SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

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Augustine's *Confessions*

Communicative Purpose and Audience

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ANNEMARÉ KOTZÉ

BRILL

Augustine's *Confessions*: Communicative Purpose and Audience

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Augustine's *Confessions*: Communicative Purpose and Audience

by

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PREFACE

The research for this book, which is the publication of my recently completed doctoral dissertation, started about six years ago. But this starting point was in fact a return to a first love that had originated during the 1980's when I read the *Confessions* with Professor Frans Smuts, the then retired head of the Department of Latin at the University of Stellenbosch. Prof. Smuts' enthusiasm and Augustine's lyrical Latin proved an irresistible combination. What I found especially fascinating was the controversy surrounding the unity of the *Confessions* because of the network of secondary issues involved, issues like trends in research (positivism making way for post-modernism), the limitations of modern readers reading ancient texts, and even religious tolerance and intercultural communication. Thus, when I eventually decided to spend a considerable portion of my time on the writing of a doctoral dissertation I knew that this would be the text and the issues that could prove absorbing enough to justify the effort.

The project received its initial impetus from the enthusiasm with which Sjarlene and Johan Thom, my colleagues and mentors in the Department of Ancient Studies at the University of Stellenbosch, greeted my embryonic ideas. In her capacity as my supervisor for my Masters thesis, Sjarlene had taught me to write, by patiently dissecting my impossible sentences and paring away the many superfluous words. Johan's academic acumen, for which I have the greatest admiration and respect, provided an invaluable safety net all through the stormy process of planning, structuring and formulating my findings. Every student who shared his or her ideas on the *Confessions* with me contributed to my insight into the work. Also the practical assistance and advice, the encouragement and moral support of every member of the staff of the Department of Ancient Studies at some stage played a valuable role in enabling me to complete this daunting task.

The first stages of the research were much simplified through the fact that I was able to work in the library of the Augustinian monastery in Heverlee and in the libraries of the Catholic University of Louvain. It was especially through the initiative of my husband, Robert, and the

goodwill of his colleagues (especially An Huts) and of Professor Vic Goedseels of the Catholic University of Louvain that this study visit could become a reality. I also wish to thank Pater Van Houtem at the Augustinian monastery for his efforts to support my research in their library and the facilities put at my disposal. I also wish to thank the National Research Foundation and the Harry Crossley Foundation for the financial assistance without which I could not have completed the project.

Another very important impetus that changed the course of my research was my contact with Professor Hans van Oort, when he was a visiting Professor at the Theological Seminary in Stellenbosch in 1998 and subsequent years. He convinced me that the *Confessions* could not be read without knowledge of Augustine's relationship with Manichaeism and thus initiated a line of inquiry that became one of the main tenets of my thesis on this work. Without my conversations with Professor van Oort, the publications he put at my disposal, his constant encouragement and especially the meticulous care with which he read and corrected the manuscript the publication of this book would not have been possible.

Lastly, the years of reading and rereading and puzzling over the *Confessions*, of writing and rewriting and polishing the text presented here would have been empty years without my friends and family around me. The freedom to work in Louvain was created through Annette's sacrifice of taking responsibility for two difficult children during our stay in Belgium, Robert endured six years of one-track mindedness, Fransina kept together a household that often threatened to fall apart, Adéle spent two whole week-ends editing the final document and my mother was the therapist who helped me deal with the effects the process had on the totality of my life. My daughters Clara and Hanna, in spite of their often expressed misgivings at having to play a secondary role to the birth of this baby, nevertheless always supported me in principle and provided a much needed counterbalance without which the whole project would simply not have been worthwhile.

INTRODUCTION

> It is a measure of the inadequacy of the understanding of the modern period that Augustine's great work should have become the 'autobiography' of a sinful, guilt-ridden soul
>
> —(Crosson 1989, 95).

Crosson's closing statement in his convincing article, 'Structure and Meaning in St. Augustine's *Confessions*,' points to exactly what this study is about: to show how calling the *Confessions* 'an autobiography' clouds our understanding of this multi-dimensional literary work and how many of the problems surrounding the meaning of this text are the result of the inadequacy of modern approaches rather than of Augustine's bad compositional techniques, as some have believed. The *Confessions* is one of those ancient works around which an impossible dichotomy exists. It is, according to many, one of the great works of Western literature and probably, through all the ages, Augustine's most read work. Yet, it is arguably one of the least understood pieces of ancient literature. The very existence of the issues concerning the 'historicity of the *Confessions*' and the 'unity of the *Confessions*' is symptomatic of the perplexity many scholars still experience with the literary strategies employed by Augustine in this work. The elusiveness of the problem is demonstrated by the rare circumstance that, while scholars do agree, today, that there are ample indications of a well-construed unity, they are unable to agree on exactly what constitutes this unity, as Holzhausen (2000, 519) points out.

The primary focus of the present study is on the *Confessions* as a literary object and thus ultimately on structure, cohesion, and 'unity.' But I am convinced that one research project cannot constitute the breadth and depth of study necessary to finally solve the riddle of the literary unity of this work that is often described as an awkward combination of autobiography and exegesis. It can at best hope to make a significant contribution towards eventually arriving at an improved understanding. Thus, the emphasis is not on structure and unity in the

first place, but on two aspects that we have to understand before we can comprehend the whole, namely the genre and the target audience of the work. Even here I narrow the scope of my research down to two distinct but interrelated areas: 1) to what extent does the *Confessions* conform to the standards of a specific genre, popular in the time of Augustine, the genre of the protreptic? and 2) to what extent is this protreptic aimed at a specific segment of the intended audience of the work, the Manichaeans?

The procedures and terminology employed here do not require the elaborate exposition of a methodological framework. Thus, I have refrained (with the exception of the clarifying remarks on genre in chapter 2) from 'first erecting a methodological framework' (O'Connell 1996, xv) based on, for example, the tenets of semiotics or reader reception theory mainly because of a personal conviction that theories like these with all their terminological particularities have the effect of estranging the reader, rather than the opposite. Of course, eclectic use is made of some categories and terms from these theoretical frameworks that have become part of mainstream terminology or are self evident enough to render long theoretical explanations superfluous.

But, to evaluate the *Confessions* as a literary product of its time I venture into the issue of how the principles of genre in general and the literary practices of Late Antiquity in particular can and should influence a present day reading of the *Confessions* (chapter 2). This is supplemented by a short section highlighting the salient facts about Manichaeism that need to be understood in order to follow the arguments about the work's Manichaean audience (also in chapter 2). In chapters 3 to 5 I analyse selected passages from the text of the *Confessions* in order to pinpoint what chapter 2 identifies as the primary indicator of genre, the communicative purpose of the work, as well as to ascertain what we learn about the reader Augustine may have had in mind. I come to the conclusion that an important aspect of this communicative purpose is to convert the reader to the true Christianity Augustine claims to have found. I also argue that Augustine consciously imitates literary models that are in many respects similar to the *Confessions*, that bear the characteristics of the protreptic genre, but that are very dissimilar to (modern) autobiography. This makes it imperative to believe that he is consciously using some of the devices of the protreptic genre as part of the communication strategy of his *Confessions*.

Through these and other procedures, I hope to open up new perspectives on the *Confessions* by not focussing, like the vast majority of

studies of the past century, on the Augustine 'behind' the text, or the thought systems that make up the background to his writing, but on the reader 'in front of' the text. If the text makes use of some of the devices of the protreptic genre as I postulate, what interests me is how this text aims to influence its readers to make a life-changing choice and be converted. If the text, like all texts, implies its ideal reader by the very devices it employs, my question is who this ideal reader is, or narrowed down as it is here, to what degree this ideal reader is a Manichaean reader. I contend that Augustine's aim in writing the *Confessions* was neither to analyse and understand himself nor to create for posterity a portrait of himself or even of his conversion. If we approach the text with the assumption that Augustine's aim was that of a traditional protreptic, namely to change the course of the life of its reader, the questions we ask change completely. We might ask, not why does Augustine break off his autobiographical section shortly after the account of his conversion, but why does Augustine make use of a more extended autobiographical section than expected; and not why does Augustine add three books of exegesis to his autobiography, but how does the theoretical section of this protreptic compare to that in other protreptic texts.

All this said, I want to emphasize that my aim is not to 'prove' that the *Confessions* is a protreptic and not an autobiography and to present this as a solution to the problems scholars still experience with this text. But it should be clear that providing a counterbalance to the presupposition of many scholars that the text consists of a less than successful combination of autobiography and exegesis by examining—in a more extensive and methodical manner than those who have suggested this possibility before now—the degree to which the *Confessions* can be read as a protreptic text may enhance our understanding of it.

In conclusion: I thoroughly agree with O'Donnell's criticism of the positivistic approach to the *Confessions* one often encounters: 'One prevailing weakness of many of these efforts has been the assumption that there lies somewhere unnoticed about the *Confessions* a neglected key to unlock all mysteries. But for a text as multi-layered and subtle as the *Confessions*, any attempt to find a single key is pointless.' The more I read the *Confessions* as well as the thoughts of so many outstanding scholars over so many years on this work, the more I become aware of just how multi-layered and multi-dimensional it is, indeed, in O'Donnell's words (1992, 1:li), 'a work that draws its rare power from complexity, subtlety, and nuance.' Thus, this examination of the pro-

treptic characteristics of *Confessions* and the degree to which its ideal reader is a Manichaean reader can be no more than the unravelling of one strand of meaning while we remember that what is not said here is so much more than what is said.[1]

[1] All references to the text of the *Confessions* are to O'Donnell's text (1992) and the translations given are those by Chadwick (1991) except where indicated otherwise.

PART I

PROLEGOMENA

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CHAPTER ONE

THE *CONFESSIONS* AND ITS ACADEMIC READERS: A SURVEY OF SECONDARY LITERATURE

Even though the *Confessions* is usually referred to as one of the great works of Western literature, mainstream research on this work is not concerned with the *Confessions* as a literary object. This does not make the writing of a literary survey to preface a work on the literary characteristics of the *Confessions* an easy task, however. First, mainstream research has been so influential in forming ideas, also of literary scholars, about Augustine's masterpiece that no scholar can claim to be completely independent of these readings and they cannot be passed over in complete silence.[1] Secondly, though the field of literary analysis of the *Confessions* still shows many lacunae, the amount of research that forms the basis from which to go forward, remains intimidating.[2]

I start this survey with a look at important theological and historical perspectives, as well as at the issue of the historicity of the *Confessions* (1.1), i.e. at mainstream but not primarily literary research. The focus is mainly, but not solely, on recent studies of the *Confessions* (research from roughly the past two decades). The second section of the chapter (1.2), on the problems surrounding the literary qualities of the work, consists of an introductory discussion of the long debated question of

[1] Marrou's *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (1958) illustrates the influence of studies that are not primarily literary on literary studies. I am convinced that a work as influential as his, and perhaps especially his (in)famous dictum, 'Augustin compose mal' (1958, 61 et passim) must have had a profound effect on scholarship for a long time. This is the kind of formulation by an eminent scholar that is easily perpetuated in research for decades—in spite of the author's heart-felt retraction on this point (1958, 665–672)—before it is questioned seriously.

[2] For a concise but authoritative overview of the whole field of research on the *Confessions* in the past century, see the section, 'A century of scholarship' (1992, xx–xxxii), in O'Donnell's introduction to his *Augustine: Confessions*. Because the primary focus of this dissertation is on literary studies, many well-known and major books on the *Confessions* will not be considered or only referred to in passing. Conversely, other studies that are not so well-known or influential will be discussed, albeit cursorily, either because they are recent publications and a discussion of them offers an opportunity for an overview of recent trends in research on the *Confessions*, or because they contribute to the specific reading of the work offered here.

the unity of the *Confessions* (1.2.1) and a selective survey of only the works I find most helpful towards understanding those aspects of the *Confessions* under scrutiny here (1.2.2). Lastly, I focus on that segment of research that constitutes the direct predecessors of the present study in the sense that it refers explicitly or implicitly to the genre and/ or the audience of the *Confessions* (Perspectives on genre and audience, 1.2.3). It should be understood that throughout, the selection of works to be discussed is governed by the specific goals of this study and that what is presented does not purport to be exhaustive in any sense of the word.[3]

1.1. *Theological and Historical Perspectives*[4]

In this section I discuss (because of the constraints of time and space) mainly works from the eighties onwards but with the main emphasis on those trends that have existed throughout the previous century. The greatest impetus for studying the *Confessions* has always come from the disciplines of theology and ancient history (with philosophy and psychology in ancillary positions). Augustine's thought on various issues of universal importance has drawn scholars to the *Confessions* for centuries and, as the survey below shows, continues to do so.

Prominent in theological studies during the last two decades has been Augustine's thought on a variety of theological issues like grace, morality, (original) sin, the nature of man or the soul, and his understanding of God and evil, expounded in the first six books and culminating in book 7;[5] his description of (mystical) attempts to ascend to

[3] The researcher today has the freedom of selective treatment because of the availability of the easily accessible 'Bulletin Augustinien', published annually in *Revue des Études Augustiniennes*, as well as the exhaustive list of works and the authoritative discussion of the Augustinian bibliography on the *Confessions* provided in Feldmann's long and concisely written essay, the mature fruit of many years of study on this work, in the *Augustinus Lexikon* (1994, 1134–1193). Another very complete bibliography on the *Confessions* can be found in Stock's *Augustine the Reader* (1996).

[4] In the following discussions I categorize studies as having a theological, philosophical, psychological or historical focus on the one hand and a literary focus on the other. This is merely an ordering principle and a very arbitrary procedure. Often a theological perspective is combined with a philosophical or historical concern, and, more importantly, a reading with a theological or historical aim often makes use of sound literary strategies to interpret the text.

[5] See for example: Mann, 'The theft of the Pears' (1978); Mayer's interest (1986) in Augustine's 'Gnadenlehre'; Derycke, 'Le vol des poires, parabole du péché original' (1987). Quinn's 'Anti-Manichaean and Other Moral Precisions in *Conf* 3.7.12–9.17'

God in books 7 and 9;[6] and the conversion story in book 8.[7] Augustine's conception of the nature and function of memory in book 10 has been the focus of studies from various disciplines,[8] while the 'digression' on the nature of time in book 11 has drawn much philosophical interest,[9]

(1988) investigates Augustine's thoughts on morality expressed in book 3. Feldmann's 'Et inde rediens fecerat sibi deum (Conf. 7,20)' (1991) aims at clarifying Augustine's thinking about God (the article has, as the title indicates, a strong focus on theological matters and on the seventh book of the *Confessions* but also contains references to the protreptic overall purpose of the work). O'Connell (1993) aims to locate the heart of Augustine's thinking on the nature of the (fallen) soul. Cambronne (1993) analyses the pear-theft in Book 2 and his 'Unde malum? Augustin et les questions sur le Mal' (1994) analyses especially book 7 of the *Confessions* in combination with the *De civitate dei* in order to explicate Augustine's ideas on the difficult philosophical question concerning the nature of evil. See also O'Donnell's 'Augustine's Idea of God' (1994).

[6] From a large number of works on the topic I name only a few: Courcelle's work in his *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin* (1968, 157–167); Mandouze, *Saint Augustin: L'aventure de la raison et de la grâce* (1968, 678–714); and Van Fleteren's work on this topic over many years, e.g. his 'Authority and Reason, Faith and Understanding in the Thought of Augustine' (1973); 'Augustine's Ascent of the Soul in Book VII of the *Confessions*: A Reconsideration' (1974) and, more recently, his 'Mysticism in the *Confessiones*—A Controversy Revisited' (1994). See also Quinn, 'Mysticism in the *Confessiones*: Four Passages Reconsidered' (1994); indeed the whole 1994 volume of *Collectanea Augustiniana*, which is dedicated to the topic 'Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue.'

[7] See for example O'Brien's 'The Liturgical Form of Augustine's Conversion Narrative and its Theological Significance' (1978); Ferrari's 'Paul at the Conversion of Augustine' (1980) and 'Beyond Augustine's Conversion Scene' (1992); Bonner's 'Augustine's "Conversion": Historical Fact or Literary Device' (1993); Babcock's 'Augustine and the Spirituality of Desire' (1994); Bochet's 'Le livre VIII des "*Confessions*": Récit de conversion et réflexion théologique' (1996); McGowan's 'Ecstasy and Charity: Augustine with Nathanael under the Fig Tree' (1996).

[8] See for example Klose 'Quaerere deum: Suche nach Gott und Verständnis Gottes in den Bekentnisse Augustins' (1979); Miyatani (1992) discusses the role of memory not only in book 10 but in the whole of the *Confessions*.

[9] O'Donnell (1992, 3: 252) discusses the most important studies of the issue in the previous century. Interesting among relatively recent works are: O'Daly, 'Augustine on the Measurement of Time: Some Comparisons with Aristotelian and Stoic Texts' (1981); Flood, 'The Narrative Structure of Augustine's *Confessions*: Time's Quest for Eternity' (1988) that sees the unity of the *Confessions* (albeit in passing, 141) in the preoccupation with the themes of temporality and eternity throughout; Ross, 'Time, The Heaven of Heavens, and Memory in Augustine's *Confessions*' (1991) that contains a good overview of approaches to the problems of book 11 (191–192); Flasch, *Was ist Zeit* (1993); Thompson 'The Theological Dimension of Time in *Confessiones* XI' (1993); Severson's *Time, Death, and Eternity: Reflecting on Augustine's Confessions in Light of Heidegger's Being and Time* (1995) that discusses Book 11 of the *Confessions* as a point of departure for a thoroughly philosophical treatment of the nature of time; and Wetzel's 'Time after Augustine' (1995).

and Augustine's views on creation and on exegesis in books 11 to 13 once again mostly theologians.[10]

Another prominent group of studies are those that have the autobiographical contents of the *Confessions* as their main concern. With Augustine's life story as point of departure, they treat general philosophical or theological issues,[11] make psychological and psycho-analytical analyses of the character embodied in this story (this has remained highly popular during the last two decades),[12] or focus on the process of self-discovery embodied in the narrative.[13] But most prominent in

[10] Vannier's work on the triad *creatio, conversio, formatio* affords important insights not only into Augustine's ideas about creation in books 11 to 13 of the *Confessions*, but also into his thought in general as well as the framework of thought underpinning the progression in the *Confessions*: 'Saint Augustin et la création' (1990); 'Aspects de l'idée de création chez S. Augustin' (1991a); *Creatio, conversio, formatio chez saint Augustin*, (1991b); 'Saint Augustin et Eckhart: Sur le problème de la création' (1994).

[11] See for example in the category of philosophically oriented studies, Kliever's '*Confessions* of Unbelief: In Quest of the Vital Lie' (1986); or Bernasconi's 'At war with oneself: Augustine's phenomenology of the will in the *Confessions*' (1992). Bessner's published lectures, *Augustins Bekentnisse als Erneuerung des Philosophierens* (1991), offer in lectures 3 to 8 a discussion of the *Confessions* but attention to the work itself is strongly subordinate to the philosophical focus on the reactions of a man in changing times, as the subtitle, *13 Vorlesungen zur Geschichte der Philosophie von Augustinus bis Boethius*, implies.

[12] Psychological readings of the *Confessions* became increasingly popular during the previous century. These readings often constitute sensitive analyses of continuous sections of the work, and can of course also provide insight into its techniques and devices, especially of autobiographical writing. However, these studies are often less concerned with the work as a literary artefact than with modern categories of psycho-analysis. What they do illustrate—partly unintentionally—is one of the main reasons for the popularity of the *Confessions*: people remain interested in other people because they remain interested in themselves. The titles of some of the more recent articles provide an interesting kaleidoscopic vision of the interests covered in this field: 'Augustine's *Confessions*: A Study of Spiritual Maladjustment' (Dodds 1927–1928); 'Psychological Examination: Augustine' (Pruyser 1966); 'Augustine and his Analysts: The Possibility of a Psychohistory' (Fredriksen 1978); 'Paul Ricoeur, Freudianism, and Augustine's *Confessions*' (Rigby 1985); 'Augustine as Narcissist: Comments on Paul Rigby's "Paul Ricoeur, Freudianism and Augustine's *Confessions*"' (Capps 1985); 'Augustine: The Reader as Self-object' (Gay 1986); 'Embracing Augustine: Reach, Restraint, and Romantic Resolution in the *Confessions*' (Elledge 1988); 'Augustine: Death Anxiety and the Power and Limits of Language' (Fenn 1990); 'A Psychoanalytic Study of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine' (Kligerman 1990); Donald Capp's 'The Scourge of Shame and the Silencing of Adeodatus' (1990); Paul Rigby's 'Augustine's *Confessions*: The Recognition of Fatherhood' (1990); 'Augustine on the Couch: Psychohistorical (Mis)readings of the *Confessions*' (Jonte-Pace 1993).

[13] See for example Schmidt-Dengler's 'Die "*aula memoriae*" in den *Konfessionen* des heiligen Augustin' (1968); Suchocki's 'The Symbolic Structure of Augustine's *Confessions*' (1982); Starnes's 'The Unity of the *Confessions*' (1983); Weintraub's 'St. Augustine's *Confessions*: The Search for a Christian Self' (1990).

this category is of course the work of ancient historians who aim at perfecting their picture of the historical Augustine,[14] an 'autobiographical quest' that is narrowly linked to the problem of the historicity of the work.[15]

A few words on the issue of the historicity of the *Confessions* are necessary here, especially in the light of the fact that a scholar like Feldmann is of the opinion (1994, 1135) that scientific study of the *Confessions* had its origin in the argument about the historicity of the work initiated by Boissier and Harnack in 1888. The question of the historicity hinges on the differences scholars perceive between the Augustine delineated by his earliest works after the conversion (the philosophical dialogues written at Cassiciacum) and the picture to be gleaned from the story of the conversion presented in the *Confessions*.[16] Especially the details narrated in book 8 come under scrutiny. The two extremes of this debate are constituted by those defending the literal truth of everything narrated in the *Confessions* on the one hand, and those believing that the literary devices employed in the structuring of the events make it obvious that

[14] The biographical quest starts with early works like Alfaric's *L'évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin* (1918); Nørregaard's *Augustins Bekehrung* (1923); Gibb and Montgomery's long introduction (1927, ix–lxx); Gilson's *Introduction à l' étude de saint Augustin* (first published 1943); and reaches its zenith with Courcelle's magisterial *Recherches sur les Confessions de Saint Augustin* (first published in 1950). But the quest continues in works like O'Meara's *The Young Augustine* (1954) and Brown's *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography* (1967).

[15] The big names in the debate on the historicity of the *Confessions* are those of Boissier (1888) and Harnack (1888), who opened the debate. Then follow Alfaric (1918), Boyer (1953, first published 1920), Le Blond (1950), Boyer (1953), which includes discussions of early works on the question of the historicity and Courcelle (1968, first published 1950) who brought a decisive change in views on the issue. Later surveys of research on the issue is provided by Ferrari's 'Saint Augustine's Conversion Scene: The End of a Modern Debate?' (1989); Madec's 'Le néoplatonisme dans la conversion d'Augustin' (1989); and O'Meara's 'Augustine's *Confessions*: Elements of Fiction' (1992). Bonner's 'Augustine's "Conversion": Historical Fact or Literary Device' (1993) points out that some elements in the description of the conversion 'must remain controversial as factual material, but the general narrative is convincing' (1993, 119); Bochet (1996) explains that Augustine's narrative of his conversion in Book 8 of the *Confessions* does not have perfect historical representation as its aim but is subordinate to the overarching aim of the work as a whole.

[16] This brings the additional complication that the Cassiciacum dialogues cannot be treated as historical documents. To assure responsible readings also their generic peculiarities have to be taken into account. Kevane (1986) analyses the philosophical dialogues in order to circumscribe Augustine's philosophy as it was emerging at this stage of his development. He also evaluates 'the controversy on Augustine's conversion' in this light.

this version is not true, on the other. Feldmann (1994) provides a concise discussion of the issue (1135–1136).[17]

Lastly in this section I want to mention the range of very valuable studies that bring the perspective of the broader cultural-religious and philosophical milieu within which the *Confessions* functioned into their readings of the text.[18] The most important influences, apart from

[17] On the issue of the historicity of the *Confessions*, see also for example, Eder, 'Eigenart und Glaubwürdigkeit der *Confessiones* des heiligen Augustinus' (1938); Dönt, 'Aufbau und Glaubwürdigkeit der *Konfessionen* und die Cassiciacumgespräche des Augustinus' (1969); Marrou, 'La Querelle autour du "Tolle, lege"' (1978a); Bonner, 'Augustine's "Conversion": Historical Fact or Literary Device?' (1993); Bochet, 'Le livre VIII des "*Confessions*": récit de conversion et réflexion théologique,' (1996). Ferrari's large number of articles on individual aspects of the *Confessions* published in almost all the leading Augustinian Journals over many years constitutes a careful reading of the text and has enhanced our understanding of the work significantly over the years. Especially his comparative analyses showing how the conversion scene in the *Confessions* functions on an inter-textual level (1980, 1982 and 1987) and his arguments for seeing this as a well structured literary construct rather than an accurate historical account implicitly add an important perspective on the compositional strategies of the whole. O'Connell's article, 'The Visage of Philosophy at Cassiciacum' (1994, 65–76), together with the last chapter of his *Images of Conversion in St. Augustine's Confessions* (1996, 259–309), discussed below, fulfils the double function of providing a very good concise summary of the debate (he also touches on the works of the biggest role players in this debate). At the same time it illustrates how the discrepancies perceived between the conversion portrayed in the *Confessions* and that depicted in the philosophical dialogues of Cassiciacum are probably a result of modern readers' inability to decode the messages in these Dialogues.

[18] There are a number of recent publications that offer valuable assistance to the reader who wants to read Augustine's work as a product of its time. I include in this category some of the recent monographs (often introductions) that are published as parts of series, like Von Campenhausen's *Aurelius Augustinus* (1991). Clark's *Augustine, the Confessions* (1993) belongs in the category of broad introductions to the *Confessions*, but reflects some sound literary judgement. She observes, for example, that while the text in the first sections of the *Confessions* is undeniably autobiographical, what Augustine actually spends time on 'are the beliefs he held about God, the reasons why he held them, and the questions they raise' (Clark 1993, 34). Where I disagree with Clark, is of course her (as far as I am concerned) too easily reached conclusion that the 'philosophical-treatise-style' (that she correctly ascribes to the 'autobiographical' part of the *Confessions*) as well as the combination of autobiographical and 'other' material is explained away by calling the work spiritual autobiography (1993, 34). Burns' article on Augustine's use of the Psalms in the *Confessions* (1993) focuses, contrary to what its title implies, on the role of Psalm singing in daily religious activities Augustine would have taken part in; John M. Rist's, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (1994) examines the development of Augustine's thought under the influence of the various philosophical and theological thought systems of his time; Johann Kreuzer's *Augustinus* (1995) also focuses on Augustine's thought; T. Kermit Scott insists that his *Augustine: His Thought in Context* (1995) is not for specialists but he provides the reader with illuminating insights on especially the religious environment within which Augustine worked and lived.

Catholic Christianity, probably came from Augustine's classical education,[19] Manichaeism (see discussion in chapter 2 and passim), and neo-Platonism.[20]

1.2. *Literary Perspectives*

The complex and multifaceted nature of the *Confessions* often forces those who publish on it to carefully limit their analyses to a single well-defined aspect or to a short section of the work. Still, no analysis of literary devices in a given work can be completely divorced from some view on what the nature and purpose of the work as a whole constitute. This means that the present study, although it narrows its scope down to the protreptic features and the intended audience of the *Confessions*, is ultimately occupied with the meaning and purpose of the work as a whole and that in the following survey of work done on literary aspects of the *Confessions*, the issue of 'the unity' looms large.

1.2.1. *The Issue of the Unity of the* Confessions

What does the problem of the unity of the *Confessions* entail? In short, it comes down to the fact that at some stage in the reception of the work it came to be viewed as an autobiography with an exegetical section loosely appended at the end, as consisting of two disjunctive parts

[19] See for example Harald Hagendahl's *Augustine and the Latin Classics* (1967); Hübner's 'Die praetoria memoriae im zehnten Buch der *Confessiones*: Vergilisches bei Augustin' (1981); Bennet's excellent article, 'The Conversion of Vergil: The Aeneid in Augustine's *Confessions*' (1988); Churchill's '*Inopem me copia fecit*: Signs of Narcissus in Augustine's *Confessions*' (1989–1990); Shanzer's 'Latent Narrative Patterns, Allegorical Choices, and Literary Unity in Augustine's *Confessions*' (1992) that attempts to discover the unity of the *Confessions* at the hand of the classical topoi used; and Colot's 'Une approche des *Confessions* d'Augustin à travers l'étude d'*otium* et *quies*' (1994).

[20] Highlighting the neo-Platonic influences in the work are, for example, O'Meara's 'Augustine and Neo-Platonism' (1958); O'Connell's articles 'Ennead VI, 4 and 5 in the Works of Saint Augustine' (1963a); 'The Plotinian Fall of the Soul in St. Augustine' (1963b); 'The Riddle of Augustine's "*Confessions*": A Plotinian Key,' with the ambitious aim to solve 'once and for all the nettling question of the unity of the work' (1964, 331); and his 'Faith, Reason, and Ascent to Vision in St. Augustine' (1990); Van Fleteren's 'Augustine's Ascent of the Soul in Book VII of the *Confessions*: A Reconsideration' (1974); 'A Comment on Some Questions Relating to Confessiones VII: A Reply to O'Connell' (1993); Madec's 'Augustin et le neoplatonisme' (1986); and Pierre Fontan's 'Une exégése néo-Platonicienne? (Le Livre XII des *Confessions*)' (1987).

forming a badly constructed whole.[21] Tracing the origin and development of this problem exceeds the limits of a study with its main focus elsewhere as does a detailed discussion of all the propositions concerning the unity of the work that have been offered in over a century of scholarship. On the one hand, the problem merits a treatment bigger than an introductory literary survey can afford and, on the other, good reasons would have to be present for repeating what has been done, ably and exhaustively, by Grotz and Feldmann.[22] Grotz's *Warum bringt Augustin in den letzten Büchern seiner Confessiones eine Auslegung der Genesis?* (1970) surveys 35 attempts to explain the unity of the *Confessions* while Feldmann's 'Confessiones' in the *Augustinus Lexikon* (1994) entails, apart from the section about research on the problem of the unity, an authoritative survey of the whole field of research on the *Confessions*.

But, let us take a quick look at the problem of the unity. What is the status quo in scholarship on the literary qualities and the unity of the *Confessions* at the beginning of the 21st century? A comparison of the remarks by Grotz (1970, 15) and those by Jens Holzhausen (2000, 519), thirty years later, shows that, in spite of repeated efforts to discover 'the key' to how autobiography and exegesis can constitute a satisfying unity, in spite of a 'galloping bibliography' during the fifties and sixties, and in spite of many sound analyses of the text (especially during the last few decades) the research community does not seem convinced that anyone has really sufficiently explained the unity of the *Confessions*. In 1970 Grotz comes to the following conclusion:

> Es gibt zwar sehr viele Gelehrte, die der Meinung sind, daß den *Confessiones* von Anfang an eine einheitliche Konzeption zugrunde liege, nur aber, worin diese zu sehen ist, d.h., was das einigende Band zwischen Lebensgeschichte und Genesisexegese bildet, in dieser Frage ist man sich keineswegs einig (1970, 15).

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[21] As Crosson (1989, 86) puts it: 'Indeed although thematic and psychological accounts of the unity of the *Confessions* abound, the virtually unanimous critical judgment is that it is hastily put together, moves by fits and starts, dallies here and hurries there.' This view of the text is illustrated by the phenomenon of text editions or translations that leave out the last three books of the work without much more than a quick remark describing these books as a less interesting addendum. See for example Blaiklock 1983 as well as discussions of this issue and references to shortened editions and translations for example in Williger's 'Der Aufbau der *Konfessionen* Augustins' (1929, 81) or Steur's 'De eenheid van Sint Augustinus' *Confessiones*' (1936, 17).

[22] I do think that a probing and creative study that draws together the strands that have been unravelled in the various approaches to understanding the *Confessions* could prove a very worthwhile independent project.

Holzhausen's remark in his 'Augustin als Biograph und Exeget' (2000) makes clear that thirty years along the line not much has changed as far as consensus on the literary unity of the *Confessions* is concerned:

> In den letzten Jahren scheint die Forschung bei der Behandlung der Frage nach Einheit und Aufbau der *Confessiones* zu stagnieren, wenn nicht gar zu resignieren. Ein Konsens ist zwar darin erreicht, daß die 13 Bücher des Werkes eine Einheit darstellen, aber nicht, worin diese besteht.

I think one of the causes for this situation is simply the fact that—as I have shown—focus on the *Confessions* as a literary work per se has never been part of the main stream of publications on it. Scholarship has consistently, even in the era of the galloping bibliography, been characterized by a dearth of wide-ranging and in-depth analyses of the literary qualities of the work. Holzhausen's observation (quoted above) is a clear indication that O'Donnell's criticism (1992, 1: xxii) of about ten years ago is still valid today:

> The sum total of all that has been accomplished in the last forty years weighs up to less than half what Courcelle accomplished in his one book. New lines of inquiry and new questions have not been risked. The issues have remained those that Courcelle defined, and the techniques remain his; infertility is the obvious fate of such debates.

Thus, contrary to what the amount of titles in any bibliography of Augustine or of the *Confessions* may lead us to expect, research on the literary aspects and the unity of the work progresses at a relatively slow pace.

