no obligation whatsoever to exist.²¹ For if it is to exist, it is to be true; and something is not true unless it is as it seems; but its inside is not seen; therefore, it doesn't exist—unless you have something to say in response to these things.

Augustine. I see that indeed these things have arisen from what I have conceded. But it's so absurd that I would more readily deny anyone of these things than concede that this [argument] is true.

Reason. I disagree with nothing. Therefore, consider what you'd like to say: that corporeal things can be seen only by the senses; or that only the soul* has sense-perception; or that a stone or whatever else exists but isn't true; or that the "true" itself should be redefined.

Augustine. Let us, I pray you, consider that last point.

8. *Reason.* Then define what is true.

Augustine. The true is that which is constituted in the way that it seems to the knower, if he would like to know and is capable of doing so.

Reason. And so, will what no one can know not be true? For then, if what seems other than it is, is false, what if this stone seems to be a stone to one man and wood to another? Will the same thing be both true and false?

Augustine. I'm moved more by the earlier point, how if something can't be known, it so happens that it's not true. For I'm not very worried about one thing being both true and false at the same time. In fact, I see that when one thing is compared to different things, it is at the same time both greater and smaller. But from this consideration it turns out that nothing in itself is great or small, for these are terms of comparison.

Reason. But if you say that nothing is true in itself, don't you fear that it should follow that nothing exists in itself? For from the fact that this is wood it follows that it is also true wood.²² Nor can it happen that in and of itself (that is, without the knower) it is wood and not true wood.²³

Augustine. Then this is what I say, and thus do I define (and I'm not afraid that my definition may be rejected on the grounds that it's too brief): for it seems to me that the true is that which is.

Reason. Then nothing will be false because whatever is, is true.

Augustine. You have put me in a very tight spot,²⁴ and I'm coming up with nothing at all to say in reply! It so happens that although I don't want to be taught in any other way except through these interrogations, nevertheless, I'm still afraid of being interrogated.

6.

9. *Reason.* God, to whom we have committed ourselves, brings help without wavering and delivers us from these tight spots, if only we believe and ask Him most devotedly.

Augustine. There is obviously nothing I'd more gladly do at this point, for I've never had to endure such a dark fog before.

O God our Father, who dost exhort us to pray and dost also grant what we ask for, since when we ask Thee we live better and are better: Hear me trembling in this darkness and stretch forth Thy right hand to me. Send forth Thy light upon me; call me back from my errors. With Thee as my guide, may I return both to myself and to Thee. Amen.²⁵

Reason. Be here as much as you can, and be attentive with the utmost vigilance.²⁶

Augustine. Please, tell me if some suggestion has come to you, lest we be lost.

Reason. Be here.

Augustine. Look here, you have me doing nothing else!

10. *Reason.* First, let's winnow out, over and over again, what the false is.

Augustine. I wonder whether it will be anything other than that which is not as it seems.

Reason. Pay closer attention. Let's first question the senses themselves. For certainly, what the eyes see is not called false unless it has some likeness to the true.²⁷ For example, a man whom we see in our dreams is, of course, not a true man, but a false one by the very fact that he bears a likeness to the true man. For who would see a dog while dreaming and rightly say that it was a man? Therefore, that dog is false from the fact that it's *like* a true dog.

Augustine. It is as you say.

Reason. What if someone wide awake saw a horse and reckons that he's seen a man? Wouldn't he be mistaken by virtue of the fact that some likeness of a man appeared to him? For if nothing appeared to him but the form of a horse, he can't think that he has seen a man.

Augustine. I cede the point entirely.

Reason. Similarly, we call the tree that we see painted false, and the countenance that is returned to us in a mirror false, and the motion of towers as we sail by them false, and the break of an oar [in the water] false for no other reason than that they're like the true.²⁸

Augustine. I admit it.

Reason. And in the same way we're mistaken about twins, in the same way about eggs, in the same way about the impressed seals from a single signet ring, and in the same way about all other such things.²⁹

Augustine. I totally follow and I concede the point.

Reason. And so the likeness of things, which pertains to the eyes, is the mother of falsity.

Augustine. I can't deny it.

11. *Reason.* But this entire forest,³⁰ unless I'm mistaken, can be divided into two categories. For it consists partly of things that are equal and partly of things that are inferior. They are equal when we say that this is like that as much as that is like this, as it's said of twins or the impressions of a signet ring. They are inferior, on the other hand, when we say that what is inferior is similar to a superior thing. For who would look in a mirror closely and rightly say that he is like that image rather than it is like him? This category, however, consists partly of what the soul* experiences, partly of the things that are seen. But what the soul* experiences it experiences either by sense-perception (as the motion of a tower, which is nonexistent) or within itself by virtue of what it has received from the senses—these being the sorts of things seen by dreamers and perhaps also by madmen.

Furthermore, the [likenesses] that appear in the very things we see are portrayed and concocted, some by nature, others by living beings. Nature makes inferior likenesses by begetting or by reflecting: by begetting, when creatures are born similar to their parents; by reflecting, as in various sorts of mirrors. For even though men make the most mirrors, nevertheless they themselves do not form the images that are returned on them. Now on the other hand, the works of living beings are in pictures and in various fictions of this sort, and in this category can also be included whatever demons make (if this ever happens).³¹ But the shadows of bodies, because it's not that far off the mark to say that they are similar to bodies and are, so to speak, false bodies (nor should it be denied that they pertain to the judgment of the eyes)—it seems

right to put them in the category of that which is made from nature by reflection. For every body that is set before a light reflects and returns a shadow on the opposite side. Or does it seem to you that there's something that should be contested?

Augustine. Nothing, it seems to me. But I'm very much looking forward to where these things are heading.

12. *Reason.* And yet, it behooves us to bear with this patiently until the other senses report back to us that falsity dwells in a likeness to the true. For instance, there occur almost as many kinds of likenesses with the sense of hearing, as when we hear the voice of someone speaking whom we don't see and reckon that it's someone else whose voice is similar. And among inferior things, an echo bears witness to this, as does a ringing in the ears themselves, or some imitation of a blackbird or a raven in clocks,³² or the things that dreamers or madmen seem to hear. Moreover, it's incredible how much falsetto voices³³ (which is what musicians call them) attest to the truth, which will be apparent later on.³⁴ Nevertheless, for now it's enough [to note] that these voices are not without a likeness to the ones that they call true. Do you follow?

Augustine. Yes, and with the utmost delight. As a matter of fact, I'm not even struggling to understand.

Reason. Therefore, lest we delay—does it seem to you that one can easily determine by smell one lily from another, or by taste thyme honey from the thyme honey in different hives, or by touch the softness of a swan's feathers from a goose's?³⁵

Augustine. It does not.

Reason. What about when we dream that we're either smelling or tasting or touching such things? Aren't we being duped by the likeness of the images, and the more inane the image, the more inferior it is?

Augustine. You speak the truth.

Reason. It's therefore apparent that we are deceived in all the senses by an enticing likeness, whether they are in equal things or inferior. And even if we are not deceived (while we withhold our consent or discern the difference), we still name the things false that we observe to be similar to the true.

Augustine. I cannot doubt it.

7.

13. *Reason.* Now pay attention while we again go back over the same things in order to make clearer what it is we're trying to show.

Augustine. Here I am: say what you want. For I myself have decided once and for all to tolerate this roundabout way of yours; nor will I grow weary of it, so great is my hope of reaching what I sense we're aiming at.

Reason. You're doing well. But direct your attention to whether it seems to you that, when we see similar eggs, one of them can rightly be called false.³⁶

Augustine. By no means. For all of them, if they are eggs, are true eggs.

Reason. What about when we see an image reflected in a mirror? By what signs do we comprehend that it's false?

Augustine. Obviously by the fact that it's not held, it makes no sound, it doesn't move itself, it doesn't live, and by countless other things that would take too long to describe in detail.

Reason. I see that you don't wish to linger and so our ways must be accommodated to your haste. And so, lest I repeat each and every thing, if those men whom we also see in dreams can live, speak, and be held by those who are awake, and if there

were no difference between them and those whom we, who are alert and sane, speak to and see, surely we would never call them false?

Augustine. In what way could that be rightly said?

Reason. Therefore, if these are true by the fact they appear to be very much like the true and nothing at all distinguishes them from the true, and if they are false by the fact that they are proved to be dissimilar by these or other differences, shouldn't it be admitted that *likeness* is the mother of truth and *unlikeness* the mother of falsity?

Augustine. I've nothing to say, and I'm ashamed that I had consented so rashly earlier.³⁷

14. *Reason.* It's ridiculous for you to be ashamed, as if we hadn't chosen for this very reason to hold discussions of this kind.³⁸ And since we are speaking with ourselves alone, I want these discussions to be called *Soliloquies* and written down.³⁹ This is certainly a new name, and perhaps an unrefined one at that, but it is sufficiently suitable for indicating the gist [of what we are doing]. In fact, since there is no better way of seeking the truth than by questioning and answering, and since hardly anyone can be found who isn't ashamed of being refuted in a disputation⁴⁰ (and for that reason it's almost always the case that the matter under discussion, one that's off to a good start, is booed off the stage by the rowdy hullabaloo of stubbornness,⁴¹ and all the while souls are being ripped apart, mostly out of sight but sometimes out in the open)—I most calmly, in my opinion, and agreeably decided to seek the truth with God's assistance by means of being questioned by my very self and giving answers to myself. Consequently, if at any time you have rashly tied yourself up in knots, there's nothing to fear in returning to them and loosening them; for otherwise one could never get out of them.

8.

15. *Augustine*. You're right, but I don't see clearly what it was that I conceded poorly—unless perhaps it's that something is rightly said to be false which has some likeness to the true, although nothing else at all which is worthy of the name "false" occurs to me. On the other hand, I am nevertheless forced to admit that those things which are called false are so called for the very reason that they differ from true things; hence it follows that unlikeness itself is the cause of falsity. And so I'm confused, for something that may be produced by contrary causes is not readily coming to mind*.⁴²

Reason. What if this is the one and only of its kind in all of nature?⁴³ Or are you unaware of the fact that when you rush through the countless kinds of animals that there are, only the crocodile is found to move the upper part [of its jaw] when it chews?⁴⁴—particularly since almost nothing can be found so similar to one thing that it's not also dissimilar in some way.

Augustine. I certainly see these things; but when I consider that what we call false has something like the true and something unlike it, I can't figure out which side has the better claim on the name "false." For if I say that it's because it is dissimilar, there will be nothing that cannot be called false, since there is nothing that's not unlike another thing which we concede to be true. Likewise, if I say that it should be called false because it's similar, not only will those eggs protest (which are true by the very fact that they're utterly similar),⁴⁵ but I also couldn't escape him who would force me to confess that all things are false, because I can't deny that all things are in some way similar to each other.

But suppose I'm not afraid of answering that likeness and unlikeness at the same time make it so that something is rightly

given the name “false.” Which way will you give me to escape? No matter which one, it will be insisted that I declare all things false, since obviously all things, as was said above, are found to be in some way both like and unlike each other. It would remain that I should call nothing false except what is other than it seems, were I not afraid of all those many monsters which I had thought that I had sailed by a little while ago.⁴⁶ On the other hand, it’s for that very reason that I am again rebuffed by an unexpected whirlpool to say that that which is constituted in the way that it seems is true. The result of which is that nothing can be true without a knower; but from this I dread shipwreck on those completely hidden rocks, rocks that are true even if they’re not known!⁴⁷ Or rather, if I say that the true is that which exists, it may be concluded that the false doesn’t exist anywhere, which no one will like.⁴⁸ And so the surging waves from before return,⁴⁹ and I see that I’ve made no progress at all despite my enormous patience with your delays.

9.

16. *Reason.* Then pay more attention, for there’s no way that I will bring myself [to think] that we’ve implored divine aid in vain. In fact, I see that after putting everything to the test (insofar as we could), nothing remains that may be justly called false, unless it’s that which pretends to be what it is not or that which in every way strives to exist and does not.⁵⁰ But the first kind of falsity [*falsus*] is either deceitful [*fallax*] or untrue [*mendax*]. For the deceitful is rightly said to be that which has the desire to deceive.⁵¹ This desire can’t be understood apart from a soul*, but it comes partly from reason, partly from nature: from reason in rational animals, as in man; from nature in beasts, as in the little fox.⁵² What I call untrue [*mendax*], on the other hand, comes from dissimulators [*mentientes*].

These people differ from the deceitful, because every deceitful person has the desire to deceive, but not everyone who utters an untruth wishes to deceive. As a matter of fact, farces and comedies and many poems are full of untruths [*mendacia*] for the purpose of delighting rather than of deceiving, and almost everyone who tells a joke tells an untruth. But he is rightly called deceitful or deceptive whose business it is to deceive one and all. Those, however, who don't do something in order to deceive yet still feign something, no one hesitates that they be called either by so strong a term as "liars" [*mendaces*] or, if not even this, at least "dissimulators" [*mentientes*].⁵³ Unless you have something you'd like to say against these things.

17. *Augustine*. Please continue, for maybe now you've begun to teach things about the false that aren't false. But I'm already looking forward to that category which, as you said, is such that it strives to exist and does not.

Reason. Why wouldn't you look forward to it? These same things are some of the many items that we mentioned above. Or doesn't it seem to you that your image in a mirror wants to be you, so to speak, but precisely because it is false, it isn't?

Augustine. It very much seems so.

Reason. What about every picture and semblance of this sort and everything of that kind [made by] artisans? Do they not tend⁵⁴ to be that in whose likeness they were made?

Augustine. I am completely persuaded.

Reason. And now those things by which dreamers and madmen are deceived: you will concede, in my opinion, that they are in this category.

Augustine. And nothing more so than they, for nothing more closely tends to be the sort of thing that is perceived by those who are awake or sane. Nevertheless, they're false by the very fact that they cannot be that toward which they strive.

Reason. Now what more shall I say about the motion of towers or the submerged oar or the shadows of bodies?⁵⁵ It's clear, I believe, that they are to be assessed by this rule.

Augustine. Extremely clear.

Reason. I'll pass over in silence the other senses, for there's no one who, when considering the matter, will not find that among the things which we perceive, whatever strives to be something and is not is called false.

10.

18. *Augustine.* You're right. But I wonder why it seemed to you that those poems and jokes and the other deceits should be excluded from this category.

Reason. Because, of course, it's one thing to want to be false, another to be unable to be true. And so we can't put the works of men, such as comedies or tragedies or farces and other things of this kind, together with the works of painters and sculptors.⁵⁶ For a man in a painting can't be as true (even though he tends toward the form of a man) as those things that are written in the books of comic authors. And they don't want to be false, nor are they false from any desire of their own but out of a certain necessity to follow, insofar as they can, their maker's will. On the other hand, Roscius was by his own will a false Hecuba on the stage and by nature a true man.⁵⁷ But he was by his will also both a true tragedian (from the obvious fact that he fulfilled the role) and a false Priam (from the fact that he pretended to be Priam but was not).⁵⁸ From [this consideration] now comes something astonishing, yet which no one doubts is the case.

Augustine. Well, what is it?

Reason. What do you think, if not that all these things are true in some ways on account of the very [qualities] whereby they are false in other ways; and that this alone helps them to their own truth—the fact that they are false to something else? Hence it is that whatever wants to be or ought to be in no way attains its goal if it avoids being false. For by what means is the man I mentioned a true tragedian if he doesn't want to be a false Hector, a false Andromache, a false Hercules, and countless others?⁵⁹ Or how is it a true picture if it's not a false horse? How is it a man's true image in a mirror if it's not a false man? Consequently, if it helps certain things to be something false in order to be something true, why do we dread falsities so much and desire the truth as a great good?

Augustine. I don't know, and I'm quite astonished—unless, it's because I see nothing worthy of imitation in these examples. After all, we shouldn't be like actors or the reflections in a mirror or “Myron's heifer made out of bronze”⁶⁰ in such a way that we as well are true in our own garb while masquerading and parading about in another's (and thereby false).⁶¹ Rather, we should seek something true that is not in a two-faced mode, so to speak, contradicting itself so that it's true on one side, false on the other.⁶²

Reason. You are searching for certain things that are great and divine. Yet if we find them, won't we admit that it is from these that truth itself is made up and fused together, so to speak, the truth from which everything that is in any way named true is given its name?⁶³

Augustine. I readily agree.

11.

19. *Reason.* Then what about this: Does it seem to you that the discipline of disputation is true or false?⁶⁴

Augustine. Who doubts it to be true? But even grammar is true.

Reason. As much as the former?

Augustine. I don't see what is truer than truth.

Reason. But certainly that which has nothing false about it [is truer]. When you were looking at this a little while ago, you were vexed by those things that (I don't know how) could not be true unless they were false. Are you unaware of the fact that those fables and patently false things pertain to grammar?⁶⁵

Augustine. I'm not unaware of that; but, in my opinion, it's not by virtue of grammar that they're false, but by virtue of grammar that they are shown to be whatever kind of thing they are, since a fable is an untruth composed for use or delight.⁶⁶ Indeed, the discipline of grammar is the guardian and moderator of the articulated word, and out of the necessity of its office it is forced to collect everything in human language⁶⁷ (even fiction) that has been committed to memory and writing—not making them false, but teaching and affirming a certain true mode of reasoning with regard to them.⁶⁸

Reason. You're certainly right. For the moment I don't care whether you have defined and distinguished these things well; instead, I'm inquiring into whether grammar itself or rather the discipline of disputation shows this to be so.

Augustine. I don't deny that the power and skill of defining, by which I just now tried to differentiate those things, is attributed to the disputatious art.

20. *Reason.* What about grammar itself? Isn't it the case that, if it's true, it's true because it's a discipline? For it is called a "discipline" from "learning" [*discere*]; but no one who has learned and retains [what he has learned] can be said not to know, and no one knows* false things.⁶⁹ Therefore, every discipline is true.

Augustine. I certainly don't see anything in this succinct bit of reasoning that is being conceded rashly.⁷⁰ Yet I'm moved by the fact that, as a result, it may seem to someone that even those fables are true, for we learn and retain these.

Reason. Surely our teacher wished us to believe and know what he taught?

Augustine. Even more: he vehemently insisted that we know.

Reason. Did he ever insist that we believe that Daedalus flew?⁷¹

Augustine. Never. But obviously, if we didn't hold the fable [in our minds], he made sure we could barely hold anything in our hands!⁷²

Reason. Then you deny that it's true that this fable exists and that it's in this way that Daedalus has become well known.

Augustine. I don't deny this to be true.

Reason. Then you don't deny that you learned something true when you learned those things. For if it were true that Daedalus had flown, and children received and recited this as a *fictitious* fable, then they would be retaining something false from the very fact that what they recited was true. Hence there comes into being what we marveled at earlier: that it can't be a true fable about the flight of Daedalus unless it is false that Daedalus flew.

Augustine. I maintain this now, but what we accomplish as a result, I await [to see].

Reason. What else but this: that it wasn't false reasoning by which we concluded that a discipline can't be a discipline unless it teaches true things?

Augustine. And what's the point of this?

Reason. Because I want you to tell me how grammar is a discipline,⁷³ for whatever it is that makes grammar true is what makes it a discipline.

Augustine. I don't know how to answer you.

Reason. Doesn't it seem to you that if nothing in it were defined and nothing were assigned to and distinguished by [different] genera and their parts, there is no way it could be a discipline?

Augustine. Now I understand what you're saying. There's not a single aspect of any discipline whatsoever that occurs to me in which definitions and divisions and methods of reasoning are not operative in determining what each thing is, in rendering to each part what is proper to it without confusion,⁷⁴ in neglecting nothing belonging to it and adding nothing alien to it, in doing everything for which it is called a discipline.⁷⁵

Reason. And therefore in doing everything for which it is called true.

Augustine. I see that that follows.

21. *Reason.* Now tell me what discipline contains the reasoning [*ratio*] behind definitions, divisions, and distinctions.

Augustine. It has already been said earlier that these are contained in the rules of disputation.⁷⁶

Reason. And so grammar, in order for it to be a discipline and in order for it to be true, is produced by the same art that you defended earlier from [the charge of] falsity. And I'm allowed to make this same conclusion not only about grammar but about all the disciplines. For you said, and said truly, that no discipline occurred to you in which the power of defining and distributing was not the very thing which made it so that it was a discipline. But if they're true from the fact that they are disciplines, will anyone deny that it is the truth itself through which all disciplines are true?

Augustine. I am close to agreeing with you completely. But I'm moved by the fact that we also number the reasoning [*ratio*] of disputation among the same disciplines. Hence I consider it instead to be the truth by which even reasoning of this kind [*ratio*] is itself true.

Reason. Excellent, and most alertly done! But you don't deny, in my opinion, that it is true from the fact that it's a discipline.

Augustine. On the contrary, that is the very thing which moves me. For I noticed that it is itself a discipline as well and for that reason it's called true.

Reason. What then: Do you reckon that it could otherwise be a discipline if all things within it were not defined and assigned?

Augustine. I have nothing else to say.

Reason. But if this office pertains to it, it is a true discipline through its very self. And so, who at all will think it surprising if that by which all things are true is through its very self and in its very self the true truth?

Augustine. Nothing is stopping me from moving straight to this opinion.

12.

22. *Reason.* Then be attentive to the few things that remain.

Augustine. If you have something, bring it out: only, let it be the sort of thing that I can understand and I will gladly concede it.

Reason. It doesn't escape our notice that something is said to be in something in two ways. With the first, the thing can also be detached and exist somewhere else, as this wood is in this place and as the sun is in the east. With the second, on the other hand, the thing is in a subject in such a way that it can't be separated from it, as the shape and form we see in this wood,⁷⁷ as light is in the sun, as heat is in fire, as a discipline is in the mind, and whatever other similar things there may be.⁷⁸ Or does it seem to you otherwise?

Augustine. As a matter of fact, this is very old news to us, as we have perceived and thought about these things with the

utmost zeal since early manhood.⁷⁹ Consequently, when I'm asked about them I cannot but concede them without any deliberation.

Reason. What about this: Don't you concede that what is in a subject inseparably cannot remain if the subject itself doesn't remain?

Augustine. I also see this as necessary. For whoever carefully adverts to the matter understands that a subject can remain while that which is in a subject does not, since the color of this body can change by reason of health or age, although the body itself hasn't yet passed away. This doesn't obtain equally in all cases but only when the things that are in subjects coexist in such a way that they are not themselves subjects.⁸⁰ For example, in order for this wall to be a wall, it need not be in the color that we see it in, since even if by chance it grew black or white or changed into some other color, it would nevertheless still remain a wall and be called a wall. But if fire lacked heat, it would certainly not be fire, nor could we call something snow unless it were white.⁸¹

13.

23. But about that question you raised: Who wouldn't concede the point? Or to whom could it seem possible that that which is in the subject remains after the subject passes away? For it is monstrous and utterly alien to the truth [to say] that something which doesn't exist unless it exists in something can exist even when [its subject] doesn't.

Reason. And so that which we were seeking has been discovered.

Augustine. What are you telling me?

Reason. Exactly what you are hearing.

Augustine. And so it's now clear that the soul is immortal?

Reason. If the things that you conceded are true, crystal clear.⁸² Unless perhaps you're saying that the soul is a soul even if it should die.

Augustine. Of course I would never say that! But I do say that by the very fact that it has passed away, it so happens that it's not a soul. Nor am I called away from this opinion by what great philosophers have said: that the thing which furnishes life, wherever it goes, cannot admit death into itself.⁸³ For even though light brightens whatever area it is able to penetrate (and, on account of that memorable power of contraries,⁸⁴ the light can't admit darkness into itself)—nevertheless, it gets extinguished, and once the light goes out, the place grows dark. Thus, that which was holding back the darkness and didn't in any way admit the darkness into itself also made room for it by passing away, as it could have also done by departing. And so I fear that death may befall the body in the same way that darkness befalls a place: sometimes by the soul's leaving the body, at other times on the other hand by its being extinguished in the same place, like the light. The result is that there's no assurance about every death of the body—though one should hope for some kind of death in which the soul* is led unimpaired out of the body and conducted to a place (if there is any such place) where it can't be extinguished. But if even this cannot be, and the soul* is lit up in the body itself as if it were a lamp and it cannot last anywhere else, and if every death is a certain extinguishing of the soul* or of life in the body, then some way [of life] should be chosen, insofar as man is allowed, in which he may live the life he has been given to live with assurance and tranquility—although I don't know how this is possible if the soul* dies. O greatly blessed are they who have been persuaded, by these very considerations or by whatever, that death needn't be feared even if the soul* passes away!⁸⁵ But no reasons, no books, have yet been able to persuade a wretch like me.⁸⁶

24. *Reason.* Don't lament: the human soul is immortal.

Augustine. From where does your proof come?

Reason. From those things that you conceded, in my opinion, with great caution.

Augustine. Indeed, I remember giving nothing to you inadvertently when you were questioning me. But summarize it all now, I pray you. Let's see where we have arrived after so many round-about ways. And I don't want you to interrogate me now. For if you're going to enumerate briefly the things I have conceded, why on earth would you want my response again? Can it be that for no good reason you're causing⁸⁷ a delay in my joy, if we have perhaps accomplished something good?

Reason. I will do what I see that you want me to, but pay attention with the utmost care.

Augustine. Speak already! Why are you torturing me to death?!⁸⁸

Reason. If each thing that's in a subject remains forever, it is necessary that the subject itself remain forever. And each discipline is in the soul as in a subject.⁸⁹ Therefore, if a discipline remains forever, it's necessary for the soul to remain forever. But a discipline is the truth, and, as reason persuasively showed at the beginning of this book, the truth remains forever.⁹⁰ Therefore, the soul remains forever, nor is something dead said to be a soul. And therefore, only the man who proves that something above wasn't conceded correctly can deny without absurdity that the soul is immortal.⁹¹

14.

25. *Augustine.* Now I want this to bring me joy, but I'm being held back to some extent for two reasons. First, I'm moved by the fact that we have used such a circuitous path, following I know not

what chain of thought processes,⁹² when everything we covered could have been shown so briefly, as it was just now. Hence it makes me uneasy that our discourse has traipsed about for so long as if it were laying snares. Second, I don't see how a discipline may be in a soul forever, especially the discipline of disputation, when so few are familiar with it—and whoever does know it was once ignorant of it for such a long time, from his infancy on. For we can't say either that the souls of the unlearned aren't souls or that there is in the soul that which they do not know as a discipline. But if this is awfully absurd, it remains that either truth is not [in the soul] forever or that this discipline is not the truth.

26. *Reason.* But you see how it was not without purpose that our thought processes took such circuitous paths. For we've been seeking what the truth is, and I see that not even now, after we have wandered down almost every trail, can we track it down in this forest of things.⁹³ But what are we doing? Can it be that we are disregarding what we've begun and are waiting for anything at all to fall into our hands from the books of others, anything that could satisfy this question? As a matter of fact, I believe that there are many books written before our time which we haven't read. And currently—not to opine about what we don't know—we evidently have books written on this matter both in verse and in prose and by men whose writings cannot escape our notice. And we know that their intellectual aptitude is of such high quality that we cannot despair of finding what we want in their writings, especially since before our eyes is he in whom eloquence itself, which we had lamented as dead, we know has come back to life in all its perfection.⁹⁴ Will he who has taught us the way to live with his own writings allow us to be ignorant of the nature of living?

Augustine. I for my part don't think so, and consequently there is a great deal I'm hoping for. But I do regret one thing, which is

that we're unable to reveal to him as we would like our enthusiasm either for him or for wisdom. For he would immediately have mercy on our thirst and gush forth much more quickly than [he does] now. In fact he is secure, because he has completely convinced himself already that the soul* is immortal. And perhaps he doesn't know* that there are some who have had quite enough familiarity with the misery of this ignorance; it would be cruel not to assist them, especially the ones asking for it.⁹⁵ On the other hand, that other man certainly knows our fervor firsthand, but he is so far away; and with the way we're now situated, we hardly even have the opportunity to send a letter. I believe that in his leisure beyond the Alps he has now completed a poem by which the fear of death, driven out by incantation, may flee and the numbness and frigidity of the soul*, hardened as it is in its ancient ice, may be dispelled.⁹⁶ But in the meantime, until these things that are not in our power come to pass, isn't it a complete shame to waste away our leisure and to leave our entire soul hanging, tied up by an indecisive will?

15.

27. Where is that for which we have petitioned God and continue to petition Him: not riches, not pleasures of the body, not popular platforms⁹⁷ and honors, but for Him to open up a way for those of us who seek our soul* and His very self?⁹⁸ Is He really deserting us, or are we deserting Him?

Reason. Certainly, it is utterly foreign to His very self to desert those who long for such things, and therefore deserting so great a Leader ought to be foreign to us as well. Consequently, let's briefly repeat, if you please, how those two things were proved: that the truth remains forever⁹⁹ or that the reasoning [*ratio*] of disputation

is the truth.¹⁰⁰ For you said that these are so wobbly that it makes us less secure about the gist of the whole matter. Or should we instead inquire into how a discipline can be in an unlearned soul, which we cannot not call a soul? For it was at this point that you seemed disturbed, the result being that it was necessary to hesitate again about the things that you had conceded.

Augustine. No indeed. Let's discuss the first topic, and then we will see what sort of thing the latter is. For in this way, in my opinion, nothing controversial will remain.

Reason. May it thus be done, but be present, all of you, and extremely cautious. For I know* what happens to you when you're being attentive. While you're hanging too much on the conclusion and waiting for it to be brought forth at just that moment, you concede the things that are being asked without examining them carefully.¹⁰¹

Augustine. Perhaps you're speaking the truth, but I will struggle against this kind of malady as much as I can. Only, you yourself begin inquiring now, lest we be delayed by superfluous matters.

28. *Reason.* From what I remember about it, we concluded that the truth cannot pass away because not only if the entire world but even if the truth itself could pass away, it would be true that both the world and the truth had passed away.¹⁰² Nothing is true, however, without the truth; and so in no way does the truth pass away.

Augustine. I acknowledge these things and would be greatly amazed if they were false.

Reason. Then let's see that other matter.

Augustine. Allow me to consider things for a little while, I pray you, lest I have to return to them again in shame.

Reason. Won't it then be true that the truth has passed away? If it won't be true, then it hasn't passed away. If it will be true, how

will it be true after the demise of the truth, when the truth is now rendered nil?

Augustine. I have nothing more to ponder and consider; proceed to the other matter. And we'll certainly arrange it, insofar as we can, for learned and prudent men to read these things and correct our rashness, if there is any; for I don't consider myself capable of finding, now or at any time, something to be said against this.

29. *Reason.* Then surely the truth is not said to be anything except that by which whatever is true, is true?

Augustine. No way.

Reason. And surely something isn't rightly said to be true except that which is not false?

Augustine. Truly, from here on out, it would be madness to doubt.

Reason. Isn't the false that which is adapted to the likeness of something and yet is not that which it appears to be like?¹⁰³

Augustine. I certainly see nothing else that I'd more gladly call false. But still, it's also the custom to call something false that is far from any verisimilitude.

Reason. Who denies this? But still it has some imitation of the true.

Augustine. How? For when it's said that Medea flew on winged serpents joined together, the subject matter doesn't imitate the truth in any of its parts.¹⁰⁴ Obviously, it doesn't exist, and something can't imitate that which does not exist at all.

Reason. You're right, but you're not being attentive to the fact that a thing which does not exist at all can't even be called false. For if it's false, it exists; if it doesn't exist, it's not false.

Augustine. Then we shouldn't call that monstrous thingamajig about Medea false?

Reason. Of course not. For if it was done, how is it false? If it wasn't done, how is it monstrous?

Augustine. A strange matter I'm considering! Thus when I hear "the huge winged serpents joined together by a yoke,"¹⁰⁵ I don't call it false?

Reason. Obviously you do, for there's something [about it] that you may call false.

Augustine. What, I beseech?

Reason. The sentiment, of course, that is expressed in the verse itself.

Augustine. And how does that contain an imitation of the truth?

Reason. Because it would be expressed similarly even if Medea had truly made that flight. Therefore, a false sentiment imitates true sentiments by its very expression. If it's not believed, it only imitates truths by being said in the same way, and as such it is only false but not deceitful besides. If, on the other hand, it elicits faith, it also imitates truths that are believed.

Augustine. I now understand that there's a great difference between the things that we say and the things about which we say something. Consequently, I now agree with you, for I was held back by only one thing: that whatever we call false is not rightly said to be so unless it contains an imitation of something true. For who wouldn't be justly ridiculed for saying that a stone is false silver? Yet if someone says that a stone is silver, we say that he has said something false, that is, that he has produced a false sentiment. But not absurdly, in my opinion, do we call tin or lead false silver, because it's as if the thing itself is imitating silver. Consequently, it is not our sentiment that is false but the very thing about which it is expressed.

16.

30. *Reason.* You understand well. But consider this: whether we can appropriately call silver by the name “false lead.”

Augustine. It is not to my liking.

Reason. Why so?

Augustine. I don’t know, except that I see it would be called this very much against my will.

Reason. Is it not perhaps on account of the fact that silver is superior, and calling it [false lead] is, so to speak, an insult to it? On the other hand, it would be a special honor, as it were, for lead to be called false silver.¹⁰⁶

Augustine. You have perfectly explained what I’ve been wanting to say. And it’s for this reason that I believe that men who go around in women’s clothing are justly held to be infamous and detestable.¹⁰⁷ I don’t know whether it would be better for me to call them false women or false men, yet without hesitation we can call them true actors and truly infamous.¹⁰⁸ And if they escape our notice (someone isn’t called infamous unless it’s because of a shameful reputation) then not without truth, in my opinion, do we call them truly depraved.

Reason. There will be some other time for us to discuss these things. As a matter of fact, many things are done that seem disgraceful on the popular level, so to speak, yet they’re shown to be decent on account of some laudable end. Whether one should put on a woman’s tunic and deceive the enemy in order to liberate the fatherland is a great question: perhaps one will be a truer man by the very fact that he is a false woman.¹⁰⁹ So too is whether a wise man who in some way is certain that his life will be necessary for human affairs should prefer to die from the cold rather than be clothed in feminine garments if there is nothing else. But, as I said,

we will consider this some other time.¹¹⁰ For surely you realize that [determining] how far these things should proceed would require an enormous investigation in order not to fall into some inexcusable shame. But since for the time being this is sufficient for the present question, I reckon that by now it is apparent and beyond doubt that nothing is false except by some imitation of the true.¹¹¹

17.

31. *Augustine.* Proceed to the remaining items, for I am very persuaded by this.

Reason. I'd therefore like to know whether besides the disciplines by which we are educated and among which the very zeal for wisdom should also be counted,¹¹² we can discover something so true that it's not like a thespian Achilles—false in one way in order to be true in another.¹¹³

Augustine. It seems to me that many such things are discovered. For the disciplines don't contain this stone, nor on the other hand, in order to be a true stone, does it imitate something according to which it can be called false.¹¹⁴ And you can already see that by mention of this one thing there spontaneously occur to those who are thinking [about it] innumerable examples that should [at present] be omitted.

Reason. I certainly see it. But don't these things seem to you to be all included under the one name of "body"?

Augustine. They would, if I were certain that the empty is nothing,¹¹⁵ or if I thought that the soul itself should be counted among bodies, or if I even believed that God were some sort of body. If all these things exist, I see that they aren't false and true in their imitation of anything.

Reason. You're sending us on a long [journey], but I will take a shortcut, insofar as I can. For certainly, what you call the empty is one thing, and what you call truth another.

Augustine. Very much so. For what would be emptier than I if I reckoned that the truth was something empty or if I so ardently desired something empty? For what else do I long to discover except the truth?

Reason. Then perhaps you also concede that nothing is true which is not made by truth to be true.

Augustine. This was already made manifest a long time ago.¹¹⁶

Reason. Do you doubt that there is nothing empty besides the empty itself?

Augustine. Absolutely not.

Reason. Then in my opinion, you believe that the truth is some sort of body.

Augustine. No way.

Reason. What about *in* a body?

Augustine. I don't know.

Reason. That's not the point. For I believe that you at least know* this much: that if the empty exists, it is the more so where there's no body.

Augustine. This is certainly plain [to see].

Reason. Then why do we delay? Can it be that the truth seems to you either to have made the empty or that something is true where the truth doesn't exist?

Augustine. No.

Reason. Then the empty isn't true, because the empty can't be made from that which is not empty, and because what is lacking in truth is obviously not true, and because that which is called empty in every way is so called from the fact that it's nothing. And so, how

can that which does not exist be true, or how can that which is absolutely nothing exist?

Augustine. Move on already: let's abandon the empty as empty.

18.

32. *Reason.* What do you have to say about the other things?

Augustine. Which ones?

Reason. What else but that which you see has my total support?¹¹⁷ For there remain the soul and God.¹¹⁸ If the two are true on account of the fact that truth is in them, no one has doubts about the immortality of God. The soul, however, is believed to be immortal if truth, which can't pass away, is also proved to exist in it. Therefore, let's see that last point—whether a body is not truly true, that is, whether there is in it not the truth but a certain image of the truth, so to speak. For if we find in the body (which we are sufficiently certain is subject to destruction) the same sort of truth that is in the disciplines, then the discipline of disputation will not necessarily be the truth by which all disciplines are true.¹¹⁹ For the body, which doesn't seem to have been formed by the reasoning of disputation, is indeed real as well.¹²⁰ But if the body as well is real by some sort of imitation and for this reason isn't completely real,¹²¹ then perhaps there will be nothing to stop us from teaching that the reasoning of disputation is the truth itself.

Augustine. In the meantime, let's inquire into the body, for even when this matter has been settled, I don't see an end to this controversy of yours.

Reason. How is it that you know* what God wants? So pay attention! For I reckon that the body is contained by some shape and form which, if it didn't have, would not be a body.¹²² But if it

did have a true [form], it would be a soul.¹²³ Or should it be reckoned otherwise?

Augustine. I agree with one part, but I'm hesitant about the rest. For I concede that unless it's held together by some figure, it's not a body. But I don't understand sufficiently how, if it has a true [figure], it is a soul.

Reason. You don't remember anything about the beginning of the first book and about your geometry?¹²⁴

Augustine. You do well to mention it. I remember it all, and most gladly.

Reason. Are the figures found in bodies the same as those to which that discipline draws our attention?

Augustine. On the contrary, it's incredible how much worse they are proved to be.

Reason. Then which of these things do you reckon is true?

Augustine. Please: don't think that I should even be questioned about this. For who is so mentally blind¹²⁵ that he doesn't see that those things which are taught in geometry dwell in the truth itself or that the truth dwells in them? But those bodily figures, since they seem as if they're striving toward those things, have some sort of imitation of the truth and are therefore false. Now indeed I understand all that you've been trying to show.

19.

33. *Reason.* Then what need is there of inquiring now into the discipline of disputation?¹²⁶ For regardless of whether geometrical shapes are in the truth or the truth is in them, no one doubts that they are contained in our soul* (that is, in our intellect)¹²⁷ and that because of this even the truth is forced to be in our soul. But if any discipline whatsoever is in the soul in such a way that it's in a

subject inseparably, and if the truth can't pass away, why, I beseech, do we doubt the soul's perpetual life: from some familiarity with death? Can it be that that linearity or squareness or roundness has other things that it imitates in order to be true?

Augustine. There's no way that I can believe it, unless perhaps a line is something other than length without width and a circle something other than a round line curving equidistantly from the center.¹²⁸

Reason. Then why do we delay? Can it be that the truth is not where these things are?

Augustine. May God avert such madness!

Reason. Can it be that a discipline is not in the soul?

Augustine. Who would say this?

Reason. But perhaps what is in a subject can remain when the subject passes away?

Augustine. When could I be persuaded of this?

Reason. It remains that the truth perishes.

Augustine. How can this happen?

Reason. Therefore, the soul* is immortal. Now believe in your reasons, believe in the truth. It cries out that it dwells in you, that it is immortal, and that its seat can't be dragged away from it by any bodily death. Turn away from your shadow, turn back to yourself;¹²⁹ there is no passing away for you unless it is forgotten that you can't pass away.

Augustine. I am listening, I am recovering my wits, I am beginning to mull these things over. But, I beseech, dispatch the things that remain: how a discipline and truth are understood to exist in an unlearned soul, for we can't call such a soul mortal.

Reason. This question of yours needs another book if you want it to be treated carefully.¹³⁰ At the same time I also see that you should review the things that we investigated as best we could,

because if there's no doubt about what was conceded, then I believe we have accomplished much and may [now] seek the other things with no little assurance.

20.

34. *Augustine.* It's exactly as you say, and I gladly obey your precepts. But I'd like to request at least one thing before you put an end to this book: that you would briefly explain the difference between a true figure, which is contained in our intellect, and that which thought fashions for itself, which in Greek is called either a *phantasia* or a *phantasma*.¹³¹

Reason. You're seeking something that none but the purest can see, and you have been insufficiently exercised for the vision of this reality.¹³² And we're currently working through these circuitous ways for the sole reason of getting you some exercise in order to make you fit to see this. Yet let me make clear (briefly perhaps) how it can be taught that there *is* an enormous difference. For instance, suppose you have forgotten something, and others want to call it back, so to speak, to your memory. And so they say, "Surely it is not this or that?" holding out different things as if they were all alike. But you don't see what you want to remember, and yet you do see that it's not what is being said. When this happens, surely it doesn't seem to you that there is a forgetting in every way? For this discernment, which rejects the advice you're being given as false, is itself a certain part of remembering.

Augustine. So it seems.

Reason. Therefore, such people don't see the truth yet, but they can't be deceived or duped—and they know enough about what they are seeking. But if someone were to say to you that you laughed a few days after you were born, you wouldn't dare say that

this was false.¹³³ And if the author is someone in whom you should have faith, you wouldn't remember it (for that entire time is buried for you in an extremely powerful forgetfulness), but you would still believe it. Or do you reckon otherwise?

Augustine. I give my complete assent.

Reason. Thus, there is an enormous difference between this forgetting and the other, though the latter is [somewhere in the] middle. As a matter of fact, there is another kind that is closer and nearer to remembering and revisiting the truth.¹³⁴ It's like when we see something and recognize for certain that we have seen it and affirm that we had seen it some time before; but where or when or how or with whom it came to our notice we have trouble retrieving and recalling. For example, if this were to happen to us regarding a man, we also ask him where we knew him; and once he mentions it, the whole thing suddenly pours into our memory like a light and we no longer struggle to remember. Or is this kind of forgetting unknown or obscure to you?¹³⁵

Augustine. What is clearer than this? Or what usually happens to me more often?

35. *Reason.* Those who are well educated in the liberal disciplines are like this, since they draw out by learning and in a certain way dig up the things that are without a doubt buried in the forgetfulness within themselves.¹³⁶ Yet they aren't content and don't hold themselves back until they gaze high and wide upon the truth's entire face, a certain splendor of which already glows faintly in those arts. However, it is from them that certain false colors and shapes pour themselves into the mirror of thought,¹³⁷ as it were, and often deceive inquirers and dupe those who reckon that what they know or seek is all that there is. These are the very imaginations that should be shunned with great caution. They are unmasked as deceitful when they vary with the variation of the

so-called mirror of thought, whereas that face of the truth remains one and unchangeable. Thought, for instance, depicts for itself and holds forth before its eyes, so to speak, a square of one size and then another; but the interior mind*, which wants to see the truth, turns itself instead (if it can) toward that according to which it judges that they are all square.¹³⁸

Augustine. What if someone were to say that [the mind] judges according to that which it usually sees with the eyes?¹³⁹

Reason. Then how does it judge (if it's still a well-educated mind) that a true sphere of any size is touched by a true plane at one point [only]? Has an eye ever seen, or can it ever see, such a thing when nothing of this sort can be fashioned by our thought's imagination? Don't we prove this when we describe, by virtue of the soul's imagination, even the smallest circle and when we draw lines from it to the center? For when we have drawn two lines between which one can hardly put a needle, so to speak, we can't now draw by virtue of imaginative thinking itself other lines in the middle so that they reach the center without touching each other at all. All the while, reason cries out that innumerable lines can be drawn, and that in these incredibly narrow spaces they can't touch each other anywhere except at the center, in such a way that even a circle can be described in the spaces between each. As that *phantasia* cannot fulfill this [task] and is more deficient than the eyes themselves (since it's through them that the [*phantasia*] is imposed upon the soul), it's obvious that there's a great difference between it and the truth, and that the truth is not seen as long as [the *phantasia*] is.

36. These things will be spoken of with more painstaking care and subtlety once we have begun to discuss understanding, which has been proposed to us as a part [of the dialogue], and once we have clearly explained and discussed (insofar as we can) whatever worries us about the life of the soul*.¹⁴⁰ For I believe that you're

more than a little afraid that human death, even if it doesn't destroy the soul*, might nevertheless bring with it the forgetting of all things and of the truth itself (if any has been discovered).¹⁴¹

Augustine. It can't be said enough how much this evil should be feared. For what kind of eternal life will that be or what death should not be preferred to it if the soul* lives on in the way that we see it live in a newborn child? To say nothing of the life that goes on in the womb, for I don't reckon that this is nonexistent.

Reason. Be of good heart.¹⁴² As we can already feel, God will be present to us in our seeking, the God who promises after this body something utterly blissful and utterly full of truth without any untruth.¹⁴³

Augustine. May it be done as we hope.

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ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL; OR, NOTES FOR WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME BOOK THREE

1.

1. If a discipline exists somewhere, it cannot exist unless it exists in something that lives; and if it exists forever and if nothing in which something exists forever cannot also not exist forever, then that in which a discipline exists, exists forever.¹

If we who reason² exist—that is, our soul—and if our soul can neither reason rightly without a discipline nor exist without a discipline (except as a soul in which there is no discipline),³ then a discipline exists in the soul of man.⁴

But a discipline exists somewhere;⁵ for it does exist, and whatever exists cannot exist nowhere. Likewise, a discipline cannot exist unless it exists in something that lives. For nothing that does not live learns anything, and a discipline cannot exist in that which learns nothing.⁶ Likewise, a discipline exists forever. For what exists and exists unchangeable necessarily exists forever. Indeed, no one denies that a discipline exists. And whoever admits that it cannot happen that a line drawn through the midpoint of a circle is not greater than all the lines that are not drawn through the midpoint of a circle and that this belongs to a particular discipline does not deny that a discipline is unchangeable.⁷

Likewise, nothing in which something exists forever can exist only sometimes.⁸ For nothing that exists forever ever permits that in which it exists forever to be taken away from it. Now indeed, when we reason, it is the soul that is doing so. For only someone who understands is doing so. The body does not understand, and neither does the soul understand with the help of the body, since when the soul wants to understand, it turns away from the body.⁹ For what is understood exists forever so, and nothing pertaining to the body exists forever so.¹⁰ Therefore, the body cannot help the soul strive toward understanding; it is enough if it does not hinder it.¹¹

Likewise, no one reasons rightly without a discipline. For right reasoning is thought striving [to move] from certainties to the investigation of uncertainties,¹² and there is nothing certain in a soul that is ignorant. But everything that the soul knows*, it has within itself; nor does knowledge* contain anything other than that which pertains to some discipline,¹³ for discipline is the knowledge* of anything whatsoever.¹⁴ Therefore, the human soul lives forever.¹⁵

2.

2. Surely, reason is either the soul or in the soul.¹⁶ But our reason is better than our body, and our body is a certain substance, and it is better to be a substance than nothing.¹⁷ Therefore, reason is not nothing.¹⁸

Again, it is necessarily the case that whatever harmony of the body there exists is in the body inseparably as in a subject.¹⁹ And nothing else may be believed to be in that harmony that is not likewise necessarily in that body as in a subject (in which harmony itself is in the body no less inseparably). But the human body is changeable and reason is unchangeable. For everything that does

not exist forever in the same way is changeable. And “two and four make six” exists forever in the same way. Likewise, there exists forever in the same way that “four is the sum of two plus two. But this sum is not two; therefore, two is not four.”²⁰ But this is that reason of yours; therefore, reason is unchangeable. But in no way can it be that when a subject has changed, that which exists in the subject inseparably does not change.²¹ Therefore, the soul is not the harmony of the body.²² Neither can death happen to unchangeable things. Therefore, the human soul exists forever, whether it is reason itself or whether reason exists in it inseparably.

3.

3. Virtue is a certain kind of constancy.²³ All constancy is unchangeable, and all virtue can do something; and when it does something, it is still virtue. Further, every action is either moved or moves. Therefore, not everything that is moved—or certainly, not everything that moves—is changeable. But everything that is moved by something else and does not move itself is something mortal.²⁴ Nor is anything mortal unchangeable. Consequently, we conclude with certainty and without any disjunction²⁵ that not everything that moves is changed.

But there is no motion without a substance. And every substance either lives or doesn't. But everything that does not live is lifeless,²⁶ and no action is lifeless.²⁷ Therefore, that which moves in such a way that it is not changed cannot exist except as a living substance.²⁸ Indeed, all of this substance moves the body through any number of steps. Therefore, not everything that moves a body is changeable.

But the body is not moved unless it is according to time, for being moved faster and slower pertains to the body. It follows that

there is something that moves in time yet is nevertheless not changed. But every body that moves in time, although it strives toward a single end, nevertheless cannot do everything simultaneously, and there are many things that it cannot *not* do. For regardless of whatever power [*ops*] acts upon it, what is capable of being divided into parts cannot be one perfectly; nor is there any body that is without parts;²⁹ nor is there any time that is without an interval of delays; nor to be sure is there even pronounced the shortest of syllables of which you don't hear the end when you no longer hear the beginning.³⁰ Further, what is acted upon in this way needs expectation (that it may be carried out) and memory (that it may be able to be understood as much as possible). And expectation concerns future things while memory the things of the past. The intention to act, on the other hand, concerns the present time, through which the future transitions into the past.³¹ And without any memory, the end of a bodily motion that has begun cannot be expected. For how can one expect a motion to stop when one has forgotten that it had a beginning or that it is a motion at all? Again, the intention of carrying something out, which is present, cannot exist without an expectation of the end, which is future. Nor does anything exist that does not yet exist or exists no longer.³² Therefore, something in acting can exist that pertains to those things which do not exist. Many things can exist simultaneously in the agent, even though many things that are put into action cannot exist simultaneously. Therefore, they can also exist in the mover even though they cannot exist in that which is moved. But it is necessarily the case that whatever cannot exist simultaneously in time and yet is transitioned from the future into the past is changeable.

4. From this we now gather that something can exist that is not changed when it moves changeable things. For since the intention of the mover bringing the body that he moves to the end that he

wants is not changed; and since that body to which something happens is changed by the same motion from moment to moment but that intention of completing it, which obviously remains unchanged, moves the very members of the artist as well as the wood or stone subject to the artist—who would doubt that what has been said follows as a consequence? Therefore, if any change to bodies happens by virtue of a moving soul, no matter how intent the soul is on the change, we shouldn't think that the soul is thus necessarily changed and that as a result it also dies. For in this intention the soul can simultaneously possess a memory of the past and an expectation of the future, and none of these things can exist without life. And indeed, even though there is no destruction without change and no change without motion, nevertheless not every change effects destruction and not every motion effects change. For it is permissible to say that our very body has been moved for the most part by some action or other and that it has certainly been changed at least by age; still, it has not yet been destroyed, that is, it does not exist without life. Therefore, let it be permissible to reckon that the soul is also not immediately deprived of life even though perchance some change may affect it through motion.

4.

5. For if there remains something unchangeable in the soul that cannot exist without life, it is necessary that sempiternal life remain with the soul as well. For this is utterly how the matter stands: if the first statement is true, the second is true. But the first is true. For to pass over other examples, who would dare say that the principle [*ratio*] of numbers is changeable;³³ or there is any art which does not abide by such a principle [*ratio*];³⁴ or art does not exist in the artist, even when he is not practicing it; or it exists in

him but somewhere other than his soul; or art can exist where life does not; or what is unchangeable cannot exist somewhere; or art is one thing, reason [*ratio*] another?³⁵

For although it may be said that a single art is like a certain union of many principles [*rationes*], nevertheless art can also be most truly called and understood to be a single reason [*ratio*]. But regardless of whether it is the former or the latter, it follows that art is no less unchangeable. Moreover, it is obvious not only that art exists in the soul of the artist but also that it exists *only* in the soul—and that it exists there inseparably. For if art is separated from the soul, either it will be outside the soul or it will be nowhere, or it will pass at once from soul to soul. But just as art has nowhere to be without life, so too does a life with reason exist nowhere except in some soul*.³⁶ Further, how can that which exists exist nowhere, or that which is unchangeable not exist at some time or another? But if art passes from soul to soul, it would be to dwell in one soul while abandoning another; no one could teach art without losing it, or no one could even become an expert unless his teacher forgot it or died! If these things seem utterly absurd and false—and they are—the human soul is immortal.³⁷

6. But surely, if art sometimes does and sometimes doesn't exist in the soul (because the soul is fairly well-known for its forgetfulness and ignorance),³⁸ the conclusion to this argument contributes nothing to the soul's immortality unless the foregoing is denied in the following manner. Either something is in the soul that is not in one's thought at present, or the art of music does not exist in an educated soul when it is thinking only about geometry.³⁹ But the latter is false; therefore, the former is true.

But the soul doesn't sense that it is in possession of anything except what has come into thought. Therefore, something can exist in the soul that the soul itself does not sense to exist within itself. And

it doesn't matter how long this lasts. For if the soul has been occupied on other things for so long that it can't easily turn back to what it was thinking about before, it is called forgetting or ignorance.⁴⁰ But when we are reasoning with ourselves or being questioned adeptly by another about certain liberal arts,⁴¹ the things that we discover, we discover nowhere else but in our soul. And discovery is not a making or a begetting;⁴² otherwise, the soul would be begetting eternal realities through temporal discovery. And indeed, it often discovers eternal realities. For what is as eternal as the principle [*ratio*] of a circle or anything else in the arts of this kind?⁴³ It is understood that this principle was not nonexistent at some time, nor was it ever not about to exist: it is obvious as well that the human soul is immortal and that all true principles [*rationes*] are in its hidden recesses,⁴⁴ even though it may seem that the soul does not possess them or has lost them through either ignorance or forgetting.

5.

