

The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's *De doctrina christiana**

Augustine describes the subject matter of Books Two and Three of *De doctrina christiana* by the phrases '*doctrina signorum*' and '*de signis*'¹. In these two books he is concerned with the second part of the principles for understanding Scripture. (I. 1, 1, 2) The first part, which comprises Book One of the treatise, he calls '*de rebus*'. (I. 11. 2, 17) There Augustine summarizes the main doctrines of the faith and concludes that the primary principle by which interpretation of Scripture should be guided is the building of love of God and neighbor². In Books Two and Three he moves on from this general principle to more specific advice for handling the difficulties encountered in Scriptural exegesis. But before taking up

* This article is a revision of a chapter in 'Semantics and Hermeneutics in Saint Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*', a dissertation presented by the author for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Yale University, 1967.

1. *De doctr. chr.* I. 11. 2, 1, XL. 44, 15, II. 1. 1, 3, and XXXVII. 56, 45. References to *De doctrina* are to book, chapter, paragraph, and line (in that order) of the *Corpus Christianorum* edition of Josef MARTIN (Series Latina, XXXII, Turnhout : Brepols, 1962). The full reference will not be given when a certain passage is the stated topic of discussion or when the reference would differ only in paragraph and line from one immediately preceding it. I adhere to the following conventions in the use of Latin words :

- a) All Latin words will be italicized.
- b) When *mentioned* in an English sentence, a Latin word or phrase will be enclosed in single quotation marks. E. g., '*Res*' is a difficult term to translate.
- c) When *used* in an English sentence, a Latin word or phrase will not be enclosed in quotation marks. E. g., A *res* can also be a sign.
- d) When a Latin word, phrase, or clause occurs in parentheses to show what I am quoting or paraphrasing, it will be quoted exactly from the text ; but when used or mentioned in a sentence, if a noun, the nominative case will be given, if a verb, the present active infinitive will be given.

2. For a sound analysis of Book One see Gilbert ISTACE, *Le livre 1^{er} du 'De doctrina christiana' de saint Augustin*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, XXXII (1956), pp. 289-330.

these difficulties he states, in a few short paragraphs (II. I. I-IV. 5), a theory of signs. Although this theory was proposed for a definite use and not for its own sake, it is nevertheless intrinsically interesting. Moreover, Augustine's use of this theory can be fully appreciated only if the theory itself is clearly understood. In this article I shall, therefore, interpret the theory of signs in *De doctrina* II. 1-5 apart from Augustine's application of it.

First, I shall carefully analyze the text. For clarification and amplification of certain difficult and important points I shall refer to other parts of *De doctrina*, some of Augustine's other writings, and selected Latin writers. Two of Augustine's early works will be most important — *De dialectica*, written in Milan while he was awaiting baptism in 387³, and *De magistro*, written two years later. Of his later writings, *De Trinitate* will be useful. On the basis of this textual analysis I shall formulate Augustine's theory of signs.

Then I shall move to a wider context. First, the possible background for Augustine's theory will be considered. The conclusion will be that only in logic were signs treated in the manner of Augustine's treatment. To establish the extent of Augustine's contact with the logical tradition I shall, in the second place, examine what he knows and professes to know about logic. With this as a basis I shall then compare Augustine's theory of signs with the semantics of the two great logical systems of antiquity — the Aristotelian and the Stoic. My aim is not just to establish possible sources, but primarily to clarify Augustine's position.

Several scholars have dealt with the issues which I shall be considering. R.-A. Markus⁴ and K. Kuypers⁵ have examined Augustine's theory of signs. H.-I. Marrou has looked at Augustine's logic⁶. Several writers have studied Augustine's relation to Stoic logic, especially with reference to *De dialectica*⁷. I find myself in only partial agreement with most of these authors. At some points their analysis of Augustine's logic and of Stoic logic lacks both historical accuracy and technical precision.

3. *Retractationes* I. VII (I. VI in Migne; in general references to Augustine's works are to *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* editions. Exceptions will be noted). This work, regarded as spurious by the Benedictine editors of Augustine, is now widely accepted as the *De dialectica* mentioned by Augustine in the *Retr.* For recent discussions of authenticity see H.-I. MARROU, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la Culture Antique*, 4th edition including the *Retractatio* published in 1949 (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1958), pp. 576-8, and JAN PINBORG, *Das Sprachdenken der Sioa und Augustins Dialektik*, in *Classica et Mediaevalia*, XXIII (1962), pp. 149-151.

4. *St. Augustine on Signs*, in *Phronesis*, II (1957), 60-83.

5. *Der Zeichen- und Wortbegriff im Denken Augustins* (Amsterdam: N. V. Swets & Zeitlinger, 1934).

6. *Saint Augustin*, pp. 240-248.

7. PINBORG *op. cit.*; Georg PFLIGERSDORFFER, *Zu Boethius, De Interp. . . . nebst Beobachtung zur Geschichte der Dialektik bei den Römern*, in *Wiener Studien*, LXVI (1953), 131-154; and Ulrich DUCHROW, *Sprachverständnis und Biblisches Hören bei Augustin* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1965), pp. 42-62.

A. — THE THEORY OF SIGNS IN *De doctrina christiana* II. I. I-IV. 5.

1. The definition of 'signum' (I. II. 2 and II. I. 1)

Augustine twice defines 'signum' in *De doctrina* :

Definition 1 — « Signs are things which are used to signify something (. . . *signa, res . . . quae ad significandum aliquid adhibentur*. I. II. 2, 11 f.). »

Definition 2 — « A sign is a thing which causes us to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses (*Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem venire, . . .* II. I. 1, 5-7) »⁸.

Both definitions are general. The second is more elaborate than the first. Both say (a) that a sign is a *res* and (b) that it bears a certain relation to something else (*aliud aliquid*). I shall consider each of these points.

A sign is a *res*. In Book One Augustine gives two meanings to the term 'res'. First, it refers properly to that which is not used to signify something else (*quae non ad significandum aliquid adhibentur*, I. II. 2, 2 f.), such as wood, stone, cattle, and so on. Second, it refers improperly to anything whatsoever that is (I infer this from '*quod enim nulla res est, omnino nihil est*', 13f.)⁹. Anything not a *res* in the improper sense is nothing at all. In this latter sense 'res' may be applied to such things as words and the stone which Jacob slept on, which in addition to *being* something also *signify* something (4-10). Clearly a sign, like everything else that exists, is a *res* in this second and improper sense, for it must be if it is to signify. But a sign is a *res* only in the improper sense, for in addition to existing it signifies.

A sign is a *res* or thing which bears a certain relation to other things. Augustine says that things are learned by signs (*res per signa discuntur*, I. II. 2, 1 f.). It would appear that his term for the relation of signs to things is 'signify'. So we have.

- (1) things learned by signs, and
- (2) signs signifying things.

The second relation must, however, be inferred, for in the two defining chapters Augustine never says that signs signify *res*. Rather he uses the vague terms '*aliquid*' and '*aliud aliquid*'. In this he is similar to Cicero, who uses '*quiddam*' in his definition¹⁰. Quintilian, on the other

8. From St. AUGUSTINE : *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. by D. W. Robertson, Jr., copyright (c) 1958 by The Liberal Arts Press, Inc. (Indianapolis), reprinted by permission of the Liberal Arts Press Division of The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., p. 34.

9. 'Properly' translates Augustine's '*proprie*' at I. II. 2, 2. He gives no term for 'improperly'. KUYPERS, p. 78, calls them 'eine weitere und eine engere Bedeutung', with 'engere' corresponding to 'proper'.

10. *De inuentione* I. xxx. 48.

hand, does speak of *alia res* which are understood by signs¹¹. The reason the second relation can be inferred with *res* as the second term is that what is signified, the 'something else', must be a *res* in at least the improper sense if it is to be anything at all. In *De doctrina* Augustine does not investigate further the logical qualities of this relation. In *De magistro* he had established that the relation of signifying can be reciprocal and reflexive, but it need not be¹².

No more can be said about the something signified from these two chapters (I. 11 and II. 1. 1), except that all the examples given are of the signification of rather concrete things: an animal by a track, a fire by smoke, emotion by a voice, advance or retreat by a trumpet (II. 1. 1, 7-11). More can be said, however, about the relation of signifying itself. Definition 2 includes specification of the mechanism of signifying. Although it does not use the word '*significare*', it follows immediately upon Augustine's statement that he will now consider signs not as they are but as they signify (I. 1, 3-5).

This mechanism has two stages: (1) the sign is known as an impression upon the senses, and (2) causes something else to come into thinking. These two stages or aspects are duplicated by the definition given in *De dialectica*:

« A sign is something that is (1) itself sensed and which (2) indicates something beyond itself to the mind (*Signum est et quod se ipsum sensui, et praeter se aliquid animo ostendit. V. 9-10*)¹³. »

The only difference is a trivial one. In *De dialectica* Augustine names the mind, whereas in *De doctrina* he names what the mind does, namely, thinking (*cogitatio*). Quintilian speaks in the latter way when he says that a σημεῖον is that by which another thing is understood (*intelligitur*, V. ix. 9). Cicero's definition, on the other hand, is less anthropological in reference to the second stage, but is the same as Augustine's in the first.

« A sign is something (1) apprehended by one of the senses which (2) signifies something that is seen to follow from it ». (*Signum est quod sub sensum aliquem cadit et quiddam significat quod ex ipso profectum uidetur, . . . De inu. I. xxx. 48*)¹⁴.

11. *Institutio oratoria* V. ix. 9.

12. Reciprocity is illustrated by 'noun' and 'word' which can signify each other, for 'word' is a noun and 'noun' is a word. (*De mag. v. 11*) Reflexivity obtains in the case of 'noun' which can refer to itself as well as to other nouns. (vi. 18).

13. *De dialectica* will be referred to by chapter and line of chapter of the Benedictine text reprinted in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. XXXII, columns, 1409-1420 (printed there with the title '*Principia Dialecticae*'). A French translation of this incomplete treatise is found in vol. IV of *Œuvres Complètes de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Librairie de Louis Vivès, 1873), pp. 52-68.

14. For the Latin or Greek text of most classical authors to whom I refer throughout the article I have used the editions in the Loeb Classical Library (London: Wm. Heinemann Ltd., and Cambridge: by permission of Harvard University Press, Cambridge). Exceptions are noted.

Because of the generality of all of these definitions, I hesitate to call them 'anthropological'. Indeed Augustine even speaks of the apprehension of signs by animals. (II. II. 3, 9 ff.) Terms like '*cogitatio*' and '*animus*' are, nevertheless, primarily anthropological terms. This should be expected, for Augustine's topic in Books Two and Three is a certain kind of signs in so far as *men* are concerned with it. (II. 3, 6-7) In any case, in addition to (1) the sign and (2) what is signified by it, Augustine's definition of '*signum*' includes within the signifying situation (3) the subject to whom the sign indicates something. Thus Markus concludes that for Augustine the relation of signifying is triadic¹⁵.

2. '*Signa naturalia et data*' (II. I. 2-II. 3).

After giving this very general description of signs, Augustine divides signs into two kinds, *signa naturalia* and *signa data*. The former are those which

without any intention or desire of signifying, make us aware of something beyond themselves, as smoke signifies fire. It does this without any will to signify (. . . *sine uoluntate atque ullo appetitu significandi* *Non . . . uolens significare* II. 2, 12-15)¹⁶.

Other examples of *signa naturalia* are the track of an animal and the facial expressions of an angry or sad person. Augustine says he will not discuss this kind of sign further. (22-24).

Because it includes the divinely given signs contained in the Holy Scriptures, the other class is more important. (II. 3, 7-8) *Signa data* are

. . . those which living creatures show to one another for the purpose of conveying, in so far as they are able, the motions of their spirits or something which they have sensed or understood. Nor is there any other reason for signifying, that is, for giving signs (*significandi, id est signi dandi*), except for bringing forth and transferring to another mind (*animum*) what is conceived in the mind of the person who gives the sign. (II. 3, 1-6)¹⁷

Here the situation is more complex than in the definitions of 'sign'. Now two subjects are involved, the sign-giver and the one to whom the sign is given. This much is clear. But there is disagreement in the secondary literature on the precise nature of *signa data*.

This disagreement focuses on the question of translation. There is no problem with *signa naturalia*. They may be named 'natural signs'.

15. MARKUS, pp. 71f.

16. ROBERTSON, pp. 34f.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 35, altered.

Most translators call *signa data* 'conventional signs'¹⁸. In a short but well documented article J. Engels has argued against this¹⁹. He correctly points out that what distinguishes these two kinds of signs is the presence or absence of will, intention²⁰. Natural signs are those which occur without intention of signifying (*sine uoluntate significandi*, II. 3, 14f.). They merely happen. *Signa data*, on the other hand, are given. They occur because some one wills that they occur. Engels, therefore, prefers a literal translation of '*signa data*' as 'given (donnés) signs'²¹ or even 'intentionally given signs'²².

