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## AUGUSTINE'S NOTION ON THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

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### ABSTRACT

*The students are both active and passive, voluntary and involuntary, non-temporal and temporal. This is a critique on inauthentic forms of life (hermeneutics of suspicion) and to liberate new forms of praxis (hermeneutics of restoration or reinvigoration). One must practice a kind of warning heedfulness and suspicion. Augustine postulated a doctrine of evil as "privatio boni". He ascribes all evil, both moral and natural, directly or indirectly to the unfavorable choices of free rational beings. Free will is the cause of our doing evil and that thy just judgment is the cause of our having to suffer from its consequences. When the will, which turns to its own private good or to anything exterior or inferior, sins, the heart excessively loves bodily pleasures to the neglect of temperance, In these ways a man becomes proud, inquisitive, licentious. When "libido" becomes a habit, these aqueous analogies on old shady loves present the consequence of incapacity to resist the very powerful burgeoning passions within. "Thus did my two wills, the old one, the other new, the first carnal, and the second spiritual, contend with one another, by their conflict they laid waste my soul." – Gal. 5:17. This is Augustine "moral contradiction" within the human soul. The flesh at war contrary to the Spirit. Love is considered by Augustine to be the binding power of the will (Confession xiii, ix, 10). At a crucial point of suspension, Augustine argues on his "old shady loves" still holding him back, while he is being beckoned by the vision of continence, his new love.*

**KEY WORDS:** *shady, evil, privative, carnal, spiritual*

### INTRODUCTION

This research study was part of the arguments tackled on a research study entitled "**Student's Shady Loves**" conducted through personal one on one conversation and immersion. There are 50 respondents. Of the 50 respondents only 7 admitted they smoked, tried alcohol and drugs. This study aims to analyze the experiences of the students shady loves that impels them to little by little behoove into a state of moral degeneration and their climactic awareness on transformation from carnals to spiritual. Some students honestly expressed their experience of so many confusing problems that led them to smoke, take alcohol and even drugs to free themselves from severe anxieties even just for a short moment of time.

Other students struggled to the so-called inclination toward evil.

Human beings are evil by nature. Evil is grounded in humanity. It is a matter of freedom. The paradox is we do evil. Evil is the meaning of evil because it is the work of freedom. Freedom has the meaning of freedom because it is capable of evil. There is no evil being, there is only the evil done by me. The predisposition to good coexist the propensity to evil. There is the transition from the innocence of the creature to guilt. Guilt leads to the accusation without accuser, a tribunal without a judge, a verdict without author. Guilt has then become the irreversible misfortune, a condemnation has become damnation. Virtues are the fruit and seed of a morally good acts, ordering our passions and

guide our conduct according to reason and faith disposing all the powers of the human being for communion with divine love. Virtues alludes to whatever is true, just, pure, lovely and gracious. It reinvigorizes us to say no to whatever enslaves us such as the vice of indulgence, vainglory, impatience, passivity, imprudence, injustice, softness, stubbornness, etc. An ethical vision of evil is a vision in which freedom is revealed in its depths as power to act and power to be, the freedom that evil presupposes is a freedom capable of digression, deviation, subversion, and wandering. St. Thomas does not see evil as illusory but as negative not as cruel but as something other than a being, entity, essence, form or nature. It is an abuse more exactly a privation or deprivation of good. Augustine's post conversion focuses on the reinforcing of his will. It is undergoing spiritual revolution. It exceeds all that his imagination and understanding could compass. The presence of such exceeding majesty fills him yearning soul seeking his love, protection and healing.

### **Augustine's Doctrine on Original Sin<sup>1</sup>**

Original sin is a situation wherein the entire human race finds itself (*massa damnata*), but from which only some individuals are rescued by an utterly gratuitous act of God's mercy. God desires the salvation of all in Christ; only those who are justified by faith and baptism are actually saved. This doctrine contradicted Pelagius. For Pelagius, infants could not be guilty.

Augustine linked original sin with concupiscence (i.e., the human person's spontaneous desire for material or sensual satisfaction). It is an effect of original sin and is transmitted through sexual intercourse, i.e., the libido in the parents' love by which a person first comes into existence. Concupiscence infects every human act; all of our deeds are in some sinful. Augustine failed to differentiate the intrinsic difference between original sin and personal sin. For Augustine, both kinds of sin are the same in the next world.

