

AUGUSTINE'S *CONFESSIONS* AND THE CONTROVERSY WITH JULIAN OF ECLANUM: MANICHEISM REVISITED

'In my end is my beginning': that is the overwhelming impression one is apt to bring away from a re-reading of the controversy between Augustine and Julian of Eclanum. The crucial matters at stake had long ago been settled for Augustine. The terms of the debate itself had crystallised as early as his *Confessions*. It is this anticipation of the end — the debate with Julian — in the beginning — the *Confessions* — that this paper explores*.

Much of Augustine's later intellectual and spiritual career is present in germ in the *Confessions*. The work is a new beginning for him; the 390s were 'a difficult and frustrating period' for Augustine, 'when one literary project after another fell to pieces in his hands as a kind of desperate writers' block settled on him'¹). 'What frees his pen', O'Donnell concluded,

for the prolific career and the masterworks we know was ... the writing of the *Confessions* itself: he discovered how to make 'confession' in his special sense come to life through his writing. This work liberates him: after the *Confessions* begins the torrent of his great works, including (significantly) a series of works re-beginning and then completing triumphantly attempts that had gone to nothing in the years before the *Confessions*.

*) The original version of this paper was given as a Mead-Swing Lecture in Oberlin College, Ohio, in October 1987. I wish to record my thanks to the College and the organisers of the lectures.

¹) The quotation is from J.J. O'Donnell's forthcoming commentary on the *Confessions* (Typescript p. 24): 'He wrote in that period his worst book, *de utilitate credendi*, — unconvincing, insincere, poorly organized — and managed to complete only his commentaries on the Sermon on the Mount and on Galatians [while throwing up his hands at the thought of giving Romans a similar treatment]'; and n. 64: 'Note that Gn. litt. imp. (393/4) went astray, to be revived and redone differently and better after conf. in Gn. litt.; c. ep. Don. (a systematic refutation barely begun and not surviving) leads nowhere, until the div. qu. Simp. put him on the right track (that leads directly to conf., and beyond conf. to both trin. (see below) and to the anti-Pelagian controversy. The c. ep. fund. undertook in 396 to refute a central Manichee text: after another failure, the idea lay dormant, until the massive c. Faust. of c. 399 finished the job. Finally, doct. chr. itself was a high and serious attempt to deal with the problems of preaching; unfinished (until 427), its task was performed much more humbly by the cat. rud. of 399-400'. The second quotation in the text is from p. 25.

The writing of the *Confessions* not only liberated Augustine; it also pointed the way forward. It is not my intention now to look for a hidden, or even an overt, agenda in that work for the sequel of his literary career. That could be done, and the key to the puzzle of the last three Books of the *Confessions* especially has, rightly, been sought in considering them as part of such an agenda. But I wish neither to solve the puzzle, nor to catalogue the items on the agenda. Rather, I shall take yet another look at the book as an intersection between Augustine's past and his future. I want to focus on his understanding of his own self in the first place, and, in the second, on the implications of that self-understanding for his thought on being human. This, as any reader of the *Confessions* knows, is of course a highly artificial distinction. Augustine's extraordinary genius for universalising his experience made any reflection on his own self a reflection on being human. In the *Confessions*, as O'Donnell says²), Augustine has 'devised an idiom by which it is possible to pray in a literary medium'. And not only to pray; for in universalising his experience, Augustine draws the reader of his book not only into his own prayer and confession, but also into his reflection. It is, in Paula Fredriksen's words³), 'theology in a new key', in which Augustine is 'using his own past experiences as privileged evidence for his new theological propositions'.

On a previous occasion I suggested that Augustine's break with Manicheism was the most profound of the series of upheavals that punctuate his spiritual life⁴). That had taken place over a period of time; and when Augustine embarked on the writing of the *Confessions*, the final break with the sect lay more than ten years behind him. The crucial months were those weeks that followed Augustine's hearing Ambrose's Lenten sermons in 386. It is from those he had learnt to appreciate the fatal flaw of Manichean teaching: the easy way it offered of resolving the problem of evil now seemed too easy, for it did away with personal moral responsibility. 'I still held the view', Augustine wrote in the *Confessions*⁵),

²) *Augustine* (TAS 739. Boston, Ma., 1985) 83.

³) 'Beyond the body/soul dichotomy: Augustine on Paul against the Manichees and the Pelagians', *Rech. Aug.* 23 (1988) 87-114, at p. 109.

