Ennead VI, 4 and 5 in the Works of Saint Augustine

Introductory

When the late Richard Harder, shortly before his death, called attention to the importance of Plotinus’ twin-treatise on omnipresence (Ennead VI, 4 & 5) for the understanding of St. Augustine’s thought, the suggestion might have seemed a bolt out of the blue. And yet, that appearance of novelty is deceptive. Grabowski’s more recent study has only served to underline once again the fascination that notion exercised on the Saint, but it must be said that Willy Theiler’s controversial Porphyrios und Augustin had long since proposed a generous series of texts to support his contention that Augustine showed unmistakable traces of what amounts to the Neo-Platonic (in Theiler’s view, Porphyrian) teaching on omnipresence, and of its multiple corollaries.

While admitting that Augustine never seems to have read any work of Porphyry’s which has survived to this day (including the Sententiae),

1. One continuous treatise which Porphyry’s fondness for the number nine has split into two, it is 22-23 in the chronological listing of Plotinus’ works, Harder’s Vortrag, unfortunately lost with his untimely death, is partially reconstructed from notes and appears in the Hardt Foundation Entretiens sur l’Antiquité Classique, Vol. V : Les Sources de Plotin (henceforth cited as : Sources) Vandœuvres-Geneva, 1960, pp. 325-332. While leaving open the question whether Augustine got his doctrine directly or through Porphyry, Harder speaks suggestively of « exact citation » (p. 332) of the Plotinian treatise itself. The full text of his remarks might have banished the appearance of contradiction.

2. So far as we have discovered, only L. Grandgeorge, Saint Augustin et le néo-platonisme, Paris, 1896, pp. 39 ff., had previously alluded to this treatise as influential in Augustine’s works.

3. The All-Present God: A Study in St. Augustine, by S. Grabowski, St. Louis, 1954. The author is not concerned with tracing the source of Augustine’s teaching, however.


5. Theiler does not speak explicitly of this relation to the omnipresence theme ; but he makes no effort to hide the fact that many of the elements he finds parallel in Augustine and Porphyry are corollaries of the Plotinian doctrine contained in this treatise : see especially his treatment of Sententiae XL, pp. 43 ff. and the references to Ennead VI, 4-5, pp. 25-28, p. 46. Only his arbitrary Arbeisatis (p. 4) has previously ruled out Plotinus as a direct source; for some perceptive remarks on Thelier’s method, see F. Courcelle, Lettres Grecques en Occident, 2d ed., Paris, 1948, pp. 159 ff.

6. Porphyrios, p. 4 ff.
Theiler refers to these latter, as indeed he must, in the hope of grounding his thesis that Porphyry, and not Plotinus, provided Augustine with his introduction to the world of Neo-Platonic thought. Whatever one may think of his conclusions, it is certain that his resort to the *Sententiae* manages indirectly to underline the key role of the omnipresence notion in Neo-Platonic thought. In this, of course, the disciples were only faithful to their master; Plato himself had pointed out its indispensability for a right understanding of his cherished participation theory: at the very heart of that theory, and grounding its possibility, lies the truth that (to cite Plotinus’ title) “Being is integrally everywhere, one and the same” — and here, as Harder points out, Augustine’s *tota simul* corresponds to the master’s διὴ πανταχοθεόν. The significance of the omnipresence theme, therefore, was far from lost on the Neo-Platonic school. The fact that not only *Sententiae* XL, which Theiler cites and analyses at length, but the entire series running from the thirty-third to the forty-fourth (over a third of Mommert’s text) is little more than an extended paraphrase of Plotinus’ twin-treatise on the subject, shows the regard in which Porphyry held this particular work of the master. Modern commentators, too, have paid homage to this same treatise. One may wonder, then, if its crucial significance would have escaped the translator who undoubtedly mediated between Plotinus and Augustine; *Ennead* VI, 4—5 would certainly have impressed him as a “must” if his intention was to make Plotinus’ thought accessible to the Latin world.

And even a cursory reading of that treatise would have left a deep and lasting impression on Augustine. For there is little doubt that the difficulty of conceiving God’s omnipresence as at the core of all creaturely participation in Him, is what Augustine is ultimately alluding to in the *Confessions*, as the *maxima et prope sola causa inevitabilis erroris meae*.

7. Ibid. pp. 43 ff.

9. *Sources*, p. 332. This phrase is from *Enn*. VI, 4, 4, 33. Harder gives several other equivalents of the *tota simul* notion as well, all from this treatise.
10. See note 7, above.
11. See his edition of the *Sententiae* (Teubner: Leipzig, 1907) in which pages 25-46, excepting only portions of pp. 41-43, constitute a Porphyrian paraphrase of this twin-treatise.
13. *Conf.*, V, 19. (We cite book and paragraph, omitting the chapter-headings). Augustine is referring to his inability to conceive of God except in corporeal terms, but the root defect is expressed in terms of omnipresence: see, for instance, the *ubiique praesens* (*Conf.*, V, 16) and *praesentissime... ubiique totius es* (VI, 4) which bracket the development in which V, 19 occurs. See the other sections of the *Confessions* dealing with this difficulty: I, 2-6; III, 7-16; IV, 14-20; IV, 25 — V, 2; V, 19-25; VI, 4-8; VII, 1-7, 11. The solution of the difficulty is furnished by the Neo-Platonic readings, *Book VII*, 13-26.
At first glance, Fairchild seems opposed to Hare's suggestion.

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tion no further and there the matter rested until Harder's *Vortrag*, so unfortunately lost, brought it to the fore again. In this (and in subsequent studies) we hope to show that Harder's suggestion was highly significant. But before any valid conclusions can be drawn in this matter, both a broadening of perspective and a modification of method are indispensable.

And first, a broadening of perspective. If we consent to limit the debate only to the *De immortalitate animae* which furnished the starting point for Harder's argument, it seems impossible to decide between *Ennead VI, 4—5* and the treatise *IV, 2*, which Fr. Henry once again adduces for comparison. Nor do we mean to insist that a choice between these two is necessary: Augustine could conceivably have read them both. With no intentions, therefore, of excluding *Ennead IV, 2*, we hope to show that Augustine not only read, but meditated and profoundly assimilated *Ennead IV, 4—5*. In order to do this, we propose to expand the area of search to include the second book of the *De libero arbitrio* and the *Confessions*, two prominent links in Augustine's repeated study of this treatise. The consequences of this affirmation on Augustinian exegesis are, we think, important enough that we may be excused for covering the ground with what at times may appear to be over-painful care.

*From parallels to patterns*

Profoundly assimilated: the very depth of Augustine's assimilation of this treatise is what imposes a modification of method. For the somewhat fragmentary comparison of textual parallels, particularly if confined to linguistic relationships, is at a distinct disadvantage in the case before us. The more thoroughly a "source" is assimilated, the more profound its effective influence, the more freely the "influenced" author can manipulate, recombine and re-express the materials which he has made his own. When this has occurred, purely philological analysis, remaining on the level of language, is incapable of uncovering the "source" which may still be exercising a subterranean but decisive influence. We must then (if an image be permissible) look "below" the surface layer of

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17. We assume that note 1, p. 332 of *Sources*, was inserted with Fr. Henry's knowledge and approval; it reminds the reader that he traces the parallels, to which Harder alludes, rather to *Ennead IV, 2*.

18. If he had, he would have found *Ennead VI, 4—5* contains every insight of *Ennead IV, 2*, with enough superabundance to make him almost forget the latter in favor of the former. The two remarks which encourage comparison with *IV, 2* (on the soul not being like the color white, on its not being distant from itself) are both, to stay with them for the moment, found in *Ennead VI, 4—5*; see *VI, 4, 1, 1 ff.; VI, 5, 6, 10*; and *ibid., 11*, where Plotinus comes back to the color comparison; also *VI, 5, 3* for an analogue of the *non sibi distat* notion. (Compare Henry, *Plotin*, pp. 75-6). If, therefore, an either-or relationship between *Enneads IV, 2* and *VI, 4—5* is insisted upon, then the connections in which these fragmentary parallels occur in Augustine must be more closely examined. This is one of the things we shall be led to do.

expression, not merely to fragmentary doctrinal "parallels", but alert to the possibility of a tertium quid, namely, parallel "patterns" of thought and image that still betray a profound correspondence between the two authors in question. Even where the language seems no longer to correspond, hence where verbal rapprochements are out of the question; there may still persist an inner linkage of thought-in-movement in virtue of which each idea calls for its natural successor, each image for its natural partner. To detect a correspondence at this level one must perhaps be, in Mandouze's ironic phrase, quelque peu philosophe\(^{20}\), but no less objective than the scientific philologist for all that. Thought and image have contours as firm and represent a type of evidence just as "hard." as the black and white of words on paper, to which they give rise as to their organically related expression\(^{21}\).

Omnipresence in Augustine: from Cassiciacum to the Confessions

These remarks on method are all the more necessary for the case which concerns us, since Augustine's meditations on this treatise will be shown to have gone hand in hand with his readings of the Bible and of other Plotinian treatises, and (that in view of his running refutation of Manichaeism)—in a word, with his continued effort to construct an intellectus fidei in which a synthesis of the Bible and Plotinus would provide more satisfying answers to the Manichaean problem of evil than the Manichees themselves could. This complex preoccupation conducts him to a profound assimilation of the treatise on omnipresence (in connection with others, of course) with the result that Biblical expressions often cloak a Plotinian meaning—one that can be ferreted out only by close examination of the pattern of thought and image.

It does not take much insight to detect, for example, the identical paradoxical structure beneath the verbal differences that distinguish Monica's response in the De beata vita: mihi videtur Deum nemo non habere, sed eum qui bene vivit, habet propitium, qui male, infestum\(^{22}\), and

\(^{20}\) L'extase d'Ostie in Augustinus Magister, Paris, 1954, Vol. I, pp. 83 ff. The danger to which Mandouze points is real: philological method can get lost in words, considering them only with the most lenient regard for their organic connection with the entire movement of thought they embody.

\(^{21}\) Discuss method and lose friends, it has been said. But pages could be written on this question and its methodological applications. The desire for utter scientific objectivity is entirely laudable but it seems to have urged the patrons of a purely philological method to attempt an abstraction from the philosophical content of the works they are comparing, (evidently under the impression that subjectivity must inevitably haunt any discussion between philosophers, with the result that the argument never ends!). But can a problem involving a philosophic dimension ever be solved by scientific method without the scientist either suppressing that dimension or becoming at some point, in spite of himself, a philosopher? Can, for instance, a textual parallel be considered convincing evidence of dependence of one philosopher on another, except in terms of some implied theory of memory and how it operated in the case of the influenced thinker?

\(^{22}\) De b. vita, 20.
Augustine's question in the *Confessions*: *Quo it aut quo fugit (iniquus) nisi a te placido ad te iratum?* The supposition in both instances is the same: everyone "has" God, i.e. participates in Him; hence God is present in all creatures, even to those who choose absence from Him through sin. Flee though man may, God remains present, with an angry presence now, but present: for omnipresence is the heart of all participation.

From Cassiciacum onwards, Augustine is struck by these paradoxes of omnipresence, but his fascination with the theme is never more evident than in the *Confessions*. From the very opening paragraphs, we find him launched on a series of queries on God's presence to man, even to the man who chooses absence from Him. In variants and harmonics the same leitmotif spans the work from beginning to end, its recurrence relieved of monotony only by Augustine's masterful handling of a set of mighty images, many of them adaptations of those already set down by the genius of image who was Plotinus.

But the obverse of that leitmotif is equally important. Augustine spares no pains to remind us throughout the first seven books of the *Confessions* that the key to his error was precisely his incapacity to conceive of God in the spiritual terms *which alone would do justice to his omnipresent relation to creatures*. Read with a view to finding in them the influence of Enneads I, 6 and V, 1, the *Confessions* may seem to lead up to the Neo-Platonic illumination of Book VII, under the guise of a quasi-ecstatic "ascent to the spiritual." But this is to miss the fact that, in Mandouze's term again, "C'est cette présence perpétuelle de Dieu dans les *Confessions* qui change tout"; if we compare the work with the treatises usually invoked to explain Augustine's mysticism, "on ne peut manquer d'être frappé d'une différence radicale de tonalité." What Mandouze seems to have sensed, and what Theiler has repeatedly

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23. Conf., IV, 14.
24. See De b. vit., 17-22; De ordine II, 3-6. The relation of these considerations to Ennead VI, 4—5 must, however, await proof.
25. Conf., I, 2 ff. See Theiler, *Porphyrios*, p. 44 who has seen both the omnipresence connection and the relation to Ennead VI, 4—5 (though confident, of course, of Porphyry's mediation in regard to the latter).
26. Thus Henry, Courcelle and others. This movement is not absent, certainly, but it represents one side of the reality which is more complex. Put another way, *the Confessions* do show signs of Enneads I, 6 and V, 1; but those treatises (and others, notably III, 2—3) have been rethought and transmuted by an Augustine fascinated by Ennead VI, 4—5. If read through the lens of the former treatises only, the *Confessions* yield only a truncated part of their message; this is why we shall later attempt to situate Augustine's preoccupation exactly before settling the question of the sources which are active. Those sources may be invoked in the measure that they aid us to understand Augustine's work as it stands, not as we would prefer to make it.
27. Art. cit. note 20, above.
28. The text reads as though Mandouze were about to confirm, without qualification, a difference of tonality between Augustine and Plotinus: confining that comparison to the treatises usually cited in this connection is wisdom indeed.
underlined is the fact that Augustine's interiority descriptions root firmly in an omnipresence conception which shows distinctive Neo-Platonic traits.