### **Augustine's Metaphysics of Evil**

The above question furnishes the rhetorical notion. Concerning Augustinian schematization of the metaphysics of evil, Ricoeur examined *Contra Secundinum* (section 12) that proclaims evil as the "propensity of what has more being toward what has less being." Such is the doctrine of evil as a deprivation of the good, a deficiency of being, and it is, related to "the degree of being" that Ricoeur point out. For Ricoeur, there is the polarity here between and the doctrinal concoction available for considering it as sacred. Concerning Neoplatonism, Ricoeur commented: "nothing, designates here not an ontological counterpole to being, but an existential

direction, the opposite of conversion." But if we commences by acceding the primordial dehiscence between being and the one, the unity of thought, whether this be grasped as constituting in a silent centrality or in the corporation of a speculative process of expounding, is not an impending reprisal by the greater degree identification of a particular "nonbeing."

Hence we may consider the symmetry and repleteness of the second step in Augustine's structure of the "logical symbol" of original sin. This second step tremendously enlarging the first "ethical" shift of amplifying evil to personal accountability is a reply to the immoderate accountability, the voluntarism, of Pelagius. Inasmuch as this voluntarism is the hyperbolic enlargement of a transition already underway in the "ethical visualization." Augustine helped establish, the repudiation of it mounts up compulsion within Augustine's own cogitation. While he was following the voluntaristic line in opposition to the Gnostics, the very experience of his conversion and his realistic experience of the withstanding desire and habit to good will lead Augustine to discord with all his efficacy the Pelagian vision of freedom." Facing the paradox of compulsion, Augustine only establishes a symbol. Augustine thought of his immature will locating an incomprehensible onus on his soul and taking guilt of having always already sinned, of being, even while ontologically good, defiled in the profundity of his self-activity. Such symbol was operative solely as a monument, within the rational and protorational, to the prerational and even the irrational. It unconceals dimensionalities for hermeneutics and reavers their expedient proximate associations in hermeneutics.

Reading Kant, Ricoeur suggests a Philosophy of a hermeneutics of religion because of the incongruous nature of the roots of evil, of the roots of Christ innate goodness in our hearts, of an overflowing grace conferring the confession of belief and lastly of the institution that confers visibility to the kingdom of God on earth, is inscribed outside the circumscription of reason.

The emergence of hermeneutics became possible due to the affinity between the demands of philosophy and the reinterpreted subject matter of faith. The value of this acquiescence is thus a controversial connection, aggravated by the intractable results of fundamental evil, which at its climax in the heterogeneous stand of inauthentic veneration and service with their habit of obsequy and hypocrisy.

### **Evil as Privatio Boni**

The value of Augustine's Trinity for Christian spirituality resides in his reflection. Within

the Trinity is synthesized the economy or order of God's action in behalf of the human race: creation, salvation, and glorification. The Trinity is seen as a paradigm of a supreme Being who is equally and immutably good and the interrelationship of all, that were not created supremely, equally, nor immutably good, for the basic unity of reality and together they constitute a universe of admirable beauty. Augustine's reading of the Neoplatonists gave him a radically different intellectual framework within which he could understand God and evil in a new light i.e., he could start seeing God as a spiritual substance and evil as privation of the good.

Even evil, in the universe, commends the good more eminently. Good things yield greater pleasure and approbation when compared to the bad things. Even the heathen acknowledge the Omnipotent God. God does not involve any evil in His works unless as the supreme Good, He is capable to bring forth good out of wickedness. The very existence of physical evil is one of the most pervasive arguments against the existence of God. Physical evil such as toxoplasmic encephalitis or lupus or whatever illness of a child are nothing but the privation of health. When the child becomes extensively healthy, illness dissipates. For such evil is not a positive substance or force. It is essentially the malfunctioning of something that in itself is good. For "*omnis natura bonum est.*" The illness is an imperfection of the bodily substance, which, as a substance, is good. Evil is nothing in itself. It is an accident i.e., a privation of that good which is health. Thus, when considerable health is effected, illness can no longer exist at all in the state of health.

