

On the Two Wills: Augustine against Agonism toward Peace

Sobre las dos voluntades:
Agustín contra el agonismo hacia la paz

9

Thomas R. Clemmons
The Catholic University of America, United States of America



Abstract

This essay examines Augustine's critique of a hermeneutic of agonism in relation to his consideration of the Manichaean notion of the two souls, as well as his discussion of the two wills in the *Confessions*. The essay treats these dimensions as found in his early works *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* and *De vera religione*, as well as his work *De duabus animabus*, and lastly the *Confessions*. Augustine's recurring treatment of the two souls is bound with his critique of agonism. It is also linked with his own deepening understanding of the hermeneutical consequence of the luminous self and the weight of *consuetudo*. In this context Augustine's articulation of peace as an openness to God and others comes to fruition. Peace, for Augustine, is not the assertion of one's distinctive luminosity or even the resolve of a secure self at odds with the world in which it finds itself. Rather, peace is found in the realization that one is made open to difference, to a concord that does not require struggle and agony, and in fact precludes the consumption or erasure of this difference.

Keywords: Augustine, Manichaeism, *Confessions*, *consuetudo* peace, the will.



Resumen

Este ensayo examina la crítica de san Agustín de una hermenéutica del agonismo en relación con su consideración de la noción Maniquea de las dos almas, así como su discusión de las dos voluntades en *Confesiones*. El ensayo trata estas dimensiones tal como se encuentran en sus primeros trabajos *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* y *De vera religione*, así como en su trabajo en *De duabus animabus* y, por último, *Confesiones*. El tratamiento recurrente de san Agustín de las dos almas se vincula con su crítica del agonismo. También se relaciona con su comprensión más profunda de las consecuencias hermenéuticas del yo luminoso y el peso del *consuetudo*. En este contexto, la articulación de la paz de san Agustín como una apertura a Dios y a los demás llega a buen término. La paz, para Agustín, no es la afirmación de la luminosidad distintiva de uno, ni siquiera la resolución de un yo seguro en desacuerdo con el mundo en el que se encuentra. Más bien, la paz se encuentra en la comprensión de que uno está abierto a la diferencia, a una concordia que no requiere sufrimiento ni agonía, y de hecho excluye el consumo o la eliminación de esta diferencia.

Palabras clave: Paz, san Agustín, Maniqueísmo, la voluntad, *Confesiones*, *consuetudo*



Acerca del autor | About the author

Thomas R. Clemmons [clemmonst@cua.edu]

Thomas Clemmons, Asst. Professor of Latin Patristics, Asst. Professor of Church History and Historical Theology, School of Theology and Religious Studies, The Catholic University of America. His research focuses on Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and other early and medieval Latin Christian figures.



Cómo citar en MLA / How to cite in MLA

Clemmons, Thomas R. "On the Two Wills: Augustine against Agonism toward Peace." *Agustín de Hipona como Doctor Pacis: estudios sobre la paz en el mundo contemporáneo*, edited by Anthony Dupont, Enrique Eguiarte Bendimez y Carlos Vilabona, Editorial Uniaugustiniana, 2019, pp. 265-290, doi: 10.28970/9789585498235.9

Introduction

Much of Augustine's literary output before 400 is concerned either directly or in passing with Manichaeism. The nature of this extensive critique of Manichaeism, however, is not so straightforward. Augustine, as he mentions in several treatises, is certainly drawing from his personal experience with Manichaeans and as a Manichaean himself.¹ He also has friends, such as Romanianus, for whom he writes *De vera religione* and *Contra Academicos*, and Honoratus, to whom he dedicates *De utilitate credendi*, who are still Manichaeans when he composes these works for them.² Beyond his personal motivation for these early writings, two dimensions of Augustine's critique of Manichaeism stand out.

The first is more broadly construed as biblical exegesis. At the heart of his engagement with Manichaeism is how to read the Bible and to see Christ as the *velamen* of Scripture, or as Augustine says in *De moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, to read the whole of the Bible as the *Scriptura Christi* (*mor.*, 1, 1, 2). Augustine feared the implications of the oppositional hermeneutic of Manichaeism, which would use passages of the New Testament against seemingly contrary testimonies in the Old Testament. Even more so, Augustine grew to be suspicious of the narrational limitations that Manichaeism had placed on the interpretation of the New Testament. The New Testament, severed from the prior activity of God in the Old Testament, through the Patriarchs, Israel, and the Prophets, appeared a truncated story. An effect of this Manichaean narrational limitation was the removal of God's prior activity, in favor of stipulating a phantasmic, even ahistorical, Christ figure.³

Augustine's response and deepening awareness of the implications of this Manichaean hermeneutic is witnessed in his extensive exegesis which discloses his own theological vision, whether it be in relation to, amongst other things, his understanding of Christ, the Triune God, or the Church. The importance and extent of this dimension of Augustine's critique and engagement with Manichaeism, his identification of Manichaean scriptural interpretation

¹ The friendships that Augustine established as a Manichaean or friends who joined Manichaeism through Augustine are repeatedly in the background of the narrative of the *Confessions* in books III through VI. One of the more gripping illustrations of this is Augustine's friend who dies abruptly in book IV and Augustine's consolation in other friends, who were themselves likely Manichaeans. See *conf.*, 3, 4, 7-9, 14 (CCSL 27, 43-47).

² *De utilitate credendi*, *De vera religione* and *De duabus animabus* amongst others are written with such friends in mind.

³ Insofar as the Manichaean narrative opened to a historical past, Augustine perceived this to be mythologically figured. All pointed to the struggle of the Light and the Darkness.

and his own counter-exegesis, cannot be overstated. Indeed, it is the broader context in which a second dimension of Augustine's response to Manichaeism is situated. This essay will consider this second, somewhat more focused, aspect that endures through many of Augustine's writings of this period: his critique of the dualistic Manichaean conception of the two kingdoms, natures, or even souls, and how this relates to his understanding of the two wills, which he discusses in the *Confessions*.

There are several features of Augustine's protracted critique, such as his emphasis on *consuetudo* and the difficulty of the will, that will be discussed through a predominantly diachronic approach, beginning with his early writings of *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, *De vera religione* and *De duabus animabus*, and concluding with the *Confessions*. This diachronic reading is limited, however. It is possible to see in Augustine's earliest engagement the seeds, if not the flower, of his thought in the *Confessions*. My intent is to give prominence to the nuances of Augustine's thought in these earlier works such that the *Confessions* intimates a development or deepening of his own consideration. An additional limitation of this approach is the explicit focus on Augustine's theology. It is important to examine how Augustine considers the effects and limitations of the Manichaean conception of the two natures, even souls, and his own solution which manifests itself in anthropological, cosmological, social, and intrapersonal aspects.

