Whose self? Which unification? Augustine's anthropology and the psychology-theology debate

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Abstract

The aim of this essay is to bring the philosophical theology of St Augustine, and in particular his anthropology, into fuller dialogue with contemporary psychology, and to examine how psychology and theology might benefit from such an engagement. A further aim is to show that intra-psychic accounts of Augustine's Confessions are insufficient on cultural-psychological, philosophical and theological grounds. To the extent that the modern concept of 'pure nature' is incompatible with Augustine's philosophical theology, attempts to develop naturalistic intra-individual, psychological accounts of spiritual change will necessarily be limited once the full 'ecstatic' orientation of human existence is factored out. The picture of the person that emerges from naturalistic accounts of any mystical theologian may be plausible within the framework of a classical modern, post Cartesian concept of scientific rationality, and potentially useful for some purposes, but it will be over simplified and never wholly sufficient to account for the potentialities of human existence.

Keywords: Augustine, Psychology, Psychodynamics, Philosophy, Theology, Anthropology, Cognition, Culture, Naturalism, Heidegger, Temporality,

Informed debate between psychology and theology is still in its infancy, but postmodernity, for all its faults, has made dialogue much easier. As a result recent years have seen a considerable increase in co-operative ventures between the two disciplines. The current situation could be described as a point of transition between initial attempts to demonstrate the basic compatibility of theological and psychological accounts of the person and those seeking to establish deeper connections and interpenetration.[1]

[1] See Fraser Watts, *Theology and Psychology* (Basingstoke: Ashgate, 2002) for a good example of compatibilism, and Peter Hampson and Eolene M. Boyd-MacMillan, 'Turning the Telescope Round: Reciprocity in Psychology-Theology Dialogue', *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 30 (2008), pp. 93-113, for recommendations of a wider engagement.

We suggest that there are three key aspects involved in moving the debate forward.
(1) The need of a more detailed exploration of the possibilities for dialogue between selected areas of both disciplines.[2]
(2) The need to establish the architectonic basis on which the two disciplines might mutually engage and move at their boundaries from an intra-disciplinary connection through to an interdisciplinary co-operation, and even possibly to a transdisciplinary integration.[3]
(3) A currently under explored aspect is the extent to which the debate as a whole needs to be further contextualised as part of a wider discussion about the relation between faith and reason, and hence with philosophy. This would require debate and some agreement as to the theological nature, scope and limits of human rationality, and its relation to the Divine,[4] and potentially necessitate making explicit not only the intellectual allegiance of interlocutors, but also their own personal commitments.

A number of publications have recently proposed ways in which (1) and (2) can be mapped out, as part of a more general consideration of how rational traditions might interact. For instance, Hampson and Boyd-MacMillan have shown how it is possible to use Alasdair MacIntyre's[5] cultural-historical understanding of the rationality of rival traditions to establish a framework within which theology can learn from psychology and psychology from theology at points of epistemic crisis.[6] In a

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[2] Examples already exist. See for example Gerd Theissen, *Psychological Aspects of Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1987), but there is considerable scope for wider and more detailed interactions.
[3] K. Helmut Reich, 'Extending the Psychology of Religion: A Call for Exploration of Universals, More Inclusive Approaches, and Comprehensive Models', *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 30 (2008), pp. 115-134, especially pp. 122-123.
[4] Itself part of the wider debate on faith and reason.
[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).
[6] We can extend this account in various ways, and, though this is not our immediate intention here, it is interesting at least to list these future possibilities since they do form an implicit backdrop to what follows. So, to extend the idea of rational traditions, these are inevitably the source of background assumptions or social imaginaries which may be conflictual. For instance psychologists may uncritically adopt an ontological naturalism not recognising why anything but a naturalist account of the person may be needed, while some theologians may fail to see why any naturalist account might even be necessary. Second these assumptions are brought to bear in conversations which may be of varying quality. Some may be based on prevarication and pretence, others on opinion, yet others, based in fact and scholarship, will allow more purpose driven dialogue to take place. Third, conversations can vary to the extent that they make use of so called 'integrative complexity' and 'relational and contextual reasoning' (RCR). Thus Reich, *op. cit*., has argued that high levels of RCR are needed to negotiate the apparent paradoxes of interdisciplinary debates. Fourth conversations are likely to vary as a function of the fiduciary commitments of the participants and the extent to which they indwell one or other rational tradition. Fifth, debates are not without emotional, ethical and moral dimensions and at best are characterised by a hospitable engagement of one tradition with the other.

subsequent paper Peter Hampson has briefly alluded to the need to factor in the background assumptions of interlocutors more formally and indicated the possible utility of Taylor's recent analysis of 'social imaginaries', explored in *A Secular Age*, in this respect.[7]

This essay begins with the assumption that while the precise parameters of such debates have yet to be determined, the fact that the liminal space[8] in which they occur is bounded by at least the first two parameters is starting to be established. A further assumption is that it is only the exploration of paradigmatic historical examples within this space which will now help establish its dimensions more clearly. Given this, the aim of the present essay is to bring the philosophical theology of St Augustine, and in particular his anthropology, into fuller dialogue with psychology; to examine how psychology can benefit from such an engagement; to explore briefly two recent examples of such interaction; and to examine their implications.[9] A further move, effected toward the end, is to argue that Augustine's position is one that not only challenges and extends current psychological assumptions on human rational grounds, but also suggests that all human rationality is in a dependent relationship with the divine *sapientia*. Although knowledge of created things, *scientia*, is to be distinguished from wisdom, *sapientia*, since 'the Apostle teaches when he says "To one indeed through the Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge, according to the same Spirit",'[10] it is interesting to note the interdependence of the two.

Two points are worth making here: first we will treat modern psychology[11] as emerging from the epistemological turn of post Cartesian philosophy, and hence leading to psychology's empirical emphases. To this extent, psychology is simply another example of *scientia*, the knowledge of created things. It is effectively an

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[7] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, HUP, 2007), pp. 171-176; Peter Hampson, 'Psychology and religion: continuing an interrupted conversation' *Irish Journal of Psychology* 29 (1) (2008), pp.139-152, (invited contribution to special issue celebrating the life and work of Liz Dunne).