Markus suggests an interesting way of looking at the contrast between natural and given signs. They are distinguished « . . . according to whether the relation of dependence is between the sign and the object, or between the sign and the subject »²³. Smoke is a sign of fire and depends upon fire since the latter causes it²⁴. Markus goes beyond Augustine, however, when he says that *signa data* depend upon the will of the sign-giver for their significance²⁵. At least he goes beyond these early chapters of Book Two. For all that Augustine says here is that *signa data* depend upon the will of the sign-giver for their *occurrence*, not for their *meaning*.

Augustine does comment in other places on the place of will in meaning. In the etymological debates of antiquity the extreme positions were, on the one hand, that words are *naturally* suited to the things they signify and, on the other hand, that words are imposed arbitrarily, that is, by *convention*²⁶. When he wrote *De dialectica* Augustine took a middle position, regarding some words as having a natural rationale but consciously diverging from the Stoic view that all words have a natural origin. (VI. 3-5, 39-41, and 113-116) In his later writings he seems to move even farther away from the Stoic position. Of particular interest is a chapter in *De doctrina* II where Augustine says that certain letters and sounds mean one thing to the Latins, another to the Greeks, not because of nature but because each society has its own agreement and consent as to their significance (*non natura, sed placito et consensione significandi*, II.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 34 ; J. F. SHAW (trans.), *On Christian Doctrine*, in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. II (New York : Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1887), p. 536 ; G. COMBES and J. FARGES (trans.), *La Doctrine Chrétienne*, in Œuvres de Saint Augustin (Bibliothèque Augustinienne, First Series, XI, Paris : Desclée de Brouwer, 1949), p. 241.

19. *La doctrine du signe chez saint Augustin*, in *Studia Patristica*, vol. VI, ed. F. L. CROSS (Berlin : Akademie-Verlag, 1962), pp. 366-373.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 371.

21. *Loc. cit.*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 372.

23. MARKUS, p. 72.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

25. *Loc. cit.*

26. See AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae* X. IV, where the contrast is expressed by three sets of terms : *Naturalia-positiua*, *naturalia-arbitraria*, and φύσει-θέσει.

xxiv. 37, 10-12 and ff.)²⁷. Thus in *De doctrina*, at least, Augustine holds that an important class of signs (letters and sounds) has significance by convention. Although he does not here speak of the will, he obviously presupposes its presence in the agreement made within a society.

We can say, therefore, that Augustine speaks of will with respect to both the occurrence and the significance of signs.

	Not willed	Willed
1) Occurrence (II. I. 2-II. 3)	<i>naturalia</i>	<i>data</i>
2) Significance (II. xxiv. 37)	<i>natura</i>	<i>placitum et consensio</i>

Although will operates in both *signa data* and in *consensio*, it operates for different ends in each, namely, for occurrence and for significance. To translate 'data' by 'conventional' is to confuse these ends. In the early chapters of Book Two now under consideration, Augustine is concerned only with occurrence. As Engels has noted, Augustine does not relate intentional giving and conventional significance²⁸. A relation can, however, be inferred from *De doctrina*. The most important type of signs given intentionally are words. (III. 4, 10f. and 14-16) Now words and their constituent parts have their significance by convention. (II. xxiv. 37) Most intentionally given signs, therefore, are significant by convention.

3. 'Signa data' — the full scheme (II. II. 3)

Data uero signa sunt, quae sibi quaeque uiuentia inuicem dant ad demonstrandos, quantum possunt, motus animi sui uel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet. Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromendum et traiciendum in alterius animum id, quod animo gerit, qui signum dat. (II. II. 3, 1-6)²⁹

I have already noted that the definition of 'signa data' is more complex than the definition of 'signum'. The added complexity comes first in there being both a sign-giver and a sign-receiver instead of just the latter. This indicates that in *signa data* Augustine takes up the topic of communication (*communicant*, III. 4, 2). Whereas the starting point in the definition of 'sign' is the sign, the starting point in the definition of 'given signs' is something which a living being wishes to show to another living being. In the movement from this something to its being shown Augustine sees several elements. But because he does not specify or elaborate on the nature of these elements, considerable use of other

27. See also *De musica* VI. IX. 24 (Migne, PL 32) — *uocabulis . . . placito enim, non natura imponuntur*.

28. ENGELS, p. 372.

29. Quoted in translation, above pp. 13f.

TABLE — *Signa data*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
(a) <i>De doctv. II.</i> i. 1 (Defn. of 'signum')	signum (a res)	species, quam ingerit sensibus	cogitatio of aliud aliquid		
(b) <i>De doctv. II.</i> ii. 3 (Defn. of 'signa data')		modus animi sui vel sensa aut in- tellecta quaelibet	id, quod animo gerit, qui signum dat	significandi i. e. signi dandi	alterius animum
(c) <i>De doctv. I.</i> XII. 12			cogitatio ; id quod animo gerimus ; uerbum quod corde gestamus	uoces ; locutio ; sonum	in audientis animum
(d) <i>De dial. V</i>	uerbum	animus sentit ; quod in uerbo intelligitur	ipso animo tenetur ; in animo continetur (dicibile)	uerbum procedit... propter aliud ali- quod significandum (dictio)	
(e) <i>De trin. XV.</i>		scientia (ab ea re quam scimus)	cogitatio ; uerbum in corde ; uerbum quod mente gerimus	uerbum quod sonat ; signum rerum quas cogitamus	

passages in *De doctrina* and in some of Augustine's other writings will be required for their interpretation. In particular I shall try to show that several passages summarized in the table above contain notions similar to and sometimes identical with those in *De doctrina*'s description of *signa data*. The key elements of the latter description (row b) as well as those of the definition of 'sign' (row a) are included for convenient reference. The other passages include an analogy for the manifestation in flesh of the Word (row c), the semantic scheme of *De dialectica* (row d), and an analogy for the Incarnation from *De trinitate* (row e). The justification for using the latter passage, which was written nearly twenty years after *De doctrina* II, is twofold. First, its notions and some of its terms are similar to the notions and terms of *De doctrina*. Second, the theme in *De trinitate* XV. x-xi is the likeness of our words to the Word. The same theme is found in *De doctrina* itself (c) and even earlier (*De fide et symbolo* III. 3-4).

Before turning to the texts I would make a general observation about them. All contain two kinds of notions. In the first place, each contains something *psychological*. Augustine talks about the mind, sensation, knowledge, thought, etc. In the second place, each contains something *semantic*. Augustine deals with signs, words, signifying, etc. The psychology and the semantics cannot be separated, although in *De dialectica* V semantics dominates and in *De trinitate* XV psychology dominates. In *De doctrina* II. i-iv they are more evenly balanced. Yet the psychology appears in order that a complete account may be given of signification by living beings, especially by men. The rubric of this book is '*de signis*' and the application of these early chapters to Scriptural hermeneutics makes use primarily of the properly semantic notions (*signum*, *res*, *significatio*)³⁰. Hence I shall call the theory in II. i-iv 'semantics'³¹ even though Augustine is concerned as well with what goes on in the mind of the signgiver and sign-receiver.

(1) and (2)³²

Things and their apprehension

Now I shall take up each of the elements mentioned in the description of *signa data*. Communication starts with things which one living being wishes to show to another. I have placed this starting point — *motus animi sui uel sensa aut intellecta* — in the second column. Because

30. See, for example, II. x. 15. 3-12 — the crucial definitions of *signa propria* and *signa translata*, III. vi. 10-IX. 13 — the discussion of various attitudes toward figurative signs, and III. xxv. 34-36 — a discussion of the varieties of figurative signification.

31. 'Semantics' may be defined briefly as the analysis of expressions and their signification. See Rudolf CARNAP, *Introduction to Semantics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 9f.

32. These numbers in parentheses correspond to the column numbers in the table.

' *sensa aut intellecta* ' seems less ambiguous in meaning than ' *motus animi* ', I shall consider it first. In *De doctrina* and other writings Augustine uses variations of this pair of terms to designate two classes of objects according to the ways in which they are apprehended. This is implicit in two passages in *De doctrina*. Once Augustine speaks of the diverse goods which move men. Some pertain to the bodily senses, some to the understanding of the mind (. . . *ad corporis sensum . . . ad animi intellegentiam pertinent*, I. VII. 7, 4-6). He gives examples only of the former — sky, sun, earth, body. Then later, in Book Two, Augustine makes a similar division of divinely instituted *doctrinae in gentilibus* into those which pertain to the *sensus corporis*, such as history and astronomy, and those which pertain to the *ratio animi*, such as logic and arithmetic. (II. XXVII. 41, 4-5 and XXVIII-XXXVIII)

The same distinction of objects according to mode of apprehension is found in other writings as well. In *De dialectica* a *res*, which is what a sign designates, is said to be whatever is the object of understanding or sense perception or even of ignorance (*Res est quidquid intelligitur uel sentitur uel latet*. (V. 2-3) In *De magistro* Augustine makes a universal statement: All things which we perceive we perceive either by a sense of the body or by the mind. The former are called ' *sensibilia* ', the latter ' *intelligibilia* '. (XII. 39) Earlier in the book he gives examples of these two kinds of *res*. Romulus, Rome, and a river are instances of *sensibilia*; virtue is an instance of *intelligibilia*. (IV. 8 *ad fin*) Later (around 415) in the twelfth book of *De Genesi ad litteram* Augustine expanded this twofold scheme into a threefold scheme — bodily, spiritual, and intellectual vision. (XII. VI. 15-VII. 16)³³ The expansion comes in the addition of spiritual vision which is the visualization of an absent body. In *De doctrina*, however, the more normal twofold scheme is found. In *De Genesi* Augustine gives several more examples of objects seen by intellectual vision: the mind itself, love, joy, peace, God. (XII. XXIV. 50)

Thus the ' *sensa aut intellecta* ' of *De doctrina* II. II. 3 (row b) seems to refer to things which are sensed and understood. The definition of ' sign ' in II. I. 1 (a) furnishes an example of this. First, the sign (or any other sensible or intelligible thing) has a being of its own. Then it is apprehended by the senses (or by the mind in the case of an intelligible thing). The analysis of ' *sensa aut intellecta* ' allows us therefore, to say something about both columns (1) and (2). In column (1) we have objects or, in Augustine's language, *res*; in column (2) we have the reception or apprehension of those objects in two ways. In *De trinitate* XV (e) Augustine calls this reception ' *scientia* ', which comes about when we

33. For a full discussion of this see the unpublished Harvard dissertation by Gareth B. MATTHEWS, *An Interpretation and Critique of the Concept of the Inner Man in the Epistemology of St. Augustine*, 1960. I have also made use of a translation of selections from *De Genesi* XII by Gareth and Mary MATTHEWS in mimeograph form (undated).

know a *res* (*res quam scimus*, x. 19). He does not use 'scientia' in *De doctrina* II. I-IV, but it is interesting that he considers the study of Scripture to be at the level of *scientia*, and this latter is knowledge of various *res*. (II. VII. 10, 13-30)

The phrase 'motus animi' does not fit into this scheme easily. It can be interpreted in at least two ways on the basis of its use in *De doctrina*. First, it refers to emotion, or perhaps attitude. Augustine uses it of wrath and sadness (II. I. 2, 20), of that which is expressed by untranslatable interjections (x. 16, 15), and of charity and cupidity (III. x. 16, 32-35). In this usage he follows Varro, who calls fear 'a certain motion of the mind'³⁴. Taken in this sense 'motus animi' belongs in column (2), although in a peculiar way. It is not the apprehension of an external thing (hence it does not belong in column 1), but originates in the mind. Yet it is similar to this apprehension in that it may be a kind of raw datum — something immediately known and as yet unreflected upon.

A second way of interpreting 'motus animi' has less obvious grounding in Augustine but presents an interesting possibility. In the discussion of the role of consent in language, Augustine says that the same sound moves men's minds diversely (*animos mouent . . . diuerse*), for they understand it in accordance with the convention of their own society. (II. XXIV. 37, 15-20) Although the association with understanding (*intellegit*) might lead us to place this movement of the mind in column (2), a passage in Seneca suggests that 'motus animi' may also belong in column (3). Seneca uses 'motus animorum' to explicate the Stoic doctrine of the λεκτόν³⁵. He says there are bodies which we see and sounds which we speak. In addition there are certain motions of minds which declare or mean something about bodies (*corporum* ; *de corpore*). I do not wish to discuss the *lekton* at the moment. It is sufficient to note that it involves more than apprehension. There is a certain reflection, an attending to what has been apprehended, and this, as will be seen, belongs at the next stage (column 3) in Augustine's scheme.