Augustine's discussion of the two wills in the *Confessions* is not simply the rejection of dualism, but more significantly a critique of a kind of alienation from self, others, and the surrounding world. The "Manichaean" hermeneutic with which Augustine engages for so many of his early works ultimately places the individual in a kind of agonistic relation to all things, and rather focuses on the "true" self, a self safe and pure from the taint of otherness. Thus, we see in the *Confessions* Augustine's solution of the two wills both as the local limitation of what can constitute any kind of agonism and as the rejection of an agonistic hermeneutic. For Augustine, peace and concord are not found in the security of one's existential unboundedness as the Light (or any such notion of the self, be it ontologically figured or existentially so). Peace is not the citadel of the self, even if that self is bound in an agony of self-realization in a strange and divided world. Peace, rather, is found for Augustine in a self that remains open, even incomplete.⁴ Therefore, Augustine understands true peace to be

⁴ For two discussions of Augustine's conception of the self in such a manner, see Cavadini; and Mathewes.

ultimately an openness to God and thus to all that exists. This openness challenges the conception of the self as autonomous and thus independent of relation to God and all of creation, as it also rejects an agonism that replaces concord with the assurances of the self amidst strife and conflict.

On the Two Kingdoms, Natures, and Souls: Augustine's Developing Critique of Manichaeism

In his earliest commentary on Genesis (*Gen. adu. Man.*), composed circa 389, Augustine provides what may seem to be numerous *ad hoc* rejoinders to the Manichaean criticism of Genesis and to Manichaeism more broadly. Toward the end of the second book of *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* Augustine's critique becomes more pointed. Discussing 2 Cor. 11: 3, and the serpent or the deceit of heretical teachings that tempts the Church, Augustine notes that the Manichaeans are proud in that they claim as their own a status that belongs to God. They hold the human soul to be of and share the same nature as God. In their pride they attract those bound by the "desires of the flesh" who are only too willing to hear that whatever they do that seems evil or excessive is not being done by themselves, but by the nation of Darkness (*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 26, 40) (CSEL 91, 165-166). In one's true self, however, one is as God, indeed, of the same nature as God, true and pure Light free from all Darkness. Thereby, even when one seems to sin, this sin cannot be attributed to the Light of the true self; rather, the agent or actor who commits such sin or has such desires is another, one who is wholly other. It is not the Light, it is not the soul, but the Darkness.

Augustine rejects this division, be it existential or ontological, in favor of a unity of the human made by and in God, citing 1 Cor. 1: 7-12 (*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 26, 40) (CSEL 91, 166). Throughout this commentary Augustine emphasizes unity, though not an arbitrary, quasi-Platonic unity of the One, which would render all differences, material and otherwise, as the discord of Dyad.⁵ Rather, Augustine's conception of this unity is witnessed even in his reading of Adam and Eve, an exegesis that refuses a simple understanding of polarity. What is said of Adam does not simply apply to man, and of Eve to woman.⁶ On one level, Adam and Eve are images of the whole human: intellect and affections

⁵ See Augustine's discussion of this point in *conf.*, 4, 15, 24 (CCSL 27, 52-53).

⁶ Manichaean references to woman are largely negative as the process of trapping the Light in the flesh is imaged, and in truth, is understood to recur through birth. Majella Franzmann provides useful context to this largely pessimistic image. See Franzmann.

(*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 11, 15) (CSEL 91, 136). Similarly, the verse “and they will be two in one flesh” (*Gen.* 2: 22) is taken by Augustine to refer to the unity between Christ and the Church (*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 13, 19) (CSEL 91, 140). This great mystery (*sacramentum magnum*) reveals the profound unity of the Church with Christ, even as the Church through Christ is bound with history in all its particularities and moves to the ultimate consummation of the Christian with Christ in the Church (*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 8, 10-11) (CSEL 91, 129-131).

Against his articulation of the complex unity of the self, of humanity, of the world, all in God, Augustine discusses the deceit, even the duplicity, of sin. Sin, in this context, is a turning away from God, from truth, toward the phantasms of one's desires. It is the founding of a deceptive vantage removed from God and even from the hardships generated from and bound with one's own self-promulgated reality (*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 27, 41) (CSEL 91, 166-167). It is because of these difficulties (*tribulationes*) that the Manichaeans, Augustine notes, seek to blame another nature (*extranea natura*), when in fact they ought to fault themselves (*Gen. adu. Man.*, 2, 27, 41) (CSEL 91, 168).⁷ In passing off blame to another “thing,” the human has strangely abandoned or excised part of himself such that true charity, the fullness of knowledge by which one loves God and neighbor with one's whole heart, soul, and mind (*Matt.* 22: 37-39), is not possible. What remains in this integral blameless self is at best a fraction of wholeness, and thus, a partitioned love.

In *De vera religione*, written within a year of *Genesis contra Manichaeos*, Augustine expands or more properly hones his criticism of Manichaean dualism. While Augustine continues his critique of the Manichaean dualist metaphysic, he also isolates what he sees as the hermeneutical horizon and existential framing of Manichaeism. Augustine notes that the Manichaean narrative is not simply grounded in the perpetual, substantial struggle of the Light and the Darkness (*ver. rel.*, 9, 16) (CCSL 32, 198).⁸ He identifies the somewhat capricious and presentist nature of the Manichaean hermeneutic whereby those things that offend them are linked with the Darkness, and those things they prefer are from God (*ver. rel.*, 9, 16) (CCSL 32, 198).⁹ This aesthetic leads the Manichaeans to view even

⁷ “Id est per temporales tribulationes sua peccata cognoscendo et gemendo, et non iam extraneam naturam quae nulla est sed seipsum accusando ut ipse veniam mereatur.”

⁸ “Contra eos tamen potissimum est instituta, qui duas naturas vel substantias singulis principii adversus invicem rebelles esse arbitrantur.”

⁹ “Offensi enim quibusdam rebus et rursus quibusdam delectati non earum quibus offenduntur, sed earum quibus delectantur volunt esse auctorem Deum.”

themselves as divided or to propose the presence of another soul within them (*duas animas esse in uno corpore existimant*) (*uera rel.*, 9, 16) (CCSL 32, 198).¹⁰

This is Augustine's first overt reference to the two souls.¹¹ However, too much should not be made of this point, for with this observation we see Augustine's critique of the full range of the implications of the Manichaeic narrative. He recounts how for the Manichaeans the Darkness is understood not to be made by God, but rather has its own autonomous being, source, and *regnum*, such that it has its own life, land, offspring, and *animalia* (*uera rel.*, 9, 16) (CCSL 32, 198).¹² This entity or reality with all its attendant living things is believed to have attacked the Kingdom of God. In response, the Light, under the pressure of necessity (*oppressum necessitate*), sent particles of Light, the good souls of God's own substance, to subdue the Darkness through admixture (*uera rel.*, 9, 16) (CCSL 32, 198).

From his more complete elaboration of the Manichaeic myth, Augustine advances his critique beyond the metaphysical, cosmogonic narrative. Augustine also identifies the implications of its hermeneutic in its aesthetic impulses, which form the foundation of its moral framework.¹³ This is to say that the

¹⁰ Augustine holds the Manichaeic vantage to be a consequence of their bondage to their disposition (*consuetudo*), which is entangled in carnal nets: "Et cum consuetudinem suam vincere nequeunt iam carnalibus laqueis irretiti..."