[8] See Hampson and Boyd-MacMillan, 'Turning the Telescope Round', pp. 94-95 for a brief discussion of liminal space in interdisciplinarity.

[9] Donald Capps, 'Augustine's *Confessions*: The Story of a Divided Self and the Process of its Unification' *Archive for the Psychology of Religion* 29 (2007), pp. 127-150. Ellen Charry, 'Reviving Christian Psychology', *Fuller Theological Seminary Integration Symposium,* Fuller Seminary, Oakland, Pass. CA, 2007.

[10] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, (Edited by Gareth Matthews, Cambridge, CUP: 2002), XII, 15, 25.

[11] Which, contrary to frequent false assumptions in theology, is wider than psychoanalysis of course.

applied aspect of a distinctive tradition of philosophy – 'classical modern philosophy with data' we might say.

Second, and following from this, any particular claim about the relation between theology and *philosophy* will have testable implications for the relationship between theology and *psychology*. Thus, if, for example, it is maintained that theology can place philosophy within a wider context in which human rationality is not pre-eminent, then the limits of psychological accounts become apparent too. If, after careful reflection, however, it were subsequently found that contemporary, secular psychological accounts of the person are not only necessary but sufficient then this would raise doubts, through *modus tollens*, as to theology's power to so position philosophy.[12]

Forgotten founding father

Psychology is an adolescent discipline and adolescents often fail to understand their parents and appreciate their wisdom. One such unappreciated parent is St Augustine (c 354-430). Augustine is not a central figure in modern psychology, though it has been claimed that he is the first real experimental psychologist.[13] The survey has yet

[12] Of course to find that psychology is limited, and then to claim that theology is *therefore* justified in asserting the limits of rationality, would be logically invalid. It might be that psychology needs to improve its methods or extend its scope, for example, and that scientific reason alone is powerful enough to do this without assistance from philosophy or theology. However, we maintain, from a wider coherentist point of view, that the weight of additional circumstantial evidence against unbridled rationality (or better 'ratiocination') from other fields is so compelling (through inference to the best explanation) that our rejection of 'ratiocination' need not depend on the status of psychological accounts. Instead, the rejection of ratiocination on wider grounds *predicts* that psychological explanations which assume reason's limitless power will be found to be limited, as indeed we claim they are. If, however, we are shown to be incorrect, and psychology, as currently constructed, turns out to be stronger in explanatory power than we claim, then arguments for the limits of scientific rationality are weakened. Space prohibits a full exploration of this trope but related 'coherentist' aspects of theological method are explored in Paul Murray, *Reason, Truth and Theology in Pragmatist Perspective* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005). For an exploration of the limits of ratiocination on wider philosophical grounds see Johannes Hoff, *Das Subjekt entsichern. Zur spirituellen Dimension des Subjektproblems angesichts der Dekonstruktion des cartesianischen Wissenschaftsparadigmas*. In: Heinrich Schmidinger; Michael Zichy (Ed.), *Tod des Subjekts? Poststrukturalismus und christliches Denken* (Innsbruck - Wien: Tyrolia 2005), pp.213-242, and starting from the philosophical foundations of modern mathematics Johannes Hoff, *Kontingenz, Berührung, Überschreitung. Zur philosophischen Propädeutik christlicher Mystik nach Nikolaus von Kues* (Freiburg/Br.: Alber, 2007), 85-148, 196-225, 283-301.

[13] Ellen Charry, 'Reviving Christian Psychology, Lecture 1: Psychological Theology', *Fuller Theological Seminary Integration Symposium,* (Fuller Seminary, Oakland, Pass. CA, 2007), see also Ellen Charry, 'Augustine of Hippo: Father of Christian Psychology', *Anglican Theological Review* 88 (2006), pp. 575-589.

to be conducted, but were one to poll a random sample of contemporary psychologists, those who admitted to knowing anything of Augustine may well hold a series of highly problematic, though to a certain extent 'typically modern' prejudicial views.[14]

In so far as he is considered at all, Augustine is likely to be seen as dualist in his approach to mind, thus pre-empting the discredited Cartesian 'inner theatre' model.[15] He is often perceived as individualist in his orientation and discovery of interiority.[16] His 'theory of language' has been perceived as crudely referential and lacking any grasp of social, cultural and intersubjective dimensions.[17]He is often perceived to be anti-body, anti-pleasure and repressive. His alleged 'voluntarism' has been accused of underplaying the role of rationality and intellect in a time that is increasingly rediscovering the importance of the 'embodied mind'.[18] Finally it has been argued that Augustine slips into an overly simplistic view of the divided self, given that he has a 'psychological' view at all.[19]

These are all contestable points, and each could be explored in some detail. Indeed the entire 'history of Western thought since Augustine can be seen as a series of readings – or, better, *mis*readings of his work'.[20] Such misreadings of Augustine are

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[14] Contemporary attempts to overcome this standard misreading of Augustine may be traced back to Henry de Lubac's genealogy of modern Augustinianism. See: Henri de Lubac, *Augustinianism and modern theology*. Ed. by Lancelot Sheppard (New York, NY: Crossroad Pub, 2000); Henri de Lubac, *The mystery of the supernatural* (New York: Crossroad Pub, 1998).

[15] See Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 101-138, for a critical exposition of the 'Cartesian theater' (sic.).

[16] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), pp. 132-133.

[17] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Cambridge: CUP, 1953), §1-10; also Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 132.

[18] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) for a stimulating and provocative account of the turn to embodiment and its metaphorical implications.

[19] For a generally well nuanced and scholarly treatment of the divided self in theology and psychology, with a critical examination of the notion that self-multiplicity is necessarily pathological (in both psychological and theological senses) see Léon Turner, *Theology. Psychology and the Plural Self* (London: Ashgate, 2008). Sophisticated though it is overall, and accepting that his discussion of Augustine is really only in passing, Turner's account nevertheless has a tendency to 'back project' modern categories onto him, claiming Augustine as 'the creator of the inner self' for example, op cit., p.1. Setting aside the anachronistic use of modern psychological terminology, Augustine would probably have appreciated the unintended irony of his dramatic elevation to the status of self 'creator'.

