

FIGURING THE POROUS SELF: ST. AUGUSTINE AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF TEMPORALITY

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The first person who sensed profoundly the enormous difficulties inherent in this analysis, and who struggled with it almost to despair, was Augustine. Even today, anyone occupied with the problem of time must still study . . . the *Confessions* thoroughly.¹

—Edmund Husserl

1. *Phenomenology and Augustine*

Our aim here is to examine the phenomenological structures of the *homo temporalis* filtered through Augustine's illuminating, if unsystematic, insights on selfhood, interiority and the contemplative (inward) ascent toward the divine who transcends time altogether. By virtue of the thickly textured studies of the body, affection/feeling, self-awareness and temporality marshalled by Augustine to describe the contours of human existence, his groundbreaking work on what it is to be a temporal "self" bears an affiliation with phenomenology's quest for the elemental disclosure of temporal experience (both *Erlebnis*, i.e., lived-experience and *Erfahrung*, i.e., public experience).² We are not without precedent in granting Augustine a privileged voice when speaking to the phenomenological and existential conditions of selfhood. As the only theologian noted in Husserl's *Lectures on the Conscious-*

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¹ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough, (Dordrecht and London: Kluwer Academic, 1991), p. 3.

² For more on the distinction between *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, see Pierre Keller, *Husserl and Heidegger on Human Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

ness of *Internal Time*, Husserl also takes Augustine's search for the inner self as paradigmatic for his own mature Cartesian quest for pure consciousness in his now classic text, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (1929).³ It is well-known that Heidegger derived not only his emphatic turn toward existential temporality from Augustine but also his key philosophical concept of "care" (*Sorge*) from Augustine's book 10 of the *Confessions*.⁴ Also, not only has Jacques Derrida's (whom we consider a phenomenologist) confrontation with Augustine in the 1990s been well-documented⁵ but also Jean-Louis Chrétien and Jean-Luc Marion have published significant studies on Augustine in recent years.⁶ Modulated in a Neo-Platonic accent, Augustine's philosophical theology discloses crucial structures of the interior and exterior sites of heartfelt faith, a faith in God who is immanent to, but ultimately distinct from, the temporality of lived-experience. So, a characteristic feature of Augustine's work is that it is both philosophical and theological in tone, and perhaps in the words of Marion, "l'aporia de Saint Augustin" lies in how we are to approach him.⁷ As a philosopher? As a theologian? Marion acknowledges that it is perhaps facile, or at the very least highly reductive, to split the disciplinary bond that joins philosophy and theology in Augustine's oeuvre.⁸ The apt words of Etienne Gilson underline this aporia: "We are never quite certain whether Augustine is speaking as a theologian or as a philosopher."⁹ Augustine's work is therefore both philosophically suggestive and theologically fertile without insisting on a conceptual rift between philosophy and theology. Perhaps one can read Augustine as a proto-phenomenologist of Christian faith, or what John Caputo calls a saint who evokes a "passionate phenomenology *avant la lettre* of the temporality of the heart's restless love of God."¹⁰

³ Husserl writes in the last page of the book: "I must lose the world by epoché, in order to regain it by a universal self-examination. 'Noli foras ire,' says Augustine, 'in te redi, in interiore homine habitat veritas.'" See Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), p. 157. The quote of Augustine is from his early work, *De vera religione* 39, 72.

⁴ See Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 155 ff.

⁵ Jacques Derrida, "Circumfession" in *Jacques Derrida*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993). See also the interviews with Derrida in *Augustine and Postmodernism*, eds. John Caputo and Michael Scanlon (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).

⁶ See Jean-Luc Marion, *Au lieu de soi: L'approche de Saint Augustin* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2008); Jean-Louis Chrétien, *Saint Augustin et les actes de parole* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002).

⁷ Jean-Luc Marion, *Au lieu de soi: L'approche de Saint Augustin*, §1, "L'Aporie de Saint Augustin."

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–27.

⁹ Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L. E. M. Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), p. 236.

¹⁰ John Caputo, "Introduction: the Postmodern Augustine," in *Augustine and Postmodernism*, p. 3.

Our constructive utilization of Augustine, then, while not always consistent with the historical Augustine or the regnant Augustinianisms purported to represent the essence of Augustinianism, testifies to the malleable nature of the Augustinian tradition and thus the fecundity of his legacy to resist domestication by any one discipline, scholarly consensus, or periodization. Central to Augustine's enduring popularity and thus, in part, to his interdisciplinary plasticity is the fact that his work lends itself to a variety of interests which invite a variety of Augustinianisms to take shape. By taking a phenomenological approach we wish for an Augustine who speaks to contemporary questions framed by the theological turn in phenomenology. We are not therefore overly occupied with the "historical" Augustine or the early Augustine in relation to the mature Augustine. While these remain important pursuits in their own right and perhaps define the task of the historian or historical theologian, we situate Augustine in the contemporary borderland between phenomenology and theology.

In order to correct an imbalance in some contemporary appropriations of the Augustinian self, our argument proceeds as follows: the approach of Augustine to the self moves between interior and exterior fields of manifestation. This integrative version of selfhood frustrates the attempt to label the Augustinian self in an either/or fashion, as if it were an escapist, non-worldly self on the one hand, or as if it amounted to a "worldly" self or a forerunner of the "alterity" thematic, on the other hand. Our thesis appreciates the elusive disclosure of the interior self Augustine worked tirelessly to uncover, and yet does so with an eye toward how he integrated it with visible disclosure of exteriority, difference, and temporality. By locating the self in "between" the interior and exterior spheres of disclosure, we maintain that Augustine propounded a porous self that does justice to the intrinsic dignity of the physical body and its circumscription within the temporal horizon of the world and yet also to the soul's interior spiritual ascent to the eternal through contemplation. This porous interval resembles the site of the "between"—the metaxological dwelling place (in Greek, *metaxu* or "middle"),¹¹ or better, a sutured-point that passes between non-temporal self-presence (i.e. interior essence) and the temporal horizon of the world (i.e. exterior existence) without collapsing into either. So understood, the Augustinian self is not worldly. But nor is it escapist, because its contemplative desire for God does not give way to an ecstatic religious experience or a moment of inner union in flight from the world, but rather, it is manifest as a seeking in and through the temporal horizon of the world after God's eschatological reality. A brief survey of some current scholarship on Augustine will help add a sharper point to such a thesis.