¹¹ See Giuffrè Scibona; see also Lössl. For its part, Ferwerda posits that Augustine is mistaken that the Manichaeans hold the notion of the two souls. Augustine confuses this "Gnostic" concept to be Manichaeic. In contrast to these readings, Decret notes Fortunatus's reference to the *bona anima* (c. *Fort.*, 14, BA 17, 148) as an indication that Manichaeans used this terminology. Perhaps, the scholarly consensus is best represented by Jason BeDuhn who claims Augustine "consciously" misrepresents the Manichaeic position. BeDuhn appeals to the technical Manichaeic use of the *animus/anima* distinction (which we perhaps may assume shows the philosophical, even Platonic, terminology that guides Manichaeic anthropology). BeDuhn claims the Manichaeic would hold *duas* (sic?) *animos* but not *duas animas* (205). However, BeDuhn is mistaken in his assumption that this distinction holds true even in Augustine. Augustine's early language is not as strongly governed by such philosophical precision as, it would seem, holds true for the Manichaeans. Nevertheless, from this negative assessment, BeDuhn continues to show how Augustine's use of the term is functionally accurate.

¹² "Alteram de gente tenebrarum, quam Deus nec genuerit nec fecerit nec protulerit nec abiecerit; sed quae suam vitam, suam terram, suos fetus et animalia, suum postremo regnum habuerit ingenitumque principium..."

¹³ For an insightful account of Augustine's reading of the Manichaeic system see Fuhrer 539-547. See also *uera rel.*, 9, 16 (CCSL 32, 198): "Sed quodam tempore adversus Deum rebellasse, Deum autem qui aliud quod faceret non haberet et, quomodo aliter posset hosti resistere, non inveniret, necessitate oppressum misisse huc animam bonam et quandam particulam

Manichaeen conception of the two natures or souls need not be read simply as applying to an aboriginal state, which at some other concrete time becomes mixed. The function of this mixing is as much focused, perhaps even intensively focused, on the present. It is a hermeneutic that is focused on the interpretation of liberty and salvation from agony, in which the historically prior is equal in kind and quality to the present. One interprets the world in the agony of perpetual struggle, while holding the surety of one's "true" existence as perpetually being freed from this agonism. The human then walks divided in a world divided, though this struggle need not assault the citadel of one's confident luminosity. Indeed, such luminousness is a shield and weapon against what one dislikes. The problems with the world, society, and with one's self are all external, even foreign to the pure Light that is the true self.

Augustine summarizes what he sees to be the effects of this agonism and confident sense of the pure and autonomous self in the statement: liberty from justice and slavery under sin (*libertas a iustitia et servitus sub peccato*) (*vera rel.*, 40, 76) (CCSL 32, 237). The freedom of the self, freedom from external conditions such as society, nature, even one's own history, is a freedom from justice. Yet, this very freedom or liberty is in truth a bondage to one's own contrived notion of the self. This *libertas* of self-exaltation does not manifest itself in arrogant pride, but in the prideful delusion that rejects the claim of all other things on the self.¹⁴ The freedom gained from a stipulated duality permits, as Augustine understands it, the individual human to be free from responsibility, free from the claims of social and corporate justice.

The Two Natures as Two Souls: *De duabus animabus*

In *De duabus animabus* (written around 391, shortly after taking his vows for the priesthood), Augustine expands on his identification of the two souls in

substantiae suae, cuius commixtione (atque miseria) hostem temperatum esse somniant et mundum fabricatum." Part of the ambiguity of the Manichaeen narrative is found in its understanding of the "time" of the sending of the Light into the Darkness. The Light "sent" (*misisse*) some of its own substance into the Darkness. Augustine notes how this "sending" resulted in the making of the world. This "sending" is linked by the Manichaeen Fortunatus with the sending of the souls before the making of the world: "Hinc ergo apparet antiquitas temporum nostrorum quam repetimus et annorum nostrorum ante mundi constitutionem hoc more missas esse animas contra contrariam naturam ut eadem sua passione subiicientes victoria Deo redderetur" (*c. Fort.*, 22) (CSEL 25, 107). Sending is bound with the act of liberation, but also with the struggle in the tension of this world between the Light and the Darkness.

¹⁴ This claim is repeated in the *Confessions*. See, for example, 7, 14, 20 and 9, 4, 9.

Manichaeism, which he had only briefly mentioned in *De vera religione* (*duab. an.*, 1, 1) (CSEL 25, 51),¹⁵ as he begins the treatise by pressing the Manichaean claim that there are two sources of life (*vita*). He draws this inference from the fact that the Manichaeans claim that there are things “living” which do not find “life” from God but from another source (*duab. an.*, 1, 1) (CSEL 25, 51). Augustine’s argument for the two souls, contrary to the opposition to such a claim made by the Manichaean Secundinus some ten years later, is drawn from the Manichaean narrative of the two active, life-giving, yet opposing natures (Secundinus *Epistula ad sanctum Augustinum*, 2-3) (BA 17, 512).¹⁶ Indeed, Augustine acknowledges that if things from the *principium* of the Darkness lack life, they are not souls properly speaking. They cannot be understood, therefore, to want or not want, or to seek or flee anything. If one does not understand the Darkness as a willing, choosing force or thing, then it is nothing but a substantial evil, like fire that simply burns because it is fire. Such an “evil” or kingdom of Darkness cannot be called soul. Yet, if this nature is understood as wanting, seeking, or fleeing (as the Manichaeans often seem to state), it must be living; it must be soul (*duab. an.*, 1, 1) (CSEL 25, 51).¹⁷

Advancing this point, Augustine clarifies his understanding of what soul and life mean.¹⁸ Soul is not only attributed to that which is simply “life,” such as the body, but also to that life which one attributes to the mind or intelligence

¹⁵ “Nam primo animarum illa duo genera quibus ita singulas naturas propriasque tribuerunt ut alterum de ipsa dei esse substantia alterius vero deum ne conditorem quidem velint accipi. Scibona (388) dates the work to 391, after Augustine had taken his vows for the priesthood and before his debate with Fortunatus.

¹⁶ Lössl holds that Secundinus is “up to a certain point correct” (143). In contrast, Stroumsa presents a strong argument in favor of Augustine’s understanding of the Manichaean conception of the two souls (198-208).

¹⁷ “Quapropter illas animas quae a Manichaeis vocantur malae aut carere vita et animas non esse neque quicquam velle seu nolle adpetere vel fugere aut si viverent ut et animae esse possent et aliquid tale agere. Quale illi opinarentur nullo modo eas nisi vita vivere.”

¹⁸ Augustine’s refinement of what is meant by “life” is in part informed by his exegesis of John 14, 6. If Christ is life, such that there is no cause of being except through Christ, then certainly any soul, anything that “lives” must be understood to find this life in the one God who is life (*duab. an.*, 1, 1) (CSEL 25, 51-52). Augustine’s insight, against a Manichaean reading of this verse, which univocally predicates life to Christ, is the notion of participation. See *duab. an.*, 2, 2 (CSEL 25, 52): “Quod si tempore illo quaestionem de ipsa vita et de participatione vitae mea cogitatio ferre ac sustinere non posset...” Thereby, Augustine asserts that every soul insofar as it is a soul and participates in life, without which it could not be a soul, is from God. *duab. an.* 6, 6 (CSEL 25, 58). “Et ideo animam in quantum anima esset et vitae participaret sine qua nullo pacto esse anima potest (...) quamobrem maximi erroris esse ullam animam dicere non esse ex deo...”