[20] Charles T. Mathewes, *Evil and the Augustinian Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), p. 61, n. 3. It is certainly not difficult to support Rist's view that some misreadings unintentionally suggest 'that Augustine's range of intellectual concerns was limited to those of a typical member of an Anglo-American philosophy department.', cf. John M. Rist, *Augustine* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994).

problematic historically, systematically and, we will suggest, psychologically, even before the strictly theological is invoked.[21] However, more central is whether Augustine has anything to offer that is distinctive and to which psychology would profit from, or whether his views can simply be assimilated and thereby neutralised by the weight of evidence and arguments of secular psychology.

The question can be sharpened as follows: is there anything in Augustine's account of *the person* which not only adds to the understanding of contemporary psychology, but which, if taken seriously, would challenge some of its core assumptions? The current paper argues that this is indeed the case. Its central premise is that an intra-psychic[22] psychological reading of Augustine the man, which misses many of Augustine's philosophical and theological claims, may be necessary if we want to provide an exhaustive account of Augustine's life and work, but is not sufficient to understand the man fully even as a psychological system, let alone his anthropology or his philosophical theology. Such a reading, we argue, is reductive in four ways:
(1) It is psychologically inadequate in that it fails to give sufficient credence to the shaping effects of culture and inter-subjective synchronic forces, and to the diachronic effects of history and tradition in the formation of personal identity.
(2) More importantly, it fails to recognise the reflexive nature of Augustine's theology as a philosophical articulation and iteration of the event of recognition, assent and surrender to God's grace. It misses the point, in other words, that the human self is determined in and through its *dependence on God*, in whom we live and move as *philosophising* beings. Augustine's 'autobiography' is not a one-level account drawn from memory. Rather, as we shall see, it is a curiously sophisticated philosophical account of something which transcends the limits of an 'auto-biography' (in the sense of an *autonomously* written account of one's life) in favour of a 'biography' which is consummated in the *theo-nomy* of God. Augustine's account of the self is motivated

[21] This is quite apart from the more florid, postmodern demonstrations of the multiplicity of readings that are possible of Augustine as counter examples to supposedly definitively veridical ones, see for example Robert Dorado, 'Augustine and Derrida on their Selves', In John D. Caputo and Michael Scanlon (eds.), *God the Gift, and Postmodernism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 79-111.

[22] We have used the term intra-psychic, here and elsewhere, to denote accounts which deal with basic, individual or internal psychological *mechanisms* and their experiential correlates, and which, tacitly or explicitly deem these sufficient in psychology to explain first person descriptions of spiritual and religious experiences, numinous or otherwise, and of a prolonged as well as of a briefer episodic character. Such accounts typically fail to consider in any detail interpersonal, cultural, historical, philosophical, and of course theological factors. Classic psychodynamic accounts are good examples of this category.

by the philosophical search for reconciliation with oneself; it is articulated through a narrative of conversion which culminates in the recovery of himself as a Trinitarian image of God; and it is mediated through the guidance of Christ. In contrast accounts of his biography which focus on 'personal integration' tend to reduce holiness to wholeness, and treat psychology as a theologically and philosophically vacuous, spiritually reductive and morally neutral science.[23]

(3) The intra-psychic account is also basically Pelagian in that it ignores or plays down the interdependence of moral culpability and divine grace. Thus it occludes the critical Augustinian dynamic of repositioning the locative self[24] in the turning away from the created to the creator. Instead of moving inwards and upwards to God and then outwards to others, it is 'Eriksonian' in stressing the dynamic of 'finding oneself' and moving 'out and way'.[25]

(4) The concept of 'naturalism' or the formal distinction between 'nature' and its beyond (the supernatural, culture, etc.) is not applicable to Augustine. His anthropology is 'decentered' or 'ecstatic' in a manner that challenges any attempt to fix our being in the world within the limits of any kind of naturalism.[26]

An appreciation of these four points by psychology depends on a willingness to accept that psychology can learn from philosophy and theology, and not just vice versa. To illustrate this argument we will first briefly outline a recent account of the psycho-dynamics alleged by Capps to be involved in Augustine's conversion. Our reading of Capps' article will be a charitable and hospitable attempt to draw out its positive features.[27] We will then briefly show that, while useful, it is limited in the ways outlined above by contrasting it with Charry's theologically richer and also psychologically better informed reading.

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[23] F. LeRon Shults and Steven J. Sandage, *Transforming Spirituality: Integrating Theology and Psychology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006), pp.187-217; 242-270 for a thorough discussion of related issues.

[24] For a well argued account of the locative self as a system for navigating physical, psychological and cultural worlds see Ciarán Benson, *The Cultural Psychology of Self* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[25] Ellen Charry, 'Reviving Christian Psychology, Lecture 2: Understanding Saint Augustine's Theological Psychology'. *Fuller Theological Seminary Integration Symposium,* (Fuller Seminary, Oakland, Pass. CA, 2007).

[26] This is the background of de Lubac's criticism of the modern concept of 'pure nature' (*natura pura*). By contrast de Lubac's Augustinianism focuses on the paradoxical concept of a 'natural desire for the supernatural' (*desiderium naturale visionis dei*). See fn. 14.

[27] Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness Amid Moral Diversity* (Basingstoke: Ashgate Press, 2006) and Murray, *Reason, Truth and Theology in Pragmatist Perspective*, introduce and explore the ideas of hospitable reading. See also Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* (London: Phronesis, 1997).

We will then ask, in the core of the essay, to what extent basic psychological assumptions are challenged by Charry's reading and to what extent a deeper philosophical and theological analysis is required. We focus in particular on *scientia* and *sapientia*; participation and imago-Dei, and the interdependence of moral culpability and grace.