¹¹ For a systematic development of the ontological "between" in view of God's transcendence (and articulated especially with Hegel in mind), see William Desmond's suggestive work, especially *God and the Between* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

2. *Problematic Appropriations of the Augustinian Self*

There are currently three variants of the Augustinian self which illustrate its elusive character: (1) those who are critical of what they perceive to be an overly interiorized self in Augustine; (2) those who defend Augustine against claims of interiority and argue that the opposite is true, that in fact Augustine adopted an exterior, “worldly” self; and (3) those like Michel Henry (and Bonaventure in, for example, the *Itinerarium* as well as many a mystic) who applaud Augustine’s quest for the interior self. While we find the third option most fruitful, all of these positions, as we shall see, tend to suffer from a polarizing procedure which arranges the Augustinian self neatly and linearly into one taxonomic category or another.

Those theologians and philosophers who occupy the first camp are diagnosticians interested in “unconcealing” (to borrow a Heideggerian trope) and ascertaining what is wrong with Augustine. Because Augustine is the fountainhead of modern subjectivity, they cast the dark cloud of “egoism” over him, denying him the mystical riches he yielded by synthesizing Saint Paul and Plotinus (against the backdrop of his critique of the Manichaean aversion to the world). They hastily set forth an Augustinian self which minimizes the temporality of the world and the physical body in favour of an inward descent into the soul (and into escapism). This camp classifies the Augustinian self as individualistic, non-worldly, and ultimately, a key step in the direction toward the fateful though ultimately uncongenial trappings of the modern self—the self-subsisting subjectivism of Cartesianism (and the transcendental egos of Kant and Husserl). Perhaps Charles Taylor’s influential reading of Augustine in his celebrated *Sources of the Self* (1989) is emblematic of this type of approach. There he links the Augustinian self to a radically self-reflexive, first-person standpoint.¹² Best situated between Plato and the modern subjectivism of Descartes, Augustine “was the inventor of the argument we know as the ‘cogito,’ because Augustine was the first to make the first-person standpoint fundamental to our search for the truth.”¹³

However, there are those who rightly oppose this interpretation of Augustine. These scholars favour an interpretation that attends to the radically exterior and worldly aspects of the Bishop’s theory of selfhood. Jean-Luc Marion and John Milbank (among others) have sought to exonerate Augustine from his ostensible proto-Cartesianism. Milbank writes that we may think one might find in Augustine, “the perfecting of a solipsistic interiority. . . . Yet in truth the reverse is the case, because for Augustine to know oneself

¹² Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: the Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 130.

¹³ Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 133. See also, Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 11, “The Christian Ascent: Augustine.” Also see Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

genuinely means to know oneself as loving what one should love—namely God and one's neighbour as oneself. Hence not interiority but radical *exteriorization* is implied.¹⁴ Similarly, Marion suggests that the Augustinian self comes about by way of an original alterity such that I "become myself *by* another. . . . I cannot give me to myself from myself: the given thus reduces to the absolute and irrefutable suffering of my selfhood as exterior."¹⁵ Yet, this approach to Augustine, while a helpful corrective, swings to the other extreme. It does not account for the richly described distinctions Augustine parsed out between the "inner man" and the "outer man" in the later books of *De Trinitate* and elsewhere. Phenomenologically speaking, there is no doubt Augustine made a turn inward.

While Michel Henry (camp 3), to whom we are indebted here, speaks little of Augustine, he nonetheless secures the "inward" Augustinian self by snatching it from all meaningful involvement in the exterior temporal horizon of the world. Henry's theory of a pure "auto-affection" or pure subjective flesh in which I feel myself crushing against myself without distance, mediation or intrusion of the temporality of the world, highlights what Henry perceives to be the essence of my ego, my primal unity not only to myself but that which gives me to myself and with whom I am in immediate unity: God's generative life. Drawing the Augustinian self into this primitive interior union, Henry strategically bolsters his phenomenology of the inner life by recourse to Augustine's discussions on the self's intimate interior bond to Christ.¹⁶ Incorporated into Henry's proposal that the only "real" life is the interior life, the Augustinian turn inward finds itself at once affirmed and radicalized.

Thus the three camps: (1) the Augustinian self is overly interior and escapist, (2) the Augustinian self is exterior and (3) the Augustinian self is perfected in its interiority. We can appreciate all three, but none on its own counts as a balanced engagement able to elucidate the complexity of the Augustinian self. While explicating the emphatic turn "*intus*" that Augustine took, our proposal of a porous self also qualifies that interiority with an inescapable movement outward into the sphere of exteriority/world. Even though we do not adopt a "worldly Augustinianism" we appreciate Augustine's emphasis on the exterior nature of the self's dispersal through time as it is cast into the world-horizon thanks to the work of creation. By the same token, while not defending an "interiorized Augustinianism," we acknowledge and welcome

¹⁴ John Milbank, "Sacred Triads: Augustine and the Indo-European Soul" *Modern Theology* 13/4 (1997), pp. 451–474, reference on p. 465. See also, for example, Charles Mathewes, "A Worldly Augustinianism: Augustine's Sacramental Vision of Creation," *Augustinian Studies*, 41/1 (2010), pp. 333–348; and Rowan Williams, "The Paradoxes of Self-knowledge in the De trinitate," in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Presbyter Factus Sum*, ed., J. T. Lienhard, (New York and Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 121–134.

¹⁵ Marion, *Au lieu de soi: L'approche de Saint Augustin*, p. 384.

¹⁶ Michel Henry, *Incarnation: une philosophie de la chair* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), §46.

the inward turn as an effectual path toward the eschatological reality of God (though God is never rendered present to consciousness). It is this tension between interior and exterior, this grey interval between, that trades on what we are calling the porosity of selfhood, and we claim to give to its elusive character a firmer shape by figuring it in relation to both the *exterior* and the *interior*.

3. *The Homo Temporalis and the Eternal*

While we shall attend to important insights in *Confessions* 10–11 throughout, a fuller portrait of the Augustinian self can emerge if that account is complemented by the analysis of the *imago Dei* sketched in *De Trinitate*. It is especially in the second half of *De Trinitate* that we find the temporal dynamic ordered by a “double entry,” or the *imago Dei* who is at once created in the exterior horizon of the world (entry one) and yet porous inwardly to that which is not in the world (entry two). The *imago Dei* does not merely represent an *activity* or a dimension of ipseity but is its phenomenological zero-point (*Null-Punkt*) or an “absolute here” around which all else revolves; the *imago Dei* is essentially who “I” am; for the porosity is the very transcendental condition for the possibility of any selfhood whatsoever; without a structural fracture to the non-temporal presence of God actualized as a concrete possibility of that opening, human life is reduced to nothing more than a temporal streaming, an exterior and worldly shell fragmented and flowing away toward the abyss of nothingness: “Indeed we cannot truly say that time exists except in the sense that it tends towards non-existence.”¹⁷ So while the Augustinian self is a *homo temporalis* oscillating between past and future, it is also porous to that which is present to itself in the presence of the present: namely, God. Yet how do we describe and measure the temporal (i.e. exterior) entry of the *homo temporalis*?