(3)

Conception

Moving to that next stage, there may be some question whether it is really distinguishable in *De doctrina* II. II. 3. I have isolated 'id, quod animo gerit'. This, Augustine says, is brought forth and transferred to another mind by giving signs. (4-6) But nothing in the passage distin-

34. *De lingua Latina* VI. 48.

35. *Epistulae Morales* 117. 13. For discussions of this passage see William and Martha KNEALE, *The Development of Logic* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 141, and Benson MATES, *Stoic Logic* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961; 1st printing, 1953), pp. 11f.

guishes it from the things which living creatures show by signs — the motion of the mind or things which are sensed or understood. On the basis of the passages in *De doctrina* cited in rows (a) and (c) it can, however, be set apart from these apprehended things. In I. XIII. 12 Augustine uses the same phrase, changing only the person and number of the verb — ‘*id quod animo gerimus*’. (2 f.) He names this begetting or conceiving in the mind ‘*cogitatio*’. Now ‘*cogitatio*’ occurs in II. I. 1 as the name for a stage distinct from the apprehension of *species* via the senses. In this stage the mind recognizes that the sign whose *species* is apprehended signifies something else. It is conception distinct from reception. ‘That which the sign-giver conceives in his mind’ must refer to this conception and is, therefore, distinct from the apprehension of sensibles and intelligibles (1 and 2).

To explicate ‘*cogitatio*’ requires examination of both earlier and later texts, namely, *De dialectica* and *De trinitate*. Both will help fill out the scheme in terms of the two kinds of objects known. In *De trinitate* XV (row c) Augustine retains several of the terms of *De doctrina* I. XIII — ‘*cogitatio . . . , uerbum est quod in corde dicimus*’. (X. 19) This word which is spoken in the heart in conception is begotten of knowledge (*gignitur de scientia*, XI. 20), which I have placed in column (2). Doubtless Augustine achieved greater clarity and depth in the psychology of *De trinitate* than in the psychology of *De doctrina*. But the use of the same terms, for the same reason (to illustrate the Incarnation), and in the same sequence (reception then conception) justifies cautious reference to the later work for illumination of the earlier. Reference to *De dialectica*, because it is an earlier work and is explicitly semantic in content, requires less caution.

In *De trinitate* XI. III. 6 Augustine states what he means by ‘*cogitatio*’. It consists in the union of memory, internal vision, and will. ‘This trinity of the inner man is suggested to Augustine by a trinity of the outer man — the union of the *res* which is seen, the eye, and the attention of the mind (*animi intentio*) which holds the eye upon the thing which is seen. (*De trin.* XI. II. 2)³⁶ The difference between outer and inner vision lies in what each sees. The eye of the body sees the *species* of a body which is outside it; the eye of the mind sees the *species* which by the medium of the bodily eye has been impressed upon memory. In all of this Augustine distinguishes four *species* which are born step by step in knowing and conceiving. From the *species* of the body comes one in the sense (eye). From this latter comes the *species* in the memory. And when the mind’s eye is turned on this *species* by the will, there is born a fourth *species* in the one who conceives (*cogitantis*, XI. IX. 16). These four might be called in turn ‘outward appearance of a body’, ‘impression on the eye’, ‘received or retained image’, and ‘the image attended to’. The *species* named in *De doctrina* II. I. 1 (a) would seem to be the second. The important thing

36. For the text of *De trinitate* I have used the edition of Luis ARIAS, *Obras de San Agustín*, Vol. V (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Christianos, 2nd edn., 1956).

to note is that it and the *species* of *De trinitate* both have their origin from a body, an object which is apprehended by the senses. Hence we have an account of the *cogitatio* of *sensa*.

For an account of the *cogitatio* of *intellecta* I shall turn to *De dialectica* (row c). It considers only one sort of intelligible and one that is apprehended in connection with a sensible, namely, a word. But this makes it especially relevant to *De doctrina christiana*, where Augustine concentrates on the words of Scripture. Indeed, the question of the *cogitatio* of *intellecta* is central to *De doctrina* II and III, where Augustine gives precepts for the understanding (*intellegere*) of Scripture.

In the fifth chapter of *De dialectica* Augustine formulates a fourfold semantic scheme. He defines and discusses the *uerbum*, the *res*, the *dicibile*, and the *dictio*. A *res*, as we have already seen, is something which may be sensed, or understood (v. 2-3). A *uerbum* is a sign of a *res*, and when spoken it can be understood by the hearer (. . . *ad audiente possit intellegi, a loquente prolatum*, v. 1-2). Hence a word would seem to be a *res* which is both sensed (heard) and understood. As *res* it belongs in column (1) ; as sensed and understood, in column (2). With the *dicibile* Augustin moves to the next stage :

What the mind rather than the ear gains from the word and is contained in the mind itself is called the '*dicibile*'. . . . What I have called '*dicibile*' is, in a sense, the word, yet it is not the uttered or written word but what is understood in the word and held in the mind. (v. 50-52, 60-62)³⁷

When he speaks of what is understood in the word, Augustine seems to be at the step which I have called 'reception' or 'apprehension', for it is a matter of understanding the meaning of the word. But when he says that the *dicibile* is held or contained in the mind, he seems to be referring to conception. This is not immediately clear from the material just quoted, which concerns the reception of a word. In a passage concerning the speaking of a word, however, Augustine says that words in the mind before utterance (*ante uocem*) are *dicibilia*. (v. 73f.) Then when uttered (*proruperrunt in uocem*) they are *dictiones*. (v. 74-76) This contrast between inner word and outer word corresponds to the contrast between the conceived word and the word which sounds in *De doctrina* I (c) and *De trinitate* XV (e). Hence it seems appropriate to place the *dicibile* at the stage of *cogitatio*. And because in hearing a word the *dicibile* arises after the word is understood, it also seems correct to say that the *dicibile* received in communication is one instance of the conceiving of *intellecta*. The *dicibile* is somehow the content of *cogitatio*. It is not merely psychological ; it is not one of the things external to the mind which are sensed or

37. Quidquid autem ex uerbo non auris, sed animus sentit, et ipso animo tenetur inclusum, dicibile uocatur Quod dixi dicibile, uerbum est ; nec tamen uerbum, sed quod in uerbo intelligitur et in animo continetur, significat.

understood. It seems to be an intermediate entity which is central to communication. Why it is central will be seen in the discussion of signifying, the next stage in Augustine's scheme for *signa data*.

(4)

Signifying

There can be no doubt that signifying is explicitly mentioned in *De doctrina* II. II. 3. Augustine makes it equivalent to giving signs (*significandi, id est signi dandi*, 4) and says that signs are given only in order to communicate. He probably presents this activity more explicitly than apprehension and conception because he intends to make frequent use of the notion of signification in the rest of Books Two and Three. In any case, whatever his intention, he does in fact apply the properly semantic notions of sign, thing, and signification to hermeneutics; of the psychological notions, on the other hand, he retains only understanding. I do not mean to imply that signifying is non-psychological, for, as we have seen in the previous section, the distinctive feature of *signa data* is the presence of will. Nevertheless, throughout Books Two and Three Augustine almost always talks about signification (*significatio*, II. XII. 18, 34, III. XXV. 36, 24 and 34), rather than the more personal signifying (*significandi*). This may be because in those books he is considering the signs of Scripture, which confront us apart from any speaker.

When approached with the sign as starting point, signification is usually seen as a two-termed relation between a sign and what it designates. In *De dialectica* Augustine says that a word is a sign of a thing (*rei signum*, V. 1). In *De doctrina* he is more indefinite, replacing 'res' by 'aliquid' in his definitions of 'sign'³⁸. Later in Book Two, however, he will use 'res' again as the designatum of a sign. (II. x. 15) One writer has said that Augustine's semantics does not go beyond this dyadic scheme of *signum* and *res*³⁹. On the basis of my analysis of the texts in this section, I maintain instead that Augustine has a threefold semantic scheme. Thus I agree with Markus, as far as he goes⁴⁰. He sees

38. See above pp. 11f.

39. DUCHROW, *Sprachverständnis*, p. 47 and n. 73. According to Duchrow Augustine is following the common reduction of Stoic semantics from a threefold to a twofold scheme. Duchrow cites SENECA, *Ep. Mor.* 89. 17, as an example of this, but he is mistaken. For the *uerba-significationes* classification of this passage instead of being a «reduction» of Stoic semantics is good Stoic doctrine. It corresponds to the Stoic division of the subject matter of dialectic into expressions and things signified. The latter are not external *res*, as Duchrow implies, but λεκτά. See DIOGENES LAERTIUS, VII, 43 and 63ff., and below, pp. 40f. The Stoics introduced their threefold scheme at another point and Seneca retains it. (*Ep. Mor.* 117. 13, discussed above, p. 19).

40. MARKUS, pp. 71f.

the third element as the sign-giver or receiver, and it is something connected with each. It has appeared in the discussion of *cogitatio*.

Augustine says that what is transferred from one mind to another is that which is conceived in the mind of the sign-giver. From parallels with other passages (c and e) I have concluded that this latter is *cogitatio*. In *De trinitate* Augustine says that words are signs of the things which we conceive (*uoces in sermone nostro earum quas cogitamus signa sint rerum*. XV. x 19 *ad fin*). And in *De dialectica*, even though he gives the dyadic relation (*uerbum as rei signum*), he also develops the notion of the *dictio*. This latter is a word which is spoken not for its own sake but in order to signify something else (. . . *propter aliud aliquod significandum*, v. 52-54). An apparently equivalent way of stating this is to say that the *dictio* is a union of *uerbum* and *dicibile*. (v. 62-64) These texts suggest that in some sense a sign signifies a *dicibile*. It may be better, however, to say that a sign *expresses* a *dicibile*. This way of putting it fits the context of communicating better.

Earlier I noted that the *dicibile* is one sort of content of *cogitatio*, but is neither *cogitatio* itself nor some external *res*⁴¹. Now the importance of this can be seen. Only something of this sort could be truly communicated by signs. Obviously the thing designated is not transferred to the other mind, for the sign-giver usually does not have it in him to transfer. Nor is the conceiving transferred, for it is a property of the mind of the sign-giver, unique to him. It is not thinking that is transferred, but the thinking of something. This something would seem to be the *dicibile*, which may now be translated as 'that which is meant' or simply 'meaning'⁴².

Although consistent with what Augustine says, this last paragraph does go beyond the texts I have examined. But these texts do suggest that within the signifying situation Augustine sees not only the sign and the thing signified but also the meaning conceived by the sign-giver and expressed in the sign. Still it is not at all clear how meaning thus described fits into the semantic scheme. This can be somewhat clarified by turning to the final phase of communicating, the completion of the transfer to the other mind.

(5)

The other mind

De doctrina II. II. 3 (row b) represents this stage only briefly by the phrase '*traiciendum in alterius animum*' (4f.) In I. XIII. 12 (c) Augustine

41. Above, p. 21.

42. At least two writers think that '*dicibile*' is Augustine's attempt to translate τὸ λεκτόν. KNEALE, p. 188, and DUCHROW, p. 53. Kneale regards 'what is meant' as the most literal translation of λεκτόν (p. 140).

expands it to include the means by which the transfer of what we bear in the mind occurs. It reaches the mind of the listener through his ears (*in audientis animum per aures carneas inlabatur*, 3), that is, by means of one of the senses. Now this sequence of sign and the perceiving of the sign by a sense of the body is the same sequence as is found in the basic definition of 'sign' in II. I. 1 (a). Hence the giving of a sign to another person begins anew the process we have described under columns (1)-(3). A thing is apprehended and cogitated by one mind. Then by the giving of a sign of the thing, the same thing may be apprehended and cogitated by another mind. In effect, then, columns (4) and (5) may be explicated by columns (1)-(3).

The first stage in the transfer to another mind is the reception of the given sign by a bodily sense. In *De trinitate* XV (e) Augustine calls this stage 'knowledge of the thing'. Now the thing we are considering is also a sign. I have found two passages where Augustine clearly states what it is to know a sign. In *De magistro* he says that we do not have knowledge of a sign so long as we do not know of what it is a sign (*... signi ... notitiam, qua caremus profecto, quamdiu cuius signum est ignoramus*, x. 34). Again in *De trinitate* he says that no sign is known perfectly unless it is known of what thing it is the sign (*Neque ullum perfecte signum noscitur, nisi cuius rei signum sit cognoscatur*, X. 1. 2 *ad init.*) Hence a sign is not known just by sensing it; it must also be understood (*intellegam, intellegere*, X. 1. 2 *ad fin.*). And this occurs when the thing which the sign signifies is known and attended to apart from the sign in *cogitatio*. This stage is reached with certainty when, upon perceiving a sign, say a word, we know what the writer meant by it (*... uspiam forte id [sc. a word] legam, et quid scriptor senserit, nesciam*, *loc. cit.*). The sign-receiver then has in mind what the sign-giver had in mind to express by the sign. He knows both what the sign expresses and what it designates⁴³.