(*duab. an.*, 2, 2) (CSEL 25, 52). One sees “life” or a “soul” even in a fly (*musca*), whose body is invigorated by the goodness of its soul (*duab. an.*, 4, 4) (CSEL 25, 55). If a fly can possess soul or life of a certain kind, surely such a conception of life applies to that soul or nature that the Manichaeans call evil or foreign (*alienigenas*), which does not simply live but lives immortally (*duab. an.*, 3, 3) (CSEL 25, 54).¹⁹ As Augustine observes, the attributes of the kingdom of Darkness, its immortality, its vigor, even its strength, reveal the goodness of the nature or soul of the Darkness. The Darkness, thereby, is a kind of life or soul.

Augustine, then, moves to a Scriptural commonplace used by the Manichaeans: that all life is from Christ. Surely, then anything from Christ is good, and thus, all life is good insofar as it is life. Augustine finds a useful image of this in Matthew 8: 22: “Let the dead bury their dead.” These dead are not actually dead (perhaps a Manichaean exegesis is that these dead are without life), but rather they live their lives viciously. To stress this point Augustine cites 1 Tim. 5: 6: “A widow who is living in pleasure is dead” (*duab. an.*, 2, 2) (CSEL 25, 53). Surely, Augustine comments, this widow is not dead, but alive; she is only said to be “dead” because of vice. Insofar as she is living or is a soul, she is good. The Manichaeans, Augustine observes, have collapsed the ontological and the moral so that a substance is charged with a moral valence; indeed, it is even reduced to its moral valence (*duab. an.*, 5, 5) (CSEL 25, 56).²⁰

In asserting that everything that lives, indeed, everything that is, comes from God and finds its very life from Christ who is life, Augustine rejects any dualistic conception of being, and thus by extension asserts the goodness of even those who act viciously. He makes this clear through his re-reading of the Manichaean proof text for the two natures from John 8, 44-47: “You do not hear, because you are not from God; but you are from your father the Devil” (*duab. an.*, 7, 9) (CSEL 25, 61).²¹ Augustine asserts that the children of the Devil are not ontologically distinct from the children of God. One ought to read John 8, 47, “You do not come from God,” in the same manner that one views all of creation, with the stipulation of the peace and harmony of all things in God (*duab. an.*, 7, 9) (CSEL 25, 61).²² John 8: 47 refers, then, only to the human

¹⁹ “Ergo pergerem quaerere animam illam quam malam dicerent.” Later, in the same section, “an illas animas quas alienigenas crederent.” See also *duab. an.*, 2, 2 (CSEL 25, 52-53).

²⁰ “Sed magis animas dicerem vitiosas etiam non in quantum vitiosae sed in quantum animae sunt deum sibi esse creatorem fateri oportere.” See also *duab. an.*, 6, 8 (CSEL 25, 60-61).

²¹ “Recitarent adversum me voces illas evangelicas: vos propterea non auditis quia non estis ex deo, vos ex patre diabolo estis” (John 8: 47-44).

²² “Pacem concordiamque monstrarent.”

in sin. It is not a statement about one's very being, since all "belong" (*pertineo*) to God.²³ Instead, this verse indicates what the human loves and rejects. To be not of God, for Augustine, is not to believe in Christ, reject his coming, and not receive him (*duab. an.*, 7, 9) (CSEL 25, 63).²⁴ This is why John 1, 11 states: "His own did not receive him." That humans are God's own pertains to human nature, the human's very being, whereas "You are not from God" (John 8: 47) only represents the condition of the human will: to choose love of self, that is, pride, over God (*duab. an.*, 7, 9) (CSEL 25, 63).²⁵

Through these steps, Augustine has found footing on what he takes to be the central issues: fault is found with the will, not the substance, and this will must be one's own. For example, if the Darkness is deemed the source of evil and it uses the soul, made from the Kingdom of Light, as an instrument for evil, the soul of Light cannot be held liable for willing to sin (*duab. an.*, 10, 12) (CSEL 25, 67-68). This soul of Light is an instrument by no fault of its own. Sin, on the other hand, can only be attributed to the will.²⁶ This fault occurs even when one is not able to accomplish what one wishes—there is sin in the will to evil (*duab. an.*, 10, 912) (CSEL 25, 68).²⁷ To will evil is free from compulsion (*cogere*) from an external source or substantial necessity, though at times it may seem that one is compelled (*duab. an.*, 10, 14) (CSEL 25, 69).²⁸ Sin, with Augustine expanding on his maxim in *De vera religione*, is the will for retaining or acquiring that which justice forbids and from which one is free to abstain (though Augustine will turn shortly in *De duabus animabus* to the weight *consuetudo*) (*duab. an.*, 11, 15) (CSEL 25, 70).²⁹

Augustine contends that the place of will should transform the Manichaean position of the two souls from an ontological claim to strictly a moral one. If

²³ As noted above, this statement is in contrast to the Manichaean conception of two kinds of souls: one from God that proceeds as part of God's very substance and another that is evil that does not pertain to God in any way. See *duab. an.*, 12, 16 (CSEL 25, 71).

²⁴ "Nam si Christo non credere Christi adventum repudiare Christum non recipere certum indicium esset animarum quae non sunt dei."

²⁵ "Hic ergo partem naturae tenuit qui ait: sui eum non receperunt" (John 1:11); "ille voluntatis qui ait: non estis ex deo" (John 8: 47). "Evangelista enim dei opera commendabat Christus hominum peccata cohercebat."

²⁶ Augustine gives a definition of the will in *duab. an.*, 10, 14 (CSEL 25, 68): "Voluntas est animi motus cogente nullo ad aliquid vel non amittendum vel adipiscendum."

²⁷ "Scilicet nisi in voluntate esse peccatum cum mihi auxiliaretur etiam illud quod iustitia peccantes tenet sola mala voluntate quamvis quod voverint implere nequiverint."

²⁸ "Restat ut volens a cogente sit liber etiamsi se quisquam cogi putet."

²⁹ "Ergo peccatum est voluntas retinendi vel consequendi quod iustitia vetat et unde liberum est abstinere."

the evil race of darkness in its original condition did not have will before its mixture with the Light, then it is blameless (*duab. an.*, 12, 16) (CSEL 25, 71).³⁰ If it is simply evil (like a substantial evil), then it seems necessary to reconsider what is meant by the term “evil” when applied to a thing, to substances that are divested of the will to evil. Perhaps, Augustine suggests, those things, even those people, that from a Manichaean vantage one might consider to be substantially evil, are in fact, simply good. The category of substantial evil is, thereby, a strictly aesthetic claim that means nothing more than difference.

Without the will to evil, there is no moral quandary. If the race of Darkness is evil only by reference to its nature or substance and the souls of Light are good only in relation to their substance, then this conflict is simply the exchange or interaction of different natures. If wood is burnt by fire, there is no moral dilemma.³¹ At least, there is no malevolence in the fire toward the wood. Likewise, the Kingdom of Darkness only sins (or is said to act in evil) by nature, and hence it is not malevolent (that is, it does not possess the will to evil) (*duab. an.*, 12, 17) (CSEL 25, 73-74).