The central theme of Augustine's thought is that the whole creation including the material world is good since the Creator of all nature is Supremely good. But the nature is not supremely and immutably good as the Creator of it. The created universe is an immensely adequately and variegated realm of forms of existence. It comprises multitudinous host of greater and lesser, higher and lower goods, each having its appropriate place in the hierarchy of being. By "*Privatio,*" Augustine does not allude to a simple deficiency of goodness e.g., a sour grape fruit tree lacks the spiritual qualities of an angel. It is not an evil to have been created as a lesser rather than a greater good – as a "pandaca pygmaea fish" e.g., instead of my "Princess" cat, or a cat instead of me, a human being. The principle of plenitude posits a positive value in the existence of less exalted as well as more exalted forms of creaturely being in a well-ordered scale. The good, however, in created things can be diminished and augmented. For good to be diminished is evil. However, something must remain of its original nature as long as it exists at all. To be an inferior creature is not to be evil but only to be a

lesser good. It is good that there should be things of all kinds, shaping a universe of astounding intricacy that ponders the Creator's goodness from many angles and in every possible shape and color. No matter how insignificant a thing may be, the good, which is its "nature", cannot be demolished without the thing itself being demolished. Uncorrupted thing is commendable.

When can evil arise? Evil commences when members of the hierarchy ceases to function in the Divine scheme to be what it is meant to be. Such malfunctioning cannot be considered as a separate entity. On the contrary, it is the absence of proper being in a creature. Evil comprises no positive nature but "*amissio boni*" has taken the name "evil." *Evil is "deprivatio," "corruptio," "vitium," "defectus," "indigentia," and "negatio."* For Augustine, evil is simply the corruption of "*modus,*" "*species,*" or "*ordo.*" An evil nature is a perverse nature. When a thing becomes putrid, its corruption/decay is an evil because it is a privation of the good. Where there is no privation of the good, there is no evil. Where there is evil, there is a conforming diminution of the good. While a thing is being disintegrated, there is something considerable in it of which it is being deprived. In this process of corruption, if something of its being cannot be depraved, we can call this "*natura incorruptibilis.*" If there is no obstruction to disruption and dissolution, the possibility of the unceasing prevailing goodness cannot be further deprived. If it is total annihilation, it is no longer an entity at all. Corruption cannot consume the good without also consuming the thing itself. *Every "natura" is good,* a greater good if it cannot be induced to decay, a lesser good if it can be. When a thing is consumed by corruption, the thing and the corruption totally dissipates, for it is nothing in itself. It comprises no subsistent being to exist.

It follows that there is no evil if there is nothing good. Here, Augustine typifies the secondary and dependent as well as the negative and privative character of evil. Nothing evil exists in itself, but only as an evil aspect of some actual entity. A good that is deficient of evil aspect is entirely good. Where there is some evil in a thing, its good is defective or defectible. Thus every being is good. When a defective thing is bad, then evil is good, that only what is good is ever evil and that there is no evil apart from something good. Perhaps, it is due to "*omnis natura bonum est.*" Thus, there can be nothing evil except something good. Thus what we call evil in nature is regarded as consisting in the disintegration of something, which is good e.g., when a living organism, such as rice, corrupts or goes bad, it does tend towards dissolution. The rice tends to cease to exist – not indeed absolutely, for the matter comprising it enters into other combinations and

becomes part of the earth or of another plant or animal body. This process is a description of evil as *a loss of (modus, species or ordo)*. *Debilitating illness* is a loss of normal bodily order and functioning. Volcanic eruptions, droughts, tornadoes, cyclopes, hurricanes, tidal waves and planetary collisions are regarded as breakdowns in some imagined ideal ordering of nature. Here, the evil state of affairs can plausibly be conceived as the collapse of a good state of affairs. The quality of evil is not ascribable to physical disintegration but impinges deleteriously upon the realm of the personal or perhaps upon the sphere of animal life. It is in fact not loss of (modus, species or ordo) per se that is evil, but only this considered as a cause of pain and suffering. The consequences make us stigmatize their cause as evil and it is positive. They are at least as emphatic and intrusive realities of experience as are pleasure and happiness. Pain and pleasure is experientially co-ordinate, and it would be as arbitrary and as insufficient to imagine pain as a privation of pleasure as to represent pleasure as a privation of pain. Augustine postulating a doctrine of evil as “privatio boni” is the metaphysical presupposition and parasitic rather than the primary and essential. From this metaphysical analysis, it does not follow that evil is empirically a fact of experience. As an element in human experience, evil is affirmative and efficacious. Empirically, it is not merely the absence of something else but a reality with its own distinctive and often petrifying quality and potency.