Capps: Augustine's divided self

Capps' paper has two main aims. The first is to demonstrate that the Jamesian view 'of the divided self […] and the process of its unification offers an invaluable lens through which to understand the conversion experience of Augustine as presented in his *Confessions*. The second is to explore the question of how Augustine became a divided self'.[28]

Given space constraints, we shall not dwell overmuch on the details of William James' account here save to say that it is the focus on the sick souls who in James' terms need to be twice born that is relevant here. In other words, according to James, there exists a class of persons who exhibit dissociations in their mental and emotional life such that in extreme cases they are subject to the push and pull of opposing psychological forces. Capps quotes James here and for convenience we quote from the same edition:

> 'Some persons are born with an inner constitution that is harmonious and well balanced from the outset. Their impulses are consistent with one another, their will follows without trouble the guidance of their intellect, their passions are not excessive, and their lives are little haunted by regrets. Others are oppositely constituted; and are so in degrees which may vary from something so slight as to result in a merely odd and whimsical inconsistency, to a discordancy of which the consequences may be inconvenient in the extreme.[29]

and,

> 'There are persons whose existence is little more than a series of zigzags, as now one tendency and now another gets the upper hand. Their spirit wars with their flesh, they wish for incompatibles, wayward impulses interrupt their most deliberate plans, and their lives are one long drama of repentance and efforts to repair misdemeanours and mistakes.'[30]

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[28] Capps, 'Augustine's *Confessions*', p. 127.
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 168, citing William James
[30] *Ibid.,* p. 163.

James in turn cites Augustine as a classic example of the sick or troubled soul, and then interprets dramatic conversion as a catastrophic intra-psychic shift in the balance of power in which previously background aspects of the person come into the foreground and vice versa.

Capps essentially underwrites James' account, then proceeds to examine Augustine's conversion and the events leading up to it in more detail. Recovering earlier scholarship by E.R. Dodds,[31] Capps indicates that Augustine's seemingly dramatic conversion can be seen as a facet of his divided self in which 'the division was due to the fact that he was raised by parents of very different personalities and conflicting world views.'[32] Essentially his self was divided between the 'souls' of his devout Christian mother and 'hot blooded'[33] pagan father, with a dramatic reversal of control from the latter to the former occurring at his conversion. This 'shift' of control can be seen as the previously background (or repressed) mother-personality coming to the fore with the reverse obtaining so that the father now becomes the background, but still influential, force.

Again, the detailed dynamics of this need not concern us here; the reader can refer to the cited sources for coverage of this. Instead it is worth focussing on the positive features of Capps' account before seeking to contextualise it, first from within naturalist anthropology, and second from within philosophical and theological anthropology.

A hospitable reading of Capps' paper shows that it benefits from presenting the simplest psychological analysis possible of Augustine's experience without recourse either to wider, contextualising, psychological factors, philosophical or theological accounts. It also provides a plausible and parsimonious account of the factors leading

[31] E.R. Dodds, 'Augustine's Confessions: A Study of Spiritual Maladjustment,' *The Hibbert Journal* 26 (1927-28), pp. 459-473. Without wishing to question the quality of Dodds' classical scholarship it is noticeable that he rather uncritically accepts and applies Freudian and Jungian approaches as somehow definitive of (then) contemporary psychology, and makes no reference to wider approaches to personality. The reader may wish also to examine his Wiles Lectures, E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: CUP, 1963), pp. 28, 88 fn.4, 91 fn. 2, for examples of somewhat uncritical application of psychodynamic constructs.
[32] *Ibid.,* p. 138.
[33] *Ibid.,* p. 141.

up to and precipitating the dramatic change. Secondly, it offers the interesting suggestion that the psychological flavour that, rightly or wrongly, has often come to be associated with the Augustinian approach could result initially at least as much from the underlying psychology of the man as from the inherent meaning of his philosophical-theological thinking. Capps argues that '…it is difficult to believe that the Augustine of later years - the bishop who would not allow any women to set foot in his palace, the theologian who defended the use of coercive force in religious schisms, the moralist who believed it was folly to weep for the death of a friend, the ascetic who boasted that he had learned to swallow his food as medicine'[34] had necessarily found within the church the mental equilibrium that he had singularly not achieved outside it.

But parsimonious though Capps' recovery of Dodd's account can be viewed, it is that same quality which can easily be interpreted as reductiveness, especially if deemed to be a sufficient as well as a necessary account. To be fair, Capps does acknowledge that Augustine's experience, as narrated in the Confessions, '*qua* experience, has its own moral force, and its own life changing properties.'[35] But, read on its own, an account such as this can too easily be seen as sufficient psychologically to render unnecessary further accounts, whether cultural-psychological, philosophical or theological. Perhaps the clue is in Turner's remark that 'the psychologist may be … disconcerted by Augustine's strange tendency to see himself in the light of purely intellectual considerations.'[36]

Before moving on to explore the sufficiency of Capps' account it is worth briefly re-considering Denys Turner's point that the *Confessions* is a curious form of 'autobiography'. As he puts it, read at one level it is a straightforward experiential narrative, at another it is an intellectual and spiritual reflection on past events. Turner usefully explores this point:

> '(T)here is a level at which the work is an intellectual and spiritual biography in a recognisably contemporary sense […] Naturally, in an intellectual autobiography we ought not to be surprised to find accounts of how Augustine's life developed, accounts of the problems which he had learned to solve first in one way and then in another, of the arguments which came to persuade him and of those whose power to convince diminished; and in an intellectual

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 147.
[35] *Ibid.,* p. 149.
[36] Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God,* p. 54.

> autobiography we would expect to find some account of how his own experience interacted with his intellectual development so as to produce the outcomes, both intellectual and personal, which they did.'[37]

As such, and even remaining for the moment with a naturalistic analysis, we suggest this exemplifies well the psychological process of 'representational redescription'[38] in which *post hoc* interpretations are brought to bear on earlier experiences and successful behaviours. In this case this involves the acquisition of the skills involved in pre-reflexively assenting to, engaging with, and 'behaviourally mastering' Christianity, followed by more abstract reflections on general matters of a theological nature. Understood psychologically, such *post hoc* reflections come in turn to have an important, belief-constituting, person-shaping status. They are not arbitrary 'narratives' or 'discourses', adopted, delivered, or dispensed with in a casual manner.