Thus that which the sign expresses (meaning, *dicibile*) would seem to aid the sign-receiver in knowing what the sign designates (object, *res*). Unfortunately Augustine did not complete enough of *De dialectica* to get to a fuller discussion of the *dicibile*. And in the semantics of *De doctrina* he does not discuss anything like it. There he merely mentions the activity (*cogitatio*) by which meaning is conceived. In the application to hermeneutics he does occasionally refer to the meaning conceived by a writer

43. Augustine does not say why this is intellectual knowledge and not sensible knowledge. Two reasons why this is so may be offered. The first is found explicitly in Augustine; the second, as I have put it, is not. (1) In so far as to understand a sign is to know what the sign-giver intended to express by it, it involves the apprehension, through the sign, of the mind of the sign-giver. According to Augustine mind (*mens*, which is equivalent to 'animus', *De trin.* XV. 1. 1) is an intelligible which may be 'seen' only by intellectual vision. (*De Gen. ad litt.* XII. x. 21 and XXIV. 50). (2) Understanding a sign involves seeing a relation between two things, the sign and the designated object. Even if the object is a body, too (the sign is always corporeal), the relation between the two — signifies — is not a corporeal thing (sensible), and thus is intelligible.

(*sensu scriptoris*, II. XII. 18, 35 and *sensu auctoris*, XIII. 19, 4) and often to the meaning expressed linguistically, that is, the meaning of a sentence or word (*sententiam de illis uerbis*, II. XXVII. 38, 8)⁴⁴. But he does not specify how this functions in understanding what thing a sign designates. His applied semantics is really concerned only with the sign-designatum relation, for in interpreting Scripture the important thing is to move from the sign to the thing which it designates. Thus while Augustine's semantics involves a triadic relation between sign, meaning, and thing, only the dyadic relation between sign and thing seems to have ever been worked out.

We may conjecture, however, that Augustine would have been sympathetic with some such account as this: The meaning conceived by the sign-giver determines the choice of signs by which to designate what is being attended to in the sign-giver's knowledge. That is, the way in which we conceive that object which we know, determines the way in which we will try to call it to the attention of another. (Some such relation between what is conceived and what is expressed is suggested by Augustine's use of 'uerbum' to designate both)⁴⁵. This is seen most clearly when we designate the same thing in different ways. To take a modern example, the same point in space would be designated by the expressions 'the point of the intersection of a and b' and 'the point of the intersection of b and c' where a, b, and c are straight lines which connect the corners of a triangle with the midpoints of the opposite sides⁴⁶. Each expression designates the same thing, but in a different way. The same point is thought of, but in a different way. And the way it is thought of determines the way in which it is designated, that is, which signs are chosen to designate it. By attending to these signs as signs the reader or hearer understands what the writer or speaker is thinking of. If the point thought of is expressed by the first expression, the hearer reaches it in his thought by thinking of lines a and b as described. If the second expression is used, then a different set of lines guides the hearer to the same point. Hence the way in which the point is conceived determines the way in which it is designated and known.

In the example a knowledge of English and of elementary plane geometry would enable the reader to understand what either sign designates. Normally, however, what we conceive cannot be so unambiguously expressed as in geometry. So it is often more difficult to choose signs which designate what we intend to designate. Augustine deals with this problem,

44. See also II. XII. 17, 12, XIII. 19, 1 and 9, XIII. 20, 40, 50 and 58, and XV. 22, 2f. and 26. Augustine does not define 'sensus' or 'sententia' anywhere in *De doctrina*.

45. Especially in *De trin.* XV. x-xi (e), but also in *De doct.* where 'uerbum' is used once in the inner sense (c) and *passim* in the outer sense.

46. Gottlob FREGE, *Ueber Sinn und Bedeutung*, trans. by Herbert FEIGL as *On Sense and Nominatum*, in FEIGL and Wilfrid SELLARS (eds.), *Readings in Philosophical Analysis* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1949), p. 86.

without making these distinctions, in Books Two and Three of *De doctrina christiana*. He talks about what the author means (*quid senserit ille, qui scripsit*) and the meaning of the words (*sententiam de illis uerbis*) and how these may differ, especially in the case of ambiguous words. (III. xxvii. 38) Augustine's solution to this problem goes beyond semantic analysis. In particular it relies heavily on the dogmas of faith and the precepts of love set forth in Book One.

Before summarizing the scheme for *signa data* it is necessary to consider two further refinements which Augustine makes in chapters III and IV of Book Two.

4. *The signs peculiar to each of the human senses* (II. III. 4)

Moving to the next chapter, we find Augustine continuing his division of the class of signs. The signs which men give to each other pertain to each of the senses. Although most are given to sight and hearing, Augustine gives examples for each of the five senses.

- 1) Sight — a nod, gestures, military banners and standards. (3-10).
- 2) Smell — the odor of the ointment with which our Lord's feet were anointed. (16f)
- 3) Taste — the taste of the sacrament of His body and blood. (17f)
- 4) Touch — the woman's touching of the hem of His garment. (18-20)
- 5) Hearing — words, sounds made by musical instruments. (10-13)

More signs are given to the ears than to the other senses and most of the signs heard are words. This is the first mention of *uerba* in Book Two. In Book One they were said to be things whose only use is for signifying. (I. II. 2, 8-11) Now Augustine, from among all the signs given by men, chooses to concentrate on words. He gives two reasons for this choice. First, as a matter of fact words have become the most important way in which men signify for the purpose of communicating what they conceive in their mind. (14-16) Secondly, words are intrinsically superior to other kinds of signs, for by means of words any other sign can be explicated (*enuntiare*) but not vice versa. (22-23) A third reason, not given by Augustine, is that in Books Two and Three he will be dealing with the words (actually signs of words) of Scripture.

Hence Augustine's theory of signs is mainly a theory of the meaning of words. It focuses on linguistic signs. It is not applied exclusively in linguistic contexts, however, for in one of the most concentrated uses of the theory of signs Augustine sets forth the proper religious attitude toward the ritual observances of the Jews, the idols of the pagans, and the Christian sacraments. (III. v. 9-ix. 13) His theory is sufficiently comprehensive for such wide application.

5. *Letters and the diversity of languages* (II. iv. 5)

In the final chapter on the theory of signs Augustine further specifies the signs which he will for the most part treat, and he begins to examine the problematic with which hermeneutics must deal.

Because sound passes away quickly, men have supplemented spoken words with signs of a more enduring nature. These are letters, which are signs of words (*per litteras signa uerborum*, 2f.). This brings about a change in the sense which receives words. Now the eyes not the ears receive words, or rather receive signs which stand for them. (3-4) Augustine had already worked this out in greater detail in *De dialectica* v. 17-31. and he makes no changes in the earlier view. Moreover, he retains the same view later in *De trinitate*. (XV. x. 19 *ad fin.*) The important thing to notice here is that, according to Augustine, in the case of a large class of linguistic signs, namely, written words, there are two stages of signifying: (1) written 'words' signify spoken words, and (2) spoken words signify things.

The second thing which this short chapter establishes is that the diversity in words used among the various peoples is the result of sin. (4-6) This sin is pride and the tower of Babel is a sign of it (*superbiae signum*, 6-8). Ulrich Duchrow has shown that in some early writings Augustine went even further⁴⁷. In *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* II, 5 he says that the fall made necessary signs themselves, not just the diversity of signs. Prior to the fall men knew God inwardly. After the fall man had to be revived by external means, including words. In *De musica* VI. 41 Augustine further states that God has limited the domination of one man by another by allowing only indirect communication between men, that is, communication through signs. But in *De doctrina christiana* Augustine attributes to sin only the diversity of languages, not language as such. This diversity is, however, enough of a problem. It, along with other problems confronted in interpreting signs, is examined in the greater part of Book Two and in Book Three.

6. *Summary*

In the first four chapters of *De doctrina christiana* II Augustine defines, classifies, and mentions all sorts of signs. He ranges from the track of an animal to the letters of the alphabet. Hence his theory of signs is general. But he is particularly interested in those signs whose occurrence involves the presence of volition. Within this class of signs he has two emphases which indicate the intended field of application of his theory. The first

47. 'Signum' und 'superbia' beim jungen Augustin (386-390), in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, VII (1961), pp. 369-372.

emphasis is anthropological. He says that he will discuss intentionally given signs in so far as men are concerned with them. Even the psychology of the more general definition of 'sign' (II. I. 1) is an anthropological psychology. The second emphasis is linguistic. The most important signs used by men are spoken and written words. Clearly Augustine has suited his theory to the consideration of Holy Scripture. For the signs of Scripture are intentionally *given* by God, presented to us by *men* (II. 3, 7-9), and set forth in *language* (*ab una lingua profecta*, v. 6, 2f.).

Because Augustine eventually states his anthropological and linguistic interests, I have treated his more abstract description of *signa data* largely in terms of these interests. In that description I have distinguished the following elements, some properly psychological, others properly semantic.

(1) Things or objects — These are called 'things' in the widest use of that term in Book One. The class of things includes everything whatsoever that is, including signs. And it may be exhaustively divided into those things which are sensibles, and those which are intelligibles.

(2) Apprehension of things — For men this occurs in two ways, by sense and by understanding. Sensible things may be apprehended by any of the five senses. There does not seem to be a corresponding multiplicity in the apprehension of intelligibles. When things are apprehended in either of these two ways they are said to be known.

(3) Conception — Here there is an attending to what is known. In the case of sensibles, this attention gives rise to a *species* or image. In the case of intelligibles, I have singled out a type especially relevant to Augustine's linguistic focus. Here attention gives rise to a *dicibile* or meaning when a word is understood.

(4) Signifying — Just as the will contributes to the conception of a meaning by holding the mind's attention upon what it knows, so it contributes to signifying by deciding that signs should be given. The signs thus occurring designate things which are known by the sign-giver and express what he has conceived about those things. Here the major semantic notions are involved, but they are separable from psychological notions only by abstraction.

(5) Communication to another mind — This begins another cycle of knowing and conceiving with signs as the objects of apprehension both by sense and intellect. Ideally both the meaning expressed and the object designated are made known to the sign-receiver by means of the sign. But this does not always occur. It is crucial in trying to understand words which designate ambiguously. Although Augustine does not say so, obviously the interpreter of Scripture stands at this fifth stage. He reads the signs in Scripture, attempting to learn what things they refer to. It is not always enough to know what the words usually designate, so some way of determining what their author meant for them to designate must be found. Book One has already given the primary method for determining

this : All writers of Scripture conceive of God in a certain way, that is, as the one object to be loved for its own sake. (I. xxxv-xl) In Books Two and Three Augustine will devise other means, for example, examination of context.

B. — THE BACKGROUND OF AUGUSTINE'S THEORY OF SIGNS

Already several Latin authors have been found useful in interpreting the theory of signs in *De doctrina christiana*. These come from different fields. Cicero and Quintilian represent rhetoric, at least in the works of theirs cited. Varro, although a man of wide learning, writes as a grammarian in *De lingua Latina*, one of his two surviving works. And Seneca is a philosopher. In this section I shall make a brief inquiry into the place of signs in rhetoric, grammar, and logic, as well as in Christian writings. I shall argue that logic is the only field in which signs were part of a linguistic theory of meaning⁴⁸.

I. Scripture and Christian authors

The Greek word for 'sign', σημεῖον, occurs often in the Septuagint and the New Testament. It seems to have been consistently rendered 'signum' in the Old Latin translations. For example, circumcision is a *signum testamenti inter me et uos* (*Gen.* 17 : 11)⁴⁹ and Jesus speaks of the *signum Ionae* to those who seek a sign (*Luke* 11 : 29-30)⁵⁰. By the time he wrote *De doctrina* Augustine was aware of these occurrences. He quotes Genesis 17 : 11 in *Contra Adimantum* 16, which was written before *De doctrina*. Scriptural usage of 'signum' does not, however, seem to provide a basis for regarding its own words as signs. It utilizes the term in basically two other ways : (1) of distinguishing marks or indications such as circumcision (*Gen.* 17 : 11) and swaddling clothes (*Luke* 2 : 12), and (2) of miracles or wonders such as the Egyptian plagues (*Ex.* 7 : 3) and healing (*Acts* 4 : 16).

48. MARROU, p. 16, says that in his reflection on language, signs, and meaning Augustine is mainly a grammarian, though sometimes the logician comes through. KUYPERS, on the other hand, states that Augustine learned the meaning of the sign-significate distinction from the *ars dialectica* not from rhetoric. (p. 13) MARKUS, pp. 60, 64f., argues that in the linguistic application of the notion of sign Augustine went beyond even the logicians. I shall consider his view in part D below.