Ennead VI, 4-5: its proper character

Throughout the first seven books of the Confessions, then, Augustine is describing a difficulty. This is the first important similarity between that work and the twin-treatise we are about to consider. Bréhier's Notice characterizes the distinctive trait of this treatise as follows:

Le traité de Plotin ne présente pas une argumentation régulière et une série de preuves à marche progressive; s'il y a progrès, c'est dans l'intuition de plus en plus profonde et précise que l'on acquiert de la thèse; il a conscience de l'insuffisance, en ces matières, des démonstrations qui contraignent l'esprit... il se sert plutôt d'images, d'analogies qui le persuadent et qui, moyennant correction, lui donneront une vue exacte des choses; il fait appel au sens commun... à la croyance religieuse commune; mais surtout (et il y revient souvent), il montre dans un trait particulier à l'imagination humaine, la raison profonde de la répugnance à admettre la thèse de l'omniprésence de l'être: on croit l'omniprésence incompatible avec le réel parce qu'on imagine invinciblement le réel comme un corps étendu et divisible.

Il y revient souvent: Plotinus repeats, insists, and never tires of repeating those methodological pointers. If one were to search for the single treatise of all his works which answers to the difficulty which Augustine just as tirelessly describes as his own, a better would never come to hand. The reader will have noted also the paradox of method to which Bréhier alludes here: the use of the imagination to purify the imagination, of image to dispel imagery. The bearing of that paradox on our question will become manifest shortly.

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29. Again, without always realizing it, perhaps.
31. It must be kept in mind that while this or that fragment may recur in several Ennéades, its connections will be different depending on the « point » of the treatise in question, hence its internal unity, drive, movement of thought, in short, the character which sets the treatise as such apart from the others. Fragmentary comparisons inevitably allow this character to escape, but no method can quite hope to reproduce it; Mandonne's term tonalité is a (not entirely subjective) way of expressing it. An attentive reading of this treatise and relevant portions of the Confessions (cfr. note 13, above) is the best way of grasping it; but, failing that, we must here take a more analytic approach to showing the kinship between the two works, one not without considerable drawbacks.
Plotinus and Augustine: a parallel pattern of doctrine

Now it is exactly this emphasis on methodology, this painful diagnosis of the difficulties involved in forming a correct conception of omnipresence, describing its nature, root and consequences in minute detail, then applying the corrective, illustrating again and again the manner of thinking that must be applied, — in short, this extended effort of philosophical **maudictio** is characteristic of this treatise as of no other that Plotinus ever wrote. Others present this or that element of the finished doctrine, or suppose it in passing; none of them presents its mode of **genesis**. And once we examine the treatise from this, its proper point of view, we cannot but be struck by how regularly Augustine's own descriptions of his difficulty, its root and nature and consequences, the terms, images and linkage of ideas, the diagnosis applied and the expression of the final insight with all its paradoxes, all read like faithful echoes of Plotinus' twin-treatise.

The root of the difficulty can be variously expressed, but in both authors, as Bréhier notes of Plotinus, it comes down invariably to the same thing: we conceive of the relation of the superior world (which includes the soul, the Ideas, and God) to the inferior world, in terms drawn from sense, in terms appropriate to concrete sensible reality and to the working of our imagination, rather than to intelligence in its genuine operation. Put another way, we do not draw our principles from the appropriate intelligible realm, but from the inferior, corporeal realm.

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32. See *Ennead VI*, 4, 1-2, where Plotinus begins by discussing the soul; VI, 5, 1 where his concern is God; VI, 5, 8 where it has become the Ideas. He does not distinguish these hypostases in respect of this problem, but passes blithely from one to another without changing either the principles or the terms of his conclusion. (Compare *Conf.* IV, 25 and VII, 2 where Augustine points to the fact that God and the soul pose an analogous problem in this respect). All three hypostases (if we grant that «God» may be Plotinus' term for the One, but see note 35, infra) are grouped under the head of τὸ ὁρισμένον ὡς in Mackenna's term «Authentic-Existents». A Latin like Augustine would naturally translate this as *verum esse*, *verum ens*, or, more densely, *Veritas*; and we know that Augustine, like Plotinus, distinguishes this higher realm against the inferior, sensible, corporeal «image-world» (and there is every reason for thinking that this latter is what he means by *sanctas*); see *Confessions* III, 12; IV, 26; V, 25; VII, 16 and other loci below, notes 33-37. This distinction of the two worlds both Thleiler (Porphyrios, pp. 5-7 and 11) and R. Better (Art. Porphyrios in Paulus-Wissowa Real-Encyclopedia (henceforth *PW*) XXII, 1, col. 305) attribute to Porphyry in alleged distinction from his master. Yet if Augustine had read only this treatise, or other treatises in the light of this: one as a dominant, the distinction would then be perfectly *Plotinian*, in derivation.

33. The themes in both authors are variously expressed, but the logic of their linkage is what permits them to recur and interweave in a continuous series of fresh combinations. In the notes which follow (33-37) we have chosen to follow the order of both works, hoping thereby to preserve (and not falsify) the impression created by uninterrupted reading of them. For the basic statement on the Two Worlds, *Ennead VI*, 4, 2, 9-16, and *Conf.* VII, 16 bear comparison. For the basic statement of method, see *Ennead VI*, 5, 2, 1-9, immediately preceding the above: it is question of intelligence versus sense and imagination. The same warning recurs in *Ennead VI*, treatise 4: 2, 27 ff; 3, 23-29; 4, 26-34; 13, 5-10; and in treatise 5: 2, 1-9; 3 entire; 4, 1-10; 8, 1-15 (purification of emanation image itself); 11, 1-10, followed by the coordinate time-eternity distinction, 11, 14-24.

As for Augustine (limiting ourselves to texts of the *Confessions* where the notion of God's omnipresence is explicitly evoked in the context; and omitting for the moment all reference
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What, then, is the result? Note that the problem is entirely analogous whether stated of the soul, the Ideas, or of God, so we may express it briefly in terms of Augustine's dominating interest, God. The result is that, having imagined God after the fashion of an extended body, we automatically consider Him as spatial, hence as distributed part-for-part over a vast area, hence received part-for-part (as a property or form) by corporeal beings. We use such images as these: that God is "poured out" into the containers of inferior reality; or "diffused" throughout and "filling"; "penetrating" them much as an ocean would a sponge; as "more" in a large body than in a small; or, (in an effort to correct such images) we place God "above" corporeal beings in such a way that He would be more distant from some than from others, or, worse yet, supported by them; we are tempted to imagine Him as a kind of light, streaming down on material things in such a way as eventually to dwindle off into darkness where His light would "fail".

What, then, is the correct vision? It involves the realization that there are two distinct orders of reality, radically different one from the other; that the higher realm is non-bodily, non-spatial, utterly partless, hence, if present at all, then present entire to each unity of the inferior world, — and consequently common to them all and the property of none. God is not in the realm of flux and hence not in any sense "poured out"; is not contained "in" inferior realities, rather, He contains them. Nor is He more "here" than "there", more in this being than in that in any sense where distance, space, or quantity would have any rôle to play: their possession of Him is measured by their capacity, competence, rank. He is "above" the inferiors, not as a material light is above the things it lights up, but with a distanceless superiority which is that of producer to produced; He does not rest on them, they rest in Him and from Him receive all their stability. But they are in Him, not as in a place or an envelope, not as in some space formerly part of the Void, for this would only be a more subtle way of putting God Himself in place. He is, on the contrary, utterly

to Augustine's report on his Neo-Platonic readings: III, 11-12 (note the equivalence of such terms as oculus, sensus carnis; and the fact that corpus, phantasmatum and things outside (foris) are, despite their difference of grade, uniformly inferior to what is spiritus, interior, and attainable only by the intellectus mentis which sees quod vere est and can therefore be omnipresent, tota ubiique). Similar equivalences in IV, 24, 26 (critique of De pulchro et apto); V, 25, (note distinction of Two Worlds, opposition of corpus henis mundi, seen by the sensus carnis, and the spiritualia); VI, 6; VII, 1-2 and 7; VII, 11 (where the inus-foris distinction correlates with lumen tuum as against imagines corporum) and 12, actes mentis being sharpened for the vision to follow, on the occasion of the libri platoniciorum. (We shall see shortly that the lumen gratis ampletandae pulchritudinis of VI, 26, to be seen not by the oculus carnis but ex intimo, is an echo of the Eros-image from Ennead VI, 5, 10).

34. Since the statement of the defective conception is often accompanied by its corrective, we cite the elements together in note 36.

35. We preclude from the question whether Plotinus' God means the Nous or the One; what matters is that Augustine read God and assumed it meant what that term signified for him. See note, 32, above.
placeless, and this placelessness is the very condition for His being integrally present to things in place.36

Paradox? Then here is another. Or, rather, the same paradox in its most acute formulation. In order to be really "common" to all, hence integrally present to each, God must become the property of none, must remain self-infolded, in Himself, and not go forth from Himself. To be present, He must remain forever "apart", with a distanceless distance, at once self-inclosed and not so. Only by remaining fast in Himself will He truly be the "unfailing", will there be no place or being in the inferior

36. Plotinus, Ennead VI.

Treatise 4: i, 17-29, omnipresence of the soul versus extension of bodily masses (compare also the opening question, line 1); 2, i ff., the Authentic uncontained contains realities of inferior world, but not as in place, for it is itself placeless; hence inferiors do not possess portions of the All, since omnipresence, not vast extension, is what is being affirmed; the Authentic is integrally everywhere; no question of far, near, distance, but presence entire of Being to beings; 3, 23-29, Being's placelessness a condition for its omnipresence; entire to all in some completeness to each, else fragmented like a body; 4, 26-34, same problem with soul, the body in the soul and not the reverse; soul not present part-for-part but partlessly omnipresent throughout; 8, 28-38, unity not co-extensive with the multiple, but utterly non-quantitative; not extended (since extension is bodily); 11, i-10, grades of being determined not by "locality" but by adequacy, competence of the inferiors to receive the Authentic which is entirely present to each; 13, 5-10, again, no extension in Real, participation must be in the inextendent, and (14-19) undivided, wholly unquantified omnipresent.

Treatise 5: i, God now in question; 2, this being not in place, not in anything, nor distributed part-for-part; 4, 1-10: else God partly at one point of universe, partly at another, not omnipresent, a body; 13-17, He is omnipresent, not falling at one or other point; 8, 8-15, purification of emanation metaphor: relation is between orders of being, producer and produced (cfr. 1-7, no question of distance); 5, 40-end, Being is foundation, not founded on inferiors; 11, 7-11: contrast with material reality, a stone; 12-14, Being is measureless measure of things in place; 15-28, eternal principle of things in time; 12, entire: the "One Life" image, see below.

Augustine, Confessions I, 2 the capacity of things to receive God, suggesting God's vastness, non essem nisi esses in me corrected to nisi esset in te; nothing in heaven and earth can be extra - God; ibid. 3, (note the Images suggested, implere and fundere, then corrected) God container and not contained; the vasa which receive Him do not make Him stabilitas, but the contrary; He not effusus, for erigit, non tu facies, non dissipatur; also te toto imples omnia, but (implies) only per partem tuum capiant ... but ubique toto est et res nulla te to tum capiat. 1, 28, Non ... spatius locorum itur abs te (sed affectu). (Compare Henry, Plotin, pp. 71 ff. on De Musica VI, 40: longe a se jacere Deum, non locorum spatii, sed mentis affectu; he attributes, rightly, we suggest, to Ennead VI, 5, 12). III, 12, elimination from Deus spiritus of all extension, mass, since thus He would be in parte minor quam in toto, hence His presence not toto ubique; IV, 14, love in - God linked with His creative omnipresence, inpundendo fecit (omnia), this is in turn linked with Veritas omnipresent; IV, 15, temporal- eternal correlation of omnes-simul notion, the eternal mensio in 16 then attributed in stability (stans et manens); 18, God non longe ... non fecit et absit; 23, again, soliditas Veritatis. V, 19, the root of his error; confer V, 16 (ubique praesens) and VI, 4 the paradoxes of God's presence ubique toto ... musquam locorum; VII, 7 Post-Manichaean (probably Stes) image of God as corpus et ... per spatia locorum infinitum sine eam extra mundum per infinita diffusum (cfr. Ennead VI, 4, 1-2 especially); the non-spatial seems to him a nihil, ne inane quidem, tamquam ... locus omni corpore vacatius ... locus inanimis tamquam spatiosum nihil (cfr. Ennead VI, 4, 2, same context as above, on the Void); VII, 2, continuation of same theme and allied images of tendere, diffundere, etc. (all spatial), with subsequent correction in terms of part-for-part argument (compare De quant. animae 24 on the elephant argument); VII, 7, sponge image; 11, defect of all this, the lumen he seeks is not in loco, foris, but intus. We shall come presently to Augustine's use of the "One Life" theme, and to his own purification of the emanation-image.
world to which His power (identical with His Presence) fails to reach. Even this ultimate refinement, this final paradox, Augustine has firmly grasped and put to work.

The question of source: a question of formal structure

If only considered from the viewpoint of their number, this correspondence of elements is almost bewildering. It stamps Augustine’s doctrine of omnipresence as in any case distinctively related to the one held and taught by Plotinus, whatever be his direct source for that doctrine. We shall shortly see that his account of the libri platoniciorum and his presentation of the metaphysic he found there put that relation to Neo-Platonism beyond all question.

But is it possible that Augustine gleaned this variety of elements from hither and you in any number of Neo-Platonic writings? Not impossible, perhaps: but the rule of choosing the simplest of available hypotheses counsels that we settle on one treatise that best accounts for all the elements concerned, rather than burrow into a number of others which will do the job much less well.