The process of gaining an oversight of the large number of studies that attempt to describe the unity of the *Confessions* is, as I have indicated, greatly facilitated by the studies of Grotz (1970) and Feldmann (1994). Grotz's review of attempts to explain the unity of the *Confessions* up to the time of his own publication in 1970 (framed by two introductory and two concluding chapters where he presents his own theory on the unity of the work) makes it clear that the majority of scholars up to that stage had taken the route of looking at the work itself and describing its contents in a way that hopes to make perceivable some kind of unity. Grotz (1970, 15–78) identifies 19 categories of ways in which researchers have described the contents of the *Confessions*. Also the studies that try to see the unity of the *Confessions* in the different aspects of confession, (*confessio fidei* and *confessio laudis*, 79–93) look for a unifying element in the work in a way that is not really different from the previous category.

Grotz's own proposal on the unity (1970, 104–149) is to see books 1 to 9 as a reflection of 'das erlösende Handeln Gottes,' book 10 as 'das heiligende Handeln Gottes' and books 11 to 13 as 'das schöpferische Handeln Gottes.' This constitutes yet another attempt to look at the contents of the *Confessions* and find a unifying element, using a method and basic perspective that does not differ substantially from those of his predecessors. Further, Grotz tests all attempts to explain the unity of the *Confessions* by one criterion: to make a valid suggestion about the unity of the work, research must explain why exactly the creation story from Genesis is the section from scripture explicated in *Conf* 11–13. But he advances no argument as to why this must be the ultimate question to be answered above any other.[23] The fact remains, however, that the whole of the research community has since persisted in Grotz's lack of enthusiasm for the different suggestions as to how the unity of the *Confessions* can be explained. The one thing that does emerge clearly from the studies represented in Grotz's survey is that there exists a large number of themes or lines that can be followed through the *Confessions* and that could provide a sense of unity to the reader, hence the consensus that the work does constitute a unity remarked on by both Grotz (1970) and Holzhausen (2000), quoted above.

As far as the issue of the unity is concerned, Feldmann's section 4 of his essay on the *Confessions* in *Augustinus Lexikon* (1994) provides a concise and helpful discussion. He categorizes attempts to describe the unity of the work under six headings (note that in effect categories 1, 3, 4, and 5 all contain works that concentrate on the contents of the *Confessions* as the main indicator of where the unity resides):[24] 1) those that see the unity provided by the notion of confession throughout (1144–1146);[25] 2) studies that use information from Augustine's historical situation at the time of writing the *Confessions* to provide a clue to its composition (1146–

[23] One of the less successful aspects of Grotz's study is the fact that, although his second chapter (1970, 9–14) is dedicated to a warning against the widespread tendency to think of the *Confessions* as an autobiography, he seems in his subsequent procedure unable to heed his own warning and to move past an effort to seek (like the secondary studies he discusses) ways to explain the attachment of an exegetical section to 'an autobiography.'

[24] For each of these categories in the subsequent discussion I provide only the names of works that I found especially enlightening, with no attempt at being exhaustive.

[25] See for example Stiglmayr (1930); Verheijen (1949); Ratzinger (1957); Courcelle (1968); or Pfligersdorffer (1970b).

1147);[26] 3) those that seek to find the unity in the exposition of specific theological problems that we know Augustine was concerned with at the time of writing (1147);[27] 4) those that go out from the presupposition that books 11 to 13 are the actual goal of the *Confessions* and/or explain the rest of the work in the light of the Genesis exegesis (1147–1149);[28] 5) those that show how the use of certain motifs contribute to the compositional unity (1149);[29] and 6) those few studies that have tried to examine the generic characteristics of the work (1149–1150).[30]

The remainder of Feldmann's essay entails an illuminating discussion of all the relevant aspects of research on the *Confessions*. In his elucidation of different focus areas under the headings 'Perspektiven der Forschungsgeschichte' (1134–1139), as well as 'Textgeschichte und Titel' (1139–1140), 'Thematische Gliederung der *conf*' (1140–1143), 'Forschungsproblem: die Einheit der *conf*' (1143–1153), and the concluding sections, 'Zur künstlerischen Form der *conf*' (1180–1183) and 'Datierung'

[26] See Wundt (1923) who sees the *Confessions* as an answer to Donatist accusations; Gibb and Montgomery (1927); Perler (1931); and Adam (1958), who attempts to find the key to the work within the field of Manichaean dogma and practice.

[27] Steur (1936) sees in the *Confessions* an attempt to prove that God exists; Cayré (1953) argues that the work is an illustration of God's presence in man; Wundt (1923) and Holte (1962) argue that the composition of the *Confessions* is governed by an illustration of the ascent to God, while O'Connell (1964) sees the fall and the return of the soul fulfilling this function; Boehmer (1915), Zepf (1926), and Williger (1929) see in the *Confessions* the explication of Augustine's dogma of grace.

[28] For arguments along these lines see for example Gibb and Montgomery (1927); Duchrow (1965); Herzog (1984); and McMahon (1989).

[29] Works that belong to this category form the majority of works discussed by Grotz (already mentioned above) and include the various proposals for the structural coherence of the work. See for example the following: Suchocki's 'The Symbolic Structure of Augustine's *Confessions*' (1982) proposes an unusual structure based on the image of the two trees in the *Confessions*: the books with tree images, book 2 and book 8, are both followed by 5 books that constitute a unity. Waltraud Desch's *Augustins Confessiones* (1988) is an effort to establish the links between the 'biographical' and the 'theoretical' sections of the work and includes some interesting structural analyses. She discovers the same kind of chiastic structure in the first nine books as argued for by Stephany (1989). Kienzler's 'Der Aufbau der *Confessiones* im Spiegel der Bibelzitate' (1989) focuses on formal features of structure as constituted by citations from scripture but works against the background of thematic analysis. See also Steidle's 'Augustins *Confessiones* als Buch. Gesamtkonzeption und Aufbau' (1982).

[30] Feldmann discusses only Misch (first published 1907) and Zepf (1926) in this section. Of course, one of the reasons for a scarcity of studies examining the genre of the *Confessions* is the commonly held belief in scholarship, even after Courcelle's convincing arguments (1963) to the contrary, that the work is *sui generis*, coupled with the assumption that it did not belong to any known genre. See my arguments against this possibility in chapter 2.

(1184–1185) Feldmann presents a comprehensive overview of research on the *Confessions*, backed by an equally comprehensive bibliography (1185–1193).

It is especially in sections 5 to 7, under the headings 'Biographisch-intellektuelle Situation A.s zur Zeit der Abfassung der *conf*' (1153–1157), 'Theologische Struktur und Originalität der *conf*' (1157–1166), and 'Theologisch-protreptische Gestaltung der *conf* und die Adressaten' (1166–1180) that he argues for his own suggestion, that the *Confessions* belongs to the genre of protreptic texts. This proposal, supported mainly by an analysis of contents and by implication of communicative purpose (see discussion in chapter 2) has, as far as I can ascertain, been taken up by only one Augustinian scholar since, namely Mayer (1998), discussed below.

Feldmann's thorough overview as a whole reflects a theological rather than a literary perspective but it is nearly exhaustive and his evaluations (both implicit and explicit) are sound.[31] His contribution must be regarded as an invaluable tool for researchers struggling to see the wood for the trees in the bewildering amount of studies on the *Confessions*.

The illuminating and easily accessible surveys by Grotz and Feldmann affords me the freedom of now offering only a very selective discussion of studies that occupy themselves with literary aspects of the *Confessions*. In the following section I focus only on publications that contribute directly to the present study, whether they represent treatments of the unity or of isolated literary aspects of the work.

1.2.2. *A Selective Overview of Literary Approaches to the* Confessions

This section concentrates on that segment of research that represents to my mind the most promising approaches to understanding the literary devices and the unity of the *Confessions*. Here I have to start with the one work without which an endeavour like the present one would be infinitely more difficult to undertake, namely O'Donnell's commentary, *Augustine: Confessions*, published in 1992. The text edition, together with

[31] However, Feldmann uses the same test as Grotz (see discussion above) and, like him, provides no grounds for making this the ultimate criterion. See also Feldmann's earlier work on the unity of the *Confessions*: 'Noch einmal: die *Confessiones* des Augustinus und ihre Einheit. Reflexionen zu ihrer Komposition' (1990) and 'Literarische und theologische Probleme der *Confessiones*' (1988).

the two volumes of commentary embody a user friendly and highly authoritative tool, the value of which it is easy to underestimate when the work becomes a daily companion to the reading of the *Confessions*. The availability of the on-line version of this commentary also tremendously facilitates the process of looking up specific references. Especially helpful are the general introduction, the introductory sections and structural expositions on each book, as well as the complete versions of many of the texts that inform Augustine's writing (like that of Ps 4 and Gen 1:1–2:2), and the identification and full quotation of the Bible texts Augustine alludes to throughout, but particularly in the densely constructed allegorical reading presented in book 13. Also the authoritative discussions of and references to the most important research on all the major issues concerning the *Confessions* makes an almost impossible task less impossible. The amount of learning embodied in this one work cannot but have a profound and salutary effect on all subsequent research on this work.

Let us look at studies that do not treat the issue of the unity as such but that contribute to our understanding of the literariness of the *Confessions* in general. In this category belong the studies of a purely grammatical, syntactical or stylistic nature,[32] or that concentrate on the (literary) problematic of autobiographical writing per se.[33] The works considered in the latter category occupy themselves more with the fabric of autobiographical prose or the manner of narration than with the generic characteristics of the *Confessions* as autobiography. In the more

[32] Arts' *The Syntax of the Confessions of Saint Augustine* (1927); Carrol's *The Clausulae in the Confessions of St Augustine* (1940). Mohrmann's work on the style of the *Confessions* constitutes some authoritative readings: see for example 'Observations sur les *Confessions* de S. Augustin' (1959) or 'Saint Augustin écrivain' (1961). Poque's 'L'invocation de Dieu dans les *Confessions*' (1991) is nothing more than a documentation of the instances and various forms of invocation in the *Confessions*. Testard's philological approach (1987) provides useful information on the use of *superbia* and its derivatives in the whole of the *Confessions*; Colot (1994) examines the meanings of the terms *otium* and *quies* throughout the *Confessions* but focuses more on the terms than on the progression in the work that could be deduced from their use.

[33] Important works in this category are Olney's *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography* (1972); Vance's 'Augustine's *Confessions* and the Grammar of Selfhood' (1973); Spengemann's *The Forms of Autobiography: Episodes in the History of a Literary Genre* (1980); Rothfield's 'Autobiography and Perspective in the *Confessions* of St. Augustine' (1981); Hawkins' *Archetypes of Conversion. The Autobiographies of Augustine, Bunyan, and Merton* (1985); Freccero's 'Autobiography and Narrative' (1987) that argues for Augustine's creation of the genre of autobiography; Byrne's 'Writing God's Story: Self and Narrative Structure in Augustine's *Confessions*' (1989); Susan Mennel's 'Augustine's "I": The "Knowing Subject" and the Self' (1994); Ucciani's *Saint Augustin ou le livre du moi* (1998).

recent past, a variety of analyses that make use of the theoretical frameworks of literary theory have seen the light.[34] Belonging to roughly the same category are also those studies that describe the nature of the discourse in the *Confessions*.[35] Herzog's excellent analysis in his 'NON IN SUA VOCE: Augustins Gespräch mit Gott in den *Confessiones*' (1984) is one of the few studies where, in the course of Herzog's very perceptive readings, using a particular hermeneutical model, the hermeneutical model is measured by its ability to describe the techniques used in the *Confessions* and found lacking. Other important contributions in this category are works that study the imagery in the *Confessions*,[36] or that emphasize the centrality of language and reading as themes in

[34] In this category belong works like Ralph Flores' chapter on the *Confessions* in his *Rhetoric of Doubtful Authority: Deconstructive Readings of Self-Questioning Narratives, St. Augustine to Faulkner*, (1984); Margaret Ferguson's 'Saint Augustine's Region of Unlikeness: The Crossing of Exile and Language' (1992); and Fendt's '*Confessions*' Bliss: Post-modern Criticism as a Palimpsest of Augustine's *Confessions*' (1995). To my mind these kinds of readings often serve more to illustrate the theory than to really advance our knowledge of the *Confessions*.

[35] Flores' *The Rhetoric of Doubtful Authority: Deconstructive Readings of Self-Questioning Narratives, St. Augustine to Faulkner* (1984) and Lamarre's 'Les *Confessions* divisées. Discours du Maître et discours de l'Hystérique dans les *Confessions* de Saint Augustine' (1988) also use contemporary analytical models and terminology to analyse the nature of the discourse in the *Confessions*. See also Douglass' 'Voice Re-cast: Augustine's Use of Conversation in *De ordine* and the *Confessions*' (1996).

[36] See for example Fontaine's 'Sens et Valeur des images dans les "*Confessions*"' (1954); Cambronne's analysis of the imagery of temporality in the *Confessions* in his '*Imaginaire et théologie dans les Confessions de Saint Augustin*' contains a short section (1987, 221) where he argues that his findings in this regard provide yet another proof that the work is a unity: the consistency of the imagery as well as the logical sequence of books 1 to 13 based on the chronological logic expressed in the imagery of temporality. Georges Tavard's *Les jardins de saint Augustine. Lecture des Confessions* (1988) presents a reading of the *Confessions* directed along the lines of the image of the garden and the symbolism attached to this image. He sees the *Confessions* as fundamentally occupied with the problem of time and space, specifically the position of God, whom Augustine defines as outside of time and space, relative to man and the whole of creation that are per definition limited by time and space. One of the most piercing studies is Crosson's 'Structure and Meaning in Augustine's *Confessions*' (1989). What makes his findings fresh is the fact that he is not fettered by the expectations that a modern reader has of an autobiography. The structural symmetry Crosson suggests differs considerably from previous proposals: the first section of the *Confessions* consists of books 1 to 7 and the second of books 7 to 13 (1989, 94). The two parts are defined respectively by their focus on the dual philosophical problem of, first, 'how God is to be understood as everywhere and yet as not in the world,' and second, 'how such a transcendent God who cannot appear in the world can act within the world, can speak audibly to us, can call us to Himself' (1989, 94).

the work.[37] Then there are the various structural analyses that are not focussed on the whole of the *Confessions* but on smaller sections or single books.[38]

I now proceed to studies of literary aspects of the *Confessions* that have a more direct bearing (explicitly or implicitly) on the unity of the work or on the issues treated in this study, namely the purpose and audience of the *Confessions*. First, one of the factors that have lead scholars to doubt that the *Confessions* constitutes a literary unity is the discrepancy between Augustine's expressed intention to cover the whole of scripture in the exegetical section and what he actually does. McMahon's *Augustine's Prayerful Ascent: An Essay on the Literary Form of the Confessions* (1989) proposes an interesting interpretation to make sense of this.[39] He postulates that the narrating Augustine, that is, the character

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[37] Flores (1984) calls reading in the *Confessions* 'a unifying activity' and sees in the work a 'preoccupation with language, or more specifically, with reading in the fullest sense, as including the complementary activities of writing, speaking and exegesis' (1975, 2). Robert Jacques (1988) points out the role of reading (and hearing) in book 8 of the *Confessions*. Smolak's article, 'Sic itaque audiar: Zum Phänomen "Sprache" in Augustins *Confessiones*' (1994) emphasizes the centrality of language (spoken, written and read) in the *Confessions*. Joseph Lienhard's 'Reading the Bible and Learning to Read: The Influence of Education on St. Augustine's Exegesis' (1996) examines the reading culture Augustine worked in. Another work that is not dedicated to *Confessions* per se but offers a continuous and perceptive reading of the text of books 1 to 9 is Brian Stock's *Augustine the Reader* (1996). Stock's analyses serve to underscore the sophistication and intricacy of Augustine's writing. He follows one of the lines of the contrapuntal composition in a way that illustrates that we have here a masterly creative agent at work and that we should remain humble and cautious in our judgement of an ancient rhetorician's compositional abilities. Although this is not Stock's aim, his analysis of Augustine's sustained emphasis on the importance of reading in the *Confessions*, and on the fact that Augustine's conversion is presented as 'the climax of his reading experience in *Confessions* 1–9' (Stock 1996, 75) constitutes another argument in favour of my argument that Augustine intended the *Confessions* itself as conversional reading, as a protreptic text.

[38] Levenson (1985) proposes a perfect symmetry in books 1–9 but ignores the rest of the *Confessions*. Starnes (1990) presents a convincing argument for what is to my mind only one of the grids holding together the structure of the *Confessions*, namely its interlacing of Trinitarian patterns: he sees books 1–9 as centred around the first person of the Trinity (God the Father and Creator), book 10 around the second person (Christ the Mediator), and books 11 to 13 around the third person (the Holy Spirit). These bigger sections are each in turn built up of three smaller sections devoted to the different persons of the Trinity. He sees the three main sections as three separate confessions constituting one autobiographical whole.

[39] McMahon's thesis has in general not been well received by the research community, mainly on the grounds that the parallels he endeavours to establish between the first and second sections of the *Confessions* places an exegetical burden on the text which it cannot really bear.

Augustine, has to be distinguished from the author, the creative power, Augustine. This narrating Augustine does propose to write an exegesis of the whole of scripture, but is unexpectedly shown by God that the whole message of scripture is allegorically represented by the creation story in Gen 1, where the seventh day of rest represents the eternal rest of the apocalypse.[40]

An approach to understanding the unity of the *Confessions* and its literary devices that I find especially illuminating is the one that throws light on rhetorical practice in Augustine's day. Boyle's 'The prudential Augustine: The Virtuous Structure and Sense of his *Confessions*' (1987) starts with an interpretation of Augustine's remarks on the *Confessions* in his *Retractationes*. She proceeds to unfold aspects of rhetorical practice that must have governed Augustine's way of thinking and that is usually not taken into account either when the *Retractationes* passage is interpreted or when Augustine's compositional techniques in the *Confessions* are evaluated. She spells out what I have always believed, namely that when modern readers describe the *Confessions* as a work comprising two distinct genres (autobiography and exegesis) they in fact accuse Augustine, the master of rhetoric, of 'violation of the prime canon of composition—unity … a rhetorical fault for which as a schoolboy Augustine would have been flogged' (129). She then presents a very convincing argument, based on what can be known about the influence of Cicero's rhetoric and his philosophy on Augustine's thought, to prove the opposite.

First, the difficulty caused by the reference in the *Retractationes* to the two sections of the *Confessions* as a section '*de me*' and a section '*de scripturis sanctis*' (which has contributed to modern readers' view of the work as consisting of two disjunctive sections) ceases to exist if the *de* is interpreted as a technical term, denoting 'the person or place from which a thing is taken, that is, its origin' (130). Boyle's interpretation of the passage from the *Retractationes* based on this information provides a completely different perspective on how the unity of the work can be seen:

> Augustine is not discoursing about himself and about scripture, about his evils and about his goods, but *from* these topics *about* 'the good and just God.' It is God who is thematic of the discourse, the object of its praise.

[40] But see my arguments in chapter 5 that Augustine's meditation does indeed, in an important sense, represent a reading of the whole of scripture.

> Self and scripture, which he parallels with evil and good, are merely the topics from which he invents the encomium (1987, 130).[41]

Further, Boyle (131) points out that Cicero's *De Legibus* provides a precedent for Augustine's 'dual invention' from persons and documents (*de me; de scripturis sanctis*). Also our perspective on the creation narrative in the last section of the *Confessions* takes on a whole different aspect in the light of Cicero's advice in the *De Legibus* 1.23.61 (adduced by Boyle 1987, 131) that the way to know oneself, is through contemplation of the nature of the universe:[42]

> *quom caelum, terras, maria rerumque omnium naturam perspexerit, eaque unde generata quo recursura, quando, quo modo obitura, quid in iis mortale et caducum, quid divinum aeternumque sit viderit, ipsumque ea moderantem et regentem deum paene prenderit, seseque non humanis circumdatum moenibus popularem alicuius definiti loci, sed civem totius mundi quasi unius urbis agnoverit, in hac ille magnificentia rerum, atque in hoc conspectu et cognitione naturae, dii inmortales, quam se ipse noscet, quod Apollo praecepit Pythius, quam contemnet, quam despiciet, quam pro nihilo putabit ea quae volgo dicuntur amplissima!*
>
> [And further, when it has examined the heavens, the earth, the seas, the nature of the universe, and understands whence all these things came and whither they must return, when and how they are destined to perish, what part of them is mortal and transient and what is divine and eternal; and when it almost lays hold of the ruler and governor of the universe, and when it realizes that it is not shut in by (narrow) walls as a resident of some fixed spot, but is a citizen of the whole universe, as it were of a single city—then in the midst of this universal grandeur, and with such a view and comprehension of nature, ye immortal gods, how well it will know itself, according to the precept of the Pythian Apollo!].

Thus, it is clear that to an audience that may have been familiar with this association between the individual and the universe the subject matter of the two sections of the *Confessions* may have been far less surprising or puzzling than to a modern reader. Unfortunately, in my

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[41] The last section of the quotation above brings me to what I find problematic in Boyle (1987, 132), namely that she seems to see all 'types' of epideictic rhetoric as belonging to the same genre, and thus to conflate different genres of the epideictic type. As chapter 2 shows, I follow Berger (1984) in calling types like panegyric, hymn and also protreptic, specific genres that fall for example under the overarching category of epideictic or symboleutic rhetoric. Though Berger categorizes protreptic as symboleutic rhetoric he concedes that there are also grounds for categorizing it as epideictic and most of Boyle's observations about epideictic rhetoric remain applicable to the protreptic genre as I see it.

[42] Boyle quotes Keyes' translation (1970), which I quote from her. The text is that of Rudd and Wiedemann (1987).

opinion, when Boyle (135) interprets the phrase from the *Retractationes* spelling out the purpose of the *Confessions* (*confessionum mearum libri tredecim et de malis et de bonis meis deum laudant iustum et bonum atque in eum excitant humanum intellectum et affectum*) she interprets this purpose, like the majority of scholars, to be to praise God and does not pay any attention to the last part of the sentence, namely that the purpose of praising God in turn has the purpose to arouse the reader to convert to Him.

Next, let us look at another study that examines the implications of ancient rhetorical practice for an understanding of the *Confessions*. If DiLorenzo's arguments (1983) about the meaning of the term *confessio* for Augustine are valid, this provides very strong support indeed for the suggestion that the *Confessions* is to be read as a protreptic text. DiLorenzo contends that Augustine's 'notion of *confessio* derives not only from Biblical psalmody (*confessio laudis* and *confessio peccati*)' (124) but also from the theory of epideictic rhetoric, which is the 'theory of verbal praise (*laudatio*) and blame (*vituperatio*)' (125).[43] What others have described as an alternation between the narrative and the reflexive level in the *Confessions*, he describes as the typical procedure of rhetoricians who constantly move between 'hypotheses' (specific examples) and 'theses' (general statements). DiLorenzo does not use the term 'protreptic' but repeatedly points to the aim of Augustine's epideictic rhetoric as to raise the understanding and affections (of Augustine and his readers) to God and to Augustine's *confessio* as 'a verbal response to or, perhaps, a verbal respeaking of God's persuasive speech to the soul' (126). He says in the closing paragraph: 'In the final analysis, Augustine's *Libri confessionum* are a respeaking of God's Word, persuasively converting the soul from the false love of creatures to the love of the creator—the creator who creates by speaking!' (127).

Another common approach that scholars have used in their endeavours to explain the unity of the *Confessions* is to look at the meaning of the title, *Confessiones*, and its derivatives, and at how the work embodies the idea of confession. Here I want to refer only to two recent suggestions about the meaning of the title (DiLorenzo's arguments [1983], that also concern the title of the work, I have already discussed above). Scott's perceptive discussion (1992, 35–43) of the philosophical, foren-

[43] 'In Augustine's *Confessions*, the psalmic modes of confession and rhetorical epideixis or demonstration merge together in the praise of God and the vituperation of sin and manifest to men the spiritual psychotherapy of God's mercy (*misericordia*) and the beneficent designs of his providence' (125).

sic and religious connotations of the word '*confiteri*' and its derivatives supports a convincing argument on how 'the structure of testimony' illuminates the communicative purpose of the *Confessions*. This is a purpose transcending 'a narcissistic act of self-orientation through writing' (41) and aiming at the edification of its readers: 'Augustine … offers a written self to his fellow-Christians as exhortation, and a statement of Christian fellowship, and of course, as a sacrifice to the Christian God himself' (42). Siebach (1995), in the opening section of his article on the rhetorical strategies in Book 1 of the *Confessions*, argues that the word *confessio* can also mean 'proof' and that 'St. Augustine uses a proof for God's existence as the structuring principle of his historical/autobiographical narrative' (1995, 93).[44] More interesting from my point of view, as will become clear in chapter 2, is 'the linking of *confessio* as proof and medicinal metaphors' (Siebach 1995, 94) where *confessio* is interpreted as the action through which the sinner petitions the *Christus Medicus* to heal his sickness. Siebach argues that this 'suggests an association relevant to the history of confession as a philosophical and moral practice' (94) and that the influence of Plato's *Gorgias* may be discernable in the *Confessions* (95). This constitutes a strong argument supportive of my thesis that the milieu that informs the choice of genre for the *Confessions* is that of philosophical and moral practice (see chapter 2).

Let us look at another approach to the question of the unity of the *Confessions* that in my opinion is proposed by a number of good exponents, namely the one that emphasizes the parallels between the story of the individual's conversion in books 1 to 10 and the focus in the narrative of books 11 to 13 on creation's turn towards God.[45] One of the most important gains of this approach is the significant move away from viewing the *Confessions* as a somewhat lopsided autobiography. Tavard's *Les jardins de saint Augustine* (1988) emphasizes throughout the strong influence of Manichaean dogma on the problematic Augustine treats. The latter portrays himself as thinking his way from a

[44] Although scholarship agrees that for Augustine and his contemporaries the existence of a god, or the gods and many divine figures was taken for granted and not something that needed to be proven, one need not, for this reason, discard all of Siebach's argument. The rhetorical strategy in the opening books of the *Confessions* may well be to illustrate, as he puts it, 'an explicit search for the signs of God's existence in Augustine's life-experience' (1995, 94).

[45] Knauer's article 'Peregrinatio animae' (1957), although its main focus is elsewhere, refers to the *conversio* of the *creatura intellectualis*, described in book 13 of the *Confessions*, a *conversio* that is parallel to that of man (244–246).

Manichaean God spread out in space and not separate from the temporal, through a (strongly neo-Platonic) God who is outside of time and space, towards the Creator God and his relation with man mediated by a (thoroughly Christian) Mediator. Although Tavard does not treat the problem of the unity as such, his reading implicitly conveys his perception of the *Confessions* as a satisfactory and organic whole where the basic problem of what God is (with its spatial and temporal ramifications) uttered at the beginning of the work leads with inexorable logic through the story of Augustine's life, his examination of memory, his musings about time, to his expositions of the Trinitarian creator God at the end of the work.

Reminiscent in many ways of Tavard's approach is O'Connell's *Images of Conversion in St. Augustine's Confessions* (1996). His main focus is on the conversion experiences (or different stages of an ongoing conversion process) described by Augustine: the account of his reading of the *Hortensius* and how it affected him in Book 3; the narration of the difficult thought processes which eventually enabled him to conceive of God as a spiritual being in book 7; and the famous description of his final conversion in book 8. O'Connell's very readable style and clear presentation of arguments make this sensitive and piercing reading of Augustine's text a most valuable contribution towards our understanding of the *Confessions*.[46] It is especially his insistence that an explication of Augustine's world view—his insights into the relative places of all elements of this world—is an important objective of the narrative throughout the *Confessions* that illustrates a perception similar to Tavard's of the unity of the work.[47]

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[46] O'Connell's focus does, however, ultimately seem to be on the historical Augustine as is indicated when he expresses his frustration at Augustine's often simply not providing the reader with the kind of detail needed to reconstruct this historical person. Still, the perceptive readings provide an important corollary for the way I read the *Confessions*, especially in two respects: firstly, they show, like Tavard's reading, the prominence of the Manichaean thought system and its refutation that runs like a Leitmotiv through the key passages analysed; and secondly, they emphasize the importance of Augustine's reading of the *Hortensius* (generally assumed to be a protreptic text) in all descriptions of conversion.

[47] Similar in approach but less compelling is Miles (1992). She argues that the disjunctive nature of the two parts of the *Confessions* (that nevertheless constitute an autobiographical whole) is designed to make the reader realize the difference between the 'old' and the 'new' Augustine: 'The textual disjunction—autobiographical narration to philosophical essay—signals the disjunction Augustine experienced and for which he seeks precise expression' (Miles 1992, 126). See also Bochet (1993, 22–37) who, by

Let us end this section with a look at one of the most recent articles on the unity of the *Confessions*. Holzhausen's 'Augustin als Biograph und Exeget' (2000), in its criticism of all efforts to explain the unity by reading the last three books of the work as an extension ('Ergänzung oder Fortführung') of the autobiography in the first ten, joins its voice to those of the previous category: 'Diese Grundannahme eines biographischen Bezugspunktes der Schlußbücher scheint mir dem Text nicht gerecht zu werden' (Holzhausen 2000, 521). He argues, in a manner reminiscent of Miles, that the sudden movement away from the autobiographical and towards the exegetical is intended to astonish the reader and that, if we want to understand the unity of the *Confessions*, we need to enquire into the reasons for this unexpected turn without trying to deny its surprising and irritating nature. His reading of the second half of the work as a new perspective on essentially the same story as the first half—albeit a story he does not call autobiographical—does not seem significantly different from previous proposals, however.[48]

1.2.3. *Perspectives on Genre and Audience*

In this final section of the survey of studies on the *Confessions* I focus exclusively on publications or, more often, sections from publications that collaborate the reading of the *Confessions* presented here. I discuss more or less chronologically views that pertain to my arguments about the genre and/ or the audience of the work. Findings that support my arguments for calling the *Confessions* a protreptic is, however, usually not part of examinations of the generic characteristics of the work. It is often researchers who analyse the way in which the text tries to influence its audience who formulate their findings in a way that makes clear the protreptic communicative purpose of the *Confessions*. The following discussions illustrate exactly how closely interrelated the issues of genre and intended audience are.

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postulating that the interpretation of scripture is the ultimate goal of Augustine's spiritual journey, sees the last section of the *Confessions* as the most important.

[48] Holzhausen proposes a four-step journey for man (described in books 1–9), 'Geburt—Bekehrung—kirchliche Existenz—Ausblick auf das künftige Jenseits' (2000,527), which is paralleled by the four step process ascribed to God's action in time (described in books 11–13), 'Schöpfung—Erlösung (durch Christus)—Kirche—Weltende mit folgendem ewigem Gottesreich' (2000, 524) with book 10 as the bridge between the two sections.

Let us start with a look at the relatively small number of studies that have occupied themselves explicitly with the genre of the *Confessions*. First, studies that do pay attention to the genre of the *Confessions*, even though they warn that it is no 'usual' autobiography,[49] almost always refer to it as some sort of autobiography: spiritual, intellectual, psychological, or confessional autobiography.[50] Viewing the *Confessions* as any kind of 'autobiography' is problematic in a number of ways. First, calling the work an autobiography always implies elaborate explanations of how what has become commonly known as 'the exegetical section' can be seen as part of this autobiography. Secondly, the term autobiography to denote a specific genre only came into being many centuries after the *Confessions* was written. In Augustine's time the use of autobiographical material in many guises was common (as it had been in classical Antiquity) but there are no indications that audiences could have known anything like a 'pure' autobiography, analogous to modern autobiography, to base their expectations of this text on. Thus, thirdly, the biggest problem caused by viewing the *Confessions* as some kind of autobiography is to my mind the (invalid) subconscious expectations this brings into play for modern readers.

Before we look once again at the proposal by Feldmann, repeated by Mayer, that the *Confessions* may be read as a protreptic text, let us

[49] Pincherle (1976, 123) warns: 'What one should never forget is that autobiography, *in the ordinary sense of the word*, is not the principal element of the *Confessions*,' as does O'Donnell (1985, 83): 'This is emphatically not the "first modern autobiography," for the autobiographical narrative that takes up part of the work is incidental content while prayer is the significant form.' Bochet (1993) is another author who, to my mind, does not follow through on her own argument that the *Confessions* is no 'usual' autobiography: 'Les *Confessions* sont loin d'être une simple autobiographie au sens habituel du terme … Les *Confessions* seraient … à caractériser plutôt comme des "exercices spirituels," tant pour Augustien que pour ses lecteurs' (1993, 36–37). Her aim to establish the link between the autobiographical and the exegetical parts of the work coupled with her insistence that 'compréhension de soi' constitutes the goal of the *Confessions*, indicate that her expectations of the text remain essentially the same as for a modern autobiography.

[50] For a full discussion of the various genres that have been ascribed to the *Confessions* (varying from different kinds of autobiography to theological treatise or simply story) see Troxel's 'What did Augustine Confess in his *Confessions*?' (1994, 164–166). Paolini (1982) sees in the *Confessions* the origin of 'confession as a literary genre,' and describes it as the first exponent of 'Christian literary confession' (1982, 7) or as 'confessional autobiography' (1982, 19). See also Scott's discussion of confessional autobiography (1992, 32–34) and Clark's *Augustine, the Confessions*, where she explains away the 'philosophical-treatise-style' (that she correctly ascribes to the 'autobiographical' part of the *Confessions*) as well as the combination of autobiographical and 'other' material in the work by calling the work spiritual autobiography (1993, 34).

look at the article, 'Le livre XIII et la structure des *Confessions* de Saint Augustin,' by Catherine Joubert (1992) who does not call the genre of the *Confessions* the protreptic, but who, nevertheless, explicitly ascribes to it a protreptic communicative function. Joubert's article has the expressed aim of illuminating the structure of the *Confessions* through an examination of the function of book 13, which she sees as the key to the unity of the work (78). The basic tenets of my arguments are similar to Joubert's suggestions: namely, that the aim of the *Confessions* is to convert and that the most important segment of the intended audience is the Manichaeans (88–94).[51] I find it a pity that Joubert, after identifying the purpose of the *Confessions* as protreptic (although she does not use this technical term), still describes the work as comprising 'son autobiographie d'une part et une exégèse … d'autre part' (99). I feel that the moment we can describe the communicative function of the work as one completely foreign at least to autobiography as this term is commonly understood today, if not to exegesis, we should stop describing the work in terms of a combination of autobiography and exegesis. However, Joubert's reading of the *Confessions* is a sensitive one that I discuss further in chapter 5.