49. *Vetus Latina*, vol. 2, Genesis, ed. Bonifatius FISCHER (Freiberg : Herder, 1951-1954), p. 188.

50. *Itala : Das Neue Testament in Altlateinischer Überlieferung*, III. Lucas-Evangelium, ed. Adolf JÜLICHER (Berlin : Walter de Gruyter and Co., 1954), p. 134, and B. W. MUNCEY, *The New Testament Text of Saint Ambrose* (Cambridge : At the University Press, 1959), p. 33. For other instances in the New Testament see JÜLICHER III, pp. 18 and 232 ; I, p. 112 ; and IV, pp. 14, 19, and 40.

Ecclesiastical writers earlier than Augustine continued to use 'sign' principally of non-linguistic entities⁵¹. In his commentary on John, Origen applies σημεῖον to the star in the east⁵², to the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus⁵³, to Jesus' good cheer⁵⁴, and to the works of Jesus⁵⁵. In his commentary on Matthew, he uses the Scriptural phrase σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα⁵⁶. Similar usage is found in Latin authors. Commenting on Isaiah 7 : 14, Tertullian says that a sign would not be from God unless it were a novel and prodigious thing (. . . nisi novitas aliqua monstruosa, iam signum non fuisset)⁵⁷. Here he is using 'sign' in the second of the Scriptural senses. In another passage he uses it in the first Scriptural sense of the flowering of trees as a *signum* of summer and of wars as *signa* of the coming of the Kingdom of God⁵⁸. Frequently 'sign' was used of an Old Testament event as a figure or type of a New Testament event, as in Ambrose and Tyconius⁵⁹. The latter also speaks of Esau and Jacob as signs, and of numbers as well⁶⁰. I have found only one instance of 'sign' applied to a linguistic entity in a Church author prior to Augustine. Origen says that Jesus' having said 'Take these things hence', when he purged the temple, is a σημεῖον βαθύτερον⁶¹. There may be similar passages elsewhere in Origen and others, but a linguistic application of sign-language would seem to be the exception in ecclesiastical writers.

2. Rhetoric

In rhetoric signs were a class of argument. Aristotle is basic here.

. . . the materials of Enthymemes are Probabilities and Signs (εἰκότων καὶ σημείων), which we can see must correspond respectively with the propositions that are generally and those that are necessarily true. A Probability is a thing that usually happens ; . . .⁶².

51. MARKUS, pp. 63f.

52. ORIGENES, *Com. In Iohan. evang.*, I. XXVI, 24. GCS, Bd 4, *Der Johanneskommentar*, ed. Erwin Preuschen (Leipzig : J. C. Hinrichs, 1903), p. 32, line 33.

53. XIII. LIX. 58, p. 290, lines 1-2.

54. X. XIII, 11, p. 183, lines 1-3.

55. X. XLVI. 30, p. 224, lines iff.

56. ORIGENES, *Com. in Math. evang.*, XIII. 22. GCS, Bd 10, *Matthäus-erklärung*, ed. Erich Klosterman (Leipzig : Hinrichs, 1935), p. 240, line 25 ; XVII. 1, p. 577, lines 25 f., and XVII, 11, p. 612, lines 20f.

57. *Adversus Marcionem* III. XIII. 4. *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, I, ed. A. KROYMANN (Turnhout : Brepols, 1954).

58. *Adu. Marc.* IV. XXXIX. 16. In this passage he also uses 'res'.

59. AMBROSE, *Expositio Evangelii secundam Lucam* VII, 96-97. TYCONIUS, *Liber Regularum* IV, ed. F. D. BURKITT in *Texts and Studies*, vol. III, no. 1 (Cambridge, 1894), p. 41, line 30.

60. III, p. 29, lines 9f., and V, p. 64, lines 28-30.

61. *Comm. on John X.* XXIV. 6, p. 196, lines 5f.

62. *Rhetorica* I. 2, 1357^a 32-35. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard MCKEON (New York : Random House, 1941), p. 1332.

He goes on to distinguish between fallible and infallible signs (σημεία) both in his *Rhetoric* and in the *Prior Analytics*⁶³. In fact a σημεῖον is probable; only a τεκμήριον is irrefutable. An example of the former is the argument that a man has fever because he is breathing hard. An example of the latter is the argument that a man is ill because he has fever⁶⁴. Aristotle's relating of this to his syllogistic⁶⁵ need not concern us, since none of his rhetorical successors had his logical acumen or interest. It plainly shows, however, that 'sign' was used by him in an inferential sense.

Cicero and Quintilian follow Aristotle but place inferential sign theory in a more explicitly forensic context⁶⁶. Quintilian gives an example of such a sign and how it should be treated. Bloodstains on clothing may lead us to infer that the one who wore them has committed a murder. But since he may have just had a bleeding nose, further evidence (*testimonium*), such as being the enemy of the victim or having threatened him, is required for what is suspected to be made certain⁶⁷.

In all of these definitions and examples there is no concern with words. The meaning of events and how these events can be used to establish a point are the concerns. Yet rhetoric cultivated words and their proper and ornate use. So a focus on language was quite in character for a rhetor such as Augustine. Indeed if rhetors had followed the best of Cicero, as Augustine does in *De doctrina* IV, instead of the worst, (namely, *De inuentione*), they would have found that the man of perfect eloquence should study, along with other logical topics, the force of words (*uis uerborum*), that is, their ability to signify⁶⁸. Thus Cicero recommends semantic study, but not under the rubric 'signs'.

3. Grammar

Perhaps even more than rhetors, the *grammatici* concentrated on words. But so far as I can determine, they did not call them 'signs'. In the basic and influential handbooks of Dionysius Thrax and Aelius Donatus the term 'sign' does not even occur⁶⁹. Nevertheless, in both of them the language of signifying is used in the process of defining various grammatical terms. Dionysius, for example, defines a proper noun

63. II. XXVII, 70^a 2ff.

64. *Rhet.* 1357^b 13-20.

65. *An. Pr.* 70^a 11-39.

66. *De inu.* I. xxx. 48 and XLIII. 81; *Inst. or.* V. IX. 1-16.

67. *Inst. or.* V. IX. 8-11.

68. *Orator* 115.

69. DIONYSIUS THRAX, *Τέχνη γραμματική*, ed. Gustav UHLIG (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1884). DONATUS, *Ars Minor* and *Ars Grammatica*, ed. H. KEIL in *Grammatici Latini*, vol. IV (Leipzig, 1864. Reprinted by Georg Olms, Hildesheim, 1961), pp. 355-402. Dionysius is 1st century B. C.; Donatus is 4th century A. D.

as a noun which signifies a particular substance (τὸ τὴν ἰδίαν οὐσίαν σημαίνον)⁷⁰. And Donatus says that a noun is a part of speech which signifies (*significans*) with the case a person or a thing specifically or generally⁷¹. Neither of these grammarians reflect upon this signifying.

Varro, who is far from being merely a *grammaticus*, not only uses the language of signifying in his grammatical work, *De lingua Latina*⁷², but also reflects theoretically, though briefly, upon signification. In an argument against etymological regularity he says,

... I ask whether by a 'word' they mean the spoken word (*uocem*) which consists of syllables, that word which we hear, or that which the spoken word indicates, which we understand (*quod ea significat, quam intellegimus*), or both⁷³.

Moreover, he gives an etymology of 'signum'. He says that signs are so called because they indicate something (*aliquid significant*)⁷⁴. But this etymology occurs in the context of a discussion of the signs of the zodiac. Only in this sense and in the sense of 'symptoms' observed by physicians does Varro use 'signum' in what survives of *De lingua Latina*⁷⁵.

Hence it would seem that grammarians did not have a linguistic theory of signs⁷⁶. Their work presupposed semantics but only occasionally were semantical issues dealt with. The well educated non-specialist such as Aulus Gellius, reflecting a grammatical and a rhetorical education, might ask often about the *uis* or *significatio* of words⁷⁷ but rarely if ever about *significatio* itself.

4. Logic

Of the disciplines concerned with words only logic or, as it was usually named in Latin, *dialectica* remains to be examined. And it is in logic that

70. Τέχνη ch. 12, UHLIG, p. 36, lines 6-7. Note that he uses the participle τὸ σημαίνον, which can sometimes be translated as 'sign'. It does not seem to be appropriate to do so here. The Latin grammarians who followed Dionysius translated it either by the verb 'significat' or the participle 'significans'. (UHLIG, pp. 24, 34, and 40). It is doubtful that Augustine read any but Latin grammars, although in *De utilitati credendi* VII, 17 he mentions Cornutus, who wrote in Greek, as well as the Latin-writing Asper and Donatus.

71. *Ars minor*, KEIL, IV, p. 355, lines 5f.

72. V. 3 and 4; VI. 52; VII. 12, 80, 93, and 107; VIII. 11, 27, and 80.

73. *De ling. Lat.* VIII. 40, trans. by Roland G. KENT in the Loeb Classical Library nos. 333-4. (London and Cambridge, 1938), p. 403. See also IX. 37 — '*uox quae significauit*' and '*res quae designetur*', and V. 2 — *περί σημαינוμένων*.

74. VII. 14.

75. VII. 50, 73-74; IX. 24; and X. 46.

76. I have not made a thorough search of the grammatical commentaries. A cursory examination of the fourth century commentaries of Donatus on Terence and of Servius on Virgil revealed no linguistic use of 'signum'.

77. *Noctes Atticae* IV. ix, II. xix, VI. xvii, X. xxix, XII. xiv, XIII. iii and xvii, and XVII. xiii.

a linguistic theory of signs is found. In both of the major logical systems of antiquity, the Peripatetic and the Stoic, 'sign' occurs in semantic contexts. Aristotle gives his explicit semantic scheme in the opening chapters of *De interpretatione*⁷⁸. There τὸ σημεῖον, σημαίνει, and σημαντική are used in connection with words. As to Stoic semantics there are two primary accounts which give us our best, albeit secondhand, knowledge of Stoic logic. In Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* and Sextus Empiricus' *Against the Mathematicians* we find accounts of Stoic semantics and theory of language. The former does not use 'sign' but the latter does in connection with the same doctrines. In part D of this article I shall examine both Aristotle and the Stoics and compare them with Augustine on the theory of signs.

But first we must ask: What connection did Augustine have with the logical tradition? He received the traditional grammatical and rhetorical education and was a teacher of rhetoric until his conversion. This literary education found little place for logic, which was the concern of the philosophical few⁷⁹. Only grammar and rhetoric were really studied in the schools of the empire⁸⁰. And the rhetors did not follow the recommendation of the orator *par excellence* that they learn either the logic of Aristotle or of Chrysippus⁸¹. In the following section I shall show that Augustine, unlike most rhetors, may have taken Cicero seriously. If he did, there is good reason to compare his semantics with those of Aristotle and Chrysippus.

C. — AUGUSTINE'S KNOWLEDGE OF LOGIC

The most comprehensive attempt at judging the character and extent of Augustine's knowledge of logic has been made by Marrou. He shows that Augustine turned to logic only after his formal education was completed and under the influence of his newfound philosophical vocation⁸². This was part of his study of all of the liberal arts. (*Conf.* IV. xvi) Apparently it consisted mainly of a reading of Varro's *Disciplinarum libri*⁸³, which included a *De dialectica*. Augustine took this program of self-education seriously⁸⁴. Soon after his conversion he prescribed a study of all of the seven liberal arts as part of the way to attain happiness through

78. I. M. BOCHENSKI, *Ancient Formal Logic* (Amsterdam: North Holland Printing Company, 2nd printing, 1957), p. 29.

79. H.-I. MARROU, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. by G. Lamb (New York: The New American Library, 1964), p. 383.

80. MARROU, *Saint Augustin*, p. 111.

81. *Orator* XXXII, 113-XXXIII, 117.

82. MARROU, *Saint Augustin*, pp. 112-115.

83. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

84. See Aimé SOLIGNAC, *Doxographies et manuels dans la formation philosophique de Saint Augustin*, in *Recherches Augustiniennes I* (Paris, 1958), p. 148.

wisdom⁸⁵. But what Augustine himself achieved was another matter. According to Marrou only in *dialectica* did Augustine make significant advance⁸⁶ and even then his logic remains elementary, non-technical, eristic, and lacking in rigor⁸⁷. This judgment of Marrou's is based, however, on only part of the relevant evidence. He does not consider, for example, the semantics of *De doctrina christiana* and the discussion of the *disputationis disciplina* found in Book Two of the same treatise. In what follows I shall examine, in the order of their writing, the main passages in which Augustine talks about logic explicitly. I shall seek to establish how much and what kind (Peripatetic or Stoic) of logic he professes to know.