⁴) *Conversion and disenchantment in Augustine's spiritual development* (The Augustine Lecture, 1984. Villanova 1989).

⁵) *Conf.* V. 10. 18; cf. VII. 3-14. 20; VIII. 5. 11-9. 10. 22; IX. 1. 2. On its background in Ambrose's preaching, Pierre COURCELLE, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, (Paris, 1950) 100.

that it was not we that sinned, but some other nature sinning in us ... I very much preferred to excuse myself and accuse some other thing that was in me but was not I ... But in truth, I was one whole: it was my impiety that divided me against myself.

This discovery, I shall suggest, is the thick knot in which were tied together the threads from which, when disentangled, would be woven of a great part of Augustine's later thought. From here on, the idea of the unity of the self divided only by tensions within it runs like a guiding thread through the work, and gives Augustine the language and the imagery for describing the torment of his own inner conflicts, especially at the climax of hesitation preceding his final conversion.

What Augustine had come, finally, to reject was the Manichean explanation of evil. He could no longer see human life in terms of a conflict of two natures fought out on the stage of the human personality. He had come to see himself not as the victim of forces alien to his true self, but as a free agent accountable for his actions. I will not dwell here on the consequent enlargement of Augustine's conception of his own self-hood, a conception which he came to explore and to depict with unrivalled force in the *Confessions*. The self had to embrace the vast areas of darkness for which the Manichean conception had no room. Augustine had come to terms with the layers of shadow impenetrable to the sharp beam of consciousness. Book X of the *Confessions* contains his exploration of the new depth of the self that his discarding of the narrow Manichean concept now allowed him to acknowledge. He had come to accept himself — and that, of course means, by implication, the human personality universally — as ultimately problematic: 'I have become a question to myself' (X. 33. 40).

The conflicts previously projected outside the self were now internalised. Let us pause for a moment to dwell on this: for it brings us to the heart Augustine's concept of man, of freedom, and also — this is what needs stressing — of the problems that would haunt him for the rest of his life. What had brought him to internalise the tensions in the self had been the dawning conviction that the self was a responsible agent, not a passive resultant of external forces. And, as we shall see, it is just this conclusion that was to lead to his being charged with denying human freedom. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the greater part of Augustine's intellectual energies were henceforth to be poured into grappling with the problems raised for him by his new understanding of the self.

It was not, as we all know, entirely new. In 396 Augustine had

received the questions from Simplicianus about the right interpretation of Saint Paul; and as a succession of important and distinguished studies have taught us, it was Augustine's re-reading of Paul, especially the Letter to the Romans, and his renewed meditation on it that led to the shaking of the foundations of his spiritual edifice⁹). The 'writer's block' with which I began, that had settled on Augustine in the years that preceded the writing of the *Confessions*, is plainly the result of the uncertainty and disorientation brought on by a total change of direction and perspective. The *Confessions* is not only Augustine's account of the journey of his own self-discovery: it is a part, and a large part, of that journey itself. Writing the book liberated him from this state of confusion, and so launched him on his re-working of his thought. The re-discovery of Saint Paul in 396 and the labour on the *Confessions* from 397 to 401 are the crucial time of the gestation not so much of new ideas in Augustine's mind, as of a whole perspective within which his ideas had to take their place. We have learnt to appreciate the significance of this 'Pauline conversion' as a watershed across Augustine's mind, but much work still remains to be done on how Augustine rebuilt his intellectual universe in the new perspective. It is clear, at any rate, that Paul was both the agent of upheaval in Augustine's thought and the thread that gave continuity to it. A full study of what Paul meant to Augustine is still waiting to be written. Nothing could give us a better clue to his spiritual and intellectual development.

Note that there is an interval of about ten years between Augustine's break with Manicheism and his re-discovery of Saint Paul. The story of his final rejection of Manichean determinism re-told in the *Confessions* is a little later still; and it bears the imprint of his recent discovery. It was in his answers to Simplicianus that he had come to see inner conflict in Pauline terms; or, put more precisely, inner conflict had not previously posed a serious problem for him. The comparative tranquillity of the process of Augustine's conversion as it appears in the Cassiciacum dialogues contrasts sharply with the torment of the inner