Augustine famously associated the temporal form of the *imago Dei* with the stretching capacity of the soul, i.e., the *distentio animi*. It highlights the human animus’ distention through the past (*memoria*) as it anticipates or leans into the future (*expectatio*), a double movement which identifies and marks with precision the basic feature of human experience: the self’s temporal streaming in the world.¹⁸ The state of *distentio* therefore figures in Augustine’s vocabulary as a name for human life itself, as the concrete feeling/cognitive awareness of being this “me” burdened with constant change.¹⁹ The Augustinian self cannot help but remain subject to the variation, change and

¹⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 14, 17. I make use throughout of the Chadwick translation. See *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

¹⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 29, 39–41.

¹⁹ J. J. O’Donnell writes, “His famous description of time as *distentio animi* cannot be a definition, but is, rather, a metaphor . . .” See J. J. O’Donnell, *Confessions*, vol. 3: *A Commentary on Books 8–13* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 289.

multiplicity of the temporal streaming of the world—which means that this ongoing flow can at times be painful, burdensome, and heavy.²⁰ Temporality, “my life,” constitutes me all the way down, penetrating me without ceasing. It is an aspect of life that, in Augustine’s oft-quoted lyric, leads me “to become for myself a soil which is a cause of difficulty and much sweat.”²¹ The temporal dispersal of the self is that it is always “outside” pure self-presence, for it cannot escape the temporal flux of ongoing difference and deferral. Defined as *distentio animi*, human life remains at an irreducible distance from itself, harbouring an internal temporal gap. Before I can embrace myself in pure immediacy and set within myself (in the way that concrete sets and stiffens by binding its aggregate parts together), I am taken away from myself by the (strenuous) flow of time. The temporal flow in which I am immersed determines me in my creaturehood, arising within me and imposing itself on me prior to judgment or reflection. I am always already thrown into time without delay, already found there, as a fact—a *fait accompli*.

For Augustine, human existence is pervaded by the flow of temporality, a *factum*, thanks to creation. The creation of time is co-emergent with the creation of the world. They are identical in Augustine’s cosmic framework. To be in the world is to be in time and vice versa: “Beyond doubt, then, the world was made not in time, but simultaneously with time.”²² As a consequence, God “made time itself. Time could not elapse before you made time. But if time did not exist before heaven and earth, why do people ask what you were then doing? There was no ‘then’ when there was no time.”²³ As created and thereby intrinsically ensconced in time, as *homo temporalis*, the Augustinian self remains at distance from itself in the ceaseless streaming of time.

But the Augustinian self remains at a distance, too, not just from itself, but also from God, a distance made all the more radical by God’s eternity. Because the self is a finite creature whose existence is primordially tied to the temporal streaming of the world-horizon as a *fait accompli*, to escape the world is never an option. And though Augustine argued that the soul/mind is not extrinsic to itself,²⁴ my radical proximity to myself is not the same as self-presence because I suffer from a basic internal gap. To be outside pure self-presence and thus “outside myself” (i.e., *ek-stasis*, or “standing out from”) in the world is to be immersed in time and distinct from God. Moreover, the reason I cannot achieve self-presence in the present is because, for

²⁰ Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 28, 39.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 10, 16, 25.

²² Augustine, *City of God*, 11, 6. I consult R. W. Dyson’s fine translation, see *The City of God*, trans. R. W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²³ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 13, 15.

²⁴ Augustine wrote, “The mind, after all, is not adventitious to itself, as thought to the mind which already was came from somewhere else the same mind which was not yet.” *De trin.*, 14, 13. I make use of the Edmund Hill translation throughout. See *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill, (New York: New City Press, 1991).

Augustine, only God is purely present, that is, an eternal and unchanging self-presence—without past or future.

Augustine followed Plotinus²⁵ in characterizing God as non-temporal, or more precisely, purely present in the presence of the present. Augustine seemed to have identified God's being with a timeless eternity: "Eternity is the very substance of God, which has nothing changeable; there nothing is past, as if it were no longer: nothing is future, as if it existed not as yet. There is nothing there but, Is."²⁶ In praising God, Augustine wrote, "In the sublimity of an eternity which is always in the *present*, you are before all things past and transcend all things future, because they are still to come, and when they have come they are past."²⁷ Hence, God is always present, in "constant eternity."²⁸ Humanity's temporality therefore separates it from God (not necessarily its sinful state): "This image made to the image of God is not equal and co-eternal with him whose image it is; nor would it be, even if it had never sinned."²⁹

The Augustinian *homo temporalis* is therefore created in time and exists in its finitude thrown from past to future and back again in constant mutability, and in this temporal streaming, it is posed always at a distance from itself and from God. The Augustinian self (this side of death) cannot leave the world altogether (it is a *fait accompli*), for only God is pure eternity outside the temporality of the world; but as the image of God, the Augustinian self is porous to God.

The porosity of display sets into operation a lived relation to God. Despite the eternity of God ("eternity is the very substance of God"), Augustine insisted that the *homo temporalis'* proper object of love and worship is God: "To put it in a word, let it worship the uncreated God by whom it was created with a capacity for him and able to share in him."³⁰ He thus defined the self's natural affinity for the eternal in context of its fundamental identity as the crowning achievement of creation, its status as *imago Dei*: the self, "cannot achieve so great a good except by being his image."³¹ While always remaining temporally distinct, then, the *imago Dei* illustrates that mysterious capacity "by which even the eternal and unchanging nature can be recalled, beheld

²⁵ Augustine appropriates Plotinus' division of "time and eternity" from the *Enneads* 3.7; however, Augustine differs from Plotinus by locating time in finitude, creation and ultimately in the creation of the human self rather than in a world-soul.

²⁶ Augustine, *Exposition on the Psalms*, 102, 27. I utilize Maria Boulding's translation. See *Exposition of the Psalms*, 6 vols., trans. Maria Boulding, (New York, New City Press: 2004).

²⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 8, 16. (emphasis mine)

²⁸ *Ibid*, 11, 11, 13.