Augustine reaches the conclusion that even in the Manichaean system sin must only apply to the good souls, who have will (*duab. an.*, 12, 18) (CSEL 25, 74).³² The Manichaean practice of repentance and forgiveness evidences this fact (*duab. an.*, 12, 18) (CSEL 25, 74). Repentance cannot apply to the natural, even substantial, evil of the Kingdom of Darkness. Rather, repentance and forgiveness only concern the souls that are a part of the Light, for they alone can actually sin or will otherwise (*duab. an.*, 12, 18) (CSEL 25, 74). If these souls sent into the Darkness do not have the power to resist the influence, manipulation, or will of the Darkness, then they do not sin. To use the same image, it is as if wood is thrown into the fire. No quandary exists for the soul of Light thrown into the irresistible force of what is deemed to be a substantial evil. Yet, if these souls of Light have the power to resist and still consent to evil, then they do in fact sin,

³⁰ “Utrum illud malum genus animarum antequam bono misceretur habuisset aliquam voluntatem.”

³¹ This applies likewise to the commixture of the Darkness and the Light. The two souls, the highest good and the greatest evil, were once two separate kinds (*duo genera*) and now are mixed (*duab. an.*, 12, 16) (CSEL 25, 71).

³² Augustine’s insight here into the Manichaean system agrees with the Manichaean Secundinus’s letter to Augustine, written some years after the *Confessions*. See Secundinus *Epistula ad sanctum Augustinum*, 2 (BA 17,512): “At si cum se ipsam cognoverit consentiat malo et non se armet contra inimicum voluntate sua peccauit (...) non enim punitur quia peccauit sed quia de peccato non doluit.”

and not due exclusively to the irresistible nature of the Darkness (*duab. an.*, 12, 18) (CSEL 25, 75). It is rather like wood *wanting* to burn and loving the fire.

Augustine has cut through the Manichaean system to focus on the will of those souls, who although good by nature, will what they could resist. He takes up the question of human deliberation, which seems to have been central to the Manichaean assertion of the two souls. For the Manichaeans, human deliberation demonstrates the tension between two forces or the “mind” of two natures or souls (*duab. an.*, 12, 19) (CSEL 25, 75).³³ Augustine, who may have felt compelled by this example in his youth, asks why he is forced to admit two souls because of the common experience of deliberation.³⁴ Surely, he notes, there may be two kinds of goods over which the soul deliberates?³⁵ The difficulty of choosing the higher good over the lower good is heightened, not because of another substance, but because of the human’s familiarity (*consuetudo*) with the flesh and the historical weight of one’s sins. This negatively inclined kind of *consuetudo* is a habit, familiarity, or even disposition that obstructs or hampers the ease with which one perceives (*duab. an.*, 13, 19) (CSEL 25, 76). Nevertheless, deliberation that results in choosing poorly or choosing the lesser good is a choice that proceeds from one who may have otherwise rightly willed the higher good. Augustine’s caveat, it is important to observe, is that such a difficulty in deliberation may be intensified by *consuetudo*.

The example of deliberation, that is, the process of weighing goods, is at the heart of Augustine’s reflection on the two wills in the *Confessions*, to which we will turn in the next section. In a similar way, Augustine’s consideration of repentance is prompted by his reflection on deliberation. In *De duabus animabus* Augustine states that a condition for the possibility of repentance is the fact that one wills an evil or a lesser good that one ought not to have willed (*duab. an.*, 14, 22) (CSEL 25, 78). The consequence of Augustine’s discussion of the will, deliberation, and repentance in *De duabus animabus* is that while Augustine is clearly rejecting the ontological agonism of Manichaeism, he is also probing more deeply into the difficulty of willing in light of the weight of *consuetudo*.

³³ “An ut discerem hinc ostendi animarum duo esse genera, quod in deliberando nunc in malam partem, nunc in bonam nutat adsensio.”

³⁴ Stroumsa identifies the lengthy tradition of deliberation of two spirits in Jewish and Early Christian texts from the Roman period. He notes that all of these considerations of the two spirits, powers, or souls, though certainly possessing different implications, may have Zoroastrian origins (198-205).

³⁵ Augustine also calls these two kinds of goods as the outer and the inner. See *duab. an.*, 13, 19 (CSEL 25, 75).

This is not a wholly new development, for even as early as *De moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* Augustine had emphasized the weight of *consuetudo*.³⁶ Rather, Augustine's discussion of deliberation has provided him with an excellent tool for discussing both the struggle or weight of *consuetudo* and the freedom of the will, while pressing the Manichaean system from its ontologically figured though functionally aesthetic, moral hermeneutic.

Augustine demonstrates in the conclusion of *De duabus animabus* his more acute assessment of the will and the human when he states: "O consuetudo peccati! O comes poena peccati!" (*duab. an.*, 14, 23 (CSEL 25, 79)). The Manichaeans do not merely substitute a battle between substantial evils in place of the struggle of the will. They, moreover, do not seem attentive to the weight of *consuetudo*. Their rejection of the weight of this disposition reveals a conception of the self as a luminous soul, exculpated from fault.³⁷ Yet, as Augustine has noted at two points in the treatise, the Manichaean does repent, while still confusingly holding to the substantial and thereby moral impeccability of the soul. Augustine will take up these concerns and provide a more subtle critique in the *Confessions*.

The conflict of admixture, the agony of the soul in the world, seems to be the proper framework for the Manichaean dilemma. If this is the case, however, one still seems to be trapped in an agonistic universe, even trapped in one's own body, in one's own society. The soul of Light may repent, but that from which it wants release or reprieve still remains substantially evil. One's focus is not on one's own willing of evil or identifying the weight of *consuetudo*, but rather on seeking liberation from this evil substance and all that this entails. It is this vision, this disposition, not only to attempt to exculpate oneself from doing evil, but to free oneself from the implications of being created in and an ordered part of this world that is at the heart of Augustine's understanding of a *mala consuetudo*. We see this already in Augustine's writings before *De duabus animabus*, but the weight of *consuetudo*, a disposition that informs (as much

³⁶ Augustine uses *consuetudo* in several of his works before *De duabus animabus*, including the difficulty of *consuetudo* at the beginning of *mor.*, 1, 2, 3 (CSEL 90, 5). Fredriksen (212-213) notes this reference, along with his use of *consuetudo* on the second day of his debate with Fortunatus, as indicating a shift in Augustine's thought. See also c. *Fort.*, 22 (BA 17, 176). Jason BeDuhn holds Augustine's use of *consuetudo* in *De duabus animabus* to be a later addition, which follows his debate with Fortunatus. This decision is driven by BeDuhn's claim of the great "disturbance" for Augustine after his debate with Fortunatus. See BeDuh, 115-121; 141-149; 166; 451, and n. 53.

³⁷ Augustine, at the very least, thought this to be the case when he was a young Manichaean. See *conf.*, 4, 15, 25-26 (CCSL 27, 53).

as it is informed by) what one wills, comes to the fore in this short work. However, Augustine's treatment of *consuetudo* in the *Confessions* provides greater precision to his rejection of agonism in all its individual and social implications.