Let us return to the work of Feldmann and Mayer in order to make clear how the present study complements their work. The proposals of these two scholars for reading the work as a protreptic and their expositions of what the protreptic genre entails, what its characteristics or communicative functions are, or why Augustine may have found it the appropriate vehicle for his message (Feldmann 1994, 1166–1167, Mayer 1998, 286, 288–289), do, however, leave room for a more detailed and larger scale study like the present one.[52] Still, all the most important presuppositions of the present study are present, *in nuce*, in Feldmann's article: that the (main) theme of the *Confessions* is to illustrate how God

[51] I agree with Joubert's arguments that the Manichaeans are not the only group Augustine addresses in the *Confessions* (she names the neo-Platonists as another important group), but in this dissertation concentrate only on the Manichaean segment of Augustine's intended audience.

[52] This is, of course, due to the constraints of the type of article they write. But, even as Feldmann expounds the contents of the work in a way that demonstrates the use of topoi or vocabulary typical of the protreptic genre he does not argue his case convincingly, either unaware of the implications of the occurrence of these topoi or assuming it to be general knowledge. Also the implications of ascribing, very correctly in my opinion, the functions of 'Dienst für die Wahrheit' or 'Verkündigung der Hl. Schrift' (1994, 1160) to the *Confessions* are never spelt out.

guided every aspect of Augustine's life in order to bring him into the right 'Lebensform' (1166); that Augustine's concept of God makes it very probable that he saw it as his duty to use his own life story to lead others to God (1167); and that Manichaean concerns play an important role throughout and especially in the choice of Gen 1:1–2:2 as the subject for the exegesis in books 11 to 13 of the *Confessions*.

What the constraints of the *Augustinus Lexikon* does not allow Feldmann to do, and what I propose to do here, is to theorise more about the problem of genre in general, the literary climate within which the *Confessions* came into being, and the specific nature of the philosophical protreptic. Also the interaction between *paraenesis* and *protrepsis* and the different kinds of audiences these aimed at, is something that can fruitfully be expanded on. It is, in fact, especially on the topic of the intended audience of the *Confessions* and the many indications in the text of a constant awareness of this audience that I intend to spend much more energy than either Mayer or Feldmann has done. Of course, every reader reporting her findings in a systematic argument, can write down her reception of only a limited number of sections from the text, and each new reading will present, if only for this reason, a new perspective. Feldmann seems to call the *Confessions* a protreptic on the grounds that this is its communicative function, but seems to assume that this has no implications for the form ('künstlerische Form') of the work. He does note that the difficulty of understanding the form of the *Confessions* concerns the original way in which Augustine draws on the various sources available to him.

Feldmann further points to an important perspective on the function of the *Confessions* by insisting that the verb *uti* describes the function of the autobiographical narrative much better than the verb *frui* (1994, 1163). Modern readers very often seem unable to look past the *frui*-function of the *Confessions* when they insist that the work has the function of helping Augustine to understand himself whereas I agree with Feldmann that Augustine is much more interested in using (*uti*) the autobiographical narrative to help others understand their own shortcomings and how they should change their lives. This is achieved by the oscillation between the narrative and reflexive level of the text where the latter mode allows Augustine to make explicit (to a certain degree) the implications his life-story is supposed to have for the reader's own life: namely to lead him or her towards a new, or right, 'Lebensform' (1994, 1166 et passim). With the exception of Feldmann's and Mayer's proposal about the genre of the work other suggestions mostly do not

correspond to what constitutes a genre in ancient literature.[53] What I do find encouraging, however, is the number of voices that have been raised to argue that the *Confessions* cannot be viewed as an autobiography.[54]

Before Courcelle (1963) proved convincingly, to my mind, that the *Confessions* is heavily indebted to a large number of texts for the literary devices employed there (see detailed discussion in chapter 2) it was a commonplace in scholarship to refer to the originality or novelty of the work. While I do not deny that the *Confessions* may have been received as something original, new and fresh, I do not think that the originality extended as far as making the work *sui generis* to the extent that generic considerations did not come into play, as scholarship seems to have assumed (but more about this also in chapter 2).

There are a number of studies that see in the *Confessions* the creation of a new genre, but what they identify (and rightly so) as new, is in fact more the voice or the timbre, the medium of expression, of the work, and specifically of the autobiographical narration offered there, than the genre. A look at Fontaine's 'Une révolution littéraire dans l'Occident Latin: Les *Confessions* de saint Augustin' (1987) illustrates my case. He formulates the novelty of the work as follows:

> Il a inventé, pour le dire, des moyens d'expression si raffinés et si neufs qu'ils ont proprement donné naissance à un genre littéraire nouveau … Je me propose de le montrer en suivant trois lignes de force, que je résumerai en trois mots: parole, culture, musique (1987, 176).

What Augustine wrote may be called a new style or a new means of expression, but what Fontaine refers to does not constitute a new genre.

In the following I focus on statements that do not pertain directly to the genre of the *Confessions*, but that originate from sound analyses of the text and that support my thesis (following Feldmann and Mayer) that the *Confessions* belongs to the protreptic genre. This procedure is made difficult in the sense that my own explanation of exactly what constitutes a genre and the protreptic genre in particular only follows in chapter 2. For the time being the reader is entreated to bear

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[53] See for example the suggestions evaluated by Troxel (1994).

[54] See for example Scott (1992, 43): 'The *Confessions* are autobiographical, but this is not the primary intention informing Augustine's self-writing;' or Troxel (1994, 171): 'Augustine intended his book to be read in a significantly different manner than a typical autobiography.'

with me while only the broad definition of a protreptic as a text aiming at influencing its reader to choose a different course of life is kept in mind.

Let us proceed to look at publications that do not call the *Confessions* a protreptic but ascribe to it functions akin to that of the protreptic. From early in the previous century, studies appear at intervals that are less predisposed towards judging the *Confessions* as though it were an autobiography and that make some effort to describe its aim in a way that distinguishes it from modern autobiography. Wundt's approach (1923) already contains some elements that I feel should still characterize endeavours to read the *Confessions* today. There is in the first place Wundt's implicit refusal (1923, 161) to accept that Augustine's reasons for writing the *Confessions* were in any way similar to those of later writers who wrote their life stories (even if the *Confessions* significantly influenced these stories). Wundt comes to different conclusions than I do,[55] but in his intention not to judge the form of the *Confessions* by looking at the contents of the work, he distinguishes himself from a majority of studies that have unsuccessfully followed this procedure. Also his argument (1922, 63–64) that Augustine uses neo-Platonic arguments especially to counter Manichaean ideas provides an important corollary for my interpretation of the *Confessions* as aimed primarily at a Manichaean audience.

Billicsich (1929), even though he strongly emphasizes the aim of the *Confessions* as praising and thanking God and only just convinces himself ('auch die Exkurse sind von Wert;' 1929, 150), comes to my mind tantalizingly close to seeing the aim of the work as protreptic. He quotes the passage from the *Retractationes* that I have referred to above and brings it in line with a number of passages from the *Confessions* that express the same aim, namely to show the reader that he or she can call on God (*Conf* 2.3.5), to awaken the soul of the reader (*Conf* 10.3.4), and to excite in the reader a love for God (*Conf* 11.1.1).

Also Cayré's 'Le sens en l'unité des *Confessions*' (1953), makes a few suggestions that sound like an early draft of the present study. Unfortunately, in an article of limited extent, many of Cayré's suggestions remain no more than suggestions that he does not work out in full. But

[55] A large part of his article (1923, 166–178) is spent on finding 'der äußere Anlaß' that gave rise to the writing of this work. Here and in the rest of the article he makes out a case for seeing Augustine's ongoing struggle with the Donatists as the most important subtext for understanding the *Confessions*.

let us look at the most important of his proposals that I develop here. First there is his proposition (1953, 14) that we should see the *Confessions* as belonging to the same genre as, among other works, Justin's *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, Hilary of Poitiers' *De Trinitate*, and Cyprian's *Ad Donatum* (see my discussion of this same topic in chapter 2):

> Il faut précisément ranger les *Confessions* dans un genre dont les Pères usaient à l'occasion avec la charmante simplicité d'âmes toutes vouées à Dieu. Certains ont raconté leur conversion en tête d'un grand ouvrage, pour mieux conquérir la confiance du lecteur.

While Cayré's closing phrase in the quotation above is a perceptive description of one of the functions of a conversion story at the outset of a bigger work, he then goes on to ignore the implications of his own statement. He speaks of 'ce genre d'histoire' (1953, 15) with no further attempt at describing or even considering the genre of the named works, and, like Courcelle (see discussion in chapter 2), seems to see the only point of comparison between them and the *Confessions* in the autobiographical sections that are used as a preface, or as a kind of *captatio benevolentiae*. He is thus left, like Courcelle (1963) with the untenable proposition (which he upholds) that the first half of the work, books 1 to 9, is no more than an introduction.

Also in his description of the aim of the *Confessions* Cayré focuses on some of the same arguments I expound, unfortunately again without taking them to their logical conclusion. He talks about the weight Augustine's 'mission d'évangéliser' carried with the latter (21); and about the 'programme d'action spirituelle supérieure, à exercer avant tout par l'enseignement de l'Écriture sainte' (22). He also quotes the *Retractationes*: 'son unique but était, pour reprendre le mot des *Révisions*, de louer le Dieu juste et bon et de tourner vers lui l'esprit et le coeur de l'homme' (22). The intention to strongly influence the reader, 'to evangelise,' 'educate,' or 'turn' him or her 'towards God' embodies exactly the aim of a protreptic text (see my discussion in chapter 2). Like Boyle (discussed above), Cayré ignores part of the implications of his own suggestion and focuses, like most scholars who interpret these words from the *Retractationes*, solely on Augustine's aim to glorify God.

A very illuminating article comprising inter alia a perceptive analysis of *Conf* 9.4.7–11, the same passage I deem of great significance (and that I analyse in chapter 3), is Sieben's 'Der Psalter und die Bekehrung der VOCES und AFFECTUS: Zu Augustinus, *Conf* IX.4.5 und X.33' (1977). Sieben concludes that Augustine's unique way of

interweaving texts from the book of Psalms into the very fabric of the text of his *Confessions*—as Knauer's *Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen* (1955) so strikingly illustrates—has greater significance than many researchers (including Knauer) seem to realize. He argues that the *Confessions* themselves are to be seen as a kind of 'biographisch amplifiziertes Psalterium' (484). His conclusion (1977, 484) is based on the following: the fact that the passage from *Conf* 9 contains one of only two instances of direct quotation from the Psalter (which is however used extensively—though not through direct quotation—throughout the *Confessions* and, significantly, in the very opening lines of the work) endows this passage with special significance. Sieben (see especially 486–487) sees 9.4.7–12 as the description of a further (and by implication final) conversion in the series of conversions presented in the *Confessions*, the conversion of the emotions ('Affekten'). His various descriptions of the effect of Ps 4 (and of the use of the psalter and the singing of psalms and hymns in general) come very close to ascribing a protreptic function to this passage and the Psalter: The Manichaean listening to Augustine should become 'ein anderer Mensch' (489); the Psalter has a 'therapeutische Funktion' (494; here Sieben is quoting Athanasius whom Augustine refers to in 9.4.7–12); and it has the characteristic that it causes in the soul a 'Verwandlung und Besserung' (494). As far as Sieben is concerned this effect is only worked on Augustine himself (while I contend in chapter 3 that it is aimed to affect Augustine's Manichaean audience):

> Das explizite Zitat signalisiert einen näher zu bestimmenden Zusammenhang zwischen der literarischen Form der *Konfessionen*, d.h. ihrer Eigenart als biographisch amplifiziertem Psalterium und dem an dieser Stelle der Schrift berichteten Lebensabschitt. M.a.W. die Form der *Konfessionen* ergibt sich in gewissem Sinne aus der hier erzählten Etappe der Bekehrungsgeschichte (Sieben 1977, 484).

It is clear that Sieben ascribes the same central importance to *Conf* 9.4.7–11 as I do in my analysis of this section in chapter 3 below.

DiLorenzo's article on the thirteenth book of the *Confessions* (1985) is mainly an explication of the theological content of the allegorical interpretation of Genesis Augustine presents here. He emphasizes that book 13 plays a key role in the whole of the *Confessions*, a fact that is closely related to Augustine's view of Genesis 'as an allegorical key to scripture and spirituality' (DiLorenzo 1985, 75). The paradigmatic character assigned to book 13 in combination with DiLorenzo's insight that Augustine interprets creation history as salvation history and the days

of creation as an allegorical portrayal of the re-creation or 'spiritual conversion' of man (1985, 78) is of course a strong argument to support my thesis that the communicative function of not only the 'autobiographical' section but also of the 'exegetical' section of the *Confessions* is protreptic, i.e. to convert. I also agree heartily with his proposal that we should not view the *Confessions* as autobiography, that our conception of the *Confessions* as a 'somewhat disjointed' autobiography is the result of the fact that 'we fix our attention too much upon what Augustine tells us of his life—life as we superficially understand it—though he repeatedly says that his life (*vita*) is God' (DiLorenzo 1985, 76). The alternative DiLorenzo proposes (that we see the *Confessions* as theology) is valid in the context of his arguments but of course does not present the modern reader with a different literary model on which to base his or her expectations of the contents and structure of the work.[56]

Hawkins (1985) also takes for granted that the reader of the conversion narrative is supposed to imitate Augustine and be converted. What she hesitates about is whether the text of the *Confessions* is meant to function in this conversion in the way the Bible functions in the other conversions described there. She comes to the conclusion that such an assumption by Augustine would constitute hubris (26) and that the reader is rather through the text of the *Confessions* directed to scripture:

> The reader does not relate to the *Confessions* as Augustine does to scripture; rather, it is in Alypius, who witnesses Augustine's conversion and who is himself converted, that we are to see ourselves. And Alypius is converted not by witnessing Augustine's conversion, but by mimetically taking to himself a scriptural passage (27).

The fact remains that this interpretation ascribes a protreptic communicative function to the *Confessions*.

I have chosen to defer the discussion of Fontaine's article, 'Genres et styles dans les *Confessions* de saint Augustin,' (1990) to this section of the literary survey because Fontaine's insights into the generic make-up of the *Confessions* provide a valuable corollary for the way in which I approach aspects of genre in the present study. Although there are places where it becomes clear that what Fontaine calls a genre does not conform strictly to my definition of the term (discussed in chap-

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[56] See also Mayer (1986). At this stage he still calls the *Confessions* an autobiography (35) and mentions its purpose only in passing (36). The way he describes the text does, however, already point towards his later thesis that it, in fact, has a protreptic purpose.

ter 2) and that he uses the terms 'genre' and 'style' as if almost interchangeable, his argument that the *Confessions* constitutes, typical of literary practice and the aesthetic ideals of its time, a cento of genres (1990, 14), is well-presented and convincing. Fontaine does not count the protreptic as one of the multitude of 'genres' his sees reflected in the work but the sermon ('prédication'), the philosophical treaty ('traité philosophique') and especially the proselytising discourse ('discours prosélytique'), which he identifies (1990, 15) all share characteristics with the protreptic. The most important perspective that emerges from his study and that I want to emphasize here is the fact that, while the *Confessions* certainly displays characteristics of the ancient philosophical protreptic and in the present study I concentrate exclusively on these, this is by no means the only genre that forms part of the generic encoding that regulates communication in this text.

Quillen's 'Consentius as Reader of Augustine's *Confessions*' (1991) highlights the important role that Augustine ascribes to reading in the *Confessions* as well as the strong link between reading and conversion that is established there.[57] More important support for my own study is her emphasis on the importance of the context within which the text functioned and the audience for whom Augustine wrote. One of her closing paragraphs is worth quoting:

> Consentius' reaction to the *Confessions* first dramatizes both the prominence given in that text to reading as an activity and suggests that Augustine's late antique audience was sensitive to this dimension of his work. Secondly, an analysis of the correspondence between Consentius and Augustine highlights the need for 'contextualized' interpretations of Augustine's writings, that is, for interpretations that read Augustine's words as responses to real alternatives—Donatist, Pelagian, Manichaean—that existed when he lived and wrote (1991, 108).

Miles, in her *Desire and Delight* (1992), although she also seems to assume the readers of the *Confessions* to be Augustine's 'fellow-Christians,' (1992, 42), or, as she puts it, 'the sympathetic male colleague for whom Augustine wrote,' (1992, 71) spells out, among other things, the propensity of the text to convert, making the not-yet-converted a more probable audience. The text (especially books 1 to 9) is in fact repeatedly

[57] Quillen's insights about the importance of indications concerning the audience of the *Confessions* are valuable, but to define this audience she quotes almost exclusively passages from the later books of the *Confessions* where the audience is defined as fellow Christians, while it is my contention that this is not the sole, nor the most important, group the text targets (see chapter 5).

described in terms that would be eminently suitable for describing a protreptic text. Miles refers to Augustine's ability to touch the reader: 'strategies that enhance readers' vigorous engagement with the text' (40) or 'the reader's response is solicited and provoked' (40); to his awareness of 'the power of the written word for stimulating a reader to imitation of the narrated deeds' (26); and to conversion as an expected result of reading the *Confessions*: 'Augustine expected reading to be a powerful, life-changing experience' (40).[58]

Clark formulates the aim of her *Augustine: the Confessions* (1993) as 'to set the *Confessions* in the context of "late antiquity"' (1993, vii). She does not deal with the problem of the unity or the structure of the work exclusively but covers a wide spectrum of topics in an appraisal that reflects one of the most sensitive readings of the text. The book as a whole, and especially her second chapter, 'Genre: describing a life,' contain some probing insights into, and particularly some very valid questions about the nature and purpose of the *Confessions*. This is, for example, one of the few books where at least the question as to who Augustine's readers may have been or how they may have been influenced by the text is formulated. Although the work remains an introduction in the sense that issues are indicated rather than treated in depth, we have once again an emphasis on Augustine's own constantly expressed 'awareness of the activity of reading' (63) and the techniques Augustine uses to engage his readers: 'he will not allow his readers to cast themselves as passive consumers of rhetoric' (66, see also for example 37, 39, 46, 66–67).

In Miles' (1997) review of Boulding's translation of the *Confessions* (1997) she considers 'reading itself, especially Augustine's experience of reading and his explicit—even anxious—attention to his own readers.' Although Miles concentrates on the phenomenon of silent reading and is mainly concerned with what she calls the pleasure of reading, her recognition of the author's will to actively engage the reader through the text supports my interpretation that the ultimate required response is that of conversion. She emphasizes that Augustine saw reading as

[58] Other phrases expressing to the same effect are, for example, the following: Augustine 'expected his *Confessions* to act powerfully in the lives of his readers' (41); 'Augustine provided his readers with the potentially transformative narrative of his conversion' (45); 'it is the reader who must be persuaded, inspired to imitate, converted' (51); 'his text must first create in the reader an intense, energetic, engrossing engagement … it is now used to engage his reader in a dialogue in which the reader's life could be decisively altered' (66).

'nothing short of salvific' and that he expected his reader to equal his own intensely emotional engagement with what he or she is reading: 'The *Confessions* represents one side of an energetic conversation in which the reader's response is deliberately solicited. The reading pleasure that results from this conversation … is not merely the simple pleasure of hearing a good story, but the complex pleasures of strong feelings—sometimes violent disagreement, sometimes frustration and sometimes a euphoric recognition, produced by Augustine's text.'[59]

Cavadini's 'Time and Ascent in *Confessions* XI' (1993) concludes unexpectedly with a strong argument that supports my identification of a protreptic purpose as an important aim for the writing of the *Confessions*. Cavadini argues that in his theorizing about time Augustine does not intend to write a treatise on time, but a section that is 'at the service of the agenda of the *Confessions* as a whole, and that is to bring its readers to be able to confess …' (Cavadini 1993, 177).

Chadwick's 'On Re-reading the *Confessions*' (1994) has the expressed aim of finding information about Augustine's understanding of his priesthood, but does reveal sound insight into the work. Although he stresses the apologetic or self-defence aim of the *Confessions* in this article, as he does in his introduction to his translation (1991, ix), he also comes to the conclusion that the unusual amount of literary allusions to classical authors does speak for the fact that 'there are latent in the *Confessions* elements both of self-vindication … and also of protreptic exhortation to conversion' (1994, 152).

Keevak's 'Reading (and Conversion in) Augustine's *Confessions*' (1995) is not concerned with the genre or communicative purpose of the work, but his examination of the question 'whether the reader too is meant to convert' pertains directly to the communicative purpose of the *Confessions*. He is also concerned throughout with the audience the conversion narrative is addressed to, e.g. 'I would argue that the text has not really been understood precisely in terms of its relationship to the sorts of community to which it is addressed, since the speaker's relationship to the reader as well as to others within the text is extremely subtle and complex' (1995, 257–258), and 'on whom, if anybody, will the *Confessions* really have its intended effect?' (258). In his examination of the intricate relationships between speaker and intended reader Keevak highlights the strong emphasis on the activity of reading in the *Confessions*. Like

[59] Quotations from Miles (1997) all come from the opening sections of the electronic version of Miles' review article where no page numbers are indicated.

Hawkins, whom he quotes in this regard, Keevak also muses on the problem of how the text of the *Confessions* (in comparison to the text of the Bible) is meant to function in the conversion towards which it urges the reader and comes to the conclusion:

> This is only to claim that it is not simply a matter of reading the *Confessions* as Augustine, Alypius, or Victorinus read (or Anthony hears) the Bible … but that the text, in the very fact that it so incessantly thematizes the problem of reading itself, cannot help but condone or perhaps even encourage the tendency to read the text as itself a kind of revealed scripture (267).

However the detail is interpreted, it is abundantly clear that Keevak's arguments constitute very strong support for my thesis that the communicative aim of the *Confessions* is to convert its reader, i.e. a protreptic aim.

In the following discussions I focus more on what research has proposed up to now concerning the audience of the *Confessions*, but, as I remarked at the outset of this section, matters of audience and communicative purpose are difficult to separate. That the *Confessions* is aimed at a human audience in spite of its prayer stance of addressing only God throughout, is commonly accepted in scholarship. There are surprisingly few studies, however, that try to come to grips with what we can detect in the text about this audience: are there indications of an awareness of the audience, apart from the (delayed) explicit reference in 2.3.5 (*cui narro haec? … generi humano …*)? Are there any clues as to what this audience may be like, of specifically who they may be? These are the questions that I treat in chapter 5 and that have, in my opinion, not received their rightful place in scholarship on the *Confessions* up to now.

From the scattered references to the audience of the *Confessions* that I have been able to find, it becomes clear that a degree of dissention exists: while some postulate the Donatists as the intended audience (by saying that the work is meant to refute Donatist accusations) and others the neo-Platonists or the Manichaeans, a large number of scholars seem to assume (on the basis of references in the last four books) that Augustine's fellow-Christians are the most probable human audience. Cayré (1953, 20) feels, for example, like many other authors, that Augustine never really loses sight of his potential Manichaean reader: 'Quelle occasion surtout d'exercer un apostolat fécond auprès des égarés de la secte manichéenne, ceux qu'il y avait entraînés lui-même, et les autres assez nombreux alors en Afrique!' But, almost in the same breath, he asserts that Augustine speaks primarily to his Christian brothers.

Also Brown (1967, 160) argues that the intended audience were Augustine's fellow-Christians, while he does allow for some attention to other groups:

> The *Confessions* was a book for the *servi Dei* … it is a classic document of the tastes of a group of highly sophisticated men, the *spiritales* … It told such men just what they wanted to know about—the course of a notable conversion … It even contained moving appeals to the men who might join this new elite: to the austere Manichee and the pagan Platonist.

But there are researchers that have pointed to the prominence of adherents of Manichaeism as a part of the intended audience of the *Confessions*. Already in the 1930's three articles argue for the significance of the presence of so many Manichaean themes in the work. Allgeier's suggestions in his 'Der Einfluss des Manichäismus auf die exegetische Fragestellung bei Augustin' (1930) support both my argument for seeing protreptic intent as one of the communicative purposes of the *Confessions* and my argument that this protreptic is to an important degree aimed at the Manichaeans. He argues that Augustine's first exegetical endeavours, following shortly after his conversion, were focussed on the creation narrative in Genesis and partly had the aim to justify his conversion to his erstwhile friends or even to win them over to Christianity. He also points to the fact that Augustine's preoccupation with the creation story has Manichaean origins.

Perler (1931), advanced the thesis that the unity of the *Confessions* was to be sought among other things in the anti-Manichaean content of the autobiographical books as well as in the exegetical section, while Stiglmayr (1932), in his arguments to support his thesis that the work is meant as a sacrifice to God, portrays his awareness of the how focussed on his audience Augustine is. He notes that Augustine aims at two different groups (390) that can be described as the converted and the not-yet-converted. He feels that in book 10 the audience is the friends whom he sees as the instigators of this book (with their request that Augustine should give an account of his present state) in contrast to the less friendly, less well-known reader envisaged in the first nine books (395). But these remain isolated voices at an early stage of research on the *Confessions* and their ideas have not become part of mainstream thinking.

In 1967 Hadot's short article, 'Quelques thèmes fondamentaux des *Confessions* de saint Augustin,' argues for the importance of a Manichaean perspective on Augustine's insistence on sin in the *Confessions*. He claims (1967, 113) that Augustine is at pains to affirm the iden-

tity between the sinful self and the converted self, to emphasize that responsibility for sin lies with the individual, and that repentance is necessary, all with a view to contradicting Manichaean ideas on these matters. Also Augustine's use of the imagery surrounding a movement from darkness to light Hadot interprets as formulated to counter Manichaean ideas of separate regions of darkness and light.

Bammel's article, 'Pauline exegesis, Manichaeism and philosophy in the early Augustine' (1993), supplies another argument for taking the use of Manichaean categories of thought more seriously when they appear in the *Confessions*. She shows that exegesis of the writings of Paul was an important part of Manichaean thinking and that in his reading of Paul in the Garden at Milan, following his dramatic reaction to the 'discovery' of neo-Platonism as it does, 'Augustine was not merely combining Platonist insights with a return to his childhood religion, he was also replacing his earlier Manichaean reading of Paul with a new "Platonising" understanding' (1993, 1). Bammel's arguments also imply that the presence of so much Manichaean material in the *Confessions* is far from self-explanatory. She points out that the first versions of Augustine's conversion (in the Cassiciacum dialogues) do not contain a significant amount of anti-Manichaean material but rather represent this same conversion in terms that aim to refute the Academic position (1993, 11). The implications are clear: the conversion is not inexorably tied up with Manichaeism in Augustine's memory. It can be told in different ways to reach different audiences, to counter different sets of belief and if (anti-) Manichaean ideas permeate the conversion narrative in the *Confessions* this has significant implications for how the intended audience of this work is to be seen.

Babcock's observation in his 'Augustine and the Spirituality of Desire' (1994) offers a reading of book 8 that emphasizes the fact that here Augustine 'finally and definitively displaces his own earlier Manichaean anthropology and replaces it with a new, anti-Manichaean anthropology that is distinctively his own' (1994, 181). As I have indicated in my discussion of Bammel (above): if we shift our focus from Augustine to his audience and see the purpose of his narrative as less narcissistic and more protreptic in nature, Babcock's words could be reformulated to indicate that Augustine is instructing specifically a Manichaean reader on how to replace an earlier (faulty) anthropology with an improved (Catholic) one.

A recent article that occupies itself among other things with the audience of the *Confessions* is Asher's 'The Dangerous Fruit of Augus-

tine's *Confessions*' (1998). Especially the first part of the article focuses on Augustine's preoccupation with 'the nature of his audience's attention' (1998, 229) and adduces sermons where Augustine explicitly expresses his concern with reaching his audience. Asher is mostly concerned with the risk that Augustine is taking in writing about himself, 'a work that seems to court … illicit attentions from its audience inasmuch as "what is said" refers to the "person who is saying it"' (1998, 230). He interprets the significance of the first explicit acknowledgement of the *Confessions*' human audience for the interpretation of the narrative of the pear theft, the narrative into which it is introduced abruptly and almost illogically, and comes to the conclusion that this episode is a parody of the ascetic life, and more importantly, of the writing of the *Confessions*: 'The act of confession itself is the needful beneficiary of this parodic gesture: Augustine suggests what this book is by showing us what it is not, and what it is not is what it most runs the risk of resembling—namely, a prideful exhibition of ascetic fortitude and personal piety' (Asher 1998, 240). Asher's arguments also indirectly support my view of the Manichaeans being an important segment of the intended audience of the *Confessions* when he points out (1998, 238) that the gratuitous nature of the theft seems at first to support the Manichaean view of evil as a force 'as fully autonomous as God.' This impression is then undermined by Augustine's suggestion that 'divine omnipotence is the theft's proximate model' (Asher 1998, 239). It is clear that specifically a Manichaean audience would have been gripped by the implications of Augustine's telling of this episode, especially at their first surmise that he might be playing into their hands by his description of the gratuitous nature of the theft. Augustine's eventual refutation of this expectation would have been all the more marked to a Manichaean reader. It could conceivably even be a formal working out of an argument on sins of a similar nature that had been a point of discussion between him and the Manichaeans. I agree with Asher that the pear theft and other episodes in the *Confessions* are expressions of Augustine's concern with the risks attached to writing his own life story. My analysis goes one step further and says that Augustine's indications of a protreptic purpose for the work is a powerful motivation for taking this risk.

I end this section with a preliminary reference to the work of Van Oort who has done a great deal of work on Manichaean texts, especially the Cologne Mani Codex. His arguments are quoted and discussed in full in the course of my own analyses in chapters 3 to 5 below. Van Oort's research (especially the articles of 1995, 1997 and

2002) is probably at the moment the most important impetus towards a new appreciation of the importance of the Manichaean element in the *Confessions* for our reading of the whole.[60] His 'Augustinus und der Manichäismus' (1995, 289–308) discusses Augustine's thorough knowledge of Manichaeism and specifically of Manichaean documents and the influence of Manichaeism on his theology and his thinking in general. Van Oort also emphasizes especially the (anti)Manichaean content of the *Confessions*. His article on the anti-Manichaean content of books 1 to 3 of the *Confessions* (1997) advances convincing arguments for seeing the very opening words of the text as containing Manichaean allusions. Those of us steeped in Vergil's masterful techniques of foreshadowing will see this as very significant indeed. Apart from this, the 1997 article, together with Van Oort's inaugural lecture (2002), show how many sections of the *Confessions* appear in a completely different light when they are compared to the growing number of Manichaean texts that are being made available as scholarly work on the finds of the previous century are published. The overall effect of this movement and especially Van Oort's work, is an increased awareness that the *Confessions* targets a Manichaean audience to a much greater extent than many scholars have believed up to now.

[60] For an overview of the work on Manichaean texts see Van Oort (1996, 7–24 and 39) and more recently Lieu (2001, 137–147).

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CHAPTER TWO

THE *CONFESSIONS* AND ITS FIRST READERS: GENRE AND AUDIENCE

The overarching purpose of chapter 2 is to consider a number of factors that may have influenced the way in which Augustine's first readers experienced the *Confessions*. To do this I take a preliminary look at the two aspects this reading of the work is about: the genre and the audience of the *Confessions*. I start with an attempt to simplify the difficult task of unraveling the generic codes embedded in an ancient text by taking a preliminary look at the general principles of genre perpetuation (2.1.1) and the difficulties of pinpointing the protreptic genre in particular (2.1.2). Then I examine some respects in which literary practice in the 4th century AD may have influenced the generic features of the *Confessions*, and thus the generic expectations of its readers (2.1.3). Although the primary focus is on the protreptic features of the work, its literary antecedents include works with a variety of generic characteristics. The last part of the discussion of matters pertaining to genre (2.1.4) evaluates the change in perspective on the unity of the work this brings about. Chapter 2.2 takes a cursory look at the issue of intended audience (2.2.1) and also presents the background information necessary to follow the arguments in chapters 3 and 5 about the Manichaeans (2.2.2).

2.1. *The Genre of the* Confessions

2.1.1. *Genre and Communicative Purpose*

a. Problems and Solutions

Communicative purpose is an important—perhaps the most important—aspect of genre, which is a highly problematical category. Although this study does not aim to make a final judgment on the genre of Augustine's *Confessions* it wants to show that a researcher cannot avoid getting involved with matters pertaining to genre for two reasons.

First, what a text communicates to its readers, is always to some extent generically encoded, as Chamberlain and Thompson (1998, 1) emphasize: '*Any communication has to use shared conventions* not only of language itself but *also the more complex expectations of "genre":* of the forms expected within a given context and type of communication' (my emphasis); secondly, preconceived ideas about genre cannot but decisively influence the whole process of analysis: 'The determination of the genre of a writing has import for its overall interpretation and may predispose an interpreter to concentrate on particular elements in the work and to ignore other possibly more weighty and extensive textual evidence' (Guerra 1995, 13). Because the *Confessions* is such a multidimensional work the danger is especially great in this case that the interpreter may find lots of evidence to prove her point while important aspects of the work still remain uncovered and unaccounted for. Especially the presupposition of many scholars (based on the content of books 1 to 10) that the work must belong to the genre of autobiography is closely scrutinized.