Confessiones IV. xvi. 28 (Written A. D. 399-400 but concerning events ca. 374)

Augustine's first contact with technical logic was his reading of Aristotle's *Categories* (*Aristotelica . . . decem categorias*)⁸⁸. He read it on his own when he was twenty years old in, it is generally agreed, the translation of Marius Victorinus⁸⁹. This translation must have had fairly wide circulation, since Augustine's former rhetoric teacher and others in Carthage often discussed the *Categories*. It is the only logic book⁹⁰ mentioned by title in the writings of Augustine which I have surveyed. He gives an accurate account of the ten categories here. Later he would put his knowledge of them to good use in Book Five of *De trinitate*⁹¹. In the *Confessions* he only lamented the futility of his newfound knowledge because he did not then know whence came what was true and certain in it. (IV. xvi. 30)

Contra Academicos III. xiii. 29 (A. D. 386)

Arguing against Academic scepticism Augustine uses true things which he says he learned from *dialectica*. Indeed, in this first treatise written after his conversion he could say that he knew more about dialectic than about any other part of philosophy (namely, physics or ethics, III. x. 23

85. *De ordine* II. Marrou, pp. 174-179.

86. MARROU, pp. 237-275.

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 240-8.

88. All statements in part C will be based on the text cited at the beginning (here *Conf.* IV. xvi. 28) unless otherwise indicated.

89. Pierre COURCELLE, *Les Lettres Grecques en Occident de Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris : Éditions E. de Boccard, 1943), p. 156.

90. It is mainly metaphysical, but was regarded as logical by the editors of Aristotle and subsequently in antiquity and the middle ages. KNEALE, p. 25.

91. Discussed by Paul HENRY, *Saint Augustine on Personality* (New York : Macmillan, 1960), pp. 9f.

and XII. 27)⁹². When asked in the dialogue to enumerate some of the truths of dialectic Augustine shows some knowledge of propositional, that is to say Stoic, logic⁹³.

First, he lists several *propositiones* which are true. All have the form which the Stoics called 'non-simple propositions'⁹⁴. In modern terminology these are 'molecular propositions'; in traditional terminology, 'hypothetical propositions'. The three basic connectives are represented.

- 1) Implication. The Stoic *συνημμένον*. 'If there are four elements in the world, there are not five'. (*Si . . . , non . . .*) ($p \supset \sim q$).
- 2) Conjunction. The Stoic *συμπεπλεγμένον*. 'The same soul cannot both die and be immortal'. (*Non . . . et . . . et . . .*) ($p \& q$).
- 3) Disjunction. The Stoic *διεζυγμένον*, exclusive disjunction. (a) 'We are now either awake or asleep'. (*Aut . . . aut . . .*) ($p \vee q$), and another, (b) 'What I seem to see is either body or not body'. A better one of this form is in X. 23: 'There is one world or not one'. (*Aut . . . aut non . . .*) ($p \vee \sim p$).

Augustine knows the technical terms for statements containing these connectives. He does not name the second, but he calls the first 'propositions *per connexionem*' and the third 'propositions *per disiunctionem*'. At III. x. 23 the latter are '*disiuncta*' and '*disiunctiones*'. These were apparently the standard translations of the Stoic *συνημμένον* and *διεζυγμένον*⁹⁵. Of all the propositions given by Augustine here, only the two in (3) (b) are true by formal necessity. Augustine probably thought all were formally necessary, for he regards them all as equally true. They could easily be given formal necessity (for instance, in the conjunctive statement by changing 'be immortal' to 'not die').

Then Augustine indicates knowledge of two of the five Stoic undemonstrated arguments⁹⁶. He gives them in the form of metalogical statements. This is one of the three ways in which the Stoics presented them, the other two being as arguments (*λόγοι*) with actual propositions and as moods (*τρόποι, σχήματα*) with ordinal numerals standing as propositional

92. For *Contra Academicos* and *De ordine* (which is considered next) I have used the edition of William M. GREEN (*Stromata Patristica et Mediaevalia*, 2nd fasc., Antwerp: Spectrum, 1956).

93. Aristotelian logic, on the other hand, is a logic of classes. MATES, pp. 2f. In my remarks about Stoic logic I shall often refer to the excellent accounts of Mates and Kneale as well as to some of the primary sources.

94. The primary sources for our knowledge of these are DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *Lives* VII. 71-74 and Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos* VIII. 108ff. See MATES, pp. 32f. and KNEALE, pp. 147f.

95. AULUS GELLIUS, *Att. Noct.* XVI. VIII. 9 and 12.

96. See MATES, pp. 67-74. On p. 68 he gives a list of the many sources for our knowledge of these arguments. Diogenes Laertius lists all five. (VII. 80-81) The undemonstrated arguments functioned as axioms in the Stoics' system of deduction.

variables⁹⁷. Here are Augustine's statements with parallels from Sextus Empiricus and Cicero.

Type I undemonstrated argument ($p \supset q ; p ; \therefore q$)

UI

Augustine. 'If, of any of the conditional statements which I have just mentioned, the antecedent be assumed, it necessarily involves the truth of the dependent part'. (*si . . . quae per connexionem . . . pars antecedens assumpta fuerit, trahere necessario id, quod annexum est*)

Sextus. 'A type I undemonstrated argument is that which is made up of a conditional and its antecedent, and which has the consequent of the conditional for a conclusion.'⁹⁸

Cicero. 'The first form of conclusion is when assuming the first, that which is connected with it follows'. (*cum primum assumpseris, consequitur id quod annexum est primum conclusionis modum . . .*)⁹⁹

Type 5 undemonstrated argument ($p \vee q ; \sim p ; \therefore q$)

U5

Augustine. 'The propositions involving contrariety or disjunction (*repugnantiam uel disiunctionem* [apparently $p \vee \sim p$ and $p \vee q$]) . . . are of this nature. When either one or many parts are taken away, there remains something which is made certain by the removal (*. . . cum auferuntur cetera, siue unum siue plura sint, restet aliquid, quod eorum ablatione firmetur*).

Augustine's metalogical statement of U5 is not as technical as his statement of UI, for the latter contains the technical terms 'conexio', 'antecedens', 'assumpta', and 'annexum'. The statement of U5 does, however, have the added touch of allowing for more than two disjuncts.

De ordine II. XIII. 38 (386)

Placed in the course of studies for the attainment of wisdom, *dialectica* is here given high praise as the *disciplina disciplinarum*, but is given little technical content. Augustine praises it because it is reason's classification, noting, and arranging of its own resources. It guards against error, teaches how to teach and learn (*docere . . . discere*), and knows what it is to know (*scit scire*). The only technical functions indicated for *dialectica* here are definition, division, and synthesis (*definiendo, distribuendo, colligendo*). Under the name of *disciplina disputandi* it is for similar functions called not just 'true' but 'truth' in the *Soliloquies* (II, XI. 21).

De dialectica (386-7)

Scholars disagree on the quality of the logic found in this work. Marrou says it is *banal* and elementary¹⁰⁰. Duchrow disagrees with him¹⁰¹. But

97. See SEXTUS, *AM* VIII. 224 and 227 for all three ways.

98. *Adv. Math.* VIII. 224. Trans. by MATES, p. 99.

99. *Topica* XIII. 54.

100. MARROU, p. 578.

101. DUCHROW, *Sprachverständnis*, p. 42.

there is wide agreement that, whatever its quality, it is deeply influenced by Stoic logic. I shall examine *De dialectica* on four matters: (1) its notion of dialectic, (2) its classification of words, (3) its scope, and (4) its doctrine of words.

The treatise begins, '*Dialectica est bene disputandi scientia*'. (I. 1) The first thing to note is that Augustine chooses the Stoic name for formal logic, '*dialectica*'¹⁰². For Aristotle dialectic was merely a special kind of reasoning, namely, that based on generally accepted premisses¹⁰³. It was probably not Augustine himself, however, who made the choice between Aristotle and the Stoics. '*Dialectica*' was already the name used by Cicero¹⁰⁴ and Varro¹⁰⁵. His definition appears to be a combination of the Stoic definitions of rhetoric and dialectic. Rhetoric is the science of speaking well (ἐπιστήμην... εὖ λέγειν) and dialectic that of discussing correctly (ὀρθῶς διαλέγεσθαι)¹⁰⁶. Augustine's '*scientia*' corresponds to ἐπιστήμη, his '*disputandi*' to διαλέγεσθαι, and his '*bene*', corresponding to εὖ in the definition of rhetoric, replaces ὀρθῶς in the definition of dialectic. Again he is following earlier writers, although apparently none of the latter had used precisely Augustine's terms¹⁰⁷. The second thing to note is that dialectic is concerned with disputing. This notion of disputation was important in the early dialogues¹⁰⁸ and continued to be Augustine's basic way of thinking of logic. Marrou thinks that this represents a truncation of dialectic¹⁰⁹. But it is faithful to Stoic definitions. Moreover, as will be seen, it does not limit logic to a theory of debate. *De dialectica* gives dialectic a far larger scope than that.

Immediately following his definition Augustine says that we dispute with words. He then classifies words:

- 1) Simple — occur alone and signify one thing, e. g., 'man'. (I)
- 2) Conjoint — two or more words occurring together.
 - a) Not a sentence, e. g., 'with haste the man toward the mountain'. (II)
 - b) Sentences
 - i) Express intention of the the will — wishes, commands, curses.
 - ii) True or false
 - α) - Simple, e. g., 'Every man walks'. (III)
 - β) - Complex, e. g., 'If he walks, he moves'.

102. DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *Lives* VII. 41.

103. *Topica* I. 1.

104. CICERO, *Topica* XII. 53, *Or.* XXXII. 113.

105. PFLIGERSDORFFER, p. 137.

106. DIOGENES LAERTIUS, VII. 42.

107. Quintilian calls rhetoric '*bene dicendi scientia*'. (*Inst. or.* II. xv. 34) Cicero calls dialectic '*ars bene disserendi*'. (*De or.* II. xxxviii. 157).

108. *Contra Ac.* I. 1. 4, III. XIII. 29 and X. 44.

109. MARROU, p. 111 n. 3.

Duchrow sees in this the Stoic classification of λεκτά¹¹⁰. There are striking similarities¹¹¹, but there is one important difference. Augustine is classifying *uerba* (Stoic φόναι) not *dicibilia* (Stoic λεκτά). This is a subtle difference, since it is words that express meanings. In this respect Augustine's classification is closer to Aristotle than to the Stoics¹¹². Another divergence from the Stoics is the inclusion of the Aristotelian universal affirmative proposition (II, α). The Stoics apparently took no account of such propositions¹¹³.

This classification of words gives Augustine the scope of dialectic (IV). A section called 'de loquendo' deals with simple words. *De eloquendo* treats of non-truth-claiming sentences. *De proloquendo* treats of simple truth-claiming sentences. And *de proloquiorum summa* deals with complex truth-claiming sentences, especially with reasoning from them (he gives two UI arguments as examples, III. 8-21). This is a comprehensive scheme, capable of covering most of the topics of ancient formal logic. It does not limit dialectic to a theory of debate. Martianus Capella, probably a younger contemporary of Augustine, adopted the same scheme for his *De dialectica*¹¹⁴. Capella treated these issues in a basic if elementary fashion. For example, under the fourth rubric he gives both Aristotle's basic syllogistic and the Stoic undemonstrated arguments¹¹⁵. Augustine did not get past *de loquendo* in his treatise, but from what we learn in other of his works, it would not seem that he quit because of lack of knowledge.

Under *de loquendo* Augustine did develop a semantic scheme (ch. v), as we have seen. He also took up etymology (VI) in a non-Stoic spirit¹¹⁶, considered the way words move men to apprehend things (VII), and the impediments to this — obscurity and ambiguity (VIII-X). Chapters VI-X are more relevant to the remainder of Books Two and Three of *De doctrina* than to the theory of signs as such. Hence I shall not discuss them here.

110. DUCHROW, p. 43.

111. SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, VIII. 70-74, 93 and DIOGENES LAERTIUS, VII. 63-75. See MATES, p. 16, for a summary statement of the Stoic classification of λεκτά.

112. ARISTOTLE, *De interp.* II-V, where Aristotle speaks of nouns, verbs, and simple and complex sentences. See BOCHENSKI, pp. 28 and 85, on both the Aristotelian and the Stoic scheme. It is probable that the Stoics are dependent upon Aristotle at this point.

113. MATES, p. 32, and KNEALE, p. 146.

114. Book IV of *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*. This parallels with Capella, who, acknowledges the importance of Varro for dialectic (335 in the edn. by Adolf DICK, Leipzig, Teubner, 1925), has been seen as proof of Augustine's dependence upon Varro's *De dialectica*. (DUCHROW, p. 42, n. 47) PFILIGER-DORFFER, on the contrary, says the scheme comes from a post-Varronian Stoic school tradition. (p. 144) Such issues seem to me quite impossible to decide because of the loss of (a) Varro's *De dial.* and (b) virtually all Stoic logical writings.