⁹) The most important: F.E. CRANZ, 'The development of Augustine's ideas on society before the Donatist controversy', *HTR* 47 (1954) 255-316 (= *Augustine: a collection of critical essays*, ed. R.A. Markus (New York, 1972) 336-403); Paula FREDRIKSEN (Landes), *Augustine on Romans* (Texts and translation, 23; Early Christian literature series 6. Society of Biblical Literature, Chico, Cal., 1982); 'Paul and Augustine: conversion narratives, orthodox traditions, and the retrospective self', *JTS* n.s. 37 (1986) 3-34; and 'Beyond the body/soul dichotomy' (cf. above, n. 3).

struggle as re-told in the *Confessions*. I do not intend to go over this contrast yet again. It has been amply brought out by a succession of scholars⁷). It is not that Paul is absent from Cassiciacum; but he fits comfortably into a classically conceived world rationally ordered, a world in which human fulfilment can be achieved through the intellectual and moral resources of properly educated human beings. Since 396, however, all that had changed. The lust of the flesh against the spirit and of the spirit against the flesh were now at the centre of Augustine's mind, firmly placed there by Simplicianus, and there at the centre they were to remain. In the *Confessions* this is the context in which the climax of Augustine's struggle is explicitly set (VIII. 5. 11).

Paul had not, of course, been a stranger to Augustine. Before this time Augustine had been wrestling with the problem of reclaiming Paul from his Manichean opponents. One of their favourite proof-texts was I Corinthians 15. 50: 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God', and Augustine frequently had to vindicate against their attacks the flesh and its title to the Kingdom⁸). And now Paul himself seems to have sabotaged Augustine's campaign to reclaim him from the Manichees, with his insistence on the captivity of the flesh to sin, its conflict with the spirit, the liability of its lust to rebel and of man to reject the grace of liberation from its power over him. In his later years his Pelagian opponents quickly seized on this insistence on the sinfulness of the flesh. Here was Augustine's Achilles' heel: here, they said, he betrayed himself as the Manichee he had never really ceased to be. It is important to appreciate the irony of this charge. For initially Augustine had seen Pelagius as an ally in the fight against Manichean determinism. As late as 415 he treated Pelagius with great respect. He described him as a man 'burning with ardent zeal against people who excuse the sinful human will by appealing to human nature'⁹). 'Excusing the sinful will by appealing to human nature' is exactly what Augustine had been doing until he learnt the truth from Ambrose. (Above, p. 952-3, n. 5.) Then Augustine had come to acknowledge himself as one whole, 'divided against myself only by my own impiety'; and

⁷) Best: FREDRIKSEN, 'Paul and Augustine' (above, n. 6); and Peter BROWN, *Augustine of Hippo* (London, 1967), chapters 11 and 15.

⁸) Noted by H.-I. MARROU, 'Le dogme de la résurrection des corps et la théologie des valeurs humaines selon l'enseignement de saint Augustin', *REAug* 12 (1966) 111-136 (= *The Resurrection and saint Augustine's theology of human values*, Villanova, 1966), n. 20.

⁹) *De nat. et grat.* 1. 1. On Augustine's initial admiration for Pelagius, changing into disapproving reserve, see *De gest. Pel.* 23. 47; *De pecc. mer. et rem.* III. 1. 1.

now, especially in the attack on him by Julian of Eclanum, that profession of the wholeness of a self undivided by nature, torn apart only by inner tensions, was turned into a symptom of crypto-Manicheism. For to profess an undivided self, one which is not the resultant of conflicting forces external to it, pulling it in different directions, is, of course, necessarily, to confess *inner* conflict. Augustine was paradoxically exposed to the charge of having remained a Manichee by the passionate stress he laid on the inescapable corollary of his radical rejection of Manicheism. He was too well aware, especially since his re-reading of Paul, of the conflict between the law of the members and the law of his mind. In the debate with Pelagius and his followers it took a central place. In all the hundreds of columns of the controversy with Julian, Romans 7. 15 must be the scriptural text most often referred to. 'I shall throw it in your face', Augustine assures Julian (somewhat unnecessarily) 'as often as you say these things'¹⁰).