The term genre is often perceived as a problematic one,[1] more so (but probably not rightfully so) within the sphere of modern literary theory than in that of the discourse on classical literature.[2] The greater skepticism that modern literary theory shows towards the term has fortunately also given rise to some very precise and illuminating discussions of it, which can be used fruitfully by scholars of ancient literature. For even among classicists, where the usefulness of studying the genre of ancient works is readily agreed upon, the terminology and process are far from problem-free.

The problematic nature of genre arises inter alia from the fact that both the generic devices used by the author and the generic expectations brought to the text by the reader function on a partly subconscious level (Fowler 1982, 25). This is borne out by the fact that the science of ancient rhetoric does not treat generic matters, though the relatively late treatises on genre testify that it has been in operation and an important creator of meaning at least since the days of Homer. The

[1] For an incisive recent discussion of the problems associated with genre, see the Introduction to Chamberlain and Thompson 1998, 1–22.

[2] See e.g. Swales 1990, 33–58, for the problems surrounding the modern use of the term genre, the different viewpoints of different research communities and a working definition of the term. Another good overview of the problems and a scientifically sound treatment is found in Miller's chapter 'De generibus disputandum est' (1994, 37–51).

negative connotations modern literary scholars associate with the term genre mostly concern the perception that it is something that prescribes to and restricts the writer, or that it is a tool used by the analyst simply to classify and usually to over-schematize. Also the association of the term genre with the notion of a hierarchic canon of literature makes it suspect.

I believe, like many scholars of ancient literary works, that the category of genre and the accompanying terminology can be a useful tool in the process of analysis. The operation of generic principles, during the creation of the work, can be seen, not as inhibiting the author, but as a 'positive support … (that) offer room, as one might say, for him to write in—a habitation of mediated definiteness; a proportioned mental space; a literary matrix by which to order his experience during composition' (Fowler 1982, 31). Also the use of generic categories in the process of analysis need not be aimed at classifying, but can be employed fruitfully towards a better understanding of how generic principles create meaning in the literary work. What is more, in the case of a modern reader reading an ancient text the conventions of writing and reading have changed so profoundly that one cannot assume that communication based on generic principles will function on a subconscious level.

Above I have implied that scholars of ancient literature do not usually share the negative perceptions concerning genre and generic categories that are prevalent in the field of modern literature. But in the field of ancient literature (like in that of modern literature) problems arise from terminological inaccuracies. The term genre is often used to refer to different levels of categorization, without any indication that the speaker or writer is aware of the imprecision involved. Cairns' work, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* 1972, makes a useful contribution to the study of specific ancient genres and addresses this problem: 'Genres in this sense are not classifications of literature in terms of form as are epic, lyric, elegy, or epistle, but classifications in terms of content; for example *propemptikon* (the farewell to the departing traveller), and *komos* … (the song and actions of a lover who is usually excluded)' (Cairns 1972, 6). In the light of the terminological explanations below, it will appear that what he calls content (a farewell or a petition by an excluded lover) is actually better described by a term like 'communication situation' or 'communicative purpose.' Nevertheless, in making this his criterion for distinguishing one genre from another, Cairns is close to what modern theories of genre have found (as I discuss in more detail below).

The magisterial works of Misch (first published in 1907) and Courcelle (1963) offer further illustration of the problems surrounding the terminology of genre. Misch refers to 'the autobiographical genre' when what he speaks of is in fact the autobiographical content of works that belong primarily or at least partly to other genres. Similarly Courcelle 1963 speaks of autobiography and autobiographical antecedents for the *Confessions* without referring to the fact that calling the *Confessions* as a whole an autobiography makes it difficult to account for the presence of the last three or four books of the work, and without giving any attention to the generic features of the works he sees as the 'autobiographical' antecedents for the *Confessions*.

Of course, as far as ancient (auto)biography (both Roman and Greek) is concerned, it was always difficult to distinguish a clearly delineated genre from other genres. The discussion of the literary antecedents of the *Confessions* in chapter 2.3 below illustrates how Pelling's statements (1996, 241) about Greek biography holds true for most of ancient biography and autobiography: 'One should not think of a single "biographical genre" with acknowledged conventions, but rather of a complicated picture of overlapping traditions, embracing works of varying form, style, length, and truthfulness.'

Another problem closely related to the one above is the (often tacit) assumption as to what constitutes a genre. Cairns' claim (1972, 6) that 'every genre can be thought of as having primary or logically necessary elements which in combination distinguish that genre from every other genre,' is open to criticism, because in practice 'very few necessary elements exist' (Fowler 1982, 39). The assumption that such necessary elements should be found is also at the basis of Jordan's (1986, 328) exasperation when he comes to the conclusion: 'It is plain that protreptic cannot be a genre in the ordinary poetic sense, that is, as dictating a certain combination of form, diction, and subject-matter.' Jordan turns eventually to what he sees as the most promising solution to finding a definition, namely 'to consider the "rhetorical situation" of the protreptic' (1986, 330). Like Cairns' definition this correlates well with the findings of in-depth studies by modern literary theorists showing that 'rhetorical situation,' which I will use as a synonym for 'communication situation' or 'communicative purpose,' is one of the best indicators of the genre of a literary work (see discussion below).

Thus, communicative purpose is what this study focuses on when it analyzes the protreptic purpose of the *Confessions*. But I go into the analysis of the protreptic elements of the work, knowing full well

that what will have to be judged in the final instance of this analysis, like in the case of a study of the autobiographical elements, is: how representative of the intentions of the work as a whole are its protreptic elements?[3] It should be clear, however, that an analysis starting out from different assumptions concerning the genre of the *Confessions* would at the very least have a chance of bringing some new perspectives into the debate on the purpose and meaning of the whole.

b. A Definition of Genre

The definition of genre that I found most useful for my purposes here is that of Swales (1990). His aim is to describe modern genres, and the definition contains concepts that need to be explained against the background of modern literary or linguistic theory. For these reasons it may seem overly technical at this stage, but it will become clear as the discussion goes on that, even without going into detailed descriptions of all the terms, his definition is useful for speaking about ancient genres and can be employed to formulate aspects of the analysis of ancient works that are often passed over in silence. Also, most valuably, it can throw light on the problem of the elements 'necessary' to constitute a genre. I emphasize the aspects of the definition most important for my immediate purposes and give it in full (up to a point) though not all parts are immediately relevant for the present study:

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of *communicative purposes*. These purposes are recognized by the *expert members of the parent discourse community* and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the *schematic structure* of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. *Communicative purpose is* both *a privileged criterion* and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of *a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience* (Swales 1990, 58).

The most important aspect of this definition for my analysis of the *Confessions* as a protreptic is its emphasis on communicative purpose. This is defined as a privileged criterion for identifying specific genres,

[3] Feldmann, whom I follow in examining the protreptic characteristics of the *Confessions*, seems, in 1988, to have been cautioned to formulating his suggestion more carefully, calling the *Confessions* '(einen) Text mit der Tendenz zur Gattung des Protreptikos' (1988, 44). But in the 1994 article in *Augustinus Lexikon* he no longer shows any of these inhibitions.

which reinforces my hypothesis that the *Confessions* can be called a protreptic on the basis of its purpose to convert, even though it may be difficult to isolate structural or other elements typical of protreptic in this work or its protreptic antecedents. The category of communicative purpose is not completely non-problematical, though, and Swales (1990, 47) acknowledges that for some genres 'purpose is unsuited as a primary criterion.' Nevertheless, the term communicative purpose is clearly understandable and can be used without further circumscription.

Having said all this, I do not pretend that the purpose of a genre is an easily demonstrable feature. It demands a very clear understanding of the text and all its literary subtleties, as well as a firm grasp of the world within which it functioned. Swales (1990, 46), however, counters the objection of the difficulty of pinpointing communicative purpose by stressing the advantages of the open-minded approach to a literary work this forces the interpreter to adopt, and the protection the process offers 'against a facile classification based on stylistic features and inherited beliefs.' This is exactly what I am in search of in my analysis of the *Confessions*.

The last part of Swales' definition that is important for my analysis of the protreptic features of the *Confessions*, is the reference to structure, style and content on the one hand, and intended audience on the other hand (the latter I discuss under 2.2.1 on intended audience). Jordan (1986) experiences great difficulties in trying to formulate which elements of structure, style or content are constitutive for defining a work as a protreptic. This does not mean that there are not many features that occur regularly in many examples of protreptic. It only means that it is difficult to award to any one of these features—apart from the purpose to convert—the status of a 'necessary' element without which a work cannot be called a protreptic.

Elements of structure, style and content may, however, contribute to the prototypical nature of certain texts in a given genre. Here Swales' remarks (1990, 49–52), based on the work of Eleanor Rosch on the prototype approach to categories (which Swales makes applicable also to genres), are particularly helpful. The point of departure of this approach is, in short, the following. Empirical tests have proved that often some exemplars of a specific category are generally perceived to be more typical of the category than others. These exemplars or members are then called prototypes. The properties of any given category can be divided into privileged and 'other' properties. While priv-

ileged properties are usually (but not always) necessary to constitute the category, the presence of the other properties contributes to how prototypical the exemplar of the category is perceived to be.[4] This terminology makes possible the following useful statement about genre: '[C]ommunicative purpose has been nominated as the *privileged* property of a genre. Other properties, such as form, structure and audience expectations operate to identify the extent to which an exemplar is *prototypical* of a particular genre' (Swales 1990, 52).

Thus, for example, the *Confessions* could be described as possessing protreptic features if it could be shown that its communicative purpose (or one of its communicative purposes) is to convert.[5] But elements of structure, style, or content do not have to be left out of the equation. A study of protreptic antecedents might yield elements that also have a high 'probability for being included' in the genre (Swales 1990, 52), even though they are not necessary elements.

c. The Fluid Nature of Genre

I have implied that genre is a highly elusive category. One of the causes for this elusiveness is the way in which genre is perpetuated, which has the effect that each work is to a certain extent *sui generis*, that is, unique in the way in which it embodies generic principles. Fowler's study (1982, 11, 20, 23) teems with words and phrases like 'mutability,' 'active modulation,' 'instability,' and 'continuously undergoing metamorphosis' to describe the process of genre perpetuation, while Tolbert (1989, 50) uses the term 'fluid process.' This means in fact that every genre is constantly changing. What each work uses and does not use from its antecedent examples and how it mixes and modifies these elements is what makes it unique. And this 'active modulation … communicates, … it probably has a communicative value far greater than we can ever be aware of' (Fowler 1982, 20). The mixture of or cross fertilization between genres referred to above was also detected in modern autobiography by Chamberlain and Thompson (1998, 11): 'Not only can autobiography itself be broken down into a series of genres, but each of them is likely to draw on other genres: both in the sense of major genres, and also of generic motifs and devices.'

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[4] Here Swales (1990, 49–52) opts for Amstrong's combination of the prototype approach with the family resemblance approach.

[5] Swales (1990, 47) points out that it is 'not uncommon to find genres that have *sets* of communicative purposes.'

The generally held opinion in scholarship on the *Confessions*—at least into the second half of the previous century[6]—that the *Confessions* is *sui generis* in ancient literature has not taken into account the fact that the *Confessions* is probably not more *sui generis* than most other literary works. That is, the generic makeup of the work is unique, but this does not mean that it does not have literary antecedents. Why then has the genre of the *Confessions* been so particularly elusive? I am convinced that at least a part of the answer lies in the fact that its author used generic principles in a highly creative way, and 'the less original a work the more likely it (is) to fit comfortably into a genre category, while the greatest creative works (defy) such easy formal categorization' (Chamberlain and Thompson 1998, 3).

Once one starts to look at the *Confessions* in the light of these observations about genre and start looking for literary antecedents, a multitude of themes, topoi, strategies, attitudes and allusions from a highly diverse range of antecedent genres leap into the eye. Courcelle (1963) has proved this in his survey of the antecedents for autobiographical elements in the *Confessions* (see discussion below). My own reading on the characteristics of the protreptic has only served to multiply the possible antecedents for numerous elements in the *Confessions*.

2.1.2. *The Protreptic Genre*

a. Problems and Solutions

The following section is a cursory treatment of the nature and development of the ancient λόγος προτρεπτικός with special emphasis on its manifestations in Late Antiquity and in Christian literature, in order to provide a background and define the terminology needed for the present analysis of the *Confessions*. Some of the problems concerning the description of the protreptic genre have already been mentioned, where they were indicated as aspects of the bigger problems concerning genre in general.

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[6] Courcelle (1963) still has to prove that literary antecedents for the *Confessions* exist and Brown (1967, 160) maintains: 'No other member of this group of *servi Dei*, however, wrote a book that even remotely resembles the *Confessions*.' He is correct of course, but this and statements like 'Augustine … found himself with an audience used to intimate biography, and so, ripe for autobiography' (159), or 'the astounding novelty of the book he was writing' (160) indicate his belief that the *Confessions* is more unique than I would like to deem it. O'Donnell (1985, 83) states categorically: 'The work is sui generis.'

It has been shown that identifying 'necessary' elements of structure, style or content that are constitutive of any given genre, is always problematic for all genres. In the case of the protreptic Jordan finds this almost impossible. There is no consistency of form or structure, no proper lex operis for the protreptic (Jordan 1986, 328).

Jordan (1986, 329–333), guided by the practicalities of the task of defining the protreptic genre, therefore opts for communicative purpose (in this case the intention to convert) as the only stable element on the basis of which to define a large body of diverse works as protreptics. His method is validated by the findings of theoretically oriented modern studies of genre, like Swales, who identify communicative purpose as the privileged criterion for characterizing the genre of most texts.

It is my contention that it is the particular character of the communicative purpose of the protreptic that causes an even greater diversity in the content of protreptic texts and that is also responsible for the lack of pattern in the structural and stylistic features of extant examples of the genre.[7] If the main aim of a protreptic is to decisively influence nothing less than the complete way of life (as we shall see below) of a specific individual or individuals, group or groups, it follows that the whole fabric of the protreptic must be very finely and very specifically tuned to reach that audience in the most effective way possible. This means that the contents, the tone, the strategies of the author will depend totally on the kind of audience he or she envisages, which of course is an infinitely variable factor, and the relationship between the author and this audience, which can also vary.

It must be clear that the psychological dynamics in action between text and audience are very difficult for a non-privileged member of the discourse community to grasp. If this communication took place more than a millennium and a half ago, the analysis becomes a daunting prospect. The process involves a very careful gathering of information from the text itself but also from other texts that reflect the world (albeit in part) within which this text operated. In the case of the *Confessions* it means trying to identify probable or possible audiences through gathering as much information as possible about the world Augustine lived in, from any available sources. It implies a careful reading of the *Confessions* for explicit and implicit references to the audience as

[7] Jordan (1986, 329) also mentions this possibility in passing but argues more strongly for seeing the cause for the variety in 'the persistent conflicts among schools about the ends of philosophic teaching.'

well as a sound grasp of Augustine's other works, his general state of mind, his preoccupations, and the stage his 'spiritual development' has reached, at the time of writing the *Confessions*. I do not claim to be able to treat the matter exhaustively but only to use the large body of already existing scholarship responsibly and to read the *Confessions* carefully.

While communicative purpose is of primary importance for defining the *Confessions* as a protreptic, this analysis may be complemented by a study of other characteristic features of the genre. A selection and description of some topoi judged to be characteristic enough of specifically the protreptic genre is made below. This forms the basis for identifying certain features of the *Confessions* as protreptic features—even though none of these features are 'necessary' elements for the protreptic genre.

The positive side of this procedure is that I can focus only on what is paralleled in the *Confessions*. But the dangers of such a procedure are also apparent: what might appear to be antecedents for protreptic elements in the *Confessions* because of its presence in earlier examples of protreptic, may be so well represented in other kinds of literature that taking these elements to be an indication that the work belongs to the protreptic genre may be misleading. So even in the formulation of these characteristics of the content the communication situation of the protreptic has to be kept in mind constantly and elements judged according to their aptness for fulfilling protreptic intentions.[8]

Two additional problems complicating the description of the protreptic genre concern the state of transmission of ancient texts: First, the two most famous works in this genre (Aristotle's *Protreptikos* and Ciceros's *Hortensius*) have not survived and second, none of the extant treatises on rhetoric treats the genre of the protreptic in any detail.[9] This last fact means that the study of protreptic has to be deductive (Aune 1991, 96), but it is complicated by the first. It is to be assumed that it is impossible to study the works that are to the highest degree prototypical of the genre, and also to positively establish a direct line of imitation between these works and Augustine's *Confessions*.[10] This situa-

[8] Jordan (1986, 318) too expresses this conviction: 'no rhetorical analysis could work by comparing rhetorical devices from different philosophical protreptics without considering first the end in each.'

[9] See Jordan 1986 (314–318) for a survey of the sources.

[10] The *Hortensius* is known to have been strongly influenced by Aristotle's Protreptikos. It also changed the course of Augustine's life—as is documented in the *Confes-*

tion is however counterbalanced by the extremely varied character of extant protreptic examples, which provides grounds to assume that if Aristotle's *Protreptikos* and Cicero's *Hortensius* were extant, it would still not be easy to identify clear patterns of structure and content for the protreptic genre.

The next issue that has to be touched upon cursorily is the relation between Early Christianity and (pagan) ancient philosophy. The reader will note that, firstly, I speak of 'conversion' as the aim of ancient philosophical protreptics and Christian protreptics alike and, secondly, that I take Jordan's findings (1986) to be wholly relevant for the discussion of protreptic elements in a thoroughly Christian text, while he concentrates exclusively on 'Ancient Philosophic Protreptic.' Is it legitimate to assume such direct parallels between the world of philosophy, where the protreptic originated, and Augustine's world of religion? The answer is easy: we have clear evidence that this is no longer even an issue by the time Augustine writes his *Confessions*. By the fourth century AD the protreptic is one of the genres that have already been appropriated and modified by Christian writers to suit their own purposes, as is manifest in the prominent example of Clemens of Alexandria's *Protrepticus* (also called *Cohortatio ad Graecos*).

Further, membership of any school of ancient philosophy, the active proselytizing of these schools (done through protreptics) and even conversion to philosophy in general or to a particular school of philosophy were in many respects akin to religious practice today (Nock 1933). Augustine's own conversion to Catholic Christianity followed the route of his first being converted to the search for wisdom, i.e. the practice of philosophy, by Cicero's philosophical protreptic and eventually to Christianity itself through being converted to the philosophy of neo-Platonism.

I end this section on the problems related to reading a text, and specifically the *Confessions*, as a protreptic, with a quick look at Feldmann's procedures (1994, 1134–1193) for defining the *Confessions* as a Protreptic. First, Feldmann does not give a definition of the term protreptic or explicitly state his presuppositions, but seems to proceed from the general and broad—and perfectly valid—definition of the protreptic as a work designed to convert its readers. His classification of the *Confessions* as a protreptic is thus done mainly on the grounds of its

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sions—and could conceivably have had an impact on the generic characteristics of this work (more about this in chapter 4).

contents and the theological purpose (thus also the communicative purpose) he deduces from them.

Feldmann does refer to one prominent stylistic feature of the *Confessions*, which is also important for my analysis, namely the use of the word *excitare* and its derivatives, which, he points out, corresponds to the Greek προτρέπειν and belongs to the characteristic vocabulary of the (philosophical) protreptic. But apart from this he does not go into any detail—the 'genre' of his publication prohibits this—of the specifics of the protreptic as a literary genre and its characteristics or development and he does not theorize about his own method of defining the *Confessions* as a protreptic. That his modus operandi must differ from the one I use here is to be expected, because where I work from a literary point of view in order to understand the *Confessions* as a literary work, Feldmann's interest lies in the theological characteristics and functions of the work.

b. Definitions: Protrepsis and Paraenesis

Various definitions for the term protreptic are in circulation, expressing some degree of consensus, at least as far as the communication situation of the genre is concerned. I quote four definitions (for the different perspectives they provide) from the work of authors that have played an important part in shaping my insights into the dynamics of this genre. Discussion of the definitions follows afterwards.

First, two perspectives from antiquity: Malherbe (1986, 122) summarizes and translates Epictetus' view of protrepsis: 'Together with refutation or reproof, which exposes the human condition … and teaching, protrepsis … reveals the inner inconsistency in the philosopher's hearers and brings them to conversion.'

Jordan (1986, 317) quotes Stobaeus' discussion taken from Philo of Larissa, which I include because of its use of medical imagery that is important for the discussions below: 'As the physician both meets the causes of illness and aids what produces health, so the philosopher must remove what begets false opinion and shore up healthy thought.'

The next definition, the first of two modern examples, is from the important article, 'Romans as a Logos Protreptikos in the Context of Ancient Religious and Philosophical Propaganda,' by David Aune (1991, 91–124) and although it refers specifically to the spoken ancestor of the written protreptic, the aims and characteristics it expresses are the same for both versions, spoken and written:

> The λόγος προτρεπτικός, or 'speech of exhortation', is a lecture intended to win converts and attract young people to a particular way of life … by exposing the errors of alternative ways of living by demonstrating the truth claims of a particular philosophical tradition over its competitors (Aune 1991, 91).

I conclude with Jordan's definition (1986, 331) because his is the most serious recent attempt to arrive at a well-argued definition using modern terminology:

> The unity of the protreptic genre could be provided, then, by the recurring situation of trying to produce a certain volitional or cognitive state in the hearer at the moment of decision about a way-of-life.

The first two perspectives, while illustrating the same focus on conversion than the other examples, concentrate on the inner life of the audience. Their authors assume that if the hearer can be brought to real self-knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the sickness of his soul, this should be enough to motivate him to change.

David Aune's description of the protreptic brings to the fore what is implicit in the first two definitions: that apart from showing the audience that they are in need of help, the merits of the recommended way of life must be presented together with a refutation of the claims of rival groups that they represent the best *modus vivendi*. Jordan's definition arises from his quest for finding a unifying principle for defining the protreptic genre and therefore limits itself to a scientific description of the communicative purpose of the genre.[11]

The term paraenesis (Greek παραίνεσις) is more problematic in the sense that its meaning overlaps with that of the term protrepsis but is not exactly the same. What is more, the terms paraenesis and protreptic are often used rather loosely and interchangeably by both ancient sources and modern scholars of the protreptic. I will not go into all the technical details of the differences between the two terms here. The only matter of concern for the present purposes is the nature of the audience each was aimed at. Ferguson's definition (1993, 302) shows the resemblances between protrepsis and paraenesis while it also indicates a distinction often made as far as audience is concerned:

> Paraenesis is a broader term [than protrepsis] for moral exhortation to follow a given course of action or to abstain from a contrary behavior.

[11] It is clear from the last definition that the term exhortation (Latin *exhortatio, exhortari*) is used as a direct equivalent of the term protreptic (Greek προτρέψις, προτρεπτικός, προτρέπειν).

> It thus consisted of encouragement and dissuasion. Rules of conduct are prominent. *Paraenesis presupposed some positive relationship between the parties* (my emphasis).

It is clear that there is no essential difference between this definition and those of protreptic above, except for the provision that a positive relationship between speaker and addressee, i.e. a willingness on the part of the addressee to be exhorted to implement the specific point of view, already exists in the case of paraenesis. But, although the definitions of protreptic above does not indicate this, most authors on the protreptic genre agree that those who were already converted (already in a positive relationship with the speaker) formed a part of the audience of the protreptic, even though it is primarily aimed at converting the not-yet-converted.

Jordan (1986, 313) offers a clear perspective on the problem and its history:

> If it is true that paraenesis often consists of traditional moral precepts taught to students who ought already to have heard them, it is also true that such moral instruction frequently did serve as the call to philosophy. In this larger sense, paraenesis is linked to protreptic already with Plato.

Guerra (1995, 3) also summarizes Hartlich's suggestions (1889) about the purpose of Greco-Roman protreptic as follows:

> Protreptics could serve either of two purposes: (1) to urge others to take up a particular profession … or (2) to encourage students *to progress further* in their chosen disciplines (my emphasis).

Formulated differently: protreptic aims to change both the world view and the conduct of the addressee, while paraenetic presupposes a shared world view and aims only at improving the conduct of its audience.

The possibility of a protreptic being directed at both the not-yet-converted and the converted alike is important for my reading of the *Confessions*. While it is my own conviction and that of scholars like Van Oort (1997) and Joubert (1992) that the Manichaeans (the not-yet-converted) constitute an important part of the intended audience of the work, numerous other studies, as I have shown above, simply take for granted that the intended audience is primarily the already-converted, Augustine's fellow-Christians. Therefore, in the analyses below, I often use the term protreptic-paraenetic and refer to shifts from the protreptic to the paraenetic side of the scale in order to describe the devices employed in *Confessions*.

At this point a short remark on the relation between protreptic and apology is called for. Guerra points out that the term ἀπολογία, used in its widest sense, often refers to works that were not primarily intended as defenses but that were 'positive propagandistic appeals to win converts' (Guerra 1995, ix) and that the protreptic genre may be seen as part of the apologetic tradition.[12] The similarities between apology and protreptic is also clear from Van Oort's discussion of the apologetic and catechetical nature of Augustine's other big work in his *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities* (1991, 164–198). The communicative function of 'winning over pagans to the Christian faith' Van Oort (1991, 168) ascribed (amongst other communicative functions) to this work (and other apologetic works) is similar to that identified as an important communicative function of the *Confessions* in this study.[13]

What remains to be done in this chapter is to give an overview of the characteristics of protreptic texts that represent the antecedent tradition of protreptic that was directly or indirectly at Augustine's disposal when he wrote the *Confessions*.[14] But Augustine was not constricted to using elements from one genre only. The protreptic intent of a work could conceivably be realized by using elements from a variety of other genres as well. This means that my arguments for seeing a protreptic communicative function embodied in the *Confessions* do not imply that I oppose those who have identified, for example, elements of the ancient hymn in this text. I also hope to demonstrate (in chapter 2.1.3) that the literary antecedents identified by Courcelle in his survey of antecedents for the autobiographical aspects of the *Confessions* include works from a variety of genres. But I have to emphasize here, what I have implied before. This study does not aim at a comprehensive examination of the generic characteristics of the *Confessions*, but only to consider the extent to which this text displays characteristics of one particular genre, namely the protreptic genre.

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[12] This is also indicated by the title of Guerra's work (*Romans and the Apologetic Tradition*), arguing that Romans is a protreptic text.

[13] I see a comparison of the communicative function of the *Confessions* and the *City of God* respectively and an examination of the parallels between these works and *The Catechizing of the Uninstructed* as an essential further step in the investigation of the generic chracteristics of the *Confessions*. But this falls outside the scope of the present study.

[14] By 'directly' available I refer to texts he is known to have read. But I am convinced that a body of knowledge on generic practices was perpetuated by the schools of rhetoric, so that a rhetorician like Augustine can in fact 'indirectly' imitate works he has never actually read.

c. Characteristic Features of the Protreptic Genre

I have indicated that, although communicative purpose will be regarded as the primary criterion for identifying the genre of a work as protreptic, this is complemented by a study of other characteristic, if not 'necessary,' elements of the genre. This section treats these 'other' characteristics, matters concerning form, structure, style, content and intended audience. It is primarily a distillation of the ideas of existing scholarship (to a high degree scholars of the use of Greco-Roman genres in the New Testament, especially Paul's Letter to the Romans that is read by some as a protreptic), complemented by a reading of some of the primary sources themselves.

I start with a very short discussion of the first three elements, form, structure and style because, as has been said above, there is no specific pattern of form, structure or style that can be said to be constitutive for the protreptic genre. Aune (1991, 97) identifies the different forms a protreptic could take as 'oral *discourses* … written *dialogues*, *discourses* (i.e., monologues), and *letters*.' To this Jordan (1986, 328) adds the categories anthology, hymn, aphorism, biography and anecdote.

The *Confessions* seems at first sight to be a straightforward written discourse, a monologue. But the constantly felt presence of God as Augustine's formal addressee and the fact that God's speech is also represented in the *Confessions* through the abundance of Scriptural quotations, make the work at the same time approach the spirit of a dialogue, as Herzog (1984, 213–250) has argued.

As far as structure is concerned, it emerges from the definitions above and from studies of ancient protreptic that the content of most protreptics displays certain 'stages' (Jordan 1986, 309) or 'features' (Aune 1991, 101) rather than distinct sections. Usually between two to four of these features, that I prefer to call streams, are identified by the various scholars. The two streams that always occur are a negative stream, refuting the claims of rival groups and a positive stream where the speaker's or the writer's position is stated, defended and recommended. On the basis of the numerous examples he studied, Aune (1991, 101) adds a third optional feature: a direct appeal to the audience to make an immediate choice on the grounds of the foregoing protreptic message.

Objections to seeing the *Confessions* as a protreptic because of the absence (or lack of prominence) of just this last element must of course disappear if we realize that this is deemed an optional feature of pro-

treptic texts. As far as the first two elements are concerned my analysis shows that refuting the main tenets of Manichaean thought (the negative stream) is one of the important streams that run through the *Confessions* from beginning to end, while the Christian way of life (the positive stream) is presented throughout as the only worth while way of living. It must be emphasized that in speaking of 'streams' running through the *Confessions* I choose to follow Aune in seeing the negative and positive elements of the content of the protreptic as 'stages' or 'features' because no accompanying clear-cut structural patterns (e.g. positive section, negative section, positive section) can be deduced from the extant examples studied.

Here I may add a few remarks on the style of the protreptic. One aspect of the style of extant protreptics that I would like to compare with that of the *Confessions*, but which is rarely mentioned in the scholarship up to now, is the tone of these works. Only Malherbe (1986, 121) makes a passing remark about protreptic speeches in this regard: 'The speech … could be harsh or gentle, biting or soothing, but it was always to be frank and aim at the benefit of the hearer.' It is clear from this remark, first, that a good measure of variation in tone is probably to be expected, and second, that tone is, like the other characteristic features of the protreptic, always to be examined in the context of its contribution towards the protreptic purpose of the whole. An analysis of the tone used can, however, yield important information about both the communicative purpose of the text and the relationship between the author and his audience. It can be a very powerful tool of persuasion, especially if the author's insight into the psychological make-up of his audience enables him to find the exact tone at the right moment to touch tender or weak spots.

Another aspect concerning the tone of a protreptic is the similarities it shows to what I will call a diatribe-like tone.[15] Malherbe (1986, 120–130) identifies the diatribe as one of the modes of exhortation and devotes a section to the style of the diatribe where he also touches on tone. He speaks, for example, of a display of impatience with the hearer, the prominence of rhetorical questions, and the use of dialogue with a fictive opponent (which contribute to a tone of impatience or urgency). Stowers (1982, 46–47) points out that the most distinctive

[15] For the difficulties surrounding the identification of a formal genre called diatribe and the various forms the diatribe could take, see the concise discussion by Moles (1996, 463–464).

characteristic of the diatribe is its dialogical element. These same elements make a significant contribution to creating an urgent tone in specific passages in the *Confessions*. What is more, Malherbe's observation that the diatribe usually has 'the aim of moving people to action rather than reflection' shows that this diatribe-like tone would have been seen to be particularly well-suited to the communicative purpose of the protreptic, as is also emphasized by Stowers (1981, 75–78). Courcelle (1963, 111–117), in his chapter, 'Conversion et Diatribe: Augustin et Perse,' also points to the fact that Augustine knows and quotes Persius' *Satires* (with their strong diatribal character) in the *Confessions* and other works and that certain sections of the *Confessions* are diatribe-like in character.

Though this diatribe-like tone—like many other elements—cannot be shown to be a 'necessary' element in a protreptic text it is conceivable that this might be one of the effective ways to urge someone to see the errors of his present ways and to make the change advised in the protreptic. I will, however, also show in my analyses that passages with a diatribe-like tone is counterbalanced by passages where a caring tone prevails. This is of course only an indication of the variation Augustine uses in order to do everything in his power to reach his audience.

Let us now look at elements concerning the content of protreptic texts. The terms topic, motive, theme and topos occur regularly in the discussion of literary works and their meanings often overlap. I will use all of these terms to describe what I divide here into three sections: recurring sets of imagery; recurring themes; and recurring devices, in the *Confessions* on the one hand, and in the protreptic works I see as its antecedents on the other.

To start with recurring sets of imagery: Berger (1984, 1139–1145) identifies two topoi that occur in protreptic texts, the imagery of the two ways and the imagery of wool dyeing. While the imagery of wool dyeing does not occur in the *Confessions*, the image of the two ways, a central characteristic of protreptic from its earliest existence, is conspicuously prominent. Typically, in protreptics, the positive aspects of the recommended (narrow and difficult) way are praised while the negative aspects of the alternative (broad and easy) way are criticized. That the image of the way and the accompanying imagery of walking or journeying away from and back to God, are central in the *Confessions* is commonly accepted. Knauer's excellent article (1957, 216–248), 'Perigrinatio Animae,' shows how the image of the way is carried by quo-

tations from the story of the prodigal son and underscores the central importance of this image in the *Confessions*.[16]

The next topos I want to discuss is the use of the imagery of the physician and his patient and the accompanying imagery of the diseased soul. The imagery of the *medicus* is found in numerous examples of protreptics, and seems to have been so narrowly associated with the genre that Philo of Larissa uses it to define the basic nature of the genre (see the definition above). My arguing for the image of the healer as central in protreptic was to a large degree sparked off by my reading of Gaiser's study (1959) of protreptic elements in Plato's dialogues and the fact that this image recurs with high frequency in the dialogues he discusses.

Further, medical imagery is not only prominent in the *Confessions* but also in the texts of the Manichaeans whom I see as the main rival group (as well as an important addressee) figuring in the work.[17] This image occurs in other genres as well, but it occurs with such regularity and is so well suited to the purposes of protreptic that I feel justified in seeing its presence, in conjunction with other elements, as a possible indication of the protreptic nature of a work.