115. DICK, 406-420.

116. See DUCHROW, p. 56.

De doctrina christiana II. xxxi. 48-xxxix. 59 (396-7)

So far I have considered, with one exception, works written by Augustine as a new convert to Christianity. And the exception, *Confessions* IV. xvi, although written later, concerns a period prior to Augustine's conversion. But the author of *De doctrina* had been a priest for six years and had recently been made bishop of Hippo. Moreover, his task in *De doctrina* was to formulate a Scriptural hermeneutics. Precisely in this context, however, is to be found Augustine's most sophisticated account of deductive logic. The *disputationis disciplina* finds a prominent place among the divinely instituted *doctrinae in gentilibus* which Augustine recommends to the use of the exegete. By calling this discipline 'divinely instituted' Augustine means that its doctrines are discovered by men, not instituted by them. He thus believes that logic deals with notions intrinsic to reality rather than with merely conventional or arbitrary notions. He mentions the following points.

He distinguishes clearly between truth and validity, *ueritas sententiarum* and *ueritas conexionum* (49, 20f. ; 50, 24-6 ; 52, 1-2). An inference may be validly carried out upon true or false propositions. (49, 33-35) Hence the rules of validity may be learned in schools outside the Church, but the truth of propositions is to be discovered in the holy books of the Church. (36-38)

He gives the Stoic type 2 undemonstrated argument in two forms. First, metalogically, «When a consequent is false, it is necessary that the antecedent upon which it is based be false also (*Cum falsum est, quod consequitur, necesse est, ut falsum sit, quod praecedit.* 50, 9-10)»¹¹⁷. The Stoics did not usually use 'true' or 'false' in their metalogical statements of the undemonstrateds, but occasionally they did. (Sextus, VIII. 228) Second, Augustine gives two actual arguments (50, 20-22 and 51, 4-7) :

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1) ' If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither was Christ resurrected. | $\sim p \supset \sim q$ |
| Christ was resurrected. | q |
| Therefore, there is a resurrection of the dead '. | p |
| 2) ' If a snail is an animal, it has a voice. | $p \supset q$ |
| A snail has no voice. | $\sim q$ |
| Therefore, a snail is not an animal '. | $\sim p$ |

I give both because only the second is an instance of the simple undemonstrated. The first is really a non-simple argument which requires analysis, that is, some additional steps, to reduce it to proof by the simple unde-

¹¹⁷. ROBERTSON, p. 68.

monstrateds¹¹⁸. It is doubtful that Augustine recognized any difference between (1) and (2), since he states this rule (*regula*, 50, 12 and 24) in terms of falsity not negation. In addition to this valid argument form he gives as an invalid form of inference denying the antecedent ($p \supset q, \sim p$, no conclusion). (51, 14-25) All examples of arguments in these chapters involve the Stoic conditional propositions.

Other logical doctrines in these chapters : Validly deduced conclusions have the same truth value as the premisses upon which they are based have. (52, 8-9) There are two kinds of falsehood : (1) the false that is impossible ($\sim p$ & $\sim \Diamond p$), and (2) the false that is possible ($\sim p$ & $\Diamond p$, 53, 14-16). Logic includes the science of definition, division, and partition. (53, 1f.)

Contra Cresconium grammaticum partis Donati I (406)

In this work Augustine elaborates upon *dialectica* as skill in disputing (XIII. 16, XIV. 17), by which he means distinguishing the true from the false (*uerum discernit a falso*, xv. 19 ; xx. 25 and II. II. 3). The chief importance of this work for our purposes is twofold. First, Augustine says that the Stoics and especially Chrysippus (the greatest Stoic logician) excell all others in dialectic, and he mentions *libri Stoicorum* which teach how to dispute dialectically (XIX. 24). Second, Augustine defends himself against the charge of Cresconius that he is a *homo dialecticus* (XIII. 16), not by denying it but by establishing the legitimacy of dialectic for the Christian. He does this first by showing that dialectic may be applied to true or to false propositions and hence is neutral. More important, he argues that both Paul and Christ were *dialectici*, because they disputed skillfully with Stoics, Epicureans, and Jews. (XIV. 17, XVII. 21-22)

Summary

Judging from these texts, we can say that Augustine had more than a passing acquaintance with logic. It was certainly not a major concern of his, for these few texts contain most of the discussions of formal logic to be found in Augustine's vast writings. Yet at some time in his career he must have read, in addition to Aristotle's *Categories*, some of the *libri Stoicorum* which he mentions, for he usually gives propositions in the Stoic rather than the Aristotelian form and his theory of deduction is exclusively Stoic. In addition, his classification of words and delineation of a seman-

¹¹⁸. See KNEALE, pp. 163-176, and MATES, pp. 77-82. Most of the theorems used by the Stoics for analysis have been lost. Kneale gives a highly plausible reconstruction of this aspect of Stoic deduction theory. The first argument above could be proved by U2 with the assumption of the equivalence $p \equiv \sim \sim p$. See KNEALE, p. 168, for the latter.

tic schema show marked Stoic influence. Because no Stoic logical writings survive, a judgment as to what Augustine read can only be conjectured. There were numerous Stoic handbooks (εἰσαγωγαί)¹¹⁹ and Augustine may have read one or more, such as the *Commentarium de proloquiis* of L. Aelius Stilo¹²⁰. As to the five undemonstrated arguments, they were well known in antiquity¹²¹. Augustine could have learned them from Cicero¹²².

In the light of the Stoic character of his logic it is at first glance puzzling why in *De ciuitate Dei* VIII. 7 Augustine says that he prefers Platonic to Stoic logic. He may be mistaken about which logic is whose. Indeed, in VIII. 4 he mistakenly attributes to Plato the Stoic division of philosophy into logic, physics, and ethics¹²³. A more likely explanation is that in this passage (VIII. 7) Augustine is using 'dialectica' in reference not to logic but to what is more accurately termed 'epistemology' (he mentions the Stoic epistemological doctrine that the mind gets its notions, ἐννοιαί, through the senses), and Augustine was assuredly a Platonist on epistemology.

D. — COMPARISON OF AUGUSTINE'S THEORY OF SIGNS WITH ARISTOTELIAN AND STOIC SEMANTICS

In this final section I shall continue the examination of Augustine's theory of signs in the context of ancient thought. I have argued that the theory which I have explicated in section A has its major background in the logical writings of Aristotle and the Stoics. That this background is a direct source of Augustine's theory is made plausible by the evidence that he had studied both Aristotle and some Stoic books of logic. There is no evidence on what he might have read of Stoic logic, but his knowledge of the latter is extensive enough to allow the conjecture that he did have contact with Stoic logic. In this section the question of sources will be raised. Mainly, however, I wish to compare Augustine's theory of signs with the work of the two great schools of ancient logic.

I. ARISTOTLE

Categories

Augustine read the *Categories* in a translation by Marius Victorinus, as noted earlier¹²⁴. Victorinus was a Neoplatonist and his interest in the

119. AULUS GELLIUS, *Noct. Att.* XVI. VIII. 1; MATES, p. 8.

120. *Noct. Att.* XVI. VIII. 2.

121. See above, n. 96.

122. *Topica* XII. 52-XIII. 57.

123. Augustine was not alone in making such errors. See, for example, Cicero's assignment of Stoic doctrines to Aristotle and Theophrastus. (*De inn.* I. xxxv. 61).

124. See above, p. 34.

Categories reflects this, for Porphyry had made it *the* logic textbook for Neoplatonism by his immensely influential Εἰσαγωγή to and commentary on it. Victorinus also translated Porphyry's *Eisagoge*, but Augustine does not seem to have read it¹²⁵. Although none of Victorinus' translations survive (he also did Aristotle's *De interpretatione*¹²⁶), we can have some idea of the language he used ; for he is apparently the source of the fixed terminology of Latin Aristotelian logic which is found in Martianus Capella and Boethius¹²⁷. Since Boethius knew Victorinus' translations¹²⁸, his own translations may be regarded as something of a witness to Victorinus' language. This must be qualified, however, by the fact that Boethius frequently criticizes the choice of words Victorinus makes¹²⁹.

The *Categories* contains little of semantic interest. There are two things to note. First, in chapter 1 Aristotle gives definitions of ' univocal ' and ' equivocal ', which Augustine follows early. According to Aristotle things are univocally named when they have the same name used with the same definition ; things are equivocally named when a common name is used with different definitions. According to Augustine, « Those things with a common name and definition are univocally named. Those things with a common name but requiring different definitions are equivocally named ». (*De dial.* ix. 49-51) In *De doctrina*, however, Augustine uses neither ' univocal ' nor ' equivocal '. Second, in the important passage introducing the ten categories Aristotle says that each uncombined expression *signifies* either a substance or quantity or etc. (τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων ἕκαστον ἥτοι οὐσίαν σημαίνει ἢ ποσὸν ἢ . . . 4 1^b 25-28) This only presupposes semantics, but Boethius, who translates σημαίνει as ' *significat* ' ¹³⁰, reflects in his commentary that the *Categories* treats names of first imposition (those that signify *res*), rather than names of second imposition (those that signify other *nomina*)¹³¹. Although Augustine developed a similar distinction in *De magistro* (vii. 19-20), it is unlikely that the *Categories* stimulated him to do this. In the *Confessions* IV. xvi 28 summary of the *Categories* passage just cited he does not use ' *significare* ' at all.

125. COURCELLE, pp. 163-176, does not mention it among the several works of Porphyry which Augustine did read. Nor does Augustine appear to have read Plotinus' Περί διαλεκτικής. *Enneads* I. 3. Paul HENRY, *Plotin et l'Occident*, (Louvain : Spicilegium, 1934), pp. 224f., does not list it among the quotations, paraphrases, or allusions to Plotinus in Augustine. Plotinus regards dialectic as the way of ascent to the Good. He expresses disdain for the concerns of formal logic. The only technical content of his dialectic is Platonic διαίρεσις.

126. KNEALE, p. 187.

127. PFLIGERSDORFFER, pp. 133-5.

128. He wrote a commentary on Porphyry's *Eisagoge* based on Victorinus' translation of the latter. This is in Migne, PL 64, cols. 9-70.

129. See COURCELLE, pp. 264f., for specific instances.

130. PL 64, col. 180A.

131. PL 64, 159C.

expressed by σύμβολον¹³⁶. He continues this throughout his translation of *De interpretatione* whenever σύμβολον and σημεῖον are used semantically rather than in the sense of 'proof' or 'evidence'¹³⁷. Thus if Augustine had read the work in a similar translation, he might not have picked up a linguistic usage of 'signum' from it. Yet for Augustine the thing is more important than the word chosen to designate it¹³⁸; moreover, there is some indication that he regarded 'nota' and 'signum' as synonymous¹³⁹.

From this point the similarity requires greater qualification. First, Augustine does not say explicitly that words are signs of movements of the soul. Rather he says they are used by living beings to indicate or express, among other things, movements of the mind. Second, he does not see a relation of likeness between the mind and things as does Aristotle. Rather he says men seek likeness between signs and things. (II. xxv. 38, 15-19) And since there are all sorts of similarity, consent among men is required even for such signs. Third, because Augustine does not see a likeness between *res* and the mind, he does not see the designation of *res* by signs as taking place through the natural mediation of the mind, though he does see it in unity with the mind (the *dictio* as a union of *verbum* and *dicibile*). This is not, however, a great difference, and when Boethius comments on this passage in *De interpretatione* he develops notions similar to Augustine's. He regards the *animae passio* as understanding and says the spoken word signifies both the understanding of the thing and the thing itself¹⁴⁰. This is close to Augustine's language about the expression of a *dicibile* and the designation of a *res*. Whatever the textual relation between *De doctrina* and *De interpretatione* it seems safe to say that both authors were thinking in very similar ways about the problem of signification.

It should be noted finally that Aristotle continues to use σημεῖον and σύμβολον as well as σημαίνειν and σημαντική in *De interpretatione*. They are applied to the definition of 'noun', 'verb', and 'sentence', that is to say, linguistically. (2-4) On the other hand, the anthropological focus, which we have seen in Augustine, is not as pronounced in *De interpretatione*.

136. CICERO, *Topica* VIII. 35.

137. 2, 16^a 28 at PL 64, 303C; 3, 16^b 11 at 306B; but 'signum' for 'proof' 1, 16^a 17 at 300D.

138. See, for example, *Contra Ac.* II. xi. 25 where Licentius says to Augustine, «I have indeed often heard you say that it is a disgrace for disputants to haggle about words when no difference about the subject matter remains . . . » Trans. by J. J. O'MEARA, in *Ancient Christian Writers*, no. 12 (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1950), p. 91. See MARROU, pp. 243, n. 2 and 349, n. 3 for other similar passages in Augustine.

139. *De doct. chr.* uses the former at II. xx. 30, 11 and the latter at xxxii. 33, 31 of the same things but not of words.