The *Confessions*: The Will in Augustine: *Consuetudo*

In book 8 of the *Confessions*, building up to the famous scene of his conversion in the Milanese garden, Augustine pauses to reflect on his struggle at this earlier point of his life. He discerns how “his body more easily obeyed the slightest willing of the soul, so that the members of the body would be moved at command, than the soul obeyed itself in the will alone for accomplishing its own great will” (*conf.*, 8, 8, 20 (CCSL 27, 126)).³⁸ Indeed, there are many activities in which willing is not the same as being able to do (*conf.*, 8, 8, 20) (CCSL 27, 126).³⁹ Augustine is not talking about willing to do something like pick up a large rock and not being able to do it. He is strictly considering willing as such, specifically, to will wholly or completely to love God. To will ought to be simple in that the willing and the doing are one and the same. It is this simple, undivided willing that escaped Augustine (*conf.*, 8, 8, 20) (CCSL 27, 126).⁴⁰

As he reflects on this, Augustine discusses the difficulty of the human in sin: “The mind commands the body and is immediately obeyed. The mind commands itself and it is resisted” (*conf.*, 8, 9, 21) (CCSL 27, 126).⁴¹ This resistance is not indicative of the presence or power of something other than himself. Rather, he judges that this difficulty occurs because the mind does not will from its whole self (*conf.*, 8, 9, 21) (CCSL 27, 126).⁴² Augustine avers that this will, even as divided, is truly his own, not something foreign (as the Manichaeans might hold) (*conf.*, 8, 9, 21) (CCSL 27, 126).⁴³ He images this partial willing and partial not willing as a kind of sickness of the mind which is weighed down by habit (*consuetudo*) from wholly rising to Truth (*conf.*, 8, 9, 21) (CCSL 27, 126–

³⁸ “Faciliusque obtemperabat corpus tenuissimae voluntati animae ut ad nutum membra moverentur quam ipsa sibi anima ad voluntatem suam magnam in sola voluntate perficiendam.”

³⁹ “Potui autem velle et non facere si mobilitas membrorum non obsequeretur. Tam multa ergo feci ubi non hoc erat velle quod posse.”

⁴⁰ “Et non faciebam quod et incomparabili affectu amplius mihi placebat et mox ut vellem possem quia mox ut vellem possem quia mox ut vellem utique vellem ibi enim facultas ea quae voluntas et ipsum velle iam facere erat et tamen non fiebat.”

⁴¹ “Imperat animus corpori et paretur statim; imperat animus sibi et resistitur.”

⁴² “Sed non ex toto vult, non ergo ex toto imperat.”

⁴³ “Quoniam voluntas imperat ut sit voluntas nec alia sed ipsa.”

127).⁴⁴ He concludes: “There are two wills, one of these is not whole; what is present in one, is wanting in the other” (*conf.*, 8, 9, 21) (CCSL 27, 127).⁴⁵

Augustine returns to the example of deliberation central to his discussion in *De duabus animabus*. As in the earlier work, he states that the Manichaeans recognize two wills in deliberation and assert that there are two natures of two minds, one good and the other evil (*conf.*, 8, 10, 22) (CCSL 27, 127).⁴⁶ He does not, however, immediately turn to the conflict of deliberation, but rather he outlines what he sees as the framework through which the Manichaeans approach deliberation. As he had begun to do in *De duabus animabus*, Augustine perceives that antecedent to their consideration of deliberation is the Manichaean commitment to what he calls Manichaeism’s pride: to assert that one is of the same nature as God (*conf.*, 8, 9, 21) (CCSL 27, 126).⁴⁷ If one views oneself as God or of the same nature as God, and if God is without qualification good, one cannot ascribe an evil to one’s own nature. Thus, as in *De duabus animabus* Augustine once again faults the Manichaean conception of the self. Augustine maintains that the Manichaeans blend the moral and metaphysical to preserve the impeccably luminous and unreservedly pure self.

To Augustine, this position introduces an escape hatch from any consideration of evil.⁴⁸ One can freely fall back on the divinity of one’s nature, when asserting one’s distinction from the material “evil” of the world. What evils can one ascribe to one’s self? How does one know when it might be the good divine nature of Light that one truly is or when it might be the evil of Darkness that is truly foreign to the soul? In truth, the question seems more, what evils does the soul of Light want or desire to ascribe to itself or take responsibility for? To this problem, the Manichaean is always free to open

⁴⁴ “Non igitur monstrum partim velle partim nolle sed aegritudo animi est quia non totus assurgit veritate sublevatus, consuetudine praegravatus.” Concerning *consuetudo*, Shanzer (61-62) notes that in books VI and VII of the *Confessions* the term may signal a more overt sexual meaning.

⁴⁵ “Et ideo sunt duae voluntates quia una earum tota non est et hoc adest alteri quod deest alteri.”

⁴⁶ “Qui cum duas voluntates in deliberando animaduenterint duas naturas duarum mentium esse adseuerant unam bonam alteram malam.”

⁴⁷ “Illi enim dum volunt esse lux non in Domino sed in se ipsis putando animae naturam hoc esse quod Deus est...”

⁴⁸ James Wetzel (“Augustine” 90) summarizes Augustine’s criticism of Manichaeism: “What, after all, would be the sense of evil’s invasion and influence, if evil remains essentially alien and external to the good? The ontological partitioning of good and evil makes it difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend what manner of struggle the two natures could be involved in, either at the macroscopic level of the kingdoms or the microscopic level of the two souls.”

the escape of the willing potency of the substantial evil of the Darkness. Thus, as Augustine now considers his former Manichaeism, he recognizes that from this framework for the human (or soul) amidst the agonism of the soul in the world, there is always something or someone else to blame.

Augustine's response to this is an emphatic grounding of action and of willing as predicated of himself alone. Augustine expresses this emphasis on himself as the sole agent when he writes: "I was the one deliberating so that I might serve my Lord God, just as before I was disposed, I was the one who wished and I was the one who did not. I, I was the one" (*conf.*, 8, 10, 22) (CCSL 27, 127).⁴⁹ He was fighting with himself, and fragmented within himself. Yet, though this fragmentation occurred somewhat unwillingly, it did not reveal the nature of a foreign mind, but his own punishment (*poena*) in sin (*conf.*, 8, 10, 22),⁵⁰ a penalty that all share from Adam (*conf.*, 8, 10, 22) (CCSL 27, 127).⁵¹

This *poena* is the "penalty" of Augustine's interjection in *De duabus animabus*, "O comes poena peccati." It also reveals Augustine's continued consideration of the weight of *consuetudo* (his "O consuetudo peccati" in *De duabus animabus*). For Augustine, one cannot truly divide the *poena peccati* from the *consuetudo peccati*. The will to sin is not a perpetually reoccurring, utterly free choice. The will is bound in its own disposition or habit (*consuetudo*) to sin and the effects of this disposition are witnessed in the fractured will.

To demonstrate the difficulty of the will, Augustine returns yet again two sections later in book eight to the Manichaean example of the deliberation (*conf.*, 8, 10, 23) (CCSL 27, 127-128). Through observing the struggle of two wills in one person, the Manichaeans perceive two contrary minds from two contrary substances and two contrary principles, one good and the other evil (*conf.*, 8, 10, 24) (CCSL 27, 128). Augustine extends the line of argument previously advanced in *De duabus animabus* asking if there cannot also be deliberation between two bad choices, such as what weapon to kill someone with or even whether one should steal and then kill or steal and then commit adultery (*conf.*, 8, 10, 24) (CCSL 27, 128-129).⁵² Deliberation of this kind would reveal a division within

⁴⁹ "Ego cum deliberabam ut iam servirem Domino Deo meo (Jer 30: 9) sicut diu disposeram ego eram qui volebam ego qui nolebam. Ego, ego eram."