I am aware that these topoi (the image of the two ways and the medical imagery) are part of the universal language of philosophy and of learned treatises of the time. They are not used in protreptic exclusively and merely pointing to their presence in the *Confessions* does not say anything about the communicative purpose of the work.[18] Further, neither of these topoi have been shown to be a necessary element in protreptic texts. I try to show, however, that they are eminently suited to support a protreptic communicative purpose. Cairns' remarks (1972, 99–100) emphasize this: 'Because topoi can thus move from genre to genre, assignments to genres must always be *based* not so much on secondary elements as *on the logic of the situation*. No quantity of secondary

[16] See also Pfligersdorffer (1970a, 83) for the prominence of the image of the way in the *Confessions* and its predecessors.

[17] See for example Van Oort's 'Augustinus und der Manichäismus' (1995, 302) on the Manichaean use of the term *Christus Medicus* as 'Ehrentitel' for Christ.

[18] Topoi were seldom exclusive to any genre, as Cairns (1972, 99) reminds us: 'as the generic patterns became more elaborate and as rhetorical training became more influential, the introduction of new material into an example of a genre inevitably came to mean more and more the use in an example of one genre of a topos associated with another genre. The ability of many topoi to move from one genre to another is central to generic originality.'

elements makes an example of a genre, although their presence is a welcome confirmation of an assignment based on primary elements.'

The fact that these topoi occur with such frequency in the *Confessions* makes an important contribution to how the whole is perceived and how it affects the reader. The modern reader must remember that the use of topoi was an important device in the creation of meaning and that ancient readers would probably be much more sensitive to the occurrence of such themes than modern reader can ever become.[19]

There is one theme that recurs in all the protreptic texts that I have read, that also the reader of the *Confessions* will immediately recognize as familiar, namely the theme of *scientia*. This theme takes a central position in the argumentation, as is illustrated, for example, by Gaiser's study of the protreptic elements in the Platonic dialogues he analyses. *Scientia* is of course a core element in most of the post-Socratic philosophical systems starting with Socrates' central doctrine that virtue equals knowledge and extending to most popular Hellenistic and Roman philosophies that still assume virtue as teachable and related to knowledge (Malherbe 1986, 12–13). *Scientia* is also a persistent theme in Augustine's *Confessions*, and one more characteristic that makes this text similar to many of its protreptic antecedents. The prominence of the theme of *scientia* is consistent with Christianity's being viewed, and consciously presenting itself, by the 4th century A.D., as a system very much akin to philosophy.[20] Moreover, when it is taken into consideration that the whole idea of *scientia* was especially prominent in the writings of the people I will argue formed an important part of the intended audience of the *Confessions*, the Manichaeans, its use in the *Confessions* may be viewed as even more significant for the themes treated here.

The other factor that is underscored by the different discussions of ancient protreptics is the prominence of the use of one particular recurring device, namely the use of exempla, and then especially exemplary

[19] Cairns' remarks about the selection of topoi also imply the modern reader's lack of proficiency as far as the perception of the meaning encoded in the use of topoi is concerned: 'Neglect of the generic basis of ancient literature sometimes blinds scholars to the skilful selection which an author has made, and leads them to criticize him for faults which he has gone out of his way to avoid.'

[20] See Aune 1991 (106–109) for indications that Judaism as well as Christianity were viewed by outsiders as philosophies and how 'some educated Christians … used the intellectual framework of the major Greek philosophical traditions both to fashion their understanding of Christianity itself and to shape the ways in which they communicated with Jews and Greeks' (108).

conversion stories. Though the use of exempla is by no means a distinguishing characteristic of protreptic only, and occurs regularly in all types of rhetoric, the nature of protreptic does make the presence of exemplary conversion stories almost a *sine qua non* for the genre. Personal examples were thought to possess special protreptic power because, as Malherbe (1986, 135) points out, 'they were regarded as more persuasive than words and as providing concrete models to imitate.' In the analyses below I argue that Augustine's conversion story, together with the shorter versions of a number of other conversion stories, especially in book 8, are meant to be seen as exempla to be followed, exactly because the theme of the imitation of the lives of others, read or observed, is so prominent in the *Confessions*.

I end with a quick look at what I consider a set of words that constitute a typical vocabulary for the description of the effect a protreptic text has. In the examples of protreptic texts that I discuss in 2.1.3 below, as well as in Augustine's own description of his encounter with a protreptic text, the *Hortensius*, I have found a range of vocabulary that occurs regularly. These are the words that describe the actions and the strong emotions unleashed by the inner turmoil preceding conversion and also those of the final moment of conversion. First there are of course the words describing or advising conversion itself, words like *exhortare*, *converti*, προτρέπειν, and their derivatives. Accompanying these and describing a closely related semantic range are the words for sleeping and waking that indicate, respectively, the undesired and the desired attitude and activity of the addressee, words like *somnium, sopor, somnus*, and *dormire* on the one hand and *evigilare*, and *excitare* on the other.[21]

Lastly, there are the words that describe the strong emotions of conversion in terms of fire imagery, words like *accendere*, *flamma, incendium*, and πῦρ. The speaker's desire for truth, embodied in philosophy or religion, is also very often described in terms of erotic imagery, of which the fire imagery forms, of course, an important element.[22]

[21] It was Feldmann's passing remarks (1994, 1162) on the occurrence of *excitare* that first alerted me to the occurrence of typical protreptic vocabulary: 'Das *excitare* gehört nun zu den charakteristischen Wörtern des (philosophischen) Protreptikos und entspricht dem griechischen προτρέπειν.'

[22] See for example O'Connell's discussion (1994, 72 and 73–74) of depictions of *Philosophia* in the *Dialogues*, *Continentia* in the *Confessions* as well as Cicero's *Sapientia* in the *Hortensius* in erotic terms.

2.1.3. *Literary Antecedents*

The aim of this section of chapter 2 is to show, by looking at literary practice preceding Augustine's *Confessions*, that the combination of autobiography, philosophical discussion, and exegesis in a single work, which had (among other purposes) the objective to convert its readers, was not an unknown generic procedure in Late Antiquity. This section leans heavily on Courcelle's *Les 'Confessions' de s. Augustin dans la tradition littéraire: antécédents et postérité* (1963), but moves beyond his important study in the sense that it looks at these predecessors in their totality and not only at the autobiographical parts and how they influenced Augustine's autobiographical writing. I do not claim that any of the works examined here show the exact same set of generic features as the *Confessions*, only that looking at literary conventions before Augustine makes the *Confessions* appear much less strange than it has been made out to be. It also brings greater appreciation of how creatively he employs what is available to him to write a work that is, nevertheless, like the best literary works, generically unique.

But discussing the literary antecedents of a work like the *Confessions* is difficult in the sense that the researcher is faced with the problems of genre in general, and of modern readers interpreting ancient texts in particular, but also to some extent with the problematic surrounding the work of great religious figures like Augustine and the religious overtones they carry. The reasons why Courcelle (1963, 10) has to come to the astounding conclusion that by the time of his study the *Confessions* seemed never before to have been studied as a literary product of its time are probably located, inter alia, within this network of issues.[23] Of course, trends in research also play a role and a re-evaluation of the literature of Late Antiquity and attempts to discover the rationale behind the use of literary devices characteristic of this period have become fashionable only towards the end of the 20th century. The fact remains that for various reasons the researcher at the beginning of the 21st century still finds work to do in the field of studying the *Confessions* against its literary background.

Let us start with a closer look at some of these problems. The first area of difficulty I want to comment on is closely related to the much-debated question of the 'historicity' of the *Confessions*, discussed in the

[23] '[I]l ne semble pas que l'on ait jamais examiné de près les *Confessions* au sein de la tradition littéraire.' (Courcelle 1963, 10).

first chapter. Problems arise from both the inappropriate expectations of modern readers of ancient texts and from religious presuppositions: the *Confessions*, i.e. the autobiography, of one of the hallowed saints of the Church has to be the representative story of his life, it has to be the 'truth'. A concomitant distrust of rhetorical devices and the belief that the cleverer the techniques and the more conventional the expression, the less true is the subject matter, complicate the issue.[24] The result is that for many years the possibility of Augustine's autobiographical narrative being a clever rhetorical construct, using the rhetorical devices popular at the time, was simply not considered. It is not my object to judge the historicity of the autobiographical narrative in the *Confessions*. It is, however, imperative to show that an increased understanding of the literary milieu within which the text functioned and the light this throws on the literary devices it employs can contribute greatly to the appreciation of the whole.

Let us move to two other interrelated problem areas, namely the generic expectations of modern readers of ancient texts and the notion that the *Confessions* is an autobiography. First, I have shown that, in the case of an ancient text, the expectations of a reader many centuries later must in some ways be judged inferior to those of the original parent discourse community. Of course, we do not know what those readers' expectations of a text like the *Confessions* were. But although our knowledge will probably always remain imperfect, an effort to understand the generic and other literary conventions of the time the text was produced, may give us a better understanding and must for this reason be made.

The idea that the *Confessions* is 'an autobiography' is a long established one. A study of how and when this perception developed, and especially whether it existed from the outset, and if so, what its contents were then, would make an interesting project but cannot be part of the present study. Clark (1993, 102) points to the fact that the other famous book of *Confessions*, that of Rousseau, was named 'in deliberate reference to Augustine,' not to imitate the latter's belief about human nature, but to reject it. What I find interesting is that the motives schol-

[24] In the case of the *Confessions* the debate on the historicity of the work revolves around exactly this point. Also O'Meara's remarks (1951, 29) about the Cassiciacum dialogues illustrate this attitude: 'We can trace how closely his dialogues approach to these models, and the measure of their approximation is, to some extent, a measure of their untrustworthiness as guaranteeing facts.'

ars have consciously or subconsciously ascribed to Augustine for writing the *Confessions*, are very similar to the motives Rousseau offers for writing his *Confessions*. Rousseau, as Clark (1993, 102) puts it, wrote 'to relieve his mind, to give readers some knowledge of a human being other than themselves, to refute accusations, to enjoy his memories of himself.' I argue that these are the motives for writing the *Confessions* that modern scholars, often subconsciously, ascribe to Augustine while he may have written this work with completely different or, at least, with additional motives. At the same time, it is probably safe to say that the majority of Augustine's readers, during his lifetime and through later ages, casual readers and researchers alike, have read the *Confessions* because of the 'knowledge of another human being' they hoped to glean from it. In my analyses in chapter 5 I argue that Augustine was aware of this fact, and used it consciously to attract readers to his *Confessions*, but with a different ultimate purpose in mind.

From everything that has been said it is clear that simply to approach the text with all the subconscious expectations a modern reader would have of a modern autobiography, or influenced by ideas about Rousseau's *Confessions*, is a potentially dangerous modus operandi. From the subsequent discussion it will become clear that, while an ancient reader might not have argued with the idea that the *Confessions* was, among other things, autobiographical, the assumptions and expectations the term may have raised for this reader would probably have been totally different from those it would raise for modern readers. As Forman (1995, 41) puts it: 'In short, by modern understanding of the genre, *Confessions* is not autobiography since it never attempts to portray a whole life.'

Above I surveyed some of the reasons why the *Confessions*' indebtedness to the literary climate within which it originated had been practically ignored before Courcelle. The pioneering task for him was to show that the *Confessions* does indeed teem with literary devices that can be shown to have been prevalent at the time of its writing as well as with direct allusions to some of its models. This Courcelle (1963, 91–197) demonstrates convincingly. Literary antecedents (and the probability of Augustine being influenced directly or indirectly by specific models) exist for all of the following motifs in the *Confessions*: the quest for truth presented as a movement through a series of philosophical or religious positions, a pagan motif Christianized by Pseudo-Clement and Hilary of Poitiers; the central importance of the sin of *curiositas*, which we find in Lucius' preoccupations in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*; a quest

for truth in the form of a confession of sins, present in the *Confession* of Cyprian of Antioch; the use of specific diatribal features discernable for example in Persius' *Satires*; the conversion through grace, as described by Paul in the Acts of the Apostles and by Cyprian of Carthage in his *Ad Donatum*; the allegorical use of autobiography, prominent especially in the documentation of their visions by African martyrs; the admonition of special import received through formulas that were part of children's games in for example Xenophon of Ephesus and Jewish writings; and even the garden as the setting for a momentous spiritual experience followed by a conversion, which occurs in ancient writings like philosophical Dialogues and Christian apologetic works.

Even a superficial survey of these examples should make clear that the nature of the autobiographical narration in all these instances differ from popular modern autobiography in the respect that often the ulterior motive of converting the reader is present, but more about this later. What Courcelle does not do, is to consider the genres of the works that furnish the antecedents for the *Confessions* or the generic features of the whole into which Augustine transplants these motifs. Of course, the structure of the *Confessions* was not the focus of Courcelle's study, but rather the autobiographical antecedents for the autobiographical sections of the work.

The present study is interested in precedents for the combination of autobiographical sections with philosophical discussion and exegesis and with the function of the autobiographical narrative within a bigger unit. The works that, according to Courcelle, furnish the (autobiographical) antecedents Augustine employs in his *Confessions* represent a widely diverse range of types, as a quick look at the list above will verify.[25] Moreover, the length and function of the autobiographical sections in these works vary considerably. Courcelle's study already points (albeit indirectly) to the abundant evidence that antecedents for the inclusion of an autobiographical narrative within a larger work, often with a polemical and exegetical purpose, existed. What is most significant, however, is the fact that many of the autobiographical narratives discussed by Courcelle are not the story of a life from beginning to end but much more specifically focused: they are conversion stories.[26]

[25] See also Pfligersdorffer's 'Das Bauprinzip von Augustins *Confessiones*' (1970a, 79–88) for a discussion of the way in which various pagan and Christian models for the 'Bekehrungsgeschichte' function as background to an understanding of the *Confessions*.

[26] Courcelle (1963, 89) calls this section of his book 'Les descriptions de conversion.'

The aim of a conversion story is conceivably to inform readers about how the writer was converted. But in ancient philosophy, as well as in Christianity, it was always assumed that the person who had 'seen the light' was now burdened with the mission to lead others to it. Conversion stories were written with the aim to convert the reader, i.e. with protreptic intent.

From the discussion below it will become clear that in the models adduced by Courcelle the autobiographical narrative often has a function subordinate to that of the whole and not the kind of function a modern reader would expect an autobiography to have. It is my contention that a scrutiny of the antecedents Courcelle discusses, shows that it is only a reader who is not from the privileged discourse community who would be surprised by the co-existence of autobiography and philosophical discussion and / or exegesis in the same work. Yet 20th century scholarship seems universally perplexed with the four non-autobiographical books 'added on to' the autobiography. Knauer (1955, 19) formulates this in his introduction:

> Man hat Augustin immer wieder vorgeworfen, er hätte den Aufbau dadurch verunklärt, daß er an die neun ersten Bücher … noch vier Bücher angehängt habe … Das Verhältnis der drei letzten zu den ersten zehn Büchern hat … immer wieder großes Rätselraten verursacht.

This lack of understanding manifests in its most extreme form in editions or translations of the *Confessions* that simply, without explanation, leave out the last three or four books (as I have indicated in chapter 1).

Before we narrow the focus down to more immediate predecessors of the *Confessions*, let us start with the wider background of ancient literary practice. The combination of a vita (even if not necessarily the own vita) with philosophical discussion is not an unknown occurrence in late ancient philosophical literature. Prominent examples are Plotinus' *Enneads* prefaced by the *Vita Porphyrii* and Iamblichus' *De vita Pythagorica* that starts with the vita of Pythagoras (followed by the protreptic and then by the philosophical discussion proper). In general, the life of the philosopher was seen as an appropriate introduction to a more theoretical discussion of his work: 'In late antiquity it became conventional to preface a philosopher's works with a biography' (Aune 1991, 103). What is more, philosophical discussion was often to a large extent exegetical: discussions, interpretations and quotations of the works of predecessors formed and integral part of the fabric of the prose.

Further, use of the exemplary force of the personal example for protreptic purposes was already present in Plato's early Socratic dialogues. Socrates is the ultimate paradigm that shows the correct way by walking it himself. But the fact that he is the example to be followed, is not presented directly. He is presented, as a matter of fact, as the one most in need of improvement (Gaiser 1959, 155). Gaiser also describes Socrates as taking on himself the danger in which the others—unbeknown to themselves—are living; he takes their place and in this way is really able to show them the way. The parallels with Augustine's description of himself in the *Confessions* as the epitome of sinfulness, walking the arduous road back to God, are obvious.

The combination of the own vita, i.e. autobiographical narration, with philosophical discussion was also a widespread phenomenon. Malherbe's discussion (1986, 34–37) of the moral philosophers' convention to use autobiographical narratives as a preface to their own works, names Julian's *Oration* and Epictetus' *Discourse* 3 as cases in point. This also indicates another possible function of the autobiographical section in Augustine's *Confessions*: the autobiographical preface (although in the case of the *Confessions* the autobiographical section is clearly much more than a preface) often had the function of justifying the 'activity as moral reformers' and illustrating 'the rigorous self-examination required before daring to correct others' (Malherbe 1986, 34).[27]

As the discussion progresses, the reader will notice that I do not attempt to argue for direct literary dependence of the *Confessions* on works taken as possible literary antecedents. The assumption behind this is that knowledge of literary conventions must have been the common property of those practicing and teaching the art of rhetoric, partly because they knew some works where these devices were implemented very well, partly because they knew about works using them, and also because these devices were the tools of the trade, taught and discussed on a daily basis, even though we can never have any real evidence of this.[28]

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[27] I argue in chapter 5 that one of the objectives of the last four books of the *Confessions* (but also of the first part of the work) is to 'correct' the views of the Manichaeans on a number of subjects.

[28] This seems to be the assumption behind Courcelle's modus operandi (1963, 96): 'Je ne pretends nullement qu' Augustin ait connu et utilisé tous ces texts autobiographiques' and 'Il ne me paraît pas impossible non plus qu'il ait eu *connaissance*, *d'une manière ou d'une autre*, du roman clémentin' (my emphasis).

Before we focus on specific antecedents for the *Confessions* (where autobiographical narrative, philosophical discourse, exegesis and a protreptic communicative purpose are combined), let us turn our attention to an interesting fact that was not discussed above but that concerns the main focus of my analysis, namely protreptic. David Aune's incisive study, 'Romans as a Logos Protreptikos' (1991), includes a very detailed and broad overview of the history of the protreptic, from its earliest beginnings in early Greek philosophy up to its adaptation by Jewish and Christian writers, a history that extends to Augustine's *Contra Academicos*, 'a λόγος προτρεπτικός explicitly dependent on Cicero's *Hortensius*' (106). Apart from the very large number of examples of protreptics that shows how popular the genre had been from the 1st century A.D. onward, Aune (1991, 102) refers to the circulation of stories of philosophical conversions, celebrating 'the successes of philosophical propaganda.' This serves to illustrate that by the time Augustine studied, taught and practiced rhetoric the protreptic was definitely one of the genres in circulation that might have offered itself as a possible vehicle for his thoughts.

There exists a multitude of texts that can be called protreptic, either in totality or to a certain degree, starting from before the days of Plato and continuing through its appropriation and adaptation by Christian writers up to (and past) the time of Augustine. The existence of this wealth of material, a 'bewildering range of protreptic examples' Jordan (1986, 310) calls it, underscores what I have said above about direct and indirect literary dependence. It is redundant to go into details of how much Greek Augustine knew or which of these antecedent works he might have read. The genre of the protreptic was so well presented that rather it would be foolish to assume that he could have been ignorant of its existence, its purposes and characteristics.

Let us return to some of the (already Christianized) literary models for the *Confessions* discussed by Courcelle, but now with the purpose of discovering the place of the autobiographical section in relation to the whole. The *Dialogus cum Tryphone* by Justin Martyr, Cyprian of Carthage's *Ad Donatum*, and the *De Trinitate* by Hilary of Poitiers[29] offer precedents for the combination of autobiographical elements with argumentation that can be called polemical, philosophical, and / or exegetical. The reader is reminded that this kind of argumentation

[29] This is the one work where direct literary dependence can be proved (Courcelle 1963, 96).

would be perfectly at home in the protreptic where the refutation of opposing theories is always an important element of the whole. While the similarities between these works and the *Confessions* are the focus of the following discussion, it is good to remember that the biggest difference lies in the amount of space allotted to the autobiographical section or conversion story in these works on the one hand and in the *Confessions* on the other.[30]

In the *Dialogus cum Tryphone* Justin Martyr's autobiographical narrative takes up only capita 2 to 8 of the 142 capita that constitute the dialogue. He starts by describing his disappointing encounter with different philosophies, until eventually he enters into a much more fruitful relationship with the Platonists. Both the initial liberating effect of Platonic thinking on his thought processes and the eventual disappointment are presented in terms similar to those Augustine uses to relate his experience with the *Libri Platonicorum*:

> καί με ᾖρει σφόδρα ἡ τῶν ἀσωμάτων νόησις, καὶ ἡ θεωρία τῶν ἰδεῶν ἀνεπτέρου μοι τὴν φρόνησιν … καὶ ὑπὸ βλακείας ἤλπιζον αὐτίκα κατόψεσθαι τὸν θεόν· τοῦτο γὰρ τέλος τῆς Πλάτωνος φιλοσοφίας (c.2)
>
> [The perception of incorporeal things quite overwhelmed me and the Platonic theory of ideas added wings to my mind … So great was my folly that I fully expected immediately to gaze upon God, for this is the goal of Plato's philosophy].[31]

The autobiographical narrative culminates in a chance encounter with an old man (like the pivotal chance encounters in Book 8 of the *Confessions*) who directs Justin to the prophets as the only teachers of truth, thus a chance encounter causing a turn to the Bible, exactly like that presented in the *Confessions*. The old man also leaves him with a warning containing a reference to light that sounds familiar to the reader of the *Confessions*:

> εὔχου δέ σοι πρὸ πάντων φωτὸς ἀνοιχθῆναι πύλας· οὐ γὰρ συνοπτὰ οὐδὲ συννοητὰ πᾶσίν ἐστιν, εἰ μή τῳ θεὸς δῷ συνιέναι καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ (c.7)

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[30] It is perhaps useful to remind the reader at this point that the autobiographical part of the *Confessions* does not comprise as big a percentage of the whole as the book numbers lead us to believe: in O'Donnell's text edition (1992) books 1–9 cover pages 3 to 118 (116 pages) and books 10 to 13 pages 119 to 205 (87 pages). If we break the work up into conversion story proper (books 1 to 8) and philosophical discussion, protreptic, and exegesis (books 9 to 13) we get a ratio of 100 pages (pp.3–102) for the autobiographical narrative to 103 pages (pp. 103–205) for the rest.

[31] For this the *Dialogus cum Tryphone* I use the Greek text of Marcovich (1997) and the translation by Falls (2003).

> [Above all, beseech God to open to you the gates of light, for no one can perceive or understand these truths unless he has been enlightened by God and his Christ].

Justin then undergoes (in a garden like Augustine) a sudden conversion to Christianity, which, take note, he describes as an ultimate *philosophy*:

> ἐμοῦ δὲ παραχρῆμα πῦρ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἀνήφθη, καὶ ἔρως ἔχει με τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων, οἵ εἰσι Χριστοῦ φίλοι· διαλογιζόμενός τε πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν τοὺς λόγους αὐτοῦ ταύτην μόνην εὕρισκον φιλοσοφίαν ἀσφαλῆ τε καὶ σύμφορον (c.8)
>
> [But my spirit was immediately set on fire, and an affection for the prophets, and for those who are friends of Christ, took hold of me; while pondering on his words, I discovered that his was the only sure and useful philosophy].

But it is not only the autobiographical parts of the *Dialogus cum Tryphone* that show striking resemblances to Augustine's *Confessions*. The rest of the work, the polemical discussion in dialogue form of the relative merits of the Jewish and the Christian positions with strong emphasis on exegesis and biblical proof for arguments, as well as the special place afforded to the Book of Psalms, find parallels in Augustine's masterpiece and show features of the protreptic genre. The work ends with a direct exhortation to Trypho and his associates to be converted to Christianity. It is clear that persuasion in the *Dialogus cum Tryphone* rests on two legs: personal confession, i.e. the use of the own vita as an exemplum, on the one hand, and philosophical argument supported by exegesis on the other. Though Trypho's conversion is not reported as the result of the exhortation, the reader is left with no doubt that this is the aim of the dialogue:

> ὑμᾶς προτρέπομαι, ἐνστησαμένους ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίας μέγιστον τοῦτον ἀγῶνα, τῶν διδασκάλων ὑμῶν σπουδάσαι προτιμῆσαι μᾶλλον τὸν τοῦ παντοκράτορος θεοῦ Χριστόν (c.142)
>
> [I beg of you to put your every effort into this great struggle for your own salvation, and to embrace the Christ of almighty God in preference to your teachers].

Cyprian's *Ad Donatum* starts unexpectedly with an account of Cyprian's personal experiences.[32] Cyprian's consciousness of the limits of com-

[32] This letter is often classified, not under the letters of St. Cyprian but, as in the *Corpus Christianorum* series, under the treatises. See the remark by Roberts and Donaldson (1951, 265). Here I use the *Corpus Christianorum* text (1976) and the translation by Defer-

munication (c.1–2) reminds of the *Confessions*[33] and renders the choice of the personal example (thought to have special persuasive power) to preface the more theoretical discussion significant (c.3, note once again the combination of autobiography and philosophical discussion). But there is more that seems familiar to the reader of the *Confessions*. In the autobiographical section the emphasis is on the soul's distress in its search for light:

> *ego cum in tenebris atque in nocte caeca iacerem cumque in salo iactantis saeculi nutabundus ac dubius vestigiis oberrantibus fluctuarem … veritatis ac lucis alienus* (c.3)
>
> [While I was lying in darkness and in the obscure night, and while, ignorant of my real life, I was tossing about on the sea of a restless world wavering and doubtful in my wandering steps, a stranger to the truth and the light].

There is also a confession of the author's past sins:

> *nam et ipse quam plurimis vitae prioris erroribus implicatus tenebar, quibus exui me posse non crederem: sic vitiis adhaerentibus obsecundans eram* (c.4)
>
> [For as I myself was held enlivened by the very many errors of my previous life, of which I believe that I could not divest myself, so I was disposed to give in to my clinging vices]

and of the initial skepticism towards the way prescribed by Catholicism:

> *qui possibilis, aiebam, est tanta conversio* (c.3)
>
> ['How,' I said, 'is such a conversion possible'].

The autobiographical narration culminates, like that of Augustine, in a description of the own conversion (c.4).

The purpose of the personal example is clearly beyond what a modern reader expects of autobiography. It is a *captatio benevolentiae* confessing the lack of superiority of the speaker in relation to the hearer, and his total dependence on God:

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rari (1958). See also O'Meara (1992, 81) on the 'number of surprising reminiscences in the *Confessions*' of the *Ad Donatum*.

[33] O'Donnell (1992, 157), in his commentary on Book 10 of the *Confessions*, also comments on Augustine's awareness of the limits of communication: 'The opacity of speaker to hearer and the unbridged distance between them often led A. to sober reflection, usually concentrating on the inadequacies of the speaker.' Of course the personal example is present only through the medium of language as well and this is precisely what Augustine is concerned with in book 10 of the *Confessions*: how may the reader know that what he says about himself is the truth (*Conf* 10.3.3)? Still, what is presented indirectly through the personal example may be easier to imitate than what is presented in an even more abstract theoretical argument.

> *Dei est, inquam, Dei omne quod possumus* (c.4)
>
> [Our power is of God, I say, all of it is of God].

This, to my mind, enhances the protreptic-paraenetic power of the conversion story which, embedded as it is in a letter that seems to aim at encouraging Donatus to continue diligently on his chosen way, must be included for just this purpose. Once again the autobiographical section is combined with another section where the addressee is urged in typical protreptic terminology:

> *si tu innocentiae, si iustitiae viam teneas* (c.5)
>
> [But if you hold to the way of innocence, to the way of justice].

Note also the description of the improvement of the soul in medical terms:

> *inde iam facultas datur … in medellam dolentium posse venenorum virus extinguere, animorum desipientium labes reddita sanitate purgare* (c.5)
>
> [From this source is the power given … to extinguish the virus of poisons within the marrow of the grieving, to cleanse the stain of foolish souls by restoring health].

Cyprian's rejection of all things worldly (c.6), the strict censure of the games (c.7) and the theatre (c.8), seen as an enticement to man to follow the immoral ways of the pagan gods, as well as the emphasis on the deceptive nature of worldly success (c.11), are motifs we also find in Augustine's *Confessions*. The letter ends with a direct exhortation that reads almost like a program for what Augustine does in the *Confessions*:

> *Tu tantum, quem iam spiritalibus castris caelestis militia signavit, tene incorruptam, tene sobriam religiosis virtutibus disciplinam. sit tibi vel oratio adsidua vel lectio: nunc cum Deo loquere, nunc Deus tecum: ille te praeceptis suis instruat, ille disponat* (c.15)
>
> [Do you, whom already the heavenly warfare has designated for the spiritual camp, only keep uncorrupted and chastened in religious virtues. See that you observe either constant prayer or reading. Speak now with God; let God now speak with you. Let Him instruct in His precepts; let Him dispose you in them].[34]

Thus, like the *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, the *Ad Donatum*, which Augustine may imitate consciously (Courcelle 1963, 120–124), does not provide a

[34] From the discussion of protreptic and paraenesis above, it is clear that this letter is strictly speaking, more paraenetical in the sense that it encourages its addressee to continue on a way already chosen.

model only for the autobiographical sections of the *Confessions*, but also for the protreptic tendencies I discern in this work and for the combination of autobiographical narration with philosophical discussion.

Hilary of Poitiers' *De Trinitate* is yet another example of this combination. The step by step refutation of Arian dogma is preceded by a narration of the restless search[35] experienced by the author in his quest for nothing less than a 'divine gift of understanding':

> *Circumspicienti mihi proprium vitae humanae ac religiosum officium, quod vel a natura manans vel a prudentIum studiis profectum dignum aliquid hoc concesso sibi ad intellegentiam divino munere obtineret* (1.1)
>
> [When I was seeking an employment which belongs to human life and is religious, which, because it is either prompted by nature or suggested by the researches of the wise, might provide me with something worthy of this divine gift of understanding which has been granted to us].

The search is portrayed in a dramatic way with the fears of the soul repeatedly allayed by God's words, present through quotations from scripture, a procedure familiar in Augustine's *Confessions*. We find this for example in 1.7 (where the topos of seeing God through the contemplation of His creation is also present):

> *In quibus cum religiosa mens intra inbecillitatis suae concluderetur errorem, hunc de Deo pulcherrimae sententiae modum profeticis vocibus adpraehendit: de magnitudine enim operum et pulchritudine creaturarum consequenter generationum conditor conspicitur*
>
> [When my mind was here a prisoner of the error due to its weakness, it caught through the words of a prophet this way of expressing most beautiful thoughts about God: 'By the magnitude of His works and the beauty of His creatures the Creator of generations is duly discerned' (Wisd Sal. 13:5)].

The climax of the autobiographical section is reached in Book 1.14 when Hilary has finally attained to truth, embodied in the Catholic doctrine of the Son of God. Here Hilary reports his conversion and, importantly, the protreptic function he expects this narration to fulfill every time the story is told:

> *In hoc igitur conscio securitatis suae otio mens spebus suis laeta requieuerat, intercessionem mortis huius usque eo non metuens, ut etiam reputaret in uitam aeternitatis … Quin etiam id quod sibi credebat, tamen per ministerium inpositi sacerdotii etiam ceteris praedicabat, munus suum ad officium publicae salutis extendens*

[35] See for example: *Sed inter haec animus sollicitus utili ac necessaria ad cognitionem Domini*

> [In this calm consciousness of its safety my soul gladly and hopefully had taken its rest, and it so little feared the intervention of death belonging to this life, that it regarded it even as leading towards eternal life … My soul even proclaimed—because of the duty of the episcopate which had been laid upon me—to others what it believed for itself, extending its office to work on the salvation of all men].

The message to the reader is one of a sincere desire to share the benefits achieved for the self with him or her, to promote his or her salvation. This easily digestible introduction could quite conceivably have served as the motivation to read the more difficult, perhaps tedious, rhetorical refutation that follows, all with the purpose of enabling the reader to eventually make the right choice. It is clear that—as Courcelle (1963, 95–96) has shown—much of the strategy employed in the autobiographical narration of the *Confessions* is derived from Hilary of Poitiers.[36] But, more importantly for the present purposes, it can be shown that the *De Trinitate* provides yet another precedent for the combination of autobiography and polemic in a work that has at least a protreptic element in its overall function.[37]

Lastly, some additional light may be shed on the generic make-up of the *Confessions* by looking at one of Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues, his *Contra Academicos*. What is significant for the present discussion is Augustine's deft use of various generic devices and the fact that, in many respects, the *Contra Academicos* seems to contain the seeds of what Augustine eventually brings to fruition in the *Confessions*.[38] The main

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sui via nitens (1.4) ('But amidst all these assertions my agitated soul strove along a useful and necessary road after knowledge of God') and *Fatigabatur autem animus partim suo partim corporis metu* (1.10) ('My soul, however, became tired, partly because of fear for itself, partly for its body'). For the *De Trinitate* I use the text in Smulders 1979 and the translation of Meijering (1982).

[36] Mariette Canévet in her 'Le schéma de conversion dans le prologue du *De Trinitate* d'Hilaire de Poitiers et le livre VII des *Confessions* d'Augustin: Problématique d'un temps' also analyses the similarities betweem Hilary of Poitiers' *De Trinitate* and book 7 of the *Confessions*. Both authors make use of a three-step movement towards final conversion: 'quête de la raison naturelle avant la lecture de l'Ancien Testament ou des livres platoniciens, cette lecture, puis la découverte de la médiation du Christ' (1987, 166). As the title of the article indicates, she ascribes the similarity to two expressions of the same 'problématique d'un temps'

[37] The issue of the unity of the De Trinitate does not really impact on the arguments offered here. See for example Meijering's discussion (1982, 1–11).