Concerning the moral dimension, God cannot will the irrational because His nature is Truth and Righteousness: it is the irrationality that causes moral revulsion. God only allows people to prefer evil and evil to occur to them. God may even permit people to prefer evil ultimately i.e., to damn themselves. It is in moral evil that the problem of evil culminates – man discarding God and the Divine law in order to elevate himself in God’s place and create his own right and wrong. Genesis succinctly delineates man’s predicament as a fallen creature. The problem of evil is ultimately the problem of man’s existence. Since man is an entity, is an evil man, “natura mala?” Bad man is not bad because he is a man, nor is he good because he is wicked. It is not commendable to call evil good and the good evil. Man is an entity of God’s creation. Thus, every entity, albeit a defective one, insofar as it is an entity, is good. Insofar as it is defective one, it is evil. This method involving deception, guile, chicanery, manipulation and vehemence are totally incongruous to the good.

From this perspective of *the Law of the Excluded Middle*, two contraries cannot coexist in a single thing e.g., no weather is both gloomy and bright simultaneously; no body is, at the same time

and place, both white and black, nor disfigured or deformed and well formed simultaneously. While good and evil are not contraries, they cannot only coexist, but the evil are not contraries, they cannot only coexist, but the evil cannot exist at all without the good, or in a thing that is not a good. On another plane, the good can exist without evil. For a man or an angel could exist without imperfections whereas there cannot be wickedness and tempestuousness except in a man or an angel. It is good to be a man, good to be an angel; but evil to be wicked. These two contraries are thus coexistent. If there were no good in what is evil, then the evil simply could not be. It needs mode to exist, any source from which corruption springs. Evil is deduced in the good. If they are parasitic on something good, they are not anything at all. There is no other source for an evil to originate or develop. Insofar as it is an entity, it is unquestionably good. If it is corruptible entity, it still has no mode of existence except as an aspect of something that is good. Only by debasing something good can vitiation, iniquitousness and nefariousness inflict damage.

### **Evil Willing**

Augustine ascribes all evil, both moral and natural, directly or indirectly to the unfavorable choices of free rational beings. An “improba voluntas is the cause of all evils.” *The cause of evil is the defection of the will* of a being that is mutably good from the good, which is immutable. En “*L’oeuvres de Saint Augustin*” edition of the Confessiones 7-8, les etapes de la conversion morale. He writes: *Free will* is the cause of our doing evil and that thy just judgment is the cause of our having to suffer from its consequences. (Conf. Vii 3,5). As he succinctly states it in his commentary on Genesis liber, i.3, “omne quod dicitur malum, aut peccatum esse, aut poenam peccati.”

The efficient cause of the evil will is not efficient but deficient. Defection commences to have an evil will. The will could not become evil, were it is unwilling to become so. Its defections are not to evil things, but are themselves evil. It is contrary to the order of nature. The primary sin, which makes angels and man evil, leads to further punitive evils of pain and sorrow. It is an “*aversio a Deo, conversio ad creaturas.*”

The will which turns from the unchangeable and common good and turns to its own private good or to anything exterior or interior, sins. It turns to its private good, when it wills to be governed by its own authority; to what is exterior, when it is eager to know what belongs to others and not to itself; to inferior things, when it loves bodily pleasures. In these ways a man becomes proud, inquisitive, licentious, and is taken captive by another kind of life

which, when compared with the righteous life we have just described, is really death.