7. Now let's see to what extent we should accept that there is a change of soul.

For if the soul is a subject and art exists in it as in a subject, and if a subject cannot be changed unless that which is in it as a subject is changed, how can we maintain that art and reason are unchangeable if the soul in which these things exist is proved to be changeable? For what greater change is there usually than into contraries? And to pass over other examples, who denies that the soul is, to say the least, sometimes foolish and sometimes wise?⁴⁵

So first, let us see in how many different ways what is called a change of the soul* should be taken. In my opinion, among these ways there are found two genera (and, to be sure, many species) that are, at any rate, more obvious and more evident to us. For the

soul* is said to be changed either according to passions of the body or according to its own passions:⁴⁶ according to the passions of the body, through stages of life, through illnesses, through pains, labors, stumbling blocks, through pleasures; but according to its own passions, as by desiring, rejoicing, fearing, being distressed, being eager for, or learning.⁴⁷

8. If all these changes together don't necessarily prove that the soul* dies, then they certainly shouldn't be feared at all when taken separately by themselves. But it remains to be seen whether they oppose our reasoning, in which we said that when a subject is changed, everything that is in a subject is necessarily changed.⁴⁸ But they don't. For this is said of a subject according to a change that forces its name to change entirely.⁴⁹ For example, if wax went for some reason from white to the color black, it is wax nonetheless—and also if it took on a round instead of a rectangular shape and went from soft to hard and from hot to cold. Now these things are *in* the subject, and wax *is* the subject. But the wax remains, and it is not more or less wax even though these things are undergoing change. Therefore, some change can happen to things that are in a subject, even though the subject itself, with regard to what it is and what it is called, is not changed. But if so great a change⁵⁰ happens to those things which are in a subject that what was said to be undergirding them cannot in any way be called a subject anymore (as when wax dissolves into the air from the heat of the fire and suffers such a change that the subject may be rightly understood to have changed, since it was wax and is wax no more)—in no way, for any reason, could it be reckoned that anything would remain of those things which were in that subject because the subject existed.

9. On account of this, if the soul* is a subject, as we said above,⁵¹ in which reason exists inseparably (by that necessity

according to which things are shown to be in a subject), it cannot be a soul* if it is not a living soul* and reason cannot be in a soul* without life. But reason is immortal; hence, the soul* is immortal. For there is absolutely no way that reason would remain unchangeable with its subject not existing! This could have come about if so great a change happened to the soul* as to make it not a soul* — that is, a change forced it to die. But not one of these changes that happens in the soul*, whether it be through the body or through the soul* itself, ends up making a soul* not a soul*⁵² (although, it is no small question whether *any* changes happen through the soul* itself, that is, changes of which it is itself the cause). Now then, not only should changes in themselves not be feared, but we should also not fear for our reasons.⁵³

6.

10. Therefore, I see that all the strength of reasoning should be devoted to knowing* what reason is and how many times it can be defined, so that there may be agreement according to all modes and with respect to the immortality of the soul*.

Reason is either the looking of the soul⁵⁴ by which it gazes upon the true through itself and not through the body;⁵⁵ or it is the actual contemplation of the true, [again] not through the body; or it is the very true itself that is contemplated.

Regarding the first [definition], no one doubts that reason is in the soul. One can question the second and third [definitions], but even the second cannot exist without the soul. Regarding the third is a question of great importance: whether the true that the soul gazes upon without the instrument of the body exists by virtue of itself and not in the soul or whether it can exist without the soul. But however the matter stands, the soul cannot contemplate the

true through itself except by virtue of a certain conjoining with it.⁵⁶ For everything that we contemplate or grasp by thought, we grasp either by sense or by the understanding.⁵⁷ But those things that are grasped by sense are also sensed to be outside of us and to be contained in places, on which account it is affirmed that they cannot even be perceived.⁵⁸ But those things that are understood are not understood to be positioned, as it were, anywhere else other than in the very soul that understands them.⁵⁹ At the same time, they are also understood not to be contained in a place.⁶⁰

11. Consequently, this conjoining of the soul's gaze with the true that it gazes upon is such that the soul is a subject while the true is in it as in a subject; or the opposite of this, the true is the subject and the soul is in it as in a subject; or each of them is a substance. Of these three options, if it is the first, the soul is as immortal as reason according to the disputation above, since reason can be in nothing unless it is alive. The same necessity applies to the second option. For if that true thing which is called reason has nothing changeable (as is apparent), then nothing that is in it as in a subject can be changed. Thus, a whole battle remains around the third option. For if the soul is a substance and reason another substance to which it is conjoined,⁶¹ someone who thinks that it is possible for reason to remain while the soul ceases to exist is not being absurd. But it is obvious that as long as the soul is not separated from reason and clings to it, it necessarily abides and lives. But by what power can it eventually be separated?⁶² Surely it is not by a corporeal power, the potency of which is weaker and the origin of which is inferior and the order of which is more divisible.⁶³ No way. Then by some animate power? But again, how? Can't another more powerful soul, whatever it is, contemplate reason without first separating the other soul from it? But if all souls contemplate, reason will not be absent from any soul that contemplates; and

since nothing is more powerful than reason itself (because nothing is more unchangeable), by no means will a soul not yet conjoined to reason be more powerful than one that is.⁶⁴ It remains that either reason itself may separate the soul from itself or the soul itself may be separated from reason by its own will. But there is no envy in the nature [of reason] that would prevent it from offering itself for the soul's enjoyment.⁶⁵ Next, the more [reason] is being itself, the more it makes whatever is conjoined to it exist, and destruction is contrary to that.⁶⁶ But it wouldn't be too absurd for someone to say that the soul is separated from reason by its own will *if* there could be a separation of things from each other that are not contained in a place.⁶⁷ And this indeed can be said against all the [objections] above that we opposed with other counterarguments.

What then? Should it now be concluded that the soul is immortal? Or even if it can't be separated, can it be extinguished? But if that power of reason affects the soul by its very conjoining with it (for it is impossible not to affect it), it surely affects it in such a way that it bestows existence upon it. For reason itself exists to the maximum, where the highest unchangeability is also understood to be.⁶⁸ And so, whatever it affects by virtue of itself, it forces to exist in a certain way. Therefore, the soul cannot be extinguished unless it is separated from reason; but it cannot be separated, as we reasoned above. Therefore, it cannot be destroyed.

7.

12. But surely the very turning away from reason (by means of which folly takes hold of the soul) cannot happen without a defect of soul.⁶⁹ For if the soul has more being while it is turned toward reason and clinging to it—thereby clinging to that unchangeable thing that is the truth (which exists both to the maximum and

firstly)—then when it has turned away from reason, it itself has less being, which is [what it means] to be deficient.⁷⁰ For every defect tends toward nothing,⁷¹ and nothing is more properly construed to be a destruction than when that which was something becomes nothing. Consequently, to tend toward nothing is to tend toward destruction.⁷² Why this does not occur to the soul in which defect occurs is difficult to say.

The remaining points are conceded at this point, but the conclusion is denied that what tends toward nothing is destroyed, that is, that it reaches nothing. This can also be noticed in the body. For every body is part of the sensible world,⁷³ and + + +⁷⁴ thus the larger it is, the more of a place it occupies, and the more of a place it occupies, the more it draws near to the universe.⁷⁵ And the more it does this, the larger it is (for a whole is greater than a part).⁷⁶ Consequently, it is also necessarily the case that a body is less when it is diminished; therefore, it suffers a defect when it is diminished. Further, it is diminished when something is subtracted from it by cutting off. And from this it follows that a body tends toward nothing by such a subtraction.⁷⁷ But there is no cutting off that thoroughly leads to nothing. For every part that remains is a body, and whatever it is and whatever its extension, it occupies a place. And it could not do this unless it had parts that could be cut again and again. Therefore, by being infinitely cut, the body can be infinitely diminished, and thus it can suffer defect and tend toward nothing even though it can never reach nothing.⁷⁸ And the same can be said and understood about extension itself and any interval whatsoever.⁷⁹ For by also subtracting half, let's say, of these demarcated intervals and by continually subtracting half from what remains, the interval is diminished and approaches a limit; yet it by no means reaches a limit. For this reason, we should have even less fear that this will happen to the soul. For the soul is

certainly better and more alive than the body, seeing that the body is granted life by the soul.

8.

13. But if that which makes a body exist is not in the matter of the body but in the form [*species*]⁸⁰ (and this position is proved by irrefutable reason, for the greater a body is, the better formed [*speciosius*] and more beautiful it is; and the less a body is, the uglier and more deformed [*deformius*] it is; and this defect comes to pass not by the cutting of matter, which we have already treated sufficiently, but by the privation of form),⁸¹ then we should inquire into this diligently and discuss this lest someone affirm that the soul is destroyed by such a defect. Because the soul is deprived of some form belonging to it while it is foolish, it may be believed that this privation can be increased so much that it robs the soul of form in every way and by this flaw reduces it to nothing and forces it to be destroyed. Consequently, if we can succeed in showing that this can't happen even to the body⁸² (namely, that a body can't be deprived of the form by which it is a body), then perhaps we will rightly maintain how much less can there be taken away from the soul that by which the soul is the soul. For indeed, no one has examined himself well who would not acknowledge that a soul of whatever quality is to be ranked higher than any body.⁸³

14. Therefore, let this be the beginning of our reasoning: that not a single thing makes itself or begets itself;⁸⁴ otherwise, it would have existed before it existed. But if the latter is false, the former is true.

Likewise, it is necessarily the case that whatever was not made or begun but nonetheless exists is sempiternal.⁸⁵ Whoever ascribes this nature and excellence to a body errs outrageously indeed. But

why fight? For [if it's true], how much more are we forced to attribute this [nature and excellence] to the soul.⁸⁶ And so, if any body is sempiternal, no soul is not sempiternal, since any soul whatsoever is to be ranked higher than any body whatsoever, and all sempiternal things are to be ranked higher than non-sempiternal things.⁸⁷

But if (and this is truly said) the body has been made, it has been made by some maker, and this maker is not inferior to the body. For an inferior maker would not have the power to endow what he was making, whatever it is, with what it is that he was making.

But [maker and made] are not indeed in equal standing, for in order to make, it behooves the maker to be in possession of something better than that which he makes.⁸⁸ On the other hand, it is not absurdly said about the begetter that he is that which is begotten by him.⁸⁹ Therefore, the whole body has been made by some power and by a nature more powerful and better—at any rate, not bodily.⁹⁰ For if a body was made by a body, it could not become whole. For what we posited at the beginning of our reasoning is absolutely true—that not a single thing can be made by itself.⁹¹

But as the producer of the whole body, this incorporeal power and nature⁹² maintains the whole by the presence of its power. For it did not make and then abandon and desert its product.⁹³ Of course, that substance (which is not a body) is not, if I may speak this way, moved locally in such a way that it is able to be separated from that substance which occupies a place. And this productive power⁹⁴ cannot be idle but preserves what it has made and does not allow it to be devoid of the form by which it exists and to whatever degree that it exists. For that which was made does not exist by virtue of itself,⁹⁵ and if it is abandoned by that through

which it exists, it will assuredly exist no more. And we cannot say that once it had received a body when it was made, it could then exist secure by virtue of itself, even if it were to be abandoned by its originator.

15. And yet if this is so, all the more does the soul, which obviously surpasses the body, have [this incorporeal power and nature]. And so, based thus on the preceding, the soul is proved to be immortal if it can exist by virtue of itself. For whatever is such is necessarily incorruptible and as such cannot be destroyed, since nothing deserts itself.⁹⁶ But the changeability of the body is on full display, which the whole motion of the whole body itself sufficiently indicates. Hence, those who diligently investigate (insofar as such a nature can be investigated) discover that it imitates with an orderly changeability that which is unchangeable.⁹⁷ But what exists by virtue of itself does not even need any motion, since every abundance existing with it is from itself. (Because every motion is toward something else that the thing being moved lacks.)

Therefore, form is present to the whole body, a better nature providing for and maintaining what it has made. Accordingly, this changeability does not deprive a body of being a body but makes it to transition from one form into another by a motion extremely well ordered.⁹⁸ For no such part of it is allowed to be reduced to nothing since that productive power, with a power that neither struggles nor is idle, manages the entire body and grants existence to all that exists through it, to the extent that it exists.

Consequently, there should be no one so far gone from reason that it is not certain to him that the soul is better than the body, or that having conceded this, he thinks that it does not happen to a body that it stops being a body but it happens to the soul that it stops being a soul. But if this does not happen and the soul cannot exist unless it lives, assuredly the soul never dies.

9.

16. But if someone says that we shouldn't fear for the soul that destruction which makes something become nothing but that we *should* fear the destruction by which we call the things that lack life dead, let him notice that no thing lacks its very self. For the soul is a certain life⁹⁹ from which all that is animated lives. But all that is lifeless and capable of being animated is understood to be dead, that is, deprived of life. Therefore, the soul cannot die. For if something can lack life, it is not the soul but something animated.¹⁰⁰

But if this is absurd, much less should this kind of destruction be feared for the soul, since there is certainly no need to fear for life. For it is utterly the case that if the soul dies when life deserts it, the very life itself that deserts the soul is much better understood as the soul, the result being that the soul is no longer whatever is deserted by life but the very life itself that deserts. For whatever is deserted by life is called dead, and it is understood to be deserted by the soul*. But this life that deserts the things that die, because this life is the soul and it does not desert itself, the soul does not die.¹⁰¹

10.

17. Unless perhaps we ought to believe, as some have opined, that life is a certain tempering of the body.¹⁰² This would never have seemed to them to be the case if they had had the strength to see with the same soul (dispossessed of and purged from bodily custom) the things that truly exist and remain unchangeable.¹⁰³ For who, upon examining himself well, has not experienced that the more he genuinely understood something, the more he could move and lead the mind's* intention away from the senses of the

body?¹⁰⁴ But if the soul were a tempering of the body, this assuredly could not happen. For a thing that does not have a nature proper to it and is not a substance but (like color and shape)¹⁰⁵ is present inseparably in the body as in a subject would by no means try to turn itself away from the same body in order to perceive intelligible realities. And the more it could do this, the more it could gaze upon these realities and be made by this vision better and more excellent. In fact, there is no way that shape or color or even the very tempering of the body (which is a certain mixture of those four natures in which the same body subsists)¹⁰⁶ can turn itself away from that in which it exists inseparably as in a subject.¹⁰⁷

And on this topic: The things that the soul understands when it turns itself away from the body are certainly not corporeal, and yet they exist and exist to the maximum. For they are always constituted in the same way,¹⁰⁸ and nothing can be more absurdly said than that the things we see with the eyes exist but the things we perceive with the intellect do not, since it is madness to doubt that the intellect is ranked incomparably higher than the eyes.¹⁰⁹ But these things, which are understood, are constituted the same way, and when the soul gazes upon them, it satisfactorily shows itself that it is conjoined to them in a certain wonderful and similarly incorporeal manner—to wit, not locally.¹¹⁰ For indeed, either they are in it or it itself is in them.¹¹¹ And whichever one of these it is, either one is in the other as in a subject or each one is a substance. But if it is the first [option], the soul is not in the body as in a subject (like color and shape are) because either it is itself a substance or it is in another substance (as in a subject) that is not a body. But if the second option is true, the soul is not in the body as in a subject (like color is) because it is a substance. But a tempering of the body is in the body as in a subject, like color is: therefore, the soul is not a tempering of the body but life.¹¹² And

no thing deserts itself. And that which life deserts, dies.¹¹³ Therefore, the soul cannot die.

11.

18. Once again, then, if anything should be feared, it is that the soul should be destroyed by deficiency, that is, while it is being deprived of the very form of existence. Although I think enough has been said about this matter (as it has been shown by certain reason that this cannot happen),¹¹⁴ we should nevertheless also pay attention to this: the only reason for this fear is that it must be admitted that the foolish soul exists by a certain defect¹¹⁵ and that the wise soul exists by a more certain and fuller essence.¹¹⁶

But if—and nobody doubts this—the soul is superlatively wise when it gazes upon the Truth (which exists forever in the Same Mode) and clings immobile to it, conjoined by Divine Love; and if all those things that exist in whatever manner exist by virtue of that Essence¹¹⁷ which exists supremely and to the maximum;¹¹⁸ then either the soul (to the extent that it exists) exists by virtue of that Essence, or it exists by virtue of itself. But if it exists by virtue of itself because it is itself the cause of its own existence and never deserts itself,¹¹⁹ then it is never destroyed, as we already argued above.¹²⁰ But if it is from that Essence, we need to seek diligently for what can be contrary to it that can take from the soul its being a soul, which the Essence provides. And so, what is it? Falsity perhaps, because the Essence is truth?¹²¹ But it is obvious and on full display how much harm falsity can do to the soul. For surely, can falsity do anything more than deceive? But no one is deceived unless he is alive.¹²² And so, falsity cannot destroy the soul. But if what is contrary to the truth cannot take from the soul its being a

soul, which the truth gave to it (for thus is the truth utterly unconquerable), what else will be found that can take from the soul that which is soul? Nothing at all, for nothing is more capable than a contrary to take away that which is made by its contrary.¹²³

12.

19. But if we were to seek the contrary of the truth in this manner:¹²⁴ not insofar as it is the truth but insofar as it exists supremely and to the maximum (even though truth is the selfsame to the extent that it is the truth, since we call the truth that by which all things are true¹²⁵ insofar as they exist; and they exist to the extent that they are true)—then I would still by no means run away from that which more evidently lends support to me. For if no essence (insofar as it is an essence) has some contrary, much less does that First Essence¹²⁶ that is called the Truth have a contrary insofar as It is an essence. But the first [position] is true. For every essence is an essence for no other reason than that it exists. But being has no contrary except for nonbeing; hence, nothing is the contrary of essence. And so, by no means can any thing exist contrary to that Substance which exists to the maximum and firstly.¹²⁷ From which it follows that if the soul has this very Thing, which exists (for the soul that does not have existence from itself cannot have it from any source other than that which is more excellent than the soul itself), then there is no thing by which it may lose [its existence] because there is no thing contrary to that Thing by which it has [its existence].¹²⁸ And for this reason, the soul does not cease to exist. But because the soul has wisdom by turning toward That from which it has its being, it can lose wisdom by turning away.¹²⁹ For turning away is the contrary of turning toward. There is nothing, however, according to which it can lose

what it has from That to which no thing is contrary. Therefore, it cannot be destroyed.

13.

20. Perhaps at this point some question may arise as to whether, just as the soul is not destroyed, so too can the soul not be changed into an inferior essence.¹³⁰ For it can seem to someone (and not without cause) that the following is brought about by this reasoning [of ours]: that the soul cannot reach nothing, but perhaps it can be turned into a body. For if what was once a soul will become a body, it will, at any rate, not be utterly nothing. But this cannot happen unless the soul itself either wants it or is forced by another. Yet regardless of whether the soul itself desires it or it is forced, it will necessarily be unable to be a body. For it follows that if the soul is to be a body, it either wants it or is forced. But it does not follow that if the soul wants it or is forced, it is body.

But the soul will never want this. For its every desire with respect to the body is either that it may possess it or give it life or fashion it in a certain way or that it may look out for it by some means or another. But none of these things can happen if the soul is not better than the body. But if the soul will be a body, it will certainly not be better than a body. Therefore, it will not want to be a body. And there is no more certain proof of this fact than when the soul investigates its very self on this matter. For it easily knows for certain that its appetite is not constituted for anything but doing something, either knowing* or sensing or merely living insofar as that is within its power.

21. But if it is forced to be a body, by what is it at long last being forced? Whatever it is, it certainly must be more powerful than the soul. Therefore, it cannot be forced by the body itself. For by no

means is any body more powerful than any soul.¹³¹ But a more powerful soul does not force something to do anything unless that something has been placed under the more powerful mind's own power. And by no means is one soul placed under the power of another soul unless it is by its own desires.¹³² Therefore, that soul does not force the soul that it is forcing more than the desires of the latter allow. But it has been said that the soul cannot have the desire to be a body. It is also obvious that the soul does not reach the fulfillment of its desire as long as it is losing its every desire, and lose it, it does when it becomes a body. Therefore, a soul cannot be forced to become a body by a soul that only has a right to employ force because of the desires of the other soul placed under its power. Next, it is necessarily the case that whatever soul has another soul in its power would prefer this arrangement to having a body in its power and [having to] take care of it with carrots or subdue it with sticks.¹³³ Therefore, it will not want to be a body.

22. And further, this soul doing the forcing is either animal or it lacks a body. But if it lacks a body, it is not in this world.¹³⁴ And if it is not in this world, it is supremely good and incapable of wanting so foul a change for another. But if it is animal, either that which it forces is also animal or it is not. But if it is not, it cannot be forced to anything by another. For what is in the highest place has none more powerful than it. But if it is in a body, that which is in a body is again forcing it through the body to whatever is being forced. For who would doubt that such a change in no way happens to the soul through the body? For it would happen if the body were more powerful than the soul, although whatever it is to which it is being forced through the body is not being forced through the body absolutely but through its own desires (about which we have already said enough).¹³⁵ But all agree that that which is better than a rational soul* is God, who assuredly takes care of the soul*. It is

for this reason that the soul* cannot be forced by Him to turn into a body.¹³⁶

14.

23. Therefore, if the soul* does not suffer this [change] by its own will or by another forcing it, for what reason can it suffer this? Because sleep often oppresses us against our will, should it be feared that by some such defect the soul is turned into body? As if indeed, just because our limbs grow slack in sleep,¹³⁷ the soul therefore grows weaker in some way. The only thing that the soul fails to sense [in sleep] are sensible things because whatever it is that causes sleep is from the body and works in the body. For it lulls the bodily senses to sleep and in a certain way shuts them down so soundly that the soul* yields to such a change of the body with pleasure, since such a change, which refreshes the body from its labors, is according to nature yet does not take away from the soul the power of sensing or of understanding.¹³⁸ For it also has ready at hand images of sensible things that are so vivid in their similarity that during this time of sleep they cannot be distinguished from the things of which they are the images.¹³⁹ And if the soul [truly] understands something, it is equally true when it is either asleep or awake.¹⁴⁰ For example, if in a dream the soul seemed to itself to have a disputation, and following the true principles [*rationes*] of disputation learned something, these same things remain unchangeable even after the soul has woken up—even though the rest [of the dream] may be found false, such as the place where and the person with whom the disputation seemed to have taken place, the words themselves (which pertain to sound) that it seemed they used to dispute, and other things of this kind. Even when these things are sensed with the senses themselves and done

by those who are awake, they still pass away, nor do they in any way achieve the sempiternal presence of true principles [*rationes*].¹⁴¹ From which it is concluded that this sort of change of the body (the sort that happens in sleep) can diminish the soul's* use of the body but not the life proper to the soul*.

15.

24. Finally: If, no matter how much space a body is occupying, the soul* is nevertheless not joined to a body locally,¹⁴² then the soul* is affected prior to the body by those supreme and eternal principles [*rationes*]¹⁴³ that remain unchangeable and are in no way contained in a place. And not only is it affected prior, but it is also affected more greatly: for the more it is prior, the nearer it is [to the highest principles]; and for the same reason the greater it is, the better it is than the body as well. And nearness of this kind should be understood not in terms of place but in terms of the order of nature.¹⁴⁴ But according to this order it is understood that the Supreme Essence¹⁴⁵ bestows form on the body through the soul* by which it exists and to the extent that it exists.¹⁴⁶

Therefore, the body subsists through the soul* and exists by that very thing by which it is animated, whether universally, as the world, or particularly, as each and every animal in the world.¹⁴⁷ On which account it was concluded that the soul* could become a body through the soul* or it could not at all become a body in any other way.¹⁴⁸ And since the soul* does not become a body but remains, of course, a soul* in that [state] by which it is a soul*—and since the body subsists through the soul* that gives it its form and does not take away its form—the soul* cannot be changed into a body. For if the soul* does not hand over form, which it receives from the Supreme Good,¹⁴⁹ the body does not come into

being through form; and if it does not come into being through form, either it does not come into being at all or it receives form as nearly as the soul* does.¹⁵⁰ But it *does* become a body, and, were it to receive form as nearly as the soul*, it would be what the soul* is. Indeed, this is what matters: the soul* is better to the extent that it receives its form more nearly. But the body would also be receiving just as nearly if it were not receiving *through* the soul*.¹⁵¹ For indeed, with nothing in between it [and the Supreme Good], it would certainly be receiving just as nearly. But the only thing found to exist in between the Supreme Life¹⁵² (which is unchangeable Wisdom and Truth)¹⁵³ and that which is given life last (that is, the body) is the life-giving soul*.¹⁵⁴

But if the soul* hands over form to the body so that the body may exist to the extent that it does, it is certainly not taking away form when it hands it over. But it does take away when it transmutes soul* into body.¹⁵⁵

Therefore, the soul* does not become a body by virtue of itself because the body does not come into being through the soul* unless the soul* abides; nor does the soul* become a body through another soul* because it is only by handing over form that a body comes into being through the soul*, and it is only by the removal of form that the soul* would be turned into body, *if* it would be turned.

16.

25. And the same can be said about an irrational soul* or life, namely, that it does not turn into a rational soul*. Indeed, were it not subordinated to the rational in a lower order, the irrational soul* would receive form equally and be of the same kind [as the rational soul*].

Therefore, the more powerful realities hand over the form that they have received from the Supreme Beauty¹⁵⁶ to those that are weaker in the natural order. And obviously, when they do so, they do not take away. Consequently, the weaker realities that exist (to the extent that they do exist) exist because the form by which they exist is handed over to them by the more powerful realities. And indeed, these more powerful realities are also better. To these natures it has been given not that they can do more by a greater mass than things with a lesser mass,¹⁵⁷ but without a swelling of any local magnitude they are more powerful by the same form by which they are better. In this fashion, the soul* is better and more powerful than the body. As a result, since the body subsists through the soul* (as has been said),¹⁵⁸ the soul* cannot in any way be turned into body. For no body comes into being unless it receives form through the soul*. However, the soul*, to become body, would do so not by receiving form but by losing it; and accordingly, it cannot become body unless perhaps the soul* is contained in a place and is joined to the body locally.¹⁵⁹ For if this is so, perhaps a greater mass can turn the soul*, even though it is better formed [*speciosior*],¹⁶⁰ into its own lower form, like a greater amount of air [extinguishing] a lesser amount of fire. But this is not so. Obviously, all mass, which occupies a place, is not an entirety in each of its parts but in all of them.¹⁶¹ Consequently, one part of it is in one place and another part in another. But the soul* is present all at once and in its entirety not only to the whole mass of its body but also to every single one of its particles.¹⁶² For the soul* senses in its entirety the suffering of a part of the body, even though the suffering is not in the entire body.¹⁶³ For when there is a pain in the foot, the eye notices it, the tongue speaks about it, the hand is moved toward it. This would not happen unless that which belongs to the soul* in these parts senses it in the foot as well; and

it could not sense what had happened there if it were absent. For it is not believable for some announcer to become insentient to what he announces, since the suffering that occurs does not race through an uninterrupted succession of matter¹⁶⁴ in such a way that it forbids the other parts of the soul* (which are elsewhere) from getting a clue.¹⁶⁵ Rather, the soul* senses in its entirety what happens to the foot in particular, and it senses it only in the very spot where it happens. And so, the soul* is present in its entirety to each part, and in its entirety it senses at once in each. Yet it is not present in its entirety in the way in which whiteness or any another quality of this kind is entirely present in every part of the body. For what the body suffers in one part by change of color can be irrelevant to the whiteness that is in another part. On account of this, just as the parts of mass are different from each other, even whiteness is shown to be different from itself.¹⁶⁶ But it is proved that such is not the case in the soul* because of the sensation about which we have [just] spoken.

Finis.

COMMENTARY

BOOK ONE

Day One (1.1.1–1.13.23)

Opening Chapter (1.1.1)

The *Soliloquies* is not situated in as fixed a chronological framework as the other three Cassiciacum dialogues. Writing in the *Retractations* decades later, Augustine merely states: “At the same time (*inter haec*), in accordance with my enthusiasm and love for investigating with the aid of reason the truth about those things which I especially wanted to know, I also wrote two books in which I questioned myself and responded to myself, as if we were two, Reason and I, although I was alone.”¹ Since *inter haec* can mean either “in between the other works” or “during this time,” one can imagine the conversations of the *Soliloquies* occurring during moments of rest when Augustine was not engaging his friends and family at the Cassiciacum villa of their friend Verecundus, or taking place shortly after the other three dialogues. The one clue provided in the *Soliloquies* is the assertion that Augustine’s discussions with Reason began some time after his thirty-second birthday (see 1.10.17), which places the *terminus a quo* at November 13, 386. As for the *terminus ad quem*, Augustine

mentions in the *Confessions* that he and his interlocutors left Cassiciacum to return to Milan “when the time had come to ‘give the name’ for baptism,” that is, to enroll as a baptismal candidate.² In the diocese of Milan, that time was most likely the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6, 387.³

The *Soliloquies* does not begin with a dedicatory letter as do the other three dialogues, but it does open with a familiar scene. Augustine tells his reader that for a long time and over a period of many days he had been engaged in a series of mental meditations or “turnings.” In *On Order*, Augustine describes how his “love of discovering the truth” had led to a routine in which he would think about things for at least half the night (1.3.6). In the *Soliloquies*, the ruminating activity recorded in book one most likely happens during the day (see 1.13.23, 1.14.25), but it has the same features as Augustine’s customary lucubrations.

Augustine writes that he was seeking “his very self” and what was good for him or what evil he should avoid. *On Order* begins with Augustine staying up all night searching for the truth; here in the *Soliloquies*, he is searching for the truth about himself. The theme of self-knowledge, so prominent in *On Order*, is even more prominent in the *Soliloquies*.

Augustine’s meditations are interrupted by a mysterious interlocutor. The manuscript traditions identify the speaker as “R,” who is later revealed to be *Ratio* or Reason (see 1.6.12). Augustine does not deny that he knows who or what is speaking to him, but he does claim to be ignorant of whether (1) Reason is Augustine’s very self, or Reason is something (2) inside him (*intrinsecus*) or (3) outside him (*extrinsecus*). With respect to the first possibility, reason might be identical to the self if it were the same thing as the soul, but what if reason merely belongs to the soul? Augustine himself is not certain which one it is (see *On Order* 2.18.48). And

if reason is not oneself, then it must be either an intrinsic property of the soul (“inside”) or an extrinsic quality of some sort, coming from without (“outside”). Which one it is, is not easy to determine, for although reason is an essential or inherent attribute of human nature (Augustine affirms that humans are by definition rational animals),⁴ it also has an adventitious, giftlike quality to it that can be experienced in every act of insight (see *Against the Academics* 3.6.13). Moreover, to know whether reason is “inside” or “outside” requires an understanding of these terms that is *not* spatial, since reason is an intelligible rather than a sensible reality. And to complicate matters further, Augustine does not use the exclusive disjunctive *aut* for “or” when delineating these three options about Reason but *sive*, a word that leaves open the possibility that the answer could lie in one or more of the stated options.

Finally, Augustine’s uncertainty raises the question of the relationship of reason to God. In at least two passages in the other Cassiciacum dialogues, Augustine implicitly associates reason with the Holy Spirit,⁵ but does this pairing mean that either the character Reason in the *Soliloquies* or human reason in general is the Holy Spirit? If not, what is the relationship between the two? Reason, it turns out, can be difficult for reason to pin down, especially in its relation to the divine. Significantly, Augustine writes that he is *still* “struggling mightily to know” the answers to his questions, even after the lengthy encounter that he is about to relay to the reader. And if the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul* does not provide hard and fast answers for Augustine, it surely does not do so for the reader. The value of the work may lie elsewhere.

Initiating the conversation, Reason asks not about what Augustine wishes to discover or has discovered, but about what he would do with a discovery if he had one. Before we can begin the process of discovery, Reason is implying, let us make sure that we

have a means of preserving our discoveries, lest our labors be in vain. Augustine mentions his memory as a likely custodian, but upon closer examination, it is deemed unreliable. Writing, then, must be used to retain what has been found. Reason is treating writing as an aid in preserving discoveries rather than an aid in making them. But since this dialogue is partially intended for others who have not necessarily made these discoveries (see Reason's last statement in 1.1.1), we may conclude that the writing currently before us is intended to aid in discovery.

Reason claims that their conversation requires "complete solitude"—this in contradistinction to the other Cassiciacum dialogues, which were allegedly conducted with others and in the presence of hired stenographers.⁶ The solitude of the *Soliloquies* is necessary for Augustine's own soul to be scrutinized closely. Similarly, Reason instructs Augustine not to worry about "attracting a crowd of readers." The larger the audience, the more reluctant he will be to disclose embarrassing facts about himself. Reason, sensitive to Augustine's vanity, has him imagine the work being accessible to only a few of his compatriots. There is an echo here of *On Order*, when Trygetius, chagrined by an act of pettiness, promises to "sweat buckets" in an effort to keep the circulation of the dialogue limited to close friends and family (1.10.30). Reason, therefore, is assuming that Augustine is potentially infected by the same concern for reputation to which his emotionally charged pupils succumbed. Yet by publicizing these private moments, Augustine the author also shows a willingness to immolate his pride for the benefit of readers, allowing his personal embarrassment to serve as a model for others' self-examination and progress.

Reason, sensing that Augustine is despondent, instructs him to do three things: pray, write, and summarize.

Pray. It is noteworthy that the admonition to pray comes from Reason, the tool and prize of the philosophers. Unbiased human reason is not faith and it is not God, but it is open to faith and open to God. Reason, dispassionately and objectively surveying both the intelligibility and the enigma of the whole, does not find it unreasonable to direct its attention to that which lies beyond the whole. Reason has an innate thirst for the Absolute, and it admonishes human beings to turn to that Absolute and address it. Moreover, Reason is acknowledging reason's own lack of self-sufficiency and its need for divine assistance. Alone and unaided it cannot give the "health and help" that Augustine desires.

Write. Augustine is to commit "this" to writing. The exact referent of "this" is less clear than the purpose of the command: to boost Augustine's morale. Yet as it has already been noted, Reason anticipates that this writing will be seen by others. The *Soliloquies*, then, is meant to be hortatory and beneficial not only to Augustine but to a readership. In the meantime, writing has moved from being a mere reaction to the unreliability of memory to a means of changing the hearts of others.

Summarize. Augustine is to summarize whatever he "finds out" as a result of his prayer. Even as a petition, the act of praying may become an act of finding insofar as prayer can lead both to self-knowledge and to the knowledge of God. In explicitly articulating one's desire for God, one clarifies one's wishes and assumptions, and in clarifying one's wishes and assumptions, one learns more about the nature of one's desire. Further, one's articulated desires may reveal something, however faint, about the ultimate object of one's desire. Prayer done well can be a heuristic, a principle or guide by which further discoveries are made; and alighting upon a good heuristic is itself a valuable discovery.⁷ Just as learning to formulate the right question is, in so many cases, half the answer, so

too may learning to pray well be a significant step in learning what one truly needs and in attaining it. None of this, of course, is to deny the importance of the revelation or assistance of God Himself. Indeed, it may be the case that even one's own self-knowledge is itself a gift from God, and one's initiative in praying to God is in fact a response to an initiative taken by God and with God.

Augustine's Prayer (1.1.2–6)

Augustine's opening prayer, which reveals much about his understanding of God at the time, deserves a closer study than can be provided here. And as with all prayer, it is better appreciated when it is prayed sincerely rather than analyzed indifferently. We can, however, make three observations.

First, the prayer performs a similar function as the cover letters in the rest of the Cassiciacum corpus, serving as an overture of themes that will be encountered later. Augustine's use of heeding/seeing (*attendere/videre*) in the invocation "O God, whom to desert is what it means to perish, whom to heed is what it means to love, whom to see is what it means to have" (1.1.3) anticipates the discussion on looking/seeing (*aspectus/visio*) in 1.6.12. Likewise, the remark here about heeding and loving, together with Augustine's statement at 1.1.2 (that all creatures capable of loving love God), foreshadows an important discussion on love and fear in 1.9.16–1.14.26. Finally, his description of faith, hope, and charity in 1.1.3 heralds the discussion on the topic in 1.6.12–14, while his depiction in 1.1.2 of creation as something that strives to exist thanks to God but cannot exist by itself anticipates a crucial distinction between "being" and "striving to be" in 2.9.16–2.13.23.⁸

Second, the prayer develops topics and resolves conundrums found in the other Cassiciacum dialogues: one may even go so far as to say that it serves as an answer key to some of the earlier works'

unsolved problems. In *Against the Academics*, Augustine and his interlocutors explore at great length the possibility and scope of human knowing. In the *Soliloquies'* opening prayer, several of these issues are revisited, such as that God the Son is the Intelligible Light who makes all intelligible things intelligible, and that the "kingdoms" of sensible reality are utterly distinct from the "kingdom" of intelligible reality yet dependent on it nonetheless (1.1.2). In *On the Happy Life*, the group struggles to come up with an adequate definition of "having" or "possessing" God (2.10–11 and 3.19–21). In the *Soliloquies'* opening prayer, the issue is settled handily: to see God is "what it means to have" Him (1.1.3).⁹ In *On Order*, the group never fully comes to terms with the notion that evil is a privation of good. In the *Soliloquies'* opening prayer, evil is quickly identified as "nothing" (1.1.2) and God is praised as He who strips us of "what is not" and clothes us in "what is" (1.1.3).¹⁰

Third, Augustine has arranged his prayer in a Trinitarian manner, invoking each of the divine persons in order and demarcating each invocation with a short plea such as "Thee do I invoke," "Thee do I beseech," and "Graciously come Thou to me" (1.1.3). Thus, all of 1.1.2 is addressed to the Father, the first fourteen lines of 1.1.3 are addressed to the Son, and the last twenty-seven lines of 1.1.3 are addressed to the Holy Spirit. These passages are followed by 1.1.4, which addresses "the one God" and ends in a Trinitarian echo with a triple "hear, hear, hear me." *Soliloquies* 1.1.5 and 1.1.6, on the other hand, contain the bulk of Augustine's supplications. Interestingly, his petition for his health—one of the two things about which Reason told him to pray—occurs near the end almost as an afterthought, and when it is mentioned, Augustine merely entrusts the matter to God's goodness on the grounds that he is not certain whether bodily health is beneficial to him or not; good health could become for him a reason to neglect God, whereas an

illness might serve as a providential goad that leads him back to his Lord. Indeed, Augustine's current respiratory ailment has been an instance of the latter since it compelled his resignation from teaching rhetoric and hastened his decision to enter the Church.¹¹

As for Augustine's various epithets to the divine persons, each either reinforces or develops the Trinitarian theology that has already emerged in the earlier dialogues. The Father is the Maker of the whole who keeps all in due order; the Son is the Truth and (Intelligible) Light; and the Holy Spirit is the Admonition (*Paraklêsis* in Greek) who leads us to the Son, that is, to Him who is the Way or Door, the Truth, and the (Bread of) Life. These characterizations are compatible with Augustine's earlier descriptions of the Father as the Supreme Measure¹² and "principle-less Principle of all things,"¹³ the Son as Truth or Wisdom¹⁴ or Divine Understanding,¹⁵ and the Holy Spirit as Admonition¹⁶ or that "Most Subtle Reason,"¹⁷ since in the realm of human knowing it is reason that admonishes or moves the mind to understanding, truth, and wisdom; and understanding, truth, and wisdom implicitly disclose to the mind the uncreated and ultimate measure or mode or principle of created being. Similarly, no one can recognize Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God without the inspiration or admonition of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:3), and no one can come to the Father except through the Son (see John 14:6).

Among the interesting effects of Augustine's alignment of human knowing with the economy of the Trinity is the fact that several of his invocations apply just as well to the dynamics of the mind as they do to the three divine persons. If, for instance, one were to think of reason instead of the Holy Spirit in the passage addressing the Paraclete (1.1.3), one would learn that reason admonishes us to be alert or keep watch, enables us to distinguish good from evil, prompts us to pursue good and avoid evil, helps us

triumph over adversities, etc. Such parallels are not meant to conflate the differences between human beings and God but to affirm the intimate connection between the eternal light of God and the created light of human knowing. The human person is, as Augustine affirms in his prayer, made in the image and likeness of God (1.1.4), and that divine image pertains to the mind or rational part of the soul rather than the body.¹⁸ The inner life of the divine persons, then, is not a dim reflection of human knowing but the reverse: the operations of the human mind are what they are because they participate in the supreme truth “that [God] is, that He is understood, and that He makes all other things understood” (1.8.15).

Knowledge Versus Knowing (1.2.7–1.5.11)

At Reason’s behest, Augustine summarizes his prayer by asserting that he wants to know only two things: God and the soul. (On the basis of Augustine’s prayer, we may deduce that this knowledge of the soul includes both moral and intellectual self-knowledge.) Reason immediately turns to a consideration of the knowing subject: When it comes to knowing God, how will you know when enough is enough, that is, when will you know that all the conditions for knowing God have been fulfilled? You want to know God, Reason is telling Augustine, but do you know your own knowing well enough to know when you are indeed knowing Him? Reason is inquiring into the makeup of knowing itself—what it needs, how it works, and where it is from—rather than the content of knowing per se. As Reason later puts it, he is interested in what Augustine knows about *how* he longs to know God, not in *what* he knows as such (1.4.10). The implication is that one should turn to one’s own knowing before one can have a satisfactory knowledge of God. Philosophy and theology require philosophers and theologians with advanced intellectual self-knowledge.

The conversation covers the knowledge of a wide array of objects: friends, dinner, fleas and insects, lunar phases, and geometry. Throughout the discussion Augustine continues to focus on the different objects of knowledge (what we know as such), while Reason continues to inquire into the knowing subject and its “undifferentiated knowledge of different things” (1.4.10).

As a result of this tug-of-war between Augustine and Reason, the reader learns a fair amount about both of their interests. First, doubt is cast on whether one can truly ever know something that is dependent on the testimony of the bodily senses or that involves sensible phenomena. Augustine says that he knows that the moon will be in such and such a phase tomorrow night, but he later admits that an unknown cause could interfere and change the moon’s normal operations (1.3.8). Augustine knows, and truly knows, certain things through the discipline of astronomy, but insofar as those things concern sensible realities such as stars and planets, he does not possess an absolute knowledge about them, nor can he. Knowing through the intellect or understanding is of a higher quality than knowing through sense-perception, not simply because the objects of the former are of a higher quality but because the mind’s grasp of intelligible objects is stronger than its grasp of sensible objects. Nor, it should be added, is this condition due to any defects in the senses themselves: in *Against the Academics* Augustine defends the general reliability of the five bodily senses, even when they report illusions (see 3.11.26). Rather, it has to do with the scope of the senses’ field of operations, which is the “less real” realm of the spatial, temporal, and material (see 2.18.32 on the body).

Second, despite their limited purview, the senses are instrumental in helping the intellect or mind achieve its goals. Augustine likens the relationship between the two to a pilot and a ship. The

pilot (intellect) uses the ship (senses) to take him where he wants to go, but once he reaches his destination, the ship is not only no longer necessary, it also becomes an obstacle to further exploration on land. In the case of geometry, it is easy to think of a line as a straight and extremely thin object. This sensible image can be useful in preparing one for the Euclidian geometer's definition of a line: length without width. But truly understanding this definition requires one to go beyond all sensible images; for understanding it requires assenting to a reality with only one dimension, and at least two dimensions are necessary for something to be imagined. If one persists in thinking of a line as a long and thin thing, one is in error, for what one really has in mind is an extremely narrow rectangular object. A true line can only be intellected or understood, never imagined. Hence Augustine says that it would be easier to navigate a ship on dry land than to perceive geometry with the senses (1.4.9).

That said, leaving the ship behind is no easy matter. Truly understanding the intelligible truths of geometry and of the other liberal disciplines without the crutch of sensible imagination is difficult for minds accustomed to materialist patterns of thought. To begin with, such understanding requires a decisive intellectual breakthrough, what Augustine, borrowing from the language of Plato's Allegory of the Cave, calls a turning to the light (1.6.13; see 1.13.23).¹⁹

Second, understanding intelligible truths easily and consistently so that the mind can continue to profit from this breakthrough requires a habit of "collecting and holding" the soul in a certain pattern of thinking (see *On Order* 1.1.3). In the *Soliloquies*, Augustine compares the initial disorientation that comes from the recognition of immaterial reality to a sailor who has been pitching and rolling on the open seas and who is now on shore, fumbling to

regain his land legs (1.4.9). Those land legs can be regained permanently, so to speak, once the habit of collecting and holding the soul is acquired.

Third, knowing is more than parroting or regurgitating data learned by rote (1.4.9). Somehow, a light must “go on” in the mind that declares “Eureka, I’ve found it!” Or to use Reason’s terminology, knowing is when the mind can honestly conclude, “This is it; that’s enough” (see 1.2.7, 1.3.8). Augustine, for instance, calls the discipline of geometry knowledge *provided that* it belongs to a knowing subject (1.3.9). Knowledge does not reside in textbooks, which merely preserve symbols of knowledge (such as words and formulas). Human knowledge can reside only in the human mind, and it cannot reside there as a memorized datum or as a form of belief (which usually requires having faith in someone else’s mind) but as something grasped, understood, and verified by oneself.

Fourth, just as there is an enormous difference between knowing through sense-perception and knowing through the understanding (so much so that it might even be incorrect to speak of sense-perception as a kind of knowing at all), so too is there an enormous difference between knowing intelligible realities such as a line or a circle in geometry and knowing the intelligible reality that is God. Augustine consistently emphasizes the utter transcendence of God, who is far higher than any other intelligible reality, including the human soul (see 1.2.7, 1.3.8, 1.4.10, 1.5.11). The being that is proportionate to human understanding is nothing in comparison to the Transcendent Being who outstrips and overwhelms human understanding like the noonday sun blinding an owl.²⁰

Fifth, contra the Stoics, one does not need to be wise to possess knowledge. Wisdom, the knowledge of (the highest) human and diving things,²¹ is a knowledge that pertains to the whole of reality;

it is an architectonic grasp of the knowable. But it is possible to know a part of the whole without knowing the whole itself (1.4.9). I may know that given the definition of a line in geometry, it is impossible to divide a line down the length of it, for that would require an object that possessed some degree of width, and a line in geometry, as mentioned above, is length without width (1.4.10). I may know this and know it truly yet remain unwise about the greater order of things.

Sixth, although Reason does not disagree with Augustine's point about the uniqueness of God and the uniqueness of the knowledge of God (owing to His transcendence), Reason nevertheless points out that if and when God will be understood, He will be understood by an invariant human intellect or understanding (1.5.11). The mind, Reason says, is the sensation of the soul; and just as senses latch onto a wide variety of objects yet remain one and the same, so too does one and the same mind grasp both the geometer's lowly definition of a line and—insofar as it can—the utterly majestic essence of God (1.6.12). Reason is returning Augustine to his original point. If the mind and the mind alone knows God (if and when it knows Him), we should first gain a clearer understanding of the mind and its operations before inquiring into the nature of God. Perhaps it is possible to know God without first knowing the mind, just as it is possible for artisans to be ignorant of their tools or soldiers of their weapons and still be successful. Nevertheless, just as it is more prudent for artisans to know their tools well before beginning an important project and likewise for soldiers to have a thorough understanding of their weapons before stepping onto the battlefield, so too is it reasonable for Augustine to follow Reason's recommendation and come to know his own knowing before taking on the daunting task of trying to know God.

*The Makeup of Knowing: Mind, Reason, and
Understanding (1.6.12–1.14.25)*

Once Augustine concedes that it is with one and the same understanding that a knowing subject knows (if he knows at all) both the lowly things on earth and the Supreme God on high, Reason moves to a consideration of what is happening in the knowing subject when the knowing subject knows something. Reason offers the analogy that the eyes are to the mind as looking (*aspectus*) is to reason and seeing (*visio*) is to understanding, as shown here:

Bodily analogue	Intellectual referent
Seeing	Understanding
Looking	Reason
Eyes	Mind

The similitude aptly illustrates that knowing is not a simple monolithic act but a multitiered activity in which each tier differs fundamentally from the other. In at least some versions of Stoic epistemology, which emphasizes “impressions” imprinted on the mind, knowing is like taking a photograph with a film camera: one simply clicks the shutter of one’s mind and an image is formed passively on the film of one’s memory. By contrast, Reason is saying here that human knowing involves several different activities that vertically convert potency into act. For Reason, knowing would be somewhat more akin to a digital camera in which analogue data are converted into digital information by a sophisticated process that turns light and color into the zeros and ones of bits. But whereas the conversion of analogue into digital, sophisticated though it may be, still remains on the same level of data, Reason’s analogy for the soul points to a more qualitative leap from data to

genuine enlightenment. That enlightenment, experienced by the mind as an enrichment or revelation, involves more than rearranging or storing information.

Despite his overtly visual analogy, however, Reason does not confuse the physical activity of seeing with the noetic activity of understanding. In the *Confessions* Augustine explains why ocular examples occupy a privileged place: “the eyes are the chief of the senses we use for attaining knowledge.”²² Since the eyes have a more comprehensive function than the other bodily senses, collecting disparate kinds of data (such as light, shape, color, distance, and speed), they bear a resemblance to the comprehensive integration of different conglomerates of data in the unifying act of understanding. Eyesight is therefore a tempting trope for the understanding, which is why it is customary to say things like “see how it sounds” and “see how it smells.”²³ Nevertheless, Reason does not depict knowing as taking a good look with one’s bodily eyes: knowing is a spiritual act that *may* involve some bodily involvement, but it is distinct from the body and not reducible to the spatial, temporal, and material components of bodily sensation. Reason’s self-portrayal of being “in” the mind just as looking is “in” the eyes (1.6.12) suggests as much, for looking is not “in” the eye in the way that a pupil is in an iris or an iris is in an eye.²⁴

Faith, Hope, and Charity (1.6.12–1.7.14)

Reason’s analogy also allows him to explore how the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are relevant to the seeker of truth and knowledge. Just as bodily eyes can be subject to all sorts of diseases and disorders that affect a person’s ability to look and see, so too is the mind subject to various blind spots.²⁵ In humanity’s current fallen state, these mental blind spots are typically caused

by disordered, sinful desires: to borrow a similar metaphor from the *Confessions*, sin is like an allergic reaction that swells up the cheeks and closes up the eyes.²⁶ Moral disorders can lead to the development of intellectual disorders, warping one's attentiveness and perception in subtle but pernicious ways. (Reason appears to be especially sensitive to the way in which disordered desire acts as a "birdlime" that keeps the mind mired in a metaphysical and moral materialism and dispossessed of a healthy love of God [1.14.24].) The first practical consideration, then, is how to cure the illnesses of the mind. Reason mentions the triple medicine of faith, hope, and charity: faith, because the sick patient must take it on faith that the cure will work and that it is the only way to be healed; hope, because if the patient despairs, he or she will not follow the physician's advice; and charity because unless the patient loves the goal of the treatment (in this case, seeing the Light), he or she will refuse the treatment (1.6.12).

But faith, hope, and charity are more than remedies that restore the soul after it has fallen; they also inspire it to return to God, its highest object of contemplation. Reason, the "looking" of the soul, needs faith that the activity of looking at God will satisfy it or make it happy; it needs hope whereby it may reasonably expect to be rewarded with seeing what it wants to see; and it needs charity or love of God, without which it will not long to see God (1.6.13). Faith, hope, and charity not only correct and restore the rational soul to its true nature but also elevate it to a new level of exploration and discovery.

Last, faith, hope, and charity are relevant even to the final stage of knowing, the "seeing" or understanding of God—assuming that such an understanding is possible in this life. If it is, faith and hope would still be necessary as counterweights to the vicissitudes

of bodily existence, not because the body is bad but because human bodily existence entails a series of complex levels of operation that collaborate admirably but that nevertheless are in tension with each other, levels such as a sensitive development shared in common with all vegetable and animal life, a psychic development shared with animals, and an intellectual development that distinguishes humans from the rest of the animal kingdom. These complex tensions provide multiple opportunities for doubt and despair—doubt about the intelligible realm, and despair about the possibility of pain-free, eternal bliss (1.7.14). Regarding doubt, for instance, in *On Order* Augustine speaks of the “wounds of opinion” that the course of daily life inflicts upon the soul (1.1.3), tempting it to think of all reality as material and to deny the existence of the intelligible. Succumbing to such a materialism, which is always possible during this lifetime, is akin to being deceived by the many false images of Proteus and losing one’s grip on the divine.²⁷

Reason holds out the possibility that the soul can be happy in this life, but Reason is more certain that when the disembodied soul finally experiences the beatific vision, faith and hope, which are temporary substitutes for an immediate and eternal knowledge of God, will no longer be necessary. On this side of the grave, however, faith and hope remain necessary even for the wise and holy. The tensions mentioned above are ineradicable for all living human beings: just as not even fools can completely obliterate their eros for the high (try though they might), so too can the wise and holy in this life never divest themselves entirely of their animality, thereby necessitating the ongoing aids of faith and hope, as shown here:

Bodily analogue	Intellectual referent	Supplement
Seeing	Understanding	Faith, hope, charity in this life; charity only in the next life
Looking	Reason	Sustained by faith, hope, charity
Eyes	Mind	Purged by faith, hope, charity

Reason's account of faith, hope, and charity is inspired by 1 Cor 13:8–13. In fact, Reason appears eager to explain the ways in which St. Paul is right to claim that “these three remain” yet only charity is needed once we see God face to face (1 Cor 13:12–13). That Reason is defending and explicating the Bible points again to reason's openness to Christian revelation. Moreover, it is significant that these three virtues are portrayed not simply as antidotes to the problem of sin but as necessary supplements to human understanding, supplements that alone enable the rational soul to reach its ultimate telos. Reason is suggesting that human knowing, by its very nature, is ordered in such a way that it cannot operate at full capacity without these divine gifts.

But is such a view rationally defensible? On the side of the affirmative, one may consider the argument of Vatican astronomer Guy Consolmagno, who claims that every scientist, even those who are atheists, “must accept articles of faith, hope, and love.” All science requires faith “that there is an objective reality,” “that the universe operates according to laws, laws that human reason is capable of grasping at least in part.” All science involves the hope that one's instruments will work properly and that one's observations will not be tainted, as well as the hope that some “*unexpected* things will result” from observation and “that our efforts will sooner or later bring us to some new understanding about the way the physical universe works.” And all science is fueled by scientists' love

of their work, “that sense of joy, that simple happiness, that sense of rightness they have when they uncover the elegance in nature reflected in its laws of science.”²⁸ Consequently, there would be no science without faith in an intelligible order (a tenet that is presupposed by science but not proved), hope in a determinative outcome (which is a reasonable expectation but not a demonstrable certainty), and the exhilarating love of and delight in discovery.