This was the last great debate of Augustine's life, sustained over more than the ten years preceding his death. The logic of this central issue in the debate is very clearly presented, and repeatedly, in the course of that depressing dialogue of the deaf, the polemical writings of Julian and Augustine against each other. Augustine asserted an evil — the penalty of Adam's sin — which did not reside in any individual's freely willed act but held all men under its sway; Julian and his supporters assimilated this to the Manichean assertion of an evil nature¹¹). Augustine's answer was to distinguish¹²):

The Manichees assert an evil nature ... from which all evil flows; whereas Catholics, which you refuse to be, assert a nature created good, but vitiated by sin, in need of healing by Christ ... Wherefore Manichees think that evil has to be separated from good in such a way that the evil be removed outside; but we, though we separate evil from good intellectually, we do not believe that which is called evil to be any nature (*substantiam*). It is to be removed from those who are liberated from it not in a way such that it will be outside them, but it is to be healed within them so as to cease to be.

What Augustine is always longing for, since that moment in 386 is 'our healing, not the separation of an alien nature'¹³): we catch the echo of

¹⁰) *Op. imp.* V. 60.

¹¹) E.g. *Ib.* I. 24. References could be multiplied *ad nauseam* to the points made here and the next 4 notes. I refrain.

¹²) *Ib.* III. 37.

¹³) *Ib.* VI. 8.

Augustine's crucial discovery retold in the *Confessions*: 'In truth I was one whole' (see above, p. 952-3, n. 5). Ambrose's preaching had led Augustine to that discovery as a young man in his early thirties; now, in the last weeks of his life, it is Ambrose's authority he will always recall to Julian. Ambrose retained the crucial place in Augustine's mind that he came to occupy in Lent, 386. To answer Julian, he refreshed his memory by consulting a now lost work of Ambrose's that he had read long ago¹⁴). True, Augustine also often appealed to others — John Chrysostom, Hilary, Gregory of Nyssa most often; and the Pelagians, too, liked to invoke Ambrose's authority. The significance of this choice of authorities has not, however, been properly appreciated, especially when taken together with a significant omission: that of Jerome.

This was more than chance omission, and more than avoiding reliance on an authority he knew would be suspect to his opponents. It is worth dwelling on it for a moment. On the morrow of writing his *Confessions*, in 401, Augustine had written a pair of short treatises, one devoted to marriage, the other to virginity. They preceded by a few years the great upheaval in his own views on marriage and sexuality which took shape in the course of his meditation on the story of Adam recorded in that great work, the literal commentary on Genesis. The two little treatises contain hints of the uncertainties about sex that Augustine was already aware he would need to sort out. One thing, however, is plain: they were intended as an attempt to undo the damage he thought Jerome had done some ten years before with his attack on Jovinian's views on these matters. They were a thinly veiled reply to Jerome and a decisive rehabilitation of the good of marriage against Jerome's intemperate attack. To Pelagius, there was not much to choose between Jerome and the Manichees; and here Augustine could sympathise with his Pelagian opponents. His own doctrine developed along very different lines. True, Augustine went on paying sometimes almost fulsome compliments to Jerome; but looking through them one is struck to notice that Jerome's views on sex, marriage and virginity are always passed over in a silence that speaks more loudly than would have Augustine's, no doubt, inevitably polite words. At one point in

¹⁴) On Augustine's knowledge of Ambrose's *De sacramento regenerationis sive de philosophia*, see COURCELLE, *Recherches* (above, n. 5) 174, n. 1. For the fragments and discussion, see G. MADEC, *Saint Ambroise et la philosophie* (Paris, 1974), 249-337. I owe the reminder of the importance of this work to Dr J.J. O'DONNELL. P. ROUSSEAU, 'Augustine and Ambrose: the loyalty and single-mindedness of a disciple', *Augustiniana* 27 (1977) 151-165 for a general discussion of the personal relationship.

their controversy Julian brought in Jerome. It is hardly a matter for surprise that Augustine, though he said he would be willing to defend Jerome's orthodoxy against the imputation of Manicheism, did not do so. He was always prepared to reprehend, he said, what he disapproved in the views of his friends as in his own. But Jerome's views could be left out of the debate. He would rather appeal to the authority of Ambrose¹⁵).