What makes free beings perversely turn to the private conception of evil? According to Augustine's "*doctrine of deficient causation*," the evil will have no positive or efficient cause but only a deficient cause. Evil willing is a self-originating act; it lies concealed within the mystery of finite freedom. Avarice is not a defect inherent in gold but in the man who ordinally loves gold, to the detriment of justice, which ought to be maintained in incomparably greater consideration than gold. Neither is luxury the fault of lovely and alluring objects, but of the heart that excessively loves sensual pleasures, to the neglect of temperance, which attaches us to objects lovelier in their spirituality, and more delectable by their incorruptibility. Nor yet it is bragging the fault of human approbation, but of the soul that immoderately prefers the applause of men, and that makes light of the voice of conscience. Pride is not the fault of him who commissions power, nor of power itself, but of the soul that is excessively enamoured of its own power, and abhors the more just dominion of a higher authority. Consequently he who excessively loves the good which any nature possesses, albeit he procure it, himself becomes evil in the good, and wretched because deprived of a greater good.

In Augustine's explorations of a paradigm of the human will in action, the first feature that emerges is the power of the will to form "*consuetudines*." An act of the will brings the "*consuetudo*" into existence and "*consuetudine non resistitur, facta est necessitas*." An act of the will, habit, and necessity – in this way is the chain of habit, which is forged link by link by his "*mea ferrea voluntate*." This is a "*dura servitus*" when "*libido*" becomes a habit because of a "*voluntas perversa*." This enforced subjugation is discordant because there is a "*voluntas nova*" taking shape, yet the new will is not able to overcome the "*vetus*." This gives rise to a conflict between the two. Thus it is incongruous.

"Thus did my two wills, the old one, the other new, the first carnal, and the second spiritual, contend with one another, by their conflict they laid waste my soul." – Gal. 5:17

Thus Augustine posits a "moral contradiction within the human soul, not an encounter of opposing substances. In Rm 7:22-23 (Cf. Confessiones viii, v, 12), Augustine identifies the law of his members with "*violentia consuetudines*," and this force of habit drags the "*animus*" and holds it fast. This occurs unwillingly (*inivitus*) and, more strongly, by its "*eo merito*," since by willing the soul has fallen into this habit.

Thus, in short, first, the will is efficacious in shaping habits "at will," but not to alter or exclude them so easily. Second, this elevates to the

contradiction of the will with itself that Augustine first describes in Pauline concepts / language as the flesh at war contrary to the Spirit, from which Augustine infers that "to will and be able are not the same." Third, Augustine transposes the Pauline entire detachment within the will itself in terms of *velle and nolle*. Fourth, the contradiction of the will with itself emerges because the will does not will completely or totally, thereby allowing "space" for the emergence of the counter-will (the will by its own power, subverts its power, that is, the impotence of the will arises from the incomplete exercise of the will). Fifth, the resolution of this paradox comes about through love. Love is considered by Augustine to be the binding power of the will (Confession xiii, ix, 10). At a crucial point of suspension, Augustine argues on his "old loves" still holding him back, while he is being beckoned by the vision of continence, his new love. Here, Augustine realizes that he's in a purgative state. The power of the will can be practiced fully and completely when Augustine wills "to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, making no provision for the flesh and its desires." With this act of the will, Augustine loves his "new love" more fully and completely than his "old loves" whose voices he still hears.

### ***The Principle of Plenitude***

Why God should have created a world of complexity and variety, with its inevitable inequalities of creaturely equipment and capacities? Why did God make such variously imperfect creatures? Why did he fail to give men the wisdom and intelligence of angels? Why is there a world rather than only the highest heaven of heavens? Two different answers have been given to this question. Plato, and which descended through neo-Platonism to Augustine and to the common stream of western thought suggested the first one. The universe is a "*plenum formarum*" in which the range of imaginable variety of kinds of living things is exhaustibly exemplified and that no genuine potentiality of being can remain unfulfilled, that the extent and plenteousness of the creation must be as great as the possibility of existence and commensurate with the productive capacity of a "perfect" and inexhaustible source, and that the world is the better, the more things it comprises.

The other answer is of less famous philosophical lineage. It sees the intelligibility of the world primarily in its relation to man. The world has been created as a relatively autonomous sphere in which man might exist as free moral beings, responding to the tasks and challenges of their common environment and being summoned to serve God as He reveals Himself to human faith in the midst of life's mingled meanings and mysteries.