To Consolmagno’s thesis it might be objected that while science may require some form of faith, hope, and love, and while Christianity may indeed have been the historical source for these virtues,²⁹ scientists do not necessarily require the quintessentially Christian versions of faith, hope, and love. Nevertheless, the thesis illustrates that these virtues, even apart from special revelation or divine grace, are beneficial to human knowing, and that therefore if a faith, a hope, and a charity were to flood the soul from above as divine gifts, they would not necessarily disrupt or violate but amplify and complete the soul’s activities. Moreover, Reason is speaking here not of human knowing in general but of the soul’s coming to know or “see” God.³⁰ It has already been stated that although there is only one human understanding, the knowledge of God is unique: it transcends all other kinds of knowledge and is therefore—unlike the truths of the liberal arts or the facts about one’s dinner—disproportionate to the knowing subject. But if the knowledge of God is disproportionate to the knowing subject, then the union between knower and known would require gifts or graces from God to bridge the gap. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that a merely mortal or natural form of faith, hope, and love—which are necessary in general to fuel the human subject’s coming to know—would be inadequate to the particular task of uniting with God in knowledge and love; only a supernatural supplement from God Himself would suffice.

The Divine Nature (1.8.15)

The disproportionate quality of a knowledge of the Almighty brings us to the second half of Reason's instruction. Having taught Augustine something about the soul with the analogy of the eyes, Reason now endeavors to teach him something about God with the analogy of the sun. Borrowing from Plato's Allegory of the Cave (and Plotinus's commentary on it),³¹ Reason contrasts the truth of God with the truths of the liberal arts. Although both are intelligible, "they differ from each other greatly" (1.8.15). God is not simply intelligible but the source of intelligibility. Specifically, God is the Father of "Intelligible Light" (1.1.2), and it is in that and from that and through that Intelligible Light that "all those things that shine intelligibly, shine intelligibly" (1.1.3). The mind comes to know this Intelligible Light by being awakened to Its presence and by being illuminated by It. Moreover, this Intelligible Light is not an inanimate thing but the second divine person, while the soul's Awakening and Illumination are not events but the third divine person (see 1.1.2). Reason's analogy of the sun is ultimately Trinitarian. God the Father is He who is, God the Son is He who is being understood (*intelligitur*), and God the Holy Spirit is He who makes all things understood (1.8.15). These relations between the three divine persons are comparable to the three things one can notice about the sun: that it is, that it shines, and that it illuminates.

Reason's analogy raises a host of questions, but we limit ours to two. First, why is the Son called "He who is understood" (*intelligitur*, the present passive form of *intelligo*, to understand) rather than "Understanding" or "Intellect" (*intellectus*, the past participle), as He is in *Against the Academics* 3.19.42 and *On Order* 2.5.16 and 2.9.26? Augustine hints in his opening prayer that the Son is Intelligible Light; if so, He is not so much someone who is understood as He is an act of understanding itself. Perhaps Reason

is teasing out the significance of the Son as Logos or Word (John 1:1). A word differs from a mere noise in that it is understood.

Second, if He is an act or *the* act of understanding, should the Son not also be called “He who makes all other things understood” rather than the Holy Spirit? Perhaps there is a thin line between Being Understood or Understanding on one hand and He who makes all things understood on the other, just as there is a thin line between shining and illuminating. But although the line is thin, it exists nonetheless. In the case of the sun, there is a difference between the sun shooting out flames and the light that is emitted from those flames, even though—at least from a prescientific perspective—the sun, its brilliance, and its light are inseparable. Similarly, there may be little distinction between the Word who is the True Light that enlightens (*illuminat*) “every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9) and the Spirit who illuminates and makes all things understood, but there is enough there to maintain a distinction as well as to affirm an essential unity.

In any event, Reason’s analogy aptly emphasizes that God is no mere object of thought to be understood amidst a myriad of others; He is not even the highest “thing” atop a pyramid of existent things. Rather, God is the transcendent source and transcendent summit of all things and of all knowing, and as such He is utterly different from everything else, even though all creation bears faint similarities to Him. God is unique, or as Augustine and Reason put it, *singularis* (see 1.1.5, 1.7.14, 1.13.23). He is even as different from other intelligible realities (the “heavens”) as intelligible realities are different from sensible phenomena (the “earth”) (see 1.5.11)—and for Augustine and Reason, that is quite a difference.

Last, before changing topics Reason asks Augustine whether he accepts these things as probable or true. In light of the lengthy

discussion on probability in *Against the Academics*, the question amounts to asking whether Augustine truly knows that Reason's analogies about the soul and God are true or whether he merely holds the opinion that they are so. Without hesitation, Augustine replies that it is the latter, and that in fact he is disappointed, for he had been hoping to attain knowledge (a grasp of the true) rather than mere opinion (a grasp of the verisimilar). Augustine's provisional acceptance of Reason's analogies is, among other things, a reminder to the *Soliloquies*' readers that we too cannot know whether or not these analogies are true until we verify them on our own, apart from the authority of Reason (the character) or Augustine (the character or the author).

Augustine's Health, Take One (1.9.16–1.14.23)

Reason would like to explore his two analogies further, but to do so with Augustine, he must first determine the health of his interlocutor's mental eyes to make certain that they are fit for the undertaking. Reason takes an interesting tack, testing neither Augustine's breadth or depth of knowledge nor his intellectual capacities or aptitude but inquiring into his loves (1.9.16). How can love, the motion of the heart, be a litmus test for the proper functioning of the mind? The answer, Reason more or less explains later, is that because the ultimate goal of the mind is wisdom (the highest form of knowledge), the mind can be assessed by its strength for the love for wisdom, since there is no attainment of wisdom without being moved to it by love. Further, the failure to love wisdom first leads to (or is caused by) the rise of disordered or unruly loves that constitute the various scotomas and other disturbances plaguing the unhealthy mind. Wisdom is such that she requires a hot, all-consuming, and total love from a monogamous lover; anything less, and she and the happiness she confers remain

elusive (1.13.22). Again we see a link between moral, psychological, and intellectual health.

Augustine, however, does not understand Reason's method of diagnosis. When Augustine hears the word "love," he thinks of things that disturb his tranquility, and when he thinks of disturbances, his mind drifts to what he fears (1.9.16). Augustine is more aware of what repulses him than what draws him. Reason gently corrects him, pointing out that every fear of loss implies a prior love of possession: love, *pace* early modern philosophers like Hobbes, is more fundamental than fear. When Augustine admits that he would be carried away with joy by being with his friends, by being healthy, and by knowing that he is healthy, Reason concludes that his mind is still beset with "diseases and disturbances" (1.9.16). It is not Augustine's fears that agitate him but his loves.

Augustine is being judged by a high standard of absolute health, and he protests. What about all the progress he has made? Reason obliges and proceeds to examine how far Augustine has advanced in acquiring a healthy or moderate love of wealth, honor, women, and food. Again he has to keep Augustine on course, redirecting his drifting attention from what he has consciously decided to what he loves, consciously or not (1.10.17). Reason admits that Augustine has made much progress, but it is still not enough (1.11.18). He articulates the options in stark and vividly unsettling terms: either Augustine is completely healed, or he is still beset with "rot" or *tabes*, a word that can signify putrefaction and the juices of a decaying corpse. Reason brooks no middle ground or third alternative: when listing the two options, he uses *aut . . . aut* as the disjunctive, which implies exclusion of the other term.

Augustine, still somewhat confused, must again be corrected. Because they are seeking what kind of a lover Augustine is, Reason is interested in what Augustine finds delightful and not in his

hopes (1.11.19). There is a crucial difference between “removing a pest” and “lulling it to sleep,” between the absence of a disordered desire and a disordered desire that lies dormant or suppressed or “covered up.” With the help of Cicero, Reason again offers a vivid similitude: the fool is mad in the same way that filth stinks—not all the time, but when it is riled up, you can tell. The word for “filth” here is *coenum*, a cognate of a vulgar Latin verb for defecating that refers to muck or mire. The image that emerges is roughly that of marsh or swamp gas, which is released when the water is disturbed. It is a psychologically astute observation, for it recognizes the complex layers of the human psyche and the constitution of that psyche by various wants or loves, not all of which are acted upon or are allowed to express themselves but which nevertheless affect mental health. Yet whereas much of modern psychology continues to follow Freud’s limited goal of helping patients transform their acute neuroses into “ordinary” human misery, Reason aims as high as he can go, contending that one should not settle for anything less than complete and total happiness. As he put it in his earlier statement (which the Ciceronian simile is meant here to evoke), either one has health or one has rot—period. Or to invoke another Ciceronian truism: “He who has progressed somewhat toward the state of virtue is no less in misery than he who has made no progress at all,” for it makes no difference whether a swimmer drowns one inch below the surface of the water or twenty feet down.³² Whereas Augustine concentrates on his diminishing distance from the goal, Reason concentrates on whether or not the goal has been met. Each side illustrates the merits of each approach.

Yet Reason is not so extreme as he may at first blush appear. When speaking of love, he introduces a crucial distinction between loving something for its own sake and loving it for the sake of something else. It is not that one can love God or wisdom only by

hating everything else. Rather, there must be a hierarchy of loves in which a desire for the lower is subordinated to a desire for the higher. In a slightly later work, Augustine portrays love (*amare*) as a special form of desire (*appetere*) in which the object is sought for its own sake. There are, in turn, two kinds of objects that can be sought for their own sake: the things that are below us (i.e., passing, temporal goods) and the things that are above us (chiefly, God). Loving the things that are below us, which Augustine calls *cupiditas*, ultimately brings misery, for these goods are susceptible to loss and hence the cause of fear. The love of what is above, on the other hand, is *caritas* or *dilectio*. Because the objects of this love are eternal and immutable, *caritas* is invulnerable to loss and fear and is hence the cause of happiness.³³ In the *Soliloquies*, it may be said that Reason is trying to ascertain whether Augustine's desires have been harmonized and integrated into a unified *caritas* or whether his soul is still torn apart by various and inevitably conflicting *cupiditates*. Although Augustine is humble enough not to claim perfect self-knowledge (1.9.16), he still insists that, at least with respect to his previous lust for women, he is completely cured (1.10.17). But is he right?

Reason ends his examination by showing that he is not so insensitive to the importance of progress as it might seem (1.13.23). There are, he claims, two classes of wisdom lovers: those who attain the light quickly (albeit not without the virtues of faith, hope, and charity), and those who, because of the weakness of their eyes, can approach the light only by soft degrees. Reason describes the first class as so perfect that they may not even need a teacher, only perhaps some admonition. The wording of this passage has led some readers to suspect that Reason is suggesting that a small elite of humankind needs the admonition of only the Holy Spirit and not the teacher of truth, the Son of God. Although

this could conceivably be the gist of Reason's remark, it should also be noted that Reason himself, as is attested by his addition of "perhaps," is hesitant to draw any hard conclusions about this class. Augustine does not criticize this statement when he has the opportunity to do so in his *Retractations* decades later; certainly, his later theology explicitly affirms that all humanity stands in need of the mediation and intercession of the God-man Jesus Christ.³⁴

In any event, Reason is clearly locating Augustine not in the first but in the second class—those who ascend to the light gradually. Again Reason borrows heavily from Plato's Allegory of the Cave by describing the progression from lusterless objects to shiny objects reflecting light to small sources of light such as fire to greater sources such as the stars and moon to the greatest source of all, the sun. Having a teacher who can help the disciple follow this order is crucial: to reach the light outside of a beneficial order is a stroke of sheer luck. As with the previous dialogue *On Order*, Augustine (the author) emphasizes the importance of following the right sequence in one's therapeutic recovery, the aim of which is to strengthen, cultivate, and purify the soul's desires by various exercises that "beneficially delay and nourish" (see 1.13.23).

Day Two: The Next Day (1.14.24–1.15.30)

Augustine's Health, Take Two (1.14.24–26)

If order is to be kept, moderation must be observed. Reason adjourns their meeting for the sake of Augustine's fragile health (1.13.23). But another day has dawned and Augustine, eager to see the Sun, entreats Reason to push on. In somewhat turgid language Augustine professes to be a willing disciple, ready and able to follow Reason's prescriptions no matter how difficult. Whether

Augustine's lofty rhetoric matches the true state of his will shall now be put to the test.

Reason has only one prescription: to flee "these sensible things." Later in his life, Augustine the author laments that this statement sounds too Porphyrian, as if all sensible phenomena were intrinsically bad.³⁵ Reason's point, however, is not to condemn the sensible but to remind Augustine that given our current condition, constituted as it is by a tension between humanity's animality and its unrestricted eros for God (both of which are affected by sin), we must be vigilant about preventing the former from infiltrating the latter. As with the provisionally enduring need for faith and hope, the body is not the culprit per se but creates certain conditions for the soul that, if acted upon wrongly, keep the soul from escaping the Cave (Reason obliquely refashions Plato's cave dweller into a bird trapped in a cage). Reason does not criticize the body but merely states that "while we bear" it in this life, we are vulnerable to certain intellectual and moral failings. These failings affect each other: *Cupiditas* is a moral "birdlime" that keeps the soul from *seeing* the light (1.14.24). Reason indirectly shows how this occurs when he contrasts the destructiveness of delight in "earthly things," no matter how slight, with the goal of "seeing what you desire" (1.14.24). Seeing or understanding is the fruit of intellectual desire, and if that desire is compromised or sullied by *cupiditas*, the mind will not obtain the fullness of what it seeks. To use Reason's earlier analogy, even the smallest amount of *cupiditas* creates a mental scotoma, adversely affecting one's grasp of reality.

Augustine protests (1.14.24). How can he love the Good alone when he does not see it? Should he not know the Good in order to abandon disordered desires rather than abandon disordered desires to know the Good? As an aside, regardless of how reasonable Augustine's objection is, it should be noted that he is already giving

the lie to his grandiloquent promise to follow Reason's instructions slavishly (1.14.24).

Reason counters by pointing out that, like it or not, only healthy eyes can see the sun. Failure to acknowledge this fact is an act of self-deception that leads to false assessments about one's health, presumption about one's progress, bragging, and unwarranted complaining (1.14.25). In other words, it leads to the behavior of Augustine in this conversation, who has (boastfully) claimed that he is healthy, who thinks that he has made much progress, and who is now complaining about Reason's prescription. But Reason is confident that the true and unique Beauty that is God, who knows us better than we know ourselves, will not allow Augustine to remain in an ugly cocoon of self-delusion. In a manner that is reminiscent of the "thorn" in St. Paul's flesh that God therapeutically uses to perfect him,³⁶ Reason interprets the Divine Physician as providentially allowing certain lingering vices in Augustine to serve as a salutary reminder of his keen dependence on Him, to show him, as Reason puts it, how he has still escaped God's care and what things remain to be cured. Specifically, God had allowed Augustine to be visited with pleasing erotic fantasies the night after he vehemently denied being bothered by such distractions any longer.

Reason has been trying to induce in Augustine an epiphany of self-knowledge that is both intellectually and emotionally convincing, and now he has succeeded. In the only scene of the *Soliloquies* where tears are shed, Augustine breaks down at the disclosure of this embarrassing private moment (1.14.26). Sexual shame can be especially acute for those striving to be morally excellent; Augustine therefore experiences humiliation when Reason exposes his "swamp-gas" lust for the fairer sex. He is now compelled to admit what Reason was suggesting all along: that he

is not completely healed, and since he is not completely healed, he is still sick, progress or no. After much resistance, Augustine has finally yielded to Reason's examination, not only noetically but viscerally: he confesses that he is not healthy but "wasting away in rot (*tabes*)" (1.14.26; see 1.11.18). We can now better appreciate the merit of Reason's strict approach: it is an antidote to self-delusion by preventing one from becoming complacent about one's present condition. It is a goad to self-knowledge, even when that knowledge is ugly or painful.

Augustine's lack of self-knowledge is revealed in more ways than one. When Reason applies his solvent to the rationalizations and evasions that form the warp and woof of Augustine's self-deceit, Augustine reacts thumotically, telling him to be quiet (1.14.26). The patient who earlier boasted of being willing to follow the physician's prescriptions to the letter is the patient now wincing and bristling at the actual treatment.

Further, the revelation that Augustine has failed to know himself on the one issue about which he professed adamant certainty (his triumph over lust) serves as a crucial corrective to what otherwise might appear to be an all-too-tidy Platonism, where the only thing needful is a rational or logical ascent to the Good. Rather than espousing a simple line of progress, the dialogue calls attention to the complexity of the human heart and its inscrutable cockles of rebellion and resistance. The soul's desires are multilayered and multifarious, and what is resolved on a conscious level often remains unresolved on an unconscious level. This unconscious level can emerge and interrupt in oblique ways, be it in dreams or, in this case, an unguarded private moment. Even after decisive improvements such as Augustine's own recent conversion, the extirpation of *cupiditas* remains a painful and arduous task requiring thorough moral, psychological, and intellectual rehabilitation predicated on

complete humility. The publication of the *Soliloquies*, in which Augustine reveals an embarrassing and “unmanly” weakness that he could have kept secret, is itself derived from this ongoing therapeutic humility.³⁷ The *Soliloquies* is thus offered as a model of Christian humility in the service of self-knowledge and healing as well as an invitation for the reader to go and do likewise.

Reason’s Consolation Prize (1.15.27–30)

Reason wants to conclude this part of the discussion so that in book two they may embark on a more advantageous path. The phrase he uses for going on a path, *viam adgredi*, is the same one he used before when telling Augustine that they should be getting on their way with their inquiry into the analogy of having healthy eyes, looking, and seeing in relation to Augustine’s own life (1.9.16). But that road has proved too painful for Augustine, with the psychological stress even threatening his physical health (1.14.26). And so Reason and Augustine never finish their inquiry into the ocular analogy of the soul, let alone proceed to the solar analogy of God. Like Augustine the character, the reader is left with unfinished business. This dangling conversation, in turn, raises the question as to whether the *Soliloquies* abandons the initial path entirely or finds a way of finishing the discussion on reason (looking) and understanding (seeing), albeit from a different route.

Reason’s wish to conclude this section is not shared by Augustine, who, likewise using a geographical metaphor, pleads for a shortcut to the “vicinity of the light.” Augustine knows that he cannot reach the luminous center of the city, but he insists on at least visiting its suburbs. His request presupposes a tacit assent to Reason’s conclusions about his health. For instance, Augustine no longer insists that he has made progress but merely states that he will be able to tolerate the light *if* he has made progress. He does

not ask for the full glory of the sunlight but merely a “tidbit” or foretaste (*modicum*).

Reason, thanks to the “radiant” inspiration of God the Physician, complies (1.15.27). His tidbit, however, does not continue their previous line of thought but returns to the beginning with a reaffirmation of Augustine’s desire to know God and the soul (see 1.2.7). Before, when Augustine professed his desire to know only God and the soul, Reason shifted to the conditions in which Augustine could know that he knew God, that is, to the conditions in which his soul could say, “That is enough.” Here, when Augustine professes the same desire, Reason shifts to knowing that “through which these things are known” (1.15.27), namely, the truth. In both instances Reason redirects Augustine’s attention away from the objects of knowing to something more fundamental or prior. Perhaps these two moves to the a priori are related in such a way that when the mind fully knows the truth, it also knows the point at which it can say “that is enough”; and when the mind has enough (by having fulfilled all the conditions of knowing), it knows the truth.

And perhaps there is an added correlation between these two beginnings. On one hand, the point of Reason’s first a priori move was to show that despite vast differences in the kinds of things that are known, the understanding or intellect that attains a knowledge of these different things remains unchanging: as Reason puts it, if you ever rejoice in knowing God, it will be because what is known is different from everything else, not because your understanding or intellect is different in each case (1.5.11). On the other hand, during Reason’s second a priori move, Reason is taking advantage of a verbal ambiguity. The Latin adjective for true, *verus*, can also mean “real,” while the noun for truth, *veritas*, can also mean “reality.” In the linguistic nexus of meaning within which

Augustine and Reason are operating, what is real is what is true and vice versa (this should be borne in mind when the text of the *Soliloquies* becomes confusing).

Putting both these things together, it may be concluded that Reason is aligning understanding with the real: the real is that which is grasped by the understanding. Knowing one's understanding, then, leads to a realism or understanding of the real that unlocks the secrets of reality—even, to some extent, the reality of God Himself. Hence Reason's penchant for the a priori: in order to know God, one must first know one's own understanding or one's "undifferentiated knowledge of different things" (1.4.10).

The Tidbit

Reason has been exercising Augustine from the beginning, but he is now worried that the mental workout is proving too strenuous (1.15.27). The tidbit he offers is no doubt affected by this concern. It is brief and no longer dwells on Augustine's lingering lusts or imperfections. Nor is the methodology the same: whereas before Reason took a more inductive approach, working from analogy, he now proceeds deductively and syllogistically.

Reason first establishes that there is a difference between truth and what is true. The former is more excellent: what is true is derived from the truth and not vice versa, and true or real things such as trees come into being and pass away, but the truth abides forever (1.15.28). The example that Augustine gives, which Reason takes and uses, is the difference between chastity and a chaste person. Still smarting from Reason's psychological-spiritual evaluation, Augustine has the virtue of well-ordered sexual appetite on his mind.

Reason then asks an unusual question: Does Augustine agree that "whatever is, must be somewhere" (1.15.29)? Reason and

Augustine proceed to use the word “somewhere” to denote a “location” that lacks physical spatiality. In *On the Immortality of the Soul*, Augustine writes that the senses have as their object things that are “contained in places” and cannot be perceived except in places (6.10). Objects that are understood, on the other hand, are not placed anywhere other than in the mind that understands them; they are not “contained in a place” (6.10, 15.24). It is noteworthy that Augustine speaks of being “contained” in a place or wholly immersed in it, so to speak, rather than merely “being” in a place. Perhaps he is making a distinction between the physicality of an object, which is contained by space, and its intelligibility, which is not. This, at least, is true for a human being, whose body is spatial and hence contained in a place but whose mind is not spatial and not contained in a place. In fact, although the human mind is intimately united to the human body, it is not united locally (15.24), nor is the mind joined to intelligible realities locally (10.17). Consequently, when the mind is said to be “near” eternal principles, this nearness must be understood not “in terms of place but in terms of the order of nature” (15.24). To borrow a phrase from *On Order*, the realm of pure intelligibility is “neither in a place nor nowhere” (2.16.44).

With this last conclusion established, Reason presents a dense paragraph for Augustine’s consideration. Reason refers to his argument as a *ratio uncūla*, a term from Cicero signifying a petty syllogism. Yet Cicero tends to use this word pejoratively for the reasons advanced by his philosophical adversaries.³⁸ Is Reason winking at Augustine, wryly hinting that there are problems with the argument? Since Reason’s aim is to exercise Augustine, and since exercise often involves deception (to sharpen a student’s acumen), it is not outside the realm of probability.

Reason concludes that (1) truth is not in mortal things; (2) immortal things exist; (3) things are not true (or real) unless they are immortal; and (4) nothing is rightly said to exist unless it is immortal. It is a curious barrage of assertions. The third and fourth statements, for instance, contradict what had just been conceded earlier, that trees, which pass away—mortal trees, if you will—are real or true. And why does Reason state that nothing is “rightly said to exist” instead of saying simply that “nothing exists”? Perhaps Reason is calling attention to the need to predicate different levels or kinds of reality or existence but is not yet adding the necessary nuances or distinctions.

Augustine, uncertain of what to make of these arguments, thanks Reason and promises to examine them later. Whatever its deficiencies, the *ratio uncula* has mollified Augustine’s troubled spirit, although he continues to fear that he will return to the darkness and even start to take a perverse delight in it (1.15.30). (Right desire remains a crucial issue.)³⁹ The *ratio uncula* also has the merit of introducing two themes to the discussion: truth or reality, and immortality. What will become of these topics remains to be seen.

Reason ends by exhorting Augustine to commit himself to God, telling him not to belong to himself and not to be his own master. At the root of all perverse loves is the desire to put oneself at the center of things, to “be as gods” (Gen 3:5) rather than move to the periphery and acknowledge God as God. Reason no doubt suspects that Augustine’s unwillingness to give himself entirely to God is compounded by his fear of the Physician, specifically, his fear of submitting himself totally to the care of another.⁴⁰ Consequently, Reason assures Augustine that God is a most gentle and helpful Master who will not allow anything to happen to him unless it is for his own good, thereby reminding him of what was concluded in *On Order* about God’s providential care.

BOOK TWO

Day Three: Part I: Two Proofs for the Immortality
of the Soul (2.1.1–2.12.23)

Augustine's Impatient Prayer (2.1.1)

Book two of the *Soliloquies* presumably begins on another day, although neither the time nor the location is explicitly stated. Unlike book one, which is begun by Reason's prompting, it is now Augustine who initiates the conversation. Augustine the character, who has become enthralled with the discussion, is impatient to resume, and his impatience is reflected narratively by the absence of an introduction by Augustine the author. Book two goes straight to the action.

Augustine is impatient on the grounds that love or *amor* is impatient and will induce tears unless it gets what it wants. His veiled threat to recommence weeping is aimed at Reason, who cares about Augustine's health and does not want him bawling again (see 1.14.26–1.15.27). Further, Augustine the author has already evinced a knowledge of 1 Cor 13:12–13 in 1.6.12–1.7.14, so it is not unlikely that he is also familiar with 1 Cor 13:4: "charity is patient." Perhaps Augustine's confession of his impatient *amor* is a humble admission that he lacks the fullness of *caritas*.

Reason, deferring to Augustine's impatience, instructs him to "pray as briefly and as perfectly" as he can. Whereas book one began with a richly ornamented and lengthy prayer that fills several pages, book two now begins with a prayer that is but nine words in Latin. Augustine asks for only two things: to know himself and to know God. His petition echoes the summary of his first prayer, when he evinced a desire to know nothing more than God and the soul (see 1.2.7). Does this mean, then, that Augustine thinks of himself as nothing more than a soul? Not quite, for he also affirms that the human person is both body and soul, and thus when a man's

immortal soul is separated from his body by death, there is a way in which he is no longer a man.⁴¹ Augustine would agree with Socrates in Plato's *Alcibiades I* that "there is nothing which may be called more properly ourselves than the soul" but would not go so far as to say the "soul is man."⁴² Augustine's desire to know himself rather than the soul in book two of the *Soliloquies* thus broadens his field of inquiry and enables Reason to ask him questions such as whether he knows he is "simple or multiple" (2.1.1)—that is, whether he is merely a spiritual essence or a unity involving both spirit and matter.

What Augustine Does and Does Not Know (2.1.1)

To assist Augustine in his quest, Reason canvases the terrain of Augustine's self-knowledge. Augustine is convinced he knows (1) that he exists, (2) that he thinks, and (3) that it is true that he thinks. On the other hand, he does not know (1) how he knows that he exists, (2) whether he is simple or multiple, (3) whether he is moved, and (4) whether he is immortal.

Regarding the things that Augustine knows: It is tempting to construe this cluster of statements in light of Cartesian philosophy and see it as an anticipation of Descartes's *cogito ergo sum*, since indeed there are striking parallels. We must, however, resist this temptation, for it is possible that Descartes utilized Augustinian elements but in a way that is different from or even antithetical to Augustine's theology. If such is the case, interpreting Augustine in light of Descartes would be profoundly misleading. For the moment, we can at least point out one distinctive feature of these affirmations: Augustine not only knows that he thinks, but he knows that it is true that he thinks. This seeming redundancy has a purpose. If one has knowledge of oneself as a thinker, one knows something true. But if one knows a truth, then truth is attainable; and if truth is real and one has attained a knowledge of it, one

knows something real. (Augustine takes a similar tack in *Against the Academics* when he discusses a number of what he calls “disjunctions,” either/or propositions that every mind is compelled to acknowledge are either true or false [see 3.9.21ff].) Facts as simple as these are sufficient to make one skeptical of skepticism and render unnecessary the draconian and cognitively violent measures involving radical doubt for which Descartes is famous.

On the other hand, it is surprising to see how short the list of things is that Augustine truly knows. In *Against the Academics* 3.9.21, he concludes that Zeno’s definition of knowledge is true but only for purely intelligible realities. That being the case, the vast majority of what we tend to think about in the course of our day does not qualify as genuine knowledge* or *scientia*. Augustine is more of a skeptic than is initially apparent, albeit a different kind of skeptic than Cicero or Descartes.

Regarding the things that Augustine does not know: First, he is ignorant of how—or more literally, whence (*unde*)—he knows that he exists. The question of the “how” or manner of one’s knowing is also the question of the “whence” or source of one’s knowing. It is not the first time that this question has been raised in the *Soliloquies*, let alone at Cassiciacum.⁴³ Tracing the source of one’s knowing appears to be essential to self-knowledge.

Second, Augustine does not know whether he is simple or multiple. What is the correct understanding of the composite unity of human nature? Is a human being just a body, just a soul, or a combination of the two? If the latter, how is this combination or composite to be understood? We may have to wait until *On the Immortality of the Soul* for an answer to these questions.

Third, Augustine does not know whether he is moved. It is an odd question to the modern ear, but a proper notion of motion is integral to the Cassiciacum project because it is essential to

self-knowledge.⁴⁴ If there are nonlocal forms of motion,⁴⁵ if reason is one such motion,⁴⁶ and if the soul is somehow a self-moving reality,⁴⁷ then a complete knowledge of one's own soul would involve a knowledge of how it is or is not moved or moving.

Augustine wants Reason to help him first understand the fourth item he currently does not know—whether he is immortal. His request builds upon a theme introduced in the previous book with Reason's *rationcula* (1.15.29); he is therefore fulfilling, in part at least, his promise to “go over” the *rationcula* “carefully and cautiously” (1.15.30). Reason obliges, which ultimately leads to the neglect of the other things that Augustine does not know. Even aside from the incomplete status of *On the Immortality of the Soul*, the *Soliloquies* emerges again as a book of unfinished business.

The Triad of Being, Living, and Understanding (2.1.1)

Reason does not proceed directly to the task of proving Augustine's personal immortality but examines prior foundational issues, returning to the topics of what Augustine loves (see 1.9.16–1.10.17), the notion of sufficiency (see 1.2.7–1.3.8), and the difference between desiring something for its own sake and desiring something for the sake of something else (see 1.11.18). Reason is again probing the purity and character of Augustine's love of wisdom (see 1.13.22), the implication here being that logical proofs for the soul's immortality will be either not understood or taken to heart without a prior and authentic passion for understanding the higher things. Without a pure desire to know animating and guiding one's inquiry, the ratiocinating process can easily be derailed by pedantic distractions, egotistical rationalizations or attacks, and other obscurantist tactics.

Further, reprising a line of inquiry from *Against the Academics* 1.2.5, Reason confirms that Augustine understands the attainment

of knowledge or wisdom as a good thing that brings happiness rather than misery—or to put it differently, that the life of the wise man is a comedy (a story with a happy ending) instead of a tragedy such as that of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, where the disclosure of truth makes the protagonist miserable. This, too, is a test of Augustine's eros, one that may become relevant later.

Reason concludes from his brief examination that Augustine wants to exist, to live, and to understand and that he knows that he exists, lives, and understands.⁴⁸ Augustine the author employs a similar logic in several of his other writings, including the *Enchiridion*:

It is impossible that anyone should not know that he is alive, since if he is not alive, he actually cannot not know something; for not only knowing but also not knowing belongs to the living. But clearly, by not assenting to the fact that they are alive, it seems to them that they are avoiding error—although indeed, by erring it is proved that they are alive, since he who is not alive cannot err. Therefore, as it is not only true but certain that we are alive, so too are many things true and certain; and God forbid that by not assenting to these, it should be called wisdom rather than insanity.⁴⁹

Unlike Descartes, who grounds the certainty of his existence in the fact that he knows that he thinks, Augustine knows that he *understands* (an activity that links the mind to reality), and therefore he knows that he is a knower and not a mere thinker who may or may not be thinking of the real.⁵⁰

Reason proposes that they prove that the soul will live forever (which will ipso facto take care of its immortal existence) and that from there they can turn their attention to the understanding. Three proofs of the soul's immortality follow, but is the promise to discuss understanding ever fulfilled?

Finally, Reason enjoins Augustine to “be here” (2.2.2), that is, to be as attentive as possible. It is a frequent admonition in the Cassiciacum dialogues, used first by Augustine on his pupils Licentius and Trygetius and now by Reason on Augustine. The theme of attentiveness ties into a broader theory of presence, where “being present” has different levels of meaning, just as being “in” a place may not be the same as being “contained” in a place. Reason is not asking for Augustine’s physical presence but for a higher mode of presence found only in the mind. Total presence or attention is also a requirement for solving difficult problems. A pure desire to know is a necessary condition for becoming wise, but this desire must be cultivated by a singular habit of concentration whereby the soul is able to “hold itself” in position as it withdraws from the orbit of the senses (see *On Order* 1.1.3).

First Proof for the Immortality of the Soul (2.2.2–2.4.5)

Reason again reprises planks from his *ratiuncula* and the steps leading up to it, namely, that the truth exists forever even if the world should pass away and that something true cannot exist if the truth does not exist (2.2.2). Reason also prods Augustine into new areas, inquiring into his opinion about the soul in order to arrive at a clearer understanding of truth and falsity. It *seems* to Augustine that sensation or sense-perception (*sensus*) pertains to the soul rather than the body (2.3.3). There would be no sensation without a soul animating the body and its senses: a corpse may have all of its senses intact, but it does not feel or experience anything. Paradoxically, then, bodily sensation stems from the soul rather than the body: it is an activity of the soul that seeks and retrieves sensible data through the agency of the body’s senses. The soul may have a mind, which Reason earlier characterized as a kind of

soul-perception (1.6.12), but it also has sense-perception, a capacity different from mind *per se*.

Augustine expresses greater certainty that the understanding or intellect is a property of the soul. When Reason asks him whether understanding pertains to the soul alone, Augustine replies: "I see nothing else besides the soul*—except for God, which is where I believe understanding to be" (2.3.3). The expression that Augustine uses for "besides the soul," *praeter animam*, can also mean beyond or outside the soul. We are thus given a possible clue into the riddle of the dialogue's opening sentence as to whether Reason is "inside" Augustine or "outside" him. If reason is the looking of the soul and understanding is the seeing of the soul (1.6.12), and if understanding dwells with God, then perhaps reason dwells there too. That which is most intrinsic to the uniquely human part of human nature, rationality, is also somehow "extrinsic" insofar as it is "located" in God. This conviction would not necessarily be pantheist; nor is it an affirmation of Manichaeism, which held that the human soul was a particle broken off from the divine. But it would underscore the intimate relation between human understanding and the Divine Understanding that is God, the former being an image of the latter. It also suggests that every act of understanding is in a certain way ecstatic, a "standing outside" of oneself in the grasp of a reality not merely concocted from within. Further, if God is "where" the understanding is, as Augustine believes, we are again confronted with a "somewhere" that is not spatial.

Reason also asks Augustine what he thinks of falsity, to which he replies that a thing is false when it is other than what it seems. Joining this statement to Augustine's earlier concession about sense-perception and the soul, Reason concludes that "there's no sense-perception without the soul and no falsity without sense-perception"

(2.3.3), for even if the issue of deception or error enters in only on the level of assent, the false thing that is assented to comes from sense-perception, as in the case of optical illusions. Finally, Reason has Augustine concede that it is impossible for falsity not to exist at some time or another (2.3.4).

Garnering all of these concessions, Reason offers his first proof for the immortality of the soul:

Falsity cannot exist without sense-perception and . . . it cannot *not* exist; therefore, sense-perception always exists.

But there is no sense-perception without the soul; therefore, the soul is sempiternal.

Nor is something capable of sense-perception unless it's alive; therefore, the soul lives forever. (2.3.4)

Augustine immediately dismisses the proof as a “leadene dagger” on the grounds that he never said that the world cannot exist without humans or that the world is everlasting (2.4.5). Augustine’s claim is technically correct, but are there no other deficiencies in this proof? What about the premise that falsity cannot exist without sense-perception? For instance, is it not possible to assent to a false geometrical theorem that by definition can be only intellected and never perceived or sensed? And what about the premise that the false must always exist? The dagger may be even more leadene than Augustine imagines.

Second Proof for the Immortality of the Soul (2.4.6–2.13.23)

Reason praises Augustine’s vigilance, thereby implying that he knew all along that the proof was flawed and that he was merely testing Augustine (once again he is exercising his interlocutor with deceptive mind games). But Reason insists that something good has come out of this bad proof—the conclusion that “the nature of

things,” the whole, cannot exist without a soul to know it (2.4.5). It is an astonishing and counterintuitive claim, but if the false always exists, then it is an inherent part of reality, and if the false cannot exist without sense-perception and sense-perception without a soul, then there must be a soul equipped with sense-perception for there to be reality.

Since Augustine cannot question the logic that produced the conclusion, he wisely wishes to revisit the premises. Yet he is not up to the task; all he can do is return to the conclusion and point out (rightly) that the argument only proves the necessity of *a* soul, not *his* soul, which could therefore still be mortal and part of a succession of souls (2.4.5). He is reluctant to remove falsity from the whole (the “nature of things”), lest it mean that all things are true. And he continues to understand both falsity and truth in relation to “seeming” or appearance: the false, he thinks, is what seems to be other than what it is, and the true is what “is as it seems” (2.4.5). And if there is a seeming, there must be a “seemer,” that is, someone to whom something seems to be this or that. As Reason points out, nothing can seem to be anything “except to a living soul” (2.4.5); or as he put it earlier, “if there’s no one to whom it may seem, nothing is false” (2.3.3). Reason is essentially treating the issue of falsity and of seeming as similar to the proverbial question of whether a tree that falls in the woods makes a sound if nobody is around to hear it. Is he right to do so?

Reason senses a stalemate and tries a different approach. Can corporeal or sensible things, he asks, be grasped by the understanding (2.4.6)? (Reason uses the terms interchangeably, as the physical senses are geared to grasp corporeal or bodily reality only.) Augustine replies that they cannot, and he also concedes that God, as far as he can tell, does not use bodily senses. Only a soul, therefore, has sense-perception. Finally, Reason recalls an earlier

concession, that a thing is not a thing unless it is a true (real) thing. He is now ready to offer his second proof for the soul's immortality:

If nothing is true unless it is as it seems;
nor is anything corporeal unless it can be seen through the
senses;
nor is there sense-perception without a soul;
nor is anything a body if it's not a true body;
—there remains the fact that a body can't exist unless a soul
does. (2.4.6)

The unspoken conclusion is that since bodies obviously exist, so too does the soul.

This proof is even weaker than the first one. Not only does it fail to prove that all human souls are immortal, it does not prove that a soul is necessary to reality, since it merely demonstrates that the soul is coterminous with bodily existence, as if all reality were corporeal. It also relies, as Augustine points out, on premises that are probable rather than certain (2.4.6). Yet Augustine confesses that he lacks the wherewithal to resist the argument, even though he appears unconvinced by it.

REVISITING THE TRUE (2.5.8)

Reason attempts a reboot of the conversation—but still within the parameters of his second proof—by again enjoining Augustine to pay attention (2.5.7). He obliquely leads Augustine to the Achilles' heel of the arguments so far, namely, Augustine's definitions of the false and the true. If truth is defined in terms of perception, Reason observes, then when something is not perceived, it is no longer true. According to this logic, if I do not sense it right now, then it does not exist, like the rocks beneath the earth's surface or the money in my purse or wallet. This reasoning

is obviously absurd, for as Aristotle points out, the stars would still exist even if we had never seen them.⁵¹ The true therefore must be redefined.

Augustine's new definition, that the true is "that which is constituted in the way that it seems to the knower, if he would like to know and is capable of doing so" (2.5.8), tries to overcome the objection of the disappearing money in the wallet by focusing on the knower's *potential* to know rather than his having *actually* to know in order for something to be real. It is a nice try, but it is not enough, for it still ties the true to the knower, and thus it remains the case that wood cannot be true wood without someone truly knowing it (2.5.8).

The definition does, however, give rise to an important distinction first articulated by Aristotle: things that are prior in relation to something else and things that are prior in relation to themselves.⁵² Later in the Western tradition this distinction came to be known as the difference between the *quoad nos* and the *quoad se*, something in relation to us and something in relation to itself. Some realities can be real or exist only in relation to us (*quoad nos*). The examples that Augustine gives in *Against the Academics* are bitterness and sweetness (3.11.26). Bitterness and sweetness indeed exist but only in relation to the taste buds of a living organism; they do not exist *per se*, in relation to themselves alone. One cannot therefore make universal pronouncements about these qualities *quoad se*, for what is bitter to one creature may not be bitter to another (e.g., oleaster is simultaneously bitter to humans and sweet to goats). The same can be said about the categories pertaining to other bodily senses: fragrance and stench, roughness and smoothness, largeness and smallness—and, of course, the tree that falls in the woods and does not make a sound unless there is an ear to hear it. Yet even if these *quoad nos* realities are true only in a restricted

sense and are thus “less real” than something that is true *quoad se*, they are important nonetheless, for it is by being cognizant of them that one often detects the intelligible laws and principles governing them that exist *quoad se*. Modern science, for instance, depends on the initial “*quoad nos* descriptions” of empirical phenomena made from the viewpoint of observers and their instruments of measurement. These collected data serve as starting points for the abstract hypotheses that are ultimately free of the scientists’ individual perspectives or the particular measurement systems they used.

The variation of the *quoad nos* that Augustine mentions here is the comparison of one thing to another, which gives rise to the category of greater and smaller. “Greater” and “smaller” are not true *quoad se*, for something is great or small only in relation to something else: an elephant is great in comparison to a flea but small in comparison to a mountain. “It turns out,” Augustine notes, “that nothing in itself (*per se*) is great or small” (2.5.8).

Accepting this distinction, Reason pushes Augustine further. Granted that some things are only true *quoad nos*, does he also want to say nothing is true *quoad se*? Augustine does not, and so he proposes a second definition of the true as simply “that which is” (2.5.8). Free from any mention of a knower and how things may seem to him, the definition mercifully liberates the true from its ties to another, allowing it to stand on its own. But this does not mean that the true cannot be known: the *quoad se* can indeed be known by the knower—the distinction merely clarifies that the *quoad se* is not what it is by virtue of its relation to the knower; it is what it is by virtue of its relation to itself. Augustine’s definition is therefore promising, but it has a problem of its own. If whatever is, is true, Reason charges, then nothing will be false. How does one overcome this difficulty?

PRAYER (2.6.9)

Augustine is flummoxed again. He wants to continue because he recognizes the value of these interrogations, yet he is simultaneously afraid of being interrogated. To break this impasse, Reason proposes that he pray. This third prayer of the *Soliloquies*, which evinces some familiarity with the liturgical conventions of the Church in both its structure and its imagery, reaffirms the central petition of his other two prayers: self-knowledge and the knowledge of God. Here, however, Augustine does not speak of knowing but of “returning” to himself and God, a theme that is at the heart of all the Cassiciacum dialogues and included in Augustine’s opening prayer (1.1.2–6). The idea most likely came to him first through Plotinus’s *Enneads*, but it is not difficult to see its ultimate compatibility with Christianity, the Gospels of which describe the turning point in the prodigal son’s return to his father as a “returning to himself” (Luke 15:17).

Augustine’s prayer also includes an interesting insight into prayer itself, namely, that praying is living better and being better. Earlier, Reason had commanded Augustine to summarize whatever he discovered as a result of praying, as if the act of praying for discovery were itself a kind of discovery (see 1.1.1). Here we see a similar assumption: the act of petitioning God for what is better is itself a better way to live.

REVISITING THE FALSE (2.6.10–2.7.13)

Reason begins a reconsideration of the false with another call to pay attention. The result is somewhat comical, as Augustine is growing weary of being told to “be here” (2.6.9). Reason suggests that they return to their definition of the false, perhaps with the intention of liberating the false from the *quoad nos* in the same way that the true was liberated. But Augustine still clings to the

chestnut that the false is “that which is not as it seems,” and by binding it to seeming, he is binding it to a person to whom it seems. And as long as the false is bound to a person, it is bound to the *quoad nos*.

Reason, indulging Augustine once again, teases out an inference from their current definition of the false. If the false is that which is other than it seems, then it bears a likeness or resemblance to the true: it is verisimilar (2.6.10). In the background of this conversation is the lengthy discussion on verisimilitude in *Against the Academics* 2.5.12–2.13.29, with its ties to the probable and the realm of the senses. Reason canvases the five senses and finds much evidence that the false is similar to the true; he even subdivides likenesses into those that are equal to each other and those that are inferior, and those that are “made by nature” and “made by living beings” (2.6.11). In the realm of sight, nature makes equal likenesses when it makes eggs, twins, and so on; it makes inferior likenesses when it makes reflections in a puddle or a mirror or when it makes shadows (2.6.11). In the realm of hearing, equal likenesses include virtually identical voices and unequal likenesses include echoes, cuckoo clocks, and falsetto voices. When it comes to smell, the fragrance of two different lilies are equally alike, as is thyme honey from two different hives when it comes to taste and a swan’s feathers versus a goose’s when it comes to touch. From all this Reason concludes, with Augustine consenting, that likeness is the mother of falsity (2.6.10).

But just when it appears that they are making progress and that Augustine is finally growing amenable to Reason’s “roundabout ways” (2.7.13), Reason points out that Augustine has been rash in his concessions. With likenesses that are equal to each other, as in the case of eggs, it is not the case that one is true and the other false. Rather, both are true and neither is false. And with respect to

inferior things, the knower can tell which one is false because the false image lacks certain similarities to the true one. Therefore, *unlikeness*, not likeness, is the mother of falsity (2.7.13).

WHY SOLILOQUIZE? (2.7.14)

After seeing the effects of his rash concession, Augustine says that he is embarrassed. Instead of simply moving on with their investigation, Reason addresses this reaction with a single-paragraph response, the brevity of which is inversely proportionate to its significance. It is this passage that reveals for the first time the title of the work and the reason for its distinctive method:

It's ridiculous for you to be ashamed, as if we hadn't chosen for this very reason to hold discussions of this kind. And since we are speaking with ourselves alone, I want these discussions to be called *Soliloquies* and written down. This is certainly a new name, and perhaps an unrefined one at that, but it is sufficiently suitable for indicating the gist [of what we are doing]. In fact, since there is no better way of seeking the truth than by questioning and answering, and since hardly anyone can be found who isn't ashamed of being refuted in a disputation (and for that reason it's almost always the case that the matter under discussion, one that's off to a good start, is booed off the stage by the rowdy hullabaloo of stubbornness, and all the while souls are being ripped apart, mostly out of sight but sometimes out in the open)—I most calmly, in my opinion, and agreeably decided to seek the truth with God's assistance by means of being questioned by my very self and giving answers to myself. Consequently, if at any time you have rashly tied yourself up in knots, there's nothing to fear in returning to them and loosening them; for otherwise one could never get out of them. (2.7.14)

Gently chastising Augustine for his shame, Reason mentions two horns of a dilemma. On one hand, the best way for the human mind to seek the truth is dialectically and discursively, in a disputation that typically involves vigorous discussion with others. On the other hand, human beings have a low threshold for making a mistake in front of others, since the appearances they wish to maintain for the sake of good standing are compromised when a failing of theirs is exposed. Put differently, the desire to know the highest things, things human and divine,⁵³ benefits from being exercised politically (in community), but the political instinct to excel in the eyes of others means that the fear of being shamed often takes precedence over the fear of being ignorant. We would rather be thought a fool and remain silent than open our mouths and remove all doubt, even though the principal way to learn is by opening our foolish mouths and confessing our need for learning. This fear of being exposed a fool even turns into a hatred of the truth, as Augustine explains in the *Confessions*:

They love truth when it enlightens them, they hate truth when it accuses them. Because they do not wish to be deceived and do wish to deceive, they love truth when it reveals itself, and hate it when it reveals them. Thus it shall reward them as they deserve: those who do not wish to be revealed by truth, truth will unmask against their will, but it will not reveal itself to them. Thus, thus, even thus, does the human mind, blind and inert, vile and ill-behaved, desire to keep itself concealed, yet desire that nothing should be concealed from itself.⁵⁴

The root of this political desire for self-concealment (and its concomitant desire for a disingenuous self-exaltation) springs from that part of the soul which the Greek philosophers called *thumos*. Augustine does not use a proper noun for *thumos* but instead

employs a variety of terms for the disordered loves that issue from it in a sinful condition. In the *Confessions* it is called the lust for holding first place (*libido principandi*)⁵⁵ and the pride of life (*ambitio saeculi*);⁵⁶ in *On True Religion* it is the haughtiness of temporal domination (*dominationis temporalis fastus*);⁵⁷ and in the *City of God* it is famously referred to as the lust for domination (*libido domnandi*).⁵⁸ At Cassiciacum Augustine describes it as a “childish exhibition of . . . talent” (*ingenii puerilis jactantia*) and the love of victory over the love of discovering what is right and true.⁵⁹

The outcome of the dilemma as Reason has outlined it is grim. Even a discussion among friends that starts off auspiciously, initiated by the pure desire to know, can fall prey to egotistical derailing. We need only think of Licentius and Trygetius’s altercation in book one of *On Order* as an example, when Augustine refers to their disordered jockeying for supremacy instead of searching for knowledge as a “pest lowest in rank *yet more injurious than all the others*—that of toxic emulation and vain boasting” (1.10.30, emphasis added). Here in the *Soliloquies*, Reason uses theatrical imagery to describe the phenomenon: the undisciplined outcry of stubbornness “explodes” (*explodat*) good discussion, a word that literally means driving someone off the stage with hissing or clapping or booing. The world is a stage in which our personal eagerness to come off well in the drama of our lives, to be good performers adored and esteemed by the audience, overshadows our curiosity about what is on the other side of the curtain. The desire to know reality, our only hope for escape from the theatrical house of mirrors in which our obsession with reputation places us, is booed off the stage by that very obsession. J. Elsner has referred to Roman society as a “panopticon of spectatorship,”⁶⁰ a world of seeing and of being seen in which daily life is constituted by a “sequence of performances, rehearsed or extemporaneous.”⁶¹

True, but Reason's broader point is that *every* human society is a panopticon of spectatorship, including Elsner's and our own.

Reason characterizes the unruly *thumos* that leads to the obsession of being seen as a form of stubbornness: we become attached to our opinions precisely because they are *our* opinions, and we resolutely defend them when they are challenged, lest we lose face. These opinions are "undisciplined" or *inconditus* (crude, unformed, disordered), but that does not matter: if they are discredited, we react furiously, like wounded animals.⁶² Reason states that our souls are "ripped apart" (note the violence in this image) by the correction or rejection of our opinions even though we are usually clever about hiding the injury "out of sight." Like a wounded animal, our bruised *thumos* grows violent, either rising up and demanding vengeance "out in the open" or angrily sulking and plotting retribution for another day. But the real casualty is not the adversary who slighted us in the first place but our own dispassionate capacity for rational inquiry. Following Reason's thespian metaphor, we may say that what is supposed to be a comedy, a story with a happy ending, becomes a tragedy fraught with violence committed mostly in the dark.

Reason's solution is to transfer the politically visible or public method of question-and-answer to the private mind of a single person, to "soliloquize." Does this mean that we can finally escape our own wicked heart, which we must hide in order to get along with others, by hiding it even more in a soliloquy? Not quite. For the soliloquizing of the dialogue has already failed in its professed objective: it was designed to circumvent the distracting dynamic of praise and shame, yet Reason launches into this digression precisely because Augustine has become ashamed, even in private, over a mistake he has made. Obviously, soliloquizing did not fully prevent what it was designed to. And there is a further irony: this, the first

soliloquy by that name, takes place not in complete privacy as its meaning would suggest but “on the stage,” before us readers who are enthralled by the spectacle of Reason and Augustine sparring. To overcome the vainglorious desire to be right or to appear to be right, Augustine the author makes the *Soliloquies* public.

But if soliloquizing is an imperfect solution to our morally defective hearts, it is still an important process for our inquiring minds. What Reason calls a soliloquy is merely the internalization of a heuristic method, a way of coming to know what one does not already know by questioning and answering. Reason’s explanation of his strategy in dealing with the “theatrics” of humankind’s zeal for being a prima donna thus includes a useful reminder of the native eros of the mind and its flourishing through dialectical disputation. It also includes a practical suggestion: “if at any time you have rashly tied yourself up in knots, there’s nothing to fear in returning to them and loosening them; for otherwise one could never get out of them” (2.7.14). This advice, which is unthinkable to those dominated by the lust for domination, is the same rule that Augustine placed on his pupils in the other dialogues.⁶³ Augustine himself must now be reminded of that rule by another.

Or is he reminded by himself? Reason makes an unprecedented shift in persona when he says, “I . . . decided to seek the truth with God’s assistance by means of being questioned by *my very self* and giving answers to *myself*” (emphasis added). Previously, Reason had used the pronoun “we” to indicate a joint effort, but this is the first time that he has used “I” to signify *Augustine’s* own activities of asking himself questions (see 1.1.1). This “slip” in the use of pronouns would seem to answer the question that began the entire work: whether Reason is a part of Augustine or is Augustine himself (1.1.1); here, it appears, Augustine is his Reason and vice versa. Further, because the slip constitutes a momentary drop of

Reason's "mask," it reinforces the theatrical aspect of this paragraph and of the *Soliloquies* as a whole. Historically, the earliest theater in ancient Greece consisted of a single actor on the stage accompanied by a chorus: what began as a sole performer offering a monologue or soliloquy eventually became a dialogue between two actors and then three.⁶⁴ Reason's conflation of identity harkens to theater at its most basic. Perhaps Reason's thespian metaphor is more than ornamental.

REVIEW SO FAR (2.8.15)

Augustine is encouraged by Reason's admonition but remains uncertain how to proceed. How is it, he wonders, that there are good arguments for the false being both like and unlike the true? Is it possible to have something produced by contrary causes? Could this case be *sui generis* (2.8.15)? Augustine summarizes his five options:

1. If I say that both likeness and unlikeness are involved in the false, I will have to determine on account of which one it is called false. If I say on account of the dissimilar, then everything is false, because everything is in some way dissimilar to something else. If I say on account of the similar, then I run up against the example of the eggs (see 2.7.13).
2. If I say that likeness and unlikeness make something false, it will be insisted that I declare all things false, since all things are both like and unlike other things.
3. If I say that the false is that which is other than it seems, many monsters will emerge, that is, the deficiencies of the first proof (Augustine compares this option to Scylla).
4. If I say that the true is that which is as it seems, then nothing can be true or real without a knower, and thus I will be forced

to concede that unknown rocks are unreal rocks, which is the deficiency of the second proof (Augustine compares this option to Charybdis).