140. *Vox enim etiam intellectum rei significat, et ipsam rem.* PL 64, 297B.

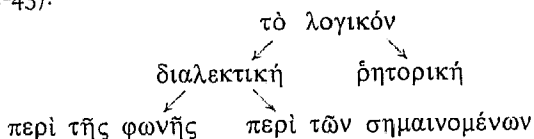
2. STOICS

There is a twofold textual problem involved in studying the relation of Augustine to Stoic semantics. In the first place, only secondhand accounts of the Stoic logicians — Zeno, Cleanthes, and the great Chrysippus — have come down to us. Notions of immense subtlety, such as the doctrine of the *lekton*, can be known only through the often confused¹⁴¹ and sometimes dishonest¹⁴² accounts of others. The later Stoa is much better known, but it had little interest in logic. In the second place, there are no surviving Latin discussions or translations of Stoic logical writings comparable to Boethius' discussions and translations of Aristotle's logical works. At least there are none for Stoic semantics. Although the Stoic propositional calculus was relatively well known, only scattered passages in Varro and Seneca are helpful for determining the Latin vocabulary of Stoic semantics. Pinborg has taken Augustine's *De dialectica* as a prime witness to this vocabulary. Since I intend to compare Augustine to the Stoics, this course is not open to me. I shall have to rely mainly on the Greek accounts of Diogenes Laertius and Sextus Empiricus.

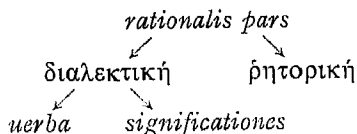
Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* VII

In his life of Zeno, Diogenes gives a general account of all Stoic doctrines. (VII. 38) The paragraphs on logic include results of his own research (41-48) as well as a quotation verbatim of Diocles Magnes (49-83), a scholar of the first century B. C.¹⁴³ The term 'sign', either as τὸ σημεῖον or τὸ σημαῖνον, does not occur here. But notions are explained which, according to Sextus, do involve sign-language.

The first thing I wish to call attention to in Diogenes is the division of logic (41-43).



Seneca gives exactly the same division¹⁴⁴.



141. See MATES, pp. 12f.

142. See KNEALE, p. 142.

143. MATES, p. 9.

144. *Ep. Mor.* 89. 17.

The important thing here is that the notion of meaning is central to the Stoic conception of logic. Chrysippus apparently stated the φωνή-σημαινόμενον division even more 'semantically'. He said that the subjects of dialectic are things signifying and things signified (περὶ σημαίνοντα καὶ σημαινόμενα, VII. 62). By the latter Chrysippus meant λεκτά. I shall consider the doctrine of the *lekton* in connection with Sextus' account.

Under the rubric of 'things signifying' the Stoics considered grammatical subjects. Here they presuppose a theory of meaning in the same manner as the grammarians discussed earlier¹⁴⁵; they defined parts of speech by what they signify. A common noun (προσηγορία), for instance, is a part of a sentence signifying a common quality (σημαίνον κοινήν ποιότητα, VII. 58). Proper nouns and verbs (ὄνομα, ῥῆμα) are defined in a similar way. Although Augustine uses terms that could and sometimes do correspond to ὄνομα, προσηγορία, and ῥῆμα¹⁴⁶, he appears to have adopted as a technical term only the Stoic λόγος (sentence or statement) as λέξις σημαντική (significant utterance). (VII. 57) This he called by the name 'dictio', the word which proceeds in order to signify something¹⁴⁷.

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS, *Adversus Mathematicos* VIII

Sextus gives a brief statement of the Stoic semantic schema in his discussion of where truth and falsity may be located. (VIII. 11-13) There are three options: in the thing signified (τῷ σημαινόμενῳ), in the sound (τῇ φωνῇ), and in the motion of the mind (τῇ κινήσει τῆς διανοίας). Sextus thinks that the third option is a scholar's invention. He assigns it to no thinker. It apparently is something subjective¹⁴⁸ and thus is not the *motus animorum* of Seneca, although it could be Augustine's *motus animi* in so far as the latter is an emotion or attitude. The second view was held by Epicurus and by Strato, the successor of Theophrastus as head of Aristotle's school. As on many other issues, the Stoics disagreed with the Epicureans. According to Sextus the Stoics take the first option. In so far as Augustine does not distinguish between a sentence as a linguistic entity and its meaning, he seems to agree with the Epicureans and Peripatetics on what it is that is true or false¹⁴⁹. However, leaving aside the sign-giver or receiver, Augustine's semantic schema is (definitely in *De dialectica* and probably in *De doctrina*) that of

145. Dionysius Thrax is said to have been influenced by the Stoics. KNEALE, p. 143.

146. 'Nomen' for the first, 'uocabulum' for the second, and 'uerbum' for the third; see *De dial.* I. 14f. and 22-24, VI. 17 and 31, VII. 33, and *De mag.* V. 16.

147. *De dial.* V. 52-54 and 62-64.

148. See the refutation of the view at VIII. 137-139.

149. *De dial.* II. 12-18.

the Stoics, not of the Epicureans, for the Epicureans admit only the sign and the thing signified.

According to Sextus this is the Stoic schema :

The Stoics say that three things are linked together, that which is signified, that which signifies, and the object (τὸ τε σημαίνον καὶ τὸ σημαῖνον καὶ τὸ τυγχάνον) ; of these that which signifies is speech (φωνήν), as for example, ' Dion ', that which is signified is the thing itself which is revealed by it and which we apprehend as subsisting with our thought but the barbarians do not understand, although they hear the spoken word, while the object is that which exists outside, as for example, Dion himself. Of these two are corporeal, that is, speech and the object, while one is incorporeal, that is, the thing which is signified, i.e. the *lekton*, which is true or false¹⁵⁰.

The basic correspondence with Augustine's semantic schema is of τὸ σημαῖνον with the *signum*, τὸ τυγχάνον with the *res*, and τὸ σημαίνον or τὸ λεκτόν with the *dicibile* and notions associated with the latter in *De doctrina christiana*. I shall now say some things about each of these three pairs.

The Stoic sign¹⁵¹ is here plainly a linguistic entity. The name ' Dion ' is given as an example. Augustine's theory is also linguistic, at least in emphasis. Another emphasis of Augustine's, the anthropological, is not quite as explicit in this passage, but it is present in such terms as *διανοία* and the discussion of the barbarians' failure to understand.

The Stoic object (τὸ τυγχάνον) is always a body. Augustine uses ' *res* ' more broadly than this, making it applicable in a wide sense to anything that is. Even when he is thinking of a *res* as what is designated by a sign, he conceives of it as either sensible or intelligible (*De dial.* V. 2f.), that is, as either corporeal or incorporeal. In this Augustine is a Platonist and not a Stoic.

The Stoic *lekton* has several characteristics in common with Augustine's *dicibile* :

1) Both the *lekton* and the *dicibile* are explicated by the notion of understanding. The *lekton* is what the barbarians do not understand (ἐπαίουσι) when they hear a Greek word. The *dicibile* is what is understood in a word and conceived by the mind.

2) Both the *lekton* and the *dicibile* are made known by signs. The *lekton* is revealed (δηλούμενον) by a sign. Things understood (*intellecta*), among which are *dicibilia*, are shown (*demonstrandos*) by giving signs.

150. VIII. 11-12. Trans. by KNEALE, p. 140, quoted by permission of the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Actually, only a part of the class of *lekta*, namely, the ἀξιώματα, are true or false.

151. I believe that τὸ σημαῖνον has almost lost its participial flavor and has here become a nominal technical term, unlike the usage in Dionysius Thrax. See above n. 70.

3) Both are explicated by psychological notions. The *lekton* subsists with our thought (*διανοία*). The *dicibile* is held in the mind (*animus*) ; it is attended to by thought (*cogitatio*).

4) The only type of sign by which either is expressed is linguistic. The *lekton* is signified by sound (*ἡ φωνή*). The *dicibile* is understood in a word and comes forth in union with a word as a *dictio*.

The last assertion requires reference to other texts, for the passage in Sextus cited above speaks only of sound and not of language or discourse, even though it gives a proper name as an example of a sound. There are several such texts. Later in the same work Sextus says that the *lekton* is that which subsists in conformity with a rational presentation (*λογικὴν φαντασίαν*) and such a presentation is one that can be conveyed by discourse (*λόγῳ*)¹⁵². When one speaks (*τὸ λέγειν*), we learn from Diogenes, one does more than utter sounds (*προφέρονται ... αἱ φωναί*) ; one expresses *λεκτά*¹⁵³. And Seneca's explication of the *significationes-verba* distinction shows awareness of the connection of *lekta* with discourse. He says that there are things which are said and the words in which they are said (*res quae dicuntur et uocabula quibus dicuntur*)¹⁵⁴. In another passage Seneca translates τὸ λεκτόν by 'dictum'¹⁵⁵. In both Greek and Latin, therefore, the choice of technical terms reflects the linguistic focus of Stoic semantics. Just as λεκτόν seems to be derived from λέγειν, so 'dictum' and Augustine's 'dicibile' and 'dictio' seem to be derived from 'dicere'.

Markus has argued that the originality of Augustine's theory of signs lies in its use as a theory of *language*¹⁵⁶. But the texts which I have been citing show that the Stoics did speak of signs in their theory of the meaning of linguistic expressions. Only if one insists that τὸ σημαῖνον does not denote a sign, can one say that the Stoics did not apply a theory of signs to language. They used the more common τὸ σημειον non-linguistically in their elaborate theory of inference¹⁵⁷. It is not clear how these two terms for 'sign' are related¹⁵⁸, but Augustine's 'signum' has something of the connotation of both. On the one hand, he uses 'signum' non-linguistically in his general definition of 'signum', in the examples which he gives for *signa naturalia*, and in some of the examples for *signa data*¹⁵⁹. He even uses one of the stock examples from Stoic inferential theory — smoke as a sign of fire¹⁶⁰. On the other hand,

152. VIII. 70. See MATES, pp. 15f.

153. *Lives* VII. 57.

154. *Ep. Mor.* 89. 17.

155. II. 13 ; KNEALE, p. 141.

156. MARKUS, pp. 60-65.

157. *Adu. Math.* VIII. 14off.

158. See KNEALE, pp. 141f., and MATES, pp. 13f.

159. *De doct.* II. I. 1-2 and III. 4.

160. *De doct.* II. I. 1, 8 and 2, 14f. See *Adu. Math.* VIII. 152. Also compare II. I. 2, 18-22 with *AM* VIII. 173.

he uses ' *signum* ' linguistically, that is, of spoken and written words. Thus, instead of being novel, Augustine's use of ' sign ' seems to be in agreement with the Stoic tradition.

It might be more correct to say that Augustine is original among *Latin* authors in calling words ' signs '. Cicero, Varro, and Quintilian do not seem to use ' *signum* ' in this way. It is not used at all in two Latin handbooks of logic which survive from Augustine's period and earlier — Capella's *De dialectica* and the *Peri hermeneias* attributed to Apuleius¹⁶¹.

But there would seem to be a more important originality in Augustine than this. It consists, I suggest, in the application of traditional sign-theory and sign-language to a new task, the interpretation of Scripture. Briefly Augustine's application consists in using the technical terms of semantics to make distinctions and definitions which delineate clearly the problems faced by the interpreter of Scripture¹⁶². Detailed application of an explicit semantics would seem to be an innovation in the history of Christian hermeneutics. In the only hermeneutical treatises prior to *De doctrina* which survive, *De principiis* IV and *Liber regularum*, Origen and Tyconius use the language of meaning and signifying¹⁶³ but neither reflect upon these semantic notions nor make systematic application of them. The clarity and sophistication gained by the use of semantics put Augustine in a better position to provide adequate solutions to the problems of Scriptural interpretation than he might otherwise have been in. Originality of this kind is appropriate to one of the greatest of the synthesizers of Christianity and classical culture. It is an instance of what Augustine so highly recommends in *De doctrina christiana* itself (II. 41-63) — the Christian's retaining of the liberal disciplines, in this case Aristotelian and Stoic logic, to be put to the use of truth (*usui veritatis*, II. XL. 60, 15), in this case the interpretation of Holy Scripture.

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161. APULIUS, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 2, ed. G. F. HILDEBRAND (Leipzig, 1842), 265ff. This second century A. D. work contains no semantics. Capella does have some semantics, but he uses ' *nomen* ' and ' *res* ' not ' *signum* '. (DICK, 355-358).

162. This is done in Books Two and Three of *De doctrina*.

163. ORIGEN, *De principiis* IV. 2-3 and TYCONIUS, *Liber regularum* IV (BURKITT, p. 36, lines 12f., p. 37, line 11, p. 53, line 8), V (p. 59, line 23), and VII (p. 71, line 7).