Actually, Augustine was influenced by Plotinus who depicted the Ultimate One as flowing out in the creation of the reality next below itself in the order of possible beings, and this in turn as producing the next below itself, and so on in a series of emanation filling the whole realm of the possible down to matter, which is so far removed from the One that it represents the vanishing point of being, in the very border of non-being.

Augustine's thought in his conception of **the universal scales of being**, comprising of higher and lower goods each with its proper place and dignity in the scheme of creation. Augustine states very concisely the inner logic of the visible to the invisible, there are some things better than others; and for this purpose are they unequal, in order that they might all exist.

The question, "Why when God made all things, did He not make them all equal?" lessened the Plotinian argument to the epigram, *non essent omnia, si essent aequalia*: "if all things were equal, all things would not be; for the multiplicity of kind of things of which the universe is constituted – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and so on, down to the creatures of the lowest grades – would not exist."<sup>2</sup>

Among things that have life, the sentient are higher than those, which have no sensation, as animals are ranked above flowers. And among the sentient, the intelligent are among those that have no intelligence – men, e.g., above cattle. And, among the intelligent, the immortal, such as the angels, above the mortal, such as man. These are the gradations according to the order of nature: but according to the utility each man finds in a thing, there are various standards of value, so that it comes to pass that we prefer some things that have no sensation to some sentient beings.

Contemplating nature urges very distinct discretions from those required authoritatively by the indispensability of the needs, or the desire of the voluptuous; for the former give attention to what value a thing in itself has in the scale of creation, while indispensability deliberates how it meets its need; reason directs for what the mental light will judge to be true, while pleasure directs what pleasantly titillates the body sense. But of such consequence in rational nature angel's rank above men, yet by the scale of justice, good men are of greater value than bad angels.

It is with allusion to the nature and not to the wickedness of the devil. Wickedness can be a vice only where the foregoing nature was not vitiated. Vice is in contrariety to nature, that it cannot but damage it. Departure from God would be no voice, unless in a nature whose property it was to abide with God. Even he wicked wills is a strong evidence of the goodness of the nature. God is the supremely

good Creator of good natures. While creatures make an ill use of good natures, He makes a good use even of evil wills. Accordingly, He causes the devil (good by God's creation, wicked by his own will) to be cast down from his high position, and to become the mockery of His angels i.e., He caused his temptations to profit those whom He wished to injure by them.

God in his goodness created him good. He yet had already foreseen and fixes how He would make use of him when he became wicked. Thus, the oppositions of contraries lend beauty to the language, so the beauty of the course of this world is attained by the opposition of contraries, classified by eloquence not of words, but of things. God is set against evil, and life against death. So is the sinner in opposition to the godly. So look upon the words of the Most High, and these are two and two, one against another.

Augustine's aesthetic theme is his affirmation of faith that conceived in its totality from the ultimate standpoint of the Creator, the universe is wholly good; for even the evil within it is made to share to the intricate perfection of the whole. Augustine cogitates on the "pulchrum" and "aptum" of creation, of considering the universe as an ordered work of art, in which the gradations are a reverable as the contrasts. Even hell, the damnation of sinners, is an act in the "ordination malorum," an absolutely necessary part of the work of art.

The very reason why some things are inferior is that though the parts may be imperfect the whole is perfect, whether its beauty is viewed stationary or in movement. The black color in a picture may very well be beautiful if you take the picture as a whole. Evil as a substance that poisons the fire that burns, and the water that drowns are evil only in a relative sense. Substances are not poisonous or harmful in themselves but harmful only when brought into conjunction with other substances with which they disagree.<sup>3</sup>

To God there is no such thing as evil, and even in His creation taken as a whole, there is not, because there is nothing from beyond it that can burst in and destroy the order, which thus has appointed for it. But in the parts of creation, some things, because they do not harmonize with others, are considered evil. Yet those some things harmonize with others and are good, and in themselves are good. All these things, which do not harmonize with each other, still harmonize with the inferior part of creation, which we call the earth. The fact that earth, dinosaurs (dragons), and all deeps, fire, and hail, snow and vapors, strong winds, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars, beast and cattle, creeping things, and flying fowl; things of the earth, and all people, princess, and all judges of the earth; both young men and maidens, old man and children" (Ps 148:7-12)

praise the name of God. In Ps 148:1-4, we can read that: in heaven “all thy angels praise thee, O God, praise thee in the heights, and all thy hosts, sun and moon, all stars and light, the heavens of heavens, and the waters that are above the waters praise thy name.” Thus things above were better than those below, yet that all creation together was better than the higher things alone.