²⁹ Augustine, *Unfinished Literal Commentary on Genesis*, 16, 61. I am using the Edmund Hill translations of all three works Augustine wrote on Genesis, which are combined into a single text. See Augustine, *On Genesis*, trans., Edmund Hill and Matthew O'Connell (New York: New City Press, 2002).

³⁰ Augustine, *De trin*, 14, 15.

³¹ *Ibid*, 14, 11.

and desired."³² Perhaps the capacity to contemplate the eternal raises an obvious question: how can the human self, created in time and subject to the *distentio* of the past and future, share in that which is outside of time (the pure present)? Does this not pose an obvious philosophical problem?

The Augustinian self overcomes this problematic by acknowledging that God created the self with a double capacity, or, a *double entry*, one temporal (entry 1) and the other eternal (entry 2). We are careful not to reduce the elusive structure of the Augustinian self to a rigid formula, as if "double entry" brings to light what Augustine meant to say but never actually articulated. Augustine took pains to maintain something like what we are calling the "double entry" in his discussions about the nature of temporality. The "porous self," as we maintain Augustine understood it, is a temporal self fractured by an entry to the eternal. I am a temporal creature porous to the eternal God whose presence is "more intimate to me than I am to myself."³³ Augustine acknowledged, in other words, the radical finitude of ipseity all the while refusing to reduce it to the temporal sphere alone.

Indeed, the porosity of display as we propose it here in light of Augustine unequivocally deconstructs any attempt to reduce selfhood to the enclosure of temporality alone. The porous self is porous to the eternal by virtue of the distance or gap between the temporal and non-temporal. And it is seeking after God across this gap (without at the same time narrowing it) that constitutes the power of porosity to be lived as a life of seeking God. So while the entry to the eternal can be "clogged," its porosity is nevertheless intrinsic to the self's sense of ipseity as an *imago Dei* whose temporal display is a field of display created by God, a God who finally is not disentangled from creation (as if God were a Deist or a *causa sui*) but who is "both interior to everything, because *in him are all things* (Rom 11.36), and exterior to every single thing because he is above all things."³⁴ It remains for us to clarify with phenomenological rigor how this double entry (one exterior, the other interior) is lived. To refine the structure of the double entry, we proceed to phenomenological description of the inner entry inasmuch as it is the site wherein I both appear most intimately to myself *and* open myself to the eternal (the eternal Word).

4. Verbum Interior and the (absence of the) Present

The phenomenological structure of the double entry accommodates both interior and exterior dimensions, and in this section we probe the prospective interior field of display. The porous self in its interior display also mounts here a strong critique of pure interiority by vanquishing the strict either/or

³² *Ibid*, 15, 39.

³³ Augustine, *Confessions* 3, 6, 11. Also 10, 27, 38.

³⁴ Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 8.26.48.

paradigm. This means that the interior field of display we are proposing, inhabited by the *verbum interior*, an inner word by which the porous self opens onto God, instantiates itself in the temporal streaming of the visible world. Inescapably temporal, and therefore necessarily disengaged from, and thereby quarantined from, the presence of pure interiority, the *verbum interior* functions nevertheless as a non-reflective “inner” word by which the ego knows and loves itself in and through its temporal streaming.

The *verbum interior* is therefore not complicit in a kind of metaphysics of presence inasmuch as the *verbum interior* circumvents the structure of soliloquy and thus resists the self-enclosure of pure interiority or of a kind of non-temporal auto-affection. And yet we claim the right to describe the *verbum interior* as an intimate word, a *verbum intimum* (what Augustine called the *verbum verum nostrum intimum*)³⁵ that draws me to myself. This universal interior word indicates an ongoing “speaking” internal to myself that compels me to converge on myself because I *image* through this *verbum interior* the unchanging, eternal Word. If I did not image the eternal Word my temporal condition would pull me apart due to the cross-pressure of the past and future, eradicating the unity of my ipseity altogether as I proceed rapidly toward nothingness. The Augustinian self so understood is not merely a social construct, a “bundle of temporal impressions” or a mirage forever alienated from itself and thus reduced to the vagaries of temporal delay and deferment (*différance*).³⁶ While it is thrown into temporality by creation and blocked from self-presence, the *verbum interior* nevertheless speaks to me intimately (without being a soliloquy) in that I find myself there, in that self-revelation of myself expressed as a word, “and since it loves knowledge and knows love, the word is in the love and the love in the word and both in the lover and the utterer.”³⁷ And, “the kind of word then that we are now wishing to distinguish and propose is ‘knowledge with love’ [*cum amore notitia*].”³⁸

If not of the order of a self-present soliloquy, how shall we describe what kind of word is the *verbum interior* that is uttered in the heart as “knowledge with love”? Is this *verbum interior* a word we speak to others formed with syllables and sounds? Is it a mental word seen by the mind’s eye before I speak? Is it something altogether different? We are given a clue by Augustine:

³⁵ For the Latin version of *De Trinitate*, I consult the Bibliothèque Augustinienne. See Augustine, *La Trinité (Livres VIII–XV)*, vol. 16, trans. P. Agaësse and ed. J. Moingt (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1955), p. 494. Referred to as BA, vol.16 in all subsequent citations.

³⁶ Marion’s resituating of the Augustinian self in view of the temporal structure of Derrida’s *différance* is unhelpful and perhaps even misleading. Certainly there is a temptation to view the Augustinian self as initially cast into the flow of temporality without recourse to presence at all. However, describing phenomenologically the Augustinian self with reference to *différance* tends to delimit the self to temporality alone (though Marion does not do this). See Marion on this point, *Au lieu de soi: L’approche de Saint Augustin*, §31.

³⁷ Augustine, *De trin*, 9, 15.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 9, 15. For Latin, see BA, vol.16, 102.

"And so we must come to that word of man, the word of a rational animal, the word of the *image of God*, which is not born of God but made by God, the word which is neither uttered in sound nor thought of in the likeness of sound, which necessarily belongs to some language, but which precedes all the signs that signify it and is begotten of the knowledge abiding in the consciousness, when this knowledge is uttered inwardly just exactly as it is."³⁹ The *verbum interior* so described designates a primal word spoken to myself from within myself, my self-identifying word, "before any sound, before any thought of sound [*verbum ante omnem sonum, ante omnem cogitationem soni*]."⁴⁰ Quite literally, the *verbum interior* delivers the porous self to itself by way of an interior self-awareness, a proximity of the self to itself realized through a pre-linguistic, non-reflective word.