The appeal to a number of other treatises, furthermore, would utterly fail to explain the formal aspect of the correspondence, the tight unity of conception which links this number of elements into a pattern which is parallel to that found in Ennead VI, 4—5. The omnipresence doctrine, in Mandonuza’s phrase, is not just one element alongside of a number of others in the Confessions, it is precisely ce qui change tout, what en-souls them all, transforms them and puts them into an entirely new register. And this it does precisely in virtue of its own internal laws, its own formal structure, a structure which suggests that Augustine must have found it in a source in which the same presiding conception was already powerfully at work.

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37. Ennead VI, 4, 8, 28.38; but far more often and vigorously in treatise 5: thus 1, 1; 2, 16; 3 entire; 4, esp. 13.17; 9, 40.48; this is also the point of the Eros-image in VI, 5, 10. For Augustine, the adjective unfalling is applied to God as Veritas (see note 32) with the attribute manens in se sometimes being explicitly connected with this unfalling insight; see Confessions VI, 6, veritas semper manens et ex nullo deficiens; IV, 14 (transmuting the theme of Providence as presented in Ennead III, 2—3) Quo il... nisi ad te?... Nam ubi non invent lagem tuam? Et lex tua veritas et veritas tu; V, 22, where God’s attribute of manens takes on the eternity nuance of Ennead VI, 5, 11, 15-28; IV, 7, An tu, quamvis ubique addes... in te manes, nos autem in experimentis volvimus? But see below, the treatment of his Platonic readings, where this theme becomes even more explicit than formerly.

Note that for Augustine (as for Plotinus, Ennead VI, 4, 3 and VI, 5, 8) it is not legitimate to lift this last paradox by having God far and his power near: see Confessions VII, 6 for the general principle: Voluntas enim et potentia dei deus ipse est; and the application, II, 3, Non enim longe a nobis omnipotentia tua, etiam cum longe sumus a te. Much of the power of the Confessions, in fact, comes from Augustine’s thorough assimilation of this insight in a way that permits him to rethink Plotinus’ other treatises in function of it.
Plotinus or Porphyry?

Now among the Neo-Platonists our only realistic choice lies between Plotinus and Porphyry: and that choice must already be weighted in favor of Plotinus. For despite the presence in the Sententiae of most of these elements and of their guiding conception, we have not only Theiler's doubts that Augustine read that work, but the admission of other tenants of the Porphyrian hypothesis that Augustine did read Plotinus. Their additional claim that he read Porphyry as well is (before the composition of the De consensu evangelistarum) based entirely on indirect evidence, much of it, ironically enough, accountable for by this very treatise of Plotinus.

But, the question may be raised, did Porphyry explain the omnipresence doctrine in some lost work resembling, even more closely than the Sententiae, Ennead VI, 4—5? The answer is that we simply do not know. But a paraphrase of Plotinus more faithful than that contained in Sententiae XXXIII-XLIIV, would be almost tantamount to outright translation, the task of discerning what Augustine "borrowed" from Porphyry's and what he took from Victorinus' translation would become impossible, and the entire question becomes, for that very reason, idle and without real significance. We may, then, consider the Sententiae as representative of Porphyry's philosophic manner; indeed, as Theiler's own practice shows, we have no other recourse.

Now the lasting contribution of Theiler's work seems to have been that of pointing up the residue of Augustine's Neo-Platonism that must still

38. This holds for Courcelle, Solignac and O'Meara; it does not hold for Theiler. See (inter alia) Courcelle's Lettres Grecques, pp. 161 ff.; O'Meara's Against the Academicians pp. 22-3 and notes; Solignac's "Rémémbrances platoniciennes et porphyriennes", in Archives de Philosophie (20), 1937, pp. 446-463. Theiler's review of Courcelle's Recherches sur les Confessions, in Gnomon (25) 1955, pp. 113-121, shows he is still impenitently and exclusively Porphyrian.

39. See O'Meara's Porphyry's Philosophy from Oracles in Augustine, Paris, 1959, especially pp. 83 ff.; G. Bardy (Les Révisions, Bibliothèque Augustiniennne XII, Paris, 1950, p. 580) dates the De consensu as «vers 400», quite possibly after the completion of the Confessions, (see ibid., pp. 577-8). Before that date, O'Meara's practice is to attribute to Porphyrian influence themes in Augustine's early works which the ageing bishop censures as «Porphyrian»; so, for example, the contempt of sense-knowledge and the fuga a corpore, both of which Augustine could easily have learned from Plotinus, and from this very treatise. It is transparently possible that Augustine could have found it polemically useful to abstain from criticizing Plotinus, the better to use the master against the anti-Christian theses of his disciple.

40. For the arguments in favor of such writings, see Beutler, art. cit., PW XXII, 1, cols. 255-7. The reader will not overlook the measure of conjecture in all this.

41. Theiler, Porphyrios, pp. 43 ff., presents an extended analysis of it; is he perhaps uncomfortably aware of the number of times his effort to "reconstruct" the lost writings of Porphyry from the converging evidence of Augustine's De vera religione and fragments taken from later Neo-Platonists, (assumed to be following Porphyry since they echo the De vera religione) has led him to conjecture what Porphyry must have said? Thus, the emphasis on ἀλήθη, so evident in Plotinus and in Augustine, kann ... nicht gefehlt haben (p. 28) in the writings of Porphyry: here the irony of his method, aimed at substantiating his arbitrary exclusion of Plotinus, is painfully clear.
be accounted for. And in choosing Porphyry as the source of those elements which flow from the Neo-Platonic doctrine of omnipresence, his instinct is to be commended, for his eye was really on Augustine: he has, assuredly, entered what is very much the right church.

But he chose the wrong pew. This a careful analysis of the Confessions' account of the Neo-Platonic readings at Milan will shortly make clear. But that analysis requires in its turn that we situate those readings in terms of the problematic that Augustine has gone to some lengths to evoke.

The "difficulty" of omnipresence, the "problem" of evil

For "difficulty" and "problem" are not quite the same thing. A difficulty, as we use the term here, is what makes the problem irresoluble. And the main problem of the Confessions is still, at bottom, the Manichaean problem of evil: unde malum? That problem Augustine presents at length in Manichaean terms in the account he gives, in Book III42, of his conversion to that sect; the order of presentation there dovetails closely with the solution he claims to have found in Neo-Platonism43. What put the problem beyond solution, he assures us in Book III, was his inability to transcend corporeal imagery, to form a spiritual conception of God, a conception which would permit him to understand that the Divine Presence is tota simul, omnipresence44. Hence he conceived both of God and of Evil as material substances, mutually exclusive one of the other. In Book VII, accordingly, we must not be surprised to hear his claim that, having arrived at that conception of omnipresence, he found that he had resolved the problem of evil.

Resolved it, that is, in its intellectual dimension. Meanwhile, however, he has repeatedly pointed out that the question, unde malum? cannot be answered until one sees clearly on the prior question, quid est malum?45. This solution, in turn, becomes accessible only when the "darkened heart", the acies mentis obscurata, have been cleansed and enlightened. For this very obienebratio, with its resulting incapacity to break through the evil of corporeal imagery, is an aegritudo, an insania, a punishment for a primal

42. Conf., III, 10-16.
43. Let us stay for the moment with one significant detail: after showing that everything is in ordine locorum (Conf. VII, 18-19), Augustine attains to the complementary insight that everything is in ordine temporum as well (Ibid. VII, 21). Compare the hierarchic universe (order of place) in Conf. III, 10, and the affirmation (Ibid. 13) that all justice comes from the one eternal lex, qua formarentur mores regionum et diorum, (the order of temporal realities).
44. Conf. III, 12.
45. Ibid.; also V, 20; VII, 4-7. Compare the principle enunciated in De moribus ecclesiae II, 2 and that contained in the opening lines of Ennead I, 8, On the Origin of Evils. P. Courcelle (Recherches, p. 167) claims this as one of Augustine's early readings in Plotinus, and there is much evidence to support that view. The fact is not without its irony: the privatio theory of the origin of evils is precisely what Plotinus is attacking throughout the major portion of this treatise.
iniquitas whose root-identity is pride, superbia\textsuperscript{46}. In Augustine’s mind, then, there is an organic connection between the iniquitas of man and his incapacity to arise to a proper conception of God’s omnipresence. The difficulty which makes his problem irresolvable is itself an outgrowth of that problem in its existential and religious dimension.

Only when God has succeeded in bringing low his proud head (caput)\textsuperscript{47} has the opportune time come\textsuperscript{48} for Augustine to attain to a spiritual conception of Him and His relation to creatures. How had this been achieved? Augustine sees two means, exactly those which the Manichees rejected: the humble submission of faith, and the purifying “heat” of sufferings\textsuperscript{49} which God’s omnipresent Providence applies to cauterize the wound of the heart, bathe the film on his inner eye, reduce the swelling whereby his inflata facies prevents him from seeing. In another image, Augustine is turned foras, outwards (and downwards) to the ina of vanitas, away from the Summa which is God dwelling forever intus, in corde. The cure which opens his inner, spiritual eye, will also “turn” his gaze from outer to inner, from lower to higher. Not before giving us a final summary of this entire complex of conversion-imagery, one which makes clear the relation between evil and the incapacity to conceive of omnipresence, and at the same time suggests that he is at last ready to accept the admonitio which he is about to receive, does Augustine open his account of his Neo-Platonic readings\textsuperscript{50}.

This effort to “situate” those readings in a context which Augustine has prepared with consummate care, will help us avoid seeking a message there which corresponds much more to our own preoccupations than to his. The more unified Augustine’s account of his Platonic readings proves to be, the less chance there is of understanding any single portion of it except in terms of its contextual setting\textsuperscript{51}. And a little scrutiny reveals that Augustine’s account in Confessions VII, 13-26, is quite literally organic; the sutures that bind it together are living tissue, and no one member can be understood except in functional relation to the others and to the whole.

\textsuperscript{46} Conf. VII, 11; compare the final identification of iniquitas as the root of evil (unde malum) in VII, 22.

\textsuperscript{47} In Conf. IV, 5, there is an obvious imaginative association of superbia with the caput; but in VII, 11, with the more biblical cervix. The images are not always consistent, but the former association is significant.

\textsuperscript{48} Conf. VI, 17, and 24, where Augustine is discreetly using his own story as typical of God’s providential action according to the ordo temporum.

\textsuperscript{49} Conf. V, 14 (suffering) and VI, 6 (faith). Hence, as his cure approaches, he refers again to these agents: VII, 4 (faith) and 12 (suffering).

\textsuperscript{50} Conf. VII, 12-13.

\textsuperscript{51} See E. Hendrikx, Augustins Verhältnis zur Mystik, Wurzburg, 1936, pp. 132 ff., for some methodological remarks which have not lost their value.
Libri platonicorum: an organic and logical account

Having begun with what Fr. Henry has aptly called a "spiritual apology" to justify his enthusiastic allegiance to Neo-Platonism, Augustine presents us with the fruit (and this comes down practically speaking to the content) of those readings, in paragraphs VII, 16-23. A reflection on the Incarnation (VII, 24-5) leads into a final summary of the entire experience, VII, 26. Against all reductions which would see in the central section (VII, 16-23) a movement which is unilaterally "ecstatic", it must be remarked that Augustine's concern is not only with the lies which the Manichees had spread about God, but also with those they uttered respecting His opera, His creatures. The movement of the entire account, accordingly, is not so much "upward" as "oscillating"—from God to creatures and back again. *Vidi te*, yes—but (and we shall stay with purely formal indices for the moment) that vision of God's true nature issues in every case into a corrected vision of creatures in their true relation to God: note in this connection the *inspexi cetera infra te* (VII, 17), the *manifestatum est milii* (VII, 18) which modifies a vision both of creatures and of God, the *respexi alia et vidi* (VII, 21), the *itaque gradatim a corporibus* (VII, 23) of the final ascent, the *cetera ex te* of the final summary (VII, 26). Even on the basis of purely philological considerations, nothing could be plainer: both God and creatures are involved throughout, and the account oscillates from one to the other just as it does throughout the Confessions, with an oscillation commanded by the relational character of the omnipresence notion.

Another piece of evidence for the organic unity of the account is the progress of the philosophical *Weltanschauung* it transmits. One could show some interesting relationships with the progression of content and problematic in Augustine's early work; but we shall stay for the moment

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53. There is, perhaps, a third solution to the question of whether *Conf.*, VII, 16-23 resumes the content of the *libri platonici* or Augustine's subsequent reflections on them, as Gilson (*L'Esprit de la philosophie médiévale*, Vol. I, Paris, 1932, p. 259, note 7) would prefer. Comparison with Augustine's early works might well show that he is presenting the fruit of his gradual adaptation of the content of those writings, a process that may well have taken him up to 391, a.d. But in that case, it is probable that he came back again and again to reading and meditating Plotinus, in the effort to find an *intellectus* which would rime with his accumulating knowledge of the *fides catholicae*; see note, 56, below.
54. Compare *Conf.*, III, 10, and note 43, above.
55. But the vision was *in speculo et aenigmate*, *Conf.*, VIII, 1. He is using *videre* in the sense of an intellectual vision of the *invisibilia intellecta, per ea quae facta sunt* (*Conf.*, VII, 23). Comparison with his language in the texts cited above, notes 33-37, confirms this, and *Sol. I, 8 ff.* (where Augustine affirms he has not yet attained to that *scientia* which he desires) puts it beyond reasonable doubt.
56. The question deserves more extensive treatment; we present there only summary indications. *Conf.*, VII, 16-17 interweaves the same themes (doubt, certitude, *cibus animae*; beatitude) prominent in the (chronologically interwoven) *De b. vita* and *Contra Academicos*; VII, 18-19 presents a kind of *De ordine*, part I, in which refinements due to later works (*De moribus ecclesiae* among them, see note 45, above) answer to the question *quid est malum?* VII, 20 moves toward the solution of the *unde malum* question (*De ordine*, part II) and particularly makes
with the archiclassic movement which presents us first with a vision of God as *Esse*, the *cetera* (to use the classic terms) as "beings by participation" (VII, 16-17); God as *Sumnum Bonum*, creatures as "good by participation" (VII, 18-19); God as *Veritas Aeterna*, inferior realities as "temporally true", their *ordo temporalis* (VII, 20-22) complementing the "order of place" referred to earlier (VII, 18-19). At this point, the vision of *iniquitas* represents the dénouement setting the stage for the only true "ascent" (VII, 23) of the entire account, one which starts from corporeal beauty and arises to the Divine *Decus* which ultimately explains their power of attraction. *Ens, bonum, verum, pulchrum*, nothing could be more classical. The progress of the account, therefore, is not only organic, but logical as well: there is no indication whatever of a series of discrete "events", only a continuously developed view of reality under the sign of participation theory.