Looked at in this broadly psychological way, but also couched now within the cultural-historical, the *Confessions* affords clues as to why an intra-psychic reading of Augustine is insufficient, in the same way that intra-psychic readings, of say, the accounts of any mystical theologian are also typically insufficient.[39] This is because to effect such 'representational re-descriptions', Augustine brings existing tradition-constituted, community-instantiated and ecclesiastically guaranteed cultural beliefs and narratives to bear in a deep sense.[40] Cultural, self shaping knowledge is essential to the process. As Turner correctly points out '(i)n the structure of *Confessions* […] the interplay of the conceptual with the experiential is crucial.'[41] For Augustine his 'discovery of who *he* is is dependant in good measure on what the *self* is.'[42]This intermingling of the intellectual and experiential tends to vitiate the modern split between 'reason and emotion, between inference and autobiography, between logic

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[37] *Ibid*., p. 52.
[38] For a nuanced and sophisticated treatment of representational redescription, see Annette Karmiloff-Smith, *Beyond Modularity: a Developmental Perspective on Cognitive Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 15-26.
[39] The term 'intra-psychic' is used in the sense of an internal, individual psychological account of the cognitions, behaviours and affects of the person concerned. It is to be contrasted with an inter-subjective account of the person or, more fully, a cultural psychological account in which the person is seen as embedded within, shaped by, and ultimately able to contribute to the world of language, meanings and cultural forms. See Peter Hampson, 'Beyond Unity, Integration and Experience: Cultural Psychology and Mediaeval Mysticism', *New Blackfriar*s, 861 1006 (2005), pp. 622-641.
[40] See Peter Hampson, 'Cultural Psychology and Theology: Partners in Dialogue', *Theology and Science*, 3 (2005), pp. 259-274, for an extended discussion of the cultural psychological perspective.
[41] Turner, *The Darkness of God*, p. 55.
[42] *Ibid*., p. 54.

and psychology'.[43] It also shows why Capps' account is psychologically plausible in our culture but from the longer view afforded by the philosophical and theological tradition it may be less tenable.[44] Hence, the claim that the unqualified application of the modern construct of 'autobiography' is simply an anachronistic back projection receives converging support from a cultural-psychological angle.

It is possible, however, to move a step further in relating this basic psychological concept of representational redescription to *philosophical* considerations on memory and time, starting from Augustine's own considerations on these topics. Augustine's pioneering phenomenology of memory and time is not accidentally part of his *Confessions* (Books X and XI). Recollection is more than and something different from the mere reproduction of past events. It is an inventive process which coincides with the temporal process of forgetting and self-transformation. Hence, in Augustine's account of his own conversion, the time of recollection is an iterating and deepening of the event of his conversion which is directed to the future life in God. The future-oriented narrating time of his *Confessions* interferes and communicates with the narrated past time of his conversion.

This is the background of the contemporary phenomenological renaissance of Augustine in the wake of Husserl and Heidegger.[45] Augustine's phenomenology of temporality marks the point of departure of Heidegger's secularised concept of 'ecstatic temporalisation'. Heidegger explains this as follows:

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[43] *Ibid.*

[44] The idea that there is a single 'definitive' commentary on the *Confessions* can be deconstructed from a literary-philosophical perspective as well as from the position that an intra-psychic reading is insufficient, see for example Robert Dorado, 'Augustine and Derrida on their Selves', p. 100, fn.2.

[45] Heidegger's considerations on the ecstatic dimension of time connect with Husserl's lectures on 'internal time consciousnesses'. As Husserl explicitly acknowledges: "The first person who sensed profoundly the enormous difficulties inherent in this analysis, and who struggled with them almost to despair, was Augustine. Even today, anyone occupied with the problem of time must still study Chapters 14-18 of Book XI of the *Confessions* thoroughly. For in these matters our modern age, so proud of its knowledge, has failed to surpass or even to match the splendid achievement of this great thinker who grappled so earnestly with the problem of time." Edmund Husserl, *On the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*. Transl. by John B. Brough (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers 1991), p. 3. For an account of the influence of Augustine on Heidegger's and Husserl's phenomenology of time see: Friedrich Wilhelm von Herrmann, *Augustine and the phenomenological question of time*. Transl. prologue, epilogue, and annotation by Frederick van Fleteren and Jeremiah Hackett (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2008). Heidegger draws substantively from Augustine and is deeply inspired by his writings. See Craig J. N. De Paulo (Ed.), *The influence of Augustine on Heidegger. The emergence of an Augustinian phenomenology* (Lewiston, N.Y: Lewiston, N.Y, 2006).

> What we called expecting [Gewärtigen] is nothing other than that getting-carried-away [Entrückung] into the then-quality which lies at the basis of those comportments, which we can and must say, they will be 'then'. […] (E)xpecting is, as we say, ecstatic. The ecstasy mentioned there, stepping out itself (ἔκστασις) is to some extent a *raptus* [rapture]. This means Dasein does not become gradually expectant by traversing serially the beings that factually approach it as things in the future, but this traversing rather goes gradually through the open path made way by the *raptus* of temporality itself. Now this is true, in a corresponding manner, of retention and making-present. And we therefore call these three basic phenomena the ecstases of temporality. Temporality is itself the self-unifying ecstatic unity in ecstatic temporalization."[46]

Heidegger concludes from this phenomenological analysis of temporality, that past events are never something finished or unalterable. The ecstatic 'stretching out' into the future rather substantially affects the past in that it "stretches out immediately, constantly, and primarily into the having-been."[47] Moreover, since the temporalisation of the future is entangled with the habits and narratives of the present, our hermeneutics of the past is always and necessarily a creative philosophical process. We uncover our future in recovering the unrealised possibilities of the past. Starting from our capacities to dwell in the future, we understand ourselves and our past out of our "capacity-for-being."[48] For this reason Heidegger considers philosophising not as an accessory of our biographic existence but rather an intrinsic and constitutive part of it: "all existing is already a philosophizing."[49] If we consider philosophising as a conceptualising and reconceptualising of possibilities, then it is indeed an intrinsic and constitutive aspect of the human condition.

Against this background, Augustine's account of his own life in his *Confessions* may be read as an exemplary exercise of the process which Heidegger describes in more general terms. Augustine uses his life as an example of conceptualising and reconceptualising the possibility of being in the world within the Christian narrative of conversion and makes reflexively explicit the temporal conditions of the possibility of this process.