This also highlights that the *verbum interior* is manifest as a streaming non-reflective self-awareness, not as a phenomenon dependent on reflective searching, or word unveiled by an act of introspection or thinking upon oneself as if I were a spectator looking inward able to find that inner word. It is not a function of an inner perception or introspection in which the ego can (as one contemporary philosopher describes it), "take a (non-optical) 'look' at what is passing his mind. . . . He can reflectively or introspectively watch, without any bodily organ of sense, the current episodes of his inner life."⁴¹ The inner word, rather, is intimate to itself through a non-reflective self-awareness inside the self prior to linguistic phonemes or the reflective power of an ego to observe itself through introspection. The porous self knows and loves itself through its inner word and thus "does not have to look for itself as if it were not available to itself."⁴² Thanks to this self-proximity, the porous self does not intermittently know itself but is always already aware of itself given that "there was never a time when the mind did not love itself, when it did not know itself."⁴³ Even when it is looking for itself, it is always already self-aware; it "knows itself even when it is looking for itself."⁴⁴

But we must emphasize that the porous self, even in its non-reflective *verbum*, cannot escape its temporal condition and thus cannot coincide with itself. In submission to the temporal streaming of the world (i.e., strenuous flow), the *verbum interior* "knows itself and loves itself, it does not know and love something unchangeable."⁴⁵ If it is not purely self-present or self-enclosed, neither does it speak to itself (soliloquy) independent of all that is "outside." But how does the *verbum interior* surmount the self-presence without succumbing to an absolute and pernicious temporal fragmentation?

³⁹ *Ibid*, 15, 20.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 15, 22. For Latin, see BA, vol. 16, 484.

⁴¹ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 4.

⁴² Augustine, *De trin*, 10, 10.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 10, 11.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 10, 16.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 9, 9.

The *verbum interior* arrives at itself continually with reference to itself as created according to an image that does not change (i.e., eternal *Verbum*), and thus overcomes the absolute fragmentation of temporality—but it does not escape the “changeability” of temporality. It is therefore shaped by both the pressure of temporal streaming of the world-horizon and the interior entry to that which is outside of time.

The Augustinian self, in fact, yearns to be eternal only because its interior non-reflective *verbum interior* is porous to the eternal Word. The self’s *distentio* through the past and future implies that it is missing that which it cannot experience, the pure “present” moment of eternity which persists with no reference to past or future. In book 11 of the *Confessions* (on “Time and Eternity”), Augustine explored the relation between the three temporalities only to judge that the present moment is fleeting in that “this time flies so quickly from future into past that it is an interval with no duration.”⁴⁶ This “present has no extension.”⁴⁷ And so, when Augustine wrote that “my life is a *distentio* in several directions,”⁴⁸ he elucidated a self whose present moment is entirely absent. Without the present, the self is carried along by time in either the backward direction of memory or the forward motion of expectation. Its temporal condition maintained in such a way temporalises itself not in spite of but because of the lack of the present: “If the present were always present, it would not pass into the past: it would not be time but eternity.”⁴⁹ Irrepressibly a *homo temporalis*, the Augustinian self gropes toward the present by looking inward, by listening to its non-reflective word (which images the eternal Word). The lived expression of the double entry through the *verbum interior* is that it renders God near without narrowing the temporal gap between my ipseity and God: “We observed [the eternal] as both not being far away from us and yet being above us, not spatially but in its august and marvellous eminence, and in such a way that it also seemed to be with or *in us* by the presence of its light.”⁵⁰ The eternal Word illumines, shines on and draws my interior word toward participation in eternity (without violating the temporal difference). This ratifies the fact that I am created with a double entry: I am a temporal creature oscillating between past and future (entry 1) whose ipseity is held together by an inner entry to God’s presence, or the *verbum interior* (entry 2).

We now turn to sketch a fuller portrait of how the Augustinian *homo temporalis* may seek after that which is outside of time structured by primordial temporal rhythms that govern existence: Heidegger’s exposition of the future and Husserl’s privileging of the past.

⁴⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 15, 20.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11, 21, 27.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 11, 29, 39.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 11, 14, 17.

⁵⁰ Augustine, *De trin.*, 15, 10. (emphasis mine)

5. *Being-in-the-World and Epektasis*

So far we have seen that the temporality is a *fait accompli* and that the *imago Dei* is endowed with a double entry, constituted between the play of the temporal (entry 1) and the eternal (entry 2); and that the entry to the eternal is interior and that this primal interior site of porosity, because it is non-reflective, is not strictly subject to the same protocol of display indicative of exterior modes of display such as linguistic utterance and bodily movements. Yet because the porous self is thrown into the exterior field of temporality through the work of creation, its *verbum interior* is not purely interior, as if divorced from language and the body. Faith, uttered as a temporal reflective word, can bring the interior non-reflective word into plain sight. The profession of faith assumes a visible disclosure thereby bringing to light the *verbum interior* through a public utterance. How does faith as a public utterance, a confession, therefore render visible that which is non-reflective? To pose it more precisely: what is the exterior, temporal structure of faith?

Faith transforms temporality by theologically redeeming time itself, by temporalising time in view of its Creator, the eternal God who transcends past and future time and yet is mysteriously related to all that is created in time. Faith's futurity institutes an eschatological desire or *Epektasis*. The theological reorientation of temporality toward the eschaton is at the same time the confirmation of the *imago Dei* as porous to God.

Before we elucidate *epektasis*, a brief word about how the temporality of faith affects the porous self is in order. It is only by virtue of the purging power of faith that the interior pores can be "unclogged" and thereby open onto the eternal. That is, the temporality of faith is not simply added onto our original temporal condition as merely one possible "ontic" mode of temporal existence. Rather, faith penetrates the fabric of time itself, transforming its character by distending it, and with that movement, faith re-opens my inward word to a God who created time as originally good. For the porous self, then, the element of faith carries its own form of temporality, both past and future tenses. Leading toward that which is not in this world, it is by recourse to the interval of incommensurability posed between faith's temporality and God's eternality that enables faith to pursue God in the first place. Faith signifies that our likeness to God is regulated by an immeasurable difference, or a play between our temporal contingency and God's pure simplicity and eternal presence. But faith ensures that this play is not founded on an absolute incommensurability. Faith, calibrated by its temporal economy, professes a God who is to come, and a God before whom we shall, at the final day, sit face to face. Before that eternal Sabbath, faith is given as gift of grace, as a contingent reality to sustain our seeking; in fact, faith expresses itself as radically finite in its groping amid the horizon of the world wherein its utility as a temporal mode is most evident. But as also porous to the eternal, the temporality of faith draws near to God. And in its seeking through faith, the

porous self's non-reflective *verbum interior* becomes visible as an image of that eternal Word. Ordered by its own temporal rhythm, then, faith is led by the Spirit toward its terminus point where the porous self shall realize its perfect presence before God such that it can "rest in you for the Sabbath of eternal life."⁵¹ The logic of faith is a contingent logic, a public appeal that carries me forward (*extensio*) while I am a pilgrim on this earth but expires when the direction of its gaze is fulfilled, when it sees God face-to-face: "There will no longer be any faith by which things that are not seen are believed, but sight by which things that were believed are seen."⁵²