... the problem of evil solved

It may seem upsetting to claim that the "high point" of this entire section lies not in this or that vision of God, but in the insight into *iniquitas*. And yet nothing is more coherent with the close connection which Augustine has set up between his omnipresence difficulty and the problem of evil. This explains why the transcendent *cibus grandium* which Augustine is too "infirm" to eat (VII, 16) is counterpointed later by the *Cibus miscens carnii* of the Word made flesh (VII, 24-5). The insights prompted by his readings issue in certainties, (*vidi, certus eram, manifestatum est mihi*) but, just as importantly, in a sense of his own infirmity which, against the Manichaean denial of our responsibility for our fall, Augustine must trace ultimately to his own *iniquitas*. Thus, his inability to form a correct conception of God and creatures, a conception in which God's omnipresence plays the crucial rôle, is due to his own « perversity », his own lack of order; only when his *insania* has abated can he enjoy the insight which is the *peripeteia* of the entire account, namely, that the *unde malum* question is answered with the single term, *iniquitas*. The *ascensio animi* of VII, 23, is made possible only when his former Manichaean "presumption" has been turned (inchoatively at least) into "confession", when his own perversity is recognized and (implicitly) avowed for what it is.

... the difficulty of omnipresence banished

The main contribution of the readings therefore was to cut through Augustine's difficulty and thereby solve his problem, precisely by conducting him to a right notion of God's *nature and relation to the world,*

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use (VII, 22) of the *perversitas* notion brought to maturity in the *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*, and then inserted as the climax-definition of sin in *De libero arbitrio II*, 53, written later. Only then does Augustine take up the *ascensio animi*, starting with created beauty (*Conf. VII, 23*) which corresponds (roughly) with the effort of the *De musica*, especially Book VI.
a notion commanded by the Plotinian doctrine of participation, and hence of omnipresence. The oscillation already noted suggests this strongly; the concern is with God and the cetera, the alia. But closer examination will put that interpretation beyond doubt.

We shall explain shortly our reasons for thinking that the lux incommunicabilis vision of VII, 16, supposes Ennead VI, 4—5; suffice it to remark for the moment that the veritas...neque per finita neque per infinita locorum spatio diffusa, when taken in connection with its analogies throughout the Confessions, manifestly refers not only to God's spirituality, but ultimately to His omnipresence.

The inspexi cetera which follows (VII, 17) brings us to the ille autem in se manens innovat omnia, a Biblicism which shows that Augustine found in the Wisdom books the same paradoxical doctrine (to be present, God must remain "in Himself") as he had discovered in Plotinus; this is perhaps why he has already evoked it earlier (VII, 14) when showing the basic agreement between the platonici and Scripture.

The little "de malo" (or De ordine, part I) of paragraphs VII, 18-19, betrays the same orientation; the declaration that there is nothing "outside" (extra) the created universe which could "break in and corrupt" its order, invincibly recalls the terms in which, just before these readings (VII, 7), the problems of evil and omnipresence are posed: ubi ergo malum et unde et qua hic invripsit?

In paragraph VII, 20, Augustine is getting to the core of the problem and consequently to the heart of the matter. He alerts us to that fact by interrupting the positive side of his development. One final time, he resumes his former Manichaean views. He adds a sketch of his post-Manichaean Stoicism; the terms in both instances perfectly parallel former statements (in III, 10 ff.; VII, 1-3; 7) where the omnipresence preoccupation is unquestionable. And that same context is echoed faithfully here by the deum per infinita spatio locorum, which is then corrected in a respexi alia which inverts that relation: in te cuncta finita... non quasi in loco — God is not "contained", He is, rather (as Plotinus had insisted) "container" — provided always that we understand that term correctly, for He is indeed infinitum, sed aliter...

One need only compare the description of the Verbum in VII, 24 with that in VII, 14 and 17, to find its supereminens implying the super omnia tempora and the connected manens in se so crucial to Plotinus' doctrine of omnipresence.

The final summary in VII, 26, only adds to the presumption already formed: Augustine advises us that he was certus...te infinitum esse...cetera vero ex te esse omnia. The relation of God and creature is uppermost in his mind; the key to that relation is participation; and the heart of participation is omnipresence.

57. See the texts resumed in note 36, especially Conf. I, 3; II, 12; VI, 4; VII, 1-2. When Augustine uses this imagery, the difficulties against omnipresence are never very far from his attention.
Iniquitas: and the Neo-Platonic aversio

Augustine is, therefore, presenting us with an organic and progressive vision which may best be described as a Christian-Platonist religious philosophy. Turning back now to the heart of the account, we find the vital problem, the unde malum of the Manichees, resolved in the final phrase of paragraph VII, 22:

Et quaesivi, quid esset iniquitas, et non inveni substantiam, sed a summa substantia, te deo, destortae in infima voluntatis perversitatem proiciens intima sua et tumescens foras.

Here we are confronted with a variant of the aversio-conversio couple which Theiler has attributed to Porphyry, partially on the strength of comparison with Sententiae XI. Fr. Henry, on the contrary, points out that dependence on the finale of this double treatise on omnipresence is at least equally probable. Indeed, such is the contrast between Porphyry's wearying proximity and the admirable compression of his master, it is difficult not to present the entire Plotinian text. We shall try to pare it to what is directly relevant.

The finale to which Henry has drawn attention opens on a note which is absent from Porphyry: a lapidary question-answer that may well have provided the seed of Augustine's celebrated name for God, vita vilarum, vita animae meae. The changes we make in Mackenna's translation are in the interests of a more literal fidelity to the new text of Henry-Schwytzer. "To return," Plotinus asks, "how is that Power present to the universe?" And he answers:

As a One Life: 'Ως ὑμῖν μια.
Consider life in any living thing: it ... is omnipresent; ... in it there is no Matter to make it grow less and less according to the measured mass.
Conceive it as a power of an ever-fresh infinity, brimming over with its own vitality. If you look to some definite spot and seek to fasten on some definite thing, you will not find it. The contrary is your only way; you cannot pass on to where it is not; you will never halt at a dwindling point where it fails at last and can no longer

58. The religious impact of these readings, and the religious importance Augustine accords to intellectual insight as he understands it, are not to be underestimated: see, for example, H. von Ivanka, *Die Unmittelbare Gotteserkennnis...* in *Scholastik*, (13) 1938, pp. 521-43. The roots of this valuation lie in Augustine's religious anthropology, as we have already suggested by our effort to situate the Platonic readings in connection with the problem of evil and sinfulness. Our modern reluctance (whatever its grounds) to accord the same value to intellectual knowledge, makes us prone to imagine *mysticism* in what was, for him, a kind of insight only inadequately described by the term *religious philosophy*.

59. Porphyrios pp. 43 ff.
60. Plotin pp. 70-73.
61. *Conf.* III, 10: *Tu vita es animarum, vita vilarum ... vita animae meae. Also Conf. VII, 2: vita vilarum...* (Note the omnipresence context in both instances).
62. We must here express our gratitude to Fr. Paul Henry, who so generously put at our disposal the page-proofs for the forthcoming critical text of the Sixth *Ennead*.
give; you will always be able to move with it—better, to be in its entirety (ἐν τῷ πνεύμα) and so seek no further; denying it, you have strayed to something of another order and you fall; looking elsewhere, you do not see what stands there before you: παρέω σοι ἡδον τῷ ἄλλον βλέπειν.

But supposing that you do thus "seek no further", how do you experience it?

In that you have entered into the All (πᾶς) and have not remained in some part of it (ἐν μέρει αὐτοῦ). You do not say: "so much is me" (τοιαύτης εἰμί) but laying aside that "so much" you become the All (τό πάν). No doubt you were the All from the first, but something other than the All has been added to you, and that addition diminished you; for the addition was not from the All (οὐ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ παντὸς) —you can add nothing to the All— but from what is not the All (τοῦ μη παντὸς). It is on account of this non-being that you are become some-one (πᾶς), and you are not the All except by putting that non-being away. You increase, then, by letting go of the "alien" (τὰ ἄλλα); cast aside the alien and there is the All, present....

No need for it to come to you in order to be present; when it is not present it is rather you who have departed; to depart does not mean to put distance between you and the All, for it is still present; but (more exactly) you did not depart: still near to it, you turned about to the contraries: ἀλλὰ παρέω ἐμι τὰ ἐναντία ἑστράφης.

It is rare that the scholar can enjoy at least the illusion of agreeing with just about everybody, yet here is a text which pulls us into that utopian dream. One need only compare it with Porphyry's interminable paraphrase⁶⁴ (he is convinced his reader is not very bright) to be assured that all the elements of Plotinus' masterful text are at least represented. And yet, it must be admitted that a reasonably intelligent reader (and Augustine could lay modest claim to that) might have spelled out those virtualities for himself, particularly with the aid of other Plotinian treatises. To this extent, then, we find ourselves in agreement with Henry against Theiler.

And yet it must be acknowledged that the latter has amassed an impressive series of texts which show Augustine playing variations on a number of the themes we have just seen, among them the aversio to non-being, a diminishing addition, one which makes the soul "less" in its very being, reducing it to an aegestas copiosa since it has lost the universum in pursuit of the pars⁶⁵.

And a number of other instances could be added to these: some of them presented in Theiler's Porphyrian commentary on the Confessions⁶⁶.

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⁶³. Enn. VI, 5, 12.
⁶⁴. It can be found in translation in Bouillet's edition of the Enneads, as well as in the Creuzer-Moser edition of Plotinus' translation.
⁶⁵. See Theiler, Porphyrios, pp. 25-8 and p. 46 for a series of these parallels (with generous references to Ennead VI, 4—5 as well). Note the correlation of pars and propria in Plotinus; our part-pecularity is what makes us some-one ἐκ apart ἀπό from the All.
⁶⁶. Ibid. pp. 60-69.
Augustine never tires of that final paradox of God remaining present even to the man who has "departed" \textsuperscript{67}, remaining with us even when we are not with Him, since He does not desert us, it is we who did the deserting, and so forth\textsuperscript{68}. Here, too, is quite a probable source for the Augustinian image of God as "center", with the other things as "opposites", on an outer periphery\textsuperscript{69}. Sinners, in Augustine's phrase, \textit{ponunt ad te tergum et non faciems}\textsuperscript{70}, and hence he says of himself, \textit{dorsum habebam ad lumen, et ad ea quae inluminabantur faciems}\textsuperscript{71}.

These are only some of the reasons which suggest that Theiler entered the right church; the doctrine he underlines as Augustine's in a number of instances manifestly reflects the omnipresence doctrine of the Plotinian school, whether drawn from \textit{Ennead VI}, 4—5, or Porphyry's \textit{Sententiae}, or something very like the latter.

\textbf{Plotinus or Porphyry: a parallel pattern of imagery}

But the text just cited also hints at the means of showing that he did choose the wrong pew after all: for it presents us with an \textit{image} — a metaphysical image, if you prefer, one that Plotinus offers to purify our habitual images — but the image of the center is there, nonetheless. And at this point the paradox pointed to in Brehier's remarks cited above\textsuperscript{72} promises to hold a precious clue. For few works more teem with imagery than the \textit{Confessions}; and the same must be said for Plotinus' treatise on omnipresence.

Why are the images we are about to study entirely absent from the \textit{Sententiae}? One could press on Theiler that their omission was systematic; that, great enemy of the imagination that he was, Porphyry would have dropped them intentionally\textsuperscript{73}.

But the irony of the situation is that Porphyry's rejection of the imagination is at least partially a construct of Theiler's, starting from the

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\textsuperscript{67} See the texts has Theiler has amassed \textit{loc. cit.} above, note 65, for example, \textit{Conf. X}, 38, \textit{Mecum eras et tecum non eram}; see also II, 3, cited above, note 37, where God's omnipotence is never far from us, even when we have chosen to be "far" from Him; cpr. also the Cassiciacum paradoxes, notes 22 and 24, above.

\textsuperscript{68} One instance among many: \textit{Conf. V}, 2: \textit{Solus praesens etiam his, qui longe sunt a te ... quia non, sicut ipsi desierunt creatorem suum, ita tu deseruisti creaturam tuam.}

\textsuperscript{69} This is quite likely a variant of the \textit{omphalos} image common to primitive religions, as H. Fugier has claimed, "L'Image de Dieu-Centre dans les Confessions de saint Augustin", \textit{Rev. de augus. I}, 1955, pp. 379-93. But closer identification and specification of the source than Miss Fugier was inclined to attempt, can clarify the meaning and the "psychological value" of the image as Augustine uses it. Does it imply, as it did for Plotinus, the "fall of the soul"?

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Conf. II}, 6.

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Conf.}, IV, 30.

\textsuperscript{72} Above, p. 7.