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[46] Martin Heidegger, *The metaphysical foundations of logic*. Transl. by Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 205; as for the ecstatic character of temporality see also Martin Heidegger, *Being and time. Translation of Sein und Zeit*. Transl. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), §§ 67-77.
[47] Martin Heidegger, *The metaphysical foundations of logic*, 207.
[48] Ibid. 206.
[49] Ibid. 212.

Theological dynamics of love in Augustine: scientia and sapientia

Perhaps a more important key to understanding Augustine's anthropology is that he is interested less in a process of unification, in the Plotinean way of becoming one, or even in the Heideggerian sense of a self-unifying temporalisation, than he is in how the one which is and which is the first reality (God) is reflected in and to be seen in the many.[50] Making the theological move, everything created and particular for Augustine is 'under God'. The centrality of the act of creation, of being an *imago Dei*, of recognising myself as a fallen and divided creature with the possibility to be healed, of being recognised by God, and finally of recognising God through loving participation in the economy of the Trinitarian God, unlocks Augustine's argument strategy.

Central also to understanding Augustine's account, is to grasp that for Augustine it is love and its resulting *theo*-logical dynamic that is ubiquitous here. Our desire for our true home in God, the source and end of love, is not a desire or a search for personal integration, wholeness, or harmonious interpersonal interactions. To be sure, I am called to turn myself to the ('innermost') integrating centre of myself, but this centre is at once infinitely superior to and beyond 'myself' and in this sense 'ecstatic'(decentered).

It is worth, therefore, spending a little time unpacking what we might style the *theo*-dynamics of love and contrasting it with the *psycho*-dynamics of (secular) narrative identity. For Augustine, as Charry puts it, 'growth into life with God, is the growth in the healing of love'[51], since love, in Augustine's terms, requires healing and guidance; 'it can work for weal or well'. As an ecstatic and in this sense excessive desire, love can move our fallen nature in two directions, toward God, or away from God due to a lack of guidance. The source of 'conflict' for Augustine is therefore inherently

[50] Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p.141. For the recovery of the Augustinian tradition against the backdrop of Heidegger's criticism of the 'occidental onto-theology' see: Johannes Hoff, *Mystagogy beyond Onto-Theology. Looking back to Post-modernity with Nicholas of Cusa*. In: Arne Moritz (Ed.), *Brill's Companion to Nicholas of Cusa* (Leiden: Brill, 2010) (forthcoming). See also Johannes Hoff, *Kontingenz, Berührung, Überschreitung. Zur philosophischen Propädeutik christlicher Mystik nach Nikolaus von Kues* (Freiburg/Br.: Alber, 2007).

[51] Ellen Charry, 'Reviving Christian Psychology, Lecture 2: Understanding Saint Augustine's Theological Psychology', *Fuller Theological Seminary Integration Symposium,* (Fuller Seminary, Oakland, Pass. CA, 2007). (All references in this paragraph to Lecture 2).

theological, it is not due *purely* to some inner psychic conflict, for such cannot exist in an Augustinian anthropology.[52] Resolution of such conflict, therefore, involves the re-ordering of our loves, not (merely) the psychological integration or 'unification' of our self.

How does this re-ordering work? Essentially, Augustine argues that there is a dynamic at work in which '*scientia*' (the knowledge and love of created things) eventually gives way to *'sapientia'* (wisdom, the love of sacred and divine things).[53] This re-orientation of love from knowledge to wisdom is assisted by the prior grace of God, and by our recognition of the beauty and wisdom of Christ who perfectly instantiates and brings together *scientia* and *sapientia* in such as way that an undivided route from creation to creator is re-established.

> 'Our knowledge therefore is Christ and our wisdom is the same Christ. It is he who plants faith in us about temporal things, he who presents us with the truth about eternal things. Through him we go straight toward him, through knowledge toward wisdom without ever turning aside from one and the same Christ.'[54]

In this sense, Christ as perfectly ordered love heals creation and points to the Trinitarian life which is our goal. Since we are created through the *eternal* word as an image of the trinitarian God, our soul resonates with the temporal being of the *incarnated* word, which is at once science (accessible for our *temporal* knowledge) and wisdom (the *atemporal* and inaccessible word). Under the guidance of the incarnated Son we start participating in the Trinitarian life of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which is ecstatic in that each 'person' of the divine triad transcends itself into the other while being at once in perfect reconciliation with itself.

Interdisciplinary implications

In discussing Augustine's classic instantiation of an example of the Christian narrative of transformation and conversion, we have made two, or more precisely three moves:

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[52] See fn. 19.
[53] Augustine, *The Trinity*, Translation, introduction and notes, Edmund Hill (Brooklyn, New York: New City Press), XII, 4, 25.
[54] *Ibid*., XIII, 6, 24.

In the first move, we showed that an intra psychic account of Augustine's transformation is insufficient. On psychological grounds alone, move one indicated that an additional cultural psychological account of the mind-shaping, cultural-symbolic milieu and traditions in which Augustine lived needs to be factored in. In other words, the external, cultural-symbolic environment with its complex currents of neo-Platonism, Gnosticism and Christianity must be appealed to so as to make sense of the changes in *belief* (as well as more basic personality, or psychic balance) which Augustine undergoes. In Charles Taylor's terms, this wider cultural understanding makes available the background assumptions and 'social imaginaries' of Augustine's narrative, and gives us meaningful access to them.[55] Otherwise their content's meaning is effectively neutralised or rendered otiose in a psychological account.[56]

In the second move, the requirement to go beyond the individual psycho-dynamical showed that a sufficient and more adequate *psychological and philosophical* account is needed. Augustine is not merely reporting experiences that can then be subjected to 'analysis' in a straightforward narrative sense. Loosely speaking he is introspectively[57] reporting, reflecting and framing these experiences from within, for sure, but such introspections are themselves contextualised within a distinctive cultural tradition and synthesized within a distinctive perspective on the future. Augustine recruits the language and assumptions that his socio-cultural context provides in order to conceptualise and reconceptualise a possibility of being. These are not simply reports of a stream of psychic changes, therefore, but rather philosophical reflections on and redescriptions of prior changes in the light of the future possibility of a life in God. It is this wider psychological, cultural, philosophical, and now theological dynamic that permits the *Confessions* to be more and something different from an autobiographical report.