5. If I say that the true is that which exists, then the false does not exist anywhere, with which no one would agree.

Augustine may be willing to follow Reason's "roundabout ways," but he remains somewhat comically critical, complaining about Reason's "delays" in contrast to his own "great patience."

THE FALSE AS STRIVING TO BE (2.9.16–2.11.21)

Worried that Augustine is beginning to think that they have "implored divine aid in vain" (2.9.16), Reason relents and, after the now customary injunction to "pay attention," offers a new distinction. That Reason becomes more obliging when faced with the threat of Augustine's despair underscores the importance of the virtue of hope in discovering the truth (see 1.6.12–1.17.14).

Reason suggests a variation of option 5: The false is what pretends or strives to be but is not. It is an astonishing possibility. So far, there has been a persistent dualism between existence and nonexistence that brooks no middle ground: something either exists or it does not. Reason himself had expressed the fear that if whatever exists is true, then nothing will be false (2.5.8). But now Reason is suggesting a third alternative: it is not true that nothing is false, but it is true that the false is in a way nothing. More precisely, the false is "naught-y" in the original sense of that word: it is "nothing-ish." The false falls into a shadowy twilight between truth/reality and undifferentiated nonexistence. Whereas the true exists by virtue of what it is, the false "exists" by virtue of what it is not, and therefore it neither fully exists nor is merely nonexistent. As Reason puts it later, "A thing which does not exist at all can't

even be called false. For if it's false, it exists; if it doesn't exist, it's not false" (2.15.29).

Moreover, if the false is naughty, it must be approached by the mind in a fundamentally different manner than the truth. In book one, Reason persuaded Augustine that when the mind grasps truth, it is with one and the same understanding, be it the truth about fleas, geometry, or even God Himself. Later in his life Augustine would designate this kind of understanding *notitia secundum speciem*, knowing according to the form or essence of a thing. Knowing falsehood, on the other hand, involves a *notitia secundum privationem*, a knowing according to privation.⁶⁵ The latter, which is essential to the grasp of nonbeing, is especially elusive because it involves knowing that there is nothing knowable about the object in question: some crucial component of "knowability" is missing from it. Knowing according to privation, in other words, is knowing not the intelligibility of a thing but knowing that it lacks a certain intelligibility. When I know an irrational number, I am knowing a number that lacks what *ratio* or reason requires in order to comprehend its value completely. When I experience cold, I am experiencing a deprivation of heat. When I understand folly, I understand not a determinate content but the absence of that determinate thing which is called wisdom.⁶⁶ When I see darkness, I am "seeing" that there is no light.⁶⁷ And when I know evil, I am understanding not a substance but the privation of a good—hence, the *Soliloquies'* opening prayer identifies evil as "nothing" (1.1.2) and praises God as He who strips us of "what is not" and clothes us in "what is" (1.1.3).

As these examples attest, that which is grasped by *notitia secundum privationem* is not nothing tout court but nothing with respect to a particular intelligibility that is naturally expected but intrinsically missing (an irrational number is not the absence of memory, nor is folly the absence of number). In the realm of truth-

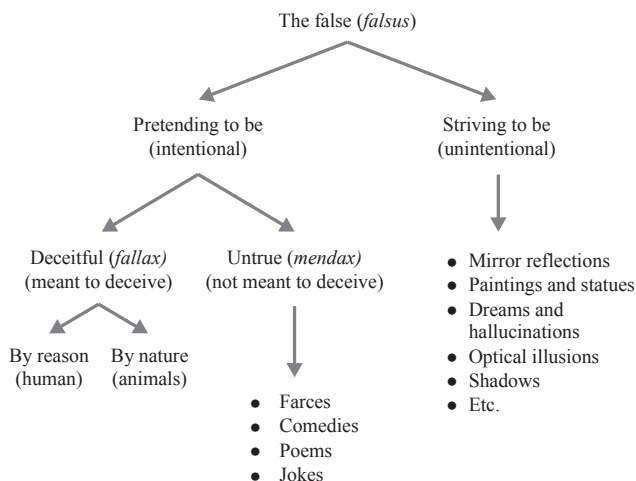
fulness, then, falsehood is a lack of truth that is nevertheless pretending to be true or “striving” or tending toward veracity.

If Reason knew all along that this was the key to understanding the false, why did he not mention it before? No doubt he was holding back to exercise Augustine and to allow him to exhaust all other possibilities so that he would more readily see that this strange and counterintuitive option is what alone “may be justly called false” (2.9.16). Having an insight into privation is no easy matter. Augustine the author is keenly aware of the difficulty in coming to terms with insights into privation and the realities—or rather, unrealities—that they grasp. That is why he persistently introduces various examples in the *Cassiciacum* corpus.⁶⁸ Indeed, the group’s struggle with whether evil has always existed in *On Order* 2.8.22 parallels in many ways Augustine’s struggles with whether falsity has always existed (*Soliloquies* 2.3.4). The question of whether these forms of privation have always existed is itself skewed, for there is a way in which evil and falsity have never truly existed in the full sense of that term; in some manner, they do not exist in relation to themselves or even in relation to us but only as a subtraction, so to speak, in relation to a particular good. Only a knower who has had an insight into privation can understand the truth of this odd statement; such an insight is what Reason has been attempting to induce in Augustine the character and, by extension, the reader.

SUBDIVISIONS OF THE FALSE (2.9.16–2.10.18)

The false is peculiar even among other privative pseudo-realities, for it can be further divided into that which feigns or “pretends to be what it is not” and that which “in every way strives to exist and does not” (2.9.16). Pretending implies a certain conscious intentionality on the part of a living agent—it “can’t be understood

apart from a soul”—and that intentionality either can have the goal of deception or not. Hence, that which pretends to be can be further subdivided into the *fallax* (translated here as “deceitful” because it aspires to deceive) and the *mendax* or “untrue,” which has no such aspirations. Something can be deceitful either “by reason,” as with human liars, or “by nature,” as with clever little foxes. The untrue is likewise pretentious, as it were, but is not meant to deceive. Examples of the untrue include farces, comedies, poems, and jokes, all of which are meant to delight rather than dupe (see chart, below). Reason uses the adjective *mendax* to refer both to the pretending agent and to the product itself (e.g., his poem); he also uses the noun *mendacium* to refer to the product. Likewise, Reason uses the adjective *fallax* to refer to the deceitful agent, but he does not apply it to the deceptive product or act, nor does he use a noun for the deceptive product or act.



Additionally, Reason’s categorization of farces and comedies as nondeceptive implicitly constitutes an exoneration of those involved

in these types of theater from the often repeated charge of being liars—a charge that goes back to Solon calling Thespis (from whom the term “thespian” is derived) a liar for pretending to be someone else in his tragedies.⁶⁹ Reason’s defense is especially surprising in the case of farces (*mimi*), which in the late Roman Empire could be notoriously lewd. *Mimi* were the only form of Roman theater that employed actresses for female roles,⁷⁰ and real acts of copulation are said to have taken place during some performances.⁷¹

Augustine is pleased with Reason’s categorization and tells him, “maybe now you’ve begun to teach things about the false that aren’t false” (2.9.17). It is a witty line, but it also draws attention to the importance of not separating the argument from what the arguer is doing when the arguer is making the argument. When arguers fall into a self-referential incoherence, as when they freely deny free will or speak at length against the possibility of speech, they undermine their own argument, no matter how internally flawless it may be. Augustine’s comment reminds the reader to consider whether what is being said is consistent with who is saying it or with the work in which it is being said.

Reason then examines that which strives or tends to exist, things such as mirror reflections, paintings and statues, dreams and hallucinations, optical illusions, and shadows (2.9.17). Unlike the previous category of “pretenders,” the “strivers” lack intentionality; as Reason puts it, they do not want to be false, yet they are unable to be true (2.10.18)—the verb *tendere*, which is variously translated “to strive” or “to tend to,” does not connote conscious effort. By this logic, even if something striving to exist becomes the occasion of deception, it cannot be considered deceitful. Consequently, Reason lists dreams and hallucinations as examples of a “striving” rather than a deceptively “pretending” thing even though dreamers and madmen are deceived by them (2.9.17).

Reason's categorization of the false is rich but not without problems of its own. First, Reason's terminology is not in perfect accord with the rest of the Cassiciacum dialogues, which are not as strict in their usage. On one hand, the noun *fallacia*⁷² always and the adjective *fallax*⁷³ sometimes indicates deceit, as we see here. On the other hand, the activities of sense-perception and sensible images are sometimes called *fallax* in a way that indicates deceit,⁷⁴ yet—in defiance of Reason's present classification—these are faculties or things rather than agents with intentionality.⁷⁵ Moreover, *fallax* is elsewhere used for simply being mistaken or false.⁷⁶

Second, since pictures and statues are clearly the result of conscious effort or intentionality, it is strange that they are listed among the strivers and not the “untrue,” the nondeceptive pretenders. After all, Reason puts other artificial verisimilitudes such as poems in the category of the untrue; why then are these works of art in the category of the striving?

Augustine was initially thrilled that “maybe” Reason was finally teaching things “about the false that aren't false” (2.9.17). It would seem that he was wise to add the qualifier “maybe,” as there appear to be inconsistencies in Reason's account.

THE FIVE ENIGMAS OF 2.10.18

Augustine is aware that something is wrong, but his own question at 2.10.18 only muddies the water more. “I wonder why it seemed to you,” he asks, “that those poems and jokes and the other deceits [*caeteraeque fallaciae*] should be excluded from this category [of the striving].” It is an oddly phrased question, for he does not ask why paintings and sculptures are not included with the innocently pretending untruths, which is the more obvious question, but why poems and jokes, which are the result of a conscious

effort to pretend, are not included among the nonpretending, striving things.

Moreover, Augustine has committed a categorical error when he speaks of poems and jokes as *fallaciae* or deceitful things instead of untruths. We finally have a noun for the deceptive product of the fallacious or deceitful person; the only problem is that it is being applied to things previously identified as mendacious, not only in the *Soliloquies* (see 2.9.16 and 2.11.19) but in the rest of the Cassiciacum dialogues.⁷⁷ Augustine himself, therefore, has committed (1) an error in thought or diction, (2) an intentionally deceptive falsehood (*fallacia*), or (3) a falsehood not meant to deceive (*mendacium*). Granted that one cannot rule out options 1 or 2, it nevertheless seems that the most likely choice is option 3. Previously, Reason had listed delight as a motive for being in the category of the untrue (*mendax*), but he did not preclude other nondeceptive options. Indeed, Augustine later defines a fable as an “untruth (*mendacium*) composed for use or delight” (2.11.19). Perhaps his misclassification of poems and jokes is a *mendacium* meant to be useful rather than delightful.

If so, we may add to the category of the untrue any falsehood uttered for some pedagogical or revelatory purpose, such as exercising readers or listeners in order to increase their ability to discover the truth.⁷⁸ Externally, this form of untruth may appear identical to the *fallax*; but since the key differentia in the genus of pretending falsehoods is motive, they cannot be considered the same. In baseball, a pitcher throws a curveball in a game in order to deceive the batter, but a coach throws a curveball during practice in order to educate the batter in the truth about deceptive pitches.⁷⁹

In response to Augustine’s befuddling question about why poems and jokes and the rest of the fallacies are not included in the category of the striving, Reason gives an almost equally

befuddling answer. Unfortunately, the manuscript tradition of the *Soliloquies* at this point is ambivalent, lending even greater confusion to the passage. Most of the extant copies of the *Soliloquies* have Reason saying that we *can* put fictitious writings in the category of things striving to exist (which contradicts what is stated in 2.9.16), while the remainder of the manuscripts have Reason saying that we *cannot*. In our hesitant opinion, the latter is the more likely reading. Read thus, Reason gives two reasons why literature and theater are excluded from the category of the striving. First, a figure in a painting cannot be as real or as true as what is represented in the books of comic authors. Second, things that strive to be are not false of their own accord but follow their maker's will, whereas in a tragedy an actor must willfully pretend to be who he is not.

Although this variation of the manuscripts makes more sense in context, it too is not without its own problems. Regarding the first reason, Reason unexpectedly introduces a new criterion for contradistinguishing the striving from the pretending: degrees of verisimilitude. Reason has a point in claiming that the product of a playwright is "more real" than a painting. According to Aristotle, there are three kinds of imitation: imitation in different things (such as in color and shape, rhythm, and meter), imitation of different things (superior or inferior actions), and the manner of imitation (indirect reporting versus direct impersonation).⁸⁰ Comedies and tragedies fulsomely imitate human life in all three areas, whereas paintings and sculptures do not. Still, this fact alone does not explain why something should be relegated to the striving as opposed to the pretending. Was not the key difference between pretending and striving the maker's intention, the fact that a soul was necessary for the former but not the latter?

Further, within this new criterion there are additional oddities. In his second reason, Reason contrasts paintings and statues with a

live theatrical performance of tragedy, but here he contrasts a painting with “things that are written in the books of comic authors.” Why does Reason speak of things in a book instead of in a performance? Perhaps logically there is ultimately no difference between the two, since the thing to which a comic script points is performance. Still, the shift in language places psychological weight on the books rather than the actions, and we are left wondering why.

Reason’s second reason is also puzzling. His divorce of the product from the author’s intention contradicts his earlier classification in which he placed the untrue product alongside its untrue author (2.9.16). Reason even says that the author of a “striving” painting or statue is himself not a striver but a pretender: the word he uses for “maker” when speaking of their designer’s will is *fingens*, from the same verb he uses for pretending (*fingere*). And we must also wonder why Reason shifts from comedy (the books of comic authors) to tragedy (Roscius performing Hecuba), especially when Roscius was historically more famous as a comic actor.

In sum, besides the paleographic difficulty of whether we can or cannot put comedies and tragedies in the same category as paintings and sculptures, there are no fewer than five puzzles to 2.10.18: (1) Why Augustine speaks of *fallaciae* instead of *mendacia* for poems and jokes, (2) why things in the books of comedy are used for one example but the performance of tragedy for another, (3) why a distinction between willing and unwilling falsity is used to distinguish theatrical works from paintings and sculptures (are not the former as much a slave to the maker’s will as the latter?), (4) why Augustine refers to the maker of a *mendacium* as a *fingens* or pretender, and (5) why Roscius is invoked as a tragedian instead of as a comedian.

I do not profess to have answers to these puzzles except to suggest that perhaps a self-referential key can be discovered by

raising one final question: Where does the fictitious work that is the *Soliloquies* fit within Reason and Augustine's disjointed classification?⁸¹ It would seem that the author of the *Soliloquies* is to be ranked among the blameless pretenders or *fingentes*: like "comic authors," he presents a higher degree of truth than painters not only through his fuller modes of imitation but through his pedagogical orientation. The *Soliloquies*, in turn, is a series of nondeceitful falsehoods—or to borrow an expression from *On Order*—of "reasonable untruths" uttered for the sake of the truth (2.14.40). Even Reason's deliberately flawed arguments in the dialogue are designed not to deceive but to sharpen: his specious little syllogisms or *rationuncula* are in the service of finding the truth. The *Soliloquies* thus falls among the "books of comic authors" rather than performances of tragedy, and yet it is also a performance of sorts. Last, the dialogue is a comedy that is superior to the conventional comedies for which Roscius earned his fame and which, in turn, would explain Roscius's "demotion." Just as Plato in the *Symposium* makes the speech of the comic playwright Aristophanes in praise of Eros wistfully tragic in comparison to the whimsical genealogy that Socrates offers,⁸² so too does Augustine portray Roscius as a tragedian rather than a comedian in comparison to the authentically comic, happy life of loving and obtaining wisdom.

The *Soliloquies* thus bears some resemblance to or claim on all three categories of the false, all the while remaining oriented to the true: with its captious arguments it is externally similar to the *fallax*; with its intention to teach rather than deceive it is *mendax*; and with its comic verisimilitude it is striving to be. Likewise, the *Soliloquies* surpasses all other forms of theater even as it incorporates elements from each of them, not unlike Plato's dexterous transcendence of Aristophanic comedy and classical tragedy even in the act of borrowing from them.⁸³ What is incoherent within

the *Soliloquies* may actually make sense when seen in reference to the *Soliloquies*.

THEATRUM MUNDI (2.10.18)

Reason himself does not dwell on the subject but moves on quickly to another consideration. As the art of acting attests, the truth or reality of some things is dependent on their falsehood. The famous actor Roscius must wish to be a false Hecuba in order to be a true tragedian. “This alone helps them to their own truth,” Reason explains, “the fact that they are false to something else.”

Not only does this paradox ostensibly threaten the notion that the false is a privation of the true—portraying as it does the true as derivative of the false rather than the false as parasitic upon the true—it has unsettling implications for what Augustine at Cassiciacum calls the happy life. Augustine does not think that we should imitate actors, being “true in our own garb while masquerading and parading about in another’s” (2.10.18): being true to thine own self should not require being false to another. Earlier, Augustine had been chastised for caring more about the perception others had of him (Elsner’s so-called panopticon of spectatorship) than about his own progress in truth. Knowing oneself through the estimation of others and living falsely are intimately connected, since an inordinate concern for reputation generally leads to putting up a façade or false image of oneself. The very act of soliloquizing was initiated by Reason to be an alternative to the political “theater” of pandering to an audience or the rest of the cast, which typically boos rational inquiry (and hence the quest for self-knowledge and knowledge of God) off the stage (2.7.14). Augustine seems to have taken the lesson to heart, for here he rejects the theatrical pretensions of political life—or more precisely, he rejects living according to them, since they are not “worthy of

imitation.” Imitation participates or shares in the reality of what it is imitating, and so if we wish to be utterly true or real, we must not emulate the false. Augustine seeks a truth that is not “in a two-faced mode” (2.10.18). These two faces live contradicting each other, which is hardly a winning strategy for becoming authentically happy or whole.

The phrase that Augustine uses for a two-faced mode, *bifrons ratio*, merits closer scrutiny. The adjective *bifrons*, meaning “with two foreheads,” is a Vergilian epithet for Janus, the two-faced god who looks both forward and backward (hence the month named after him).⁸⁴ Here, however, Augustine states that the two faces are *sibique adversanti* or facing each other. And the noun *ratio*, which is translated here as “mode,” is also the name of Augustine’s interlocutor Reason (see 1.6.12). Given this studied ambivalence, Augustine may be subtly calling his dialogue partner two-faced and contradictory.

There would be warrant for him to do so. Throughout the *Soliloquies*, Reason has been somewhat duplicitous. In order to exercise Augustine morally, intellectually, and religiously, Reason has advanced deliberately flawed arguments or “leaden daggers” (2.4.5) and taken Augustine down several dialectical culs-de-sac. In short, Reason has been putting on an act but an act designed to make Augustine a better lover of the truth. Reason has been false for the sake of the true, wearing a persona in a *bifrons* manner that does not authentically convey what he knows yet is not intended to deceive.

And Reason is not alone. Unlike Reason’s salutary acting, Augustine the character has been attempting, unconsciously perhaps, to hide his ignorance and his sinfulness—the ignorance that becomes apparent in rash concessions (2.7.14), and the sinfulness that becomes apparent in lustful digressions of thought (see 1.14.24–1.15.27). Augustine, too, has been *bifrons*, guilty of the same

posturing for which he chides Licentius and Trygetius in *On Order* (1.10.28–30). Consequently, the rule that Augustine imposes on his pupils⁸⁵ is reasserted by Reason in the *Soliloquies*: “if at any time you have rashly tied yourself up in knots, there’s nothing to fear in returning to them and loosening them; for otherwise one could never get out of them” (2.7.14).

On one level, then, the *Soliloquies* may be seen as a play involving two characters, each of whom presents a mask at variance (to some extent) with his authentic self; one of them does it for the sake of the good, and the other to hide his inadequacies. On this level, Reason’s performance is an example of good theater, with his mask serving not as an agent of duplicity but as a unifying window into his true identity. Augustine the character’s performance, on the other hand, would be theatrical in the pejorative sense, with Augustine attempting to hide his faults for the sake of saving face.

But on another level, the *Soliloquies* is a play in which Reason and the character Augustine are two different projections or masks of the same individual, namely, Augustine the author. On this second level, the *Soliloquies* may be additionally labeled a new kind of pantomime.⁸⁶ Lucian mentions that a single pantomime actor could play as many as five roles, with a different mask for each character.⁸⁷ And according to Quintilian, an actor could also use a single, asymmetrical mask (such as the one that appears on the front cover of this volume) to indicate two different moods, one side having a raised, jovial eyebrow and the other a lowered, angry brow; to indicate the character’s emotional state, the actor would show the appropriate side to the audience.⁸⁸ It is possible, then, that a single actor also could have portrayed two different characters with a single “two-faced” mask.⁸⁹ Either way, the adjective *bifrons* may hint at a pantomime. And either way, whether we are imagining Augustine and Reason played by two separate actors or

as two separate characters played by the same person, the *Soliloquies* may be said to function as a kind of *bifrons* theatrical performance.

The *Soliloquies*, then—a mode of writing so novel that it requires a neologism to name it—is also a novel form of theater. Rather than the tragic political theater that, among other things, is constituted by an oppressive panopticon of spectatorship, the *Soliloquies* (despite its tearful episodes) is a liberating comic theater of the divine, a superior form of comic performance not only peppered with lines from the great comedies of ancient Rome but constituted by the comic structure of a philosophical dialogue.⁹⁰

One thing is certain: Both Reason and Augustine are construing human living in terms of the theater. Later as a bishop Augustine would recall an incident involving an “extremely poor” Christian usher who discovered a moneybag containing almost two hundred gold coins and who not only made the effort to find its owner but refused to accept even a modest finder’s fee. When the owner, indignant that he could not show his gratitude, refused to take the money, the poor man distributed it all to the other poor, making sure that not a single coin entered his own house. Summarizing the drama between the two men, who were each in their own way trying to be honorable, Augustine declares, *theatrum mundus, spectator Deus*: “the world is a theater and God is the audience.”⁹¹ The alternative to the panopticon of spectatorship is not solipsistically feeling good about one’s own existence or withdrawing from the political and communal into isolation, but living the drama of one’s life as if God were the only spectator, the only critic that mattered.

PURE TRUTH (2.11.19–21)

Reason commends Augustine but points out that even if the truth is not “two-faced,” it is still multifaceted, “made up and fused together” by “things that are great and divine” (2.10.18). The goal,

then, is to find the truth according to which anything that is true is true. Reason and Augustine are now looking for a pure truth, one that is not tied by its nature to the false. Their most recent examples of true and false things have had the same drawback as their earlier discussion of the false, when the false was bound to “seeming.” Then, the same thing could have two contradictory things said of it without contradiction, like an elephant being both great and small (2.5.8). Now, a thing can be false in order to be true (2.10.18). The reason behind the persistent ambivalence is that the false and true continue to be examined vis-à-vis the realm of the sensible. To find the truth they seek, Reason and Augustine must slip the surly bonds of the earthly theater.

Reason thus turns to the liberal arts, free as they are of corporeal determinations, and especially to the “discipline of disputation” (2.11.19). In *On Order* Augustine refers to this discipline as dialectic (2.3.8), but curiously, that word is not to be found in the *Soliloquies*. Instead we hear of the “disputatious art” (2.11.19), the “rules of disputation” (2.11.21), and the “reasoning (*ratio*) of disputation” (2.11.21). The exclusive use of the term forms an interesting contrast with the theater of vanity from which Augustine must extricate himself, since that theater is established on the shame of “being refuted in a disputation” (2.7.14). While actual disputations are soiled by a love of victory and a fear of appearing foolish, the discipline of disputation proper remains pure and entirely true.

And not only is disputation true, it is that by which all the other disciplines are true. For a liberal art to be a liberal art, it must use precise definitions and classifications, which is the very essence of dialectic, that branch of learning which organizes and orders “by defining, dividing, and connecting” and defends itself from “every encroachment of falsity.”⁹² The discipline of grammar, for instance, is true by virtue of its definitions and classifications, and

the same can be said for the other liberal arts as well. (Nor need we worry about the false elements, such as fables, that fall within grammar's purview, since grammar merely judges these with a true "mode of reasoning" rather than endorses or believes in them.) Augustine's only hesitation is that disputation appears to be simply listed as one of the liberal arts when in fact it is that which makes all liberal arts true: it is the "truth by which even reasoning (*ratio*) of this kind is itself true" (2.11.21). Reason does not deny Augustine's claims but reminds him that the field of disputation is likewise constituted by definitions and classifications and is therefore a discipline. The key difference is that whereas the other disciplines derive their truths from another discipline, disputation derives its truth from itself (2.11.21). Disputation or dialectic is therefore, as Augustine puts it in *On Order*, "the very discipline of disciplines" (2.13.38).

Last, if disputation or dialectic is the truth or reality by which *ratio* itself is true, then disputation appears to be more than just the canons of right reasoning. In *On Order*, reason (*ratio*) is defined in terms that are strongly reminiscent of the definition of disputation, that is, as "a motion of the mind capable of distinguishing and connecting the things that are learned" (2.11.30). Perhaps understanding disputation provides another clue into the identity of Augustine's interlocutor (see 1.1.1).

TWO WAYS OF BEING "IN" (2.12.22)

Reason has been building up to his final proof for the soul's immortality, but he cannot offer it until he has clarified what it means to be "in" something (2.12.22). He asserts that there are two possibilities. First, a thing can be "in" something else in such a way that it can be "detached and exist somewhere else." The examples that Reason gives are a piece of wood being in a place and the sun

being in the east. Second, a thing is “in” something else—or to be more precise, in a subject—in such a way that it cannot be separated from it without destroying the nature of that subject. Reason illustrates this category by mentioning form in wood, light in the sun, heat in fire, and a discipline in the mind.

Three further distinctions are necessary in order to grasp these two types of “in-ness.” First, the preposition “in” can be predicated either spatially or nonspatially. This topic has already arisen several times in the *Soliloquies*; now, Reason is developing it explicitly. The most common use of “in” is as a spatial marker, as when we speak of being in a room or in a city. However, as Augustine the author points out elsewhere, there are valid nonspatial uses of terms that are usually reserved for spatial use. In the *Confessions*, after asserting that the light of God was “above” his mind, Augustine explains that it was not above his mind “as oil above the water it floats on nor as the sky is above the earth.” Rather, he writes, “It was above because it made me, and I was below because made by it.”⁹³ A preposition’s nonspatial meaning should not be construed as an attenuated, metaphorical derivative of its “normative” spatial sense. On the contrary, the relation could very well be the opposite in the order of being. Paradoxically, understanding the preposition “above” in a nonspatial sense brings out its “aboveness” all the more, for spatial “aboveness” is limited by a relative perspective while nonspatial “aboveness” is not; whereas spatial meanings are tied to a shifting *quoad nos* perspective, nonspatial meanings enjoy the status of the absolute *quoad se*.

What is true for “above” is also true for “in.” According to Reason, things that are in something locally or spatially can be separated from that object while things that are in something nonspatially cannot. Interestingly, the nonspatial “in” does not need to be predicated of purely intelligible realities. Of the four

examples that Reason gives, only one is of a purely intelligible reality being in another purely intelligible reality, that of a discipline being in a mind. The other examples involve in some way a material reality, accessible to the bodily senses. Even so, the material reality that is heat might be present to the material reality that is fire (a reality that occupies space), but not in a way that is spatially determined. And when it is a case of an intelligible reality such as mind being “in” a sensible reality such as body, the presence of the one in the other cannot be understood spatially or locally.⁹⁴

Second, it is necessary to make a distinction, found in Aristotle’s *Categories*, between accident and substance.⁹⁵ A substance, which Aristotle defines negatively as that which is neither in a subject nor said of a subject, is that which is grasped by the mind when the mind accurately answers the question “What is that?” If the substantial form is removed or destroyed, so too is the thing itself. An accidental form, on the other hand, is a property of a substance; it is that which exists “in a subject.” Augustine’s summary of the *Categories* is accurate (he even uses similar examples), but his *use* of it is astonishing. Aristotle, who most likely did not believe that individual human souls survived death (at least not as Augustine envisions it), does not use the relationship between substance and accident as a means of arriving at a knowledge of the soul’s immortality.

Third, Augustine adds a distinction made in Porphyry’s commentary on the *Categories*—the difference between a merely accidental property that can be removed from a substance without destroying it (such as color in a wall) and a permanent or essential property (what Porphyry called a “completer of substance”) that if destroyed would also destroy the substance, such as heat in fire. The result of this final distinction is a dihaeretic structure:

A is in B

1. Separably (as in a place), or
2. inseparably (as in a subject)
 - a. as an accidental property, or
 - b. as a permanent or essential property.

Augustine's dihaeresis is similar to one found in Porphyry but with a key difference: Porphyry's is not about being in a subject at all. In fact, Neoplatonists tended to dislike the category "in a subject" in reference to specific, essential properties.⁹⁶ Augustine is combining the two authors in unusual ways.

Finally, aside from the concept of being "in a subject," neither Reason nor Augustine employs the technical vocabulary as we have here. Both evince a greater concern for leading the reader to an insight into the distinctions rather than imparting a mastery of specialized nomenclature.

SOUL AS LIFE (2.13.23)

Reason is close to offering his proof now, but he must first confirm that Augustine agrees with him that a soul is not a soul if it dies. If the soul is that which gives life to the body or is indeed life itself, and if death is the negation or extinction of life, then the soul cannot suffer death any more than white can be colored black and still be called white. Augustine agrees with the premise that the soul is life itself,⁹⁷ and he affirms the logic of the principle of noncontradiction implicit in Reason's statement. Still, Augustine says that he feels compelled to depart from the authority of several "great philosophers"—most likely Plato and Plotinus (see 1.4.9)—since he is hesitant to draw from this an indication of the soul's immortality. Unlike Socrates, who used a similar "Opposites Argument" in the *Phaedo* to prove that the soul is immortal,⁹⁸

Augustine conjectures that the soul's cessation would lead to death in the same way that the cessation of light in a room brings darkness, all without violating the canons of reason or reality.

Moreover, with respect to the triad of existence, life, and understanding (see 2.1.1), Augustine appears more interested in grounding the endurance of the first in the nature of the third rather than in that of the second. The mere fact that a soul is life does not ensure its immortal continuation, for animals, insects, and plants also have souls animating their bodies, and presumably those souls do not exist forever. It is human rationality, evident in the fact of understanding, that is one's best hope for demonstrating the immortality of the human soul, since human understanding is already participating in eternity as evidenced by its grasp of eternal truths. And if it is participating in eternity, has it not already to some extent slipped the temporal confines of mortality? The only question is whether it makes that slip decisively and completely.

Day Three: Part II: Third Proof for the Immortality of the Soul (2.13.24–2.20.36)

Reason does not answer Augustine's rejection of the "great philosophers" but coyly declares that the soul is immortal. Reason's delays, coupled with his now annoying imperative to pay attention, is too much for Augustine to bear. "Why are you torturing me to death?!" he cries (2.13.24). The line, which is lifted directly from Roman comedy, joins others like it⁹⁹ in reinforcing the *Soliloquies*' character as a new but comic form of theater.

Finally relenting, Reason offers the proof that he has assembled from the premises conceded by Augustine:

If each thing that's in a subject remains forever, it is necessary that the subject itself remain forever.

And each discipline is in the soul as in a subject.

Therefore, if a discipline remains forever, it's necessary for the soul to remain forever.

But a discipline is the truth, and, as reason persuasively showed at the beginning of this book, the truth remains forever.

Therefore, the soul remains forever, nor is something dead said to be a soul.

And therefore, only the man who proves that something above wasn't conceded correctly can deny without absurdity that the soul is immortal. (2.13.24)

The proof bears a faint resemblance to a line of reasoning in Plotinus: if the soul possesses wisdom and authentic virtue (which are divine), the soul "must be divine by its very capacity of the divine, the token of kinship and of identical substance."¹⁰⁰ However, because Reason is thinking like a good Christian, he does not want to follow Plotinus in claiming that the soul and the divine are consubstantial, and so he constructs another rationale with the help of Aristotle and Porphyry.

Nor is the proof entirely new to Cassiciacum. In *On Order* 2.19.50, it seemed as if Augustine was laying down a similar demonstration, for he had argued that (1) a ratio (*ratio*) such as two-to-four is immortal, and (2) we are our own reason (*ratio*). But instead of concluding that we are immortal, Augustine merely concluded that that which makes us mortal is not so much "ours" as that which makes us immortal, and that it is through reason we are higher than other animals. No doubt Augustine knew better than to conclude from these premises that the human soul is immortal, given the equivocal use of the term *ratio*. But is Reason's proof in the *Soliloquies* guilty of a similar equivocation? If so, on which word is he equivocating?

Further, Aristotle describes accident as ontologically dependent on the subject and nothing more; he never dreamed of arguing from the eternity of an accident (like grammar or discipline) to the eternity of a subject (like the mind or soul). Is Reason's use of Aristotle legitimate?

Finally, several rungs of the proof concern existing forever (*semper*) rather than mere immortality. Certainly, if something is proved to exist forever, it is immortal, but is Reason nevertheless blurring the line between eternity and immortality? Strictly speaking, eternity has neither beginning nor end whereas immortality requires only life without end.

On a different note, why does Reason say in this proof that "reason persuasively showed" instead of "I persuasively showed"? It is as if Reason had suddenly changed into Augustine the character or become a third party. Again the question of the identity of Augustine's interlocutor is raised, but this time with potentially negative implications. If Augustine is not his reason and vice versa, this proof may not work.

Augustine's Two Reactions (2.14.25)

Augustine hesitates to embrace the proof for two reasons. First, he is again suspicious of the roundabout ways of Reason, who has taken a circuitous path as if he were setting up a trap. Second, Augustine does not see how a discipline can be said to be in a soul when most souls do not have the disciplines, that is, the majority of the population does not possess a knowledge of the liberal arts (2.14.25). Augustine conjectures that they will be forced to admit either "that the souls of the unlearned aren't souls or that there is in the soul that which they do not know as a discipline." Either that, or the truth is not in the soul forever or the discipline of disputation is not the truth.

These are two different kinds of objections. That Augustine even raises the first shows the degree to which the philosophically disputatious art of dialect does not take place in a vacuum hermetically sealed from the rest of human living. In the theater of life, the pursuit of wisdom is not simply an interlocking series of logical deductions by which one proceeds from ignorance to knowledge: it has an inescapably interpersonal and even political dimension. Augustine knows that Reason has been wily with him in the past, and not unreasonably is he wary of him at present, even at the risk of committing a genetic fallacy. Further, Augustine's impatience here and in 2.13.23, when he bemoans Reason's ostensibly pointless "delays" and accuses Reason of "torturing" and killing him, betrays his own lack of self-knowledge. Earlier, Augustine had grandly proclaimed that he would "never grow weary" of Reason's roundabout ways (2.7.13). Clearly, he misjudged himself.

Reason's Reply to the First Objection (2.14.26)

Reason replies to the first objection by claiming that their circuitous path has had as its purpose the discovery of truth, which even now eludes them. Implicit in Reason's logic is the importance of exercise for the soul that wishes to know the truth: it cannot simply take a shortcut or receive a handout and expect the desired results. If anything, Reason is suggesting, their circuitous path has been too brief, for they have been insufficiently exercised and are still not ready. Reason has thereby turned the tables on Augustine. It is not Augustine who should be suspicious of Reason's exercise regimen; it is Reason who should be suspicious of Augustine's implicit claims to have no further need of it.

Within this context Reason brings up Augustine's friends and mentors, first by way of reproach and then by way of exhortation. On a possibly sardonic note, Reason asks Augustine whether he

wants to abandon their soliloquizing together and trust in a good book, either from the past or from one of his contemporaries. But after praising one of their acquaintances (most likely Manlius Theodorus), Reason encourages Augustine by asking him whether he really thinks that their unnamed acquaintance will let him down. The question is meant to lift Augustine's spirits, as Reason is again worried that Augustine is beginning to "despair of finding what we want" (2.14.26). Instead, however, Augustine frets that his acquaintance will not be there for him, and to make matters worse, he begins to worry about his other friend who is far away in the Alps (most likely Zenobius). Whether or not Augustine envisioned the *Soliloquies* to be read by more than "a few" of his compatriots (1.1.1), it is certain that only those who are well versed in the other Cassiciacum dialogues will be able to understand the references to his acquaintances that he makes here. These elliptical allusions are therefore consistent with Reason's instruction not to write this dialogue for a "crowd of readers" (1.1.1). Moreover, Augustine's frustration with Theodorus (and possibly Ambrose) bespeaks the need for what today would be called spiritual direction. Given the enormous moral and intellectual complexities involved in genuine progress to God, Augustine recognizes the benefits of guidance from a wise mentor. This awareness is echoed later when Augustine expresses his desire to have "learned and prudent men" double-check his work (2.15.28).¹⁰¹ Soliloquizing is not meant to replace a flesh-and-blood spiritual director.

Augustine is now portraying himself as a victim of circumstances beyond his control who is plagued by some of the loves and fears he described in book one of the *Soliloquies*. Consequently, he ends on a note of frustration, claiming that they have been wasting their time at Cassiciacum (2.14.26) and wondering where is the God to whom they prayed (2.15.27). Augustine uses an orator-

ical image when speaking of his indifference to “popular platforms and honors” (2.15.27), but his metonymy for success as a rhetor may also have theatrical connotations since a platform is, after all, a kind of stage. “I am no longer seeking the theater,” Augustine seems to be saying, “be it the theatrical panopticon of spectatorship in general or the particular theater of my past profession in rhetoric, when I took the stage for the sake of praise. Where, then, is the God for whom I quit these things?” Augustine stops short of total despair, leaving open the possibility that he has deserted God rather than the reverse, but he is clearly despondent.

Reason’s Reply to the Second Objection (2.15.27–2.16.30)

After reminding Augustine that God does not abandon those who seek a knowledge of Him and the soul, Reason yet again tells Augustine to be “present, all of you.” The injunction for total presence, which has been a recurring motif in the *Soliloquies*, bespeaks a profound need for the soul to differentiate the sensible and intelligible realms and to “hold itself” in the latter by a “great habit” of concentration that keeps sensible phenomena from filtering into one’s deliberations about the intelligible (see *On Order* 1.1.3). This habit is great and requires herculean effort because human consciousness is, to borrow a significant metaphor from these early dialogues, protean.¹⁰² The human soul is not an angelic, disembodied substance that grasps everything at once and for all eternity, but something that makes use of or coexists with bodily senses and animal instincts. Although the consciousness unique to this soul, when properly educated and disciplined, can think exclusively in terms of the intelligible, its polymorphic inclinations enable it to slip easily into carnal modes of thinking, all without its being aware that such a slip has occurred. Thus, unless one stays in the correct holding pattern, one can unwittingly sully the purest of intellectual

breakthroughs or fail to achieve a breakthrough at all. Total presence, a presence that involves but transcends mere physical presence, is a necessity in investigations of this kind.

Total presence is necessary but, as we have just noted, it is also difficult. Reason points out that when Augustine is being attentive, he hangs “too much on the conclusion” and waits “for it to be brought forth at just that moment,” incautiously conceding premises along the way (2.15.27). His emotional zeal intrudes upon the dispassionate forum of inquiry. We have already seen an example of this zealous haste in the scene that prompted Reason to explain the panoptic theater of spectatorship (2.7.14). For his own part Augustine concedes that Reason may be right, but he quickly tells Reason to hurry up lest they be delayed by superfluous matters (2.15.27). It does not seem that Augustine has learned his lesson and taken Reason’s admonition to heart.

Reason asks Augustine how he would like to proceed with respect to his second objection about a discipline being in a soul, and Augustine chooses to examine two other things first: that the truth remains forever, and that the reasoning of disputation is the truth (2.15.27). Although this decision was made at Reason’s prompting, it shows some willingness on Augustine’s part to resist the easy shortcut and to risk another circuitous path. And he appears to have become more cautious, asking for more time to consider the claim that the truth cannot pass away lest they must return to this premise “again in shame” (2.15.28). His dispassionate caution, however, does not last long, no doubt because he is still thinking in terms of a shame that shackles him to the theater of the political. Reason barrages him with a series of questions that are implicitly designed to exploit Augustine’s vain fears of embarrassment. Twice Reason begins a question with “surely” (2.15.29). The word he uses is *numquidnam*; *numquid* introduces a question

to which a negative reply is expected, and *nam* is an enclitic expressing wonder or emotion. It is as if Reason is saying, “Surely you’re not so foolish as to believe X, are you?” In the face of this social pressure, Augustine abandons some of his caution with the sheepish reply, “Truly, from here on out, it would be madness to doubt” (2.15.29).

But Augustine has again surrendered too quickly, leaving him susceptible to Reason’s tricks. He has conceded that only that which is not false can be called true, apparently forgetting the category of things that must be false in order to be true, such as actors. And he does not notice that Reason has contradicted himself. Earlier, Reason defined the deceitful (*fallax*) and untrue (*mendax*) in terms of the author’s intention. If the author intended to deceive, he was deceitful; if not, he was untrue (2.9.16). Here, however, Reason distinguishes the two in terms of the *recipient*: if I do not believe that the story of Medea is true and it is not, it is “false but not deceitful (*fallens*) besides” (2.15.29).

Still, Reason is able to establish that “nothing is false except by some imitation of the true” (2.16.30). This doctrine of imitation of or participation in the real builds upon their earlier breakthrough into falsity as a pretending or striving to be (2.9.16), a breakthrough that requires an understanding of privation on the part of the knower. And just as it requires an understanding of nonbeing, so too does it require an understanding of being, especially the hierarchy of being. Silver cannot be reasonably called false lead, but lead can be reasonably called false silver on account of the fact that silver is in some way superior to lead. Augustine and Reason qualify their statements on this subject by adding concessions like “not absurdly” is it called (2.15.29), “it’s as if” (2.15.29), or “so to speak” (2.16.30). Their point is not to claim that lead imitates silver *quoad se*—or put differently, that the former ontologically participates in

the latter—but that when viewing the matter *quoad nos* it is reasonable to evaluate what we judge to be lower as an imitation of what we judge to be both similar to and higher than it rather than vice versa. This reasonableness in human judgment, in turn, reflects a greater hierarchy of participation or nonreciprocal likeness in the order of being, where the lower is like the higher but not vice versa.

Two other things about these passages bear mention. First, in order to distinguish between the realities about which we are speaking and the statements we make about them, Augustine must reject something he learned from Cicero, who had taught that the verse “the huge winged serpents joined together by a yoke” is in no way similar to the true. Reason, however, points out that it is similar to a true statement insofar as false meanings imitate true meanings in order to be coherent. Just as Augustine was willing to disagree with the “great philosophers” Plato and Plotinus for the sake of the truth, so too is he willing to part from the great philosopher-statesman Cicero.

Second, Augustine returns again to the theater for an example of the false and true, excoriating cross-dressers and calling them “true actors and truly infamous” (2.16.30). Part of Augustine’s animus may be driven by the association in Roman society of transvestitism with homosexuality and religious castration;¹⁰³ it may also be in reaction to the god Bacchus or Dionysus, who was often involved in cross-dressing.¹⁰⁴ But the most immediate referent is to cross-dressing on the Roman stage, which was often done by castrated male actors, who, according to one account, “played feminine roles with much lascivious realism.”¹⁰⁵ Some actors were castrated young specifically for this purpose.¹⁰⁶

Yet even against this cultural backdrop, Augustine’s outrage comes across as unduly conventional—bourgeois “middle-class morality,” we might be tempted to say. It is certainly more reac-

tionary in comparison to Reason, who, mindful of extraordinary circumstances in which one could conceivably be a “truer man by the very fact that he is a false woman” (2.16.30), takes a more nuanced approach to the matter.¹⁰⁷ By softening Augustine’s stance, Reason is not denying the evil of a profession that includes castrated actors and onstage fornication, nor is he ignoring the immorality of sexual deviance in general. On the contrary, Reason promises to launch a more careful investigation into the matter later (2.16.31). For the time being, in the face of mere cultural prejudice, Reason is careful to distinguish these perversions from the simple act of wearing the other sex’s clothes.

In terms of the philosophical distinction between convention (*nomos*) and nature (*phusis*), Augustine the character’s focus on infamy, shame, and reputation comes close to saying that this practice is bad merely because society frowns upon it; it is too reliant on *nomos*. Ironically, his criticism of cross-dressers for being like actors in the theater stems somewhat from his own participation in the spectator-driven theater of the polis. By contrast, Reason is essentially promising a theological or philosophical critique of cross-dressing grounded on *phusis* or the nature of things (a critique that he implies is both possible and desirable) “in order not to fall into some inexcusable shame” (2.16.30). This purpose clause, which is primarily in reference to knowing the proper limits of wearing the opposite sex’s clothes, is a subtle warning to Augustine not to fall into the shame he so fears by operating exclusively within the boundaries of conventional honor and shame.

Real Reality, Bodily Reality, and Emptiness (2.17.31–2.19.33)

Building upon their earlier discovery of the liberal arts (see 2.11.19–21), Reason now asks if anything else can join the ranks of the purely true. Retaining the theatrical motif, he formulates the

question as a search for alternatives to a “thespian Achilles—false in one way in order to be true in another” (2.17.31). Augustine has a ready reply. Drawing from their conversation on stones, lead, tin, and silver and noting that stones were the only item not resembling the others, Augustine singles them out as true to their nature without imitating something else. It is a shortsighted deduction, one that contradicts his earlier statement that *all* things are in some way both like and unlike each other (2.8.15); for if a stone turns out to be like something else, then it too may be reasonably said to be “imitating” that other object.

Reason objects. “Don’t these things seem to you,” he asks, “to be all included under the one name of ‘body’?” (2.17.31). During their discussion on the first two proofs for the soul’s immortality, Reason and Augustine had continued to falter because they defined the false in terms of “seeming” and hence yoked notions of truth and falsehood to the realm of the corporeal. Finally, Reason is making explicit their false assumption. But Augustine hesitates. It would be easy for him to lump everything in the category of “body” or the corporeal if (1) he were certain that the empty was nothing, or (2) he believed that the soul and God were corporeal. Augustine mentions the second option because if the soul and God are corporeal, they could join the stone as examples of things that are not “false and true in their imitation of anything” (2.17.31).

Whether or not Augustine’s logic is sound on the latter point, Reason prudently focuses on the former, making Augustine certain that emptiness is nothing. Persuading him that it is will again require a *notitia secundum privationem*, for if emptiness is the absence of bodies in this or that spatial location, understanding emptiness requires understanding privation. Again, this is no easy task: not even contemporary physicists are necessarily good at it.¹⁰⁸ But Reason is able to persuade Augustine by a process of elimina-

tion that the empty is not a reality but the absence of a particular kind of reality, that is, the absence of a body in space. The empty is truly nothing; there is no-thing there.

Having established that the truth is real and that it is not a corporeal entity, and having seen that emptiness is nothing real, it is now left to determine that which falls in between pure reality and nothingness: matter or body. Reason affirms that the body is real, but it “is real by some sort of imitation and for this reason isn’t” *liquidum verum*, that is, “purely true” or “completely real” (2.18.32). Reason has in mind their earlier distinction between that “thespian Achilles,” which is both true and false, and those realities that have no admixture of the false in them. Exploiting an ambiguity in the Latin *verus* (which can mean either real or true) he is claiming that the “purely true” is the “really real” (*vere verum*), whereas sensible things are real but less so on account of their dependence on intelligible reality for their identity or essence. A human body, for instance, is not a human body without a human soul animating it and giving it its identity,¹⁰⁹ whereas a soul remains a soul even after its separation from the body (at least, that is what they are attempting to prove). All prime, formless matter remains barely existent until it is informed by a principle of intelligibility (a so-called form or figure) and made a determinate thing.¹¹⁰ Reason and Augustine develop a similitude in which the relation between body and soul is analogous to that between visible shapes and geometrical definitions. Bodies are therefore true insofar as they participate in the truth or reality of the soul but false insofar as they strive—in a way that Augustine does not claim to understand—to “imitate” the soul. Bodies are a thespian Achilles.

Reason’s characterization of the body is not without its difficulties. Reason has focused only on the soul, which in the case of humans is not only an intelligible reality but an intelligent reality.

What, then, about the intelligible forms or essences of mortal creatures and inanimate objects? Moreover, if bodies are false because they are an “image of the truth” (2.18.32), should not the soul likewise be considered false because it is made in the image and likeness of God? At least, however, Reason has been able to show that the truth is in God, who is immortal, and in the soul as well, which therefore could be immortal. Operative throughout these passages is the nonspatial predication of “in” discussed earlier (see 2.12.22). If the truth is “in” our soul—specifically, in the intelligent part of our soul, the part capable of understanding—as something is in a subject inseparably, then our soul must be immortal, for what is in a subject in this way cannot remain when the subject passes away, and the truth does not pass away (2.19.33). (Reason also considers this conclusion a sufficient answer to Augustine’s request to revisit whether the reasoning of disputation is the truth [see 2.19.33, 2.15.27].) Of the realities that they have examined in the dialogue, only the disciplines, the human soul, and God are totally real and thus, the argument goes, immune to death or nonexistence.

Reason is triumphant. “Now believe in your reasons,” he declares, “believe in the truth. It cries out that it dwells in you, that it is immortal, and that its seat can’t be dragged away from it by any bodily death” (2.19.33). And then, drawing from the earlier image of light and the Allegory of the Cave, Reason adds, “Turn away from your shadow, turn back to yourself.” (Significantly, the preposition used here for “to” is the Latin *in*.) For his part, Augustine can honestly testify that they have turned a corner. “I am listening, I am recovering my wits, I am beginning to mull these things over,” he says. Although it is uncertain whether the proof has achieved its professed aim of demonstrating the soul’s immortality, the exercise as a whole, especially the discovery of truth within, appears to have had a therapeutic effect on him. Augustine, after a long trial, has

been aided in his return to himself, this despite the fact that in other areas he remains “insufficiently exercised” for the vision that only “the purest can see” (2.20.34).

Three Ways to Forget (2.20.34–36)

Because Augustine has only begun to mull these things over, he is not at a point of perfect comprehension or agreement. He therefore asks Reason to return to his second principal objection from 2.14.25—how a discipline can be in an unlearned soul (2.19.33). Reason replies that it will take another book to do justice to the topic. Augustine agrees, but he wants to know in the meantime the difference between a true figure (*figura*) in the intelligence or understanding (*intellegentia*) and a *phantasia* or *phantasma* in thought (*cogitatio*). It is astonishing that we come to a rather basic clarification of technical terms only near the end of book two of the *Soliloquies*, which itself comes only near the end of the *Cassiciacum* dialogues. With the possible exception of *Against the Academics*, the dialogues have kept to a minimum all specialized nomenclature. As we have noted before, this eschewal of jargon shows not so much a disdain for precise language or control of meaning as the extent to which Augustine the author is concerned with the more fundamental problems issuing from the polymorphism of human consciousness and the difficulty of intellectual and moral conversion. If these problems are not addressed first, the finest dictionaries of epistemology and metaphysics fall on untilled ground.

Reason complies by describing three kinds of forgetting, which we list here in a modified order (2.20.34). The first is forgetting completely, like the memories of one’s infancy; the second is forgetting partially, as when one remembers enough of a thing to know what it is not but not enough to remember entirely what it is; and the third is forgetting temporarily, as when a memory is triggered

and what was previously forgotten comes flooding back. The well-educated person's grasp of the truths of the liberal arts is analogous to the third kind of forgetting (2.20.35).

As for the terminology, *figura* here signifies what in Greek philosophy is called an *eidos*, a pure intelligibility or idea grasped or conceived by the understanding alone (in English translations of Platonic dialogues, it is often translated as "Form"). A *phantasia* and a *phantasma*, on the other hand, are sensible images produced by the imagination. The understanding or intellect "contains" figures, but thought or imagination "makes" phantasms (2.20.34). Reason portrays the educated soul as "digging things up" within itself and then thirsting for more, yearning to see truth's "entire face," which has been illuminated by the liberal arts. However, the same arts that contain these figures also give rise to "false colors and shapes" in the "mirror of thought" (*speculum cogitationis*) or the imagination. Such shapes are deceptive and should "be shunned with great caution" (2.20.35). The mind, however, has the capacity to judge rightly these false shapes.

In addition to answering Augustine's immediate question about figures and phantasms, Reason has two objectives in offering these remarks. First, even though he said he was going to postpone a discussion on how a discipline can be in an unlearned soul (2.19.33), Reason indirectly answers that question here: the liberal arts are "buried" in the soul, waiting to be unearthed by the process of learning and education, and thus they can still be considered an essential and inseparable part of even the most ignorant person's knowing faculties. Earlier, Augustine had opined that "we can't say . . . that there is in the soul that which [the unlearned] do not know as a discipline" (2.14.25). Now he realizes that we *can* say that, provided we differentiate between truths that are present actually and potentially.

Second, Reason's threefold taxonomy of memory lapse paves the way for a more extensive discussion of human understanding (see 2.1.1 and 2.20.36). Just as Reason's current remarks are meant to foreshadow a more thorough treatment of how a discipline is in even an unlearned soul, so too does it serve the function of foreshadowing a "painstaking and subtle" treatment of understanding (2.20.36). Both of these discussions are supposed to take place in book three of the *Soliloquies*.

Problems

Still, there are three difficulties with Reason's explanation. First, why is it so negative? Before, Augustine and Reason had maintained the distinction between intelligible concepts and sensible images in a more positive way, mentioning the shiplike function of the senses and the pedagogical value of drawings for disciplines such as geometry (1.4.9). Here, however, emphasis is placed on the disproportion between the two. The discussants return to geometry but now see only the enormous chasm between the fallacious square or circle that can be pictured and the geometer's unimaginable definitions (2.20.35). And Reason, contradicting his earlier characterization of reflections in a mirror as false things that strive to be, now calls them fallacious, that is, deceptive (2.20.35; see 2.9.16–17).

Second, is the account too Neoplatonic? The use of the phrase "digging up" would seem to suggest an unreformed theory of recollection, where truths are buried in an immortal soul that has acquired knowledge from a previous existence. Augustine's own discomfort with these paragraphs decades later would seem to suggest as much. In the *Retractations*, he opines that the passage sounds too similar to Plato's and Plotinus's theories of recollection and that he should have said that the light of eternal reason is present to the mind and enables it to recognize eternal truths.