⁵⁰ "Ideo mecum contendebar et dissipabar a me ipso et ipsa dissipatio me invito quidem fiebat nec tamen ostendebat naturam mentis alienae sed poenam meae."

⁵¹ "Et ideo non iam ego operabar illam sed quod habitabat in me peccatum (Rom 7:17) de supplicio liberioris peccati quia eram filius Adam."

⁵² Augustine notes that deliberation is also observed in choosing between good things such as what book to read.

the evil substance and the absence of the soul of Light, who stands as a silent observer to this struggle.

Augustine responds to the attempt to vacate the will in these examples, with his own conversion, his struggle to will wholly God. He describes how he was sick, turning and rolling himself in his own chain, his own division of will, until it was fully broken (*conf.*, 8, 11, 25) (CCSL 27, 129).⁵³ Augustine, in this famous passage, sees God's mercy in pressing him to break that which so thinly and narrowly held his will (*conf.*, 8, 11, 25) (CCSL 27, 129). All the while his temptations, which he calls his old friends (*antiquae amicae meae*), sought to remain, whispering to him to not let them go (*conf.*, 8, 11, 26) (CCSL 27, 129). It is important to note that these are not memories, this is not an exercise in forgetfulness, but rather what informs and presses him are urges or desires, more properly a violent disposition (*violenta consuetudo*) (*conf.*, 8, 11, 26) (CCSL 27, 130). In seeking to give up such desires, his disposition toward such things, Augustine realizes that he cannot stand on his own but rather must throw himself on God (*conf.*, 8, 11, 27) (CCSL 27, 130).⁵⁴ His understanding of himself, his own strength and autonomy, is precisely the problem.

Augustine provides an image of this struggle earlier in book eight. He notes how he wished that a law such as the one the Emperor Julian passed prohibiting Christians from teaching literature and rhetoric, could have stood in his way as it had for Marius Victorinus. He wishes that something external had opposed him. At least he would be forced to act and maybe his will would have been changed by this external necessity. This is a remarkable observation: an external necessity might aid in the transformation of his will. His own will bound in necessity from a certain *consuetudo* might be altered by an external necessity (*conf.*, 8, 5, 10) (CCSL 27, 119).⁵⁵ His very openness to the world, more properly to God's activity, might assist or even shockingly induce a new *consuetudo*.

In order to describe this transformation, he first outlines how his own necessity, the bondage of his will, was formed. He notes that from a bent will (*perversa voluntas*) lust develops. As one becomes a slave to lust, a habit or disposition (*consuetudo*) is formed. When such a habit or disposition is not

⁵³ "Sic aegrotabam et excruciar accusers memet ipsum solito acerbius nimis ac voluens et versans me in vinculo meo donec abrumperetur totum quo iam exiguo tenebar."

⁵⁴ "Dominus Deus eorum me dedit eis quid in te stas et non stas proice te in eum, noli metuere; non se subtrahet ut cadas; proice te securus excipiet et sanabit te."

⁵⁵ "Cui rei ego suspirabam ligatus non ferro alieno sed mea ferrea voluntate."

resisted, necessity (*necessitas*) imposes itself (*conf.*, 8, 5, 10) (CCSL 27, 119).⁵⁶ Yet, somehow even when he was bound in this necessity, formed by a disposition to lust, Augustine detects that a new will (*nova voluntas*) had begun to be in him; a will to worship God freely and enjoy God completely (*conf.*, 8, 5, 10) (CCSL 27, 119).⁵⁷ Within himself a fight began to take place between his old *consuetudo* and its desires and this new will (and newly forming disposition). Instead of two souls from two natures, Augustine here in the *Confessions* describes this tension as a struggle between his own two wills (*duae voluntates meae*) (*conf.*, 8, 5, 10) (CCSL 27, 120).⁵⁸

In this struggle, Augustine recounts how his soul was torn apart. The desires of the flesh, established by his own willing of them, struggled against the spirit. Through such a force of habit, he seemed almost to obey unwillingly, more suffering than acting; though in truth, his own actions had fostered and strengthened his own habit (*conf.*, 8, 5, 11) (CCSL 27, 120).⁵⁹ The force of this disposition, of this habit, is such that the mind is dragged and held unwillingly even as the mind so willfully sunk into this very disposition (*conf.*, 8, 5, 12) (CCSL 27, 120-121).⁶⁰ To love God wholly, to will to love God wholly, is a struggle, even a battle, against his own violent habit or disposition; against Augustine's own conception of himself.

Augustine's understanding of the force of *consuetudo* is set in even greater relief when we look back to the *consuetudo carnalis* of book seven. Here his spiritual ascent is abruptly halted by what he calls a *consuetudo carnalis*. In this vision, Augustine hears God's voice saying: "You will eat me, but you will not change me into you, but you will be changed into me" (*conf.*, 7, 10, 16) (CCSL 27, 103-114).⁶¹ Through this confrontation, he realizes with a greater certainty even than he has of his own existence that God is truth and the Truth exists

⁵⁶ "Quippe ex voluntate perversa facta est libido et dum servitur libidini facta est consuetudo et dum consuetudini non resistitur facta est necessitas."

⁵⁷ "Voluntas autem noua quae mihi esse coeperat ut te gratis colerem fruique te vellem..."

⁵⁸ "Ita duae voluntates meae una vetus alia nova illa carnalis illa spiritalis confligebant inter se atque discordando dissipabant animam meam."

⁵⁹ "Ibi enim magis iam non ego, quia ex magna parte id patiebar invitus quam faciebam volens; sed tamen consuetudo adversus me pugnacior ex me facta erat, quoniam volens quo nollem perveneram." Augustine describes the two laws: the law in one's members and the law of the mind (Rom. 7: 24-25).

⁶⁰ "Lex enim peccati est violentia consuetudinis qua trahitur et tenetur etiam invitus animus eo merito quo in eam volens illabatur."

⁶¹ "Cibus sum grandium: cresce et manducabis me nec tu me in te mutabis sicut cibum carnis tuae sed tu mutaberis in me."

(*conf.*, 7, 10, 16) (CCSL 27, 104). God presses on Augustine to conform to God's Truth. In so doing, he begins to perceive that all things are good insofar as they are, and even things that seem to be evil, such as dragons, fire, and hail, all, in truth, praise God's name (*conf.*, 7, 11, 17) (CCSL 27, 104-105). Augustine cannot find peace or embrace God without a willingness to abandon his *consuetudo carnalis* and be open to God's transformation.

In the subsequent sections of book seven, Augustine discusses the very problem he has now for a decade identified with the Manichaean hermeneutic. He was unable and unwilling to admit that things which displeased him were from God. From the confidence of this aesthetic judgment, he refused to appreciate how all things, indeed, everything, points to and praises God. Therefore, he held to the Manichaean notion of the two substances so that he might exalt his own preferences and assure himself of his impeccability. Through this hermeneutic, Augustine was able to discard uncomfortable difference as being ontologically evil, if only because aesthetically displeasing. From the surety of his self-defined individuality, he could authoritatively aver that such things could have nothing to do with God or more properly himself (and by extension God) (*conf.*, 7, 13, 19) (CCSL 27, 105-1106).