\textsuperscript{73} Such an argument would be entirely too abstract, however, and not take into account that a theory of the imagination need not always rime with poetic practice. This is true of Augustine (and of Plotinus); \textit{it may} have been true of Porphyry — though he seems to have been less endowed with imagination than either of the above.
condemnation of imagery he finds in Augustine's _De vera religione_ : "Give me a man who can see without being influenced by imaginations" says Augustine at one point; and from such utterances Theller has spelled out an entire Porphyrian polemic against the phantasia. Despite that theoretical rejection of the imagination, however, Augustine remains a literary artist of the first order, an "image-maker" of undeniable brilliance, and a powerful image evokes in him a response that proves he is, after all, one of us, — a man; and that image remains ineradicably consubstantial to the furthest reaches of human thought.

That irony is perhaps only more intense when we consider Plotinus' intention in this treatise: despite all his warnings against imaged thinking (and we shall see how closely they accompany some of his most stunning efforts of metaphysical imagination) this twin treatise alone would certify him as one of the most potent wielders of image who ever wrote philosophy. So struck has Bréhier been by the method of "dynamic image" we are about to see in action, he has devoted a special study to the process. Armstrong, too, has been led to make a comparable study. And both of them have had to deal with images taken precisely from this treatise.

There are four important images in _Ennead VI, 4—5_ which, for our purpose, we may reduce to three distinct types. First and most characteristic of Plotinus' method are the two dynamic images of the Light and of the Hand. The second type is represented by the image of the Head, and here the strictly dynamic character is gone, paradox having taken its place. The third type is represented by the image of "Eros waiting at the door" which we shall consider now. Neither dynamic nor paradoxical, it occurs in _Ennead VI, 5, 10._ But first, a world of explanation on its function in the argument.

"Eros waiting at the door"

The relation that Plotinus means to exclude is one whereby the superior reality will compose with the beings of the inferior world, becoming a "form" ap-prop-rated by this being rather than by that. Such a relation would prevent its remaining integrally present to each and _common_ to all of them.

The difficulty in conceiving this relation is the same as always: we insist on imagining it in terms of sensible reality, in terms of beings whose mass makes them subject to mutual exclusion in place so that part of them must be possessed by this, another part possessed by another being. Plotinus offers his reader several examples to illustrate the relation he wishes him to grasp: diverse subjects can see the _whole_ of the same object, hear the same sound _in its entirety_. The result of our study, he will

74. Porphyrios, pp. 36 ff., and 57.
75. _Art. cit.,_ note 12 above.
76. _Art. cit.,_ note 12 above.
77. Plotinus' clearest statement of this principle occurs in _Ennead VI, 4, 3, 11 ff._
repeat in the text we are about to cite, wisdom itself, are both common to all of us without being parcelled out part for me and part for you.

Having seized on this relation of appropriation of the part against community in the whole, Augustine presents a long manuductio in the second book of the De libero arbitrio, where he systematizes Plotinus’ different suggestions into an ascending consideration which shows that the lower senses (taste, smell) necessarily possess only this or that part of the shared object, — Augustine and Evodius cannot eat the same piece of honey in its entirety — since the operation of these senses involves an appropriation of the object, a transformation whereby it becomes part of the individual nature of the sentient. The higher senses (hearing and sight) on the contrary, furnish a more adequate analogy of the (spiritual) community of possession (of Wisdom) which leaves the object entire and unchanged, still common to both subjects of intellectual knowledge. This manuductio, some twenty paragraphs of the text, has been treated by commentators either as an anomaly to be ignored or as a mere digression. Yet the importance of the commune-proprium distinction in Augustine’s subsequent writings, and the fact that he puts it to work in the culminating definition of sin here, shows that it had functional import to him. That import, we suggest, involves a profound and decisive adaptation of the source from which he drew these diverse elements: from paragraph 20 to paragraph 38 of the second Book of the De libero arbitrio, the Saint has strewn generous traces of the Eros image from Enneda VI, 5 which clearly betray that source. We assemble them here, underlining on either side the corresponding elements which, despite the transformation which Augustine has worked, still answer one to another:

\[ \text{Enn. VI, 5, 10 :} \]
\[ \text{Ménei oiv en tautà osofrosin kai oýk en allú yénoi - kavína dé tâ alla ámptrgētai eis autò àýmper osi eis pódy àýnymo. Kálw. Kai outòs étwv ò thvraulóv 'Eroso parón éxwv dê kai éphímenos tov kaloud kai àgyanw déi oútwv ós òdýmatos metàpachê. Épê kai o éntaitha ýpstatís ou déghómoos tov kállou, alla parakwínwv oútow étwv. Tô dé èb éwtw mév, kai o épès ýpstatò pollw àgyanw érhoútes déià àgyanw oútow, ótan àgyanw - to vàr àgyanw òn tò érhoúmen.} \]

\[ \text{De Libero Arbitrio II :} \]
\[ 34. \text{Cum illa (veritas) in se manens nec proficiat ... nec deficiat ... sed integra et incorrupta ... conversos laeticet lumine.} \]
\[ 35. \text{Ecce ... ipsa veritas : amplectere illam ... et fruere illa...} \]

78. Enneda VI, 4, 12, 1, ff.
82. De libero arbitrio II, 33. Once one admits that the second book stands as a kind of retractatio of the first, where the unique object of their research was the definition of sin (I, 34), then this definition of sin assumes particular importance, becoming, in fact, the point of the second book. See P. Séjouré, « Les conversions de saint Augustin d’après le De libero arbitrio I » in Revue des Sciences Religieuses, (89-90) 1951, p. 359, note 2 and p. 360: he likens the second book to an édition revue et corrigée of the first.
ENNEAD VI, 4-5 IN AUGUSTINE

kai γὰρ καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν πάσαν ὅλον· διὸ καὶ
καὶ ἕναν τὸ φρονεῖν, οὐ τὸ μὲν ὀδος, τὸ δὲ ὃδε
δὲ γελασάν γὰρ, καὶ τόπου διόμενον τὸ φρονεῖν
ἔσται.... Ἀλλ' εἶπερ ὅτις μετέχομεν τοῦ
φρονεῖν, ἐν δεῦ εἰναι τὸ αὐτὸ πάν ἕκαστῷ συν δὲν.

καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖθεν, οὐ μόνας αὐτῶν λαβόντες,
οὐδὲ ὅλον ἑνό, ὅλον δὲ καὶ αὐ, ἀποσπασθὲν
ἐκατέρων εκατέρων....

καὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὡς ἐφαπτόμεθα τοῦ
ἀγαθοῦ ἐχθήν ενθυμεῖσθαι. Οὐ γὰρ ἄλλων μὲν
ἐνό, ἄλλου δὲ καὶ αὐτὸ ἐφαπτῷ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ.
Ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἄρα ὅτε καὶ ἀρέσκει τᾶς ἀγαθοῦ
καὶ ἐφαπτόμεθα αὐτῶν....

τὰ δὲ καὶ ἐμπόδιον τοῦ εἰς ἐν; Οὐ γὰρ δὲ
τὸ έτερον ἀπαθεῖ βάθον τόπον οὐ πορέχων.

ὁσπερ καὶ δρόμες πάν μάθημα, καὶ θεώρη-
μα καὶ ὅλως ἐπιστήμα τάσας ἐπί ψυχῆς αὐτὸ
οὗ ἐπεπερισχομένων.

25. ... Quid de ipsa sapientia ... ?
... An vero unam praesto esse com-
muniter omnibus, cujus quarto magis
quisque fu particeps, tanto est sapien-
tior?

37. Nemo enim locis separari ab
ea quisquam potest .... Habemus
igitur qua fruamur omnès aequaliter
atque committer, nullae sunt angus-
tiae, nullus in ea defectus. Omnes
amatores suos nullo modo sibi invidos
recipit, et omnibus communis est,
et singulis casta est. Nemo aliquid,
dicit, « Recede, ut etiam ego accedam,
remove manus, ut etiam ego amplect-
tar ». Omnes inerent, id ipsum omnes
tangunt. ... Cibus eius nulla ex
parte discipitur, nihil de ipsa bibis
quod ego non possim ... quod tu de
illa capis, et mihi integrum mane....
Non enim aliquid eius aliquando
fit quisquam unius proprium, sed
simul omnibus tota est communis.

36. In veritate cognoscitur et tenetur
sumnum bonum, eaque veritas
sapientia est, carnamus in ea tene-
musque sumnum bonum.... (Cfr. II,
26-7)

38. Nam et si possit esse quisquam
suavis cantus sempiternus et studiosi
eius certatim ad eum audientium
venirent, coarternent esse atque pugna-
rent de locis, quanto plures essent,
ut cantanti esset quisque propin-
quor.... At illa veritas et sapien-
tiae pulchritudo ... nec multitudine
audientium constipata secludit venien-
tes ... nec migrat locis ... De toto
mundo ad se conversis qui dili-
gunt eam, omnibus proxima est...
nullo loco est quisquam deest ... a
nullo in deterius commutatur....

20. ... Ratio et veritas numeri omni-
bus ratiocinantisibius praesto est....
Cum ... ipsa aequaliter omnibus se
praebent valentibus eam capere ...
 nec ... quasi alimentum veritatur
atque mutatur ... ea vera et integra
permanentem....
The first thing which strikes on examination of this parallel is the initial identity of basic image: it is question in both cases of Beauty and her many lovers. But while Plotinus soon drops this image, Augustine continues with it and simply assumes Plotinus’ other illustrations under it, fusing them with it. Here as throughout the *manuductio* which has led to it, he combines Plotinus’ other examples of *μάθημα, θεώρημα* and the objects of *ἐπιστημή* more generally, with the notion of *φρονεῖν*; the resulting whole becomes that hypostatized *veritatis et sapientiae pulchritudo* which, from the context, is identical with the Eternal Christ. Both authors take care to eliminate all limitations of place, hence to avoid all species of “crowding” proper to the sensible sphere, so that despite their multitude the lovers need not elbow each other out of possession. Augustine’s *singulis casta* shows Plotinus’ *οὗ δεόμενος* in moralistic dress; yet despite the “distanceless distance” implied in both expressions, all the lovers possess the beloved by intimate contact, that contact, moreover, going out to the same “whole” and not to different wholes or one or other partial fragment. The fundamental reason for this is that Wisdom “remains in itself” and does not “go forth” to become the “property” of this or that participant, remaining, on the contrary, “common” to all her lovers. The possession of the good Plotinus presents as an additional example, and it is interesting to find the allusions to both sight and touch so faithfully reproduced (*δρόμεν τάγαθον καὶ ἐφαπτόμεθα; cognoscitur et tenetur; cernamus...teneamusque*) (cfr. II. 26-7 where this combination occurs four times), but this too, Augustine (with Trinitarian intentions, doubtless) has assumed into the basic image with which Plotinus had begun, reminding his reader that in that Truth (Christ) we hold and behold the highest good, i.e. the Father. Despite all this fusion of elements, despite the occasional vivacity which Augustine brings to their development, the identity of fundamental image and of the metaphysical insight it transmits is manifest.

83. (Qui) *foris admonet, intus docet* (II, 38). See II, 37, where this manifestly refers to Christ (as throughout the *De magistro*).

84. It would seem that Augustine read *Ennead VI, 4—5* before composing the *Solutioquia*, as the following citation from that work suggests; we underline the elements found also in the *Eros-image of the De libero arbitrio*:

*Ratio*: Nunc illud quaerimus, quals sic *amator sapientiae quam castissimo conspicu atque amplectu, nullo interposito velamento quasi nudam videre ac tenere desideras, qualem se illis non sinit, nisi paucissimis et electissimis amatoribus suis. An vero si allicius pulchriæ feminæ amore flagrantes, jure se tibi non dare, si aliud abs te quidquam praeter se amari comperisset; *sapientiae se tibi castissima pulchritudo*, nisi solam arseris, demonstrabit?

Augustinus: (after protesting the singleness of his love): ... Quem modum autem potest habere illius *pulchritudinis amor, in qua non solum non invideo caeteris, sed*
Light : a dynamic image and a metaphysical correction

The second image we must consider is the dynamic Light-image which Plotinus presents in *Ennead* VI, 4, 785. To bring out the steps in the correction-process, we divide it into three paragraphs:

Or imagine a small luminous mass serving as centre to a transparent sphere, so that the light from within shows upon the entire outer surface, otherwise unlit: we surely agree that the inner core of Light, intact and immobile, reaches over the entire outer extension; the single light of that small centre illuminates the whole field.

The diffused light is not due to any bodily magnitude of that central point, which illuminates not as body but as body lit, that is, by another kind of power than corporeal quality.

Let us then abstract the corporeal mass, retaining the light as power: we can no longer speak of the light in any particular spot; it is equally diffused throughout the entire sphere. We can no longer even name the spot it occupied... we can but seek and wonder as the search shows us the light simultaneously present at each and every point in the sphere.

The movement of thought, therefore, involves three steps: first, the presentation of an initial image of the corporeal order, the luminous core. Then comes a correction consisting in the reminder (the underlining is meant to bring it out) that light, in Plotinus' view86, is an incorporeal phenomenon. Thirdly, the radical step, Plotinus asks us to "abstract the corporeal mass", and the initial image is shattered and at the same time lifted out of the corporeal and into the intelligible realm. It is in this moment of "shatter" that Plotinus expects insight to occur.