Always linked to the temporal horizon of the world, to be sure, faith does not lead to escapism or a flight from time but radicalizes the Heideggerian future temporal ecstasy ("being-toward-death") by stretching that ecstasy toward the final destination of the saints. *Epektasis*, the Greek term Paul used in Philippians 3:13–14 ("Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward [*epekteinomenos*] to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus") puts into play an eschatological act of seeking a God who is to come.⁵³ Faith in the final consummation of history temporalises that seeking beyond the temporality of the world. It is appropriate that we identify the future ecstasy as a "seeking," for its *epektasis* signifies that temporality is a straining forward to what lies ahead, to that final day. It is described here eloquently by Augustine:

It is the Son of man who is mediator between you the One and us the many, who live in a multiplicity of distractions by many things; so 'I might apprehend him in whom also I am apprehended' (Phil. 3.12–14), and leaving behind the old days I might be gathered to follow the One, 'forgetting the past' and moving not towards those future things which are transitory but to 'things which are before' me, not stretched out in distraction but extended in reach, not by being pulled apart but by concentration. So I 'pursue the prize of the high calling' where I 'may hear the voice of praise' and 'contemplate your delight' (Ps. 25. 7; 26.4) which neither comes nor goes.⁵⁴

It is doubtless that Augustinian faith reintegrates vulgar or secular time within a theological setting, overcoming, or at least radically qualifying, the finitude of Heidegger's being-toward-death. Charles Taylor has recently suggested that one crucial facet of human life which explains the secular ethos of

⁵¹ Augustine, *Confessions*, 13, 36, 51.

⁵² Augustine, *De trin*, 14, 4.

⁵³ Here we distinguish an Augustinian *epektasis* from an Eastern Orthodox variant that characterizes a central feature of Gregory of Nyssa's theology. Gregory identifies *epektasis* as perpetual becoming in union with God. See for example his *Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham J. Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

⁵⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 11, 29, 39.

our contemporary age lies in the gradual transformation of how we understand time. Secular time constitutes an interpretive grid that constrains us to experience time as radically finite and levelled, that is, purely horizontal in the world. He suggests that secular time necessarily leads to the homogenization of the temporal movements themselves. All time is the same and all time is of a piece with the world. Industrialization, technology, science and the steady detaching of the self from God gave way over the last few centuries to a temporal framework in which “my” singular temporal flow finds its meaning only within the wider, mundane flow of objective world time; each “moment” is regulated to repeat itself by the mechanized consistency and perfect continuity of the clock. A generic world time sets the boundaries of life itself, secularizing the *distentio* of faith in a God who transcends time.⁵⁵ Heidegger is profoundly original in his own retrieval of an “existential” sense of temporality which places an accent on the future.⁵⁶

Indeed, Heidegger’s understanding of time as *kairos* in *Sein und Zeit* may illustrate a helpful corrective to secular *chronos*. Nonetheless, Heideggerian time is secular, or at the very least neutered to the eternal. By privileging the future plane, Heidegger opens up a valuable space of expectation, possibility and “destiny.” Yet his notion of being-toward-death is radically finite, inauthentic and thus “secular” in that it is grounded in the finitude of temporality and the coming termination of death. How does an Augustinian critique of being-in-the-world shape, and in fact transform, the experience of time from secular expectation of a future inscribed in the world (death) to a theological expectation (*epektasis*) of eternal things?

Even though hope for the future is ultimately realized in the Parousia, hope is nevertheless manifest in the world as a seeking or a quest defined by and ordered to the power of the temporal horizon of the world. Thus, despite the fact that the temporality of faith is directed toward the eternal, as a temporal *distentio*, the profession of faith is a rigorous practice “worked out in fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12), and reflects an ongoing engagement with and assessment of my place in the world. Though it is a subjective temporality (“faith itself is temporal and finds a temporal dwelling in the hearts of believers”),⁵⁷ Augustine oriented that seeking for God so that it radicalizes the existential possibilities of being-in-the-world with recourse to the mood of hope (not angst), a hopeful *distentio* toward the City of God to come, culminating in the “perpetual Sabbath” of that perfect City.⁵⁸

To radicalize the *distentio* beyond the limits of being-toward-death, however, is not to eradicate *distentio* altogether and take flight from the world

⁵⁵ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 55–61 and pp. 195–200.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 798, n.45.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *De trin.*, 14, 3.

⁵⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, 22, 30.

in a Gnostic escapism. To radicalize the *distentio* from an Augustinian point of view is to stretch rather than to eradicate the *distentio* to its maximal degree, “distending” the *distentio* toward its eternal “terminus.” Faith, which gives way to the existential mood of hope, redeems secular time by unlogging the self’s temporal pores to that which transcends time. Unable to escape the temporal streaming of the world-horizon, the Augustinian self sanctifies and redeems the *distentio*, which does not eliminate the basic state of *distentio*; for a profession of faith is not an other-worldly escapism but rather a practice of stretching the future possibilities to-be toward a future beyond death (and angst)⁵⁹ to that absolute Parousia where I shall see God face-to-face. This theological radicalization of the *distentio* framed by the Parousia affirms Marion’s judgment that *distentio* is transformed by faith into *extensio* toward God—my distracted state (*distentio*) translates into an existential attraction to God as I extend my temporal destiny toward the eschaton (*extensio*).⁶⁰ The Augustinian radicalization of time *extends* (and does not escape) temporal existence in the world forward to the absolute destiny.