[38] O'Meara's introductory remarks (1951, 3–33) induced me to examine the relationship between these two works: 'The correspondence between the *Contra Academicos* and the *Confessions* will be seen to be remarkable' (21). See also O'Connell's incisive treatment (1994, 65–76) of the lack of discrepancies (postulated by many scholars) between

parallels between the two works that I am interested in here (there are many other smaller points of similarity) are the following:

- The addressee of the *Contra Academicos* is an adherent of Manichaeism, as, I will try to show, is the case with an important section of the addressees of the *Confessions*;
- the communicative purpose (or one of the communicative purposes) of both works is to effect an important change in the reader, i.e. the works have protreptic features;[39]
- both works contain an autobiographical narrative (a conversion story) that fulfills a protreptic purpose.

The *Contra Academicos* is a philosophical dialogue in the classic Platonic style and consists of three books of which the first two are prefaced by letters addressing the work to Romanianus, Augustine's patron over many years. That he is one of Augustine's oldest friends and benefactors and that his son is one of the participants in the dialogue should not obscure the fact that what we have here is, among other things, a Catholic Christian author addressing a Manichaean reader. In this attempt to use philosophy and the tools of philosophy in order to change the life of the addressee, Augustine fulfills a moral responsibility (see his acknowledgement of direct involvement with Romanianus' adherence to Manichaeism in the second quotation below) and is true to the missionary task now imposed on him by his having attained the ultimate truth. The intention to convert Romanianus is explicitly stated at the outset of the work:

> *O… Romaniane … nihil pro te nobis aliud quam vota restant, quibus ab illo cui haec curae sunt deo, si possumus, impetremus, ut te tibi reddat—ita enim facile reddet et*

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the *Contra Academicos* (and the other dialogues) and the *Confessions* as far as the intrinsically Christian contents of these works are concerned. Tavard (1988, 47, 58–63) discusses similarities (and differences) between the *Contra Academicos* and book 8 of the *Confessions* and also Wilson (1990; 264–266) draws a comparison between the *Confessions* and *Contra Academicos*.

[39] Aune (1991, 105–106) classifies the *Contra Academicos* as a protreptic and O'Meara (1951, 29) refers to the protreptic function of the prefaces to some of its books. The reader may not find this an obvious parallel with the *Confessions* at this stage, but the analysis in chapter 3 should convince her that *Conf* 9.4.8–11 is an explicit protreptic to the Manichaeans. This is borne out by the analysis of other key passages in subsequent chapters of this thesis. Scholars like Curley (1996, 1–38) and those he quotes, however, do not consider the protreptic function of the Dialogue as significant to its understanding.

> *nobis—sinatque mentem illam tuam, quae respirationem iam diu parturit, aliquando in auras verae libertatis emergere* (1.1.1)
>
> [Romanianus … we're left with nothing to do for you but pray. With our prayers to God, Who has these matters as His concern, we shall, if we can, successfully entreat Him to restore you to yourself—for He will thereby return you to us as well—and to permit your spirit, which has been waiting to take a deep breath for a long time now, to come forward at last into the fresh air of true freedom].[40]

The same intention is implicit in 1.1.3 where Romanianus' adherence to Manichaeism is also referred to:

> *evigila, evigila, oro te … ipsa (philosophia) me nunc in otio, quod vehementer optavimus, nutrit ac fovet, ipsa me penitus ab illa superstitione, in quam te mecum praecipitem dederam, liberavit* (1.1.3)
>
> [Wake up! Wake up, I beg you! … Now philosophy nourishes and sustains me in that retirement we have so much hoped for. It has freed me completely from the superstition into which I had thrown you headlong with myself … Philosophy promises that it will display the true and hidden God, and now and again deigns to show us a glimpse of Him through the bright clouds, as it were].

The two citations above are a clear indication of not only the addressee, but also the communicative purpose of the work. As far as communicative purpose is concerned, there are in fact two interrelated but separate issues involved. The first is the explicit protreptic intention of the introductory letters and the second is the more implicit protreptic of the dialogue to which they are attached.

Let us start with the letters. Apart from telling Romanianus outright that he is concerned about him and that he wishes his friend to follow him into the Catholic version of Christianity (for example in the first quotation above), Augustine also makes consistent use of the typical vocabulary of the protreptic genre. In the first letter we have for example *sapientiae portus* in 1.1.1; *exitare* and *evigila, evigila, oro te* in 1.1.3; and *incitarem* and *hortans* in 1.1.4. In the second letter there are *necesse est disciplinia atque scientia sapientiae* in 2.1.1; *adgredere mecum philosophiam* in 2.2.3; and *concitarunt* in 2.2.5.

But more pronounced in the second letter, is the employment of the theme of *scientia* and—to describe the quest for it—the accompa-

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[40] The *reddet et nobis* may reasonably be taken to refer to Augustine's hope that Romanianus will come over to Catholic Chrisitanity. For the *Contra Academicos* I use the Corpus Christianorum text (1970) and the translation by King (1995).

nying pair of *quaerere* and *invenire* (based on Matt 7:7, quoted explicitly in 2.3.9) that I argue in chapter 4 plays an important part in the expression of protreptic purpose in the *Confessions*. Augustine's handling of the protreptic letters suggests a familiarity with the conventions and the topoi of the genre that the reader of the *Confessions* may do well to bear in mind when she finds these same elements there.[41] O'Meara's analysis (1951, 27–32) of the degree to which the dialogue imitates its models, also illustrates how well Augustine knew the classical models and how well versed he was in their generic conventions: 'Augustine deliberately chose a particular literary genre and did not fail to employ all the devices to be found in the many models that were available' (29).

How apposite is a dialogue about the positions of the New Academy as a protreptic aimed at converting Romanianus? At least we know that the ideas of the New Academy did provide Augustine with a halfway station between Manichaeism and neo-Platonic Christianity (O'Meara 1951, 16). It is conceivable that he sees it playing the same role for Romanianus, helping him think his way through their ideas (and beyond) towards a better understanding of Catholic Christianity, which was generally regarded as yet another philosophical system. Furthermore, Augustine at this stage still seems willing to use philosophy eclectically, in the way he says the *Hortensius* urged him to do, as a means towards attaining to the truth, or to what was for him the ultimate philosophy, Catholic Christianity. Against the background of the whole, this is what the section near the end of the first introductory letter seems to imply (it also points to an ongoing conversation between Augustine and his friend on the issue of his conversion):

> *Philosophia est enim, a cuius uberibus se nulla aetas queretur excludi. Ad quam avidius retinendam et hauriendam quo te incitarem, quamvis tuam sitim bene noverim, gustum tamen mittere volui. Quod tibi suavissimum et, ut ita dicam, inductorium fore peto, ne frustra speraverim* (1.1.4)
>
> [No age has any reason to complain that it is excluded from the breasts of philosophy! Though I am well acquainted with your thirst for philosophy, I wanted to send along a foretaste to incite you to cling to it and suckle the more eagerly. I implore you that I do not hope in vain, and that this will be most agreeable and, I might say, an enticement to you].

[41] Steidle (1982) also adduces Augustine's use of 'künstlerische Gestaltungsprinzipien' in the early dialogues as an argument against a very loosely composed *Confessions*.

The other striking parallel between the *Contra Academicos* and the *Confessions* is the use of the autobiographical narrative, the own conversion story, for protreptic purposes. In the *Contra Academicos* the autobiographical section occurs in the letter preface to book 2 and comprises the first extant narrative of Augustine's early life and his conversion. The context into which it is introduced suggests that it is designed to fulfill a protreptic purpose. First, Augustine's enumeration of the reasons for his indebtedness to Romanianus serves to convince the latter of the sincerity of his efforts to win him over to philosophy. Paragraph 2.2.3 starts with the direct exhortation,

> *ergo adgredere mecum philosophiam*
>
> [Therefore, come with me to philosophy],

and a recommendation of the benefits of philosophy:

> *hic est quicquid te anxium saepe atque dubitantem mirabiliter solet mouere*
>
> [In it there is everything that is wont to move you wonderfully whenever you're anxious and thrown into doubt].

The autobiographical section is introduced just after this with:

> *egone tibi gratiam non repensabo? an fortasse paululum debeo?*
>
> [Shall I not fully repay your favors to me? Do I perhaps owe you only a very little?],

and it reads (apart from its focus on Romanianus) like a concise summary of the story of the *Confessions*. The narrative starts here with Romanianus' first intercession when money for Augustine's education ran out and his sympathetic support at the death of his father; it describes the advances in Augustine's career that took him successively to Carthage and Rome and proceeds up to his present situation at Cassiciacum, all as an illustration of Romanianus' supportive role.

Romanianus is the one who made possible the *otium* at Cassiciacum, which in turn contributed to the circumstances where Augustine's conversion became possible:

> *postremo quidquid de otio meo modo gaudeo, quod a superfluarum cupiditatium vinculis evolavi, quod depositis oneribus mortuarum curarum respiro resipisco redeo ad me, quod quaero intentissimus veritatem, quod invenire iam ingredior, quod me ad summum ipsum modum perventurum esse confido, tu animasti, tu inpulisti, tu fecisti. cuius autem minister fueris, plus adhuc fide concepi quam ratione conprehendi* (2.2.4)
>
> [Finally, you are the one who has inspired, advanced, and brought about whatever I now enjoy in my retirement—that I've escaped from the

> chains of superfluous desires; that in putting down the burdens of mortal cares I breathe, come to my senses, return to myself; that I am searching for the truth most eagerly; that I'm now beginning to find it; that I'm confident about arriving at its highest degree. Whose assistant you were, however, I still conceive by faith rather than apprehend by reason].

Especially effective as a protreptic is the emotive account of Augustine's yearning for the ultimate revelation and the liberating role of Platonic thinking in the final enlightenment. It is also significant to note how, in the context of the philosophical dialogue, the emphasis on and positive evaluation of the encounter with the *Libri Platonicorum* is much more pronounced than in the *Confessions* (note also the use of typical protreptic vocabulary, erotic and fire imagery):

> *itaque cum admoto nobis fomite discesisses, numquam cessavimus inhiantes in philosophiam atque illam vitam, quae inter nos placuit atque convenit, prorsus nihil aliud cogitare atque id constanter quidem, sed minus acriter agebamus, putabamus tamen satis nos agere. et quoniam nondum aderat ea flamma, quae summa nos arreptura erat, illam qua lenta aestuabamus arbitrabamur esse vel maximam, cum ecce tibi libri quidam pleni, ut ait Celsinus, bonas res Arabicas ubi exhalarunt in nos, ubi illi flammulae instillarunt pretiosissimi unguenti guttas paucissimas, incredibile, Romaniane, incredibile et ultra quam de me fortasse et tu credis—quid amplius dicam?—etiam mihi ipsi de me ipso incredibile incendium concitarunt* (2.2.5)
>
> [Therefore, when you departed after the tinder had been sparked in us, we never stopped yearning for philosophy. Nor did we think about anything except that way of life, a way of life both appropriate and suitable for us. We thought about it constantly. Yet we weren't as passionate as we might have been, despite our thinking we were passionate enough. We hadn't yet been touched by the greatest flame, the flame that was to consume us. We thought that the flame with which we were burning slowly was really the greatest flame. But look! When certain books brimming full (as Celsinus says) wafted their exotic scents to us, and when a few drops of their precious perfume trickled onto that meager flame, they burst into an unbelievable conflagration—unbelievable, Romanianus, unbelievable, and beyond what perhaps even you believe of me—what more shall I say?—even beyond what I believe of myself!].

The narration of the final crisis of his conversion and the pivotal part played by Paul's epistle, events that would later become famous through book 8 of the *Confessions*, are also present here in embryonic form (note also the use of the verb *confiteor* in this context):

> *prorsus totus in me cursim redibam. respexi tamen, confiteor, quasi de itinere in illam religionem, quae pueris nobis insita est et medullitus inplicata; verum autem ipsa ad se nescientem rapiebat. itaque titubans properans haesitans arripio apostolum Paulum. neque enim vere, inquam, isti tanta potuissent vixissentque ita, ut eos vixisse*

> *manifestum est, si eorum litterae atque rationes huic tanto bono adversarentur. perlegi totum intentissime atque castissime* (2.2.5)
>
> [I was quickly returning to myself as a complete whole. Now I confess that I looked back on the religion implanted in us as boys, binding us from the marrow, as though from a long journey's end. Yet it was actually drawing me to itself without my realizing it. And so stumbling, hastening, hesitating I snatched up the Apostle Paul. Truly, I declared, the (apostles) would not have been able to do such great deeds, nor would they have lived as they clearly did live, if their books and arguments were opposed to so great a good. I read all of it with the greatest attention and the greatest care].

Although there is no explicit expression of protreptic intent in the autobiographical section, the context of the whole makes clear that Augustine is not merely passing on information, but trying to influence Romanianus to make the same choices. In the *Contra Academicos*, then, the autobiographical section fulfills the same function as, for example, in the *Dialogus cum Tryphone*. The relatively small amount of space allotted to it, as well as the combination of autobiographical narrative with philosophical discussion, parallels the procedure followed in the other works that I see as antecedents for the *Confessions*.

Thus we know for certain that Augustine was familiar with, and could deftly use, the conventions of the ancient protreptic genre, including the use of the protreptic power of a conversion narrative. This means that when these devices appear, albeit in a much more mature and subtle guise, in the *Confessions*, we can assume that Augustine is consciously using them to send a message, and that he takes for granted that his immediate readers are perfectly capable of interpreting it.

2.1.4. *Perspectives on Genre and the Unity of the* Confessions

Although the debate on the long-sought-for 'unity' of the *Confessions* is not the central concern here, it must be clear that some light is also shed on this by the remarks above. Seeing the work from the perspective of a readership used to reading an (auto-) biographical narrative as the introduction to philosophical teaching and / or as a protreptic aimed at converting the reader or supporting her in her resolve through a personal example before the start of the polemical-exegetical argumentation, should change the way the problem of the unity of the *Confessions* is approached. A reader from the privileged discourse community might have been more surprised to find an autobiography pre-

sented on its own than one followed by philosophical discussion and exegesis. More significantly, this reader would certainly have thought of the autobiographical section of the *Confessions* as a conversion story, and would not have expected anything similar to autobiography today.

I argue, then, that Augustine's contemporaries would not have been surprised at the inclusion of an autobiographical narrative in a bigger work with an overall purpose that was partly protreptic. What might have surprised even members of the privileged discourse community, though, was not the 'adding on' of non-autobiographical books but both the quantity and the quality of Augustine's autobiography. The amount of space the autobiography takes up in relation to the whole and especially the degree of introspectiveness it displays, in short that which constitutes the generic innovativeness of the *Confessions*, are its unprecedented qualities.

It may well be that it is exactly this change in scale coupled with the convincing presentation of frankness and spontaneity Augustine effects in his autobiographical narrative that has had a counterproductive effect. Many readers, ancient and modern, became so fascinated by the man Augustine, that they failed to appreciate literary indications in the work as to how this autobiographical narrative should be read. In chapter 4 I discuss, for example, the many references implying that the reader should not read about the lives of others out of curiosity, but in order to improve herself.

2.2. *The Audience of the* Confessions

2.2.1. *Intended Audience*

In the discussions of the protreptic genre above I have repeatedly touched on the issue of intended audience. This is the logical consequence of a definition that makes communicative purpose the primary indicator of what genre a text belongs to. Who does the *Confessions* aim to communicate with? And how does it aim to achieve this communication? It is clear that there are two interrelated but separate issues involved here. First, the question of who the original intended audience of the work was and how (also how successfully) the text communicated with these readers or hearers and, secondly, what the specific problems are for modern readers reading Augustine's text more that a millennium and a half later.

To treat the second issue first, let us go back to Swales' reference to the parent discourse community in the definition of genre quoted above: 'A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community' (1990, 58). It should be clear that one can speak of ancient literary texts as presupposing a highly sophisticated parent discourse community and that modern researchers are not expert members of this community. Only through very hard work can we hope to become expert enough to understand many of the codes, especially the generic codes operating on a partly subconscious level in these texts, knowing that some of these codes may remain indecipherable.

Here the question of generic expectations comes into play. This is a complicated issue that I can only touch upon here, but important enough to merit some mention. Generic expectation can be described as the audience's anticipation of finding certain (prototypical) characteristics, pertaining to structure, style, topoi, etc. in a given text.[42] It should be clear that circumstances can exist that may cause a modern audience to have a completely different expectation of a text than the original parent discourse community had and that this may have a profound effect on the reception of the text.[43] I have already indicated in the survey of secondary literature above that I ascribe a good deal of the problems with the unity of the *Confessions* to the modern notion that the work is an autobiography and should comply with the modern expectations associated with this genre while for the original readers no comparable genre called autobiography and no equivalent set of expectations existed.

This brings us to the first issue mentioned in the opening paragraph: the original intended audience of the *Confessions*. It is my opinion that our understanding of the literary qualities of the work can be greatly enhanced by an effort to discover as much as we can about generic expectations of its parent discourse community. Looking at the literary antecedents for the *Confessions* and trying to understand more about the

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[42] 'In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various *patterns of similarity* in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar *will be viewed as prototypical by members of the parent discourse community*' (Swales 1990, 58; my emphasis).

[43] 'Knowledge of the conventions of a genre … is likely to be much greater in those who routinely or professionally operate within that genre rather than those who become involved in it only occasionally' (Swales 1990, 54–55).

literary climate within which it came into being, as I have tried to do above, is instrumental in achieving this. But, especially in the case of a protreptic text, because of its pronounced aim to reach or touch its chosen audience in a far-reaching way, it is to be taken for granted that the whole presentation of the protreptic will be designed to fit a very particular audience (or audiences). Thus, information about this audience, gathered from external sources and coupled with the knowledge of this group that may be gained from the content, tone, and strategies of the text may greatly enhance our understanding of its contents.[44]

To return to the intended reader of the *Confessions*: literary theorists discern many levels of audience or readers that precede the 'real historical' reader in distance to the text. For the present purposes it is enough to define the intended audience as a construct of the text, a kind of 'ideal' reader that is presupposed by certain indications in the text. These indications can vary from direct mention of an individual or group as the addressee of a text, to the treatment of specialized subject matter that is particularly relevant to a specific group or groups, or a very subtle use of veiled nuances that can be understood only by expert members of a parent discourse community. The audience of the *Confessions* and the devices used in the text to reach this audience can be described without further technical concepts or terminology. It is a far less controversial subject than that of genre in general and the genre of the *Confessions* in particular and I can proceed without further theorizing to some remarks about the Manichaean segment of Augustine's intended audience, the segment I show in chapters 3 and 5 remains foremost in Augustine's mind almost throughout the work.

But before I go on to outline some issues relevant to Augustine's relationship with his Manichaean audience, I want to repeat that it is imperative that the reader understands that I do not claim the Manichaeans to be the sole intended audience of the *Confessions*. First, the discussion of the definitions of protreptic above indicated that in

[44] Thus, I have to agree in principle with Guerra's objection (1995, 11) that 'Aune's indecisiveness over the question of the audience and purpose of Romans hinders his argument for reading the work as a protreptic.' Guerra's combination of the separate but interrelated previously existing interpretive hypotheses on the genre and the audience of Romans, in the section aptly titled 'Apologetic and audience: making the message meet' (1995, 1–3), displays in outline the same presuppositions and approach as the present study. Showing the *Confessions* to be a protreptic is an empty exercise when it is not complemented by some attention to the issue as to whom the protreptic was aimed at.

practice protreptic texts usually also fulfill a paraenetic function, that is, while they strive to move one section of their audience to conversion, they never lose sight of members of the audience that may already be converted but remain in need of constant encouragement and exhortation. This means that I do not disagree with those scholars who have over the years referred to Augustine's fellow-Christians as those addressed in the *Confessions*. They will, however, have to concede that also the potential Manichaean reader constitutes an important segment of Augustine's target audience.

Furthermore, one must take into account that, for rhetorical purposes, the speaker may assume the protreptic in books 1 to 9 to be successful, and proceed on this supposition from there through the last four books. This would mean that an already converted audience is envisaged in the last section whereas in books 1 to 9 the emphasis is on those who still needed to be converted. This is confirmed by my analyses presented in chapters 4 and 5. But, interestingly enough, towards the end of the *Confessions* Augustine's attention seems to return to those Manichaeans still persisting in the non-Catholic way of thinking, so that the scale seems to tip once again in favour of protreptic rather than paraenetic.

2.2.2. *Augustine's Manichaean Audience*

I have indicated in my introduction that I intend to focus on the Manichaeans as a significant part of the intended audience of the *Confessions*. In the discussion of secondary literature in chapter 1 I also concentrated on studies that have in the past argued for the importance of Manichaean subject matter in the *Confessions* and / or Augustine's concern with the Manichaean segment of his audience. The strongest support for my argument that the Manichaeans are never far from Augustine's thoughts as he writes the *Confessions* is gleaned from the analyses of the text that I report on especially in chapter 3 (on the Manichaeans as the intended audience of the meditation on Ps 4 in *Conf* 9.4.7–11) and in chapter 5 (devoted as a whole to the issue of the audience of the *Confessions*). But there are also a number of external factors that support an argument for the possibility or even probability of Augustine being acutely aware of his Manichaean audience as he writes his *Confessions*. These are factors like the presence of Manichaeans as an opposition group in Hippo, the ongoing polemic with members of the sect in public debates and published treatises, as well as the knowledge that

a number of his friends, like Romanianus, won over to Manichaeism by none other than himself, still clung to the doctrines he now passionately believes are erroneous.

There are two reasons why I spend this section of the introductory chapter on expounding some basic background information on the Manichaeans. First, many readers of the *Confessions* are not familiar with some of the aspects of Manichaeism that are relevant in the analyses offered below and providing the information here in a systematic way avoids unnecessary repetition in the course of these analyses. Secondly, Manichaeism is a subject on which a considerable amount of new information has become available since the second half of the previous century (inter alia through the discovery of Manichaean texts formerly only known through references and quotations by other authors). It should be clear that, only when the modern reader has acquired a basic amount of knowledge about Manichaean dogma, literature, and religious practice, can she recognize those places in the *Confessions* where Augustine is addressing Manichaean issues (mostly without making it explicit) or when he is echoing their literature.

For a very detailed and reliable overview of Manichaeism the reader is referred to Samuel Lieu's *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (1992) and for a more concise version to Van Oort's *Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine: The Rediscovery of Manichaeism and Its influence on Western Christianity* (1996), the two works on which much of the following short introduction is based.[45] Here, however, I concentrate only on those aspects of the religion that feature prominently in the analyses presented in chapters 3 and 5.[46]

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[45] My first realization of the importance of a grasp of Augustine's relationship with Manichaeism started with conversations with Prof. Van Oort in Stellenbosch in 1998. The understanding of Manichaeism that forms the basis of the reading of the *Confessions* presented here was shaped to a large extent also by the various works of Van Oort, Decret, Lieu, Feldmann and Bammel on Manichaeism in general and in the *Confessions*. Another recent work that greatly enhances an overall insight into Augustine's relation to Manichaeism is the 2001 edition of the proceedings of the Fribourg-Utrecht International Symposium of the IAMS, *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West*, edited by Van Oort and others.

[46] For general and easily readable overviews of the Manichaean system Gibb and Montgomery's Introduction (1927, ix–lxx) remains valuable. See also Koenen (1978); Böhlig (1991), whose comparison between Plato and Mani provides concise information on the Manichaean system; Scott (1995, 70–94); and Van Oort's version in his *Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine* (1996).

The Manichaean religion, founded in the 3rd century AD by Mani, is often referred to by Manichaean scholars as a 'world religion' to indicate both how widely disseminated this religion was at some stage in its history and the long period of time during which it exerted an influence over large numbers of followers.[47] Although scholars at the beginning of the previous century thought of Manichaeism as a Persian religion with some Christian influences, it is now assumed to have been of Jewish-Christian origin with only superficial similarities to Persian religions.

Augustine's involvement with Manichaeism offers a useful perspective for illuminating those aspects of the religion that are relevant here.[48] The fact that a passionate young man of high intellectual ability joined the Manichaeans in his philosophical search for 'the Truth' that had nevertheless to satisfy an emotional need for the Christianity of his childhood, illustrates some of the basic attractions of Manichaeism. The Manichaeans flaunted an intellectualism which consisted mostly of a sharp criticism of other systems of belief rather than a positive exposition of their own dogma, while their pious repetitive use of the name of Christ (if the perception Augustine chooses to perpetuate is correct) and ascetic everyday demeanor appealed to the religiously minded on a different level.

A large element in their success (both for attracting new adherents and for surviving periodical persecution) was their organization into small cells and house groups rather than in large church congregations. The influence of the warm reception and genuine friendships Augustine found in Manichaeism must never be underestimated in what I see as a lifelong preoccupation with Manichaeans, i.e. real friends who may have remained Manichaeans. Another aspect that certainly prolonged Augustine's involvement with Manichaeism was the mystery in which their teachings were veiled. The large masses of adherents, the Hearers of the sect, took part in regular liturgical activities of which the singing

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[47] Frend (1954, 859) remarks: 'Both Donatism and Manichaeism were to last as long as Catholicism in North Africa.' In the East Manichaeism endured for many centuries longer.

[48] For a discussion of the role of Manichaeism in Augustine's thought, see Clark's 'Vitiated Seeds and Holy Vessels: Augustine's Manichaean Past' (1986); Wenning's 'Der Einfluß des Manichäismus und des Ambrosius auf die Hermeneutik Augustins' (1990); Van Oort's 'Augustinus en het manicheïsme' (1993); Cary's 'God in the Soul: Or the Residue of Augustine's Manichaean Optimism' (1994). See also Markus (1989) on Augustine's break with Manichaeism.

of hymns formed a large part, and in festivals of which the annual festival of Bêma was most prominent,[49] and displayed a certain degree of asceticism.[50] But they did not have access to the dogma or religious practice of the Elect who maintained a rigorous vegetarian diet (the Manichaeans believed that the eating habits of their elite helped in the process of liberating light particles from the matter in which they have become imprisoned), remained strictly celibate and had privileged access to the canonical writings of Mani. This may mean that even a gifted and prominent member of the sect, like Augustine, would have known Manichaean dogma and cosmology only as it was expounded in the Manichaean Psalms without a first hand knowledge of the theology or religious practice of the Manichaean leaders,[51] although Van Oort (2002, 15) argues that unmistakable echoes of some of the Manichaean canonical works in Augustine's oeuvre makes it probable that he may have had more access to this body of literature than the ordinary auditor. Nevertheless, the large body of Manichaean literature published in the well-refined manuscripts that the sect was known for, formed part of the intellectual attraction of this religion.[52]

Most striking in the Manichaean set of beliefs, but also least consistent with the claim that with them reason preceded faith, was their spectacular mythological cosmology, which Mani asserted was known to him through divine revelation and which believers were expected to believe as the literal historical truth about the creation of the world. In the dualistic world-view expounded by this myth evil originates in the Realm of Darkness that, through an initial attack on the Realm of Light, necessitated the creation of the physical universe (as a means to free elements of the Light from evil matter with which it had become mixed) and remains in constant conflict with the latter.[53] This myth, if the unscientific nature of its version of creation and the nature of the

[49] On the Bêma festival see for example Ries, 'La fête de Bêma dans l'Église de Mani' (1976).

[50] See Feldmann's 'Christus-Frömmigkeit der Mani-Jünger: Der suchende Student Augustinus in ihrem "Netz"' (1980, 198) for a view on 'was einem neu hinzukommenden und suchenden Menschen "optisch" und "akustisch" begegnete, sobald er sich in eine Gemeinde Manis hineinbegab.'

[51] For a recent discussion of this issue see Coyle 2001.

[52] Much of Manichaean literature was also translated from Syriac into Greek, Coptic and Latin (Lieu 1992, 117).

[53] On Manichaean dualism see for example Bianchi (1991) with references to earlier treatments of the subject. For a recent treatment of Augustine's views on Manichaean dualism see Gasparro (2001).

universe is ignored, offered a facile and satisfying explanation of the existence of evil in this world that at the same time made the individual less responsible for his sin.

This does not mean that Mani denied the existence of sin. Regular confession of sins was in fact an important liturgical activity, especially at the Bêma feast (Ries 1976, 223–226). Furthermore, Lieu (1992, 178) points out that in a system that made evil 'external and therefore uncontrollable' it was only natural that astrology would be popular at least for the 'premonition of the next onslaught of evil' it offered. It is this same interest in astrology that initially fascinated Augustine but eventually played an important part, through its lack of sophistication, in his disillusionment with Manichaeism. For readers of the *Confessions*, familiar with Augustine's preoccupation with time in the eleventh book, it is also interesting to note the emphasis on time in the Manichaean world view, where cosmic history is seen in terms of three epochs, Beginning, Middle and End (Lieu 1992, 10).[54]

While the Manichaean myth of creation refers to Adam and some Old Testament figures like Seth and Enoch, these characters and their stories differ greatly from those in the Jewish tradition (Lieu 1992, 156). Mani claimed to be an apostle of Jesus and the 'earthly twin of the Paraclete' promised by Him (Lieu 1992, 69). Manichaeism spoke of a Trinitarian God whom they purposely portrayed to lay members of the Catholic Church as the same as their Catholic God. But the similarities are superficial. Manichaean Christology entailed the *Jesus Splenditenens*, the *Jesus Patibilis* as well as Jesus Christ, the historical Jesus, who in their theology was, however, never really born, had a 'spiritual body' (Ries 1990, 766) and died only an apparent death. These concepts are completely foreign to Catholic Christology.[55] The Manichaeans thought of themselves as 'Christians of the New Covenant' (Lieu 1992, 155) and rejected the Old Testament as a whole while they accepted only those parts of the New Testament that they believed could be defended by reason. The creator God portrayed in the Old Testament they deemed to be, among other things, too warlike and the behavior of Abraham and the Old Testament patriarchs they liked to expose as immoral. In

[54] See also Wurst's remarks on 'die Lehre von den Drei Zeiten' in his analysis of Bêma-psalm 223 (1991, 391–399).

[55] On the Christological differences between Catholicism and Manichaeism, see for example Viciano, 'Aspects christologiques du "Corpus Paulinum"' (1991); Van Oort, 'Augustinus en het manicheïsme' (1993); and Decret, 'La christologie manichéenne dans la controverse d'Augustin avec Fortunatus' (1995b).

the New Testament they were partial to the writings of Paul on whom Mani is thought to have consciously modeled himself in many respects (Lieu 1992, 54). During the last decade of the 4th century a large amount of Augustine's energy was spent on a defence of the Catholic Bible against the Manichaean attack.[56]

In the time of Augustine's ministry in Hippo the Manichaeans constituted a strong presence in North Africa and in Hippo.[57] They were seen by many as just one of the numerous versions of Christianity existing in the Roman Empire during the late 4th and early 5th centuries AD.[58] Though the Manichaeans were (like some of the other Christian sects) seen by the Roman authorities as a potentially dangerous community, especially because of their secrecy and their perceived involvement with sorcery, and were banned by periodic decrees, there is little indication that Manichaeans were actively persecuted during the years that Augustine was an adherent of the sect or during his period as presbyter and later as bishop of Hippo.

One of the reasons why Manichaeism made its presence felt so strongly is the active proselytizing and missionary zeal its adherents were known for. They targeted the members of the Catholic congregations and with their aggressive attacks on aspects of Catholic dogma, and especially on the perceived immoral conduct of the Old Testament patriarchs, rather than positive arguments about their own system of belief, they tried to win members for their own sect. Augustine himself converted a number of his friends to Manichaeism after becoming a Manichaean in the course of his intellectual quest for the Truth triggered initially by his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*. Because in daily practice a member of the Manichaean Hearers could not easily be distinguished from his Catholic counterpart, people were often suspicious that some within the Catholic congregation might be there to infiltrate and weaken rather than out of conviction. Some scholars maintain that one of the reasons for the writing of the *Confessions* was suspicions and allegations against Augustine by some of his contemporaries that he was proclaiming to be Catholic while still a Manichaean at heart.[59]

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[56] See the series of articles on this subject by Ries (1961, 1963 and 1964).

[57] For the Manichaeans in North Africa see Decret, *Essais sur l'Église manichéenne en Afrique du Nord et à Rome au temps de saint Augustine* (1995a).

[58] Koenen (1978, 163) points to the fact, referred to by Augustine, that the Manichaeans thought of themselves as the real Christians.

[59] Frend in his article 'Manichaeism in the Struggle between Saint Augustine and Petilian of Constantine' (1954) on Petilian's accusations (in 400 AD) that Augustine

I hope that these observations may succeed in creating a clearer picture of those issues in the *Confessions* that would have special significance for a Manichaean reader of the text. Of course, the message of the text could be deciphered on a certain level without an awareness of those matters that would be of special concern to a Manichaean reader. I have indicated that I do not see the Manichaeans as the sole intended audience. It must, however, also be granted that an effort to read the text with an eye on the way it could have been received by such a reader, can only enhance our understanding of the whole.

was still a Manichaean, also speaks of the Donatists' 'suspicion that Catholicism in Numidia was not only a wilful and persecuting schism, but that it served as a cloak of respectability for the dreaded religion of the Manichees' (859).