We have now, of course, made a leap into faith, but this step is *philosophically* not strictly necessary, as the recent phenomenological reading of Augustine in the light of

[55] Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 171-176.
[56] Peter Hampson made a similar point in more general terms in 'Cultural Psychology and Theology', pp. 265-266.
[57] Turner, rightly in our opinion, critiques and nuances the term 'introspection' in this context, suggesting that Augustine is conducting an act of 'explicating self-reflection […] primarily an act of epistemological inference, not an act of psychological introspection', cf. Turner, *The Darkness of God*, p. 88. This maps well onto the construct of 'representational redescription' within a cultural and epistemic framework, cf fn. 32.

Heidegger and Husserl demonstrates. Part of the argument can be 'won' on purely secular grounds. This phenomenological intermediate step can ease the transition from 'cultural psychology' to philosophical theology, arguably[58] by allowing the elaboration of a philosophical concept of transcendence (in the sense of Heidegger's 'ecstasis') without immediately interpreting it as a kind of transcendence toward God or even the Trinitarian God.

As distinct from this philosophical move, the third and last move is far more critical for interdisciplinary debates. It sets the cultural-psychological story, indeed the entire story, within a divine economy, and thus positions the psychological, the cultural, and the philosophical accounts within an overarching theological account. From a theological perspective we are creatures who live and move and have our being within God, and our explanations must take cognisance of this. Space precludes a full exploration of Augustine's anthropology in this context, but two important points are worth drawing out further which are likely to interest interdisciplinarians.

First, Augustine's account of the soul versus the flesh is not to be read in any simple dualist sense, in which flesh (body) is contrasted with soul or spirit. Even a simple reading of the *City of God* (Book XIV) shows quickly that when, following St Paul, Augustine distinguishes the life of the flesh from the life of the spirit (God) he is speaking metonymically (*synecdoche,* respectively *pars pro toto*) of flesh as the whole person, 'for by *flesh*, that is, by a part of man, man is meant.'[59] Following St Paul, Augustine argues:

> 'For by flesh it means not only the body of a terrestrial and mortal animal, as when it says, *All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, another of birds*, (1 Corinthians 15:39) but it uses this word in many other significations; and among these various usages, a frequent one is to use flesh for man himself, the nature of man taking the part for the whole, as in the words, *By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified* (Romans 3:20) for what does he mean here by no flesh but no man? And this, indeed, he shortly after says more plainly: *No man shall be justified by the law* (Galatians 3: 11) and in the Epistle to the Galatians, *Knowing that man is not justified by the*

[58] For a critical discussion of Heidegger's own and subsequent philosophical attempts to abstract from the context of the original Christian narrative see: Johannes Hoff, *Das Paradox des Glaubens und der Holzweg moderner Entscheidungslogik. Kierkegaards Lektüre von Genesis 22 und ihre Wirkungsgeschichte von Heidegger bis Derrida und darüber hinaus*. In: Helmut Hoping; Julia Knop; Thomas Böhm (Ed.), *Die Bindung Isaaks. Stimme, Schrift, Bild* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2009), pp.238-258.

[59] Augustine, *City of God*, XIV, 4.

> *works of the law*. And so we understand the words, *And the Word was made flesh* (John 1:14) — that is, man.'[60]

The key issue is not, therefore, the healing of any putative split between spirit or flesh, but whether one *lives* for God (spirit) or man (flesh). In this sense, the inward and upward sapiential turn to interiority which Augustine narrates is precisely that, a turn or *metanoia*, a change of direction which leads to a reordering of the 'fallen soul', not a leap into another realm.

Moreover just as it can be argued that there is no distinctive or abrupt (dualist) split between flesh and spirit,[61] neither is there a dualist chasm in the inward and upward journey to God away from the world, nor is the former distinction (body and soul) isomorphic with the latter (outer and inner). Denys Turner again:

> '…the boundary between the inner and the outer falls not between the mind and the body, but between the part of the mind which is intrinsically dependent on the body for its powers (the 'outer') and the part of the mind which is not so dependent (the 'inner').'[62]

The less dependent inner part is called to guide and reorder the soul. It marks the point where the infamous Augustinian 'movement inwards' coincides with the previously outlined (Christocentric) reorientation of the inward part toward God. Turner discusses this point of coincidence in more general terms:

> 'The two metaphors of inwardness and ascent themselves interact at the point where God and the self intersect, so that that which is most interior to me is also that which is above and beyond me; so that the God who is within me is also the God I am in.'[63]

Again, this is critical for the psychology-theology debate since it means that human nature cannot be bracketed off without loss, from divine life. There is no pure nature which may be discussed independent of the ecstatic orientation towards God.[64] The soul's journey into God is not marked by clear borders through which it must pass. It is a re-orientation and re-intensification of its natural love and desire, governed by the grace of God.

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[60] *Ibid*., XIV, 2 (italics added).
[61] Rist argues more circumspectly for a more dualistic interpretation of Augustine but notes that this is variously expressed, 'to some extent to the degree of hostility to the body which Augustine exhibits', cf. Rist, *Augustine*, pp. 98.
[62] Turner, *The Darkness of God*.' p.90.
[63] *Ibid*., p. 99.
[64] See fn. 14.

But then, and crucially following on from this for the psychology-theology debate, it becomes untenable to claim the adequacy of a *purely* psychological account of spiritual transformation. Even though a psychological account of the fallen state might be attempted, it will necessarily be limited once the 'ecstatic' orientation of our existence is factored out. In other words, a purely cognitive or biological account of a spiritual process could be adduced which, for reasons of scientific convenience and simplicity, ignores social and cultural and, as we now argue, philosophical and theological factors. The picture of the person that then emerges may be in many cases the practicable one to deploy (certainly outside the psychology of religion), but it will be over simplified, necessary perhaps, yet never wholly sufficient to account for the potentialities of human existence.