The Augustinian self therefore harbours a decisive theological critique of Heidegger’s preoccupation with the future temporal plane, i.e., being-toward-death.⁶¹ While Heidegger founds existential authenticity on the “possibility of impossibility” by which I (anxiously) create myself through my possibilities (do not rest on your laurels, but push forward!),⁶² the *imago Dei* repaired through faith both remembers the divine who can make it happy and strains (in hope) toward that absolute future in which faith is consummated and happiness is realized in the full presence of God (Parousia)—all without taking leave of, or bracketing, the world itself.⁶³ While we wait in hope, we dwell in the future tense, in *epektasis*. We profess faith on the basis of the non-reflective word that images God, but we do so without the satisfaction of the immediacy of an esoteric religious experience or emotional rapture leading to non-temporal union with God. The Augustinian non-reflective self-awareness remains tied to the temporal horizon of being-toward-death—accomplished as a *fait accompli*. It is as though, as Augustine claimed, I look at God while in this world through a glass darkly and in an

⁵⁹ Heidegger writes that “being-toward-death is essentially anxiety.” See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), p. 310.

⁶⁰ Marion, *Au lieu de soi: L’approche de Saint Augustin*, p. 310.

⁶¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, §53, “Existential Projection of an Authentic Being-towards-Death.”

⁶² Heidegger says that “death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus death reveals itself as that possibility which is one’s ownmost.” See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 294.

⁶³ For more on Augustine’s view of the temporality of eschatological expectation, see G. J. P. O’Daly, “Time as Distension and St. Augustine’s Exegesis of Phil 3.12–14,” *Revue des Etudes Augustiniennes* 23 (1977), pp. 265–271.

enigma.⁶⁴ My existential hope is beaten back as I try to glimpse through faith the divine plenitude of Father and Son bonded by the love of the Spirit in co-eternal aseity. Even the perfected *imago Dei*, Augustine insisted in book 15 of *De Trinitate*, consists of a feeling of “absolute inadequacy.”⁶⁵ This side of the eschaton, I remain temporal if even aware of myself as a “self” only because I seek that which I cannot fully grasp or gaze at—the eternal *Verbum*.

6. Memoria: Toward a Contemplative Intentionality

We attend to the final stage in the Augustinian ascent to the eternal. We highlight here the theological fulfilment of Husserl’s “consciousness of internal time,” a style of perception which emphasizes the power of memory, i.e., retentive consciousness. To do so we proceed from several facts already established: that my ek-static, temporal streaming in the world is inescapable, a *fait accompli*, and that despite this temporal existence I have been created with a porosity to the eternal; that my entry to the eternal is interior; and that the temporality of faith renders visible this porosity to the eternal by *distending* being-toward-death beyond (without taking leave of) its secular limits. We now critically introduce Husserlian retentive consciousness as a boundary with which the Augustinian *memoria* must negotiate on its way toward the eternal.

Augustinian *memoria* enacts a looking inward which gives way to an ascent, an inward elevation that re-shapes past time (without escaping time). Augustine’s notion of *memoria* is of profound importance not only to my self-awareness but also to my interior awareness of God. Memory is, ultimately, the interior site wherein God draws near, if only as an eschatological reality. It is in this deep recess of the memory that one possesses an ineluctable and irrepressible memory of the immemorial, the eternal call to desire the God in whose image it was made: “Where in my consciousness, Lord, do you dwell? But you remain immutable above all things, and yet have deigned to dwell in my memory since the time I learnt about you.”⁶⁶ I am porous to God in my inner depths as they unfurl within the layers of memory. Because memory is porous to that which is not of this world, the Augustinian self cannot, in principle, completely forget God (though it may repress that memory). Robert O’Connell observes that Augustine’s *imago Dei* cannot have “forgotten God completely. For if that were the case, Augustine argues, no ‘reminder’ could ever succeed in awakening that lost memory.”⁶⁷ Just as my pores

⁶⁴ Augustine often quotes Paul’s phrase from 1 Corinthians 13:12: “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”

⁶⁵ Augustine, *De trin.*, 15. I borrow the expression for the title Edmund Hill gives to book 15, “the Absolute Inadequacy of the Perfected Image.”

⁶⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 24, 36.

⁶⁷ Robert O’Connell, *Origin of the Soul in Augustine’s Later Works* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), p. 267. See Augustine, *Confessions*, 10, 19, 28.

remain clogged when I am limited to the future horizon of being-in-death, so too they remain obstructed when reduced to the intention-intuition structure of Husserl's retentive consciousness. We must set our theological proposal of *memoria* up against Husserl's consciousness of internal time.

Husserl contends that the ego desires and craves fulfilment of objects so that it can manifest phenomena to consciousness.⁶⁸ The Husserlian ego phenomenally objectifies phenomena into phenomenality by way of retentive objectification. In other words, the ego moves outward into the temporal horizon of the world in order to synthesize by way of memory the intention-intuition opposition into a unity of experience. This intentional synthesis necessarily takes place against the backdrop of the consciousness of internal time in which the ego experiences the impact of the objects in a temporal flow that moves like a "comet's tail" receding into the depths of the memory. One impression after another makes it impact in an ongoing temporal continuum—but only in such a way that the ego remains anchored as the "referential centre of the whole surrounding world."⁶⁹ While Husserl does account for the future (protention) the present (the primal impression) and the past (retention) ecstasies, he nonetheless confers on retention the special privilege of holding consciousness together, insofar as it is a "unique kind of intentionality."⁷⁰ Take a melody for example. The melody gives itself point by point as the notes impact the ego. From the "perceived" note (not the note itself), the tone is held in the memory and the ego "holds onto" the elapsed tones themselves. In doing so, the retentive consciousness "progressively brings about the unity of the consciousness that is related to the unitary temporal object, to the melody."⁷¹ Husserl therefore gives to memory the power of perception itself whereby "retention constitutes the living horizon of the now."⁷² Calling retention a "horizontal intentionality," he claims that it unifies by holding together conscious experience of time, so that the flow of temporality is stretched, gradually and linearly, from the primal impression to the retention, to the retention of the retention onward until it fades.⁷³ The temporal flow itself proceeds from the present toward nothingness in a horizontal fashion, for the present "continually dies" away as it recedes from memory.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, vol. II, trans. J. N. Findlay (London and New York: Routledge, 1970), p. 779 and p. 726.

⁶⁹ Husserl, *Thing and Space: Lectures of 1907*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1997), p. 69.