### **The Aesthetic Paradigm<sup>4</sup>**

The order of creatures advances from top to bottom by just grades. He who affirms that a thing ought to be distinct from what it is, either events to append something to a higher creature already perfect, in which case, the deficiency is moderation and justice, or he desires to annihilate the lower creature, and is thereby wicked and grudging. Whoever conceives that any creature ought not to be is no less wicked and grudging, for he desires an inferior creature not to exist, which he really ought to commend. For example, the moon is certainly far inferior to the sun in the brilliance of its light, but in its own way it is beautiful, embellishes earthly opaqueness, and is fit to nocturnal utilities. For all these things he should admit that it is commendable in its own order. If he declines that, he is foolish and contentious. Instead of saying that the moon should not exist he said that the moon ought to be like the sun not there should be no moon, but there should be two suns. In this there is a double error. He desires to append something to the perfection of the universe, by desiring another sun. But he also desires to gain something from that perfection, seeing by desiring to do away with the moon.

Indeed it is not a kind of dissatisfaction about the moon because though its light is less, it is not unhappy, his inconvenience does not concern the deficiency of lustre in souls but their misery. I for one admire the beauty of “moonlit paradise.” When I was a child many times I was waiting for God in my garden hoping I might be able to see Him in the sky and be with Him in my moonlit paradise. There is no question of happiness or unhappiness concerning the blithe of the moon and the sun. Though they are celestial bodies, they are nonetheless bodies so far as their light is concerned. For it is perceived by the corporeal eyes. Corporeal things cannot be happy or unhappy, albeit they can be the bodies of happy or unhappy creatures. Thus it is not conceivable for us to surmise a perfect universe unless it possesses some greater things and some smaller in perfect relation one to the other. Here, consideration of the differences between souls is indispensable. In them we will discover that he misery they lament has this edge. The fact that there are souls, which ought to be miserable because they willed to be sinful shares to the perfection of the universe. God ought not to have

made such souls, that He ought to be praised for having made other creatures for inferior to miserable souls.

If the completion of the universe demands of our being miserable, it will lose something of its perfection if we should become eternally happy. If the soul is save by sinning, our sins also are necessary to the perfection of the universe, but souls as such are necessary which have power to sin if they so will, and become miserable if they sin. If misery constantly recurs after their sins had been wiped out or if they were misery before there were sins, then it might be right to say that the order and government of the universe were at fault. If there were sins, and no consequent misery, that order is equally dishonored by deficiency of equity. But there is happiness for those who do not sin; the universe is perfect; and no less perfect because there is misery for sinners. There are souls whose sins are ensued by misery and whose equitable behavior is ensued by happiness – because it comprises all kinds of natures – the universe is always complete and perfect. Sin and its punishment are not natural objects but states of natural objects, the one voluntary, and the other penal. The voluntary state of being sinful is dishonorable. The penal state is imposed to lead it into order, and is therefore in itself not dishonorable. Indeed it restrains the dishonorable state to become concordant with the honor of the universe, so that the penalty of sin amends the dishonor of sin.

### **NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Eugene Portalie, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*. Agostino Trape, *Saint Augustine: man, pastor, mystic*. Henry Chadwick, “The Formation of Augustine’s Mind: Cicero, Mani, Plato, Christ” in *Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). See *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. See also Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism* (San Francisco, Harper, 1994), 187-188.

<sup>2</sup>George Tyrrel, *Essays on Faith and Immortality* (London: Edward Arnold, 1914).

<sup>3</sup>St. Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1871), book XI, 22.

<sup>4</sup>St. Augustine, “Free Will” book 111 chapter 24-26, trans. Burleigh in *Augustine’s Earlier Writings, Library of Christian classics* vol. Vi (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953).

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