But what was Augustine to do with this dynamic correction if he did not hold Plotinus' theory on the incorporeality of light? Paradoxically enough, Plotinus himself offered a way out, and in this very treatise. Later on he is compelled to return to his favorite image of "emanation" and submit it to a profound correction; and it is a compliment to Augustine's alertness that he seems to have grasped the relation of that correction with the one we have just seen. The changes we make in Mackenna's translation here are in the interests of a more literal fidelity to the text:

It is not reasonable, it is even impossible in our opinion, to conceive of the Ideas and Matter as lying apart (χωρίς) with Matter illumined from them as from somewhere above (πάπρωδεν ἄνωθεν πολευ), a mean-

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85. *Enneades*, VI, 1, 22.
86. See Brehier, *Enneades*, VI, p. 786, note 1; also Armstrong, *Art. cit.*, pp. 64 ff.
ingless conception, for what could the words “far” and “separate” mean here (τι γὰρ ἐν εἰς τὸ «πάρρο»... καὶ τὸ «χωρίς»;)? The theory of participation would not be the most obscure and difficult of all if it could be made understandable through such images (παραθετόμασιν).

When we ourselves speak of illumination, it is not to suggest the mode in which sensible light pours down on sensible objects (ὡς ἐν τῶν αἰσθητῶν... εἰς αἰσθητάν); but since, on the one hand, the Ideas hold the rank (τάξιν) of Archetypes with respect to material things, their images (ἐιδωλία), and since, on the other hand, there is an analogous “apartness” (τομητών οὖν χωρίς) between illumination (τὸς ἐλλαμφάνους) and illuminated, this is why we talk as we do.

But now we must speak more precisely. We do not mean that the Idea is locally separate from Matter (ὡς χωρίς δινός τοις) showing itself in Matter like a reflection in water; Matter is at all points in contact (ἔφαρμακεν) with the Idea.

It is because the Idea, say, of Fire, is not in the Matter (ἐν τῇ δήλῃ) that the Fire itself, not having become the form of Matter (ὅς ἐγενεθμένων αὐτῷ τῇ δήλῃ μορφῇ) can produce (παρεξῆς) the form of Fire in the entire enflamed mass... that single Fire... produces an image (ἐλκύων) of itself... yet it is not spatially separate (τόπω χωρίς ἐν οὗ παρέξης).

Now it would seem that what Augustine has done, with or without benefit of other Plotinian reminiscences\(^{90}\), is combine both treatments of the light-image to the point where they coalesce, the incorporeality of light becomes an unnecessary postulate, and yet the dynamic movement of correction is retained to a remarkable degree. Here is the first paragraph of his reflections on the libri platoniciorum:

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87. One can understand why the translators uniformly render this by "source of illumination", but Plotinus' exact phrasing may have been intentional; see Armstrong's explanation of his effort to purify the difficulties of his emanation image, art. cit. supra.

88. Enn. VI, 5, 8. This passage is elliptical in the extreme, and each translator does what he can with it. The most difficult portion occurs at VI, 5, 8, lines 10 ff. which Brehier renders: "Comme les choses matérielles sont des images, dont les idées sont les modèles, et comme, dans le rayonnement, l'être éclairé est séparé de celui qui éclaire, (see note 87), nous employons cette métaphore. Brehier drops out entirely the notion of ταχύς which Mackenna, for his part, stresses perhaps overmuch: "We use the phrase in the sense only that, material being image while the Ideas are archetypes, the two orders are distinguished somewhat in the manner of illuminant and illuminated." The translation we present means to conserve, without undue emphasis, that distinction of orders which seems capital to the understanding of Plotinus' thought here. For evidence of Augustine's sensitivity to this notion, see Theiler, Porphyrios, pp. 17 ff.

89. Note the distinction of cause and effect which correlates with the distinction of orders of being.

90 Such as Ennad I, 6 and V, 1, on which Henry and Courcelle place almost exclusive stress here. We do not mean to exclude such reminiscences, only to show that they do not account adequately for the movement of the thought, an integral datum of the problem.
If we compare them to similar expressions in connection with the omni-
presence difficulty in the Confessions, the terms intima, oculus animae are
Augustine's way of reminding us that his insight on this occasion was at
last a truly intelligible one. The lux inommutabilis could, at first glance,
be attached to any number of Plotinian light-images; again, it is not
impossible that other reminiscences are at work here. But Augustine's
care to warn us that he is not speaking of ordinary light (vulgaris), sensible
light (conspicuum omni carni) rings a special note. It is a light, he
continues, of a different order entirely (non ex eodem genere), — the
distinction, as Plotinus had insisted, is one of τοῖς. Supra it is, and
Augustine repeats the term several times, but not supra as one sensible
object is "higher" than another: nec tía...sicul oleum super aquam, nec
sicul caelum super terram. This would imply the spatial relation Plotinus
insists must be eliminated, bring in images of "far and separate" which
have nothing to do with the case, suppose that corporeal realities of the

91. Henry, Plotin, p. 112 (followed by Courcelle, Recherches, pp. 157-167) attaches this
term admonitis to Plotinus' admonition contained in Ennead I, 6, 9, 7: "Arave étois avροδ. It
may well have been that originally this phrase struck Augustine forcibly, but it then started
a subsequent process whereby he seems to have connected it with some analogous theme in
Christian literature or liturgy (the propeeis salutaribus admoniti of the Mass, perhaps?)
and then developed an extremely technical sense which he attaches to the term; at the end
of this process, the rapprochement to Ennead I, 6 appears almost pure verbalism. O'Meara
presents some suggestions both on the term's meaning and its possible Scriptural correspon-
dences in Against the Academicians, p. 176, note 14. For the sense of the term, compare De ord.
I, 14, where Augustine is admonished by the sound of running waters; Ibid. 25 (this time
by a cock-fight); De b. vita, 35 and Sol. 1, 2-3 both connect it with the work of the Holy Spirit;
and the Confessions use the term repeatedly to express God's inspirational action in
conjunction with the semi-occasionalistic operation of any secondary cause whatever, usually
one who is ignorant (metios: we shall meet the term again) of the effect of his action; see
Conf. II, 7; III, 8; IV, 5, 8, etc.

Courcelle, loc. cit., seems on much more solid ground in seeing the work of Ennead I, 6 in
Conf. VII, 23: there, the context is one of pulchra and deus, the movement of thought is
unmistakably ascensional, and the criterion of judgement is brought into play exactly as in
Ennead I, 6, 3, 1 ff. Henry on the other hand, must make the soul's effort at self-
purification, culminating in a vision of itself (Ennead I, 6, 9), equivalent to the mind's dynamic
effort to attain to the vision of that Light which is divine (Conf. VII, 16): this transposition
would have demanded some mental gymnastics indeed, and seems psychologically most
improbable. Add to this that it eliminates all omniresental reference from the transcendence
of spatial considerations: this reference is a constant in the Confessions, something which
Henry's prior option for Ennead I, 6 as a source does not permit him to see.

92. See notes 55 and 58, above.
same order were in question. But this light is aliud, aliud valde: its superiority is exactly as Plotinus had described it, one of true being to its image, of producer to produced, superior quia ipsa fecit me, et ego inferior quia factus ab ea.

So much for the second of Plotinus' corrections: Augustine has encased the first dynamic correction inside the process we have just examined. And he has done it, we would suggest, not through some slavish comparison of one text with the other, but precisely because he has so firmly grasped the movement of the thought and the dynamism of the image-correction involved. Note for a moment the almost feverish pace of that movement: supra...supra...non...nec...lamquam si! The phrase hurls forward with the same dynamism sensed in Plotinus' correction. A light, assuredly: but incommuabilis, supra mentem; not this lux vulgaris, — and at this point Augustine sketches his own dynamic correction in two bold strokes: first in the order of quantity, nec quasi...grandior...totumque occuparet magnitudine; then, interior to this first, a correction in the order of intensity: lanquam si ista multo multoque clarius claresceret. And both corrections culminate in that aliud, aliud valde which represents both the lunge into the intelligible and the link with Plotinus' second correction. Note too, how the grandior...totumque occuparet magnitudine reproduces the same movement of expansion whereby Plotinus' light spreads outward and finishes by "occupying the entire mass of the sphere" (ἐν τοῖς περιέχοντι φαινέων). Brief, pointed, metaphysically condensed to a degree that demonstrates a philosophical talent of a high order, Augustine's text leads us straight to the Veritas which alone truly exists, though not per finita neque per infinita locorum spatia diffusa: and the familiar terms of the omnipresence problem are once again with us95.

The "Hand" — from dynamic image to paradox

The extremely sophisticated process of "dynamic correction" we have just examined was developed by one of human history's greatest thinkers, on the basis of an immense philosophic culture and after years of teaching activity. It shows Plotinus, beyond any doubt, a true "professional". What is astonishing is that Augustine, much less seasoned, far less learned, immensely talented, doubtless, but with the brilliance that from time to time betrays the amateur, Augustine seems nonetheless to have grasped the secret of a process which may well have eluded the faithful Porphyry.

But Augustine is not giving lessons in philosophic method; nor is his

93. See the final portion of the text from Ennead VI, 4, 7, cited above, p. 25.
94. On the relation of verum esse and the Plotinian ὁρώει, see note 32, above.
95. See notes 57 and 97 above. This omnipresent reference is, once again, entirely absent from Ennead I, 6.
96. We refer the reader once more to the studies Bréhier and Armstrong have devoted to it, cited in note 12, above.
native gift the dynamic image. It is in handling paradox that he is a master of another sort: the very opening paragraphs of the Confessions, to cite but that instance, show an intensity of treatment, — image paired off against counter-image, terms colliding with their contraries, the stab of paradox everywhere, — which provides an admirable lens for metaphysical vision. This remark on the style of Augustine's imagination may help us to understand the transformation he has worked on the second of Plotinus' dynamic images, that of the "Hand". It occurs in the same paragraph of Plotinus' treatise as the dynamic light-image, and is absent, just as its partner was, from the Sententiae. Its purpose is to show that a being can control another with its energy without splitting up into parts corresponding to the parts of the extended being controlled:

A hand may very well hold an entire mass, a long plank, or anything of the sort; its power is distributed throughout and yet, it is not distributed unit for unit over the objects being held: the power is felt to reach over the whole area, though the hand is only a hand-long, not taking on the extension of the mass it holds.

Lengthen the object, and provided the total is within its strength the power extends to this new body-mass without the need of being divided into as many parts as the new mass possesses.

Now let us eliminate the corporeal mass of the hand, retaining the power it exerted: is not that power, the indivisible, present throughout that assemblage of bodies, and present in the same way to each part?

The "Head" — and a tug at the hair

Again, the three-stage process is evident: an initial image, an intermediate correction, then a correction so radical that the image shatters. Before passing on to see what happens to it in the Confessions we present the last image that concerns us: that of the Head. Almost useless to mention that it, too, is absent from Porphyry; but it is important to remark the doctrine which it is meant to illustrate: as in the finale of Ennead VI, 5, cited above, Plotinus is here insisting that we are all one being, identical with the universal being, the All. The thesis in

97. Plotinus uses the term κρασοῦ. Exactly translated, this becomes Mackenna's a control; but Picianus uses tener, Bréhier o tenir levé, and we have taken the liberty of inserting this more obvious term here. One may suppose that such a neutral term (tener) was probably present in the translation Augustine used: see the omnilentem manu veritatis, Conf. VII, 22. P. Courcelle kindly offers the information that the omnilentem with respect to God is repeated in Conf. XI, 15 — and, we would add, in explicit connection with repeated evocations of the hand image (XI, 13-15), and in the same time-eternity connection as here, Conf. VII, 21. Courcelle observes also that in Trad. in Joannes CVI, 5, Augustine assures his hearers of the equivalence between the Latin omnilentem and the Greek παραθερασον, thus returning to Plotinus' term καρσοῦ. This, however, may well be no more than a curious coincidence.

98. See pp. 18-19, above.
question is what Armstrong speaks of — precisely in reference to these same two texts — as “outspoken pantheism” 99. The consequences of that fact we shall bring to light shortly; now to the text:

We reduce to Real Being, all that we have and are; to that we return, as from that we came. We have knowledge (νοοθεμέν) of what is there, not images (εἴδωλα) or even impressions (τύπους) and to know without images is to be those things (Ει δὲ μὴ τούτο, δοτες ἑκεῖνα). We are (true beings) while we are also one with all: therefore we and all things are one (Πάντα ἄφα ἐσμέν ἐν).

When we look outside of that on which we depend, we are not conscious of that unity; we are like a single head with many visages, the many visages turned outwards, but on the inner side, all one head:

Ἐξὼ μὲν οὖν ὅραντες ἢ δεδε ἐξήμαθα ἄγνοοθεμὲν ἐν ὄντες, οἷον πρόσωπα πολλά ἐις τὸ ἔξω πολλά, κορφῆς ἑκοιτά ἐις τὸ ἔσω μίαν.

If a man could but be turned about (ἐπιστραφὴν)—by his own motion or by a lucky pull of Athena at his hair—he would see at once God, and himself, and the All: Θεὸν τε καὶ αὑτόν καὶ τὸ πάν ὁδηγαὶ 100.

There is no effort of dynamic correction here: the image is pure paradox. Considering Augustine’s penchant in that direction we must not be surprised if it enjoys a certain future in his works. Like the finale of VI, 5, it supposes the whole-part couple with frankly pantheistic implications; it presents us with an εἶσω - ἔξω that strongly recalls Augustine’s ἐντός-μέσωs; it features a conversion-image as well, one that uses the same term as before, ἐπιστραφήναι, but here the context and especially the ἕλκεις of Athena, that “tug at the hair”, gives this image of turning-about a violence that is not present in the former text. Bréhier remarks on the difference in quality between the more usual Plotinian image of conversion and Bergson’s “torsion” 101, a difference in quality that should be evident. But could it be that Bergson’s image is Plotinian after all? Granted one would never be tempted to translate the conversion image of Ennead VI, 5, 12 (or of Sententia XI) by the term torquere; but for the image we have just seen, that translation would hardly be out of place...