Augustine comes to reject this view, which so easily discards the unwanted or that which he is not able to consume or make his own, as he questions his own integrity and judgment. Bread, he notes, is displeasing to the sick, and light to weak eyes, and so even to some justice is loathsome (*conf.*, 7, 16, 22) (CCSL 27, 106). The problem is the vantage of the viewer; that is, the distorted will that bends away from God. In essence, the human seeks a kind of agonism with things in order to preserve one's eminence. Through a *carnalis consuetudo*, one's formed disposition, the human seeks to consume and incorporate and discard at will. Yet the very difficulty faced in this endeavor presses or even forms one's desire for agonism. Because human beings seek to assert themselves as the sole arbiters of what is good, just, and beautiful, they must ground opposition, the displeasing, the ugly, even those things which cannot be commodified, in a kind of agonism, whether we think of this in the Manichaean framework of an ontology or, as Augustine identifies in other places, an agonistic aesthetic.

What stands out in these passages from the *Confessions* is that it is the beauty of God, a beauty that cannot be consumed but consumes, that draws in Augustine. On the other hand, it is the weight of his *carnalis consuetudo* that drags him down and back within his confident conception of himself (*conf.* 7,

17, 23) (CCSL 27, 107).⁶² This *carnalis consuetudo*, as James Wetzel has insightfully noted, is, on one level, the desire to consume (“The Question” 170–171). We can even extend this to the desire to consume what is different; to consume all things and make them one’s own. Augustine’s *consuetudo*, then, is a kind of disposition that seeks to possess and to consume, even that which is wholly other, even God. Through this consumption, Augustine also strives to assert his eminent autonomy over and against whatever he wills; a freedom, as he says in *De vera religione* from justice, from the claims and contributions of creation, humanity, and God.

As Augustine’s reflection on the *carnalis consuetudo* reveals, the resolution of the agonism put forward by a belief in two principles or two souls is not to turn around and consume all things into a kind of simple homogeneity. This is still to hold the exalted view of the self as divine (or functionally divine). Difference, authentic as well as good, must remain, and the will to consume must give way to the will to love even those things which do not appear to be worthy of love, as well as to love those things such as God which cannot be possessed, but in the end will possess Augustine. Perhaps this is why Augustine ends book seven with a discussion of the grace of God through the Incarnation (*conf.*, 7, 18, 24–21.27) (CCSL 27, 108–112).

Conclusion

Augustine’s critique of the Manichaean dualistic system and hermeneutic reveals his own thought. Even if we concede that Augustine unfairly depicts Manichaeism as holding two souls and not two minds or principles, Augustine’s reflection on the tension of the Manichaean hermeneutic of agonism is fairly his own. This does not mean that Augustine has nothing but criticism for Manichaeism. On the contrary, through his sustained engagement with Manichaean dualism, we can see how he attempts to move the Manichaean position toward a focus on the will to sin in the soul. If Manichaeans are disposed to be concerned with this issue, as Secundinus at least in part suggests, all the better.

Augustine’s focus on the human person, on the mind, indeed, on the will as the point of discord and tension takes place through, in part, his recurring treatment of the Manichaean notion of the two natures, minds, and two souls. The

⁶² “Sed rapiebar ad te decore tuo moxque diripiebar abs te pondere meo et ruebam in ista cum gemitu et pondus hoc consuetudo carnalis.”

fruit of the reflection is a substantial dimension of Augustine's understanding of concord and peace. Augustine places his suspicion on the self or mind who wills and one's own selfish *consuetudo*, not in the external world or in some unrelated substance within himself. The seeds of this insight, if not in full, are found as early as *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* and *De vera religione*, though it is in *De duabus animabus* that we begin to observe a more focused reflection on the weight of *consuetudo* and its function in relation to an agonistic hermeneutic.

Through his recurring reflection on *consuetudo*, we come to see that Augustine does not simply discuss the hindrance of *consuetudo*, but also, especially in the *Confessions*, takes up the corresponding conception of the self that engenders even as it is sustained by such a *carnalis consuetudo*. Hence, Augustine's articulation of his critique of Manichaeism does not simply fault pride as such, but the pride that closes off the human from humanity's created openness. Peace is found in openness to God, to others, to the beauty of the created world, even, perhaps shockingly, to difference. Peace is not the consequence of the consumption of beauty or the satiation of desire on even the most luminous of goods; peace is grounded in the disposition—*bona consuetudo*—to love God and others. While this is a disposition that may experience conflict, it does not find security and rest in agony or even the prideful resolution of such agony in the luminousness of the self—the secure citadel. Such a notion of the self is, for Augustine, the cause of so much carelessness and stolid dismissiveness. Peace truly can only be sought from a disposition that acknowledges the source of peace is beyond the confines of the self, and is open to the agency of that which is different.



Works Cited

- BeDuhn, Jason David. *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, 2: Making a "Catholic" Self*, 388-401 C.E. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, pp. 104-106.
- Cavadini, John. "The Darkest Enigma: Reconsidering the Self in Augustine's Thought." *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2007, pp. 119-132.
- Decret, François. *L'Afrique Manichéenne (IV-Ve siècles): Étude Historique et Doctrinale*, I-II, Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978, pp. II 262-271.
- Ferwerda, Rein. "Two Souls: Origen's and Augustine's Attitude toward the two Souls Doctrine; Its Place in Greek and Christian Philosophy." *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 47, no. 4, 1983, pp. 360-378.
- Franzmann, Majella. "Manichaean Views of Women: A Study of the Teaching and Perspectives on Women from the *Kephalaia* of the Teacher and the *Manichaean Psalm Book*." "I sowed Fruits into Hearts" (Odes Sol. 17:13): *Festschrift for Professor Michael Lattke*, edited by M. Lattke, Pauline Allen, M. Franzmann, and Rick Strelan, Strathfield, NSW, St Pauls Publications, 2007, pp. 67-85.
- Fuhrer, Therese. "Augustine's Moulding of the Manichaean Idea of God in the Confessions." *Vigiliae Christianae*, vol. 67, 2013, pp. 531-547.
- Giuffré Scibona, Concetta. "The Doctrine of the Soul in Manichaeism and Augustine." "In Search of Truth": *Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism, Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*, edited by Jacob Albert van den Berg, Annemaré Kotzé, Tobias Nicklas and Madeleine Scopello, Leiden, Brill, 2011, pp. 377-418.
- Lössl, Josef. "Augustine on 'The True Religion': Reflections of Manichaeism in *De vera religione*." *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity: Selected Papers from the First South African Conference on Augustine of Hippo, University of Pretoria, 24-26 April 2012*, edited by Johannes Van Oort, Leiden, Brill, 2013, pp. 137-153.
- Mathewes, Charles. "Book One: The Presumptuousness of Autobiography and the Paradoxes of Beginning." *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, edited by Kim Paffenroth and Robert Peter Kennedy, Louisville, Westminster John Knox, 2003, pp. 7-23.
- Shanzer, Danuta. "Avulsa a Latere Meo: Augustine's Spare Rib: Confessions 6.15.25." *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 92, 2002., pp. 157-176.

Stroumsa, Guy. "The Two Souls and the Divided Will." *Self, Soul and Body in Religious Experience*, edited by Albert I. Baumgarten, Jan Assman and Guy Stroumsa, Leiden, Brill, 1998, pp. 198-208.

Wetzel, James. *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992.

-----". "The Question of 'Consuetudo Carnalis' in Confessions 7.17.23." *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2000.