Finally, Augustine states that he should not have limited the third category of memory lapse to the liberally educated; indeed, his case for eternal truths in the mind is stronger if even the unlearned can, “upon being properly questioned,” provide correct answers about the liberal arts.¹¹¹ Interestingly, Augustine’s retraction replaces one element of Platonism with another, for while he rejects recollection, he retrieves the means by which Socrates “proves” recollection in the *Meno*, the interrogation of an ignorant slave boy regarding mathematics.

This latter point introduces the third difficulty. If Reason’s case would have been stronger by appealing to the knowledge immanent in a *Meno*-like slave boy, why does he limit his remark to the well-educated soul in the first place?

A Myth and a Legend

To deal with these difficulties, we must advert to two ancient stories that lie like faded palimpsests in the background of Reason’s speech.¹¹² The first is the myth of the god Dionysus. Born as the bastard offspring of Zeus and Persephone and originally named Zagreus, he was murdered and dismembered as a baby by the Titans at the behest of a jealous Hera. According to one version, the boy was lured to his death by his reflection in a toy mirror; according to another, he caught a glimpse of himself in a mirror, disfigured and mutilated, before dying; still another, recounted by Proclus, has Hephaestus making a mirror for Dionysus in which the god, upon seeing his image, entered into the whole universe of divisible things.¹¹³ After Zagreus’s death, Zeus took pity on him and reassembled him to live as an immortal—hence the name Dionysus, or “twice born.”

Neoplatonic thinkers made much of this tale. For Plotinus, the souls of human beings see their images reflected in matter,

which he calls the “mirror of Dionysus,” and “leap downward from the Supreme.” It is thanks to the mirror of Dionysus that the soul is now immersed in earthly cares, yet it remains connected in some way to the divine Intellect. Eventually, Plotinus notes, Father Zeus takes pity on these souls and frees them from the body so they may reunite with the World Soul. While the World Soul, in turn, maintains “the unvarying march” of the cosmic circuit, individual souls must constantly adapt “to times and seasons.”¹¹⁴ For Plotinus, then, the myth of Dionysus represents the move from unity to multiplicity (soul dispersed in matter), the fallaciousness of matter (the mirror), and reassembly (a return from multiplicity to unity). On the middle point, Plotinus remarks that matter lies and pretends to be what it is not and that it is a poor mirror, for at least “water and a mirror give back a *faithful* image of what presents itself before them.”¹¹⁵ On a more positive note, imagination is also a mirror, one that reflects intellect. A healthy imagination is like a smooth and shining mirror, while an imagination disturbed by a lack of bodily harmony (caused by disordered desire) is like a shattered mirror.¹¹⁶ Although intellection may be attended by imagination, care must be taken not to confuse the two.

The second story implicit in Reason’s speech is a legend recounted by Cicero about the origin of *ars memoriae*, the science of mnemonics.¹¹⁷ Simonides the poet was attending a dinner party at the house of Scopas when he was told that two men were waiting for him outside. After he went outside to look for them, the hall roof caved in and killed everyone at the dinner table. When the friends of the deceased came to recover the bodies, they discovered that the corpses were disfigured beyond recognition and that the only way they could be identified was by relying on Simonides’s memory of the seating arrangement. It was then that Simonides realized that the best aid to a clear memory was orderly arrangement and that

the best arrangement was picturing different “images” for different facts in different “localities.”

This story, along with the mnemonic method of spatial visualization that it illustrates, was probably part of the training Augustine received as a rhetor, yet it is not without philosophical significance. According to Cicero, Simonides knew that

the things most vividly portrayed in our minds are those that have been conveyed and imprinted by the senses. Moreover, the keenest out of all our senses is sight, which is why things received by hearing or thought (*cogitatio*) can be most easily held in the mind if they are also conveyed by the recommendation of the eyes. The result is that things unseen and removed from the judgment of sight are tagged by a certain outline and image and figure in such a way that the things we barely have the power to grasp by thinking we hold on to as if we were staring at them.¹¹⁸

Cicero goes on to state that a “great variety of images” is useful in retaining words, which act as “joints for the limbs of speech.” It is the task of the orator to assemble these joints and limbs at a moment’s notice.¹¹⁹

Taking advantage of the (rather gruesome) overlapping elements of these two stories, Augustine the author is able to assemble his own account of human knowing and memory. Although Augustine agrees with Plotinus that knowing is a kind of reunification or turn from multiplicity to unity, he makes the mirror in his version not a purportedly duplicitous matter but thought or imagination, poised as it is between pure understanding or intellectual “seeing” and merely ocular vision. It is thought, despite its often fallacious products, that is instrumental in putting things together for us; thought, Augustine has learned from Cicero, is synonymous with *inventio* or resourceful discovery in its investiga-

tion of the hidden.¹²⁰ And as Augustine tells us elsewhere, the very word for thought, *cogitare*, comes from the word for putting together (*cogere*).¹²¹ Departing from the Plotinian explanation of the myth, Augustine writes that thought derives this power to assemble from the light above (2.20.35) rather than from a previous existence. For Augustine, it is not understanding that relies on imaginative thought; it is imaginative thought that relies on the light of understanding, assuming sensible data and being in turn assumed by the intellect—even though intellect or intelligence can sometimes be “disturbed” by thought’s various images. Whereas Plotinus uses the metaphor of a mirror primarily to discuss the ontology of matter, Augustine, incorporating a Ciceronian assessment of memory and thought, uses the metaphor to discuss his own cognitional theory.

Problems Revisited

The tales of Dionysus and Simonides set in sharp relief what occurs in the foreground of Reason’s speech. First, regarding the “negative” portrayal of thought, Reason and Augustine are approaching their subject from a different perspective from the one they used earlier. Before, they approached things from the bottom up, where almost everything was of potential value in solving a mystery. Here, they are examining the same things from the top down, where everything below would only serve as a distraction. The significant difference between these viewpoints is aptly expressed in *On Order* 2.19.51: in the imitation of God “everything else is beautiful”; in comparison to God “everything else is foul.” Yet the severity of Augustine’s top-down vantage point is modified here by an implicit account of memory borrowed from Cicero that sees memory and the image-making power of thought not as a descent from the One but as an aid in the re-presentation

of the real. Memory is that which preserves even intelligible truth through sensible markers located in metaphorical spaces.

Second, although Augustine's account of knowing has been formed in the crucible of Neoplatonism, it is not beholden to it. His statement in the *Retractations* does not amount to a confession of erstwhile Neoplatonic convictions but expresses a concern that his statements *sound* too Neoplatonic. Indeed, his language of "burying" and "digging up" are more compatible with the Ciceronian story of Simonides, where the buried bodies are exhumed in order to be interred properly. As Dominique Doucet notes, just as the dead are buried in order *not* to be forgotten, so too is information stored in order not to be lost.¹²² And what is buried in Reason's explanation are not just intelligible realities (as Plotinus might be inclined to say), but the sensible mnemonic devices used to catalogue and retrieve them.

On a different note, it should also be observed that Reason's speech betrays a distinctive interest in the role of judgment, since the difference between a true circle and its false images is recognized not by an act of understanding but by an act of judgment. Although this distinction is mentioned only briefly, it is enough to indicate a departure from Neoplatonic epistemology.

Third, Augustine's memory of the story of Simonides may explain why he singled out the "well educated" as possessing the best kind of memory. As he wrote these passages he was probably thinking of the trained orator, well versed in the liberal arts and especially in the *ars memoriae* with its vast resources for burying and recovering information.

Fourth, and moving beyond these considerations: Reason's thoughts on forgetting implicitly return us to the brief discussion on memory at the beginning of the dialogue and suggest an answer to the question on the relationship between writing and discovery.

In 1.1.1, Reason portrays writing as an aid to or substitute for memory, specifically, the memory of a discovery already made. Memory itself is faulted for being incapable of retaining everything that has been “thought out” (*excogitata*). There is no mention, however, of how writing can lead to discovery per se. Here, Reason’s description of something half-buried in memory and “dug up” by the mind helps fill that lacuna. Writing certainly preserves the remembered discoveries of an author just as discoveries are preserved in the memory in a way that is analogous to writing (Cicero compares the *ars memoriae* to etching letters on a wax tablet).¹²³ But writing may also trigger discoveries in readers by directing them to excavate truths immanent in their own memories, insofar as memory, limited though it may be, is not merely a receptacle of things learned or experienced but the locus of all knowledge actual and potential. Indeed, this appears to be the real reason why Reason has commissioned Augustine to write the *Soliloquies*: not as a private journal to boost his morale when he is despondent or to record his progress, but as a goad to readers to discover within themselves what is already in some sense there. Likewise, as a testimony to the progress of a fallible and imperfect protagonist, the *Soliloquies* encourages its readers to “take heart” and not despair of their own chances of discovering these buried treasures. Just as Augustine uses his memory and the light of his mind to assemble a new and unique synthesis from the “limbs” of Plotinus and Cicero’s tales and just as he literally “re-members” his struggles as a new path to finding, so too are his readers called to turn their reading into thinking and their thinking into discovery.

Last, Augustine the author may have an additional layer of meaning in mind for the mirror of Dionysus, one that would constitute his final reference to the theater. Dionysus’s status as the patron god of the stage, his ties to cross-dressing, his association

with a mask, and of course his narcissistic use of a mirror all implicate him in the theater of Augustine's day and, by extension, the broader theater of political life. The mirror of thought is therefore evocative of the smoke and mirrors of the worldly theater and its deceptive promise of self-knowledge—deceptive because a mirror lets spectators see themselves only as others see them in the panopticon of spectatorship. The thespian connotations of the Dionysiac mirror thus help to explain why Reason calls the mirror of thought fallacious even though he earlier described mirrors as striving rather than pretending to be (2.9.16) and even though, presumably, one's own thinking or cogitation is not by nature intentionally bent on deceiving one's understanding or intellect, at least not in the activity of picturing squares of different sizes (2.20.35).

Conclusion (2.20.36)

After promising to examine these things more carefully later, Reason reminds Augustine of the order they have taken. Book two of the *Soliloquies* began with the triad of existence, life, and understanding. In response to Augustine's desire to know that the soul is immortal, Reason proposed that they examine the second member of the triad, which would ipso facto resolve the issue of the first. (If the life of the human person—that is, the soul—were immortal, it would be true that the soul exists forever.) Afterwards, they would then be free to inquire into the third item, human understanding. Now at the end of book two, their examination of the soul is still not drawn to a close, as they have yet to determine more precisely how a discipline may be in an unlearned soul or to begin their formal investigation of understanding. That said, as paragraphs thirty-five and thirty-six attest, the *Soliloquies* has already provided ample matter into both areas for further rumination.

But have they proved that the soul is immortal? The third proof that Reason offers is the most promising, but it is uncertain whether all its difficulties have been resolved; and even if it does work, the proof merely guarantees immortal existence rather than *good* immortal existence. Reason detects that Augustine has a lingering fear which the proof cannot dispel: that death may yet inflict misery on the soul by killing its memory and allowing it to exist in little more than a vegetative or animalistic state. “It can’t be said enough,” Augustine shudders, “how much this evil should be feared.” He even suggests that death (total extinction?) would be preferable (2.20.36). Augustine had mentioned in book one that death was one of the three things that he feared (1.9.16), and when Reason interrogated him, it was revealed that he would gladly depart from this body if he were guaranteed divine wisdom in exchange (1.12.20). On the other hand, what continues to terrify Augustine is the possibility that in death “some greater evil may . . . take divine knowledge” away from him or block his “access to the things” he is so eager to perceive (1.12.20). Clearly, the third proof for the soul’s immortality has not extirpated that fear, which is one of the reasons why a third book of the *Soliloquies* is proposed.

On the other hand, because the third proof is grounded in a better understanding of being and of the soul’s nature, it constitutes a genuine and significant advance for Augustine (the character) and is more than just another leaden dagger. It even lays the foundation for a better understanding of understanding insofar as it deals with the presence and inherence of truths to the mind.

“Be of good heart,” Reason tells Augustine. “As we can already feel, God will be present to us in our seeking, the God who promises after this body something utterly blissful and utterly full of

truth without any untruth.” In a brief statement, Reason has combined at least three important threads of the dialogue.

First, Reason, who has been nagging Augustine “to be present” in various ways, now speaks of God being present to them not only in their discoveries but in their searches. It is a happy and unexpected peripety.

Second, although he does not rule out the possibility of a satisfactory rational explanation, Reason turns to the life of faith as a solution to Augustine’s fears about death and to God’s promise of “something utterly blissful” and “utterly full of truth,” which we take to mean what Augustine identifies earlier as the beatific vision (1.7.14). Reason’s answer, then, not only retrieves their thoughts on understanding as seeing in book one, it also—since the vision will consist of the fullness of truth without any untruth (*mendacium*) or striving—makes use of their discussion on truth and falsity in book two.

Third, in telling Augustine to be of good heart (*bono animo esto*), Reason comes full circle to the beginning of their journey, when he had told Augustine to be *animosior*, more heartened by the exercise they were about to undertake (1.1.1). Encouraged, Augustine replies here, “May it be done as we hope.” The vice of despair or discouragement has been a recurring pest in the dialogue, and the virtue of hope or courage has been the recurring antidote; now, hope is literally given the last word of book two of the *Soliloquies*. The life of faith, hope, and charity complements, completes, and elevates the life of reason, giving it the cleansing and courage and vision to persevere. It is that life, more than anything else, that the wholesomely theatrical and therapeutically exercising untruths of the *Soliloquies* strive to impersonate and induce.

ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL; OR, NOTES
FOR WHAT WOULD HAVE BECOME BOOK THREE
Preliminary Considerations

As we mentioned in the Introduction to this volume, *On the Immortality of the Soul* consists of private notes that Augustine took in preparation for the third and final book of the *Soliloquies*. Augustine never managed to finish the task: he published books one and two of the *Soliloquies* soon after their completion¹²⁴ while his notes later ended up being published without his consent under the title *On the Immortality of the Soul*.¹²⁵ Rereading them decades later, Augustine found the task of deciphering them an exhausting experience that barely yielded any fruit.

When an author admits that his work is inscrutable even to him, readers may understandably feel pessimistic about the chances of successfully interpreting it themselves. Nevertheless, there are three reasons not to let the later Augustine's frustration deter us from studying *On the Immortality of the Soul* and even attempting a tentative reconstruction of the third book of the *Soliloquies* from the raw material bequeathed to us.

First, when Augustine returned to *On the Immortality of the Soul* at the age of seventy-two (a full forty years after its composition), he was reading his notes with an eye toward their doctrinal content and approaching them with a pious severity.¹²⁶ Inspired by St. Paul's remark "If we judged ourselves, we should not be judged by the Lord" (1 Cor 11:31), Augustine hoped to avoid the wrath of divine judgment by being an even stricter judge of himself.¹²⁷ Figuring out his literary intentions for *On the Immortality of the Soul* was not among his top priorities.

Second, Augustine was reading quickly. Near the end of his life he had resolved to review *all* his publications, including approximately one hundred books (some of them, like the *City of God*,

being quite lengthy) and several hundred sermons and letters (many of which are elaborate treatises). Although he finished his retractations of the former, Augustine never reached his sermons or letters. But that is beside the point: at the time that he turned to *On the Immortality of the Soul*, he saw it as the fourth of approximately eight hundred writings that lay ahead of him. I do not accuse the great bishop of Hippo of reading sloppily, but he can certainly be forgiven for having little patience for unearthing nuances.

Third and most important, whether the older Augustine saw them or not, the younger Augustine left a number of important clues about his vision for the final book of the *Soliloquies*. We know from the other Cassiciacum dialogues that whatever progress Augustine and Reason would have made in book three would not necessarily have been made in a straight line. Circuitous lines of questioning and deliberately flawed arguments are a common feature of these works, what Augustine calls in the *Soliloquies* “roundabout ways” (2.7.13) and “leaden daggers” (2.4.5). *On the Immortality of the Soul* may therefore contain a zigzagging pattern, with Reason and Augustine pinballing their way from deficient argument to deficient argument until they finally alight on a satisfactory conclusion.

In the other Cassiciacum dialogues, this conclusion typically takes the form of an *oratio perpetua* or long uninterrupted speech by Augustine in which a probable or plausible answer (as opposed to an apodictically certain one) is given; it also contains a Trinitarian element of some sort that links these problems to a divine solution and consummates the dialogue’s religious content.¹²⁸ However, because Reason is the dominant character in the *Soliloquies*—and because the *Soliloquies* is different from its prequels by virtue of its theatrical dimensions—it is difficult to say whether book three would conform to this precedent and likewise

end with a monologue. It is also difficult to determine to what extent Augustine would have incorporated religious elements into book three since his notes contain mostly philosophical arguments and no Scriptural citations.

We do know, however, that if book three of the *Soliloquies* were to have remained faithful to the rest of the Cassiciacum dialogues, it would have continued Augustine's goal of effecting in the reader an intellectual conversion, a moral conversion, and a religious conversion.¹²⁹ Of the three, the most palpable in these writings is intellectual conversion—an inquiry into one's own understanding that culminates in a specific form of self-knowledge. In the Cassiciacum dialogues Augustine refers to this process as a "return to ourselves," which he often links to a return to God.¹³⁰ Intellectual conversion can even function as a solution to the problems that a dialogue addresses. In *On Order* 1.2.3, Augustine blames a lack of self-knowledge on the difficulties of theodicy, thus hinting that self-knowledge is a critical part of the solution.

We also know that the Cassiciacum dialogues tend to avoid technical terminology in favor of a more heuristic approach. Rather than inundate readers with an expansive and established set of terms and relations, the dialogues create a space for readers to arrive at the meanings behind the terms through a process of discovery.¹³¹ *On the Immortality of the Soul*, however, is remarkable for a high concentration of specialized vocabulary such as substance, essence, and form. Assuming that book three of the *Soliloquies* would have been based on the same strategy as books one and two, Augustine would have diluted—or better yet, transposed—his notes from the arid scholarly key in which they were written to something more dynamic and zetetic.

Finally, we know that Reason has made three promises in the *Soliloquies*. First, he promises to explain "how a discipline and

truth are understood to exist in an unlearned soul" (2.19.33). This explanation would complete Reason and Augustine's treatment of the third proof for the soul's immortality, the "in the subject" proof.

Second, Reason promises to address, in a proposed "part" of the dialogue, Augustine's worry that his soul will survive death only to revert to an infantile condition of oblivion and ignorance, for proving the soul's immortality as a living force is not the same as proving the perdurance of an individual's memory and understanding. Augustine the character expresses great interest in the subject, for "it can't be said enough how much this evil should be feared" (2.20.36).

Third, Reason promises more than once to launch an investigation into the human intellect. Out of concern for Augustine's bodily health, Reason terminates a discussion of the soul's health, its reason, and its understanding before they have a chance to talk about the latter two (1.15.27). And in 2.1.1, Reason and Augustine embark on a journey of comprehending the soul's existence, life, and understanding. The two interlocutors combine the topics of existence and life and promise to return to the topic of understanding later. Remembering that promise in 2.20.36, Reason states that a discussion on human understanding has been proposed as a "part" of the dialogue (book three?) and that the proposed discussion will include a more "painstaking and subtle" treatment of what they have just been examining, namely, the intellect vis-à-vis figures and thought vis-à-vis phantasias and phantasms (2.20.34–36). Reason is not clear about whether they will discuss immortality (his previous promise) and understanding sequentially or whether they will combine the two topics like they did in their treatment of the soul's existence and life.¹³²

In sum, the general character of the Cassiciacum dialogues and the specific promises of books one and two of the *Soliloquies* suggest that book three would have included the following:

1. A dialectical pattern that includes circuitous lines of questioning and deliberately flawed arguments
2. A concluding section, possibly in the form of an *oratio perpetua*, that offers a plausible resolution with a Trinitarian echo
3. A discernible call to intellectual conversion and a possible call to moral and religious conversion
4. A completion of the discussion of the “in the subject” proof for the soul’s immortality by an explanation of how discipline and truth are in an unlearned soul
5. A discussion of whether this proof or any other ensures that the soul’s understanding and knowledge will persist after death or whether the soul will revert to an infantile or vegetative condition
6. A more “painstaking and subtle” discussion of human understanding, possibly as it relates to number 5.

With these considerations in mind, let us turn to *On the Immortality of the Soul*.

Day Four: Part I: A Reexamination of the Third Proof for the Immortality of the Soul (1.1–5.9)

Recapitulation (1.1)

We conjecture that in keeping with the virtue of moderation¹³³ and in order to spare Augustine’s health,¹³⁴ book three of the *Soliloquies* would have taken place on a new day. As with books one and two, Reason most likely would have beckoned Augustine to begin with a prayer, and if Augustine were consistent, he would

have prayed for a knowledge of God and the soul. In order to pick up where they left off, Reason then would have invited Augustine to summarize their third and latest proof for the immortality of the soul from the previous occasion (2.13.24–2.20.35).

On the Immortality of the Soul 1.1 recapitulates the argument of *Soliloquies* 2.13.24 but with three distinctive emphases. First, it brings into sharper focus the notion of a discipline. Reason and Augustine are assuming that a discipline is something that is learned, which is why it can exist only in an entity capable of learning, and they credit the presence of a discipline in the mind with the mind's ability to reason well. By this account, a discipline is a method or tool for acquiring knowledge, a means by which a learner moves from "uncertainties" to "certainties." However, Reason and Augustine also state that a "discipline is the knowledge of certain things, whatever they may be" (1.1). Rather than being the means, discipline is the end. If it is a means, discipline is a subjective reality, something that exists in relation to the learning subject; if it is the end, it is an objective reality, something that exists per se, in relation to itself.¹³⁵ The problem is that although both definitions are necessary planks in this the third proof, they are in opposition to each other. If a discipline is learned, it is acquired at some point in time, and if it is acquired at some point in time, it is not eternally present to the mind of the subject as an object of contemplation. Reason the character, it turns out, may have been equivocating on the word "discipline" from the very beginning, but it is now becoming more evident.

Second, with its frequent use of the word "forever," the recapitulation makes more obvious that Reason and Augustine have been approaching immortality and eternity as if they were synonymous, but this could be a mistake. Immortality is in reference to a thing that has no end through death, but its deathlessness does not

preclude its having a beginning. Eternity, on the other hand, can be used loosely to denote anything that is everlasting, but it can also be used strictly in reference to a thing that has neither beginning nor end but always is, always has been, and always will be. The soul is a creature, and as such its immortality is compatible with the loose definition of eternity but not the strict; yet it appears that Reason and Augustine have the strict definition of eternity in mind. For example, the statement “nothing in which something exists forever can exist only sometimes” may be omitting the possibility of something beginning to exist and then continuing to exist perpetually. Socrates likewise conflates immortality and eternity in the *Phaedo*, but he also presupposes a beginningless preexistence of souls and a never-ending cycle of reincarnation, and he applies his conclusion to *all* life, human and nonhuman.¹³⁶ It is uncertain how many of these conditions Reason and Augustine, good Christians that they are, are willing to accept.

Third, *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1 also follows Socrates in its hard line on the body, treating it at best as a useless assistant in the quest for wisdom and at worst as an impediment.¹³⁷ Socrates’s declaration, however, that the body is an obstacle to acquiring knowledge contradicts his statement that the senses help the soul recover knowledge,¹³⁸ and so too does the critical characterization of the body in this passage of *On the Immortality of the Soul* contradict a more positive assessment of bodily senses elsewhere in the dialogues (see *Against the Academics* 3.11.24–3.12.28 and *Soliloquies* 1.4.9). Perhaps this critical characterization will not be the final word of the subject.

Reason and Change (2.2)

The next paragraph applies the same line of reasoning to reason instead of discipline. Reason is a more complicated topic. While it is clear that a discipline is in the mind (insofar as it is a

subjective reality), reason can either be in the mind or be the mind itself. Reason and Augustine endeavor to prove that either way the mind or human soul exists forever.¹³⁹ Crucial to their argument is the unchangeability of reason: if reason is real and does not change, it does not die, and if it does not die, the soul, which either contains reason inseparably or is reason, does not die. But the argument may involve the same kind of equivocation about reason that was present in the treatment of a discipline. Augustine and Reason characterize reason as the unchangeable truths of logic and arithmetic (“four is the sum of two plus two”) and then declare, “But this is that reason of yours; therefore, reason is unchangeable,” before combining this conclusion with the concept of being in a subject inseparably (2.2). The question is what Reason and Augustine mean by *ista ratio*, “that reason of yours.” Is the argument here that reason is both mathematics and a faculty of the mind? If so, there is an equivocation on the meaning of reason. Augustine employed a similar equivocation in *On Order* 2.19.50, but there his goal was to offer food for thought rather than demonstrate something as certain. Can equivocation of this kind be used in a logical proof?

At the very least, our reason is real. It is better than the body (which we all agree is real). Further, the soul that it constitutes or of which it is an inseparable part is more than a collection or arrangement of disparate things: it is its own distinct and even superior reality. Following a long line of philosophers, Reason and Augustine reject the view that the soul is a mere harmony of the body, but in the process of doing so they mark their departure from the apparent teaching of the *Phaedo*. In that dialogue Socrates portrays the body as a shadowy reality, a mere garment or shell for the soul. Here, however, Reason and Augustine call the body a “certain substance,” a reality in its own right (2.2). Reason and Augustine are already modifying the portrayal in 1.1 of the body as

an obstacle to the good, for if the body is a substance, then it too is good. For everything that has a nature or substance is good.¹⁴⁰

Motion and Change (3.3–4.4)

Augustine and Reason have concluded that reason is unchangeable (2.2), yet in *On Order* Augustine defines reason as “a motion of the mind* capable of distinguishing and connecting the things that are learned” (2.11.30). The relationship between motion and change therefore needs to be established.

The argument in *On the Immortality of the Soul* 3.3–4.4 is that the soul is a living substance capable of setting the body in motion without itself undergoing change. A body can be moved faster or slower and divided into parts, making it a member of the world of space, time, and matter; and as a member of this world, it is subject to change. The soul, on the other hand, is a more perfect unity that is free of this changeable world. It can nevertheless act on the world of body through its actions, actions that involve an expectation of the future, an intention to act in the present, and a memory of the past (Augustine later develops this psychology in his famous reflections on time in book eleven of the *Confessions*).

In order to prove that not everything that moves is changeable, 3.3 begins with a discussion of constancy that relates to the notion of “stable motion” (see *On Order* 2.16.44), which has the power to act yet remains constant. Augustine opens the *Soliloquies* with a prayer that includes the following invocation: “O God, by whose laws, standing firm for all time, the unstable motion of changeable things is not allowed to be thrown into confusion [but] is each and every time called back to a semblance of stability by the restraint of circulating ages” (1.1.4). Augustine appears to be referring to an ongoing process of repetition or recurrence that keeps all change from being random or chaotic—recurrences like the circulation of

the ocean waters or the succession of the four seasons. In the constant instability and flux of these recurrences is a paradoxically predictable stability. But that stability is only a semblance of true stability, which exists only in the intelligible realm of being and, perhaps surprisingly, is not only unopposed to motion but actually requires it.¹⁴¹

The key to deciphering 3.3–4.4, then, is a recognition of nonlocal forms of motion. In *On Order* Augustine writes that knowing “what motion according to place is, what motion not according to place is, [and] what stable motion is” are among the things that an educated soul has in its possession.¹⁴² Classical philosophy had a far more robust and differentiated view of motion than what is commonly held today. In addition to locomotion,¹⁴³ thinkers like Aristotle and Plotinus identify other forms such as qualitative and quantitative motion;¹⁴⁴ generation and destruction, increase and diminution, and alteration.¹⁴⁵ Whereas locomotion is a passing from place to place, these other forms of motion are a passage from potency to act.¹⁴⁶ With this broader concept of motion, alteration or change is a type of motion rather than the reverse, and motion can exist outside the sensible realm. As an attribute of substance, Plotinus teaches, motion is *primarily* timeless¹⁴⁷ and free of matter.¹⁴⁸ Finally, nonlocal motion is relevant to the quest for self-knowledge. In Plato’s *Laws*, Socrates defines the soul as “motion capable of moving itself” and characterizes it as “the cause of all transformation and motion in all things,”¹⁴⁹ while in the *Timeaus*, nonlocal motion bridges the gap between the sensible and the intelligible.¹⁵⁰

Changes to the Soul (4.5–5.8)

After wrestling with the concept of the soul being both unchangeable and an agent of motion, *On the Immortality of the Soul* 4.4 ends with a surprise twist: the soul *may* change because of

motion after all. “Therefore,” concludes Reason (we conjecture), “let it be permissible to reckon that the soul is also not immediately deprived of life *even though perchance* some change may affect it through motion” (emphasis added).

In order to salvage their proof for the soul’s immortality, then, Reason and Augustine now need to ensure that there is at least “something unchangeable in the soul that cannot exist without life” (4.5). They give several examples, including the fact that “a principle (*ratio*) of numbers” is unchangeable and that every art abides “by such a principle (*ratio*).” Could this be another example of equivocation regarding *ratio*? Is reason an object of mathematics or an activity of the subject?

Another example is that “art”—that is, artistic skill or knowledge—cannot exist where life does not. In 3.4 Reason and Augustine discuss an artist working with wood or stone, but in 4.5 and the passages following it they focus exclusively on the *liberal* arts, especially music and geometry. It is not clear why Augustine and Reason have chosen the word “art” instead of their usual term, “discipline.” Perhaps it is to broaden their consideration from the highest form of knowledge (*scientia* or knowledge*) to others. Whether it is the artistic know-how of a sculptor or the theoretical knowledge of a musicologist or geometer, knowing is the function of a living mind. The knowledge of, say, chemistry does not exist in a chemistry textbook but in the minds of chemists; what exists in a chemistry textbook is a series of black markings that remind chemists of their knowledge or perhaps ignite knowledge in their minds. But if true knowledge is unchangeable, so is the soul in which it inheres.

And unchangeable truths inhere in the soul whether the soul knows them or not. In 4.6, Reason and Augustine conclude that all truths are present to the mind “in its hidden recesses” even when

the mind is not present to them. The latter occurs when (1) the mind is intent upon something else, (2) the mind has forgotten something that it once knew, or (3) the mind is unaware of one of its “possessions” because the possession has not been brought to its attention through education. And education can be either autodidactic (such as what is transpiring now in the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul*) or an activity that involves “being questioned adeptly by another,” as in Plato’s *Meno*.¹⁵¹ Perhaps there is a middle option as well, which is what *readers* are undergoing when they read the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul* alone. In any event, by explaining how an ignorant soul nonetheless has within it unchanging truths, the discussants have returned to a topic that Reason promised in book two to cover “with more painstaking care and subtlety once [they] have begun to discuss understanding” (2.20.36.) Could this mean that they are having the discussion on understanding right now?

In any event, Augustine and Reason avoid the language of change when discussing forgetfulness or ignorance, most likely because they are defending the position that the soul cannot actually lose or gain one of its timeless, intellectual possessions; at most it can lose or gain an *awareness* of these possessions. Yet they list as an example of change a soul being foolish and being wise (5.7). The thinking seems to be that a wise soul can forget some things or neglect to be conscious of some things or even fail to know some things (wisdom is not omniscience) and still be wise, but for it to become foolish would mark a genuine change in status. For as we learn later, wisdom is a turning toward God and folly a turning away (see 7.12, 12.19).

Reason and Augustine conclude by identifying two basic kinds of change to the soul: those that occur through passions of the body (such as sickness, aging, and pleasure) and those that occur through

its own passions (such as desiring or learning). Neither kind of change threatens the duo's proof for the immortality of the soul because neither kind of change is so profound that the soul ceases to be a soul (5.8). Changes in either bodily or spiritual passion may change certain characteristics or qualities of the soul, but they do not change its essence, for a foolish soul or a fearful soul or a soul weighed down by bodily illness or age is still a soul. Labeling learning as a form of soul-change, however, is problematic for the overall "in the subject" proof. For if learning is a form of change, and discipline is a form of learning,¹⁵² then discipline is a form of change. But for the proof to work, discipline must be changeless.¹⁵³

Summary (5.9)

Various issues having been resolved, Reason and Augustine now offer a final summary of their proof. It is essentially the same as the one first articulated in *Soliloquies* 2.13.24 insofar as it is dependent on the notion of an eternal reality being in a subject inseparably as a means of guaranteeing the immortality of that subject. The current iteration of the proof, however, differs in that (1) since 5.7, Augustine and Reason have been speaking of the soul* (*anima*) rather than the soul or mind (*animus*). The replacement does not affect the logic of the argument, but it is curious nonetheless. (2) Different kinds of change have been addressed, namely, those that do not change the nature of a thing and those that do—what Giovanni Catapano has labeled "unsubstantial changes" and "substantial changes";¹⁵⁴ and (3) reason replaces discipline as the thing that is eternally and inseparably present in the soul as in a subject. We can imagine Reason as the interlocutor offering this summary, and we can imagine him as well making the final statement: "not only should changes in themselves not be feared, but we should also not fear for our reasons (*rationes*)."

Day Four: Part II: Conjoined Substances (6.10–16.25)

A Reconsideration of Reason (6.10–11)

We conjecture that this final statement prompts Augustine the character to object with words to this effect: “Is reason something in a subject, or is it an object consisting of immutable principles? For if reason as an essential property of a subject can change but reason as a series of truths cannot, perhaps the two are not one and the same after all and our entire proof falls apart.”

An objection like this never made it into the notes that comprise *On the Immortality of the Soul*, but it would explain the otherwise inexplicable opening word of 6.10: “therefore.” *Ergo* is used in the conclusion to an argument, but a corresponding argument is missing; it stands to reason that Augustine the author was going to have Augustine the character register a complaint about the vacillating meaning of reason at this point and conclude by saying, “Therefore, I see that all the strength of reasoning should be devoted to knowing* what reason is and how many times it can be defined, so that there may be agreement according to all modes and with respect to the immortality of the soul*.” The problem of equivocation, which has been operative in one guise or another since *Soliloquies* 2.13.24,¹⁵⁵ is finally being addressed.

The Lewis and Short *Latin Dictionary* lists fifteen different definitions of *ratio* in what is probably its longest entry,¹⁵⁶ but Reason and Augustine are content to limit their investigation to three that are peculiar to them:

Definition 1. Reason is the soul’s (capacity for) looking “by which it gazes upon the true through itself and not through the body.” The language of soul (*animus*), incidentally, has returned, replacing soul* (*anima*).

Definition 2. Reason is the “actual contemplation of the true, not through the body.”

Definition 3. Reason is the “very true itself that is contemplated,” like, we presume, the principles (*rationes*) of a discipline.

Definition 1 hearkens back to the analogy in *Soliloquies* 1.6.12, where eyes/looking/seeing are compared to mind*/soul/understanding. Here, however, Reason makes a further distinction. In book one, the focus was mostly on the *activity* of mentally looking even though the word used for looking (*aspectus*) can also refer to the *capacity* for looking. Here, however, both meanings are identified and contradistinguished: definition 1 implies that reason is the capacity for or faculty of mentally looking while definition 2 defines it as the actual act. Despite their differences, both definitions locate reason in the subject. Definition 3, by contrast, renders reason an object. Consequently, Augustine or Reason raises a “question of great importance”: whether reason according to definition 3 can exist *quoad se* and without the soul. If it can, reason as defined in definition 3 (what we may call “reason 3”) is not necessarily related to reason as defined in definitions 1 or 2 (“reason 1” and “reason 2”), and the “in the subject” proof fails.

In light of these more precise definitions, Reason and Augustine decide to reformulate their conclusions about being “in a subject.” There are three possibilities:

Option 1. The soul is a subject and the true is in it as in a subject (the recently discredited position they have been defending since *Soliloquies* 2.13.24).

Option 2. The true is a subject and the soul is in it as in a subject (vice versa?! If this is true, the soul is reduced to a property or accident and is no longer an individual substance).

Option 3. The soul and the true are both substances, which, among other things, means that one cannot be in the other as in a subject (Augustine the author learned from Aristotle's *Categories* and had reinforced from various Neoplatonic writings that a substance cannot be in another substance as in a subject).

Although Reason and Augustine state that options 1 and 2 would be fine for ensuring the soul's immortality if either one turned out to be true, the focus shifts to the "battle" around option 3. It is at this point of the discussion that something unexpected happens. The concept of being in a subject, which has occupied the pair's attention for so long, all but disappears. When it reemerges briefly in 10.17, it is merely to prove that the soul is not a tempering of the body. Instead, beginning in 6.11 there emerges the language of *conjunctio* or of "conjoining" the two substances of soul and truth, a word that until now has made only a fleeting appearance in the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul*.¹⁵⁷ This shift could signify either an abandonment of the proof or a regrounding of it. If Augustine the character can overcome his newfound suspicion that the different definitions of reasons are no more than homonymous and if he and Reason can find a real relation between them, then they may be able to salvage the "in the subject" proof.

What Has Been Conjoined Nothing Can Tear Asunder (6.11)

As a result of their new focus, Augustine and Reason have two other new concerns: whether the substance that is the soul can be separated from the substance that is the truth, and whether the soul can suffer any substantial changes (see 5.8–9). If the soul cannot be separated from the truth or changed substantially, its

immortality is ensured. Consequently, most of 6.11 wrestles with the soul's inseparable conjoining with the true while some of 6.11 and the rest of *On the Immortality of the Soul* are devoted to arguments against substantial changes to the soul through destruction (6.12–12.19) or degeneration into an inferior essence—what Augustine calls “transmutation” (13.20–16.25).

Reason and Augustine are confident that the soul cannot be separated from reason 3, that is, the soul cannot be separated from the true that is contemplated. First, there is no power capable of making such a separation. Bodily forces are inferior to the soul and therefore cannot dislodge it from so important a union. Counterexamples such as dementia and senility are not entertained, but Reason and Augustine would most likely reply that in such cases bodily decrepitude or disease suspends the mind's *awareness* of its union with reason 3 (the true that is contemplated) rather than destroys the union itself, in the same way that dreams and madness can dominate the mind's imagination but not touch the knowledge that remains in the understanding (see *Against the Academics* 3.12.28).¹⁵⁸ Death itself is not mentioned.

Second, an animate power would not separate the soul from reason. A less reasonable soul would not have the power to do so, and a more reasonable soul would never dream of doing so. (Reason and Augustine are taking it for granted that reason is omnibenevolent.)

But most of all, it is not in the nature of reason to allow separation. Reason 3 is omnipotent (“nothing is more powerful than reason itself”), supremely existent (it “exists to the maximum”), utterly immutable (where the “highest unchangeability is . . . understood to be”), totally generous (it would never begrudge a mind the enjoyment of it), and a creative power that enriches the existence of everything with which it conjoins and that even

“bestows existence upon” the soul. In other words, reason 3 sounds a lot like God. In at least two passages in the other *Cassiciacum* dialogues, Augustine implicitly associates reason with the Holy Spirit,¹⁵⁹ and his opening prayer of the *Soliloquies* invokes the Holy Spirit with some clauses that could easily apply to reason 3, clauses such as that through which “we distinguish good things from evil” and through which “we cling not to the lures and enticements of evils” (1.1.3). The prayer in 1.1.3 invokes the Holy Spirit as He “through whom things diminished diminish us not,” He “through whom what is better in us is not subjected to what is worse,” and He “through whom we do not serve weak and needy elements”—depictions that align nicely with the current portrayal of the soul being protected by reason from “corporeal power” (6.11). Finally, even the opening prayer’s invocation of the Holy Spirit as He “who dost lead us into all truth (*veritas*)” does not contradict the present characterization of reason 3 as the true (*verum*) that is contemplated, for Augustine’s early Trinitarian theology portrays the Holy Spirit as the True (*verum*) who leads us to Christ the Truth (*veritas*).¹⁶⁰

Substantial Change Through Destruction? (6.11–12.19)

PRIVATION OF FORM: TURNING AWAY IN FOLLY (7.12)

But can the soul turn away from reason 3 by “its own will” (6.11)? In 6.11, Augustine or Reason calls the idea “too absurd,” for indeed any agent voluntarily turning away from the good is making an absurd decision. But absurd does not mean impossible. In 7.12 Reason and Augustine note how the soul can turn away from reason and become foolish. They agree that folly is a privation and that a foolish soul “has less being” (7.12) than a wise soul, and they also agree that folly is a defect and defects tend toward nothing. The logic throughout recalls the last line of book two of the

Confessions: “I went away from Thee, my God; in my youth I strayed too far from Thy sustaining power, and I became to myself a wasteland.”¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, Reason and Augustine deny that the “naughty” defect of folly can effect a *substantial* change to the soul. Even a wasteland is still land, and even the most foolish of souls is still a soul. And if not even a body can be totally destroyed (it can be infinitely divided and infinitely diminished, its parts and matter being displaced and reassigned, so to speak, but it cannot be annihilated), then it is much less likely that the soul, which is a superior substance, can be destroyed.

On the Immortality of the Soul 7.12 also contains a sentence that reveals something about the compositional process behind the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul*: “The remaining points are conceded at this point, but the conclusion is denied that what tends toward nothing is destroyed, that is, that it reaches nothing.” Augustine the author has scribbled down what Christian Tornau calls “stage directions” for future implementation and development.¹⁶² One can even imagine Augustine converting the remaining points into a round of staccato questions and answers between Reason and Augustine in the familiar style of the *Soliloquies*.

PRIVATION OF FORM: BODY AND
“THE PRODUCTIVE POWER” (8.13–15)

Augustine and Reason have argued by way of analogy that because the inferior body is not totally destructible, neither is the superior soul, but they need to “inquire into this diligently and discuss this” more (8.13), for someone can still argue that a defect in the soul such as folly can grow so bad that it extinguishes the soul altogether. The reason why the issue has not been put to rest is a

lingering uncertainty over the nature and function of form. The body's infinite divisibility, which was defended in 7.12, is due to "the cutting of matter," but the body can also be deformed and lessened by "the privation of form." But if privation of form can deprive, perhaps it can deprive something of its existence. In the background of their question is a Neoplatonic rather than an Aristotelian or a Platonic account of form, body, and matter. The soul may be that which gives life to the body (7.12), but unlike Aristotle's theory of hylomorphism in which the soul is the form of the body, Augustine and Reason hold that the body's existence is due to its having its own form, for it is a distinct substance (see 2.2). According to this philosophical tradition, the human person is a hypostatic union of two substances, one immaterial and the other material.¹⁶³ Among other things, this union of different substances explains why having a better formed or more beautiful body (8.13) does not mean that one has a better formed or more beautiful soul.

In response to the problem of form, Reason and Augustine return to the same line of reasoning as before, albeit in a more elaborate mode. If they can prove that destruction by privation of form cannot happen to the body, it will be clear that it cannot happen to the soul, which is superior. But have they ever proved that the soul is superior to the body? Plotinus devoted a good deal of his tractate on the soul's immortality to this question, first proving that the soul is not a body and not dependent on a body before concluding that the soul is superior to the body and immortal.¹⁶⁴ Augustine and Reason, on the other hand, make a simple appeal to the reader: "No one has examined himself well who would not acknowledge that a soul of whatever quality is to be ranked higher than any body" (8.13). The theme of self-knowledge, so pervasive in the *Cassiciacum* dialogues, is explicitly invoked here as a valid premise in an argument. Self-knowledge

provides the necessary evidence for the claim that the soul is superior to the body.

To prove that destruction by privation of form cannot happen to the body, Reason and Augustine present an intriguing metaphysical map in 8.14 and 8.15 of two levels of being. The first, which consists of that which “was not made or begun,” is eternal while the second consists of that which was made or brought into being by another, for “not a single thing makes itself or begets itself” (8.14). The body clearly falls into the latter category, but even if someone were so foolish to think otherwise, it would work to Reason and Augustine’s favor, for if the body is in the higher category and is eternal, then the soul certainly is as well—for as anyone with self-knowledge knows, the soul is superior to the body.

But if the body has been made (and it has), it has been made by something superior, something that Reason and Augustine identify as an “incorporeal power and nature,” a “substance,” a “productive power,” and the body’s creator or “originator” (*conditor*) (8.14). This force makes the body, sustains the body, and is responsible for the various changes to the body, even the changes from one substantial form to another, like, we presume, the change from a human body to a corpse to a pile of dust (8.15). Even in these cases, however, body does not cease to be body insofar as matter does not cease to be matter; body or matter is merely reconfigured.

Reason and Augustine have made their case, but their metaphysical map of existence is not without its ambiguities. The pair do not explicitly state that the soul is the unidentified “originator,” and it is not clear whether they are speaking of an individual soul animating an individual body or the World Soul organizing all physical matter. Indeed, with their use of the adjective *universus* for “whole,” their profile works better for a Platonic World Soul animating the universe. But proving the eternal existence of the

World Soul does nothing to guarantee the immortality of Augustine's own soul, which has always been his primary aim (see *Soliloquies* 2.20.36).¹⁶⁵ This line of argument may therefore have been meant to become one of Reason's signature red herrings in the finished version.

But whatever its weaknesses, the metaphysical map introduces a crucial concept: the means through which "this incorporeal power and nature maintains the whole" is by "the *presence* of its power" (8.14, emphasis added). Cosmic creators do not create in a deist manner, setting the world into motion and abandoning it any more than an individual soul deserts the body it has vivified and then expects it to live. The principle is an important one: the higher reality causes the lower reality to exist by virtue of its abiding presence, a sort of *creatio continuata*. It is this presence, in turn, that allows the lower to participate in the higher, or as Reason and Augustine put it, for the body to imitate "that which is unchangeable" through an orderly changeability (8.15). And, of course, the notion of *creatio continuata* is crucial to understanding the presence of God to His creation.

Finally, just as these passages provide the resources for understanding God as creator, and just as 6.11 provides a means of understanding God the Holy Spirit, so too does 8.14 help in developing a Christology. One of the most baffling lines in *On the Immortality of the Soul* is "it is not absurdly said about the begetter that he is that which is begotten by him" — baffling, that is, until it is seen in light of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed and its proclamation of Jesus Christ as "begotten, not made" and "consubstantial with the Father." God the Father, Augustine explains elsewhere, perfectly begets God the Son His equal out of His very self and with His very own form.¹⁶⁶ Augustine's phrasing in 8.14 is in accord with the also grammatically puzzling statement in *Soliloquies* 1.1.4,

that “He who begets and He who is begotten *is One*” (emphasis added). Both are perhaps a little too close to a modalist heresy that denies the distinct reality of the three divine persons, but both were intended to reject the Arian heresy that denies the equality of Father and Son and their consubstantial union.

PRIVATION OF FORM: LIFE (9.16–10.17)

On the Immortality of the Soul 7.12 ends with the claim that the soul is better and more alive than the body since it is that which gives life to the body. But if life can be removed from the body in the event called death, perhaps life can be taken away from the soul as well. Responding to this charge is 9.16, which notes that “no thing lacks its very self,” and so the soul, which is life itself, cannot but have life. It is a clever argument originally derived from Plato’s *Phaedo*, but if it is true, then plants and animals also have immortal souls. Plotinus certainly thought so,¹⁶⁷ but one wonders whether Augustine and Reason wish to join him.

The alternative to understanding the soul as the principle of life is to think of it as a tempering or mixing of bodily ingredients, a popular opinion then as now. Plotinus provides a series of logical arguments refuting this position (reputedly held by the Pythagoreans),¹⁶⁸ but Augustine and Reason for the second time cut to the chase with an appeal to self-knowledge. No one would have come up with this theory, the two disputants charge, if “they had had the strength to see with the same soul (dispossessed of and purged from bodily custom) the things that truly exist and remain unchangeable. For who, upon examining himself well, has not experienced that the more he genuinely understood something, the more he could move and lead the mind’s* intention away from the senses of the body?” (10.17). When the mind truly knows intelligible realities (such as definitions in geometry or other principles

of the liberal arts), it has surpassed the “bodily custom” of construing all reality as spatial, temporal, or material—in a word, as sensible. And when it has done so, it understands that this breakthrough could have come about only by a power that is itself not spatial, temporal, or material; it could have come about only by virtue of a reality that is both intelligent and intelligible—in a word, a mind. The antidote to materialistic reductionism, which flattens the hierarchy of being to an amalgamation of physical elements or physiological processes, is the self-discovery of the substantial reality of one’s own mind.

Augustine and Reason’s appeal to the mind’s knowledge of itself affords them an opportunity to explore at greater length the nature of human understanding. When the mind understands reality and itself, it understands that the intelligible is higher than the sensible, and when the mind gazes upon the intelligible, it is “conjoined” to these realities “in a certain wonderful and similarly incorporeal manner—to wit, not locally” (10.17). In book two of the *Soliloquies*, when Augustine and Reason were attempting to prove the soul’s immortality through the “in the subject” proof, they were at pains to show how “in” could be predicated nonspatially. Here, where the interest is in the mind’s “conjoining” with the higher, there remains the same concern for properly predicating the nonspatial.

The concept of the mind’s being conjoined to the realities it contemplates furthers the goal that Augustine and Reason have had since 6.11, and it adds to the metaphysical map of 8.14–15. There, the impression given was of a soul firmly in the camp of the higher world of the eternal and intelligible. The problem with that view is that the eternal was defined as that which “was not made or begun but nonetheless exists” (8.14). But what if the soul, be it the individual soul or the World Soul, did have a beginning and was

made—or to be more precise—was created from nothing? In 10.17, by contrast, the possibility is left open that whatever its origin, the created soul gains eternity by turning toward the eternal and being conjoined to it firmly.

The final proof in 10.17 affirms that the soul is life itself and not a mere tempering of the body. It retrieves the *Phaedo* principle that “no thing deserts itself,” but it also draws a more modest conclusion than before. Rather than inferring that the soul is eternal or lasts forever, it concludes that “the soul cannot die.” Immortality and eternity are not necessarily synonymous.

PRIVATION OF FORM: EXISTENCE (11.18–12.19)

Reason and Augustine are thorough: they want to make sure that no privation of form in the body or the soul can deprive the soul of its existence. The last form to examine is the very form of existence itself. The insight from 7.12 that folly is a defect that deprives the mind of a fuller existence continues to haunt the investigating duo, and understandably so. It was the fear of a reversion to an infantile condition (*Soliloquies* 2.20.36) that launched what would have been book three; Reason and Augustine continue to worry about how much havoc the similar condition of folly can wreak.

But they also have a surprise in store. In 8.15 they were interested in proving that the soul “can exist by virtue of itself,” for if it can, it is clearly immortal, an unmade substance with no beginning or end and a member of the upper echelon of being that is substantially changeless and eternal. But such a view of the soul also entails the belief that the soul “is itself the cause of its own existence” (11.18), a belief that is difficult to reconcile with orthodox Christian doctrine (and perhaps even common sense). Now, in 11.18, Reason and Augustine offer an alternative. If the soul is not a

self-caused entity, then perhaps it is caused by a higher essence, the Supreme Essence in fact. By this account, the soul would derive its existence from the Supreme Essence just as the body derives its existence from the soul (8.14). The soul would not be in the top tier of being but somewhere below. Previously, Reason and Augustine had reserved phrases like “to whatever degree that it exists” (8.14) and “to the extent that it exists” (8.15) for the body, since the soul was purportedly from the shiny realm of Being while the body was a part of the shadowy and less real world of becoming. Here, however, they state that either the soul exists by virtue of itself or “the soul (*to the extent that it exists*) exists by virtue of that Essence” (11.18, emphasis added). The soul is now seen as part of the world of contingent or dependent being and yet not a part of the world of body.

Despite its “demotion,” however, the soul can still live forever by clinging to the Supreme Essence that made it. Specifically, it can be conjoined to the Truth, which dwells in the selfsame Mode or Measure, through Divine Love—in other words, God the Son, God the Father,¹⁶⁹ and God the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁰ This allusion to the Holy Trinity is consistent with the rest of the Cassiciacum corpus, for each dialogue has a “Trinitarian twist” near the end that builds upon the previous philosophical discoveries and incorporates them into a higher theological synthesis.¹⁷¹ The twist is always subtle, which heightens the delight of readers when they recognize it; and it often forces a reconsideration of what has gone before, since ordinary occurrences are now being seen in light of the extraordinary revelation of God’s inner life. Such a reevaluation both elevates the dignity of the ordinary and makes the extraordinary more accessible.¹⁷²

With their Trinitarian description of the soul’s conjoining, Reason and Augustine have breathlessly replaced the Platonic or

Neoplatonic doctrine of the soul's self-sufficiency with a Christian doctrine of creation. In so doing they have redrawn the metaphysical map outlined in 8.14 and 8.15 by demoting the soul and promoting God to a paradoxical transcendence and immanence unachieved in the writings of Plotinus or Porphyry. And the soul's union with the Trinity guarantees its immortality as surely as its alleged eternal self-sufficiency, for as Augustine and Reason discuss in 11.18 and 12.19, God as Supreme Existence and Supreme Essence has no contrary that can dissolve this union. "There is no thing," they conclude, "by which [the soul] may lose [its existence] because there is no thing contrary to that Thing by which it has [its existence]" (12.19).

Moreover, Augustine and Reason's reassignment of the soul to a different rank enables them to explain better the defect of folly that has been a concern of theirs since 7.12. Even if the soul contains all the eternal truths that it will ever know in its own "hidden recesses" (4.6), it must still "turn toward" God in order to become wise. And just as wisdom is the result of turning toward God, folly is a turning away from Him. A soul can choose to become a fool, and if we add to this principle a Christian doctrine of sin (which would not be difficult to do), a soul can even choose to become a damned fool.¹⁷³ The pivots of *aversio* and *conversio*, so prevalent in the *Confessions*, are already present in Augustine's thought at Cassiciacum.

Further, this new metaphysical map better explains the nature of happiness. Every human soul may live forever, but not every human soul will live happily ever after. Only the soul that has chosen wisdom (or that Wisdom has chosen) will enjoy eternal bliss, for as Augustine and his friends concluded in *On the Happy Life*, happiness is nothing else than the perfect possession of God who is Wisdom (4.34–35). And the soul that possesses God not

only will live forever in God but will enjoy perfect understanding. Augustine and Reason have essentially provided a Trinitarian solution to the philosophical problem of an infantile reversion that has plagued them since *Soliloquies* 2.20.36. The soul that is united with Selfsame Mode, Truth, and Divine Love gains immortality, wisdom, and everlasting happiness.

Reason and Augustine's Trinitarian surprise has not come without warning. As we have already seen, in 6.11 they describe reason 3 in a way that makes it sound like the Holy Spirit and even credit reason 3 with "bestowing existence" on the soul. At the time, they could take cover in the ambiguity that reason was either in the soul or the soul itself (2.2); if the latter, reason causing the soul to exist would be the same as the soul causing itself to exist (see 11.18). Here, however, they revise their earlier characterization of reason as "forcing" the soul to exist in a certain way by being more sensitive to the ways in which the soul can voluntarily turn toward or away from God.