Conversion: fovisti caput... manu veritate

Now both of these images, we submit, are found right at the heart of Augustine’s account of his Neo-Platonic illumination. He has finally satisfied himself on the question quid est malum, and is about to come to the nub of his difficulty and resolve the unde est malum question. As if to warn us of the crucial importance of what he is about to tell us, he stops the forward progress of his account. He takes the trouble of resuming once again the difficulty which has been his throughout the Confessions:

100. Ennead VI, 5, 7, 1-14.
Non est sanitas eis, quibus displicet aliquid creaturæ tuae, sicut mihi non erat, cum displiceret multa quae fecisti.

Our complaints against evil are, therefore, rooted in our lack of "health", in our insania. And yet, whence does evil come? Augustine recalls that as a Manichee he thought of everything in corporeal terms, so that evil had to be imagined as a positive substance alongside the divine:

Et quia non audebat anima mea, ut ei displiceret Deus meus, nolebat esse tuum quidquid ei displicebat. Et inde erat in opinionem duarum substantiarum et non requiescebat et allena loquebatur.

His abandonment of Manichaeism however, did not resolve this problem: he has reminded us of that already (VII, 4 ff.) and reminds us of it once again:

Et inde rediens (from Manichaeism) fecerat sibi deum per infinita spatio locorum omnium (as against the Manichee God limited by the gens tenabraram) et eum putaverat esse te, et eum collocaverat in corde suo, et facta erat rursus templum idoli sui abominandum tibi.

The spatial imagery (of Stoicism?) imposed the same conclusion (rursus) that Manichaeism had, namely — pantheism. It is the soul (anima mea) which has become God, facta erat...templum idoli102. And

102. For confirmation, compare the "idolatry" language used of the (probably Stoic) philosophers who attributed to themselves that (divinity) which belongs to God alone, Conf. V, 5, and note that it is after a summary of Stoic imagery (logically pantheist in implication) in VII, 20, that Augustine says he fell once again into pantheism (rursus...templum idoli), i. c., into a pantheism which the Manichees (in no sense idolaters, be it noted) had formerly offered to his hunger on similar fercula; Conf. III, 10: Et illa erant fercula in quibus mihi essentur te interficere pro te sol et luna,... opera tua.... Apponabatur adhuc mihi in illis ferculis phanasmata splendida,... (Et) quia te puellas, manucubam. (Here, however, Conf. VII, 15, non manucuam). Compare Henry, Plotin, pp. 96-103; O'Meara, Oracles, pp. 164-6.

In this same connection, note that Ennead VI, 4—5 seems to furnish a more satisfying view of this suggestion for the said secundum eos which (significantly) follows immediately on the above. Henry (Plotin, p. 97, note 1) holds Augustine guilty of a "confusion" here, a suggestion rejected by F. Chartillon in Quidam secundum eos: note d'exegése augustinienne, Revue du Moyen Âge Latin, I, 1945, pp. 287-304, and subsequently explained by P. Courcelle (Recherches, pp. 130-2) in terms of his Ambrosian hypothesis. Now the term secundum is hardly ideal for among (cpr. Courcelle's entre, p. 172), and despite Chartillon's dazzling display of erudition and his somewhat cavalier dismissal of Sr. Hrdlicka's statistics, each of the texts he adduces allows perfectly for Augustine's uniform meaning, i. e. according to it. And that meaning goes well with the text under consideration here, as becomes transparent when we connect it with Plotinus' appeal to common belief at the beginning of Ennead VI, 5: "The integral omnipresence of a unity numerically identical is in fact universally received; for all men (pòvenes) instinctively affirm the god in each of us to be one, the same in all i. The indefinite term pòvenes, "men generally", would then correspond to the quidam (qui) discurunt; their belief is what is reported by the works of Plotinus; hence, punctuating and translating in terms of the solution we propose, Augustine says: Quidam, secundum eos, discurunt; and he means, "Certain persons, according to (the authors of) these books, have said that...etc." It then becomes plain why Augustine regularly abridges St. Paul's remarks to the Athenians, by dropping out the member alluding to our being of the divine race (see Chartillon, art. cit. for examples of this anomaly). He wishes to avoid all semblance of furnishing Scriptural encouragement for the pantheistic beliefs common to Stoics, Manichees, and Neo-Platonists.
Augustine has found just another reason to group Manichees and Stoics in the class of those whose carnal imaginings lead them to the *superbia* of considering their own souls as part of the divine substance\(^{103}\).

We may assume that he has recalled his difficulty because he is getting to the heart of the matter: to the vision in which he saw God and creatures in their proper relation at last.

\[
\text{Sed posteaquam jovisti caput nescientis, et clausisti oculos meos ne viderent vanitatem, cessavi de me paululum, et consopita est insania mea; et evigilavi in te, et vidi te infinitum aliter, et visus iste non a carne trahebatur.}
\]

\[
\text{Et respexi alia et vidi tibi debere quia sunt, et in te cuncta finita, sed aliter, non quasi in loco, sed quia tu es omittenens manu veritate. (VII, 20-21.)}
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*Caput, manus.* At first sight both (and especially the latter) seem merely Scriptural images and nothing more. Look below the terms, however, and the contrary is clear.

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**The "Hand" a Biblical image, "Plotinized"**

Let us stay for a moment with the image of the hand; it is charged, assuredly, with a whole array of Biblical connotations: but the "hand of God" in Scripture is never used formally and properly to symbolize God’s omnipresence\(^{104}\). As such it would serve no purpose in the context of omnipresence which Augustine has been careful explicitly to evoke, unless the Saint himself had rethought the Scriptural image in terms of Plotinus’ dynamic correction and thereby impregnated it with this new meaning, the one that is directly relevant and indispensable in this context\(^{105}\).

The other elements in the presentation only reinforce this view. Augustine has gone to some lengths to bring both images into startling collision at the heart of his account, but collide they do. Only when

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\(^{103}\) See *De moribus ecclesiae II*, 21 ff.; *Conf. IV*, 27; *V*, 5; Testard, Cicéron, I, p. 60, note 1.

\(^{104}\) In Scriptural terms, God’s "arm is long," so to speak, the hand of His power extends to the ends of the earth: but the image of the hand never bespeaks omnipresence in the formal way required here by the context which Augustine himself has prepared. See, for example, *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique de la Bible*, (Brepols) Paris, 1960, s.v. "Maine.

\(^{105}\) In general it must be said that when approaching Augustine’s imagery, an either-or mentality is to be avoided: what has struck him at a number of points is the seeming *coincidences* of Biblical and Plotinian imagery and expression, one which permits him (rather too easily at times) to suppose a fundamental accord of meaning. The "flight" image of *Conf. IV*, 7, 12, etc., reflects both St. Luke’s Prodigal and Plotinus’ *Enneda* V, I, 1, and the question then arises, which has been attracted into the meaning-world of the other? The same principle holds for strictly Plotinian imagery: Augustine combines themes and images from various treatises in a way that makes them interpenetrate. So, for instance, the universality of Providence, (*Enneda* III, 2–3), rethought in terms of omnipresence, brings forth the startling description of the sinner literally hurling against God’s omnipresent *Lex* which is none other than’s God’s own *asperitas*; see *Conf. V*, 2.
his *insania* had abated, when his eyes had been closed to the "vanity" of the corporeal world of sense and imagination\(^{106}\) is he able to form a proper idea of the *Veritas* which is his lapidary expression for the Plotinian *évno\(^{107}\); once this idea is formed, then he sees that God is not properly in things, but as Plotinus had insisted, that the very reverse is true: *in te cum tua finita, sed aliter*, not as in a place — and at this point the grammatical anomaly which has driven translators to every variety of desperate solution, is fully intended: not *manu veritatis* as one might expect, but *manu veritate*, the sheer juxtaposition of two ablatives, the one correcting the other almost to a point of cancellation, almost to the strain and rupture Plotinus produces when he calmly suggests that we "now eliminate the corporeal mass of the hand" and thereby shatters his image before our gaze.

— *The "Head" — and the parvulus conversus*

But *fovisi caput nascentiis*: have we really Plotinus' "head" here? Does not that *fovisi* refer uniquely to the curative action of the *calor Dei*\(^{108}\) which Augustine sees at work to heal his wound and reduce the swelling of his tumid face? It must be said that Augustine does have this in mind; but like any other Latin-speaker he might have another, even several other *fovere* images in mind as well. "Vous avez attiré ma tête contre vous" — Labriolle's translation appears arbitrary until we notice how artfully Augustine has evoked another image that immediately leaps to mind in connection with this pregnant term: that of *sine, gremio fovere*, the tender action of a mother, drawing her ailing, fretful child on her breast to comfort him. Can it be that in the thesaurus of Augustine's imagination, the ambivalent term "*fovere*" can sometimes mean "turn about"?

The fact is that Augustine has carefully prepared for this central section as early as Book I, where the maternal image is rarely absent, and the theological fruit of his meditations is compressed into St. Matthew's verse on the *parvulus*, (I, 30): *talium est regnum caelorum*. Conversion consists quite literally, for Augustine, in becoming an infant once again: if there is any doubt on the fact he eliminates it by ringing the changes on his hidden key-term from Book IV, 1 to Book V, 2, and nails the matter firmly down with his meditation in Book IX on God's work in his own conversion\(^{109}\). Thus, in Book IV, he begins by describing himself as a

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106. For the correlation of *vanitas, phantasma, sensus carnis, corpus* etc. see note 33, above.
107. See note 32, above.
108. Thus Pusey translates suggesting this nuance slightly: *soothed my head*. For the *calor notion*, note the (otherwise inexplicable) repetition of Ps. 18.7: *Et nemo se abscondet a calore tuo*, *Conf.* V, 1; IX, 8, (both manifestly conversion contexts). *Cpr.* VII, 11-12, where the medicinal image of *bathing* the head and eyes (another sense of *fovere*) shows this process of conversion approaching its term.
parvulus on God's own breast, sugens lac tuum\textsuperscript{110}, continues his meditation with the reminder that the hand of the proconsul was placed on his head, but not to cure him — for God alone could cure that illness\textsuperscript{111}. He was, he says, looking for beauties foras when God was all that time non longe, ever present within him, intimus cordi\textsuperscript{112}. He returns to another familiar image commanded by his key term (\textit{pullos pennis forere}) by evoking the nidus fidei where the alimentum is none other than the Pauline lac spoken of at the beginning of the book, where the wings that protect are none other than God's\textsuperscript{113}. God's is the manus medicinalis forever and everywhere at work to heal Augustine's swollen head\textsuperscript{114}, and from that healing warmth, (\textit{calor} : the most general sense of \textit{forere}) no man can hide\textsuperscript{115}. But His is also the hand that carries us : \textit{tu portabis}\textsuperscript{116} — whither? As if to answer, Augustine rings the changes on the terms vertere and torguere once again\textsuperscript{117}, reminding us that the terminus of that divine action is always a reditus ad cor which makes each of us once again the os conversum ad te, the infant quite literally re-turned to the breast of "maternal omnipresence":

... Ut exsurgat \textit{in te a lassitudine anima nostra ... transiens ad te ... et ibi resectio et vera fortitudi}.

Quo ... fugerunt (iniqui) cum fugerent a facie tua? ... Fugerunt ut ... excaecati in te offendunt — quia non doseris aliquid eorum quae fecisti — ... subtrahentes se lenitata tuae et offendentes in rectitudinem tuam et cadentes in asperitatem tuam. Videlicet nesciunt quod ubique sis, quem nulus circumscriptus locus, et solus es praesens etiam his qui longe sunt a te. Convertantur ... et quærant te ... et ecce ibi es in corde eorum, in corde confitentium tibi et proiectum se in te et plorantium in sinu tuo ... et facilis terges lacrimas eorum ... tu domine, qui fecisti, refecis et consolaris eos (V, 1-2.).

Here, then, we have the full orchestration of the \textit{forere} theme, and it is Augustine's imagination which has produced it, not our own. To assure

\textsuperscript{110} Conf. IV, 1 ; cpr. I, 30 where this image is subtly prepared ; Augustine sees in infancy the symbol, not of innocence, but of humility, so that every word of Mt. 18, 3 seems taken with a terrible literality : \textit{Nisi conversi fueritis} (thus the os conversum ad te, Conf. V, 1-2) et efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis .... The "point" of Book I seems then : God is right in treating us with the same corrective sternness as we use with our children.

\textsuperscript{111} Conf. IV, 4-5 ; Compare also II, 3 where God is \textit{potens imponere lenem manum} ; II, 6 where \textit{nulla manus} could be found in his entourage to uproot the biers which grew up over his \textit{unclean head}. Note, \textit{ibid.}, the image of \textit{perversion} and the similar scheme of imagery in V, 11-13. God's hand is imposed (a liturgical gesture seems influential here) on Augustine's proud hand, and more often than not, to \textit{turn} it.

\textsuperscript{112} Conf. IV, 25 ff.

\textsuperscript{113} Conf. IV, 32 ; cpr. IV, 1 ; also VI, 8 (context : the authority of the Church) \textit{sinus, gremium Ecclesiae} ; I, 10, 12, 30, the image of the \textit{parvulus} in the arms of his nurse ; I, 19, the invocation of God as sinus cognitionis, etc. All these elements can already be seen forming in \textit{De moribus ecclesiae}, I, 17.

\textsuperscript{114} Cpr. Conf. V, 3 and the images evoked in note \textsuperscript{111}, above.

\textsuperscript{115} See note 108, above.

\textsuperscript{116} Conf. IV, 31.