⁷⁰ Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, p. 33.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

An Augustinian contemplative intentionality redeems the Husserlian intentional structure by referring it back to that which cannot die away or fade from memory. Theological memory refers back to the origin, to creation itself, but also to the beginning of faith itself, the in-breaking of God into history—Christ’s death and resurrection. Indeed, for Augustine the *memoria* par excellence is the Eucharist whereby Christ’s body and blood are continually celebrated in expectation for what is to come: “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11: 27). Whereas Husserl requires that retentive consciousness to “objectify” the datum in question by rendering my intentional aim fulfilled by a temporal object, the contemplative style of intentionality violates this principle of fulfilment. My *memoria* remains empty in that I cannot retrieve my creation or the body and blood of Christ through retention and thus objectify it as a phenomenon in the temporal flow of consciousness. The self who contemplates God *cannot* achieve intentional fulfilment—to profess faith in God is nothing less than to experience an empty intention (not merely poorly filled but entirely empty). An empty retention therefore requires faith (the “evidence of things not seen”). But the emptiness of faith finds its meaning in the porosity of display ordered by the double entry; between the play of these two entries faith actively elicits the eternal, drawing me near to God by an upward curvature toward the present.

Always there, in the pure present of the present, God is also always active in that God extends grace to the saints who profess faith, drawing them upward. By way of an inward descent that takes a turn upward to God’s eternity, the contemplative retention manipulates the temporal flow as it moves backward. Just so, reaching back to that theological origin and thus modified by contemplation, the retention bends upward by way of a curvature. Its curve bends upward, and at the same time, proceeds forward because the *memoria* is ineluctably drawn to the consummation of time itself, the Parousia. Again, we recall that the Eucharist declares both *memoria* and *epektasis* in one breath: “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11: 27). Thus the joyous levity of *memoria* is such that it rises upward in a curvature toward the expectation of the Parousia. The play between the two entries (exterior and interior) is manifest in the temporality of Eucharistic contemplation that extends in both past and future directions at once (exterior) thereby drawing me upward to the eternal (interior). Both backward and forward ecstasies are integrated into an interweaving mutuality whereby both “seek” across time the God who transcends time.

This Eucharistic *memoria* is thus lived in view of a double movement, for “to proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” implies both memory and expectation, and thus one empty intention is met with another. These two temporal movements are a double movement that forms a single curvature upward. How does this materialize?

To contemplate the eternal through *memoria* is to uncover a double intentional movement that converges on God without rendering God an objective correlate who can fulfil my intentional aim. Even though the contemplative intentionality is empty, it is not without theological import: by faith the *memoria* seeks its origin in creation (past) and by faith *epektasis* desires its destiny in the renewal of creation (future). The empty intentional aim deploys faith in order not to fulfil but to lead the aim toward the present where its origin and destiny become interchangeable. In so doing, a contemplative intentionality distends the intentional regard backwards and forwards, simultaneously, lifting me upward beyond time as I look inward toward the eternal—and yet without ever escaping time. In fact, my past and future converge in contemplation so that past proceeds upstream, bending toward the present, and the future accelerates downstream, bending toward the present, where they complement one another in their respective gazes, unfulfilled and thus remembering and expecting in a single curvature—all the while within the world-horizon. The retentional streaming looks to the origin and the future streaming searches in anticipation for the redemption of that lost origin, and they culminate in the selfsame quest for redemption, so that the beginning and the end of life become collateral movements, interweaving as they bend toward the eternal. The original Sabbath present in Genesis 1 shall become, and already is, the eternal Sabbath of the Parousia.

Understood by way of this single curvature, the two streaming ecstasies unplug the interior porosity to the present without collapsing into an interior self-presencing and without confusing the respective temporal directionalities. Access to the interior “living present” in its pure timelessness cannot be achieved by way of an interior escapism or mystical union. The curvature of faith remains a “seeking” anchored in the *memoria* and propelled upward, thereby lifting the temporal streaming of *epektasis* upward too. Retentional consciousness so understood bends forward as it arches toward the protention which likewise bends backward, a double temporal movement lifting me as I ascend to the present. Spiritual perception so described here in light of Augustine exhausts Husserlian intentionality in that Eucharistic contemplation moves away from the temporal streaming of retention and protention toward their convergence in the present. Yet because faith is a temporal movement regulated by reflective, perceptual capabilities, the Augustinian self never experiences the presence of the Parousia, as if I could flee the world toward an inward union. This over-realized eschatology, the moment of past and future reposing on the eternal present, is not entirely within reach, for the eternal present must wait until that final Sabbath. This is perhaps why the body and blood of Christ is over and again recreated in its Eucharistic form until Christ comes. The call to repetition is an explicit acknowledgement that the Eucharist cannot accomplish fully what it seeks and thus cannot render Christ’s eternal glory present.

For Augustine, a contemplative intentionality is therefore more than prayer, liturgical praxis or meditation, but not less. In the words of Kevin Hart, “contemplation . . . is an attitude, not prayer.”⁷⁵ Stretched in both directions without fulfilment, the self inhabits a contemplative attitude of wisdom, a theological wisdom preoccupied with worship of the eternal God as an ongoing retentive/protentive act sustained by grace. This ongoing contemplative intentionality renders me porous to God through the non-reflective word, a self-love and self-knowledge deep in my interior self-having prior to language and the physical body. Certainly grounded in prayer and temporally distended by the eucharist, contemplation exceeds these liturgical moments by taking on the character of an attitude of faith, a way of living *toward* God as I know and love myself *within* the temporal streaming of the world-horizon.

The upshot of such a theological analysis of time is that the Augustinian self does not experience God in episodic fashion as if caught up in an esoteric rapture or ecstatic experience in flight from the temporal horizon of the world. Rather the structure of this contemplative style of experiencing highlights a sphere of lived-experience not isolated from the everyday reflective and wakeful life of the self in the world. Augustine could have used the term “mystical union” to describe how he understood his own vision of the eternal in Ostia, but he specifically did not.⁷⁶ As a lived expression of wisdom that puts into play an empty intentional posture that contemplates the supreme Trinity, contemplation establishes my dwelling within the world-horizon as a temporal movement toward God who is outside of—because the Creator of—the world-horizon. Augustine characterized this movement as a “seeking” or quest for God that terminates only in the eschaton, where I come “face to face” with God. On this side of death, however, I advance toward God in faith while in the temporal streaming of the world-horizon, activating my *memoria* in order to remember a God I did not always know but who also I am never able to forget.

⁷⁵ Kevin Hart, “Contemplation—Beyond and Behind,” *Sophia* 48 (2009), pp. 435–459; p. 456.

⁷⁶ For more on this point, see John Peter Kenney, *The Mysticism of Saint Augustine: Rereading the Confessions* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), p. 110.