Finally, 12.19 offers another glimpse into Augustine's compositional craft with the line, "I would still by no means run away from that which more evidently lends support to me." Augustine the author probably envisioned this part being spoken by Reason, who dominates the conversation in the *Soliloquies* and who makes a similar statement in *Soliloquies* 2.18.32: "What else but that which you see has my total support?"

Substantial Change Through Transmutation? (13.20–16.25)

GOD, ANOTHER SOUL, OR ITSELF (13.20–22)

Reason and Augustine have provided a corrective or alternative to Neoplatonic metaphysics, but their work is not done. Even if the soul does not disintegrate through annihilation, the possibility remains that it can change into "an inferior essence" (13.20)

by “transmuting” into a body (15.24). The remainder of *On the Immortality of the Soul* is tasked with allaying this fear. The previous “proofs” have shown that the soul cannot be reduced to nothing, but they have not shown that the soul cannot be reduced to something else, namely, a body. Addressing this issue will also enable Reason and Augustine to develop more fully the relationship between God, the soul, and the body. At this stage, all the reader knows is that the soul is no longer in the highest category of existence; where it is in the cosmic hierarchy needs to be more precisely determined.

Reason and Augustine assert that the soul does not want to become a body. Its nature is to possess a body, to give it life, and to fashion “it in a certain way or . . . look out for it by some means or another” (13.20). Reason and Augustine turn again to self-knowledge as the Archimedean point for refuting these fears. The soul that “investigates its very self” easily knows that its orientation, its desires, are for action: the action of living, of sensing, and of knowing*. The body as body, on the other hand, is inert and lifeless.

Even if the soul is forced to be a body, there is no cogent answer as to what will force it and for how long. The body cannot force it, for it is not more powerful than the soul (13.21) since it is the soul that empowers the body. A more powerful soul will not force it unless that second, more powerful soul has been given power over it, which is impossible unless the first soul voluntarily submits “by its own desires” (13.21). But the soul will not desire this arrangement. The soul that knows itself knows that it is constituted by its desires, its orientation for the higher, and it will lose these desires if it becomes a body. Therefore, it will not desire to become a body.

And what kind of superior soul will force an inferior soul to become a body? No soul worthy of the name will want “so foul a

change for another” (13.22). Moreover, the only power superior to a soul is God, “who assuredly takes care of the soul*.” A loving God does not want to turn the soul into a body; indeed, Reason and Augustine state that He *cannot* force the soul “to turn into a body” (13.22), presumably because to do so would be against His loving nature. Christian hope in God’s goodness serves as a bulwark against the metaphysical uncertainties of body and soul.

Finally, the end of 13.22 begins using soul* (*anima*) instead of soul (*animus*), and this convention is continued for the rest of the dialogue. The meaning of the argument is not affected by this change, but the shift parallels the adoption of soul* (*anima*) in 5.7–9, which concludes Part I of *On the Immortality of the Soul* (1.1–5.9). Here, we likewise see the last three chapters of the second half employing soul*. Why the change? Perhaps *anima* is more pious: it is the predominant choice for the soul in the Latin translations of the Bible. If piety is indeed the motive, the change from *animus* to *anima* would constitute a “code switch” that reinforces the religious finale for the work that Augustine the author envisions. At the very least, this control of language suggests that *On the Immortality of the Soul* is a rather advanced and well-organized draft, for it uses “soul*” as a means of demarcating the two endings—or rather, the endings of the two parts—of the work.

SLEEP (14.23)

Reason and Augustine have ruled out the possibility that God or a superior soul or the soul itself would want the soul to become a body. They now need to examine whether the soul could become a body not through desiring or wanting but through some inadvertent or unintentional defect. The closest analogue they provide is sleep, which is a bodily function that overcomes the soul whether the soul wants it or not and renders it more corporeal. Could a

similar thing happen in such a way that it permanently disables the soul's uniqueness and turns it into a body? This question is yet another way of addressing the overarching question of whether a human soul filled with knowledge can degenerate into a vegetative or ignorant soul.

But Augustine and Reason deny that sleep in any way disables the soul. At most it shuts down the five bodily senses, but it does not shut down the soul's ability to understand or even its sense-perception. The proof of this claim is the experience of dreaming: the soul has vivid sensations of often convincing images, and it can even have intellectual breakthroughs. Modern readers may recall how James Watson discovered the shape and structure of DNA in a dream in 1953, but Augustine the author uses a more comic example: a dream of a disputation involving the dreamer in which true things are said even though everything else (setting, characters, and dialogue) is false. Aside from the fact that Augustine the character's conversations with Reason are held when he is awake, the description bears an amusing resemblance to the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul*. Perhaps this wry profile is Augustine's nod to the entirely fictitious conceit of this work in contradistinction to the other three Cassiciacum dialogues, which to some extent were inspired by actual conversations held in Verecundus's villa.

Reason and Augustine's brief examination of dreaming also contains the assertion that regardless of whether they are received awake or asleep, empirical phenomena such as locations and sounds in no way "achieve the sempiternal presence of true principles (*rationes*)" (14.23). It is the second time that a doctrine of presence is invoked. In 8.14, the soul is present to the body, and this presence produces and maintains the body. Here, it is implied that true principles are present to the soul: Could they likewise be a cause?

FILLING OUT THE MAP (15.24–16.25)

The last two chapters of *On the Immortality of the Soul* are still concerned with the soul losing itself by becoming a body. To resolve residual dilemmas, Augustine and Reason complete the revision of their metaphysical map of the soul in relation to God and the body. In 8.14–15 the soul was said to be the productive power that makes and sustains the body, but in 11.18 the soul was demoted from the highest category of being and made to rely on God the Supreme Essence for its existence, leaving the exact relation of God, soul, and the body in question.

Filling in the missing details are 15.24–16.25. God is the author of both soul and body, but He authors them differently. God affects the soul first and more profoundly, for it is “nearer” to Him in the “order of nature” (15.24) by virtue of the fact that it is a purely intelligible reality that is affected by “supreme and eternal principles.” Reason and Augustine do not say so explicitly, but presumably these principles reside with God: He is, after all, Supreme Essence (which is Truth: see 12.19 and 15.24) and Supreme Good (15.24) and Supreme Beauty (16.25) and therefore the transcendent author of all truth, goodness, and beauty. But precisely because He is Supreme, God is vastly above these principles as well. In his analogy of the sun, Reason stresses that although both God and the truths of the liberal arts are intelligible, “they differ from each other greatly” (*Soliloquies* 1.8.15). God is not simply intelligible but the “sun” who makes all else “visible” or intelligible.

The soul, according to Reason and Augustine, receives its existence from God, and in return it “hands over” form to the body, animating it and giving it its existence. This is in compliance with the will of God, who “bestows form on the body through the soul*” (15.24; see 16.25). It is thanks to this mediation that the body is not

as “near” to God as the soul is in the hierarchy of being,¹⁷⁴ and it is thanks to this mediation that the soul, as we now see more clearly, occupies a middle rank between God and the body. The soul is better and a “more powerful reality” than the body (16.25), but this does not make the body evil or the hierarchy of being a system of oppression. On the contrary, “the more powerful realities hand over the form that they have received from the Supreme Beauty to those that are weaker in the natural order” to empower them and make them more beautiful (16.25). The hierarchy of being is by its very nature a generous and self-giving cascade of collaboration that elevates and unites its various levels.

And speaking of uniting, one of the recurring themes in these chapters is the nonspatial union of body and soul. Augustine and Reason worry that the soul could become body if it were “contained in a place” and “joined to the body locally” (16.25). Consequently, they stress that this is not the case. Just as the highest principles are present to the soul, the soul is present to the body, and it is this presence that gives the body its being. But the soul is not present to the body locally, for it itself is not a spatial reality and therefore cannot be contained in a place. As Porphyry puts it, the soul is not in the body the way a beast is in a den or liquid is in a bladder.¹⁷⁵ We are again confronted with the mystery of nonspatial “in-ness” first encountered in *Soliloquies* 2.12.22, a mystery that forces us to affirm that there is not more soul in one’s arm than in one’s finger even though the soul is in both. The real but nonspatial union of soul and body is a marvel: Later in his life Augustine would write that it is in some respects even more amazing than the union of the Word and a human soul in the person of Jesus Christ, which is a union of two spiritual substances.¹⁷⁶ But the union of a spiritual and corporeal substance, even though it is an ordinary, everyday event, boggles the mind.

And to help explain this astonishing union, the theme of presence makes a final appearance in 16.25. That the soul is not joined to the body locally may be adduced from the fact that the soul does not react to the body part-for-part or sequentially but is entirely present to the entire body all at once. Hence, when the body experiences the pain of, for example, stubbing a toe, the soul is able to recognize it and identify its location instantly because the soul is present to the toe. Modern neurobiology can, of course, explain the transmission of pain signals from the nerves to the brain, but even the extraordinary advances in nociception cannot explain the mystery of consciousness or its unifying presence. Obliquely, Augustine and Reason make a final appeal to self-knowledge and a common experience.

Finally, Reason and Augustine deny that an irrational or animal soul* can change into a human soul (16.25). Perhaps the *body* can evolve from a lower form into a higher by a process of evolution, but an animal soul cannot make the quantum leap to a rational, human soul on its own.

Conclusion: The Secret of Presence

On the Immortality of the Soul was inaugurated by a desire to prove that the soul will survive death and maintain its knowledge and understanding (see *Soliloquies* 2.20.36). Its main vehicle for doing so was the “in the subject” proof for the soul’s immortality from *Soliloquies* 2.13.24, which had been rather ingeniously constructed from elements of Aristotle, Porphyry, and Plotinus, and which holds that something eternal that is inseparably present in something else as in a subject guarantees the latter’s eternal existence. The first nine chapters of *On the Immortality of the Soul* are devoted to defending and elaborating that proof, but in chapter ten Augustine the character (we presume) detects an equivocation

about that which is in the subject inseparably, namely, reason. As Reason and Augustine explore the relationship between the soul and reason as two different substances, the remaining fifteen chapters apparently move away from the “in the subject” proof to an exploration of the soul being “conjoined” with eternal truth or reason. The work ends with a metaphysical framework that assigns the soul a middle position between God’s eternal principles and the body.¹⁷⁷ The surest guarantee, it would seem, of the soul’s immortality is not a set of logical proofs but faith in, hope for, and love of a union with the Triune God.

Strictly speaking, then, *On the Immortality of the Soul* ends in failure. It does not prove the soul’s immortality according to the strict canons of logical deduction but instead offers a plausible or probable grounding for a belief in personal immortality thanks to a Christian-friendly metaphysical hierarchy and a Christian hope in God’s lovingkindness. But this failure may be deliberate. Ending a work on the soul’s immortality with the plausible rather than the proven is in keeping with the literature on the subject. In Plato’s *Phaedo* Socrates argues that *if* you grant him the existence of a Beautiful, a Good, and a Great, then the soul will be found immortal;¹⁷⁸ Augustine and Reason similarly base their concluding thoughts on a Supreme Essence, a Supreme Good, and a Supreme Beauty that is presupposed but not logically demonstrated. In the same Platonic dialogue Simmias opines that we have a responsibility to learn the truth about the soul’s immortality for ourselves or, failing that, to the best and most reasonable theories available.¹⁷⁹ *On the Immortality of the Soul* follows this pattern, for it does not prove a Christian-Neoplatonic hierarchy of being but proposes it as a theory that, if true, would ensure the soul’s immortality.

More importantly, such an ending is in keeping with the Cassiciacum corpus. *Against the Academics*, *On the Happy Life*,

and *On Order* conclude with a plausible rather than an apodictically certain solution to the problems they explore; it would be strange if the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul* were any different. And all these plausible solutions are based on faith and divine revelation; again, it would be strange and indeed contradictory to provide logical proofs for convictions held by supernatural faith. Finally, it is appropriate that *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul* would adhere to the Cassiciacum pattern of a theological consummation of philosophical problems as a way of meeting one of the implicit goals of the dialogue, namely, increasing the virtue of hope or courage. Throughout the *Soliloquies*, Augustine the character is despondent, and Reason must frequently bolster Augustine's hope in attaining the eternal Beauty that he seeks (see 1.10.17). That hope is fortified in the finale of *On the Immortality of the Soul* by the prospect of a union with the Holy Trinity whose eternal presence will guarantee his immortal bliss.

As for the theme of presence, it could be the key to understanding the fate of the "in the subject" proof. From its inception, the proof relied upon an equivocation, and once this is exposed in 6.10–11, the work shifts to the possibility of a subject conjoining inseparably to the substance that is reason. There are two ways to understand this shift: as a supplanting of the original proof or as a supplementing of it. If the proof was supplanted, it was abandoned and replaced by the plausible model of a conjoining of two substances. But if the proof was supplemented, a connection was found between reasons 1 and 2 on one hand and reason 3 on the other. Augustine and Reason's theory of presence may be that missing link, with reason 3, by virtue of its eternal presence (14.23), being the *cause* of reasons 1 and 2's presence in the soul as in a subject, since presence is causal (8.14). Just as the presence of the soul makes the body possible, the presence of eternal *rationes*

(reason 3) to the human soul makes the capacity for reasoning (reason 1) and the act of reasoning (reason 2) possible. And all presences are caused in different modes by the transcendent causality of God the Supreme Essence (15.24–16.25), who, as Augustine puts it in the *Confessions*, is *praesentissimus* or “utterly present.”¹⁸⁰ Combining a theology of causality with a philosophy of subjective presence would still not be a strict proof (for the former was never proved), but it is plausible if Reason and Augustine’s metaphysical map is true. Moreover, it would nicely reintegrate the two parts of *On the Immortality of the Soul*.

One thing is certain: presence plays a subtle but important role at Cassiciacum and in Augustine’s other works. In *On Order*, the command to “be here” is used as a call to heightened self-presence: since the soul can turn away from that which is present to it through folly, it needs to turn toward and be fully present to what is present to it.¹⁸¹ The presence of the soul is not spatial (being physically present in a classroom does not mean that a student is necessarily paying attention) but nevertheless real. And what can be said of the soul in this regard is even more true of God. “The wise man,” Licentius asserts, “embraces God and enjoys to the fullest Him who abides forever, for whose presence there is no waiting and of whose absence there is no fearing, but by the very fact that He truly is, is always present” (*On Order* 2.2.6). In the *Soliloquies* the motifs of psychological presence and divine presence are especially salient.¹⁸² Regarding the latter, book two of the *Soliloquies* begins and ends with a prayer of hope or a profession of faith that “God will be present to us” (2.1.1 and 2.20.36). In *On the Immortality of the Soul*, that hopeful prayer may be answered in the very breakthrough about the role of divine presence in creation. And although Augustine’s thoughts on presence developed over time, he never retracted any of his statements on

the matter in the Cassiciacum writings. On the contrary, he chides himself for not applying his theory of presence more. Commenting on *Soliloquies* 2.20.35, which limits the retrieval of truths to the well educated, Augustine writes: “It is more credible that even those who are ignorant give true responses about certain disciplines when they are questioned well because, insofar as they are able to grasp it, *the light of eternal reason*, where they gaze upon these unchangeable truths, *is present to them*.”¹⁸³

RECONSTRUCTING BOOK THREE OF THE SOLILOQUIES

At the beginning of our commentary on *On the Immortality of the Soul*, we listed six possible features that book three of the *Soliloquies* might have had:

1. a dialectical pattern that includes circuitous and flawed arguments;
2. a concluding section, possibly in the form of an *oratio perpetua*, that offers a plausible resolution with a Trinitarian echo;
3. a call to intellectual conversion and possibly moral and religious conversion;
4. a completion of the discussion of the “in the subject” proof with an explanation of how discipline and truth are in an unlearned soul;
5. a discussion of whether this proof or any other ensures that the soul’s understanding and knowledge will persist after death or whether the soul will revert to a vegetative condition; and
6. a more “painstaking and subtle” discussion of human understanding, possibly as it relates to number 5.

In the wake of our analysis, we now conclude that *On the Immortality of the Soul* contains almost all of these elements either *in ovo* or in a more developed state. The work is not a monolithic exposition but a series of dialectical twists and turns, such as the discovery of the Achilles' heel of the "in the subject" proof and the progressive revision of a metaphysical map. By 11.18, the quest for an invincible proof is replaced by a probable or plausible account based on a Trinitarian theology and Neoplatonic metaphysics that provides hope for the soul's immortality, wisdom, and bliss, thereby countering the fear of a comatose afterlife (fear of an infantile or vegetative reversion is also implicitly addressed in 14.23). The work has a call to intellectual conversion in the form of "examining oneself well"¹⁸⁴ and a call to religious conversion by "turning toward" God, and it addresses the issue of discipline and truth in an unlearned soul directly in 4.6 and indirectly through its theory of presence (see 15.24). Further, *On the Immortality of the Soul* contains several important insights about human understanding that are intertwined with the concern for personal immortality. This intertwining of the themes of living and understanding, which is similar to the intertwining of the themes of existing and living in *Soliloquies* 2.1.1, may or may not have been intended as a substitute for the more "painstaking and subtle" treatment of understanding that Reason promised in *Soliloquies* 2.20.36.

How Augustine would have converted these elements into a dramatic work of art remains a matter of conjecture. Normally in the Cassiciacum dialogues, the Trinitarian element is part of Augustine the character's *oratio perpetua*. In *On the Immortality of the Soul*, this element occurs at 11.18, but Reason still seems to be responding to objections from Augustine in 12.19. Chapters 15.24 and 16.25, which complete the metaphysical map, have the character of a speech rather than a conversation insofar as they offer a

grand and sustained vision of the whole, but they are also still responding to lingering issues about transmutation. Ironically, the envisioned conclusion to the *Soliloquies* may not have contained a concluding soliloquy.

Nor can we be certain to what degree or how Augustine would have converted these notes, which are thick with technical jargon, into a more beguiling and engaging composition. Some lines, however, do contain evidence that he was thinking along heuristic lines and avoiding technical terms, for example, "For an inferior maker would not have the power to endow what he was making, whatever it is, with what it is that he was making" (8.14). Augustine could have tightened this statement with terms such as "form" and "essence," but he crafted it in such a way that leaves a door open for readers to pass through on their own.

EPILOGUE

Why the *Soliloquies* was never finished also remains a matter of conjecture. Augustine probably returned to Milan from Cassiciacum in time to enroll his name as a *competens* or candidate for baptism by January 6, 387, the Feast of the Epiphany.¹⁸⁵ From the First Sunday of Lent on March 14 until his baptism during the Easter Vigil on the night of April 24, he took part in the rigorous catechumenate of the early Church, which included participating in extensive fasting, daily Mass, and all-night vigils; memorizing prayers; listening to homilies; and taking part in dramatic events like the Scrutinies. He also may have continued doing a homework assignment from Ambrose to read the Book of Isaiah.¹⁸⁶ His freest block of time in Milan therefore would have been between January 6 and March 14, which he filled with composing the notes for book three of the *Soliloquies* and with a far more ambitious project: an eight-

volume series on philosophy and the liberal arts.¹⁸⁷ During his stay in Milan, Augustine was able to complete the volume on grammar and the beginnings for six others (dialectic, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, music, and philosophy).¹⁸⁸ In other words, in two or three months Augustine wrote the intricate *On the Immortality of the Soul*, an entire work on grammar, and six introductory chapters for six different books. It was an impressive literary output.

It is therefore easy to surmise why he did not complete the *Soliloquies* when he was in Milan: he was distracted by his exciting new idea for a series of books on philosophy and the liberal arts, and he felt compelled to follow the Muse (with all due respect to Augustine's later aversion to pagan allusions) while the Muse was still inspiring.

The larger question is why Augustine never returned to the task of completing the *Soliloquies* as he did with other projects. He wrote book one of *On Free Choice of the Will* while staying in Ostia, tabled it for a while, and wrote the remaining three books after moving back to Africa.¹⁸⁹ He wrote most of the first three books of *On Christian Doctrine* around A.D. 396 and did not finish the rest of the third book and any of the fourth book until around 426, possibly only after discovering that it was unfinished when he went to review it for the *Retractations*.¹⁹⁰ Why did Augustine not do the same for the *Soliloquies*? We know that the later Augustine is more interested in the immortality of the entire person, body and soul, through the resurrection of the dead at the end of time; in the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul*, his focus is limited to the soul immediately after death. We also know that the later Augustine is more interested in immortality as transformation in a new heaven and a new earth; in the *Soliloquies/On the Immortality of the Soul*, he would settle for immortality as continuation and expansion of the mind as we know it. Some scholars

contend that Augustine's understanding of causality in *On the Immortality of the Soul* was too Neoplatonic to be reconciled with a Christian doctrine of creation, and he therefore abandoned the project.¹⁹¹ I have reservations about this argument, but if it is correct, it does not mean that he was being too Neoplatonic at the time but that he already knew in light of his Christian faith of the inadequacy of the Neoplatonic resources at his disposal and that either he had grown weary of the task of demonstrating to his reader the transition from Neoplatonism to Christianity or he had figured that his energies were better spent elsewhere.

Whatever the reason, it seems a shame that Augustine never finished the *Soliloquies*, which was already groundbreaking in its neologistic title and in its theatrical transformation of the dialogue genre. But perhaps it is good that instead a skeletal draft for book three has survived in the form of *On the Immortality of the Soul*. Not only do these notes afford a rare glimpse into Augustine's compositional process, they exercise us with their incomplete riddles in their own distinctive way. If we have learned anything from Saint Augustine of Hippo, it is to trust in the workings of Providence.

TIME LINE

THE PROBABLE CHRONOLOGY OF THE CASSICIACUM RETREAT

For the most part the following chronology is based on the conclusions drawn in Denis J. Kavanaugh's *Answer to Skeptics* and Desiderius Ohlmann's *De Sancti Augustini Dialogis*.

NOVEMBER 386

7th

8th

9th

The party is said to have arrived a “few days” before the beginning of book one of *Against the Academics* (1.1.4), most likely on one of these dates.

Trygetius and Licentius have read Cicero's *Hortensius* either shortly before or after their arrival and are eager for philosophy (*Against the Academics* 1.1.4).

NOVEMBER 386

10th

11th

12th

[Book one of *Against the Academics*]

[Mostly Augustine, Trygetius, and Licentius take part.]

A stenographer is first used (1.1.4) to record a discussion between

The group does chores around the villa and studies book one of the *Aeneid* (1.5.15). A

A recorded discussion is held between Licentius and Trygetius on happiness that takes

continued...

Licentius and Trygetius on happiness and the quest for truth that takes place at an undisclosed location “that seemed suitable for the purpose” (1.2.5). During the discussion, Alypius departs for Milan (1.2.5, 1.4.11, 1.6.16). The group takes a leisurely stroll during which many topics are discussed (but not recorded) (1.4.10). Licentius and Trygetius try to resume their dispute at dusk, but Augustine persuades them to postpone it until tomorrow (1.4.10). They all take a trip to the baths (1.4.10).

recorded discussion is held (1.4.11) between Licentius and Trygetius on happiness and the quest for truth that takes place near sunset at an undisclosed location (1.5.15).

place at dawn at an undisclosed location (1.6.16). Lunch (1.9.25).

NOVEMBER 386

13th

14th

15th

[On the Happy Life]

[Augustine, Navigius, Monica, Adeodatus, Lastidianus and Rusticus, Licentius, and Trygetius all take part.]

<p>[Augustine's birthday] A light lunch (1.6). Afterwards, a recorded discussion is held in the</p>	<p>Lunch (3.17). Later in the day, a recorded discussion is held in the bathhouse (for the same reason as</p>	<p>Because the afternoon is sunny, the final discussion on happiness is held and recorded in the “little meadow . . .</p>
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bathhouse (on account of the morning mist) concerning happiness as “having” God (4.23).

before [4.23]) on who “has” God (3.17).

nearby” (4.23). After supper, Licentius chants a verse from the Psalms while answering the call of nature; Monica overhears and disapproves (*On Order* 1.8.22). [This is assuming that book one of *On Order* begins on the 16th; if *On Order* begins on the 17th, the outhouse incident happens on the 16th].

NOVEMBER 386

16th

17th

18th

[Book one of *On Order*, either on the 16th and 17th or on the 17th and 18th]

[Augustine, Licentius, and Trygetius take part, with a brief appearance by Monica at the end.]

A discussion takes place in the middle of the night in the bedroom that Augustine, Licentius, and Trygetius share (1.3.6) and lasts until the early dawn (1.7.20).

Shortly after, Licentius and Trygetius rise while Augustine remains in prayer. After Monica and Licentius return from the outhouse, Augustine hears

Early in the morning, the group gathers “in the usual place” (probably the baths) and continues their discussion on order (1.9.27). Near the end Monica joins the group (1.11.31). The discussion is the only business that Augustine does on this day (1.11.33).

continued...

him chanting the same verse
 that had gotten him in trouble
 with Monica the night before
 (1.8.22). Augustine and
 Licentius have a brief
 conversation (1.8.22ff).
 Augustine rises from bed, and
 the group “renders its daily
 vows to God” (a possible
 allusion to a primitive
 version of Lauds) (1.8.25).
 After prayer and on the way
 to the baths, the group
 witnesses a cockfight (ibid.).
 Once at the baths, they write
 down all that transpired that
 day (1.8.26). Before supper,
 they read half a book of Vergil
 and do nothing else for the
 day (ibid.).

NOVEMBER 386

20th

21st

22nd

[Or possibly the 19th, 20th, and 21st]

[Books two and three of *Against the Academics*, which take place on
 three consecutive days (2.4.10, 2.11.25, 3.1.1) about seven days after
 the end of book one (2.4.10)]

[Augustine, Licentius, Trygetius, Navigius, and Alypius take part.]

A beautiful clear day;	An equally pleasant	The weather is too
Alypius has returned	and calm day (2.11.25).	gloomy for the meadow,
from Milan at some	Augustine spends the	so the bathhouse is
point (2.4.10).	day writing letters	chosen for a recorded
The group arises early	(2.11.25), Trygetius	discussion (3.1.1).
and does a small amount	reveling in Vergil's	(Earlier, Licentius had

<p>of farm work (2.4.10). In the field, the group walks about as the first discussion is read to Alypius, an activity that takes up most of the late morning (2.4.10). While on the way back to the villa, a recorded discussion is held (2.4.10). Lunch at the villa (2.5.13). After lunch, a recorded discussion is held in the field (2.6.14). At sunset the discussion ends, and all return to the house (2.10.24).</p>	<p>poems, and Licentius in writing or studying verse (3.1.1). Two hours before night, a recorded discussion is held in the meadow near the “usual tree” (2.11.25). At darkness all return to the house (2.13.30).</p>	<p>been singing verses from “Greek tragedies” that he did not understand [3.4.7].) Lunch at the villa (3.3.6). Licentius leaves early, returns to the bathhouse, and works more on his verses (3.4.7). Discussion at the bathhouse is resumed (3.4.7). At dusk a lamp is fetched so the recording can continue (3.20.44). At night the discussion comes to a close (3.20.44–45).</p>
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NOVEMBER 386

22nd

23rd

24th

[Book two of *On Order*, beginning either the day after the last discussion of *Against the Academics* or shortly thereafter, most likely the 23rd, but possibly the 22nd or 24th]

A warm day invites Augustine, Licentius, Trygetius, Monica, and Alypius out on the lawn, where Licentius defends his definition of order in a recorded discussion (2.1.1).

At one point of the discussion Licentius leaves and then returns (2.3.10, 2.5.17). After being summoned by a boy from the house, the group has lunch (2.6.18). After lunch, a cloudy sky compels the group to reconvene in the bathhouse for a recorded discussion on various topics related to order (2.6.19). The discussion culminates in Augustine’s explication of the liberal arts and closes at night, after a lamp has been fetched (2.20.54).

NOVEMBER 386–JANUARY 387

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

[Book one of the *Soliloquies*, which takes place either sometime during the other dialogues, when Augustine is alone by himself, or shortly thereafter (see *Retractations* 1.4.1). No mention of the date of book two of the *Soliloquies* is made, but given Augustine's impatience to continue his conversation with Reason, it presumably takes place not long after (see 2.1.1). The *terminus a quo* of the *Soliloquies* is Augustine's birthday on November 13, 386 (see 1.10.17); the *terminus ad quem* is January 6, 387, when Augustine presumably would have returned to Milan to enroll his name as a candidate for baptism. Augustine would be received into the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil on April 24–25, 387.]

Soliloquies 1.1.1–1.13.23:

At an undisclosed location. Augustine and Reason hold a discussion, and Reason hold a most likely during the day (*Soliloquies* 1.13.23, 1.14.25), which is similar to the meditations Augustine was accustomed to holding at night (compare *Soliloquies* 1.1.1 and *On Order* 1.3.6). The discussion is concluded in order to spare Augustine's health (*Soliloquies* 1.13.23). At night, as Augustine mentally reviews these things, his mind drifts to the enticements of a woman's charms (1.14.25).

Soliloquies 1.14.24–

1.15.30: The next day (see 1.14.25). Augustine discussion near a tree, possibly the one in the meadow where the group was accustomed to meeting (see *Soliloquies* 1.15.28; *Against the Academics* 2.11.25).

Soliloquies 2.1.1–2.20.36:

Presumably on another day (given the conversation of 1.15.30), although this is not explicitly stated. At an undisclosed location, Augustine and Reason hold a discussion.

GLOSSARY OF SELECT NAMES

Adeodatus. The only child of Augustine and his unnamed mistress of fifteen years (*Confessions* 6.15.25). Adeodatus, whose name means “given by God,” was born in Carthage in A.D. 372. He went with his parents to Italy and remained there with his father and grandmother after his mother was forced to return to Africa. At Cassiciacum Adeodatus was fourteen or fifteen years old; along with Augustine and Alypius, he was there as a catechumen to prepare for baptism. Augustine comments that his son was “more intelligent than many a grave and learned man” (*Confessions* 9.6.14) and that he was “least of us all in age” but had an “intellectual aptitude, if my love does not deceive me, [that] promises something great” (*On the Happy Life* 1.6). *On the Happy Life* is the only Cassiciacum dialogue in which Adeodatus participates; his participation betrays a high regard for moral purity (see *On the Happy Life* 2.12, 3.18). Adeodatus was baptized along with his father by St. Ambrose in Milan on April 24–25, 387; he was also present at Monica’s death, accompanied his father back to North Africa, and joined his father’s lay community in Thagaste. The later dialogue *On the Teacher* consists of a conversation between Augustine and Adeodatus that is said to have taken place at this time. Adeodatus died of an undisclosed illness around 389, when he was seventeen or eighteen years old (*Confessions* 9.6.14).

Alypius, St. A native of Thagaste, born after A.D. 354 into a family nobler than Augustine’s. He became one of Augustine’s students and followed him into the Manichaean sect (*Confessions* 6.7.11–12). According to Augustine, Alypius went on to become a courageous and conscientious lawyer (*Confessions* 6.10.16). He converted to Christianity moments after

Augustine, taking and reading the same epistle from St. Paul that prompted Augustine's conversion (*Confessions* 8.12.30). He has a cardinal role to play in *Against the Academics* and *On Order* and is even significant in absentia in *On the Happy Life*. Described as somewhat short and stout (*On the Happy Life* 2.15), Alypius is the closest to an intellectual peer that Augustine has at Cassiciacum. Later he serves as a sort of assistant editor of the Cassiciacum dialogues (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4, *Confessions* 9.4.7). A close friend of Augustine, who calls him his "heart's brother" (*Confessions* 9.4.7), Alypius eventually became the bishop of Thagaste and died sometime around 427 or 428. Although he is not commonly known as such, Alypius is considered a saint in the Catholic Church. For his feast day on August 15, the *Roman Martyrology* states: "At Tagaste in Africa, St Alipius, Bishop, who was of old a disciple of blessed Augustine, and afterwards his fellow-convert, his colleague in the pastoral office, a gallant fellow-warrior in his contests against the heretics, and lastly his consort in heavenly glory."

Ambrose of Milan, St. The bishop of Milan, Ambrose is called "our priest" by Augustine in *On the Happy Life* (1.4 and 4.35; see also Ambrose, *On Jacob and the Happy Life* 10.43). Elsewhere Augustine calls him "famed among the best men of the whole world" (*Confessions* 5.13.23). As the consular governor of Liguria and Aemilia, Ambrose addressed the Catholic faithful of Milan in order to resolve a dispute as to who should succeed their recently deceased bishop. While he was delivering an eloquent speech on the importance of peace and moderation, the congregation demanded that he be made their bishop (even though he was only a catechumen), and so Ambrose was baptized and ordained in a period of eight days. He went on to become a strong defendant of orthodox Christianity from the Arian heresy and the encroachment of civic power on the affairs of the Church (see *Confessions* 9.7.15–16). From him Augustine learned at least two important lessons: the figurative reading of Scripture (*Confessions* 5.14.24) and the Christian teaching on the immateriality of God's essence (*Confessions* 6.3.4). Monica also held Ambrose in high regard (see *Confessions* 6.1.1–6.2.2); his effect on her piety is evident in *On the Happy Life* 4.35.

Lartidianus. Also known in some manuscripts as Lastidianus. Along with Rusticus, Lartidianus is described as a cousin of Augustine who never had to endure "even a single grammar school teacher" but whose common sense Augustine considered indispensable to the undertaking of *On the Happy Life* (1.6). Lartidianus and Rusticus appear only in *On the Happy*

Life, the least philosophically demanding of the Cassiciacum dialogues, and although they participate in the discussion, neither has a recorded line (see *On the Happy Life* 2.12). Nothing else is known of them.

Licentius. The son of Romanianus and thus a relative of Augustine and a native of Augustine's hometown of Thagaste in North Africa. At Cassiciacum he is described as an *adulescens*, a young man somewhere between the ages of fifteen and thirty. Licentius is one of Augustine's two pupils and a principal participant in the dialogues. He is bold and impetuous, with a newfound passion for poetry (*Against the Academics* 2.3.7; *On Order* 1.2.5) and an equally recent but sporadic passion for philosophy (*Against the Academics* 1.1.4, *On Order* 1.3.8–1.4.10). Around A.D. 395, fewer than ten years after their retreat together, Licentius sent Augustine a poem he had composed praising their time at Cassiciacum and asking for further guidance. In his response, Augustine chides his former pupil for still missing the point about the right relationship between the love of wisdom and the love of poetry (see *Epistle* 26).

Monica, St. Augustine's remarkable mother. Possibly a native North African, she married a Roman named Patricius and bore him three children: Augustine, Navigius, and a daughter whose name we do not know. Although her husband was not a Christian at the time, Monica made sure that Augustine was initiated into the catechumenate the moment he was born (*Confessions* 1.11.17). Monica bore Patricius's marital infidelities and bad temper with patience and eventually brought him into the Catholic Church before he died around A.D. 370–371. Although she was initially preoccupied with Augustine's worldly prospects (*Confessions* 2.3.8), she grew more concerned about his spiritual welfare as he fell into debauchery and the Manichaean heresy. Monica prayed for her son constantly, followed him to Italy despite his efforts to evade her, and pestered at least one bishop for help in bringing back her wayward son (see *Confessions* 3.12.21). In the *Confessions*, Augustine credits his embrace of the Christian faith to her intercession (5.7.13, 5.8.15, 5.9.17); in the Cassiciacum dialogues, he writes that he owes everything to her (*On the Happy Life* 1.6) and praises her for her philosophical zeal (*On the Happy Life* 2.10; *On Order* 1.11.32, 2.1.1), for having “a mind utterly attentive to God” (*On the Happy Life* 4.27), and for having a soul “afame for things divine” (*On Order* 2.1.1). Monica figures prominently in *On the Happy Life* and to a lesser extent in *On Order*; but having little patience for exhaustive epistemological debate (see *On the Happy Life* 2.16), she has only a brief and rather comic cameo, so to speak, in *Against the Academics* 2.5.13. Monica

lived to see her son and grandson baptized on April 24–25, 387; shortly after, she succumbed to a deadly fever as she and her family waited in the Roman port town of Ostia for passage back to Africa. She was fifty-six years old.

Navigius. Augustine had at least two siblings, one of them a sister. Little is known of his brother Navigius other than that he was present at Cassiciacum with Augustine (see *Against the Academics* 1.2.5, *On Order* 1.3.7) and later at Ostia when their mother died, where he displayed a somewhat worldly concern for his mother's burial arrangements (*Confessions* 9.11.27). Most likely he accompanied Monica when she followed Augustine to Italy around A.D. 385. Nothing is known of Navigius's education, but he appears to have been more well read than his cousins Lartidianus and Rusticus, showing a familiarity with some of Cicero's writings and an intellectual wariness around Augustine (*On the Happy Life* 2.14).

Romanianus. A relative of Augustine (*Epistle* 26) and his most generous patron. At Carthage he funded Augustine's studies and provided him with a home (see *Against the Academics* 2.2.3); at Milan he enthusiastically supported a plan by Augustine, himself, and their friends to live together in community, and he was willing to use his own resources to make it happen (*Against the Academics* 2.2.3; *Confessions* 6.14.24). Many misfortunes had recently befallen Romanianus, which is why Augustine urges him to take these as a sign to study philosophy (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.2; *Confessions* 6.14.24). Augustine tries to repay his debt to his old friend as well as to atone for leading him into Manichaeism (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.3) by dedicating two works to him: *Against the Academics*, a call to the study of philosophy, and the treatise *On True Religion*, an invitation to convert to the Christian faith. Some conjecture that Romanianus accepted at least one of these invitations, possibly converting to Christianity in A.D. 396. As we learn in *Against the Academics* 1.1.4, he is also the father of Licentius, one of the main participants of the Cassiciacum dialogues.

Rusticus. Along with Lartidianus, Rusticus is described as a cousin of Augustine who never had to endure "even a single grammar school teacher" but whose common sense Augustine considered indispensable to the undertaking of *On the Happy Life* (1.6). Lartidianus and Rusticus appear only in *On the Happy Life*, the least philosophically demanding of the Cassiciacum dialogues, and although they participate in the discussion, neither has a recorded line (see *On the Happy Life* 2.12). Aside from

his being particularly shy (*On the Happy Life* 2.12), nothing else is known of Rusticus.

Theodorus. Manlius Theodorus (his first name is mentioned in the *Retractations* but not in the Cassiciacum dialogues) was made consul of the Roman Empire in A.D. 399; before that he held several other important administrative offices under several emperors. He was the subject of a panegyric written in verse by the poet Claudian. Augustine asserts in *On Order* 1.11.31 that his mother Monica knew him and that his philosophical works are so erudite that “both now and in the coming generations, no class of men may rightly complain about the writings of our times” (see also *Soliloquies* 2.14.26). In the *Retractations* Augustine reiterates that Theodorus was a “learned and Christian man,” though he now regrets having attributed more to him than he should have (1.2). Little is known about the personal acquaintance between Augustine and Theodorus in Milan, as well as how well Monica knew him. Although Theodorus wrote on a variety of subjects, his only extant work is the treatise *On Meters* (*De metris*). Augustine dedicated *On the Happy Life* to him as a way of petitioning him to evaluate his spiritual progress (*On the Happy Life* 1.1, 1.4). It is doubtful that Theodorus ever complied with the request.

Trygetius. One of two pupils of Augustine at Cassiciacum, a fellow townsman of Thagaste, and a principal participant of these dialogues (see *On the Happy Life* 1.6). Trygetius is referred to as an *adulescens*, a youth between the ages of fifteen and thirty. Augustine writes of him in *Against the Academics* 1.1.4: “It is as if military service had conscripted the young man for a while in order to remove his distaste for the disciplines, and so it restored him to us extremely passionate and hungry for the great and noble arts.” Given that the average age of a recruit in the Roman army was eighteen or older, he may have been a couple of years older than Licentius. In *On Order* 1.2.5, Augustine again mentions Trygetius’s military service and describes him as someone “who has fallen in love with history like an old soldier.”

Verecundus. A generous and relatively wealthy friend who lent his villa at Cassiciacum to Augustine and his friends (*Confessions* 9.3.5). A grammarian by profession living and working in Milan, Verecundus may have been part of the circle of friends that desired to live together in a life of philosophical leisure (*Confessions* 6.14.24). When he heard of Augustine’s and Alypius’s conversions to Christianity, Verecundus not only wanted to convert as well but to join them in leading celibate lives. Verecundus, however, was married (to a Christian woman), and so he reluctantly

deferred conversion as Augustine and Alypius encouraged him to remain faithful to his married state. Although he worried that his friendship with the group would suffer, he gladly lent out his villa for their baptismal preparations (*On Order* 1.2.5). Verecundus eventually did convert and died shortly thereafter (*Confessions* 9.3.5).

Zenobius. A mutual friend of Augustine, Romanianus, and Verecundus. Zenobius was the victim of some kind of political or financial misfortune and had been forced to leave Milan (*On Order* 1.7.20), probably northward to the Alps (*Soliloquies* 2.14.26). Augustine portrays Zenobius as a man of outstanding moral character (*On Order* 1.2.4) and a lover and composer of poetry (*On Order* 1.7.20); he wrote a “good poem” about the difficulties of reconciling God’s goodness with the existence of evil (*On Order* 1.7.20), as well as a poem that helps conquer the fear of death (*Soliloquies* 2.14.26). Augustine hints, however, that Zenobius is in need of more intellectual formation and philosophical training (*On Order* 2.5.15). Augustine also wrote a brief letter to Zenobius while he was at Cassiciacum (*Epistle* 2).

NOTES

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE CASSICIACUM DIALOGUES

1. "Fruitful leisure": *On Order* 1.2.4; farm work: see *Against the Academics* 1.5.15; violent poultry: see *On Order* 1.8.25; Augustine states that stenographers, possibly hired by Romanianus, were used to record the conversations of the group: see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4, 1.5.15, 1.9.25, 2.7.17, 2.9.22, 3.7.15; *On Order* 1.5.14, 1.7.20, 1.9.27, 1.10.29–1.11.31, 2.20.54; on Augustine's health, see *Against the Academics* 3.7.15; *On Order* 1.2.5; on recording these conversations for those not present, see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4, 1.5.15, 1.9.25, 2.7.17, 2.9.22, 3.7.15; *On Order* 1.2.5, 1.5.14, 1.7.20, 1.9.27, 1.10.29–1.11.31, 2.20.54; on Alypius as collaborating editor, see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4; *Confessions* 9.2.4. Unlike the other three dialogues, the *Soliloquies* is not derived from transcribed conversations but is nonetheless—as I argue in the introduction to the *Soliloquies*—an integral part of the Cassiciacum corpus.
2. See *Soliloquies* 1.1.3.
3. The language of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion is borrowed from Lonergan, *Method*, 238–43. It should be noted that these conversions often overlap, that they do not follow the same chronological order in every case, and that an individual may not necessarily undergo all three.
4. Knowing God and the soul: see *Soliloquies* 1.2.7, 1.15.27, 2.18.32; "return to ourselves": see *Against the Academics* 1.1.1, 2.2.5, 2.3.8.
5. "Inquiry into inquiry": Kenyon, *Augustine*, 30; "look foremost": *ibid.*, 12; "cognitive norms of thought": *ibid.*, 34; "most if not all acts of rational inquiry": *ibid.*, 40.

6. “And what did it profit”: *Confessions* 4.16.30, trans. Frank J. Sheed; “the order for living”: *On Order* 2.8.25; sharp criticism: see *On Order* 1.10.29–30; Reason’s embarrassing questions: see *Soliloquies* 1.14.25–26.
7. On baptism, see *Confessions* 9.3.6, where Augustine refers to his baptism as his *conversio*; on religion as binding, see *On True Religion* 55.111, 113 (in *Retractations* 1.13.9, Augustine notes that although there is some uncertainty regarding the etymology of *religio*, he prefers the interpretation that traces it to *religo*, “to bind”); on Christianity and freedom, see *On True Religion* 17.33; on Monica on faith, hope, and charity, see *On the Happy Life* 4.35.
8. For instance, Robert J. O’Connell, S.J., spent the bulk of his career arguing for a disjunction between an early Augustine imbued with a Neoplatonic, anticorporeal “angelism” and a later Augustine more properly informed by an incarnational Christianity: see O’Connell, *St. Augustine’s Early Theory*, *St. Augustine’s Platonism*, and *Art*. For a critique of O’Connell’s thesis, see Fortin, “Reflections,” 99, Review, *Birth of Philosophic Christianity*, 317–19; and Harrison, *Rethinking*.
9. On the necessity of intellectual conversion, see *On Order* 1.8.24 and *Confessions* 4.16.30; on the order of conversions, see *Against the Academics* 3.17.38 and *On Order* 2.8.25–2.9.26.
10. Plato, *Republic* 10.607b.
11. The distinctive traits of the philosophical dialogue are aptly summarized by Cicero, who introduced the genre to Rome: it hides the author’s opinion, frees the reader from error, and helps the reader reach the most probable or plausible truth (*Tusculan Disputations* 5.4.11).
12. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 275d–277c. Compare Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* 4.9.23 and St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Boethius*, q. 2, a. 4.
13. On the esoteric and exoteric, see Crosson, “Esoteric Versus Latent Teaching.” The prevalence or even existence of an esoteric literature was debated in ancient Greece and Rome and again during the Renaissance and early modern period (the Commentary on *Against the Academics* cites several ancient passages on this topic). In the twentieth century the debate was controversially revived by Leo Strauss; the most thorough treatment on the topic to date is Melzer, *Philosophy Between the Lines*. On Augustine, Strauss, and esotericism, see Kries, “Augustine as Defender.”
14. On Augustine’s conjectures about Academic esotericism, see *Against the Academics* 2.10.24, 3.7.15–3.20.43; on the few versus the many, see *Against the Academics* 1.1.1, 2.1.1, 2.2.6, 3.17.37; *On the Happy Life* 1.1; *On Order* 1.1.1, 1.11.32, 2.5.16, 2.9.26, 2.11.30; *Soliloquies* 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.13.22; on the

- danger of teaching the truth, see *Against the Academics* 3.17.37; “return to their very selves”: *Against the Academics* 3.19.42.
15. On joke-telling, see *Soliloquies* 2.9.16; on Augustine’s irony, see *Retractations* 1.3.2; “in sport”: *A Dialogue Concerning Heresies*, 69/1–2; “holds as trivial”: Cicero, *On Duties* 1.20.67; on the comic structure of philosophical dialogue, see Downey, *Serious Comedy*; on “untruths,” see *On Order* 2.14.40.
 16. On engraving, see *On Order* 1.2.4. For the sake of readability, the current translations do not follow the convention of using “he says” in the present tense.
 17. See *Against the Academics* 2.1.1; *On the Happy Life* 4.34; *On Order* 1.1.3; *Soliloquies* 1.1.1ff.
 18. For Augustine’s opinion of Cicero, see *Against the Academics* 1.3.8 and 3.16.36; on Augustine’s first encounter with *Hortensius*, see *Confessions* 3.4; on the *Hortensius* at Cassiciacum, see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4; “cedars of the gymnasia” and “Church’s wholesome herbs”: *Confessions* 9.4.7. It should be noted that Augustine also modifies the Ciceronian dialogue even as he adopts it. One of his most significant changes is rearranging the chronology of a Ciceronian dialogue from (1) aporetic confusion, (2) plausible explanation, and (3) reflection on the act of debating to (1) aporetic confusion, (2) reflection on the act of debating, and (3) plausible explanation. This reordering lends to Augustine’s dialogues a more dramatic element similar to that of a mystery novel. See Kenyon, *Augustine*, 13, 77–79.
 19. “Living happily”: Cicero, *On Divination* 2.1.2; for more on this thesis, see Foley, “Cicero, Augustine”; on boredom after mastery, see *Against the Academics* 3.4.7.
 20. On intellectual conversion, see *Confessions* 7.9.13; “When behold”: *Against the Academics* 2.2.5.
 21. For a summary of the debate on Augustine’s familiarity with Plato, see O’Donnell, *Augustine Confessions*, vol. 2, 421–24.
 22. See Pucci, *Virgilian Retreat*. Pucci prefers the terms “recuperating” (xiii).
 23. On Augustine’s literary regrets: Augustine writes in the *Retractations* that he wishes he had not mentioned the Muses and other pagan figures, even though the allusions were not meant to be taken literally (1.3.2), and he laments being “puffed up” with the “conventions of worldly literature” (Prologue, 3). It should be borne in mind, however, that Augustine tells his reader that in the *Retractations* he is approaching his earlier writings with a judgment more exacting and severe than even God’s in order to avoid His final judgment (Prologue, 1). Such a hermeneutic has several advantages, but not included among them is giving the benefit of the doubt to possibly

- innocuous passages. On fighting fire with fire: In response to accusations like Julian the Apostate's that Christianity was no more than a religion of "theologizing fishermen," Church Fathers such as Minucius Felix endeavored to refute the pagans with their own literary weapons (see *Octavius* 39; see also Jerome, *Epistle* 70.2; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 43.11).
24. See *On the Happy Life* 4.31–36. These alignments will be discussed in greater detail in the Commentaries.
25. On Ambrose's influence, see *Confessions* 5.13.23, 6.1.1–6.4.6; on Marius Victorinus's influence, see *Confessions* 8.2.3–5.
26. On neologisms, see Bogan, *Vocabulary*, 43; "beatific vision": *Soliloquies* 1.7.14; on cuckoo clocks, see *Soliloquies* 2.6.12.

SOLILOQUIES

Introduction

1. *Retractations* 1.4.1.
2. *Epistle* 8.6.
3. According to Porphyry in his *Life of Pythagoras* 40.
4. See *On Order* 2.18.48–2.19.50.
5. See *On the Happy Life* 2.13, 3.17, 4.33.
6. See also *Confessions* 9.4.7; *Retractations* 1.4.1. There is internal evidence as well. In *Soliloquies* 1.10.17 Augustine tells Reason that it has been very recent, "almost a matter of days," since he stopped coveting honors. This statement most likely refers to his formal resignation from his teaching position in rhetoric, which he tendered near or at the end of the Vintage holidays. If Augustine resigned around October 15 (the last day of the holidays), and if "almost a matter of days" means that it has been less than a couple of months, then book one of the *Soliloquies* takes place either during or soon after the other three dialogues, which mostly likely transpired sometime between November 10 and 24, A.D. 386.
7. See *On Order* 1.3.6.
8. Compare *Soliloquies* 1.1.1 to *On Order* 1.3.6.
9. Compare *On the Happy Life* 1.5 and *Soliloquies* 1.2.7, 2.1.1.
10. Compare *On the Happy Life* 4.35; *On Order* 2.4.11, 2.4.13, 2.19.51; and *Soliloquies* 1.1.5 and 1.6.12.
11. Compare *On Order* 2.5.17–2.7.21, 2.16.44 and *Soliloquies* 1.1.4.
12. Compare *On Order* and *Soliloquies* 1.14.25.
13. Compare *Against the Academics* 1.1.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3.8, 3.19.42; *On Order* 1.2.3, 2.11.30, 2.11.31; and *Soliloquies* 2.6.9, 2.19.33.

14. Compare *On Order* 1.1.1 and *Soliloquies* 2.14.26
15. Compare *On the Happy Life* 1.1 and *Soliloquies* 2.14.26.
16. Compare *On Order* 1.10.29–30 and *Soliloquies* 1.7.14.
17. In *On the Happy Life* 1.2, Augustine speaks of those who “raise a shining bright standard of some work of theirs for as many of their other compatriots (*cives*) as they can, so that in being admonished their compatriots may try to reach them.” In the *Soliloquies*, Reason tells him to write this book so that it may reach a few of Augustine’s fellow townsmen (*cives*) (1.1.1; see also *On Order* 1.11.31).
18. See *On Order* 2.19.50.
19. *Soliloquies* 1.1.3.
20. *Soliloquies* 1.1.2.
21. *On Order* 2.20.52.
22. See *Soliloquies* 1.14.25–26.
23. See *On Order* 2.20.53.
24. For example, in addition to admitting a lingering lust for women (*Soliloquies* 1.14.25–26), Augustine portrays himself as impatient to the point of being intellectually sloppy (see *Soliloquies* 2.15.27).
25. See Janowski, *Augustinian-Cartesian Index*.
26. See *Against the Academics* 1.1.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3.8; *On Order* 1.1.3, 2.11.30; *Soliloquies* 2.6.9, 2.19.33.
27. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.3.1.
28. While *On Order*, for example, contains a third-person account of the soul’s attainment of self-knowledge (see 2.7.24–2.20.52, especially 2.11.30–2.20.52), the *Soliloquies* is more demonstrative, with Augustine concretely performing the various tasks that lead to self-knowledge.
29. See *On Order* 2.8.25.
30. *On Order* 1.4.10.
31. See *Soliloquies* 1.14.25–26.
32. *Confessions* 8.10.16.
33. See *Soliloquies* 2.7.14; *Retractations* 1.4.1.
34. For example, in *On Order* 2.7.24, Augustine abruptly changes course because his family and friends cannot keep up with him.
35. See *Soliloquies* 1.1.2, 1.1.3. For more on this intellectual conversion, as well as moral conversion, see “Augustine at Cassiciacum” in the General Introduction.
36. See *Against the Academics* 2.3.7; *Soliloquies* 1.14.24.
37. See *Retractations* 1.4.1.
38. See *On the Happy Life* 1.5; see also *Soliloquies* 1.2.7, 2.1.1.

39. In old age, Augustine states that he does not know “in what manner [the soul] happens to be in the body: whether it is from the man who was created first when man became ‘a living soul’ (Gen 2:7; 1 Cor 15:45), or whether individual souls are made in a similar way for individual men” (*Retractations* 1.1.3).
40. See Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 101.
41. See *Phaedrus* 245c–46a; *Meno* 86a–b; *Republic* 608d–11a; *Phaedo* 72e–80c.
42. See *Tusculan Disputations* 1.23.54–55.
43. See *Enneads* 4.7.
44. Pascal, *Pensées*, #427.
45. See *On Free Choice* 1.3.6.
46. See *City of God* 10.23.
47. *Retractations* 1.5.1.
48. *Retractations* 1.5.1.
49. See “The Augustinian Dialogue” in the General Introduction.
50. See Catapano, “Augustine’s Treatise”; Tornau, “*Ratio in subjecto?*”; Kenyon, *Augustine*.
51. See Foley, “Spectacle.”
52. See Aristotle, *Poetics* 3.1448a25–30.
53. See *Contra Academicos* 3.15.34 and 3.7.16–3.8.17, respectively.
54. *Sermon* 178.8.
55. The term “soliloquy,” which Augustine intended to be used in theological circles for the kind of spiritual therapy dramatized in this dialogue, has instead been used more frequently in theatrical circles to denote a type of interior monologue in a play (see Bickerton, “Modes”). The fit is not perfect, however, for a soliloquy in drama is a speech made by a character to himself or herself, whereas the conceit of the *Soliloquies* is two characters speaking to each other (see Hirsch, *Shakespeare*, 342). “Soliloquy” and “soliloquizing” are nowhere used today in a manner that is completely faithful to Augustine’s original meaning.