Ambrose had awakened him to the crucially important divide between Manicheism and Catholicism: the unity of the self as against the duality of two natures. Now it was Ambrose again whom he liked to use to define the gap between Catholicism and the Pelagians. What the latter denied, as Augustine saw it in this last debate, was the evil that infected man's nature. It had been created good, but its goodness was tainted by the evil which was at the root of the inner conflict that afflicted all humanity since Adam: the conflict responsible for men not doing the good they would, but doing the evil they would not. Ambrose had asserted this; here was the great divide, with Ambrose and Augustine on the one side, Pelagius and Julian on the other. The universal power of evil over all humanity, independent of and prior to any individual act responsibly and freely done by individuals, that was what the Pelagians refused to recognise, unlike both the Manichees and the Catholics. To this denial of an evil other than evil done, Augustine simply opposed the observable facts of life¹⁶):

Whence all these many defects (*mala*) with which we see [infants] come into the world, who cannot yet use freedom in willing? Whence the lust (*concupiscentia*) whereby the flesh lusteth against the spirit and draws it to commit sin, unless the spirit lusteth more strongly against it? ... Whence the many and great defects of mind, or of body, with which we see many being born? Whence the troubles and calamities afflicting infants who cannot willingly sin? Why, when the use of reason dawns, do mortals have so much pain in learning to read, or any of the arts, that to the hardships of learning we add the punishment of beatings? ... How will you reply to the Manichees?

Augustine had his own answer to these questions. Its name was 'original sin'. Happily we are not concerned here with the details of that answer, nor the implications he drew from it that so offended Julian, and many after him, or the cost to his own reflection on human freedom.

¹⁵) *Ib.* IV. 88-9; cf. 121-122.

¹⁶) *Ib.* VI. 5.

What I shall consider in the rest of this paper is Augustine's notion of the human self as it took shape from that first moment in 386 when he discarded the Manichean conception as intolerably narrow and unable to accommodate either personal responsibility for sinning or the obscure depths within the self in which sin was rooted. How, especially, did his awareness of the urge to sin, an awareness greatly sharpened by his conflict with the Pelagians, affect the subsequent development of his idea of the self?

Julian and Augustine both realised that the test-case crucial for their respective views of the human self was sexuality. There is now a real danger of this subject falling into the grips of a crisis of over-explanation. Having myself contributed to that crisis I shall here restrict myself to the sketchiest of indications that our theme requires¹⁷). Augustine changed his mind about sexuality quite late in life, in fact in the years immediately following the writing of those twin treatises on marriage and on virginity in 401. Until then he had thought, that, like the other ills the human race is heir to — pain, illness, death, conflict, war, inequality and the rest of the irresolvable tensions in the self and in society — sex, too, was among the consequences of the first sin. In this he was in agreement with most Christian thinkers of his time. Augustine had his doubts about this even at the time he wrote the treatises to rehabilitate marriage against Jerome. From then on, however, he came to the view — perhaps, if we accept an inspired suggestion made by Elizabeth Clark, prompted by Jovinian — that sex was part of the original nature God had given to men and women. It was not sex that was a result of sin, but the

¹⁷) My views are summarised in 'Saint Augustine: virginity and marriage', in *CCR* 5 (1987) 12-17; cf. John RIST, 'Saint Augustine: virginity and marriage - 2', *ib.*, 57-64. On the controversy between Augustine and Julian, Peter BROWN, 'Sexuality and society in the fifth century A.D.: Julian of Eclanum', in *Tria corda: scritti in onore di Arnaldo Momigliano*, ed. E. Gabba (Como, 1983) 49-70, and now his *The body and society* (New York, 1988) 387-427, and Elizabeth A. CLARK, 'Vitiated seeds and holy vessels: Augustine's Manichean past', *Ascetic piety and women's faith. Essays in Late Ancient Christianity* (Lewiston/Queenston, N.Y., 1986) 291-349. Among the most illuminating discussions are her 'Heresy, asceticism, Adam and Eve: Interpretations of Genesis 1-3 in the later Latin Fathers', *ibid.*, 353-385; '«Adam's only companion»: Augustine and the early Christian debate on marriage', *Rech. Aug.* 21 (1986) 139-162; and Paula FREDRIKSEN, 'Beyond the body/soul dichotomy: Augustine's answer to Mani, Plotinus and Julian' (above, n. 6). A good general account is E. SCHMITT, *Le mariage chrétien dans l'oeuvre de Saint Augustin. Une théologie de la vie conjugale* (Paris, 1983). An important study bearing on the background: P.F. BEATRICE, *Tradux peccati: alle fonti della dottrina agostiniana del peccato originale* (*Studia patristica mediolanensia*, 8, Milano, 1978).