PART 2

ANALYSES

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CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE IN THE MEDITATION ON PSALM 4

IN MEDIAS RES

I start my analyses of the text of the *Confessions* with a look at a short passage from Book 9 that has up to now not received the scholarly attention it deserves: Augustine's account in *Conf* 9.4.8–11 of his reading of Ps 4 shortly after his conversion. It was a careful reading of this passage that first convinced me that the Manichaean echoes in the *Confessions* were to be taken much more seriously than I had done up to then, and that the work displays an Augustine still intensely preoccupied with the salvation of the Manichaeans.[1] It is important for the cohesion of the arguments presented here that the reader is made aware of the impact an understanding of this passage has on our reading of the rest of the work.

The most important elements in the analysis offered here are the following:

- a preoccupation with a potential Manichaean reader permeates the passage;
- Augustine addresses the Manichaeans as directly as possible without completely breaking the prayer stance adopted throughout the rest of the *Confessions*;
- the emotions displayed towards the Manichaeans are so positive that the passage cannot rightly be called anti-Manichaean; and
- the communicative aim of the passage is protreptic.

Before I proceed with the analysis of *Conf* 9.4.8–11 there are two issues that have to be considered. First, can we assume that the Manichaeans would have read the *Confessions*? Courcelle (1968, 236–237) seems to believe that they did and that Secundinus, a prominent Manichaean auditor, alludes to the *Confessions* in a letter to Augustine. I argue however, that the strongest evidence for the fact that Augustine expected (or at least hoped) that Manichaeans (especially his erstwhile Manichaean

[1] This led to the publication of an article, 'Reading Psalm 4 to the Manichaeans,'

friends) would be among his readers is internal evidence. This becomes abundantly clear from the analysis in this chapter as well as the arguments presented in chapters 4 and 5 below.

The other question concerns my assumption that Augustine uses an Old Testament text to base a protreptic to the Manichaeans on, while we know that they rejected the entire Old Testament.[2] I argue that Augustine attempts to illustrate that the meaning and the message of the psalm is echoed and reinforced by quotations from the New Testament, especially from books we know that the Manichaeans were fond of quoting themselves. Where in *Conf* 9.4.8 the quotations are from the Psalms (Ps 4 and other psalms), in the next three sections, that bear the weight of the argument, quotations from the New Testament abound, especially from the books of Paul, the New Testament figure so popular with the Manichaeans that Bammel (1993, 1) refers to him as 'the apostle of the Manichees.' In chapter 5 I show that the technique of intertwining texts from the Old an the New Testament in a way that illustrates how only one message is proclaimed by both parts of the Bible is, in fact, a technique Augustine uses repeatedly throughout the *Confessions*. In his presentation of the allegorical interpretation of the creation story in Genesis it is exactly through this technique that Augustine achieves one of the most important objectives of *Conf* 11 to 13, namely to redeem the Old Testament in the eyes of the Manichaeans.

It is also significant for our evaluation of the importance of the passage in 9.4.8–11 for our reading of the *Confessions* as a whole to note the dense texture created here by the abundance of scriptural quotations, a circumstance that marks the passage as an important one. This is indeed an instance of what Knauer (1955, 114–117) refers to as the use of *Zitatennester*, a phenomenon which he found occurs at important or pivotal passages in the *Confessions*.[3] Thus, what we have here is a pro-

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in *Vigiliae Christianae* 55 (2001) where I argue that this section of the work is, in fact, a protreptic directed at Augustine's Manichaean audience. For this reason I repeat here the salient elements illuminated in the article.

[2] This seems to be the consensus in scholarship. See for example Ries 1961 (232): 'Sous les coups répétés des sectateurs de Mani, tout l'Ancien Testament s'évanouit, du Nouveau il reste peu de choses.' We do know that Faustus of Milev rejected the whole of the Old Testament (Allgeier 1930, 4). In 9.4.11 there is an explicit reference to the Manichaeans' resistance to (large parts of) scripture: *super inimicis scripturae huius tabescebam* (the context makes clear that they are the enemies referred to). On the Manichaeans' use of scripture, see also e.g. Ries (1961–1964); Wenning (1990, 80–89); Viciano (1991, 379–389); Van Oort (1993, 281–282) and Bammel (1993).

[3] Knauer does not analyse *Conf* 9.4.8–11 in any depth.

treptic aimed at the Manichaeans, located at the center of the work,[4] and marked as a passage with a significant role within the whole.

I organize the analysis below in three sections. Chapter 3.1 examines the direct indications in the text of who the intended audience of the meditation is, while chapter 3.2 investigates the instances of *captatio benevolentiae*, i.e. indications that Augustine strongly identifies with his audience, in a way that gives the passage a reconciliatory and non-polemical tone. Chapter 3.3 illustrates how the awareness of the use of Manichaean terminology throughout the section changes our perceptions of its communicative purpose.

3.1. *A Meditation Directed at a Manichaean Reader*

Let us examine the meditation presented in *Conf* 9.4.8–11. In the first paragraph Augustine quotes Ps 4:2 as a kind of prologue. I argue that it has the function of setting up the dramatic situation and unequivocally indicating who the intended audience is.[5] After stating that he would want the whole world to hear him recite the psalm, Augustine narrows the focus down to the Manichaeans explicitly: *quam vehementi et acri dolore indignabar manichaeis*.[6] The association in Augustine's mind between Ps 4 and the Manichaeans has been made clear, as well as the fact that what follows in this section has direct relevance for this group.

Chadwick (1991) translates the sentence quoted above as 'What vehement and bitter anger I felt against the Manichees!' Read like this, there is no trace of the positive emotion towards the Manichaeans that I argue is characteristic of the passage.[7] It is difficult to give a better

[4] O'Donnell (1992, 3:91) seems to be asserting the importance of the central section of the work indirectly through his emphasis on the fact that the passage under discussion, Augustine's famous account of his reading of Ps 4, is situated almost at the exact midpoint of the *Confessions*. But other studies of ancient literary works come to the same conclusion about the importance of what is said at the center point of the work. See for example Gaiser's study (1959) of Plato's early dialogues which focuses repeatedly on the midpoint of these works, especially in the section titled 'Die Paränese in der Mitte des Gesprächs' (148–187), and which shows how this is usually where the most directly protreptic or paraenetic passages occur.

[5] See the analysis of the structure of the Psalm (in which he sees a reflection of the structure of the *Confessions* as a whole) by O'Donnell, (1992, 3:91).

[6] All references to the text of the *Confessions* are to O'Donnell's edition (1992).

[7] Smuts (1986, 39–42) also comments on the emotional tone of Augustine's version of his encounter with Ps 4 in *Conf* 9.4.8–11.

rendition of this sentence but an examination of the Latin indicates that Chadwick's translation overemphasizes the element of anger while the idea of pain or sorrow, inherent in *vehementi et acri* ***dolore***, is not given enough prominence.

My interpretation of these words is validated by the references to pity, sickness and healing in the following sentence:

> *Miserabar eos rursus, quod illa sacramenta, illa medicamenta nescirent et insani*[8] *essent adversus antidotum quo sani esse potuissent!*
>
> [Also, I pitied them because they did not know those sacraments, those medicines. And they raged insanely against the antidote through which they could have become sane].[9]

The insane rage of the Manichaeans is not the main point here, but rather the possibility of their being healed from their insanity. What is more, the image of the healer caring for sick or injured humanity was one especially dear to the Manichaeans.[10] It is developed extensively in one of their Bêma psalms,[11] and certainly held strong positive connotations for them.[12] Again, this makes the tone of the passage urgent and caring rather than sharp or accusatory.[13] Chapter 2.2 has already pointed out that the imagery of sickness and healing may also be seen as part of the stock vocabulary of protreptic texts.

The following lines of 9.4.8 are the most explicit indication that Augustine wants specifically the Manichaeans to know how Ps 4 affected him, and ultimately how it should affect them:

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[8] References to madness have become synonymous with the Manichaeans in *Conf* 1 to 8 and the tone is usually derogatory. But in this context (with its references to the opposite *sani* and to *antidotum*) the emphasis is on sickness and the need for healing.

[9] The translations given in the whole of chapter 3, including the translation of passages quoted from the psalm, are my own, a 'working translation,' designed only to meet the needs of the analysis in this chapter. I acknowledge, however, my debt to all translations I have read.

[10] According to O'Donnell (1992, 161), the imagery is used frequently by Augustine and was part of an effort of Christianity in North Africa 'to combat the appeal of the cult of Asclepius.'

[11] Bêma Psalm 241, discussed by Ries (1976, 218–233).

[12] Of course Augustine's usual negative use of *insani* is also evoked here, playing on the name of Mani/Manes, which meant demented. See for example Van Oort (1993, 239).

[13] Gibb and Montgomery's introduction (1927, xxxii–xxxiii) also refers to 'a gentleness and an elevation, rare in the theological controversies of Christian antiquity,' which is at times discernible in Augustine's language because 'he felt that having been himself a member of the sect, it became him to deal tenderly with those who had gone astray after the same fashion.'

> *Vellem ut alicubi iuxta essent tunc et, me nesciente quod ibi essent, intuerentur faciem meam et audirent voces meas, quando legi quartum psalmum … quid de me fecerit ille psalmus*
>
> [I would have liked them to have been somewhere nearby then and to have observed my face and heard my cries when I read that fourth psalm, without me knowing that they were there, and to have seen what effect that psalm had on me].

The subject of *essent* can only be the same as that of the main verbs of the last part of the previous sentence, the Manichaeans. It is the Manichaeans Augustine wishes could be listening and looking on and not any other group or even the whole world as the statement at the beginning of the passage might have seemed to indicate. Moreover, he assumes that if they could in some way hear and see his emotional reaction without him knowing that they were there, they would be convinced of the sincerity of his emotions and not assume that he is staging an act for their benefit:

> *Ne me propter se illa dicere putarent quae inter haec verba dixerim*
>
> [So that they would not think that I was saying the words I said in between the words of the psalm for their sake].

Why would Augustine wish this if not in the hope that his reactions would have communicated with the Manichaeans in a manner that he has been unable to achieve up to now and would have made them turn away from their wrong way and towards his right way? If this is so the passage certainly has a protreptic communicative objective.

The last section of 9.4.8 contains the quotation of the first words of the psalm[14] and sets up an interesting dramatic situation for the meditation that follows. Augustine's words here are, like the rest of the *Confessions*, addressed to God and at least formally presented as a private conversation without an audience. The Manichaeans are not present at Cassiciacum (where this reading of Ps 4 takes place) as he would have wished them to be. So, the reactions portrayed are to be taken as just as genuine as they would be in such an intimate

[14] I will refer to this procedure as quotation although very often it is more a question of Augustine intertwining the words of the psalm into his own stream of consciousness, e.g. by changing verbs to the first person to pertain to himself or by changing imperatives to past tense indicatives to indicate how the psalm has had its effect on him. See O'Donnell (1992, 1: lxi). This is, according to Sieben (1977, 484), one of only two instances where Augustine does quote directly from the Bible in the first 10 books of the *Confessions*.

situation: Augustine alone before his God (which the vocative, *pater*, at the beginning of 9.4.9 poignantly evokes). Thus, the problems of inhibitions on both sides that he describes here, by implication, did not apply in the situation:

> *Re vera nec ea dicerem nec sic ea dicerem, si me ab eis audiri viderique sentirem, nec, si dicerem, sic acciperent, quomodo mecum et mihi coram te de familiari affectu animi mei*
>
> [And it is true that I would not have said those things and would not have said them in the same way, if I had known that I was heard and seen by them. And if I had said them, they would not have accepted them in the way I meant them when I was speaking by myself and to myself in your presence and motivated by the intimate love for you in my heart].

This means that we have to assume that the opposite applies: the Manichaean who reads now does 'see' and 'hear' Augustine's uninhibited reactions, not an act designed with the ulterior motive of influencing him or her.[15] This also implies that this reader must now be affected by this passage in just the way Augustine had hoped he would be if his presence that day had gone undetected. This would of course meet exactly the ultimate objective of this master of rhetoric and is another argument for claiming that the passage has protreptic intent.

Apart from the lines discussed above, there are two more almost explicit references to the intended audience of the meditation. The first is midway through, at the end of 9.4.9:

> *Quae utinam audissent qui adhuc usque diligunt vanitatem et quaerunt mendacium:*
>
> [Oh, if only they could have heard me, they who still up to this day love emptiness and seek lies].

The attentive reader must be aware, after reading Augustine's description of his encounter with the Manichaeans in books 3 to 7, that the group consistently associated with emptiness and lies up to this point in the *Confessions* are the Manichaeans.

The next and last direct reference to the intended audience of Augustine's exegesis of Ps 4 (in 9.4.11) calls them deaf corpses and refers to their animosity towards scripture:

> *Nec inveniebam quid facerem surdis mortuis … et super inimicis scripturae huius tabescebam*

[15] See also my arguments in chapter 5 about the reasons Augustine may have had to (at least initially) hide the protreptic intention of his work.

> [I could not find anything that I could do about the deaf corpses … I became sick because of their animosity towards these scriptures].

Earlier references in this passage as well as the fact that the Manichaeans were known for their aggressive criticism of scripture make clear that they are the group *inimici* refers to. What is more, I show in chapter 5 that breaking down Manichaean resistance to scripture is one of Augustine's central objectives in the *Confessions*. The words *surdis mortuis* reflect the urgency to communicate with his Manichaean audience as well as his frustration at the lack of success discernable throughout the meditation.[16] (The choice of the word *tabescebam* also expresses how strongly the Manichaeans' unyielding attitude influences Augustine emotionally, almost physically even.) But the reference to deafness is also an articulation of what I call in chapter 5 the 'history of failed communication' between these two parties.[17]

It is clear that in the passage quoted above Augustine's frustration allows some negative emotion to surface, but that the context once again softens the impact of any accusations he makes. The text emphasizes his ardent desire to do something to change the situation of the Manichaeans exactly because he himself had been subject to the same error:

> *Legebam, et ardebam nec inveniebam quid facerem surdis mortuis ex quibus fueram*
>
> [I read, and I burned to do something, but I could not think what to do about these deaf corpses of whom I had been one].[18]

Let us consider for a moment what the Manichaeans would have heard and seen, if they had been present when Augustine read Ps 4. Although O'Donnell (1992, 3:94) correctly deduces that *voces dedi* is 'not strictly evidence for "reading aloud,"'[19] I think that the dramatic situation

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[16] This same frustration is implied in 9.4.10: *internum aeternum, quod ego quia gustaveram, frendebam, quoniam non eis poteram ostendere* [The eternity within me, about which I, because I had tasted it, was gnashing my teeth because I could not show it to them].

[17] The discussion in chapter 5 refers to Augustine's efforts to convince the Manichaeans of their errors in his anti-Manichaean writings and the explicit formulation of his intention to use different tactics elsewhere. See Chidester's remarks (1986) on the themes of deafness and blindness that are developed throughout the *Confessions* and are presented inter alia as the symptoms Augustine had to be healed from before he could be converted.

[18] I borrowed the translation 'deaf corpses' from Pine-Coffin (1961) because I cannot translate the phrase any better.

[19] It is interesting to note that Miles (1992, 127) assumes this passage to represent 'silent, private reading,' while Stock (1996, 112) remarks on 'his description of oral

requires that he recite the words of the psalm out loud. Or, it would be more correct to say that he interspersed his reading of the psalm with his thoughts on the text, incorporating the words from scripture with his own.[20] Apart from this there are also numerous references to emotional cries and changes to Augustine's outward appearance in the passage.[21]

It is clear already that Augustine's intended audience here are very specifically people still adhering to Manichaean doctrines, but also that simply to describe the passage as anti-Manichaean would fall short of the truth. The attack on Manichaean doctrine takes secondary importance. The choice of words and the tone of the passage should have made the Manichaeans forcefully aware that they are witnessing the concerned effort of a friend who cares deeply for them and who is trying desperately to turn them towards the right path.[22]

The other interesting element of Augustine's interpretation of the psalm is that in his reasoning the Manichaeans are the intended audience of Ps 4. One of the most striking features of Augustine's meditation on this psalm is that he 'discovers' there that the prophet (i.e. David) is specifically addressing the Manichaeans (which is different from Augustine addressing them). The people he refers to in 9.4.9 can only be the Manichaeans:

> *Talibus dicitur qualem me fuisse reminiscebar*
>
> [It was addressed to the kind of people of whom I remembered that I had been one].

The power and dramatic quality of these words become clear when they are read in context:

> *Et clamat prophetia, 'quousque graves corde? ut quid diligitis vanitatem et quaeritis mendacium? et scitote quoniam dominus magnificavit sanctum suum.' clamat 'quousque', clamat 'scitote', et ego tamdiu nesciens vanitatem dilexi et mendacium*

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reading at 9.2–9.4.19.'

[20] Knauer (1955) remains the most coherent and full treatment of Augustine's varied techniques of citing (the psalms) from scripture.

[21] There are references to Augustine's facial expression and his cries in *Conf* 9.4.8: *quas … voces* (twice); *faciem meam;* and *voces meas*. In 9.4.9 we have *haec omnia exibant per oculos et vocem meam* and *insonui multa graviter ac fortiter* and in 9.4.11 *clamabam in consequenti versu clamore alto cordis mei*.

[22] In chapter 5 I discuss the importance of the theme of friendship in book 4 of the *Confessions* and how this may have influenced the Manichaean reader. In his chapter on friends Brown (1967, 61) speaks about the 'core of abiding friendships' that included many fellow-students who had followed Augustine into Manichaeism.

> *quaesivi, et ideo audivi et contremui, quoniam talibus dicitur qualem me fuisse reminiscebar. in phantasmatis enim quae pro veritate tenueram vanitas erat et mendacium*[23]
>
> [And the prophet calls out: 'How long will you harden your hearts? And why do you love emptiness and seek lies? And know that the Lord raised his Holy One to glory.' He calls 'How long?' He calls 'Know!' And for so long I did not know, and I loved emptiness and sought lies. And for this reason I heard these words and I trembled, because it was addressed to the kind of people of whom I remembered that I had been one. For in the fantastic ideas that I had clung to instead of the truth, were the emptiness and the lies].[24]

The use of *quoniam* and *enim* in the second part of this section clearly indicates how Augustine interprets the words of the psalm as pertaining directly to the kind of errors he has associated with Manichaean doctrine up to this point in the *Confessions*. The last sentence explicitly underscores this: the emptiness and lies the prophet talks about in Ps 4 equal (Manichaean) *phantasmata*.

Apart from addressing the Manichaeans by name and using a non-confrontational tone, there are two other important devices Augustine employs in this passage to enhance his communication with them. First, he identifies with his audience, taking on himself too the blame for all he accuses them of and, secondly, he makes repeated use of Manichaean vocabulary in a bid to arrest their attention, while at the same time giving these terms new (Catholic Christian) content.[25]

3.2. *Identification with a Manichaean Audience*

We have seen that Augustine has more than once implied concern and sympathy for the Manichaeans. I have already referred to his use of the image of the healer caring for the sick and the serious effort expressed in the phrase *surdis mortuis*, used near the end of the meditation. In this category belongs also his repeated identification with his audience, the castigation of himself for the mistakes he has made, i.e. the mistakes they are still making. In 9.4.9 for example Augustine hammers on

[23] Lines 11–17 of 9.4.9 in O'Donnell's text.

[24] In *Conf* 3.6.10 (where Augustine's falling in with the Manichaeans is described and where *phantasmata* or *phantasmatis* occur four times) the word *phantasma* stands for Manichaean doctrine, more than any other single word or concept.

[25] See also Van Oort's remarks (1997, 243) on this occurrence.

vanitatem et mendacium, terms closely associated with Manichaean error in the preceding books of the *Confessions*, as I have indicated. But the intent of the passage is not invective. Rather, it is presented as a personal confession of sins:

> *Dilexeram enim vanitatem et quaesieram mendacium … vanitatem dilexi et mendacium quaesivi et ideo audivi et contremui*
>
> [For I had loved emptiness and sought lies … I have loved emptiness and sought lies and therefore I heard these words and I trembled].

Did Augustine tremble at the realization of how nearly he himself had been lost, or is his apprehension yet another sign of an emotional preoccupation with the Manichaeans' spiritual salvation? Against the background of my analysis so far it is clear that the latter is a strong possibility.

The section from 9.4.9 already quoted above also illustrates Augustine's identification with his audience. It is phrased as a wish:

> *Quae utinam audissent qui adhuc usque diligunt vanitatem et quaerunt mendacium*
>
> [Oh, if only they could have heard me, they who still up to this day love emptiness and seek lies].

The key word is *usque*. The Manichaeans are the ones who still love emptiness and lies, but Augustine himself knows exactly what this feels like, especially now that he has progressed beyond this stage.

The wish is followed by a postulation of what Augustine believes would have happened if the Manichaeans had witnessed his meditation:

> *Forte … evomuissent illud, et exaudires eos cum clamarent ad te*
>
> [Perhaps they would have become upset and spewed out these lies, and you would have answered them when they called to you].

The words derive an added dimension in the light of Augustine's dramatic depiction of himself doing precisely this in the preceding books of the *Confessions*: Books 7 and 8 describe his final rejection of Manichaean ideas and the answering, at last, of his persistent cries to God (and God's cries to him) in the scene of final surrender portrayed in 8.12.29.

Augustine ends the meditation on Ps 4 with a last identification with his audience in the section already quoted from 9.4.11:

> *Nec inveniebam quid facerem surdis mortuis* ***ex quibus fueram***
>
> [I could not find anything I could do about these deaf corpses of whom I had been one].

Although their attitude towards scripture now makes him sick, he takes upon himself the shame for what he is accusing them of:

> *(Ego) pestis latrator amarus et caecus adversus litteras*
>
> [I had been a pestilence, barking bitterly and blindly against scripture].

Thus, Augustine makes sure that the meditation also ends with a clear indication that he is not criticizing from a position of moral superiority but earnestly warning against errors he himself has been freed from.

3.3. *The Use of Manichaean Terminology*

The next aspect to be examined is the striking degree to which Augustine uses Manichaean terminology and the frame of reference of Manichaean religious practice in order to penetrate the defenses of a potential Manichaean reader. I will treat at some length the references to the Holy Spirit in 9.4.9 and the discussion of sin and repentance in 9.4.10. This is followed by a some remarks on Augustine's use of the imagery of light and darkness, culinary imagery, phrases of calling and answering and *superbia* in the passage as a whole.

In 9.4.9 *paracletum, spiritum veritatis* ('the paraclete, the spirit of truth') is the most important 'Manichaean category' used. The Manichaeans saw Mani as the paraclete promised by Jesus, and the phrase 'Mani, the paraclete, spirit of Truth' occurs frequently in their liturgical texts (Decret 1993, 271). They also emphasized a trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and although this differed radically from the Christian doctrine of the trinity, they went so far as to exploit the (superficial) similarity in a deliberately propagandistic way in an effort to win over other Christians to their sect (Decret 1993, 268).

It is significant that this is one of the few places outside his anti-Manichaean works where Augustine uses the term *paracletus*, which he usually avoided *inter alia* because it was, according to O'Donnell (1992, 3:97), loaded with Manichaean 'claims and practices.'[26] This confirms my thesis that Augustine is in this specific instance consciously using loaded terms and phrases familiar to the Manichaeans in order to arrest their attention.

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[26] O'Donnell (1992, 3: 97) says about this issue: 'A. uses paracletus rarely outside his anti-Manichaean works …first, because it probably did not appear in his NT translations … and second, to avoid a word complicated by Manichaean claims and practice.'

Here the phrase *paracletum, spiritum veritatis* occurs in a section where Augustine describes how he found in the psalm (Ps 4:3) the words he has already used throughout the *Confessions* to describe the errors of Manichaean ways:[27] *vanitatem et mendacium*.[28] These words have also been associated consistently with his own previous inability, under influence of Manichaean doctrine, to conceive of God as a spiritual being. The two-word combination is repeated no less than six times (only once changed into the nominative) in the course of 9.4.9, both before and after the phrase *paracletum, spiritum veritatis*. It is clear that Augustine sees the solution to the problem of *vanitatem et mendacium* as connected with the 'Spirit of Truth.'

In Ps 4 the reference to *vanitatem et mendacium* (in verse 3) is followed by the words *et scitote quoniam magnificavit dominus sanctum suum* [And know that the Lord has raised up his holy One] in verse 4.[29] It is clear that this evokes for Augustine the 'correct' conception of what Christ was and by implication the solution to the problem of believing in a 'false' Jesus, i.e. in emptiness and lies. He explains that he had believed in emptiness and lies because he had not known that God had done three important and related things: He had raised Christ from the dead, He had put Him at his right hand and Christ had sent the Holy Spirit. The three points are not present in this form in the psalm but are evoked for Augustine by the words of verse 4, *et scitote quoniam magnificavit dominus sanctum suum*. These words he incorporates into his own, followed by the three points as an interpretative elaboration:

> *Et tu, domine, iam magnificaveras sanctum tuum, (1) suscitans eum a mortuis et (2) collocans ad dexteram tuam, (3) unde mitteret ex alto promissionem suam, paracletum, spiritum veritatis*
>
> [And you, o Lord, had already raised up your holy one, (1) by raising him from the dead and (2) placing him at your right hand. (3) And thence, from on high he sent him he had promised, the Paraclete, the spirit of truth].

What we have here are the main differences between the Christology of Catholic doctrine and that of the Manichaeans. Especially the empha-

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[27] This is what he implies. The possibility exists however that the discovery of these terms in the psalm predates his use of them in the *Confessions*.

[28] The text of the psalm used here is O'Donnell's (1992, 3: 91–92) very useful reconstruction.

[29] The NRSV translation of this phrase, 'but know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself,' shows that radically different readings are possible. My translation is, however, consistent with Augustine's interpretation in 9.4.9.

sis on Christ's death and resurrection is meant to speak directly to the Manichaeans who did not believe in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ.

This point is again present at the end of 9.4.9:

> *Quoniam vera morte carnis mortuus est pro nobis*
>
> [Because he died the true death of the flesh for us].

It is clear that also this part of Augustine's interpretation of Ps 4 has a very pointed relevance for the dialogue between him and the Manichaeans.

The next verse of the psalm (verse 5) is treated at the beginning of 9.4.10. Its reference to repentance over sin, *irascimini et nolite peccare … et … compungimini* [Be angry and do not sin … and … be stung (by remorse)], offers Augustine the platform to the next set of Manichaean terms and the other important issue over which he has had to think his way out of Manichaean doctrine (in Book 7) before he could finally be converted. The individual himself was responsible for the sins he committed and not some other power over which he had no control:

> *Iam didiceram irasci mihi de praeteritis, ut de cetero non peccarem, et merito irasci, quia non alia natura gentis tenebrarum de me peccabat, sicut dicunt qui sibi non irascuntur et thesaurizant sibi iram in die irae et revelationis iusti iudicii tui!*
>
> [I had already learnt to be angry with myself over my sins of the past, so that I would sin no more. And I was angry deservedly, because it was not some other nature from the race of darkness that sinned in me, as those say who are not angry over their sins (deservedly). And they are storing up anger against themselves on the day of anger and of the revelation of your true judgment].

He urges the Manichaeans to repent and confess their sins and even insinuates that because of their refusal to repent, they will be punished on the day of final judgment.[30]

Near the end of this section Augustine wishes that the Manichaeans might ask him what to do to be saved and emphasizes again, as if in answer, his own repentance and the exchange of his old sinful nature for the new:[31]

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[30] The final day of reckoning was a concept familiar to the Manichaeans. See for example Ries (1976, 226).

[31] This is another concept familiar to the Manichaeans, based on their reading of Paul: 'Faustus' understanding of anthropology and of conversion is illuminated by Pauline verses which contrast the old man and the new man' (Bammel 1993, 6).

> *Si afferent ad me cor in oculis suis foris a te et dicerent, 'quis ostendet nobis bona?' ibi enim ubi mihi iratus eram, intus in cubili ubi compunctus eram, ubi sacrificaveram mactans vetustatem meam et inchoata meditatione renovationis meae sperans in te, ibi mihi dulcescere coeperas et dederas laetitiam in corde meo*
>
> [If only they would turn their hearts to me through their eyes that were outside of you, and would say 'Who will show us where our salvation lies?' For there where I was angry with myself, inside in my inner room, where I felt remorse, where I had sacrificed, slaying my old self and where I started the meditation that was to cause my renewal, there you had started to be sweet to me and you had given me joy in my heart].[32]

What gives this passage added significance is the fact that Augustine is once again talking to the Manichaeans in terms and categories familiar to them, but at the same time pointing out exactly where their errors lie. Recognition of the need for forgiveness, repentance and regular confession of sins formed an integral part of Manichaean ritual, as is shown clearly in Ries' article, 'La fête de Bêma dans l'Église de Mani' (1976, 223–226; and 229–230). We also know that Augustine would have been thoroughly aware of this fact after his at least nine years as a practicing *auditor* with the Manichaeans (Van Oort 1993, 278; 1996, 41–45). How can he then accuse them of a lack of confession and repentance? The key lies in Augustine's interpretation of *irascimini*[33] and in the word *merito*, as well as the phrase following it in the first sentence of 9.4.10. He implies here that real repentance depends, firstly, on a real anger at yourself for your own responsibility in sinning. Secondly, it depends on a true conception of what evil is, the question whose Manichaean answer had drawn him to them initially but which he has since learnt to answer differently. Thus he makes a direct link between confessing and the confessor's concept of evil:

> *Merito irasci, quia non alia natura gentis tenebrarum de me peccabat, sicut dicunt qui sibi non irascuntur*
>
> [I was angry deservedly, because it was not some other nature from the race of darkness that sinned in me as those say who are not angry over their sins (deservedly)].

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[32] Modern interpreters find this verse of the psalm problematic, but Augustine's interpretation in his *Ennarationes in Psalmos* seems to me to justify my translation here.

[33] That this word (as well as its form, imperative) is problematic, becomes clear when it is compared to the Hebrew original and when different translations and commentaries on this verse of the psalm are taken into account. It is clear, however, that Augustine interprets it almost literally in the repetitions of the word in the rest of *Conf* 9.4.10. This also allows him the word play in *qui sibi non irascuntur et thesaurizant sibi iram in die irae*.

The answer to the *unde malum* question was one of the most essential differences between Augustine and the Manichaeans and an issue that has been one of the main streams in the preceding narrative of the *Confessions*. The way Augustine interprets Ps 4 makes repentance and confession and, by implication, the question about evil one of its central points. Thus, in Augustine's eyes the psalm addresses two of the most important issues in Manichaean doctrine that he finds unacceptable: their Christology and their beliefs about evil.[34]

The next aspect of paragraph 10 that I want to look at briefly is its references to light. For Augustine the word *lumen* in verse 7 of the psalm is heavy with the meanings associated with it in previous parts of the *Confessions* as well as with Manichaean connotations:[35]

> *Signatum est in nobis lumen vultus tui, domine*
>
> [The light of your face is imprinted in us, o Lord].

It is also still a part of the answer to the question about the nature of evil, of the universe and of God. As I have indicated, the terms *lumen* and *tenebrae* played a prominent role in the dualistic cosmology of the Manichaeans where they referred to the Realm of Light and the Realm of Darkness respectively. But it is especially their belief that the souls of both humans and animals consisted of light particles that derived from the substance of God himself that is on the table here.

Augustine's interpretation of the phrase *signatum est in nobis lumen vultus tui, domine* in the *Ennarationes in Psalmos* is in general terms,[36] but his explanation in *Conf* 9.4.10 is yet another feature of this meditation designed explicitly to speak about Manichaean error:

> *Non enim lumen nos sumus quod inluminat omnem hominem, sed inluminamur a te ut, qui fuimus aliquando tenebrae, simus lux in te*
>
> [For we are not the light which illuminates all men, but we are illuminated by you, so that we who were darkness before, can become light in you].[37]

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[34] Markus (1991, 913–925) sees Augustine's rejection of the Manichaean explanation of evil as the most important step in his break with Manichaeism.

[35] See Chidester (1986, 120 and 126–129). It is also interesting to note that the book with the most references to *lux* or *lumen* (7 occurences) is Book 7 where conceptual differences with the Manichaeans are hammered out intensively.

[36] In his *Ennarationes in Psalmos* he gives an allegorical explanation: *hoc lumen est totum hominis et verum bonum, quod non oculis sed mente conspicitur. 'signatum' autem dixit 'in nobis', tamquam denarius signatur regis imagine.*(All references to the *Ennarationes in Psalmos* here is to the text printed by O'Donnell 1992, 3:92–94)

[37] Chidester (1986) is especially illuminating on the differences between the Man-

Further, it is interesting to note how Augustine combines in this passage also the culinary imagery used throughout the *Confessions* with Manichaean terminology. It is conceivable that the Manichaean doctrine surrounding food and eating and the eating ritual of their elect were subconsciously (or probably even deliberately) influencing Augustine's use of imagery here. He speaks (in 9.4.10) about the Manichaeans licking visual images that did not satisfy their hunger, *imagines eorum famelica cogitatione lambiunt* [they lick the images of temporal things and their thoughts remain hungry];[38] not eating (certain foods), *o si fatigentur inedia* [oh, if only they would become tired of fasting]; about having tasted eternity inside himself, *o si viderent internum aeternum, quod ego … gustaveram* [oh, if only they could see the eternity within me, that I … had tasted]; and he speaks about not wanting to devour or be devoured by transient temporal things, *devorans tempora et devoratus temporibus* [devouring the temporal and being devoured by the temporal], while he had the real food of God's word at his disposal, *cum haberem … aliud frumentum et vinum et oleum* [while I had … other corn and wine and oil].

Less obvious, but certainly present throughout this passage is also the Manichaean terminology surrounding the *tochme-sotme* pair, referring to God's calling and man's answering (and vice versa), that was central in Manichaean ritual (Ries 1976, 224–225).[39] When the vital role of *tochme-sotme* within Manichaean song and liturgy is taken into account, it seems improbable that Augustine's references to calling and answering in the *Confessions* are accidental.