Book One

1. This had become a habitual practice for Augustine at Cassiciacum (see *On Order* 1.3.6).
2. For asterisked words, see the Translation Key. In *On Order* 2.11.30, Augustine says that he does not know what reason is, despite the fact that he also defines it. And in *On Order* 2.18.48, Augustine states that reason is either

the soul or belongs to the soul. This uncertainty may account for his current hesitation about who is speaking to him.

3. In *Against the Academics* 2.9.22, Augustine refers to memory as “an untrustworthy guardian of thoughts.”
4. Augustine describes the ailment that plagued him at this time as a *pectoris dolor*, a chest pain (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.3; *On the Happy Life* 1.4; *Confessions* 9.2.4) and as a *stomachi dolor*, a pain in the gullet or esophagus (see *On Order* 1.2.5, 1.11.31). His most detailed account is in the *Confessions*:

My lungs began to give way under the great hardship [of teaching], and I inhaled with difficulty. And the pains in my chest were witnessing to the fact that my lungs were not well and were keeping me from speaking in a loud voice for a prolonged amount of time. At first this greatly disturbed me, since it was forcing me to cast off, almost now by necessity, the burden of this teaching position—or at least, if I could convalesce and be cared for, to put it off intermittently. (9.2.4; see 9.5.13)

This respiratory problem vexed Augustine the entire time that he was at Cassiciacum (see *Against the Academics* 3.7.15; *On Order* 1.11.33), ostensibly compelling him to have the conversations of the group transcribed as a means of slowing down the discussion (see *On Order* 1.2.5 and the note following). Second, as we learn in this dialogue, Augustine has recently been suffering from an excruciating toothache (see 1.12.21 below).

5. In the other Cassiciacum dialogues, stenographers were used to record the conversations of the group (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4, 1.5.15, 1.9.25, 2.7.17, 2.9.22, 3.7.15; *On Order* 1.2.5, 1.5.14, 1.7.20, 1.9.27, 1.10.29–1.11.31, 2.20.54). The stenographers used wax tablets on which they imprinted words with sharp *styli*; their transcriptions would later be edited and transferred to parchment by Augustine and Alypius (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.4; *Confessions* 9.4.7).
6. Technically, a *conclusimcula*, or “little conclusion,” is a trifling or captious conclusion, a sophism (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.24.75; *Tusculan Disputations* 2.18.42).
7. The word here is *civis*, which Augustine elsewhere uses to designate fellow townsmen or citizens of his hometown of Thagaste in North Africa (see *Against the Academics* 1.1.2; *On the Happy Life* 1.6). See also in *On the Happy Life* 1.2, where Augustine speaks of those who hoist “a shining bright standard of some work of theirs for as many of their other compatriots as they can, so that in being admonished their compatriots may try to reach them.”

8. This translation of Augustine's opening prayer employs the pronoun "thou" in order to preserve its paradoxically intimate, solemn, and liturgical qualities. Contrary to popular misunderstanding, "thou" is the English pronominal marker indicating closeness and intimacy, while "you" was used to address a superior. When, therefore, Christians use "thou" to address God, they are suggesting a profound familiarity. Similarly, the archaic verb forms (which are necessitated by the use of "thou") hearken to the rich and formal qualities of Augustine's imprecations. Not unlike the liturgical formulae of his day, the prayer in 1.1.2–6 abounds in grammatical complexities, paradox, and wordplay.
9. Some manuscripts have *exaudias* instead of *liberes*, which would change the sentence to "may I act worthy of being heard by Thee."
10. For God as a liberator of souls, see *On the Happy Life* 4.36.
11. Drawing from classical philosophy, Augustine distinguishes between the few who are capable of grasping difficult philosophical truths from the many who are not (see 1.1.2, 1.1.4, 1.13.22 below; *Against the Academics* 2.1.1, 2.2.6, 3.7.37; *On the Happy Life* 1.1; *On Order* 1.1.1, 1.11.32, 2.5.16, 2.9.26, 2.11.30). For the problem of evil, see *Confessions* 7.3.4–5, 7.5.7, 7.13.19.
12. In *On Order* Augustine differentiates "knowing" and "unknowing" creatures, those that are capable of attaining true knowledge (a human being or an angel) and those that are not (1.8.25).
13. Augustine later writes that he "certainly does not approve" of this statement, for "even the impure know many truths, nor is it defined here what the truth is which none but the pure can know and what it means to know" (*Retractations* 1.4.2).
14. These six invocations refer to God the Son. For the Son as truth and wisdom, see *On the Happy Life* 4.34; as true and supreme life, see *On the Immortality of the Soul* 15.24; as happiness, see the conclusion in *On the Happy Life* that happiness is the possession of wisdom (4.33); as beauty, see *On Order* 1.8.24 and 1.14.24; as intelligible light, see 1.8.15 below.
15. Both awakening (*evigilatio*) and illumination refer to the Holy Spirit. At 1.1.3 below, Augustine characterizes the Holy Spirit as the Divine Person who admonishes us to "keep watch" (*ut vigilemus*). For Marius Victorinus, from whom Augustine sometimes draws, God the Father is "True Light," God the Son "True Light from Light," and God the Holy Spirit "True Illumination" (*Hymn* 3.67–69; see 1.8.15 below).
16. The Pledge by which we are admonished to return to the Father is the Holy Spirit (see 2 Cor 1:22 and Eph 1:14). As we shall see later, Augustine also links admonition to the Holy Spirit (see 1.1.3, 1.13.23 below). For the return to God, see 1.1.3 (where *redire* is translated as "to come back to"), 1.1.6,

- 1.10.17, 1.11.18, 2.6.9 below; *On the Happy Life* 4.36; *On Order* 1.7.20, 1.8.23. Augustine also speaks of returning to heaven as a metonymy for returning to God (*Against the Academics* 2.1.2, 2.9.22), as well as returning to the light (*On the Happy Life* 4.35; *Soliloquies* 1.6.13, 1.13.23, 2.19.33) and returning to our homeland (*Against the Academics* 3.19.42; *On the Happy Life* 1.2). For more on emanation and return, see note 22 below.
17. See John 18:36, *On Order* 1.11.32. Because of an ambiguity in the Latin, Augustine later mentions that there are two ways to interpret this statement—and he appears not to have remembered which meaning he intended (see *Retractations* 1.4.2). It could mean, “O God, whose kingdom is the entire world of *whom* sense-perception is unaware,” or it could mean “O God, whose kingdom is the entire world of *which* sense-perception is unaware.” With the first, sense-perception is unaware of God; with the second, sense-perception is unaware of the world that is God’s kingdom, which Augustine says should be construed as the “new heaven and new earth” mentioned in Rev 21:1 (*Retractations* 1.4.2). Either way, he regrets that he did not qualify what he meant by sense-perception (*sensus*) by adding “of the mortal body,” since “there is a sense of the mind as well” (*Retractations* 1.1.2; see also 1.6.12, where the mind [*mens*] is defined as the soul’s sensation or faculty of sense, and 2.2.3 below, where Augustine opines that sensation belongs to the soul rather than to the body). At the time, he explains, “I was speaking in the manner of those who do not talk of sense (*sensus*) except in reference to the body and of sensible things (*sensibilia*) except in reference to the corporeal. And so, in every place that I spoke like this, there is an ambiguity that was insufficiently avoided—except among those for whom this terminology is customary” (*ibid.*). See also *Against the Academics* 1.1.3; *On Order* 2.2.6.
18. Augustine uses the same phrase for “kingdoms such as these” (*ista regna*) when summarizing Satan’s temptation to Christ to worship him in exchange for the kingdoms of the world (see *Sermon* 284; Matt 4:8). It is likely, however, that the term here denotes the realm of the sensible, put in the plural to denote the multiplicity of sensible phenomena.
19. In *On Order* 2.11.31 Augustine speaks of the soul’s “going forth” as a “fall down to mortal things”; in *On True Religion* 14.28 and 15.29, he argues that an act of the will has plunged the body into weakness and mortality. Although this image is common in philosophical literature (see Cato’s remark in Cicero’s *On Old Age* 21.77: “The celestial soul has been brought down from its most lofty home and buried, as it were, in the ground, a place contrary to its divine and eternal nature”), it is more often than not associated

- with Neoplatonic thought (see Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.8). For more references to the soul's falling or sinking in the Cassiciacum dialogues, see 1.14.25 below, *Against the Academics* 3.15.34; *On the Happy Life* 4.33; *On Order* 2.17.45.
20. *Convertere*, translated here as “turning back,” can also mean to convert. See 1.1.3 and 1.1.6 below; *On Order* 1.8.22–23, 1.7.20.
21. The verb *consistere* can also mean “to exist.”
22. For more on the return to God, see note 16 above. The theme of emanating from, returning to, and dwelling in God was well developed in Neoplatonic thought (see Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.2.2, 5.4.2, 6.6.3; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 30–32; Syrianus, *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics* 127; Proclus, *Commentary on Plato's Timaeus* 207b; *Elements of Theology* 30–39, esp. 35). It was also adopted by Christian thinkers before Augustine (see Marius Victorinus, *Hymn* 1.71–76, 3.71–73; Ambrose, *Hymn* 5.6).
23. A possible allusion to Eve's words in Eden: “The serpent deceived me, and I did eat” (Gen 3:13).
24. On “having” or “possessing” God (*habere Deum*), see *On the Happy Life* 2.10–11, 3.19–21; on “seeing” as “knowing,” see 1.6.12–1.7.14 below and also *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 35.1: “Having is nothing other than knowing (*nosse*).” The reference to heeding/seeing (*attendere/videre*) is an anticipation of the discussion on looking/seeing (*aspectus/visio*) in 1.6.12 below.
25. See 1 Cor 13:13; see also 1.6.12 below.
26. A reference either to 1 John 5:4–5 or 1 John 4:4–6. If it is to the former, the reference is to Jesus Christ and thus concludes Augustine's invocation of God the Son (for similar language regarding Christ, see Marius Victorinus, *Commentary on Ephesians* 3.12 and 4.32). If it is to the latter, the reference is to the Holy Spirit and thus marks the beginning of Augustine's invocation of the Paraclete, since all of the invocations in the rest of the chapter are directed to the Holy Spirit.
27. For the link between the Holy Spirit and admonition, see 1.13.23 below; *On the Happy Life* 4.35.
28. For more on the topic of ruling and serving well, see *On Order* 2.8.25.
29. In the *Hortensius*, Cicero claims that Plato referred to the pleasures of the body that are to be sought after (*voluptates corporis expetendae*) as “the lures and enticements of evils” (*illecebrae atque escae malorum*; see Augustine, *Against Julian* 4.14.72; frg. 81 [Müller]). Bodily pleasures, though good per se, can be a temptation to evil; the key is not “clinging” to them in a way that they become a hook for iniquity.

30. Augustine has the Holy Spirit in mind when citing this verse from 1 Cor 15:54, which occurs in a discussion on the last Adam becoming a “vivifying spirit.” See *On Music* 6.15.49, where Augustine, commenting on this passage, writes, “That is . . . when God vivified our mortal bodies, as the Apostle says, ‘on account of the Spirit dwelling within us’ ” (Rom 8:11).
31. The full statement immediately preceding “Death is swallowed up in victory” is: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Cor 15:53–54). The imagery also hearkens to Rom 13:13 and its call to “put on” the Lord Jesus Christ, the biblical verse that precipitated Augustine’s conversion to Christianity (see *Confessions* 8.12.29).
32. A possible allusion to John 16:23.
33. Some manuscripts have *unis*, “unite,” rather than “strengthen” (*munis*). If so, it is a possible allusion to John 17:11.
34. See John 16:13a; *On the Happy Life* 4.35.
35. See John 16:13b.
36. In *Against the Academics* 3.9.20, Augustine uses the same phrase (where it is translated as “to make insane”) to describe the effects of Academic skepticism. Another possibility is that Augustine is criticizing Greco-Roman religion, in which gods or demigods are often portrayed as inducing insanity in helpless human beings (see *On Order* 1.4.10; Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.655ff, 5.604ff, 7.323ff). Lastly, Augustine may have the “madness” of Manichaean belief in mind (see *Confessions* 13.30.45).
37. John 14:3–7; see also Matt 7:14.
38. The Holy Spirit leads us to Christ, who is “the Way” (John 14:6) and “the Door” (John 10:9). Augustine uses the word *janua* here for “door,” which he takes from St. Ambrose (see Ambrose, *Exposition of Psalm 118* 22.12).
39. See Matt 7:8.
40. That is, the Eucharist (see John 6:35, 48, 52). The Holy Spirit purifies the faithful in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, thereby enabling them to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ (see Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* 4, 8.43ff).
41. See John 4:13, 6:35. The Holy Spirit pleads with us to thirst for Christ (see *On the Happy Life* 4.35).
42. See John 16:8.
43. Most likely, a reference to the Manichaeans, who in denying human free will ipso facto deny the existence of merit.

44. See Gal 4:9. In Gal 4:6, St. Paul discusses how God sends the Spirit into our hearts whereby we may cry, “Abba, Father.”
45. A Trinitarian echo. The rest of this chapter addresses the Trinity as a whole.
46. *Discrepentia* in Cicero’s writings can indicate a discrepancy or inconsistency of ideas or of terminology (*On the Ends* 3.12.41), a discrepancy between a writer’s statements and his intentions (*Topics* 25.96), or a discrepancy between particular actions and one’s general conduct (*On Duties* 1.31.111).
47. See *On the Happy Life* 4.31–35.
48. That is, God is perfect or Supreme Measure (see *Against the Academics* 2.2.4; *On the Happy Life* 4.35; *On Order* 2.5.14).
49. By using the singular “is” instead of the grammatically correct “are,” Augustine stresses the unity of the Father and Son and possibly the fact that the Holy Trinity transcends our categories of understanding. Later, however, Augustine chides himself for this peculiar usage, for as “the Truth itself explicitly says, ‘I and the Father *are* one’ (John 10:30)” (*Retractations* 1.4.3).
50. Literally, of times. “Time” is generally in the plural for Augustine, a usage that corresponds with his teaching that time is not absolute but relative (see *Confessions* 11.10.12–11.30.40). The word translated here as “recurring patterns” is *replicationes*. Cicero uses it when summarizing Aristotle’s theory that a god or some celestial being regulates the motion of the world by “a sort of replication” (*replicatio quaedam*) (see *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.13.33). *Replicatio* may be Cicero’s translation of Aristotle’s *aneilixis*, the counterrotations that account for the apparent irregularities in planetary orbits.
51. A lustrum is the period from leap year to leap year, when the sun returns to the same position as before (see Pliny, *Natural History* 2.47.130).
52. The entire paragraph is redolent of Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations* 1.28.68–70 and *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.32.87.
53. Literally, an image of stability by the harness of circulating ages. Augustine appears to be referring to an ongoing process of repetition or recurrence that keeps all change from being random or chaotic, recurrences like the circulation of the ocean waters or the succession of the four seasons (see *On Order* 2.15.42). In the constant instability and flux of these recurrences is a surprisingly predictable stability. For “stable motion,” see *On Order* 2.16.44.
54. See Gen 1:26.
55. For more on self-knowledge, see *On Order* 1.1.3–1.2.4.

56. *Res mea* (literally, my Thing) can also mean “my Wealth” or “my Possession.”
57. For God as *patria* or fatherland (also translated as “homeland”), see *Against the Academics* 3.19.42; *On the Happy Life* 1.2.
58. The verb *sanare* means to make sound or healthy. Along with its cognates it is used frequently in the *Soliloquies*. It is generally translated as “healthy” or “sound” depending on the context, while its antonym *insanus* is rendered “unhealthy” or “unsound” or “mad.”
59. The theme of healthy eyes (of the mind, not the body) is explored further at 2.6.12 below.
60. A form of the word *insania* (translated here as “mental unsoundness”) appeared earlier in 1.1.3, where it was translated as “mad.” Augustine may be alluding to skepticism as a form of mental unsoundness, for it keeps the soul from seeking the truth.
61. An echo of the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32).
62. See Matt 7:8.
63. See 1 Cor 13:13.
64. “Your Clemency” was sometimes used as a title for Roman emperors. In classical Latin, *clementia* signifies a certain lenience about the failings of others (see Seneca, *On Clemency* 2.3.1: “Clemency is a moderation of the mind regarding the power of punishing, or the leniency of a superior toward an inferior when imposing penalties”). In the Cassiciacum dialogues, Augustine uses “clemency” and “clement” especially in relation to God’s kindness in authoring the Incarnation (see 1.1.5 above and 1.14.26, 1.15.30 below; *Against the Academics* 3.19.42; *On Order* 2.5.16, 2.9.27, 2.10.29).
65. See 1.15.27, 2.18.32.
66. Literally, whence do you know that you know nothing similar to God? (*unde nosti nihil te nosse Deo simile*). See *On Order* 1.4.11.
67. In *On the Happy Life*, Augustine confesses uncertainty about several matters concerning the soul (1.5); presumably, one of them is the soul’s immortality (see 2.1.1 below). Even in old age, Augustine states that he does not know “in what manner [the soul] happens to be in the body: whether it is from the man who was created first when man became ‘a living soul’ (Gen 2:7; 1 Cor 15:45), or whether individual souls are made in a similar way for individual men” (*Retractations* 1.1.3).
68. See *On Order* 2.2.5.
69. For the love of friends, see Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 3.29.73 and Matt 22:39—“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

70. See also *Confessions* 12.14.17ff, where Augustine distinguishes an author's statements from his intentions.
71. True knowledge involves comprehending through the understanding or intellect (see *Against the Academics* 1.7.19). For Zeno, the founder of Stoicism and the first to apply the notion of comprehension (*katalêpsis*, "grasping") to the mind, mental comprehension is one step shy of full knowledge and higher on the cognitional scale than a visual appearance or percept (*visum*) and assent (*adsensus*) (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.47.145).
72. Both statements are from Cicero's *Academica* 2.20.66, where Cicero, appearing as a character in the dialogue, (1) asserts that nothing is more alien to the concept of a wise man than error, and (2) denies several times that he himself is a wise man.
73. See *Against the Academics* 3.11.26, where Augustine defends the reliability of the senses, even where optical illusions are concerned. The senses, however, report only sensible data, not intelligible truths.
74. Augustine's image recalls the myth of Jason and the Argonauts. Stranded in the Libyan desert with their ship and unable to navigate it, they were forced to carry it on their backs for nine tortuous days. For more on the relationship between sensation and understanding, see *Against the Academics* 3.11.24–3.12.28.
75. *Si qua tibi est*. The qualifier is significant. Knowledge is not knowledge unless it is attained consciously and intelligently by an individual. There is no knowledge without a knower knowing it.
76. See Cicero, *Academica* 2.47.144–45. In *Against the Academics*, Augustine says that even though he is far from wise, there are many things that he truly knows, such as, for example, the fact that there is either one world or many, that the world is the way it is by the nature of bodies or by providence, and that it is either eternal or not (3.10.23).
77. See 1.2.7 above.
78. Literally, similitude (*similitudo*).
79. See 2.2.3 below, where Augustine opines that sensation belongs to the soul rather than to the body. See also *Against the Academics* 1.1.3; *On Order* 2.2.6.
80. See Matt 13:10–17; Mark 4:10–12; Luke 8:9–10.
81. For more on the eyes of our mind, see *On the Happy Life* 4.35 and *On Order* 2.2.7. For useful or healthy eyes of the mind, see *On the Happy Life* 4.35 and *On Order* 2.4.11, 2.4.13, 2.19.51. The eye of the mind, which has been wounded by sin, requires healing (see 1.1.5 above).

82. Reason's formulation of the soul's three needs is unique, although it is partially drawn from Plotinus's discussion of the eye (*ophthalmos*), looking (*blepein*), and sight (*opsis*) in *Enneads* 1.6.9.
83. See *Against the Academics* 1.4.11, where Licentius says: "We lived with a great tranquility of mind*, making the soul free from every bodily blemish and, far, far removed from the fires of lust, devoting ourselves (insofar as man is allowed) to reason—that is, living according to that divine part of the soul which [is] . . . the happy life." For more on the soul and bodily blemish, see Anchises's description of Elysium, where a long day purges souls of the departed and "removes their ingrained blemish / and leaves remaining the pure and ethereal sense and the fire of pure spirit" (Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.746).
84. For the reluctance of the sick to undergo treatment because of the discomfort involved, see *On Order* 1.8.24.
85. See 1 Cor 13:13.
86. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 6.10; see also Augustine's definition of reason in *On Order* 2.11.30.
87. Augustine makes the same claim about virtue and right or perfect reason in *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 30. The definition is from Cicero (see *Tusculan Disputations* 2.21.47, 4.15.34; *On the Ends* 5.13.38; *On the Laws* 1.16.44), although a similar sentiment may be found in Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.2.4.
88. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 5.3.8: "To see is the function of Understanding (*Nous*)."
89. See 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 above; *On Order* 1.8.24. Augustine, following Plato and Plotinus, associates God with beauty (see Plato, *Symposium* 210a, 211e, 221b; *Phaedo* 246e; *Republic* 2.381c; Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.6–9). The notion may also be found in Scripture (see Wis 13:1–5).
90. *Beatissima visio*. This is the first instance in Latin of the expression "beatific vision" (*beata visio*), the term used to designate the saints' seeing God face to face in heaven and the ineffable bliss that results (see 1 Cor 13:12; Augustine, *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 5.14.32; *Explanations of the Psalms* 147.24). Augustine, as we see from the "Vision of Ostia" later in his life, had an abiding interest in "what the eternal life of the saints could be like" (*Confessions* 9.10.23–24).
91. See *Against the Academics* 3.11.26, where Augustine defends the veracity of the senses. Being deceived or not comes into play only on the level of assent, not perception per se (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.32.105).

92. Augustine is later displeased with this statement that the soul is happy now, “unless, perhaps, it is by [the virtue of] hope” (*Retractations* 1.4.3).
93. See *On Order* 1.1.3 for collecting and holding the soul.
94. See 1 Cor 13:8–13.
95. See 1.5.11 above.
96. *Quod est, quod intellegitur, et quod cetera facit intellegi*. God the Father is Ultimate Being, the Sun. God the Son, who elsewhere is described as Divine Intellect or Understanding (*Against the Academics* 3.19.42; *On Order* 2.5.16, 2.9.26), is here alluded to as the Truth that is being understood (see John 14:6) and the shining or splendor of the Father (see Heb 1:3). Lastly, God the Holy Spirit is He who in illuminating or teaching all things (John 14:26) makes them understood (see 1.1.2 above; *On the Happy Life* 4.35; *On Order* 2.19.51). The depiction bears some resemblance to the Neoplatonic triad of To Be, To Live, and To Understand in Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.7 et al., as well as to the analogy of the sun in *Enneads* 5.3.12 and the examples of light and vision in *Enneads* 5.3.8. It also echoes a hymn attributed to St. Ambrose of Milan:

O Splendor of the Father’s glory,
 Bringing forth light from light,
 Light of light and Font of light,
 Illuminating the days of days.
 And true Sun, flow on,
 Glittering with everlasting brilliance;
 And the radiance of the Holy Spirit,
 Pour forth onto our senses. (*Hymnus* 2, “Splendor Paternae Glorae”)

97. The word here for “recognition” is *perceptio*, which Cicero uses to translate *katalêpsis*, the Stoic term for the notion or impression that confers or constitutes true knowledge (see *Academica* 2.6.17, 2.7.22).
98. *Pro eo sensu qui mihi nunc est*: more literally, on account of that sensation which belongs to me at this moment.
99. For the incompatibility of fear and happiness, see *On the Happy Life* 4.25–27.
100. See *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 33: “No one doubts that the only cause for being afraid is either that we may lose what we love and have attained or that we may not attain what we love and have hoped for.” See also *On the Happy Life* 2.11.
101. For Augustine’s health, see note 4 above. Regarding Augustine’s absent friends, he is most likely thinking of Nebridius, a dear friend whom he

- praises in the *Confessions* (see 4.3.6, 6.10.17, 7.6.8, 8.6.13, 9.3.6) and to whom he writes letters while at Cassiciacum (*Epistles* 3 and 4; see *Confessions* 9.4.7). Nebridius, Augustine, and Alypius lived together in Milan when the latter two converted to Christianity (see *Confessions* 8.6.14). Augustine may also have in mind Romanianus and Zenobius, to whom he dedicates *Against the Academics* and *On Order*, respectively.
102. Reason has moved from speaking of the progress Augustine has made in his life to the progress *they* have made together. This shift may be a subtle attempt to answer the question articulated in 1.1.1 above, whether Augustine is his reason (see also 1.14.25 below). There is a similar ambivalence at the beginning of the previous chapter (1.9.16 above).
 103. For the pursuit of wealth, see *Against the Academics* 1.1.1; *Confessions* 6.6.9.
 104. Augustine's thirty-second birthday was on November 13, 386.
 105. When Augustine was eighteen, he read Cicero's *Hortensius* and began to long for the immortality of wisdom over material gain (*Confessions* 3.4.7–8; see *On the Happy Life* 1.4).
 106. "Liberal" here can refer either to a generous spirit in parting with wealth or to the use of wealth befitting a man who values the liberal arts more than wealth.
 107. Cicero's *Hortensius*, which exists now only in fragments, was loosely based on Aristotle's *Protreptikos*, also lost. In the dialogue, Cicero attempts to persuade Quintus Hortensius Hortalus, an accomplished orator and lawyer known for his defense of corrupt provincial governors, of the superiority of philosophy to sophisticated rhetoric in conferring genuine human happiness. As Augustine testifies in the *Confessions*, the *Hortensius* was an exhortation not to this or that school of thought but to philosophy itself, that is, to the love of wisdom tout court (3.4.7–8).
 108. As Augustine tells us in *Confessions* 6.6.9–10, he had already begun to sour on the quest for honors after his move to Milan two years earlier. However, it was not until he converted to Christianity in late August of 386 (a "very few days" before the start of the Vintage Vacation on August 23 [*Confessions* 9.2.2]), that he became decisively free of worldly ambition and of the desire for praise and approval; and not until he resigned from teaching rhetoric in Milan did he become formally free. Since Augustine tendered his resignation only near the end of the Vintage Vacation (see *Confessions* 9.5.13), that is, around October 15, he describes his liberation from the lust for honor as a recent event.

109. For the metaphorical use of a citadel (*arc*), see *Against the Academics* 1.9.24; *On the Happy Life* 2.10; and *On Order* 1.11.32.
110. For this decision, see *Confessions* 8.12.28–29, 9.1.1.
111. Along with a proper diet, the regimen of the baths was considered by the Greeks and Romans conducive to good health (see Cornelius Celsus, *On Medicine* 1.1; Augustine, *On Order* 2.11.32).
112. See *Confessions* 10.31.43–44.
113. See 1.13.22, 1.14.26, and 2.1.1 below. The Latin word here is *modus*, from which comes our word “moderation” (see *On the Happy Life* 4.32). It is translated throughout the *Soliloquies* as “limit”; in the other Cassiciacum dialogues, it is translated as “measure” or “limit” depending on context. With extensive roots in both Cicero and Plotinus, *modus* is an important concept in the Cassiciacum dialogues (see *Against the Academics* 2.2.4, 2.3.9; *On the Happy Life* 2.7, 4.32, 4.34–35; *On Order* 1.8.26, 2.5.14, 2.19.50). Here, Augustine is drawing from the Ciceronian emphasis on moderation in appetites (see Cicero, *On Duties* 1.29.102, 1.30.106), pleasure (see *On Old Age* 14.46), and emotions (see *Academica* 2.44.135). The word translated here as “desire” is *cupiditas*. It is translated elsewhere as “lust” (see 1.6.12, 1.11.19, 1.14.25).
114. See Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.24.54. The learned men to whom Reason refers are Cicero and the Stoics, the latter of whom Cicero is quoting in this passage.
115. See 1.10.17 above.
116. The verb translated here as “mull over,” *volvare*, was rendered “turning over” in the dialogue’s opening line (1.1.1 above).
117. Literally, my minds (*mentes meae*).
118. Most likely, this is the same toothache that Augustine mentions in the *Confessions* 9.4.12.
119. It is Quintilian who attributes this argument to Cornelius Celsus (*Oratorical Instruction* 10.1.124). Celsus (fl. A.D. 50) was a Roman encyclopedist who is best remembered for his treatise *On Medicine*, a treatise known to Augustine (see 1.10.17 above and *On Order* 1.7.17). In the opening paragraphs of *On Heresies*, Augustine mentions that Celsus had also compiled the tenets of all the philosophical schools up to his own time (Praefatio, 5).
120. For another description of truth’s lovers, see *On Order* 1.8.24.
121. For the notion of *modus* or limit, see note 113 above. Cicero holds that the pursuit of the truth should be without measure, and he chastises those who think otherwise (*On the Ends* 1.2.2–3). Judging from this passage, Augustine would seem to agree (see also 2.1.1 below; *On Order* 2.20.52).

On the other hand, in other passages he is concerned with the pursuer's not growing fatigued or apathetic from overexertion and thus cautions self-restraint as the key to fruitfulness (see *On the Happy Life* 2.8, 4.31–32). Eustathius in Macrobius's *Saturnalia* offers a concurrent opinion when he says that Lady Philosophy, as a teacher of moderation in all things, must herself be moderate in her activities (*Saturnalia* 7.1.6).

122. Augustine offers a similarly risqué description of Wisdom's chaste promiscuity in *On Free Choice*:

Here, therefore, is something which we can all enjoy equally and in common. Here there are no restrictions, and nothing in her is deficient. She receives all her lovers (who are by no means envious of each other), sharing with all in common and yet chaste to each. No one says to another: "Stand back so I can approach too!" or "Remove your hands that I too may embrace!" All cleave [to the same wisdom], all touch her. . . . For nothing at any time ever belongs to one man or to any group of men as their own, but the whole is common to all at the same time. (2.14.37)

123. Later in his life Augustine opines that he does not like the sound of this statement, for it could imply that there is another way to perfect union with wisdom other than through Jesus Christ, who is the Way (see *Retractations* 1.4.3; John 14:6). He therefore "should have avoided this offense to pious ears." That said, Augustine notes that the Bible does speak of a plurality of routes in Ps 24 (25):4—"Shew, O Lord, Thy ways to me, and teach me Thy paths."
124. This group is similar to the first class of seafarers described in *On the Happy Life* 1.2. The "opening" of the eyes may refer to the mind's coming into full possession of its reason (see *On the Happy Life* 1.2). For Augustine, this could occur after the age of *adulescentia* (fifteen to thirty years old), when the reliance on "carnal or corporeal forms" increasingly disappears and the mind is more capable of understanding incorporeal, intelligible forms or realities (*On True Religion* 24.45).
125. Reading *ipsa sanitas lux est* with the BHQac.m2RE manuscripts. According to other manuscripts, the phrase is *ipsa sanitas dux est*: "health itself is their guide."
126. Reason is possibly referring to his earlier discussion of the sun, its splendor, and its illumination and their Trinitarian implications (see 1.8.15 above). Here, Reason refers again to the sun (Father) and to the light (Son). The Holy Spirit is most likely alluded to by the word "admonition." In *On the*

- Happy Life* 4.35, Augustine, following in the footsteps of Ambrose and Marius Victorinus, links *admonitio* with the Holy Spirit (see 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 above) or with inspiration in general (see *Against the Academics* 1.7.21). *Admonitio* is a Latin equivalent of the Greek *paraklêsis* (exhortation) from which the title Paraclete is derived (see John 14:16, etc.).
127. Augustine's taxonomy of different spectators can be compared to the various classes of seafarers he describes in *On the Happy Life* 1.2.
 128. The importance of a gradual ascent to the highest realities may be found throughout classical philosophy, including the Allegory of the Cave and Socrates's proposed education of the philosopher (Plato, *Republic* 514a–16c and 7.522c–34e, respectively), Cicero (see *On the Ends* 5.14.40; *Academica* 20.10.30), and Plotinus (*Enneads* 5.3.9). See also *On Order* 2.14.39ff.
 129. In Vergil, the expression “whitening sky” signifies dawn (*Aeneid* 4.586). Augustine may also be thinking of something he heard from St. Ambrose, who interprets a reference to the “heavens” in Ps 8:4 as that “in which grace begins to whiten in heavenly splendor” (*On the Sacraments* 6.5.25).
 130. The entire passage echoes Socrates's description of the philosopher in the Allegory of the Cave (see Plato, *Republic* 514a–16c; see also Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.9).
 131. Augustine later wishes that he had phrased this statement to differentiate his opinions more clearly from those of the “false philosopher Porphyry” (*Retractations* 1.4.3). For while he did refer to “these” (i.e., corruptible) sensible things—as opposed to Porphyry, who would have said all sensible things—Augustine should have added that “the sensible things of this kind [i.e., corruptible] will not exist in the new heaven and the new earth of the age to come.”
 132. Birdlime, a sticky substance like flypaper used to trap birds, signifies lust (see *Against the Academics* 2.3.7; *On the Trinity* 8.2.3). Augustine most likely borrowed the metaphor from Ambrose (see *On the Good of Death* 5.16). For the image of flying from bodily burdens up to the light, see Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.734; Plato, *Gorgias* 493a; *Cratylus* 400c; *Phaedo* 82e, 114b, c; *Phaedrus* 250c; Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.9.7, 4.8.1, 4.8.3–4; Cicero, *On the Commonwealth* 6.14; Ambrose, *On the Good of Death* 2.5, 11.48.
 133. *In suas auras*. *Aura* or air has the poetic connotation of meaning vital, life-giving air or the atmosphere high in the heavens. For the image of birds in a cage, see *Against the Academics* 2.3.7, 3.4.7, where there is a hint of Plato's Allegory of the Cave. *Aurae* can also refer to the upper world, as it does in *Aeneid* 6.128 to distinguish it from the cavernous underworld Aeneas visits, thereby reinforcing the cave imagery.

134. See Ambrose, *On Isaac* 8.78: “The eye, unless it is healthy and vigorous, does not look at the sun, and it cannot see the Good.”
135. For the image of sinking, see note 19 above.
136. See 1.10.17 above.
137. For the meaning of clemency, see note 64 above.
138. In *On Order*, it is the tears themselves that impose a limit on Augustine (1.10.30).
139. For the use of the term *tabes* or rot, see 1.11.18 above.
140. For the moderate exercise to which Reason is subjecting Augustine, see 1.13.23 above and 2.20.34 below.
141. *Accipe intentus*—literally, receive in an intent manner. Reason is mirroring Augustine’s language from the previous statement.
142. See 1.2.7 above and 2.18.32 below.
143. *Verus* in Latin, translated here as “true,” can also mean “real.” When the questions that Augustine or Reason raise sound peculiar, the reader may wish to substitute the word “real” for “true” and “reality” for “truth” (*veritas*) to obtain a better sense of what is at stake in the conversation. Here, for instance, Augustine is asking how real things, which truly exist, can ever cease to exist.
144. It is possible that Augustine is soliloquizing near the “usual tree” in the meadow where the group at Cassiciacum sometimes met for their discussions (see *Against the Academics* 2.11.25).
145. Augustine and Reason will return to this topic at 2.18.32 below.
146. *Istic sum*. The expression is found in Terence (*Mother-in-Law* 1.2.39) and Cicero (*On the Ends* 5.26.78).
147. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1: “whatever is, cannot be nowhere.” In Cicero’s *Academica*, when Varro is summarizing the teachings of Antiochus of Ascalon (130–68 B.C.) and the so-called Old Academy on force and matter, he states that “there is nothing that is not somewhere” (1.6.24). Augustine, however, does not limit the notions of somewhere and nowhere to the realm of space, as can be seen in *On Order* 2.16.44, where he speaks of a reality that is “neither in a place nor nowhere.”
148. The word here for “succinct bit of reasoning” is *rationcula* (see 2.11.20 below; see also *Against the Academics* 3.13.29, where it is translated as “petty syllogism”; *On the Happy Life* 2.15). There may be a hint of irony in Reason’s use of the word, as Cicero generally uses the term pejoratively (see *Tusculan Disputations* 2.12.29, 4.19.43; *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.29.73).
149. Literally, do not wish to be your own, as it were (*noli esse velle quasi proprius*).

Book Two

1. See 1.13.22 and 1.14.26 above.
2. For a similar line of questioning, see *On the Happy Life* 2.7.
3. Or more literally, whence is it that you know that? See 1.2.7 above.
4. For the importance of nonlocal forms of motion, see *On Order* 2.11.30, 2.16.44.
5. See 1.9.16 above.
6. For more on sufficiency, see 1.2.7 and 1.3.8 above.
7. See 1.13.22 above.
8. The word that Reason uses here for intellect is *intellegentia* rather than *intellectus*. See 2.19.33 below, where the soul (*anima*) is equated with *intellegentia*. See also 1.15.28 above and 2.20.34 below; *Against the Academics* 3.11.26; *On Order* 2.7.24, 2.15.42. Cicero defines *intellegentia* as “that through which the mind (*animus*) observes the things which are” (*On Rhetorical Invention* 2.53; see *On Divination* 1.32.70).
9. The triad of To Be, To Live, and To Understand is Neoplatonic in origin (see Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.7 et passim; book one, note 96 above). It recurs in several of Augustine’s writings (see *On Free Choice* 1.7.16, 2.3.7; *Confessions* 13.11.12; *On the Trinity* 10.10.13–16).
10. See 2.20.36 below.
11. For similar statements on being here, see 1.15.28 above; 2.5.7, 2.6.9 below; *On Order* 1.5.17, 1.9.27.
12. For another use of this expression, see 1.15.28 above.
13. See 1.15.28 above.
14. See 1.15.27 above.
15. See 1.6.12 above. See also Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.8: “Sensation is apprehension by means of the *soul’s* employment of the body” (emphasis added).
16. See *Against the Academics* 3.11.26. Being deceived or not comes into play only on the level of assent, not perception per se (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.32.105).
17. That is to say, “O weak argument!” A dagger made of lead looks threatening but is too soft to cut anything (see Cicero, *On the Ends* 4.18.48; Diogenes Laertes, *Lives* 6.65).
18. The phrase *natura rerum* can refer to the nature, course, or order of things (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.17.55), but *natura* can also signify the world or universe (see Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.14.37).
19. More literally, whence it seems to you that this is a true wall. See 1.2.7 above.

20. See 1.15.28 above.
21. The Latin, *quod non esse omnino cogitur*, can also be translated as “is obliged not to exist whatsoever.”
22. See 2.4.6 above.
23. What is translated in these passages as “in itself” is *per se*, a technical term (then as now) for something as it exists intrinsically, as opposed to something as it exists in relation to anything or anyone else.
24. Literally, into great straits (*magnae angustiae*). See *On Order* 2.3.9.
25. For the return to God, see 1.1.3 and 1.1.5 above. For the double return to self and God, see *Against the Academics* 3.19.42. For the return to oneself, see 2.19.33 below; *Against the Academics* 1.1.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3.8, 3.19.42; *On Order* 1.1.3, 2.11.30, 2.11.31 (as return to one’s reason).
26. On “being here” or paying attention, see 2.2.2 and 2.5.7 above.
27. *Verisimilitudo* or verisimilitude, translated here as “likeness to the true,” is a favorite concept of Academic skeptics (see *Against the Academics* 2.5.12; Cicero, *Academica* 2.31.99).
28. See 2.9.17 below. For more on the verisimilar or being “like the true,” see *Against the Academics* 2.6.15–2.8.20, 2.10.24–2.12.28; Cicero, *Academica* 2.31.99. On the examples of optical illusions that Augustine uses here, see *Against the Academics* 3.11.26.
29. See 2.7.13 below. Physically identical objects such as eggs and twins were a favorite subject of the Academics, who taught that nothing could be known with certainty (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.17.54, 2.18.58, 2.26.86).
30. *Silva*, a woodland or forest, was often used metaphorically to signify abundance (see Cicero, *Orator* 3.12). See 2.14.26 below.
31. For more on the power of demons over the senses and the imagination but not the mind, see *Against the Academics* 17.20 and *On Order* 2.9.27; see also Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 26–28. For demonic possession, see *On the Happy Life* 3.18.
32. Vitruvius states that an inventor named Ctesibius Alexandrinus discovered how to make water dials (*horologia*, translated here as “clocks”) produce “the sound of trumpets and other such effects” through the use of compressed air (*Ten Books on Architecture* 9.8.4). Since Vitruvius did not mention birds specifically, it appears that Augustine is the first author in history to describe what we know today as a cuckoo clock.
33. This is Thomas Gilligan’s astute translation of *falsae voculae*.
34. That is, in the chapters immediately following.
35. Reason completes the examination of virtually identical things by canvassing smell, taste, and touch. Reason shrewdly uses the example of a

specific honey, since the Roman palate could distinguish between the watery honey made from skirret and the thick honey made from rosemary, the low-quality honey made from figs and the good honey made from alfalfa. The best honey, however, was considered to come from beehives placed next to thyme (see Varro, *On Agricultural Topics* 3.16.26).

36. See 2.6.10 above.

37. See 2.6.10 above, where Augustine had agreed that likeness, rather than unlikeness, was the mother of falsity. The relationship of truth and knowledge to similarity and difference was debated a great deal by ancient philosophers. Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, argued that truth can be grasped only by characteristics that are completely unlike the false (see *Against the Academics* 2.5.11, 2.6.14, 3.9.18–21; Cicero, *Academica* 1.11.41, 2.6.18, 2.10.30–31, 2.11.34, 2.13.40; Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 8.257).

38. *Sermocinationes*, translated here as “discussions,” is a technical term in rhetoric for when the speaker speaks dramatically in the first person as someone else (see Quintilian, *Oratorical Instruction* 9.2.31; Pseudo-Cicero, *Rhetoric for Herennius* 4.52.65).

39. See *Retractations* 1.4.1: “In accordance with my enthusiasm and love for investigating, with [the aid of] reason, the truth about those things which I especially wanted to know, I also wrote two books in which I questioned myself and responded to myself, as if we were two, reason and I, although I was alone. Hence, I named this work the *Soliloquies*.”

40. To wit, Augustine’s pupils Licentius and Trygetius (see *On Order* 1.10.29–30).

41. According to Cicero, the Stoics define stubbornness (*perviciacia*) as a mental “sickness” whereby one holds a vehement opinion about something that one should not (*Tusculan Disputations* 4.10.26). See *Against the Academics* 2.1.1, 3.18.41.

42. Literally, begotten by contrary causes. See *On Order* 1.5.14.

43. Literally, in the nature of things (Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.14.37). See note 18 above.

44. A common (and inaccurate) assertion among ancient natural philosophers. See Herodotus, *Histories* 2.68; Aristotle, *History of Animals* 1.11 (492b23–24), 3.7 (516a23–24); Pliny, *Natural History* (8.37.89, 11.60.159).

45. See 2.7.13 above.

46. Augustine’s defining the false as that which is other than it seems led to the leaden dagger of book two’s first proof for the immortality of the soul (see 2.3.3–2.4.5).

47. In other words, defining the true as that which is as it seems leads to the deficiencies of the second proof for the soul's immortality (see 2.5.7 above). Throughout this paragraph, Augustine compares the problems of the first and second proofs to Scylla and Charybdis, respectively (see Homer, *Odyssey* 12.73–145; Vergil, *Aeneid* 3.685–86).
48. More literally, anyone will oppose. Reason makes a similar objection in 2.5.8 above, namely, that defining whatever is as true will mean that nothing is false.
49. *Aestus*, meaning a wave or swell, can also represent mental confusion or uncertainty (see Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.532, 12.486).
50. This latter category was to some extent anticipated in Augustine's opening prayer, "O God, through whom all things, which by themselves would not be, strive to be" (1.1.2 above).
51. The character Gaius Cotta, for example, defines malice as the "shifty and deceitful (*fallax*) planning of harm" in Cicero's *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.30.75 (see Cicero, *Academica* 2.46.140). For more on the distinction between lying and speaking a falsehood, see Augustine, *Against Lying* 10.23 and *On Lying* 10.17.
52. Cicero treats the cunning of small foxes (*vulpeculae*) as the paragon of fraud in the animal kingdom (*On Duties* 1.13.41).
53. Reason hesitates here perhaps because although a *mendax* in Latin overwhelmingly signified a liar, *mentiens* as a substantive typically signified a fallacy or sophism rather than a person. See Cicero, *On Divination* 2.4.11.
54. The verbs *tendere* and *contendere*, translated here and elsewhere as "tend," have also been translated as "strive."
55. See 2.6.10 above; *Against the Academics* 3.11.26.
56. Reading "we cannot" (*non possumus*) instead of "we can" (*possumus*) in the J and H manuscripts.
57. Quintus Roscius Gallus (ca. 126–62 B.C.) was a famous Roman actor. He was so skilled, especially in comedies, that even Cicero took lessons in elocution from him. Cicero also defended Roscius in a lawsuit, the subject of his speech *For Roscius the Comedian*. Hecuba was the wife of Priam, king of Troy. She is the subject of two tragedies written by Euripides, *Hecuba* and *The Trojan Women*. It was not unusual for female characters on the stage to be played by men (see 2.16.30 below).
58. Priam, the king of Troy, was proverbial for the suffering he incurred during the Trojan War over the death of his son Hector and the destruction of his kingdom.

59. See 2.17.31 below. Hector, the son of Priam, was killed by Achilles in Homer's *Iliad*; Andromache was his wife. Hercules is the mythical demigod and son of Jupiter who was famous for his strength, bravery, and skill.
60. Cicero, *Against Verres II* 4.135. The Greek sculptor Myron of Eleutherae (ca. 480–440 B.C.) was famous for his lifelike reproductions. His bronze sculpture of a heifer was among his most celebrated works.
61. The word translated here as “garb,” *habitus*, can also mean one's condition or state. Augustine uses it later to describe women's clothing, again in an indirect reference to stage acting (see 2.16.30 below). As for Augustine's statement that “we should not become like actors,” although certain actors came to achieve great wealth and fame, under late Roman imperial law they were second-class citizens, prohibited from voting or holding public office. The profession was considered infamous and disgraceful: a Roman soldier could be executed for becoming an actor, and in certain regions of the empire, a Christian could be excommunicated for the same reason.
62. *Quasi bifronte ratione sibique adversante*, literally, in a two-faced mode, so to speak, standing in opposition to itself. The adjective *bifrons*, meaning “with two foreheads,” is a Vergilian epithet for Janus (see *Aeneid* 7.180, 12.198), the two-faced god who looked both forward and backward — forward to the new year, and backward to the old (hence the month named after him: January). Here, however, Augustine says that the two faces are *sibique adversanti*, which may imply that they are facing each other. Augustine's use of *bifrons* in reference to something other than Janus is unique in classical Latin literature and in Augustine's own corpus of writings (see *City of God* 7.7–8). His unusual application of the word explains why he adds “so to speak” as a qualifier.
63. See 1.15.27 above.
64. That is, dialectic (see *On Order* 2.13.38; *Against the Academics* 3.17.37; Cicero, *On the Ends* 2.6.18).
65. See *On Order* 2.12.37.
66. See 2.9.16 above; see also *On Order* 2.14.40–41.
67. Augustine stipulates “human” language because animals have a sort of language of their own (see *On Christian Doctrine* 2.2.3).
68. It is because of this necessity that history, a subcategory of grammar, is “filled with more worries than with charm or truth” (*On Order* 2.12.37).
69. See *Against the Academics* 3.3.5, 3.4.10, 3.12.29; Cicero, *Academica* 2.13.40, 2.32.103.
70. For the use of “succinct bit of reasoning” (*ratiuncula*), see 1.15.29 above.

71. For the successful flight of Daedalus with wings made out of wax and feathers, see Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.14–17; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 8.183–235. See also *On Order* 2.12.37, where Augustine subjects the myth to a rather severe treatment.
72. As Augustine's joke attests, corporal punishment swiftly and vigorously delivered was common in his time (see *Confessions* 1.9.14: "If I proved idle in learning, I was soundly beaten").
73. *Unde sit disciplina grammatica* — more literally, whence is it that grammar is a discipline.
74. Reading *partium* with the N aelm manuscripts. A definition should have nothing extraneous to it and everything proper to it (see *Against the Academics* 1.5.14, 1.8.23).
75. See *On Order* 2.3.8.
76. See 2.11.19 above.
77. The words Augustine uses for "shape and form" are *forma et species*. See 2.18.32 below; *On Order* 2.16.44; *On the Immortality of the Soul* 8.13.
78. See Aristotle, *Categories* 1b1–2; see also *On the Immortality of the Soul* 2.2, 5.9, 6.11, and 10.17; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.
79. Augustine is referring to his reading of Aristotle's *Categories* at the age of nineteen (see *Confessions* 4.16.28).
80. That is, when the property of a subject is not essential to its existence. See Aristotle, *Categories* 1a2off.
81. See Porphyry, *Introduction to Aristotle's Categories* 9.7–16.
82. Augustine offers similar arguments in *On Order* 2.19.50 and *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1, 4.5.
83. See Plato's *Phaedo* 105d, where Socrates asserts, as part of his "Opposites Argument" attempting to prove the soul's immortality, that "not only does life exclude death, but the soul, of which life is the inseparable attribute, also excludes death" (trans. Jowett). See also Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.11 (16).
84. The principle of non-contradiction: "The same thing cannot both belong and not belong to the same object and in the same respect" (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1005b19–21).
85. In Plato's *Apology* 40c–e, Socrates argues that in death the soul either becomes as if nothing or migrates to a better place. Either way, death should not be feared.
86. In *On the Happy Life* 1.5, Augustine admits that he is still tossed about by questions on the soul.
87. Reading *inferas*, as in the Rac.lm manuscripts.

88. *Quid enecas?* literally means “why are you killing me?” It is a colloquialism, found in Roman comedies, for thoroughly vexing or exhausting someone (see Terence, *Andria* 660 [4.1]).
89. See 2.12.22 above.
90. See 1.15.28 above.
91. Augustine offers a similar argument in *On Order* 2.19.50.
92. *Ratiocinationes*, translated earlier as methods of reasoning (2.11.20), usually signifies some kind of syllogistic reasoning.
93. For this use of “forest,” see 2.6.11 above.
94. The identity of this man who is eloquence incarnate remains uncertain. Most likely, it is Manlius Theodorus, but it could also be St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan (see Glossary of Select Names).
95. Augustine is frustrated with the person whom he admires for not responding to his request for assistance. Again, this could be either Theodorus or Ambrose. Augustine dedicated *On the Happy Life* to Theodorus but never heard back from him; similarly, Augustine mentions the difficulty he had in approaching a busy bishop like Ambrose (*Confessions* 6.3.3).
96. Most likely, Zenobius, to whom *On Order* is dedicated and who is probably in exile in the Alps, among the “ancient ice” of its glaciers (see *On Order* 1.1.1, Glossary of Select Names). Augustine eventually succeeded in sending a brief letter to Zenobius from Cassiciacum, what is now *Epistle* 2 in Augustine’s extant correspondence.
97. A *suggestus*, translated here as “platform,” was an elevated structure from which orators addressed the people. The Rostra in the Roman Forum was the most famous *suggestus*.
98. These prayers were offered at 1.1.2–6, 2.1.1, and 2.6.9. Augustine’s reference to riches and bodily pleasure, prominence and honor, and the knowledge of self and God recapitulates the three parts of the soul according to Plato: the appetitive, thumotic, and rational.
99. See 1.15.28 above.
100. See 2.11.21 above.
101. See, for example, 2.7.13–14 above.
102. See 1.15.28 above.
103. For both points, see 2.6.9–2.7.13 above.
104. See Cicero, *On Rhetorical Invention* 1.19.27, where Cicero states that a fable consists of elements that are neither true nor similar to the true (*veri similes*). According to Greek mythology, Medea murdered her two sons by Jason and then flew away in a golden chariot pulled by flying dragons.

105. This is the verse, borrowed from the tragic poet Pacuvius's *Medusa*, that Cicero uses as an example of a fable (see *On Rhetorical Invention* 1.19.27).
106. For the idea of a nonreciprocal likeness in beings that are ranked vertically, see Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.2.2.4–10.
107. For being in the wrong person's garb, see 2.10.18 above.
108. Cross-dressing on stage was often done by castrated male actors who, according to one account, “played feminine roles with much lascivious realism” (Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 42). In late Roman mimes (*mimi*), there is evidence that real acts of copulation took place. Some actors were castrated young specifically for this purpose (see Tertullian, *On the Spectacles* 17, 23).
109. The issue was not unknown in rhetorical circles. Number 282 of the *Minor Declamations* (attributed to Quintilian) asks whether it is justifiable to dress up like a woman in order to kill a tyrant. The creative scenario envisioned is that of a tyrant who has ordered a particular woman to be brought to his room, but her brother, wearing her clothes, takes her place and kills him. The student of rhetoric is given several statements to weave into his declamation (an exercise in public speaking and legal argument before an imaginary court) such as, “The soul is free, and it does not matter what clothes it is wearing,” “Custom varies from people to people,” and “Out of all the many assassins of tyrants, the man who impersonates his sister will be truly notable.” Augustine may have also heard from St. Ambrose the story of a Christian soldier who rescued a Christian virgin from a brothel to which she had been sentenced by changing clothes with her. “Your clothes will make me a true soldier,” he explained to her, “and mine will keep you a virgin.” The maiden's purity was spared, and both eventually received the palm of martyrdom (see Ambrose, *On Virgins* 2.4.24–33).
110. The promise is not kept, at least not in the published edition of the *Soliloquies*.
111. See 2.6.9–2.7.12 above, where it was concluded that the false is similar to the true.
112. See 2.11.19–21 above.
113. See 2.10.18 above. Augustine has chosen another famous mythological character from classical literature as an example, the figure of Achilles.
114. But at 2.8.15 above, Augustine had said, “obviously *all* things . . . are found to be in some way both like and unlike each other” (emphasis added).
115. *Inane*, that is, emptiness. See *On Genesis Against the Manichaeans* 1.4.7: “Emptiness (*inanitas*) is not something; but a place where there is no body is called empty (*inanis*).”