impoverished way of its functioning in the fallen, sinful heirs of Adam and Eve. This was the view he had to defend against the attack by Julian, who accused him of 'condemning marriage by his teaching on original sin'¹⁸). The experience of sexuality now became the paradigm for Augustine's understanding of fallen human nature. Sex in man's sinful state is irrevocably infected with what Augustine calls *concupiscentia carnis*, perhaps still best translated as 'lust of the flesh'. This lust removes areas of man's own self from his control. Man ceases to be fully accessible to himself, just as Adam ceased to be accessible to God. In paradise, Augustine wrote in a recently discovered letter¹⁹),

the flesh would never have lusted against the spirit, but rather it would have obeyed the will in a miraculous peace, so that it would never rear its head except when required, never worm itself into the mind engaged in illicit thoughts, and there would be nothing blameworthy that the reins of self-restraint could not control or the works of virtue conquer, but it would always follow the will of its user, when required, in an easy and concordant harmony. But now it is not like that...

Indeed it isn't. The Fall is re-enacted in the daily experience of the loss of this concordant harmony. The dislocation within the self results from and reflects the dislocation in the primordial community between man and God. In his sexual experience man's estrangement from God is reflected in the estrangement from his own body. What is reprehensible in sex and the cause of shame in its exercise is not its existence, but its tendency to run out of control, to escape rational direction. Thus it reveals at its sharpest the break in wholeness, the ground of the inner conflict between the law of God in the inward man and the law of sin in the members (Rom. 7. 22).

For Julian sexuality, being part of man's created nature, could only be unambiguously good. What he upheld was a view of sex as essentially biological. He did not take into account the radical novelty in the world brought about by the existence of a creature which was more than animal, capable of transcending its own biological nature. Against Julian, Augustine elevated sex onto a fully human, personal plane. It could not be discussed simply in biological terms; it was part

¹⁸) *Retr.* II. 53.

¹⁹) *Ep.* 6*. 8. This, among the newly discovered (Divjak) letters, is one of Augustine's clearest succinct statements on this subject. On its date and significance, see Gerald BONNER, 'Some remarks on Letters 4* and 6*', *Les lettres de Saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak* (Paris, 1983) 155-164.

of a rich and complex psychological life, subject to all the tensions imported into its texture by sin. 'Sex to Julian is reproductive biology; sex to Augustine is eroticism'²⁰). For Augustine the disruption of the self as experienced in sex came to epitomise the disruption of man's primordial community with God, with his fellows, and with himself.

Augustine transposed into terms of conflict within the self the conflict which Manichean teaching projected onto two separate natures in permanent conflict. He had been committed to precisely such a transposition by virtue of his recognition, long ago, of the radical inadequacy of Manichean doctrine. In his later work his old discovery that 'in truth I am one whole' (above, p. 952-3, n. 5) is rounded out. It was not Ambrose's faith that made Augustine whole; but it was what he had learned from Ambrose that enabled him to understand his wholeness. The growing insight into sexuality and the fully elaborated theology of 'the lust of the flesh' gave him a firmer and deeper grasp of the nature of that whole 'which was I'. Hence in all this controversy we are never very far from that first step, the discovery Augustine had made with Ambrose's help back in 386.

The whole man, that is to say, soul and body, belongs to its Creator by nature (*substantia*); it is only subjugated to the power of the Devil by vice, which is no nature (*substantia*); and yet, still subject to the same power of the Creator to which the Devil too is subject²¹).

The opposition of 'flesh' and 'spirit' is not one of two natures, but a moral conflict, the result of a fracture across the self.

We [Catholics] say, with Ambrose, that this ugly discord between flesh and spirit was imported into our nature by the sin (*praevaricationem*) of the first man; whereas he [the Manichee] asserts that flesh and spirit oppose each other in consequence of a nature alien to us, always evil, engulfing us. Hence we pray our Saviour for the healing of this, our sin; whereas they pray that that alien nature, which is altogether incurable, be removed from us²²).

Augustine was working against the clock to defend himself against

²⁰) FREDRIKSEN, 'Beyond the body/soul dichotomy' (above, n. 3), 112: cf. H. MCCABE, *God matters* (London, 1987), 94: '... the very same developments that made the human animal the first murderer made it also the first lover'. Augustine was clearly aware of what was at stake: e.g. *De nupt. et conc.* II. 7. 17; *C. Iul.* V. 16. 62.

²¹) *Op. imp.* III. 46.

²²) *Ib.* V. 30. Cf. *De Gen. ad litt.* X. 12. 20 for a clear statement in a non-polemical context.