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., \textit{Visit apud te bonum nostrum et quia inde aversi sumus, pervorsi sumus, Reverlamur iam domine, ut non evertamur}. ...
us there is no mistake he repeats the performance again in Book IX\textsuperscript{118}, — all the themes and paradoxes of omnipresence are there, the contrast of inner and outer, vanity and truth, the coupling of blindness and nescientia; and blending with them, God’s omnipresent action, warming and healing and shadowing with his wings and caressing as a mother does to draw her infant to her in the turning movement of conversion. Fovisti caput: astonishing, that the word itself, so frequent in conversion contexts at Cassiciacum, seems to have been saved for this, the heart of the Confessions\textsuperscript{119}. And hardly less remarkable is the careful setting it has received. Averte oculos meas ne videant vanitatem, read the verse of Psalm 118 he is citing\textsuperscript{120}; Augustine has added the caput, modified it with a nescientia that recalls Plotinus’ ἀγνοοῦμεν from the context of the head-image\textsuperscript{121}; polarized the ambiguity of that fovere by dropping out the averta to which his readers were accustomed and which they would dimly, half-consciously supply; doubled that polarization by the unbroken movement of the entire section toward the vision which climaxes it, the vision of that iniquitas which is the primordial counterpart of conversion, that perversity of a will which twists itself (detortae) away from God, the Summa, spewing forth its intima and swelling “outward”, foras, (VII, 22). To the violence of that detorsio, Augustine wishes us to note, God replies by a gesture of maternal lenitas: tu facilis terges lacraram...et consolaris. And like a child, tired after the long day’s play at games that only leave him fretful and unfulfilled, he climbs back up at last onto his mother’s lap, tosses himself on her breast, wailing his childish complaints against the hard world; gently the maternal hand dries his tears, strokes his feverish head, closes

\textsuperscript{118} Loc. cit., note 107, above.

\textsuperscript{119} Conf. X, 50 recounts how deeply affected he was by the hymnody of Ambrose, basilica; thus Monica’s evocation of Fove precantes Trinitus (exigilantes in fide, Augustine notes in loc., De b. vitt 35; cpr. Conf. VII, 22 : fovisti... exigilav in te) comes as a fitting climax to a dialogue whose main theme is the cibus variaticus (De b. vitt 17; cpr Conf. V, 2 and VII, 16-17, 23-24). The connection of cibus and nutritio themes is due in part to another coincidence of Plotinian and Biblical Imagery: St. Paul, whose writings Augustine read intempestime after his Neo-Platonic illumination, says (I Thess. 4,7) Faci’s sumus parvuli in medio ostium tamquam si nutritus foveat filios suos. This fovere action recalls the nutritus and lae (alimentum parvulum) of the faith which the Church gives her children; its counterpart is found in the Plotinian description of the intelligible paradise (Ennead V, 5, 4, 1-2) where truth is τὸ μητέρι and nurse, existence and sustenance to them there: γενέματα καὶ τροφῆς καὶ οὐσία καὶ τροφῆ. This, however, is the cibus grandium, Truth itself (Conf. VII, 16-17) and the weakness of the fallen state requires first the cibus misceos carni of the Word made Flesh, (Conf. VII, 23-4). This same Veritas, Sapientia is the nutritus of Augustine’s soul at Cassiciacum, the philosophia (Plotinus’ Athena was goddess of Wisdom) identical with the Christian religion quae fueris nobis insita... me ad se nescientem rapitabo. (C. Acad. II, 4) an image unmistakably recalling that of the ‘head’ in Plotinus. In Philosophia’s sinus, gremium, Augustine now finds himself (C. Acad. II, 7; 1, 3) since her ubera include no age-group (C. Acad. I, 4) she it is who now (me) nutrit et foveat (Ibid. I, 3), thus discharging the function which Romanians, as minister of Providence (Ibid., II, 4) exercised when Augustine was as yet unfledged : qui cumabula, et quasi vidum studiorum meorum foras, (Ibid. III, 3). A perfectly analogous scheme of imagery is used for Licentius’ ε’ conversion to philosophy, De Ord. I, 22-24.

\textsuperscript{120} See Labriolle, Skutella in loc.

\textsuperscript{121} See text cited above, p. 30. Note the nescientem in C. Acad. II, 4 (cited in note 120, above) and the constant recurrence of the nescientia theme (man’s typical reaction to God’s omnipresence implied in the action of adominio) in the texts listed in note 91, above.
his eyes; and like a child he is soothed, *cessavi de me paululum*, stops his fretting and drowses off, *consopita est insania mea*, and awakens to the spiritual vision that the *rectitudo* he hurled against that day, the *asperitas* on which he fell, was God’s though he knew it not: *nesciunt, quod ubique sis*; and that the hand that healed, carried, soothed and comforted, this too was God’s *omnitenens*, the only truly existent, omnipresent *Veritas*.

*The “Head”, second stage: fovere becomes retorquere*

*Lenitas, faciis*: this is the God of Isaias, who cannot forget a straying child. But, cruel to be kind, that God must sometimes be *asperitas, rectitudo*. To the violence of that primal *detorsio* He must sometimes reply with commensurate violence; and no reader of the *Confessions* will have forgotten the scene when:

Narrabat haec Pontitianus, Tu autem, domine, inter verba ejus *retorquebas me ad me ipsum*, auferens me a dorso meo ubi me posueram, dum nollem me adtendere, et constituabas me ante faciem meas, ut videremus quam turpis esset, quam *distortus* et sordidus, maculosus et ulcerosus. Et videbam et horrebam, et quo a me fugerem non erat. Et si conabas a me *avertere aspectum*, narrabat ille quod narrabat, et tu me rursus *oppositebasset mihi*, et *inpingebas me in oculos meos*, ut invenirem *iniquitatem* meas et odisset. (VIII, 16.)

Here the underlining serves to make it unmistakably clear that the same basic image of *retorquere* is at work throughout, and linked with the primal *de-torsio* which is *iniquitas*. But the content reveals that Augustine has succeeded in inverting the valency of the Plotinian image entirely. What he has in fact done is this: he has given us the image of the Head in two distinct stages, the *caput nescientis* with the discrete allusion to the *foras-intus* couple issues into a vision of God as *omnitenens manus, Veritas*. The explicit mention of *retorquere* has been saved for here, where the divine action, far from recalling a mother’s tenderness, is quite obviously patterned on the almost heartless gesture of a master engaged in house-breaking a young puppy. Why has Augustine split the image in two?

*Pantheism, pride, presumption*

The reason we have already seen: both the Plotinian images of conversion in *Ennead VI*, 4—5, — the Head, and the image of return to the All in the finale of VI, 5, — were expressly meant to illustrate the “outspoken

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122. P. Courcelle remarks that *distortus et maculosus* is rather an echo of Seneca. That may or may not be: it is not, we repeat, a question of either-or; nor is it likely that the original has the overtones which the echo receives in the Plotinian setting here. See *Conf. V*, 11-13 where this image is discreetly prepared.
pantheism" of their context. Plotinus, in effect, would assure Augustine (just as the Manichees had, and the Stoics) that his soul was of the divine substance. Twice before had the idolatry of pantheism been offered him on similar fercula Aegyptiorum, but this time, he assures his reader, non manducavat.\(^{123}\)

If, Plotinus had declared, if one were to think finally without images (clausisti oculos...ne videreant vanitatem), if a man, either by his own power, or by a lucky pull from Athena, were to be twisted about, then he would see "himself, God, the All". Fovisti, retorquebas — tu autem domine! Augustine means to insist on this first point: only God's hand can heal, can turn the head, convert the man who has turned his back to the light, promote the return from foras to the interior intimo, to the cor ubi habitat veritas: but once turned, Augustine sees the manus omnitentens, that Veritas who is Filius, as well as dextera Dei, the omnipresent law and power of God from which no man can flee, — he is careful not to intimate that he sees himself!

This darkness, this non-being that wraps us round, Plotinus had assured him — and the Manichean message was essentially the same — is the "alien", a diminishing addition which is, in the last analysis, unconnected with our real identity. Here Augustine scents the absolutely fundamental difference between praesumptio and confessio: when God turns his head in that insistent movement of moral conversion we must admit we have been warned: to tum ego eram, the saint has previously exclaimed (V, 18). This distortus thing is none other than himself. He can, it is true, no more escape from himself, his own cor oblerebratum, than he can from the aeternum internum Who is God: his "interior" is now one, now the other, with an ambiguity that can sometimes bewilder. But they remain eternally distinct, they are emphatically not one and the same thing\(^{124}\).

\textit{Summary: the point of "over-proving"}

But pantheism was not the only barb contained in this treatise. If we have inflicted so lengthy an article on the Augustinian public, it is because comparison with the omnipresence doctrine of \textit{Ennead VI}, 4—5 may have far-reaching consequences on the interpretation of other aspects of St. Augustine's thought as well.

To justify the exegetical applications we intend to make of this treatise, it was not, assuredly, indispensable to furnish proof of direct dependence on Plotinus: we could have contented ourselves with considering \textit{Ennead VI}, 4—5 as one of several possible representatives of the expression which

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123. Conf. VII, 15; see note 100, above.

124. And yet, Augustine has not sufficiently purified the Plotinian position, so that the logic of this relationship still imbeds an ambiguity: see the part-whole relation in Conf. IV, 14-17. It is a question whether all pantheistic implications can be eliminated if this scheme is preserved. But there is no doubt of Augustine's intentions: he wants no part of pantheism.
that doctrine received in the Plotinian school, assumed that analogous expression could have been found in Porphyry as well, and thereby abstracted from the problem of whether Augustine drew his insights and language from the one rather than from the other. The fact that so persuasive a case can be made out for Plotinus rather than Porphyry does, however, have some importance. Aside from commending the solidity of the conclusion that Augustine's omnipresence doctrine is at least Plotinian in a broad sense, the probability that it is Plotinian in the stricter sense, i.e. drawn from Plotinus himself (read, doubtless, in a reasonably faithful translation) makes that doctrine immediately susceptible of much more precise analysis against the backdrop of Plotinus' text and its powerful images. The interpretation of the "Head" image in Augustine was presented as an instance of the exactitude with which one may follow the workings of the saint's imaged thought, once the supposition of direct dependence is granted.

To sum up that process of proof, then, we have attempted to show how important both the omnipresence doctrine and this particular treatise were in the Plotinian school: the probability is, therefore, that it existed in Latin translation. We then went on to show that Augustine's difficulty in the *Confessions* was one which prevented him from attaining to a view of God, not only as spiritual but ultimately as omnipresent, and related to the world in terms of the participation theory. Both in the description and diagnosis of his difficulty and in the response he says he found in the *libri platonici*, we attempted to uncover not merely a set of fragmentary doctrinal parallels but a tightly structured pattern of connected elements, reproducing the same pattern as one finds in this precise treatise of Plotinus as in no other. A comparison of the great images only confirmed this dependence on Plotinus, excluding Porphyry in decisive fashion.

*Repercussions: Ennead VI, 4–5 and its three barbs*

Some scholars make little secret of their skepticism with regard to such efforts at *Quellenforschung*: the writer himself has not always concealed his unhappiness at some of its methods and findings, reductions and exaggerations. And yet, Augustine's text still holds out difficulties which only a firm grasp of his thought-world and of its language can help us resolve. Nor can such efforts be considered as merely "preparatory", eventually freeing the scholar to get (at last!) to the business of unearthing what (a somewhat solipsistically conceived) "Augustine himself" is purported to mean. The Saint's dialogue with the thought of his times was entirely too continuous for that, and the same continuous dialogue is necessary if we are to understand him.

Now the treatise we have been considering contained three barbs, at least. The first was pantheism, and we have seen that by the time of the *Confessions* Augustine had firmly extracted it. The second was the refusal in principle to admit that God could "come"—not only is there no need for Him to come, it is in the logic of Plotinus' metaphysic that He may
not. In this connection, Augustine himself admits that for a time after his Neo-Platonic fervor hit him, he did not even vaguely suspect what a mystery was contained in those words, *Verbum caro factum*. The so-called "Photinianism" of Augustine's early theology of the Incarnation might well be illumined by reference to this particular treatise of Plotinus.

But there was a third barb here as well. It was not just a digressive tendency which brought Plotinus, in the course of a treatise on Omnipresence, to explain at length certain aspects of his view on the fall of the soul into the body. Metaphysic and spiritual life are too tightly knit in his thought for him to have been able to side-step the topic: it was in the very intent of his system to make them rime. And for Augustine, no less than for Plotinus, philosophy always feeds the spiritual life, always includes a religious and anthropological reference.

When, therefore, Augustine takes his image of conversion from this treatise; when he tells us that all sin implies a turning from a common good to a good which is proper, private, "ours" in an exclusive sense; when he explains that it was this vainglorious desire to have something *proprium* which plunged us from the heights into the *ima*; when, even as late as the *Confessions*, he describes *iniquitas* as a turning-away from the *Summa* to the *ima* of corporeal creation, and our punishment as a confinement to "particularity," the question arises: to what extent are we entitled to read into his language the meaning that language must have if he has really accepted the anthropology that he found imbedded in *Ennead VI, 4—5*? In short, is the man who without exaggeration can be called the Father of Occidental Christianity, in the *Confessions* whose influence on western spirituality has been literally incalculable, cryptically advising us that we are all so many souls, fallen from a Plotinian pre-existence? The question must be posed squarely, answered responsibly. But it is not a question one man may hope to answer definitively. We hope shortly to offer at least a contribution toward that answer. And if the relation we have been led to uncover with *Ennead VI, 4—5* is sound, if the pattern method we have applied here may legitimately be extended to other Plotinian treatises as well, the answer we propose must be in the affirmative.

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126. Since the soul is one of the hypostases belonging to the intelligible world, he must eliminate all notion of its entertaining a relation of "form," "proper" to the body in which (after its passive descent) it would seem to find itself. See *Ennead VI, 4, 14—16.*
128. *De Quant. Animae 78.*
129. *Conf. VII, 32.* These last three texts are closely related.