116. See 1.15.27 above.
117. Some manuscripts show Augustine asking the question about “the other things” and Reason replying directly with, “What else but that which . . .”
118. See 1.2.7 and 1.15.27 above.
119. This was one of Augustine’s worries (see 2.14.25 above).
120. Even though spatial, temporal, material reality is in a sense “less real,” it is nevertheless real (see 1.15.28 above). The word translated here as “real” is *verus*, the same word as “true” in this paragraph and throughout the dialogue. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 12.19, where Augustine states that things exist insofar as they are true.
121. *Liquidum verum* may also be translated as “the pure truth” or the “purely true.”
122. See 2.12.22 above, *On the Immortality of the Soul* 8.13, *On Order* 2.16.44. In Latin *species* (translated here and throughout as “form”) usually refers to the appearance (as opposed to the reality) of a thing; but in the Cassiciacum dialogues, Augustine uses it as the opposite of *moles* or matter (see *On the Immortality of the Soul* 8.13). In this respect, *species* is the equivalent of *eidos* found in Greek philosophy. Augustine most likely borrowed this usage from Marius Victorinus’s translation of Porphyry’s *Isagoge*: “the form (*forma*) of each individual man is called a *species*” (see Boethius, *First Edition* 1.21). Victorinus probably chose *species* as the translation of *eidos* because of its close ties to a Latin word for beautiful (*speciosus*), an association that Augustine exploits to great effect in *On the Immortality of the Soul* 8.13. It appears that a *species* can be either an accidental form or a substantial form; for the latter, see Marius Victorinus, *Against Arius* 1.19: “For every being (*esse*) has an inseparable *species*; or rather, the very *species* [of a being] is its very substance”.
123. See *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 31: “All that is true is true by virtue of the truth. And every soul* is a soul by virtue of being a true soul*. Therefore, every soul* has from the truth [what it needs] to thoroughly be a soul*.”
124. See 1.4.9–1.5.11 above.
125. Literally, blind in the mind* (see *On Order* 1.1.2).
126. See 2.15.27 above, where Augustine expresses a desire to examine: (1) whether the truth is forever, (2) whether the reasoning of disputation is the truth itself, and (3) how a discipline is in the soul of an unlearned person.
127. *Intellegentia*. See 2.1.1 above.
128. For more on the definition of a circle and its center, see *On Order* 1.2.3.

129. See 2.6.9 above.
130. Reason is recommending that the *Soliloquies* consist of three books. The never-completed *On the Immortality of the Soul* consists of notes to the proposed third book (see *Retractations* 1.5.1).
131. The Greek notions of *phantasia* and *phantasma* are of Stoic origin, although Augustine most likely wrestled with them most in the works of Plotinus and Porphyry. Elsewhere, he contrasts them in the following way: “Sometimes I think of my father, whom I saw often; at other times, I think of my grandfather, whom I never saw. The former is a *phantasia*, the latter a *phantasma*. The former I find in my memory, the latter in that motion of the mind which arises from those things which the memory has in its possession” (*On Music* 6.11.32). Here, however, Augustine is content to view the two things in the same generic category of sensible images that stands in contradistinction to the forms (*figurae*) that are grasped only by the understanding or intellect. In *Epistles* 6 and 7, Augustine and his friend Nebridius discuss the role of *phantasiae* in memory and understanding; and in *Epistles* 7 and 8, they take up the relation between thought (*cogitatio*) and sensible images, thereby linking thought to imagination. The link, if not identification, of thought and imagination may be found not only in Neoplatonism but in Cicero as well (see *Academica* 2.16.51).
132. For the exercise in question, see 1.13.23 and 1.15.27 above.
133. It would be virtually impossible to prove that such a statement is false, even though it is highly unlikely. According to Pliny, no infant has ever laughed before being forty days old, and even then it is regarded as a “miracle of precocity” (see *Natural History* 7.1.2).
134. See *On the Greatness of the Soul* 20.34: “That which is called learning is nothing else but recollecting and remembering.” The formulation is inspired by Cicero’s summation of the Platonic theory of recollection: “The [soul] knows [ideas] by recollecting. And so, learning is nothing else but remembering” (*Tusculan Disputations* 1.24.58).
135. For more on this kind of forgetting, see *Confessions* 10.18.27–10.19.28.
136. Augustine later disapproves of this statement, for it might appear as an endorsement of the Platonic theory of recollection (which he rejects in *On the Trinity* 12.15). Further, he later claims that he did not need to limit his remarks to the liberally educated, “for it is more credible that even those who are ignorant give true responses about certain disciplines when they are questioned well because, insofar as they are able to grasp it, the light of eternal reason, where they gaze upon these unchangeable truths, is present to them” (*Retractations* 1.4.4).

137. See Plotinus, who describes imagination with the same metaphor (*Enneads* 1.4.10, 4.3.12). Plotinus also states that visible “colors and shapes” are “but reproductions of those in the Reason-Principle” (6.3.15). For the expression “colors and figures,” see also Aristotle, *Poetics* 1.1447a20).
138. See the first three lines of *Enneads* 1.6.3, where Plotinus discusses the soul’s capacity to judge by comparing what is presented to it with the Form(s) it has in its possession.
139. In *On Order* 2.15.42, it is asserted that the understanding cannot “contain” physical shapes since they are far inferior.
140. See 2.1.1 above.
141. See 2.9.16 and 2.12.20 above.
142. Reason’s admonition, *Bono animo esto*, hearkens back to his advice to Augustine in 1.1.1 to write the *Soliloquies* in order to become more heartened (*animosior*).
143. The word translated here as “untruth” is *mendacium*. For the distinction between the deceitful (*fallax*) and untrue (*mendax*), see 2.8.16 above.

On the Immortality of the Soul; or, Notes for What Would Have Become Book Three

1. A discipline or *disciplina* is a recurring subject in the Cassiciacum dialogues, especially the seven liberal disciplines or arts (see *On Order* 2.5.17, 2.12.35–2.18.47). For Augustine, a discipline can be a teaching or mode of instruction in a particular field (see *On Order* 1.9.27, 2.2.7; see also *On Free Choice of the Will* 1.1.2). This teaching proceeds according to a well-organized order (see *Soliloquies* 1.13.23) because it is organized and its parts differentiated by dialectic (see *Soliloquies* 2.11.20, 2.18.32). However, a discipline can also be knowledge* itself, that is, a knowledge of things that are true in and of themselves (see *Soliloquies* 2.11.21; see also 1.1 below). Third, the concept of discipline is not limited to the liberal arts, as when Augustine speaks of a “certain lofty discipline” that “is the very law of God that . . . is transcribed, so to speak, onto wise souls*,” so that they know* how to live better and more sublimely insofar as they contemplate it more perfectly through understanding and guard it more carefully through living” (*On Order* 2.7.24, 2.8.25).
2. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.1.7.
3. This possibility is ruled out in 4.6 below.
4. In the *Soliloquies*, Augustine usually uses the word *animus*, which is mostly translated as “soul” and less often as “mind,” when discussing the “in the

subject” proof for the soul’s immortality. He continues this convention throughout *On the Immortality of the Soul*: the word *anima*, translated as “soul*,” replaces *animus* only in 5.9 and in 15.24–16.25. While *animus* is uniquely human because of its inherent ties with reason (*Against the Academics* 1.2.5; see 1.1 here and 2.2 below), *anima* is common to all living organisms as that which gives life to the body (see *Soliloquies* 1.2.7; *Confessions* 10.7.11; see also Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.9.19). That said, Augustine sometimes uses the two interchangeably. In *Soliloquies* 1.6.13, he defines understanding (*intellectus*) as the “seeing” of the *anima*, but in *On Immortality of the Soul* 6.10, he defines it as the “seeing” of the *animus*. Augustine probably prefers *animus* in the latter half of book two of *Soliloquies* and most of *On the Immortality of the Soul* because his key concern is proving not simply that his life force (*anima*) will survive death but that his understanding, which is intrinsically tied to his *animus*, will as well (see *Soliloquies* 2.20.36).

5. “Whatever is, must be somewhere” (see *Soliloquies* 1.15.29 and its accompanying note).
6. See *Soliloquies* 2.11.20, where Reason defines discipline in relation to the subject by etymologically connecting it to learning (*discendo*). See note 13 below.
7. For other examples of geometry as eternal truth, see *Soliloquies* 1.4.9–1.5.11, 2.18.32–2.19.32; *On the Greatness of the Soul* 6.10–15.25. For other uses of the Euclidian definition of a circle, see 4.6 below; *On Order* 1.2.3; *Soliloquies* 1.4.10, 2.19.33, 2.20.35.
8. See *Soliloquies* 2.13.24, 2.19.33; Plato, *Meno* 86b; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.8.
9. See 10.17 below; *On Order* 1.1.3–1.2.3; see also Plato, *Phaedo* 65b–66e; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.8: Whereas sensation is the apprehension of sensible objects by means of the soul’s employment of the body, understanding or intellection is the apprehension of intelligible objects without employing the body. Even the act of recognizing a form or *eidos* in a concrete thing involves abstracting the form from the material, “and the separating agent is the intellect.”
10. See Plato, *Phaedo* 78d–79a. Augustine later regrets this statement on the grounds that the soul itself is a reality that is understood yet it does not exist forever so (*Retractations* 1.5.2). Indeed, other sections of *On the Immortality of the Soul* explore the ways in which the soul undergoes change (5.7–9). On the other hand, it may nevertheless be true that the soul has an unchangeable intelligibility that the body does not.
11. See Plato, *Phaedo* 65a–67b.

12. See *On the Greatness of the Soul* 26.52–53.
13. When Augustine wrote this statement as well as “a discipline cannot exist in that which learns nothing,” he was thinking of only human souls. It did not occur to him that God does not learn the disciplines and yet has a knowledge* of all things, including even a foreknowledge of future events (see *Retractations* 1.5.2).
14. See *Soliloquies* 1.4.9, where an additional qualification is added: a discipline is a knowledge* of certain things, provided it is truly the knower’s and not a memorized datum received on the testimony of someone else. In *Soliloquies* 2.11.21, however, Reason defines discipline as a purely objective reality, something that is utterly true “through its very self.”
15. For the earliest version of this argument, see *Soliloquies* 2.13.23; see also 4.5 below.
16. See *On Order* 2.19.50: “If I . . . am reason (*ratio*), then that by which I am called mortal isn’t mine. Or, if the soul* isn’t that which is reason and yet I use reason and it’s through reason that I am better, then one should flee from the worse to the better, from the mortal to the immortal.”
17. Augustine uses the term “substance” as essentially synonymous with a thing’s essence or nature, which is good insofar as it exists (see *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.13.36).
18. For the soul as more real than the body, see *Soliloquies* 2.17.31–2.18.32.
19. For the initial discussion on a discipline being in the soul as in a subject, see *Soliloquies* 2.12.22–2.13.24, 2.19.33.
20. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.8.21.
21. See *On Order* 2.19.50.
22. Viewing the soul as the harmony of the body has a long line of critics. See Plato, *Phaedo* 85c–86d; Aristotle, *On the Soul* 1.4 (407b27) and *Politics* 8.5 (1340b18); Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.2.1, 4.7.8.D.(12). Plotinus claims that the Pythagoreans held this view (*ibid.*).
23. *Virtus* is a strength or power of the human soul rather than the body (see *On the Greatness of the Soul* 21.35; *On the Teacher* 13.43). As for its relationship to constancy, see *On the Happy Life* 2.8: “But something is if it remains, if it stays constant, if it is always the same—as virtue is.” For more on constancy, see *On Music* 6.14.44; *Retractations* 1.10.4.
24. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.23.53.
25. A disjunction consists of several different options in which one of the options must be true, such as that “the world is either one or it isn’t,” that “the number of worlds is either finite or infinite,” or that the world “was and always will be, or that it began to exist and will never cease to exist, or that

- it doesn't have an origin in time but it will have an end, or that it began to abide but won't abide forever" (*Against the Academics* 3.10.23). See also Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 1.25.70; *Academica* 2.30.97.
26. *Exanimis*, translated here as "lifeless," pertains to something that has a form but not a soul or living form (see *On Order* 2.16.44). See Plato, *Phaedo* 105c–d.
27. That is, there is no action properly speaking without the agency of a soul. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.23.53.
28. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.11.
29. The body, which is composite and can be scattered, is subject to destruction while the soul, which is an indivisible unity, is not (see Plato, *Phaedo* 78b–82c; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.1, 3).
30. See *On True Religion* 22.42; *Confessions* 4.10.15, 4.11.17, 11.23.29, 11.26.33, 11.27.35.
31. For more on memory, intention or sight, and expectation with respect to past, present, and future, see *Confessions* 11.20.26, 11.28.37. Augustine has lifted this triple correspondence of time and mindfulness from Cicero (see *Tusculan Disputations* 1.27.66; *On Rhetorical Invention* 2.53.160).
32. See *Confessions* 11.14.17; see also Plato, *Timaeus* 38b.
33. *Ratio numerorum* can mean a numerical ratio (see *On Order* 2.19.50), but here it probably signifies the unchanging relationship existing between numbers on which all calculation is based, that is, the immutable laws of arithmetic. See *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 2.11.24; *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.8.23; *Confessions* 5.7.12 and 10.12.19.
34. Art (*ars*) here refers to one of the liberal arts (see 4.6 below), which Augustine traces to the power of number in *On Order* 2.12.35–2.18.47.
35. For art and reason as virtually identical, see *On Music* 1.4.6.
36. Augustine later regrets that he was thinking only of human souls when he wrote this, for "it is not the case that life is without reason in God; with Him is supreme life and supreme reason" (*Retractations* 1.5.2).
37. See 1.1 above; see also *Soliloquies* 2.13.23.
38. For the lingering problems of forgetfulness and ignorance, see *Soliloquies* 2.14.25. In *Soliloquies* 2.19.33, Augustine repeats his confusion about ignorance; in 2.20.36, about forgetfulness or *oblivio*, the privation of memory (see *Confessions* 10.16.24).
39. See *On the Trinity* 10.5.7, 14.7.9.
40. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.8.8.
41. Such as Socrates's questioning of the slave boy in Plato's *Meno* about geometry (82c–85c). See also *Soliloquies* 2.20.35; Plato, *Phaedo* 73a; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.24.57.

42. For the distinction between making and begetting, see note 84 below.
43. See *On Music* 6.12.36.
44. See Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 1.24.57.
45. See *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 23.9: “The soul* is said to be immortal, and indeed it is, because the soul* lives forever, and there is in it a certain perduring life, but it is a changeable life. According to the changeability of this life, it can be called mortal; because if it lived wisely and then became foolish, it dies for the worse; if it lived foolishly and became wise, it dies for the better.” See also *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.6.14; *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 54; Plotinus, *Enneads* 3.6.1, 3.6.2.
46. See *City of God* 9.4; see also Aristotle, *On the Soul* 403a.
47. See *On the Trinity* 6.6.8; *City of God* 14.5–6; *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 60.3; *Confessions* 10.14.22. See also Cicero, *On the Ends of Good and Evil Things* 3.11.35; *Tusculan Disputations* 3.11.24–25; *On Rhetorical Invention* 1.25.36; Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.1.1, 3.6.1, 3.6.3, 3.6.4.
48. See 5.7 above.
49. See *Soliloquies* 2.12.22.
50. Augustine uses the stronger term *conmutatio* instead of *mutatio* to indicate a change to the entire substance of a thing (see also 6.11, 13.20, 13.22, 14.23, 15.24 below). It is a translation of Aristotle’s term *alloiōsis* for the degenerative transition from one form to another (see *Categories* 14, 15b11–12).
51. See 2.2 above; see also *Soliloquies* 2.12.22.
52. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 3.6.2, 3.6.3.
53. That is, we should not fear that changes to the soul will undermine the reasoning of the “in the subject” proof. See 5.8 above.
54. See *Soliloquies* 1.6.13; *On the Greatness of the Soul* 27.53.
55. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 1.16.34, 2.6.14; *On True Religion* 53.101; *On the Trinity* 15.12.21.
56. *Conjunctio* or conjoining is translated as “intimacy” in *Soliloquies* 1.13.23.
57. See *On Order* 2.2.5; *On the Teacher* 12.39.
58. Perception can refer to basic sensory activities, but it can also designate observation or comprehension of an intelligible reality (see *On the Immortality of the Soul* 10.17; see also *Against the Academics* 3.9.21). It is in this sense that the spatial-temporal-material data grasped by the senses cannot be perceived by the intellect or understanding.
59. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.10.
60. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.2.1.
61. Reading *ratio cui* instead of *rationi*.

62. *Vis*, the word here for power, can signify an energy of action or a capacity or potency (see 8.14–15 below). In the Cassiciacum dialogues, *vis* is often used in reference to reason or the soul (see 14.23 below; *On Order* 2.13.38, 2.18.48) and the liberal arts (see *On Order* 2.17.45, 2.19.50; *Soliloquies* 2.11.19).
63. Literally, more separated.
64. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 1.10.20.
65. For the principle “the good has no envy of the good,” see *Against Maximinus, an Arian* 2.15.1. See also Plato, *Timaeus* 29e; Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.9.17, 4.8.6, 5.4.1, 5.5.12.
66. See *On True Religion* 11.22.
67. When Augustine argued that “the soul cannot be separated from eternal reason because it is not joined to it locally,” he was ignorant of Isa 59:2: “Your sins separate you and God.” “It is therefore given to be understood,” Augustine concludes, “that we can also speak of a separation of those things that were joined, not in a location, but incorporeally” (*Retractations* 1.5.2).
68. See *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 2.1.1.
69. See 12.19 below.
70. For greater and lesser being, see *On Music* 6.5.13; *On Free Choice of the Will* 3.7.21.
71. For a discussion of things “tending” or “striving” (*tendere*), see *Soliloquies* 2.9.16–17. For the principle that corruption tends toward nonbeing, see *Against the “Foundation Letter” of the Manichaeans* 40.46; *Eighty-Three Different Questions* 21; *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 2.2.3; *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.17.46; *On True Religion* 11.21.
72. *Interitus*, which is usually translated as “destruction,” can also be translated as “passing away” (see *Soliloquies* 2.19.33).
73. See *Against the Academics* 3.17.37, 3.19.42. See also *On Order* 2.18.47; *Epistle* 3.1; *On the Teacher* 12.39–40; Plato, *Phaedo* 65a–68b; Parmenides 126a–35c; *Timaeus* 28a; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.11.30; Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.3.10, 2.3.13, 4.4.32.
74. According to some scholars, there is a small lacuna in the manuscripts here.
75. That is, the more it fills the universe with its mass, the more it becomes the universe (or vice versa).
76. See *On the Trinity* 6.6.8; Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.12.32.
77. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.4.5.
78. For more on the subject, see *Epistle* 3.2: “This one thing moved me greatly, how bodies may be infinitely divided.”

79. See *Soliloquies* 1.4.10.
80. See *Soliloquies* 2.12.22, 2.18.32. Augustine's juxtaposition of *moles* (translated as "matter" or "mass" depending on the context) and *species* (form) is inspired by Plotinus's distinction between *ongkos* and *eidōs* (see *Enneads* 3.6.16).
81. For the privation of a good, see *Confessions* 12.12.15; Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.1.9.
82. See *Soliloquies* 2.18.32; *On True Religion* 11.21; Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.4.3.
83. See *On the Greatness of the Soul* 30.59.
84. For the distinction between making and begetting, both of which always have a cause, see *On Order* 1.5.14. Making versus begetting is important for orthodox post-Nicene Christianity, which holds that Jesus Christ is begotten, not made, and consubstantial with (of the same substance as) the Father. See *Against Maximinus, an Arian*: "You do not deny that the Son is in the form of God, but you do deny that He is equal to God the Father, reckoning that the form of the Father is greater than that of the Son. As if the Father would not have it in Him to perfect His own form in His Son, whom He begat from His very self and did not make, either from nothing or from something else! Or, if He did have the ability to beget His own form in His only Son and yet did not beget the full form but a lesser one—pay attention to what follows and return to the right path, lest you are forced to say that the Father is envious" (2.15.1). For the principle that nothing makes or begets itself, see *On the Trinity* 1.1.1; Plato, *Timaeus* 28a–c; Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 9.8.
85. Assuming that Augustine is not using the terms interchangeably, eternity suggests past, present, and future in a single moment while sempiternity suggests existing in all ages or of infinite duration. The distinction may be inspired by Plotinus's distinction between *aiōnios* (eternal) and *adios* (sempiternal) in *Enneads* 3.7.3. See also 4.6 above and *On the Greatness of the Soul* 20.34.
86. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 245d.
87. See *Confessions* 7.1.1; Plato, *Timaeus* 27d–28c.
88. See *On True Religion* 18.35; *On the Trinity* 15.16.26.
89. At the beginning of 8.14, Reason and Augustine distinguish "making" (be it from nothing or from something else) and "begetting," which is always from one's very self. Here, Reason and Augustine contrast the superiority of the maker to the made with the equality of the begetter and the begotten insofar as the latter two share the same essence. In *Soliloquies* 2.6.11, Reason states that nature makes *inferior* likenesses by begetting. On the

other hand, in *Soliloquies* 1.1.4, Augustine states that God the Begetter and God the Begotten are one (and hence equal—see *Against Maximinus, an Arian* 2.15.1). This passage, which despite its strange phrasing “is not absurdly said,” must have the equality of the Father and the Son in mind. But by affirming the equality between Begetter and Begotten (at least in this one case), Augustine parts company with Plato (*Philebus* 27a), Plotinus (*Enneads* 3.8.5, 6.1.6, 5.2.2), and Porphyry (*Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 13).

90. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.3. The word *universus*, translated in this paragraph as “whole,” can also mean universal (see *On Order* 1.1.1, 1.2.3). If “universal body” is in reference to all physical matter in the universe, the incorporeal power and nature guiding it may be the World Soul (see *On the Immortality of the Soul* 15.24).
91. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.17.45.
92. Elsewhere Augustine uses the expression “power and nature” (*vis et natura*) for grammar (see *On Order* 2.17.45).
93. See *Confessions* 4.12.18.
94. *Effectoria vis*, translated here as “productive force,” is first found in Aristotle (*On the Heavens* 1.17, 275b5) and later in the Peripatetic writings of Alexander of Aphrodisias and in the Neoplatonic writings of Proclus and others. Curiously, it is absent from Plotinus and Porphyry.
95. For the soul existing by virtue of itself, see Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.9, 11, 12; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to Intelligibles* 18.
96. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c–d.
97. See *On Music* 6.14.44; *Retractations* 1.10.4; Plato, *Timaeus* 37d–38a.
98. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 2.4.6–7.
99. See *Soliloquies* 2.13.23; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to Intelligibles* 18, 21.
100. See Plato, *Phaedo* 105c–7a.
101. See *Soliloquies* 2.13.23; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to Intelligibles* 22.
102. *Temperatio* is a right mixture or blending of ingredients (see *On the Happy Life* 4.32). Simmias discusses the shortcomings of understanding the soul in these terms in Plato’s *Phaedo* 85c–86d, but Augustine’s most likely source is Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.8.D.(12) (see also *On the Trinity* 10.7.9, 10.10.15). Plotinus claims that the Pythagoreans erroneously held this view. “That due blending of the corporeal materials which constitute our frame would be simply health,” Plotinus writes.
103. See *On Order* 1.1.1–1.2.3; Plato, *Phaedo* 79d; *Republic* 6.484b.
104. See 1.1 above; see also *Soliloquies* 1.16.24; *On True Religion* 3.3.
105. See *Soliloquies* 2.12.22; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.3.20.

106. That is, the four elements of earth, water, air, and fire (see *On the Greatness of the Soul* 1.2, 13.22, 31.62).
107. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.3.20.
108. See 1.1 above; *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 46.2; *On the Trinity* 12.14.23; Plato, *Phaedo* 78c.
109. The word here for intellect is *intellegentia* (see *Soliloquies* 1.15.28, 2.1.1, 2.19.33, 2.20.34). Cicero defines *intellegentia* as “that through which the soul (*animus*) observes the things which are” (*On Rhetorical Invention* 2.53; see *On Divination* 1.32.70). For the superiority of the eyes of the mind to those of the body in Augustine’s writings, see *On the Greatness of the Soul* 14.23–24; *On Two Souls, Against the Manichaeans* 2.2.
110. See 15.23–16.24 below; *Epistle* 137.11.
111. See 6.11 above.
112. See 9.16 above.
113. See 8.15–9.16 above.
114. See 8.13–9.16 above.
115. See 7.12–8.13 above.
116. See *On the Happy Life* 2.8, 4.31–32; Plotinus, *Enneads* 3.5.9.
117. A Trinitarian echo. God is one Supreme Essence in three divine persons (see *On the Happy Life* 4.34): the Father is the (Supreme) Mode (*Modus*, translated in *On the Happy Life* 4.34 as “Measure”), the Son is the Truth (see *Soliloquies* 1.1.3; John 14:6), and the Holy Spirit is the Divine Love that conjoins the soul to God (see *City of God* 12.9, where Augustine links the term “divine love” [*divinus amor*] to the gift of the Holy Spirit; and *City of God* 17.16, where he uses the language of conjoining to describe the marriage of Christ and His Church in divine love. See also *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 1.13.23, *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 81).
118. For existing supremely and to the maximum, see *On True Religion* 11.21–22, 18.35.
119. See Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c.
120. See 8.15 above.
121. See *Against the Academics* 1.4.11, 3.11.24–26; *Soliloquies* 2.3.3–2.9.17.
122. See *On Two Souls, Against the Manichaeans* 10.13; *On the Trinity* 15.12.21; *City of God* 11.26.
123. See Plato, *Phaedo* 102b–5b.
124. In 11.18 and 12.19 Augustine is in some respects mediating a dispute between Aristotle, who teaches that a primary substance has no contrary (*Categories* 5.3b24–27), and Plotinus, who claims that this position is valid

- for individual substances but not the universal substance that is the Absolute Good, which has as its contrary nonexistence (*Enneads* 1.8.6).
125. See *Soliloquies* 1.1.3, 1.15.27, 2.11.21, 2.15.29, 2.17.31; *On True Religion* 36.66; *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 1.
126. For God as First and Supreme Essence, see *On True Religion* 11.21.
127. For similar language about God, see *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* 2.1.1.
128. On “having” God, see *On the Happy Life* 2.12, 3.17–18, 4.34–36.
129. For folly as a turning away, see 7.12 above.
130. For the use of the term *commutari* for “change,” see note 50 above.
131. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 1.10.20; *On Music* 6.13.41.
132. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 1.10.20–1.11.21, 2.6.14, 2.13.35, 2.15.39; *On Music* 6.5.13; *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 54.
133. Literally, take care of it with kindness or goodness (*bonitas*) or rule over it with badness (*malitia*). *Bonitas* and *malitia* were commonly paired as contraries (see *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 26; see also Ambrose, *On Cain and Abel* 1.1; Cicero, *Topics* 47; *On Friendship* 47). In *On Music* 6.13.41, Augustine speaks of proud souls that wish to command other souls having to command their own bodies “with difficulty and pain.” The body is not evil, but in its postlapsarian condition it can be stubborn and uncooperative.
134. In the *Retractations* Augustine writes that he could not recall what he meant by this statement. “For is it not the case that either the souls* of the dead have bodies or they are not in this world? As if indeed the dead-and-buried were not in this world. But since to be ‘without a body’ can be taken in a good sense, perhaps with the word ‘body’ I was referring to bodily afflictions. But if this is true, I used the word in an exceedingly unusual way” (1.5.3).
135. See 13.21 above.
136. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 1.11.21.
137. See *On the Greatness of the Soul* 22.38.
138. See *On the Greatness of the Soul* 33.71.
139. See *Soliloquies* 2.6.10.
140. For more on dreams, see *Against the Academics* 3.11.25–3.12.28; *On the Trinity* 15.17.21.
141. See *On Order* 2.14.41: “what the mind* sees [in the intelligible realm] is always present and is acknowledged to be immortal.”
142. See Porphyry, *To Gaurus* 10.5, 12.3.

143. For principles (*rationes*), see 4.5, 4.6, 14.23 above. See also *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 46.2; *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 6.10.17; *Confessions* 1.6.9, 5.7.12, 10.12.19.
144. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.3.12; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 33, 35.
145. See 11.18 and 12.19 above; *On True Religion* 11.21–22, 14.28.
146. For transmitting form through the body, see *On Music* 6.14.44; *Retractations* 1.10.4.
147. See *On Order* 2.11.30; *On True Religion* 11.22; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.9 (14). In the *Retractations* Augustine writes that this sentence and the one before it are “utterly rash” (1.5.3), most likely because of its positive allusion to the so-called World Soul. In Plato’s *Timaeus*, the World Soul is a creative force that plays an intermediary role between the Forms and the material world and that animates the entire universe in the same way that a human soul animates an individual body. In Plotinus, the World Soul is, after the One and Intellect (*Nous*), the third of the three transcendent hypostases undergirding all being. Although some of the Greek Church Fathers equated the World Soul with the Holy Spirit, Augustine resists this interpretation (see *Literal Meaning of Genesis* 7.4.6, 7.12.19). He calls his statement here rash not because he no longer believes in a World Soul but because he is not certain whether “the world is an animal” (*Retractations* 1.10.4); if it is, then it obviously has a soul, albeit a creaturely soul and not a divine one. The older Augustine thus remained largely agnostic on the issue of a World Soul and is critical of his earlier position for being insufficiently critical or aloof.
148. See 13.20–22 above.
149. See *Soliloquies* 1.1.6; *Against the Academics* 3.12.27; *Retractations* 1.1.4. Augustine can move from a consideration of the Supreme Essence to the Supreme Good for they are one and the same (see *On True Religion* 14.28).
150. That is, with this option the body would be as “near” or “close” to the Supreme Good as the soul* and would receive its form from the Supreme Good like the soul*. For God as the Father of the good and the beautiful, see *Soliloquies* 1.1.2; Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.2.2.
151. That is, the soul is “closer” to the Supreme Good insofar as it receives what it receives more immediately (with less mediation) from the Supreme Good than the body, which receives what it receives from the Supreme Good through the mediation of the soul. The soul thus acts as an intermediary between the Supreme Good and the body; were it otherwise, body

- and soul would be on the same footing in the hierarchy of being, equally “near” the Supreme Good.
152. Augustine has replaced Supreme Good with Supreme Life (see *Against Maximinus, an Arian* 2.23.7: “What is goodness itself if not life-giving life?”).
 153. For God the Son as True and Supreme Life, Wisdom, and Truth, see *Soliloquies* 1.1.3; for the God the Creator as Supreme Life, see *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.17.46.
 154. See *On the Happy Life* 1.4: the soul “is the one thing that is close to God.” On the soul as mediating agent, see Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.8.7; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 5.
 155. That is, the soul’s communication of form that makes a body a body does not deprive the soul of anything, but a soul transmuting into a body would mean a loss of both form and its very self.
 156. For God as Supreme Beauty, see *On True Religion* 33.62; *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 44; for God as Perfect Beauty, see *On the Trinity* 6.10.12; for God as Beauty, see *Confessions* 3.6.10, 4.16.29, 10.27.38.
 157. The word *moles*, translated here as “mass,” is translated elsewhere as “matter” (see 8.13 above). See also *On the Greatness of the Soul* 14.24, 19.33; Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 35.
 158. See 15.24 above.
 159. See 10.17 and 15.24 above; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.3.20.
 160. See 8.13 above.
 161. See *On True Religion* 32.60.
 162. See 8.15 above. See also *Epistle* 166.2.4, where Augustine argues that the soul can be seen to be incorporeal from the fact that the whole soul is at one and the same time aware of occurrences in diverse parts of the body (see also *Against the “Foundation Letter” of the Manichaeans* 16.20; *On the Trinity* 6.6.8). The soul is also present to itself as a whole (see *On the Trinity* 10.4.6). See also Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.2.1.
 163. See Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.7: “We say there is pain in the finger: the trouble is doubtless in the finger, but our opponents must admit that the sensation of the pain is in the centre of consciousness. The suffering member is one thing, the sense of suffering is another . . . it is not in the nature of body that where one part suffers there should be knowledge in another part; for body is a magnitude, and the parts of every magnitude are distinct parts; therefore we need, as the sentient, something of a nature to be identical to itself at any and every spot; this property can belong only to some other form of being than body.”

164. Literally, a continuation of mass. For a criticism of the theory of bodily transmission, see Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.7.7, 4.2.2.
165. Literally, it does not permit the other parts of the soul to hide or escape notice (*latere*). See *On the Greatness of the Soul* 16.25, 23.41; *On Music* 6.5.9–10; Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.4.19.
166. That is, the soul is truly omnipresent to the body, but whiteness and other such physical qualities are not. They vary from part to part, they can be increased or decreased to different degrees in different parts, and they lack existence independent of body. As Plotinus puts it, color at any point is independent of the same color at any other point. “No doubt the Form, White, is the same all over,” he adds, “but there is not arithmetical identity. [However,] in soul there is: it is one soul in foot and in hand” (*Enneads* 6.4.1). This fact leads Augustine (or perhaps his wry interlocutor Reason) to make the paradoxical conclusion that whiteness—insofar as it occupies different areas of mass—is different from itself.

Commentary

1. *Retractations* 1.4.1.
2. *Confessions* 9.6.14.
3. See Ohlmann, *De Sancti Augustini dialogis*, 25–26.
4. See *On Order* 2.19.50.
5. See *Against the Academics* 3.19.42, 3.20.43; see *On Order* 2.9.26.
6. See *Against the Academics* 1.1.4, 1.5.15, 2.6.17, 2.9.22, 3.20.44; *On the Happy Life* 2.15, 3.18; *On Order* 1.2.5, 1.8.26.
7. Augustine has already shown a penchant for heuristic definitions at Cassiciacum (see *Against the Academics* 1.2.5; *On Order* 1.9.27).
8. Similarly, by saying that God is the Truth in whom and from whom and through whom all true things are true (1.1.3), Augustine foreshadows book two’s various treatments of true and false things.
9. Topical parallels include God as liberator (*On the Happy Life* 4.36, *Soliloquies* 1.1.2), supreme fullness and life (*On the Happy Life* 4.31–35, *Soliloquies* 1.1.4), God as the source of happiness (*On the Happy Life*, 2.11, *Soliloquies* 1.1.3), healthy eyes (of the mind) (*On the Happy Life* 4.35; *On Order* 2.4.11, 2.4.13, 2.19.51; *Soliloquies* 1.1.5).
10. The prayer is especially replete with the central themes of *On Order*, such as God’s creation of the “whole” (*universitas*) and His ability to keep the whole good and beautiful despite its “sinister side” and “dissonance,” harmonizing “the worse with the better” in part by preventing evils from

becoming “most evil” and saving “that which destroys itself” from complete self-destruction (1.1.2). Specifically, the eternal and immutable laws of God do not allow “the unstable motion of changeable things” to be thrown into confusion (1.1.4).

11. Augustine refers to this illness in *On the Happy Life* 1.4 as a storm that only *appeared* to be adverse.
12. *On the Happy Life* 4.34–35; see *Against the Academics* 3.19.42.
13. *On Order* 2.5.16, 2.9.26.
14. *On the Happy Life* 4.34–35; see *On Order* 2.5.16, 2.9.26.
15. *Against the Academics* 3.19.42.
16. *On the Happy Life* 4.35.
17. *Against the Academics* 3.19.42.
18. See *Confessions* 6.3.4–6.4.5.
19. For more on this breakthrough, see “Augustine at Cassiciacum” in the General Introduction.
20. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 993b7–10; St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1.1.5.ad 1.
21. See *Against the Academics* 1.6.16.
22. *Confessions* 10.35.54. The use of ocular analogies for knowing can be traced to Plato’s *Republic* 507b–9c.
23. *Confessions* 10.35.54.
24. There will be more on the nonspatial use of “in” at 2.12.22 below.
25. See my commentary on 3.2.3–3.4.8 in Foley, *Against the Academics*.
26. *Confessions* 7.7.11.
27. See *Against the Academics* 3.6.13, *On Order* 2.15.43.
28. Consolmagno, “Virtuous Astronomer,” 5.
29. The thesis that Christianity, more than the philosophies of Greece and Rome, gave Western civilization the confidence and conviction to look for ordered patterns of meaning in a universe created by an orderly and loving Logos is defended in Jaki, *Science and Creation*.
30. It should be recalled that Augustine is not operating under the clear delineation between the natural and the supernatural found in medieval scholastic theology.
31. See *Enneads* 1.6.9.
32. *On the Ends* 3.14.48. The counterpoint is at 4.23.64.
33. See *On Eighty-Three Different Questions* 35.1–2. This distinction also builds upon the discussion about want and fear in *On the Happy Life* 2.11, 4.26–28.
34. See *Confessions* 10.43.68–70.

35. See *Retractations* 1.4.3.
36. See 2 Cor 12:6–10.
37. At 1.10.17, Augustine the character indirectly describes the lust for a woman's charms and for sexual intercourse as unmanly insofar as they dislodge the male mind from its stronghold. By having confessed to harboring this very desire (1.14.26), Augustine is thereby convicting himself of unmanliness, indicted by his own intellectual machismo.
38. See *Tusculan Disputations* 2.12.29, 4.19.43; *On the Nature of the Gods* 3.29.73.
39. On the interplay between ignorance, unrighteousness, and darkness, see Socrates in Plato's *Alcibiades I*: "But if you act unrighteously, your eye will turn to the dark and godless, and being in darkness and ignorance of yourselves, you will probably do deeds of darkness" (134e).
40. See *Confessions* 6.4.6: "But as usually happens, the man who has tried a bad doctor is afraid to trust even a good one: so it was with the health of my soul, which could not be healed save by believing, and refused to be healed that way for fear of believing falsehood."
41. See *Against the Academics* 3.9.20; *On the Happy Life* 2.7.
42. *Alcibiades I* 130d.
43. See 1.2.7–1.5.11 above; see also *On Order* 1.8.26; *Against the Academics* 2.4.10.
44. See the discussions on motion in *On Order* 2.1.3–2.2.7, 2.6.18–2.7.20, 2.11.30, 2.16.44.
45. See *On Order* 2.16.44.
46. See *On Order* 2.11.30.
47. See Plato, *Laws* 896a; Augustine, *On Music* 6.5.15.
48. This triad may also have Trinitarian reverberations.
49. *Enchiridion* 20.7.
50. For the importance of thought connecting to reality, see *On the Happy Life* 2.8: "the mind is fed . . . on its own theories and thoughts, *provided* that it can perceive something through them" (emphasis added).
51. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1041a.
52. See *Posterior Analytics* 72a1–5.
53. See *Against the Academics* 1.6.16.
54. *Confessions* 10.23.34.
55. *Confessions* 3.8.16.
56. *Confessions* 10.30.41.
57. *On True Religion* 38.71.
58. *City of God* 1.30.

59. See *Against the Academics* 1.3.8.
60. Elsner, “Caught in the Ocular,” 105.
61. Taylor, *Moral Mirror*, 20.
62. See *Academica* 2.3.8, where Cicero mentions people defending their own positions rather than inquiring into the truth.
63. See *Against the Academics* 1.3.8.
64. See Kuritz, *Making*, 24.
65. See *On the Trinity* 9.11.16; see also *On the Immortality of the Soul* 8.13.
66. See *On Order* 2.3.10.
67. See *On Order* 2.3.10, *Soliloquies* 1.13.23.
68. See *On the Happy Life* 4.29–31 (worthlessness, neediness, darkness, and nakedness); *On Order* 2.3.8–10 (folly) and 2.8.22–23 (evil); *Soliloquies* 2.9.16 (falsehood) and 2.17.31 (emptiness). See also *On the Teacher* 2.3 (nothingness); *On True Religion* 19.37 (vice); *Confessions* 7.13.19 (evil) and 10.16.24 (forgetfulness).
69. See Plutarch, *Life of Solon* 29.4; see also Diogenes Laertes, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.2.59.
70. See Frank, *Life and Literature*, 126.
71. Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 42; see also Tertullian, *On the Spectacles* 17, 23; “Mimus” in Hammond and Scullard, eds., *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 688.
72. See *On the Happy Life* 4.33; *On Order* 2.9.27.
73. See *Against the Academics* 2.5.12; *On the Happy Life* 1.2 (bis).
74. See *Against the Academics* 3.11.26; *On Order* 2.11.30.
75. Augustine also explicitly affirms that the bodily senses do not deceive or intend to deceive, even in the case of optical illusions, since deceit occurs only on the level of an (incorrect) assent of the intellect (see *Against the Academics* 3.11.26). In the *Soliloquies*, Reason breaks his own rule by calling sensible imagination *fallax* in 2.20.35, but as we shall explore later, there may be an ulterior motive for this.
76. See *Against the Academics* 2.2.6, 3.13.29.
77. See *On Order* 2.17.37, 2.14.40, 2.14.41.
78. Exercising the reader is an important component not only of the *Soliloquies* (1.13.23, 1.15.27, 2.18.32) but of other writings of Augustine (see *On the Teacher* 8.21 and *On Christian Doctrine* 2.6.7–8 and 4.8.22).
79. A similar phenomenon occurs in cricket with swing bowls.
80. *Poetics* 1.1447a15–3.1448b4.
81. Although the *Soliloquies* was possibly inspired by real-life events (Augustine’s lucubrations mentioned in *On Order* 1.3.6), the philosophically rich and

biographically impoverished notes that comprise *On the Immortality of the Soul* suggest that the *Soliloquies* is a work of creative fiction with a philosophical foundation to which dramatic elements would have been added later. The historicity of the other three Cassiciacum dialogues, on the other hand, is a more complicated matter.

82. 189c and following versus 201d and following, respectively.
83. See Bloom's commentary on the *Republic*, 380–81, 384ff, 408. Augustine does something similar in book one of *On Order*, where there is a collage of scenes that alternate between the comic and the tragic. A poignant moment in which Augustine weeps for joy is broken by the mildly Aristophanic bathroom humor involving Licentius and Monica (1.8.22). This is followed by a bitter altercation between two barnyard roosters coupled with a “tragic” fight between Licentius and Trygetius that ends with Augustine in tears over the destructive behavior of his pupils (1.10.29–30). The mood is lightened, however, when Monica's question about whether women can be philosophers inadvertently leads to the creation of a Christianized Female Drama that ends in laughter (1.11.31–33).
84. See *Aeneid* 7.180, 12.198.
85. See *Against the Academics* 1.3.8.
86. For more on pantomime, see “Pantomimus” in Hammond and Scullard, eds., *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 776–77; Seyffert, “Pantomimus.”
87. Lucian, *On Pantomime* 66.
88. *Oratorical Instruction* 11.3.74; see also Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4.144. Some of these masks have been found in the ruins of Pompeii.
89. See Lawrence, *Beggar*, 37–40.
90. See “The Dialogue Genre” in the General Introduction and “The Command to Satirize (1.8.24)” in Foley, *On Order*, 131–33. See also *Against the Academics* 1.2.5.
91. *Sermon* 178.8. Since this incident occurred when he was still living in Milan, it still may have been a fresh memory when he penned the *Soliloquies*. The *theatrum* to which Augustine refers is likely that of a gladiator game or chariot race, but it still contains the notion of a performance made for the sake of others.
92. *On Order* 2.13.38.
93. See *Confessions* 7.10.16. For another example of a nonspatial explanation of an ostensibly spatial category, see *Confessions* 1.18.28: “It is not on our feet or by movement in space that we go from Thee or return to Thee: Thy prodigal son did not charter horses or chariots or ships, or fly with wings or journey on his two feet to that far country where he wasted in luxurious

living what Thou as a loving father hast given him on his departure . . . To be lustful, that is, darkened, in heart, is to be far from Thy face.”

94. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 10.17.
95. The distinction, though not the same terminology, may be found in *Categories* 1a20ff.
96. See Tornau, “Ratio in subjecto?,” 327–32.
97. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 9.16.
98. Plato, *Phaedo* 70d–72e.
99. The use of *Istic sum* (“I’m all here”) at 1.15.28 and 2.2.2 is likewise taken from Terence.
100. *Enneads* 4.7.10 (15).
101. Reason acts as if this is unnecessary regarding the question at hand (the true is forever), but that does not mean the idea in general is not commendable (see 2.15.29).
102. See *Against the Academics* 3.5.11, 3.6.13; *On Order* 2.15.43.
103. Elagabalus (A.D. 202–222) was a Roman emperor who dressed and wore makeup like a female prostitute and was rumored to have had homosexual liaisons. The *Galli*, priests of the goddess Cybele, castrated themselves, wore women’s robes, and had women’s hairstyles.
104. As a baby, Dionysus (then named Zagreus) was dressed as a girl to avoid being detected by Hera. As an adult, he dressed the man Pentheus as a woman and led him to his death and dismemberment in Euripides’s *Bacchae*. Dionysus’s mystery cults also may have involved cross-dressing. The initiation ceremony into the Dionysiac cult most likely consisted of a reenactment of his transformation from Zagreus into a god, and since Zagreus was still dressed as a girl and in hiding when he was murdered, it is possible that initiates wore women’s clothing for the ceremony. See West, *Orphic Poems*, 163; Taylor, *Moral Mirror*, 95, 97.
105. Barish, *Antitheatrical Prejudice*, 42.
106. See Tertullian, *On the Spectacles* 17, 23.
107. For examples that Reason may have in mind, see book two, note 109.
108. See Spitzer, “Curious Metaphysics.”
109. See *On the Immortality of the Soul* 15.24–16.25.
110. For more on formless matter, see *Confessions* 12.4.4–12.8.8.
111. *Retractations* 1.4.4.
112. The following section draws heavily from Doucet, “Speculum cogitationis.”
113. *Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus* 3.163f.
114. *Enneads* 4.3.12.

115. *Enneads* 3.6.7.
116. *Enneads* 1.4.10.
117. *On the Orator* 2.86.350–2.88.360.
118. *On the Orator* 2.87.357.
119. *On the Orator* 2.88.359.
120. See *Tusculan Disputations* 1.25.61.
121. See *Confessions* 10.11.18; see also Varro, *On the Latin Language* 6.43.
122. Doucet, “Speculum cogitationis,” 239.
123. *On the Orator* 2.86.354, 2.88.360.
124. See *Epistle* 3.1 and 3.4, which was written sometime in A.D. 387. Augustine was likely going to publish the first two books of *Soliloquies* first and the third book later. He probably published in a similar manner *Against the Academics*, which has two different cover letters demarcating two different installments (1.1.1–5 and 2.1.1–2.3.9).
125. See *Retractations* 1.5.1.
126. *Retractations*, Prologue, 1.
127. *Retractations*, Prologue, 2.
128. See *Against the Academics* 3.19.42; *On the Happy Life* 4.34–35; and *On Order* 2.19.51. The religious content of the *Soliloquies* is visible in the form of a prayer at the beginning of each book and when Augustine the character grows frustrated. See 1.1.1–6, 2.1.1, 2.6.9.
129. See the General Introduction to this volume.
130. For the return to God, see 1.1.3 and 1.1.5 above. For the double return to self and God, see 2.6.9 above and *Against the Academics* 3.19.42. For the return to oneself, see 2.19.33 above; *Against the Academics* 1.1.1, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.3.8, 3.19.42; *On Order* 1.1.3, 2.11.30, 2.11.31 (as return to one’s reason).
131. See my commentary above on the opening prayer of *Soliloquies* 1.1.1–6. Augustine also shows a penchant for heuristic definitions in *Against the Academics* 1.2.5 and *On Order* 1.9.27.
132. The question is how to translate *Soliloquies* 2.20.36: *Haec dicentur operosius atque subtilius, cum de intellegendo disserere coeperimus, quae nobis pars proposita est, cum de animae uita quicquid sollicitat, fuerit, quantum ualeamus, enucleatum atque discussum*. Some interpret the first *cum* as “when” and the second as “after.” Thus construed, the statement promises to discuss understanding only after Augustine’s anxiety about the soul’s immortality has been laid to rest. The problem is that *cum* means “when” and not “after,” and so the actions stipulated by the two *cum* clauses can just as easily take place simultaneously as they can sequentially.

133. See *On the Happy Life* 2.11, 4.31–32; *Soliloquies* 1.15.27
134. See *On Order* 1.8.26; *Soliloquies* 1.13.23, 1.14.26, 1.15.27.
135. See *Soliloquies* 2.12.21.
136. See Plato, *Phaedo* 70c and 70d.
137. See Plato, *Phaedo* 65b.
138. See Plato, *Phaedo* 75c.
139. Unless otherwise indicated, I am using “mind” and “soul” interchangeably since they are both translations of the word *animus* that appears in these sections of *On the Immortality of the Soul*.
140. See *On Free Choice of the Will* 2.13.36.
141. *Enneads* 6.3.27.
142. *On Order* 2.16.44. For other discussions of motion, see *On Order* 2.1.3–2.2.7 and 2.6.18–2.7.20.
143. See Aristotle, *Physics* 5.1.225a; Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.3.24.
144. See Aristotle, *Physics* 5.1.225a; Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.1.20, 6.3.25.
145. See Aristotle, *Categories* 15a14–15b17; Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.3.21–22, 25. Plotinus, inspired in large part by Plato’s *Timaeus*, has an extensive philosophy of motion. In his *Enneads* one will find discussions of natural and unnatural motions (6.3.22, 6.3.26), organic and inorganic motion (6.3.26), and motions that are natural (e.g., growth and decay), artificial (architecture and shipbuilding), and purposive (learning, government, and all speech and action) (6.3.26). Motions can also be classified as bodily versus psychic, spontaneous versus externally induced, and original (actions) versus derivative (passions) (6.1.19). Musical performance (6.3.21), life and happiness (6.1.19), and desire (6.1.21) are treated as types of motion. More importantly, motion “provides for the intellectual act” (5.1.4); knowledge, as “the observation of Being,” is “motion originating in the self” (6.2.18; see 6.3.21).
146. See Aristotle, *Physics* 3.1.201a; Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.3.22.
147. *Enneads* 6.1.16.
148. *Enneads* 6.2.8. Indeed, there is only a rational but not a real distinction between Motion and Being itself (6.2.7, 6.2.8, 6.2.15). The Motion of Being, in turn, is known by the motion within ourselves (6.2.8).
149. *Laws* 896a.
150. See Oliver, *Philosophy*, 8–28.
151. *Meno* 4.6.
152. See 1.1 above and *Soliloquies* 2.11.20.
153. See 1.1. above.
154. Catapano, “Augustine’s Treatise,” 81.

155. There, however, the equivocation was of the word “discipline.”
156. Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*, 1525–27.
157. See *Soliloquies* 1.13.23, where it is translated as intimacy in a passage describing the chaste conjoining of Wisdom and the soul. Augustine prefers to use “conjoining” for the union of intelligible realities and “joining” for physical or spatial unions (see *On the Immortality of the Soul* 16.25). As an intensive prefix, *con* implies a stronger and perhaps more permanent joining; it may also suggest something done in communion with someone or something else.
158. Unlike acts of sensation, acts of understanding do not require the body (see *On the Immortality of the Soul* 1.1).
159. See *Against the Academics* 3.19.42, 3.20.43; see *On Order* 2.9.26.
160. See the opening line of *Soliloquies* 1.1.3, which is addressed to the Son of God.
161. *Confessions* 2.10.18.
162. Tornau, “*Ratio in subiecto?*,” 321, fn. 4.
163. Augustine drew from Porphyry on this matter. See Fortin, “Saint Augustine,” 61–64.
164. Soul is not a body (*Enneads* 4.7.1–8), it is not dependent on a body (4.7.8), it is superior to the body, and it is immortal (4.7.9–15).
165. See also *On the Immortality of the Soul* 15.24. In Plato’s *Timaeus*, the World Soul is a creative force that plays an intermediary role between the Forms and the material world and that animates the entire universe in the same way that a human soul animates an individual body. Even in old age Augustine did not deny the possibility that there was a World Soul, as long as it was understood to be a creature and not consubstantial with the divine. See *On the Immortality of the Soul*, note 147 above.
166. See *Against Maximinus, an Arian* 2.15.1.
167. *Enneads* 4.7.14 (19).
168. *Enneads* 4.7.8.D. (12).
169. For the Father as Mode or Measure, see *On the Happy Life* 4.34.
170. Augustine does not explicitly call the Holy Spirit “divine love” (*divinus amor*) in any of his other writings, but the Holy Spirit is charity (see *On the Trinity* 7.3.6) and charity is “the will made most ardent by divine love” (*On Grace and Free Choice* 17.34). A distant disciple of Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, calls the Holy Spirit *Amor*, and his decision is defended by St. Thomas Aquinas (see *Summa Theologiae* I.37.1).
171. See *Against the Academics* 3.19.42; *On the Happy Life* 4.34; *On Order* 2.19.51.

172. See *Epistle* 137.9: “But now a Mediator has appeared between God and men so that, uniting both natures in the unity of His person, He may raise up the ordinary to the extraordinary and temper the extraordinary to the ordinary.” See also Fortin, “Saint Augustine,” 69.
173. For Augustine, the soul turns to God for happiness and turns to bodies in sin (*Epistle* 18.2).
174. See *On the Happy Life* 1.4, where the soul is described as the one thing that is close to God.
175. *Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 29.
176. See *Epistle* 137.3.
177. See Porphyry, *Thoughts Leading to the Intelligibles* 5.
178. *Phaedo* 100b.
179. *Phaedo* 85c–d.
180. *Confessions* 1.4.4, 6.3.4.
181. See *On Order* 1.9.27, 2.3.10, 2.4.11, 2.5.17, 2.6.19.
182. For the former, see *Soliloquies* 1.5.7, 1.7.13, 2.2.2, 2.5.7, 2.6.9, 2.13.24, 2.15.27, 2.15.29, 2.18.32.
183. *Retractations* 1.4.4, emphasis added.
184. See 8.13 and 10.17. See also 6.10: “All the strength of reasoning should be devoted to knowing* what reason is.”
185. I am working on the assumption that Augustine enrolled his name as a *competens* on Epiphany and not the First Sunday of Lent, but there are conflicting accounts about when this took place in late-fourth-century Milan.
186. See *Confessions* 9.5.13.
187. See *Retractations* 1.5.3. It is possible that Augustine was going to write only a seven-volume series since he does not mention astronomy by name.
188. See *Retractations* 1.5.3.
189. See *Retractations* 1.8.1.
190. See *Retractations* 2.30.1.
191. Tornau, “*Ratio in subjecto?*,” 351–52.

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