Eventually we have to take into consideration that the impediments to the liberation of such potentialities are not merely psychological but philosophical, theological, moral and spiritual. For Augustine, the primary moral impediment, indeed the primary source of all sin, is pride, '….of all these evils pride is the origin and head.'[65] Pride is not simply thinking well of oneself or a state of high 'self esteem', but rather the deliberate orientation of the soul away from God and toward 'self' sufficiency and 'self' centeredness. It is thus the primary disorder of love:

> '… what is the origin of our evil will but pride? *For pride is the beginning of sin.* Sirach 10:13 And what is pride but the craving for undue exaltation? And this is undue exaltation, when the soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and becomes a kind of end to itself. This happens when it becomes its own satisfaction. And it does so when it falls away from that unchangeable good which ought to satisfy it more than itself. This falling away is spontaneous; for if the will had remained steadfast in the love of that higher and changeless good by which it was illumined to intelligence and kindled into love, it would not have turned away to find satisfaction in itself, and so become frigid and benighted.'[66]

Only God can change this by graciously providing guidance to the disordered, self-centred soul. The fallen soul is, as it were, 'narcissistic'.[67] But its narcissistic enclosure breaks open wherever it becomes receptive for grace, the only thing it cannot narcissistically achieve 'by itself'. Only when the soul is open to the divine

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[65] *City of God*, XIV, 3.
[66] *City of God.*, XIV, 13 (italics added).
[67] The term 'pride' may be better replaced with the modern word 'narcissism'. Simone Weil makes the point poetically that '(t)he self is only the shadow which sin and error cast by stopping the light of God, and we take this shadow for a being.' Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 35. To what extent removal of the 'self' can be fully achieved is questionable: since '(u)prightness is in the actions of this life, purity only to be reached at the end.', G.R. Evans, *Augustine on Evil* Cambridge: CUP, 1982), p. 162.

gifts of grace, and pride is overcome, can the transformative journey inward, upward and outward commence with courage.

> 'You know to what extent You have already changed me, Thou who first healest me of the lust of vindicating myself, that so You might forgive all my remaining iniquities, and heal all my diseases, and redeem my life from corruption, and crown me with loving-kindness and tender mercies, and satisfy my desire with good things; who restrained my pride with Your fear.'[68]

What is critical about all this for interdisciplinary relationships? Quite simply, as Peter Hampson has argued in more general terms elsewhere, in its engagement with theology, psychology is invited to acknowledge the possibility of being positioned and thus oriented by theology. This is possible only if psychology is prepared, graciously, to grant theology the legitimacy of its own accounts, and then takes seriously theology's claim that the divine and not the human is the measure. But psychology must then ineluctably accept the full consequences of such positioning. If psychology, or at least the psychology of religion, does accept this orientation, it concedes in the same breath that it is guided by a science with moral implications, with its commitment to the good and beautiful as well as the true, and it must then take account of theological, religious, moral, and ethical factors as important factors governing human nature and life. In doing so, it must, therefore, risk engaging with God.[69]

Conclusions: repositioning the debate

We offer the following as concluding reflections:

Engagement of one 'rational tradition'[70] with another requires what Reich has dubbed 'relational and contextual reasoning' or reasoning based on 'interactive complexity'.[71] The first necessary step in psychology-theology dialogue is one which establishes the

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[68] Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 36.
[69] Hampson and Boyd-MacMillan, 'Turning the Telescope Round', p. 106; see also Hampson, 'Psychology and Religion', pp 146-148.
[70] Cf Macintyre, *Three Rival Versions*, p. 5.
[71] K Helmut Reich, *Developing the Horizons of the Mind: Relational and Contextual Reasoning and the Resolution of Cognitive Conflict* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002). The related approach of integrative complexity is associated with the work of psychologist Peter Suedfeld, see for example: P. Suedfeld, D.C. Leighton & L.G. Conway III, 'Integrative Complexity and Cognitive Management in International Confrontations: Research and Potential Applications' in M. Fitzduff & *C.E. Stout (eds.) The Psychology of Resolving Global Conflicts: From War to Peace, Volume 1* (New York: Praeger, 2006), pp. 211-237.

potential for and viability of bidirectional, hospitable *dialogue* between disciplines. Following MacIntyre, Taylor and others this has become possible, but will typically result in each discipline having to reflect on its cultural embedding without simply assuming the superordinacy of its 'rationality' over the other. To this extent the engagement of psychology and theology is akin in some ways to the hospitable engagement of philosophy and theology: both disciplines need to reflect on their intellectual traditions and background assumptions in complex ways.

In this process, however, the very notion of rationality is contested too, or at least the scope and range of convenience of the construct of 'rationality' as well as its links with value, ultimate meaning and truth. If it is assumed in a post Cartesian manner that all is measured by human rationality (seen as ratiocination) then theology falls under the spotlight of modern psychology, and at best Augustine's theology becomes a mere cultural narrative, at worst a mere epiphenomenal discourse belying deeper, more fundamental intra psychic processes *pace* Capps. Then again, at best, theological discourses become a mere decoration of the psychological, at worst conflictual.[72] The privileging of secular 'rationality' divides psychology from theology to the same extent as it tends to divide fact from value, and exteriority from interiority; it splits *scientia* from *sapientia*, and provokes incommensurable readings of *oeuvres* such as the *Confessions*.

However, the modern, post Cartesian construct of scientific rationality is insufficient to account for the potentialities of human existence. Contemporary philosophical criticism of scientific reason has become sensitive to this insufficiency without providing us with a constructive alternative to the classical modern approach to matters of anthropological or psychological concern. It is at this very point that the dialogue between theology and psychology becomes indicatory, as we have argued in this essay. Starting with the overarching assumptions of faith seeking rational understanding and rationality seeking guidance by faith, psychology can be suitably oriented by theology as a secular, rational tradition whose project clearly requires complementation. By the same token, a theologically oriented psychology may make it subsequently less likely that theologians who are engaged in constructing

[72] Hampson, 'Cultural Psychology and Theology', p. 261.

theological anthropologies or providing pastoral guidance will draw on unsuitable psychological fashions.

In practice the fiduciary commitments of the investigators are likely to matter here too. If Augustine is right, and God finds us first, then 'background assumptions' are not merely tacit knowledge, or socio-cultural background imaginaries of a secular type. Rather they depend on the 'pre-reflexive assent' to having been recognised and involved in the ecstatic life of the only truth which essentially transcends human knowledge and power.

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