Julian's slander. It may be that the very last words we have from his pen are his final attempt to indicate precisely where the lines ran that divided his teaching from that of the Manichees on the one hand and from Julian's and the Pelagians' on the other²³). But the controversy with Julian was not an affair confined to the study. It spilt over into Augustine's popular preaching²⁴):

The fact that the flesh lusts against the spirit is not something outside me, for I am not made up of a nature contrary to it; and that I do not consent to its urges, that too is something within me ... What I long for is to be healed as a whole, for I am one whole: not that my flesh were for ever removed, as if it were something alien to me, but that it be healed, one whole with me ...

Here we strike, as so often in Augustine's writings and sermons, once more, the old Ambrosian, bedrock of his faith.

That very great scholar, E.R. Dodds, once remarked on 'the recurrent ground-theme of the *Confessions*': *duae voluntates meae confligebantur inter se* («two wills were at war within me»)²⁵):

Just as we do not face the surgeon's knife unless there be something seriously amiss with our bodies, so no man faces the anguish of self-analysis unless there be grave trouble within his soul;

and he went on to express the view that

it is difficult to believe that this man had found within the Church the true mental balance which he had failed to find outside it. It will be said that these are no more than the ordinary excesses and follies of his age; and there is, of course, some truth in the contention. But the psychologist will read such symptoms, both in the individual and in the age, as evidence of the persistent though hidden activity of the old Adam...

Augustine would assuredly have assented to the last of these statements — and perhaps to rather more as well, though he would not have thought it necessary to go to a psychologist to read the symptoms. But it is important not stop at 'grave trouble within the soul'. Read again some of Augustine's Easter sermons: it is hard to resist the impression that they owe a great deal to a deepened sense of the disfigurement that

²³) *Op. imp.* VI. 41 (the last paragraph of the work) and *Ep.* 224 on the circumstances of its composition.

²⁴) *Sermo* 30. 3. 4.

²⁵) 'Augustine's *Confessions*: a study of spiritual maladjustment', *Hibbert J.* 26 (1928) 459-473; quotations from pp. 460, 472.

sin has wrought in created nature. This is what gives such power to the resurrection hope that has found its voice, for example, in that sermon which H.-I. Marrou chose to illustrate the vibrant artistry with which Augustine could speak of bodily beauty, Sermon 243²⁶):

If even in this present weakness of the flesh and even in the frailness of our members such a loveliness of the human body is apparent — a loveliness which entices the voluptuous and incites them to seek it ... How much more [beauty will appear] there where there is no lust, no corruption, no deformity, no depravity or dire necessity?

There is something more here than 'grave trouble within the soul'. It is the fact which Augustine had come to appreciate as hauntingly as Luther and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and to state with full clarity in the *City of God*²⁷) in his critique of the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*: 'if this word is to be understood to mean living without those feelings which occur in defiance of reason, to disturb the soul, it clearly is a good greatly to be desired; but it is not one for this present life'. To seek to escape the passions and conflicts of this present state — 'will not anyone judge that to be an insensitivity (*stupor*) worse than any moral failing?'. The experience of tension precedes the experience of its resolution and gives it meaning. It is plain to any attentive reader of Augustine that his lyrical praise of bodily loveliness could have been purchased only at the price of a much enhanced sense of the trouble within the soul. The point is made by the very terms in which the comparison is presented between present physical beauty — *nunc* — and its eschatological perfection — *ibi*: the *nunc* is no more and no less than what Augustine had learnt to spell out in the course of his long, and often dreary, debates with the Pelagians. Perhaps it was worth getting to grips with that grave trouble within the soul in order to come to a true appreciation of the loveliness of the body. And the threads that went into weaving the texture of Augustine's last self-defence against Manicheism had been drawn from that knot that we found tied in the *Confessions*.

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²⁶) *Sermo* 243. 8. 7. Cf. MARROU, 'Le dogme' (above, n. 8) 126-127. See also *Sermo* 241. 2. 2; *Enarr. in Ps.* 64. 4: *ibi enim erimus toti, id est integri in resurrectione justorum: ibi reddetur votum totum nostrum, non sola anima sed ipsa etiam caro jam non corruptibilis ...*, and *Enarr. in Ps.* 84. 10 on *Pax*.

²⁷) XIV. 9. 4. On the development of Augustine's view on this question, see the illuminating discussion by Marcia L. COLISH, *The Stoic tradition from Antiquity to the early Middle Ages*, vol. 2 (Studies in the History of Christian thought, 35, Leiden, 1985) 221-225.