In 9.4.8 Ps 4:1 is quoted:

> *Cum invocarem, exaudivit me deus iustitiae meae*
>
> [When I called, the God of my righteousness answered me].

In 9.4.9 Augustine tries to convince the Manichaeans that the psalm is calling to them personally and assures them of God's welcoming reaction:

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ichaeans and Augustine as far as the exact status and role of light in their religions are concerned. Augustine's words here are also a repetition of the main ideas he has already expressed in book 8.10.22 where he addresses the Manichaeans in a direct protreptic statement: *attendite, quid dicatis, et erubescite et accedite ad eum et illuminamini.*

[38] According to Chadwick (1991, 161) this is a reference to Plotinus.

[39] Van Oort (1996, 52) also believes that the emphasis on 'God's *clamare* and his *vox* and *vocatio*' in the *Confessions* must be 'compared with the pivotal role of the Manichaean Call and Answer.'

> *Clamat prophetia … clamat quousque, clamat scitote … et exaudires eos, cum clamarent ad te*
>
> [The prophet calls out … he calls out 'How long still?' and he calls out 'Know' … and you will answer them when they call out to you].

The analyses in chapter 4 demonstrate how the theme of calling and answering becomes a Leitmotiv in the *Confessions*, one that is closely associated with the protreptic purpose of the whole. God and his whole creation are constantly calling man towards the ultimate rest that is possible only in Him. The reader is repeatedly assured of God's enduring presence and his willingness to answer, to receive with open arms whoever turns to Him and calls his name.

The last aspect to be looked at in the analysis of the meditation on Ps 4 is the use of terminology concerning the concept *superbia*. Chidester (1986) proposes a convincing argument for seeing Augustine's presentation of his conversion as a conversion from pride to humility. We know that in the *Confessions* the Manichaeans are consistently accused of pride. Thus, the conversion from pride to humility runs parallel to the conversion from Manichaeism to Catholicism. Here, Augustine describes the purpose of Ps 4 as to provide 'an antidote against pride.' In the paragraph immediately preceding the meditation (9.4.7) there are references to *superbia* and the contrast between (proud) cedars and (humble) herbs, and also the use of the verbs *perdomueris* [you tamed] and *subegeris* [you subjected]. The first mention of the psalms of David in 9.4.8 is in terms of their resistance to pride:

> *Psalmos David, cantica fidelia, sonos pietatis excludentes turgidum spiritum*
>
> [The psalms of David, songs of faith, sounds of piety, that shut out an inflated spirit].

A few lines further Augustine indicates that he would like to recite Ps 4 to the whole of humanity *adversus typhum generis humani* [against the pride of the human race]. It is clear that, even though this is not obvious from a superficial reading of Ps 4, he sees it as a strong warning against pride and thus also in this respect addressing a central Manichaean weakness.

To end this chapter, let us take a quick look at the last section of the meditation. Book 9.4.11 is an exegesis of the two final verses of the psalm:

> *In pace, in idipsum obdormiam et somnum capiam, quoniam tu, domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me*

> [May I go to sleep in peace in God himself and fall into a deep sleep, because you, O Lord, have created me for your one eternal hope].[40]

It has as its main theme the eschatological peace, which is the ultimate goal of the searching soul, that has been foreshadowed in 1.1.1 (*et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te* [And our heart is restless, until it finds rest in you]) and with which Book 13 ends:

> *Post illa nos requieturos in tua grandi sanctificatione speramus … quoniam tua quies tu ipse es*
>
> [We hope that after this life we will rest in your great sanctification … because the rest that comes from you is you yourself].

The climax of the meditation has been reached. Augustine seems fully focused on God alone, repeating the personal pronoun as though in an invocation:

> *Et tu es idipsum valde, … et in te requies … nullus alius tecum … quod tu, sed tu, domine, …*
>
> [And you are himself ultimately … and in you there is rest … there is none other besides you … because you, but only you, Lord …].

These first seven lines of 9.4.11 would have been a perfectly fitting end to an ecstatic meditation and communication with God, but it is important to note that Augustine does not end here. The end of the passage on his reading of Ps 4 is the sentence, referred to above, where he states his despair at being unable to reach the audience he has been speaking to throughout 9.4.8–11, the *surdis mortuis*. Like the conclusion to the *Confessions* as a whole (see chapter 5) the conclusion to the meditation on Ps 4 is a last attempt (within the parameters of this small-scale protreptic) to turn around his audience, and constitutes a neat framing of the meditation by another explicit reference to its intended audience, the Manichaeans, as well as a reinforcement of the protreptic purpose of the unit.

Thus, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, the reader who submits herself to a careful reading of Augustine's meditation on Ps 4 has to concede that the aim to convert a potential Manichaean reader to Catholic views is unmistakably present here. How does this influence our understanding of the *Confessions* as a whole? First, Augustine is spending a lot of space on the Manichaeans here at the midpoint of the

[40] Once again, my translation is based on Augustine's interpretation of the verse in *Ennarationes in Psalmos* and not on modern interpretations.

Confessions, while the need to hasten and tell only the most important events has been stressed just before the start of this passage:

> *Quando mihi sufficiat tempus commemorandi omnia magna erga nos beneficia in illo tempore praesertim ad alia maiora properanti?* (9.4.7)
>
> [When will I have enough time to recount all your great and generous actions towards me at that time, especially because I have to hasten on to more important matters?]

and is implicitly repeated immediately after it:

> *Quando recordabor omnia dierum illorum feriatorum?* (9.4.12)
>
> [When shall I recall everything that happened in that holiday period?].

Secondly, the passage is marked, by the *Zitatennester*, as a pivotal point in the *Confessions*. The indications are that what is treated here may have importance for the *Confessions* as a whole. And this is confirmed by the analyses presented in chapters 4 and 5 where I show that the communicative purpose and the segment of the intended audience so prominent in 9.4.8–11 remain uppermost, almost throughout, in the mind of the narrator of the *Confessions*.

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CHAPTER FOUR

PROTREPTIC PURPOSE

SIC INVENIETUR

The analysis in the previous chapter of the meditation on Ps 4 in book 9 served as an *in medias res* introduction to the analyses of the *Confessions* offered here and has as its aim to convince the reader that both protreptic purpose and a strong focus on the Manichaean segment of Augustine's audience are present in the *Confessions*. Chapters 4 and 5 constitute a more analytical implementation of the theoretical agenda set up in chapter 2, with chapter 4 focusing on the expression of protreptic purpose throughout the *Confessions* and chapter 5 on indications of the importance of the Manichaean audience throughout. This strategy facilitates the argumentation but also contributes to a fragmentation of what the text offers. Where too much duplication or fragmentation would be involved by keeping the arguments about protreptic purpose apart from those about audience when a specific passage is analysed, I move away from this broad categorization. In chapter 4 I often discuss matters pertaining to audience while chapter 5 is of necessity still concerned with protreptic purpose.

Indeed, one of the strongest arguments for seeing the text as a protreptic is its preoccupation with its audience. In chapter 2 I pointed to the fact that, though the terms protreptic and paraenetic are technically not the same, they have been used interchangeably in ancient times and later. The most important difference between the two terms does not lie in the subject matter of the genre they refer to or to the techniques and devices used in this genre, but in the relationship between the speaker / writer and the audience: protreptic speaks to the not-yet-converted, whom it attempts to convince to make a life-changing choice, and does not assume the audience to have a positive attitude towards the speaker. Paraenetic speaks to the already-converted, about the same life-changing choice, but which has presumably already been made. It exhorts the audience to persist in the chosen course in spite of difficulties and does assume a positive attitude of the audience towards the speaker. It is clear that the very nature of Christian life makes

the co-existence of protreptic and paraenetic elements in their texts almost natural.

In the analyses presented below I argue that in books 1 to 9 of the *Confessions* protreptic purpose dominates (but not with the exclusion of all paraentic intention) while in books 10 to 13 paraenetic concerns seem to be uppermost in the speaker's mind (but once again not with the total exclusion of protreptic purpose). This is bound up closely with the kind of subject matter treated in the different sections, the kind of concerns with the audience expressed in the narrative and the way in which the speaker exposes himself to his readers, as I hope to illustrate in the discussion of protreptic purpose in this chapter as well as in the discussion of audience-related issues in chapter 5. Further, if books 1 to 9 successfully fulfills a protreptic communicative purpose, another reason exists to expect a change after this section: Augustine's conversion story has come to a dramatic conclusion in book 8 and was duly wound down in book 9; if the reader has been induced to pray along with Augustine and eventually to make the same commitments, that is, if the protreptic has been effective, one may assume that from book 10 onwards a different reader may be the primary focus of the narrative: an already (if recently) converted reader, or at least a reader convinced of the merits of trying to follow Augustine's way of reaching God.

The focus of chapter 4 is the author's implicit or explicit articulation of protreptic-paraenetic intention. I start with some observations on indications of protreptic purpose in the opening paragraph of the *Confessions* (4.1). This is followed by an examination of the discrepancies in the speaking voice in the prologue as a whole and in a passage from Book 4, in the section 'persona and protreptic purpose' (4.2). Chapter 4.3 shows how allusions to Matt 7:7 are used throughout the *Confessions* as a vehicle for the expression of protreptic purpose; section 4.4 is an effort to indicate how pervasive the expression of protreptic purpose remains throughout the *Confessions*, while chapter 4.5 takes a look at the role the *Hortensius* and the conversion stories in book 8 play in providing the reader of the *Confessions* with clues as to how this text itself should be read. The last section of this chapter (4.6) examines the protreptic-paraenetic characteristics of the allegorical exposition of the creation story in Genesis in book 13.

4.1. *Indications of Protreptic Purpose in the Opening Paragraph of the* Confessions

If protreptic intent is important in the work as a whole, as the analysis of the passage from book 9 indicates, it may be expected, on the basis of the pervasive technique of foreshadowing in the prologues of ancient literature (amongst others in Virgil, whom we know Augustine knew and loved), to find some indication of this in the opening lines of the *Confessions*. Is there anything in *Conf* 1.1.1 to indicate that what follows may be a protreptic text? I will attempt to show why I think that the underlying progression in this paragraph foreshadows the progression of the *Confessions* as a whole in a way that supports my argument that this whole may be read as a protreptic.[1]

First, I want to argue that the text starts by constituting the tension between what (or where) man is and what (or where) he should be, and that this is the basic tension that exists in a protreptic text.[2] The *Confessions* start with a *confessio laudis;* Augustine proclaims the greatness and praiseworthiness of God:

> *Magnus es, domine, et laudabilis valde. magna virtus tua et sapientiae tuae non est numerus*
>
> ['You are great, Lord, and highly to be praised (Ps 47:2): great is your power and your wisdom is immeasurable' (Ps 146:5)].[3]

Then the focus shifts to man who makes known his desire and his intention to praise this God. The smallness and inadequacy of man is contrasted with the greatness of God:

> *Et laudare te vult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae, et homo circumferens mortalitatem suam, circumferens testimonium peccati sui*
>
> [Man, a little piece of your creation, desires to praise you, a human being 'bearing his mortality with him' (2Cor 4:10), carrying with him the witness of his sin].

The following phrase introduces even more tension into this equation:

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[1] Although the prologue of the *Confessions* is usually seen as the section from 1.1.1 to 1.5.6, and although important themes are put into circulation in the rest of this section, I analyze here only the first paragraph. More is said about the rest of the prologue in 4.2 below.

[2] See O'Donnells' early analysis (1985, 83–87) of the opening chapters of the *Confessions* for a reading that I find in many respects complementary to my own.

[3] From here onwards, all translations given are those by Chadwick (1991).

> *Et testimonium, quia superbis resistis*
>
> [And the witness that you 'resist the proud' (1 Pet 5:5)].

Man tends to be unaware of his own inadequacy, man is proud. And God does not allow the proud to find Him. The next sentences confirm what is implicit in the above: man will not be allowed to maintain this status quo. God incites him to want to praise Him and he will not find rest before the tension has been resolved. This is expressed poignantly in perhaps the most famous phrase from the *Confessions*:

> *Et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te*
>
> [And our heart is restless until it rests in you].

The second leg of my argument rests on the fact that two of the texts alluded to in the closing lines of 1.1.1 are texts that play a prominent role in the expression of protreptic purpose throughout the *Confessions*. The first is the allusion to Romans 10 (O'Donnell 1992, 2: 15), a text both Aune (1991) and Guerra (1995) argue is a protreptic.[4] The allusion becomes even more significant in the light of the fact that the book of Romans is quoted at key points throughout book 8 (the book of the conversion, see O' Donnell 1992, 3:3) and the last three books of the *Confessions* (see my discussion in 4.6 and 5.3 and 5.4 below). If Augustine's readers thought of this text consciously or subconsciously as a protreptic text, it is clear that the prominence of allusions to this book may have influenced their perception of the generic make-up of the *Confessions*. What is more, the very text Augustine reads, which enables him to take the final step and be converted, is a text from Romans (Rom 13).

The second text introduced in 1.1.1 and which I argue in 4.3 below plays a significant role in the expression of protreptic purpose throughout the *Confessions*, is Matt 7:7. This verse is here alluded to very indirectly:

> *Laudabunt dominum qui requirunt eum: quaerentes enim inveniunt eum et invenientes laudabunt eum*
>
> ['They will praise the Lord who seek for him' (Ps 21:27). In seeking him they find him, and in finding they will praise him].

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[4] Ferrari also points towards the literary influence of Paul's letter to the Romans in the *Confessions*. It becomes especially prominent in book 8, and in his opinion (1987, 44) Romans 7:14–25 'seems to have been the inspirational source of the self-revelationary character of the *Confessions*.'

But its presence obtains added importance in the light of its prominence later in the work. The images from Matt 7:7 become an important vehicle for the expression of protreptic intent as I show in 4.3 below. The fact is that Matt 7:7 in itself may be viewed as a miniature protreptic, in the sense that it urges the listener to take action that will result in important change:

> *Petite et dabitur vobis: quaerite et invenietis: pulsate et aperietur vobis*
>
> [Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you].

Apart from a strong presence throughout the work this text is recapitulated in the very closing words of the *Confessions*. This too lends considerably more weight to these words in the prologue and the thread they form throughout the *Confessions*.

Thirdly, the last two questions in the series of questions in 1.1.1 introduce a new role-player: the *praedicator*, and then a *praedicator* with the specific function of helping his audience to start believing, i.e. to be converted:

> *Quomodo autem invocabunt, in quem non crediderunt? Aut quomodo credunt sine praedicante?*
>
> [Yet 'how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe without a preacher?' (Rom 10:14)].

This direct quotation from the book of Romans states the need of a *praedicator* in the process of conversion. The concept of the *praedicator* is touched upon three times in the last seven lines of the paragraph. First we have the quotation of Paul's words, referring to everyone who preaches the Gospel. The next mention occurs in the section where Augustine has for the first time actually moved to a personal confession in first person singular verbs (although others still seem included) and part of this confession is that he (and others) believe because someone has preached to them:

> *Quaeram te, domine, invocans te et invocem te credens in te: praedicatus enim es nobis*
>
> [Lord, I would seek you, calling upon you—and calling upon you is an act of believing in you. You have been preached to us].

Lastly, I find it also significant that paragraph 1 ends with the idea of the *praedicator*. Augustine calls this *praedicator* God's own preacher, *praedicatoris tui*. Here, I prefer Courcelle's suggestion (contra Chadwick 1991, 3) that *praedicatoris tui* refers to Christ, because this gives us a neat

progression at the end of 1.1.1. First, the *praedicator* Paul talks about in Rom 10, i.e. anybody (sent by God) who proclaims the word of God (*quomodo credunt sine praedicante*?); then, the specific *praedicator* or *praedicatores* who were co-responsible for Augustine's conversion, e.g. Ambrose or the conversion stories told by Simplicianus and Ponticianus (*praedicatus enim es nobis*); and lastly, the ultimate God-given *praedicator*, the *filius Dei*, who teaches through his own example, *per humanitatem*, and whom Augustine shows in book 7 to be the only way through which the distance between God and man can be finally bridged:

> *Invocat te, domine, fides mea, quam dedisti mihi, quam inspirasti mihi per humanitatem filii tui, per ministerium praedicatoris tui* (1.1.1)
>
> [My faith, Lord, calls upon you. It is your gift to me. You breathed it into me by the humanity of your Son, by the ministry of your preacher].

The prominence of the figure of the *praedicator* at the end of the first paragraph of the *Confessions* is to me one of the strongest indications that the work may be read as a protreptic, that the role of the *praedicator* is one of the roles Augustine sees himself fulfilling through the writing of the *Confessions*.

At this stage one important question remains: If the *Confessions* are meant to be a protreptic to the Manichaeans, why does Augustine not address them directly? The analysis of *Conf* 9.4.8–11 in chapter 3 has indicated part of the answer: the dramatic situation created in the *Confessions* (Augustine alone before an omniscient God) guarantees a degree of sincerity, otherwise difficult to convince the reader of. The more indirect approach also has a better chance on success. There are indications (see discussion in chapter 5) that Augustine deliberately harnesses the reader's *curiositas* about his personal life (see discussion in chapter 5.2 below), a curiosity that would be considerably diminished if she was to surmise that the text wants to tell her less about Augustine's life than about her own.

4.2. *Persona and Protreptic Purpose*

The question 'whose is the voice speaking in the *Confessions*?' or 'what is the persona embodied in the voice the reader hears in the *Confessions*?' becomes at some stages in the work rather complicated.[5] Here I choose

[5] A full treatment of the different voices that speak in the *Confessions* merits a

to treat the matter in a highly selective and introductory manner with the sole purpose of throwing additional light on the central concern of this investigation: the communicative purpose of the *Confessions*. A factor constantly aggravating the difficulty of knowing when another speaker has been introduced and also of gauging the tone of Augustine's speaking voice is, however, the fact that even neatly edited modern texts like that of O'Donnell cannot easily indicate everything that is scriptural quotation, for Augustine incorporates words and phrases from scripture into his own speech in a way that often makes it impossible to extricate the one from the other.[6]

Let us look at the instances I want to focus on. There are sections in the *Confessions* where the voice that is heard ceases to be that of the bishop-narrator and almost becomes that of the character in the story. The few places where this other voice comes to the surface occur at important points in the *narratio* of Augustine's past life and have considerable implications for my analysis. I analyze only two instances of this occurrence, the speaking voice in the prologue (1.1.1 to 1.5.6) and

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lengthy study in its own right. It is perhaps one of the fields where the categories of contemporary literary theory could provide a useful tool for unravelling the problem, but see Herzog (1984, 242) for the limited usefulness of some of these literary models due to the extraordinary conventions of Augustine's text. There are a number of aspects of the voice(s) speaking in the *Confessions* that I will not examine in any detail here, e.g. direct speech in the *Confessions*, that is, those instances where speakers other than the main narrator (or the exact words of the narrator himself at some stage in the past) are quoted directly or where conversations are represented. Instances in this category that spring to mind are many of the scriptural quotations, those places where Monnica or other prominent characters in the story are quoted directly, or the conversation between Augustine and his erstwhile temptations on the one hand and *Continentia* on the other in book 8. Laurie Douglass (1996, 39–54), for example, makes a case for seeing the use of conversation in the *Confessions* as an indication that the 'substantive element of the episode' (44) has been reached and asserts that Augustine tries to demonstrate 'that a conversation was the site of each significant revelation on his passage to God' (46). Another highly complex and interesting dimension of the speaking voice in the *Confessions* is the presence of the voice of God in the text. Herzog (1984) has shown convincingly that Augustine is not the only one to speak in the *Confessions*, but that the voice of God—speaking through the words cited from his Word—becomes more and more audible as the work progresses and is especially strong in the last three books once the prerequisites for constituting a real dialogue between Augustine and God have been met. Herzog (1984, 229–231) also argues convincingly that only in book 8 does Augustine acquire the ability to answer God through the words of scripture in his turn. This 'scriptural dialogue' comes to a climax in the thirteenth book of the *Confessions*, which resembles a prolonged cento of biblical quotations (Herzog 1984, 241).

[6] Knauer's analysis (1955) of the use of Psalms in the *Confessions* remains the standard work for Augustine's techniques of quotation.

in *Conf* 4.11.16 to 4.12.19 to discover the implications of the device of the incongruent speaking voice for the protreptic purpose of the whole. The prologue is one of the most intricate passages as far as the identity of the speaker is concerned and this is where in many ways the tone for the rest of the work is set. The second passage is analyzed chiefly for the additional understanding of the same discrepancy in the speaking voice that can be gleaned from it, but also for the clear indications it contains of the audience it is aimed at, and, most importantly, for the very apparent protreptic character it displays.

I start with a look at the persona of the speaker in the prologue of the *Confessions*. The speaker of the confession of praise uttered in the opening words is a person who has found and learnt to love God and who knows the Holy Scriptures: he confidently and directly addresses this God, expertly stringing together the words of at least two different Psalms. It is a voice easily identified with that of Augustine the bishop, writing his *Confessions* in Hippo, Northern Africa, during the last years of the fourth century AD.[7] In 1.1.1 we find that the speaker is, his elevated position in the church notwithstanding, or perhaps because of the particular circumstances attached to this position, aware of his own smallness (*aliqua portio creaturae tuae*, repeated for emphasis), his mortality (*circumferens mortalitatem suam*), his sinfulness (*circumferens testimonium peccati sui*) and the fact that he had been unable to find God while he was still a proud man (*testimonium quia superbis resistis*).[8] He praises God because this is what God incites him to do, because this is why he was created, and because he knows that God is the only place where man may find rest:

> *Tu excitas ut laudare te delectet, quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te* (1.1.1)
>
> [You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you].

All of this is perfectly reconcilable with what the reader (then and now) may expect the 4th century bishop of Hippo to say in his *Confessions*.[9]

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[7] Brown (1967, 162) also points to the visibility (or audibility) of the bishop in the text: 'Augustine will select as important, incidents and problems that immediately betray the new bishop of Hippo.'

[8] This is only one of the possible implications of these words.

[9] The reader must remember that even Augustine's first readers (like many readers today) probably knew the main events of his life by the time they picked up the *Confessions*.

The voice in the rest of 1.1.1 where Augustine—as is dictated by classical convention—asks for divine assistance for his task, mirrors the classical education of the bishop which he now uses in the service of his Christian ideals:

> *Da mihi, domine, scire et intellegere*
>
> ['Grant me Lord to know and understand' (Ps 118:34, 73, 144)].

The accumulation of direct and indirect questions in the middle of this first paragraph can be interpreted not as the expression of a lack of knowledge, but as a rhetorical device to introduce the themes of the work as a whole and to elevate the tone of the narrative to a more intellectual level. This is confirmed by the fact that these questions are implicitly but confidently answered by the adept use of Scriptural quotations.[10]

Where, near the end of 1.1.1, the speaker exhorts himself to seek for God (*quaeram te*) this can be interpreted as an exhortation, not to the initial search of the still godless man, but an exhortation to persevere in the striving towards God that has to continue after conversion. This is borne out by the fact that immediately afterwards we find confirmation of the speaker's already converted status, in the statement that God has already been preached to him (*praedicatus enim es nobis*), and that he has already acquired faith in Him through Christ (*fides mea, quam dedisiti mihi, quam inspirasti mihi per humanitatem filii tui, per ministerium praedicatoris tui*).

But there is a different or perhaps rather an additional interpretation possible, one that I find reinforced by my reading of other parts of the work, as will become clear below. When Augustine says, 'Let me seek you as I invoke you,' this is what will happen literally on some level of the narration that follows: the I in the text sometimes becomes the one still seeking for God and ceases to be the one who has already found Him.

Brown's formulation (1967, 164) where he speaks of the relation of present and past in the *Confessions* probably refers to what lies behind my own observation of the shifting persona of the speaking voice:

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[10] These quotations are 'from three different sources (Rom 10: 13–14, Ps 21:27, Matt 7:7), in part themselves questions—but only rhetorical questions. These citations together provide the data required to answer the questions that precede' (O'Donnell 1992, 2:16–17).

> In [the *Confessions*] one constantly senses the tension between the 'then' of the young man and the 'now' of the bishop. The past can come very close: its powerful and complex emotions have only recently passed away; we can still feel their contours through the thin layer of new feeling that has grown over them.

Thus, although the already-converted Augustine is mostly the persona behind the words we hear in the text, there are instances where the contours of the voice of the young not-yet-converted Augustine become discernible.

Further, I am convinced that, in spite of not recognizing the presence of the reader at the outset of the *Confessions*, Augustine, the master rhetorician publishing this work, must always be acutely aware of his audience and the way in which his words may influence them. Add to this the missionary burden Christianity places on its adherents as well as the tradition of conversion texts (discussed in chapter 2.3) within which Augustine works and one has to consent to the likelihood of him wanting his reader to identify with the search of the young Augustine in order to persuade him to eventually make the same decision for conversion.

One device that may enhance this identification is to use in the text the exact words the reader would be expected to utter at that stage, so that the quest in the text becomes the reader's own quest. Douglass (1996, 40) remarks on the relation between identification and persuasion: 'Persuasion occurs only when the observer recognizes himself or herself in [i.e. identifies with] what is being said.' His analysis of the use of direct speech in the *Confessions* starts with a statement that supports my reading: 'Augustine's prose presumes the reader will identify with him and be persuaded. Augustine gives the reader his very prayer; to read is to pray with him' (Douglass 1996, 43).[11]

In the second paragraph of the prologue (*Conf* 1.2.2) the dense texture of the narrative created by the accretion of questions seems to represent a speaking voice that remains a mixture of that of the older

[11] O'Donnell (1992, 3:250) argues that before Book 11 'the reader could remain a voyeur looking on curiously, side by side with A., at A.'s past' and that it is only from Book 11 onwards that 'the reader is urged to share A.'s exploration of the nature of God, and of himself … the reading of the text is itself the participation.' I argue, with Douglass (1996) and Miles (1992 and 1997, see discussion in chapter 1.2.3), that the reader is actively engaged to participate in what the text presents already in the earlier books as well.

and the younger Augustine. On the one hand there are elements that seem to point to the older Augustine: the impression that the questions serve more to indicate the intricacy of the matters to be treated than a real lack of knowledge on these subjects; signs of intimacy with God; evidence of confident knowledge of God and his Word; and of course, the clever rhetorical structure of the whole paragraph:

> *Deum meum, deum et dominum meum … deus meus … deus, qui fecit caelum et terram … an quia sine te non esset quidquid est? … quoniam itaque et ego sum, quid peto ut venias in me, qui non essem, nisi esses in me? non enim ego iam inferi et tamen etiam ibi es. nam etsi descendero in infernum, ades. non ergo essem, deus meus, non omnino essem, nisi esses in me … deus meus, qui dixit: caelum et terram ego impleo*
>
> [My God, my God and Lord … my God … 'God made heaven and earth' (Gen 1:1) … Without you, whatever exists would not exist … I also have being. So why do I request you to come to me when, unless you were within me, I would have no being at all? I am not now possessed by Hades; yet even there are you (Ps 138:8): for 'even if I were to go down to Hades, you would be present.' Accordingly, my God, I would have no being, I would not have any existence, unless you were in me … For God has said 'I fill heaven and earth' (Jer 23:24)].

And yet, the 'contours' of the voice of the young Augustine, the one who still has to find the answers to these questions in a slow an arduous process that will unfold as the narrative progresses, remains discernible under the surface. Once again we can read the *invocabo deum meum*, literally, as a statement of what this young Augustine will do in the narrative that follows, namely to (learn how to) call God into himself. We know that in the *Confessions* the reader is not allowed quick access to the answers the bishop has found with such great trouble. She has to complete, step by step, the arduous journey towards conversion, which, for Augustine, could only follow after a firm grasp on the nature of God's existence had been attained to. This is the mission mapped out by the questions here in 1.2.2 but which will take up to book 7 of the *Confessions* to accomplish:

> *Et quis locus est in me quo veniat in me deus meus, quo deus veniat in me, deus qui fecit caelum et terram? itane, domine deus meus, est quicquam in me, quod capiat te? … quo te invoco cum in te sim? aut unde venias in me?*
>
> [But what place is there in me where my God can enter into me? 'God made heaven and earth' (Gen 1:1). Where may he come to me? Lord my God, is there any room in me which can contain you? …How can I call on you to come if I am already in you? Or where can you come from so as to be in me?].

The questions about the nature of God continue through 1.3.3 and up to the last repetition (*quid es ergo, deus meus?*)[12] at the beginning of 1.4.4, before they receive at last a highly confident answer in the triumphant spate of descriptive words and phrases (that stretches over more than ten lines of O'Donnell's text edition) now clearly in the voice of the older Augustine: *summe, optime, potentissime, omnipotentissime, misericordissime et iustissime…* [Most high, utterly good, utterly powerful, most omnipotent, most merciful and most just …] and what follows.

In 1.5.5 to 1.5.6, however, the voice of the young Augustine becomes audible once again. At the opening of 1.5.5 Augustine says:

> *Quis mihi dabit adquiescere in te? Quis dabit mihi ut venias in cor meum et inebries illud, ut obliviscar mala mea et unum bonum meum amplectar, te?*
>
> [Who will enable me to find rest in you? Who will grant me that you come to my heart and intoxicate it, so that I forget my evils and embrace my one and only good, yourself?].

The reader expecting to hear the voice of the bishop should find this a little perplexing. Has Augustine not already found God and found his rest in Him? Or, if we can still accept that he is only expressing dissatisfaction with the quality or quantity of the rest he has attained to, has God not already entered the heart of the confident speaker of the opening paragraph of the work and has he not already embraced Him (*praedicatus enim es nobis. incovat te, domine, fides mea, quam dedisti mihi*)?

The next lines temporarily remove the uneasiness. The reader may assume that the previous questions were also an indication of the themes Augustine is going to treat and part of his expression of wonder at the high God's involvement with small man, part of the problems he asks God to help him speak about, when she hears Augustine say:

> *Quid mihi es? miserere ut loquar. quid tibi sum ipse, ut amari te iubeas a me et, nisi faciam irascaris mihi et mineris ingentes miserias? parvane ipsa est si non amem te? ei mihi! dic mihi per miserationes tuas, domine deus meus, quid sis mihi*
>
> [What are you to me? Have mercy so that I may find words. What am I to you that you command me to love you, and that, if I fail to love you, you are angry with me and threaten me with vast miseries? If I do not love you, is that but a little misery? What a wretch I am! In your mercies, Lord God, tell me what you are to me].

But the voice becomes confused again in the following lines:

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[12] Note that I follow here O'Donnell's reading 'quid es' instead of the more familiar reading represented for example by the Teubner text.

> *Dic animae meae, 'salus tua ego sum': sic dic ut audiam. ecce aures cordis mei ante te, domine. aperi eas et dic animae meae, 'salus tua ego sum.' curram post vocem hanc et apprehendam te*
>
> ['Say to my soul, I am your salvation' (Ps 34:3). Speak to me so that I may hear. See the ears of my heart before you, Lord. Open them and 'say to my soul, I am your salvation.' After that utterance I will run and lay hold on you].

Of course the words, *dic animae meae, 'salus tua ego sum,'* is a direct quotation which O'Donnell (1992, 2:29) interprets (correctly I think) as a petition for 'divine help to speak' through using 'the word of another man asking God to speak to him.' But in the following words (*sic dic ut audiam*) Augustine does explicitly appropriate the idea,[13] implying that he himself needs to hear the message '*salus tua ego sum*.' If this is so, what the voice asks God here to tell his soul is something that the bishop's soul must long ago have learnt to understand, something that he must regularly have told the audiences of his sermons in the church of Hippo. Also the implications of the imperative in *aperi* and the future tense in *curram* and *adprehendam* are perhaps more applicable to the not-yet-converted than to the writer of the *Confessions*. The reader knows that she is never allowed to listen uninterruptedly to the voice of the young Augustine. The most prominent perspectives and opinions expressed in the *Confessions*, and the commentary provided by Augustine in what Feldmann (1994, 1163–1164) calls the reflexive level ('reflexive Ebene') of the work, remain those of the already converted bishop speaking from Hippo.

Douglass (1996, 45), where he discusses the influence of Paul's words in Romans on Augustine at the final moment of his conversion, remarks on the power of imperatives in the second person singular to draw the reader into identifying with the speaker in the text. The same Augustine who knows the effect those imperatives in the text had on him is surely aware of the effect of using this same device in his own text: it does in fact make the reader say to God: *dic animae meae, 'salus tua ego sum': sic dic ut audiam*. What is more, a reader reading out loud may be even more susceptible to the protreptic power of the words uttered by his own voice than one reading silently.

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[13] 'Augustin setzt um die Zitat-Klammer der persönlichen Applikation (1,5,5) noch eine zweite der nur ihn selbst betreffenden Applikationsforderung: "sic dic, ut audiam"' (Herzog 1984, 218).

Let us now look at the passage in Book 4 where Augustine once again speaks to his own soul. What has been illustrated in the analysis above, namely that the voice that ceases to be that of the bishop and becomes almost imperceptibly that of the character, is something that also surfaces in the narrative at 4.11.16. Here an additional problem, which in the previous passage remains latent, comes to the fore: there is an inconsistency between the voice that speaks and the soul it calls *anima mea* in these speeches. Where in *Conf* 1.5.5 the discrepancy exists for a moment and is then resolved by once again identifying the speaker with the soul (*dic animae meae … sic dic ut audiam*), we have in Book 4 a prolonged apostrophe of the soul.[14]

Like in the passages from the prologue analyzed above the information and the exhortations directed at this soul makes it clear that this can only be the soul of the young, not-yet-converted Augustine. But the words uttered are not the kind the young Augustine would have known to use. They are the kind of words the bishop of Hippo might employ in an attempt to lead some searching soul to conversion (I quote only the most striking phrases from a passage that sustains this apostrophe to the soul through paragraphs 16 and 17 and up to the beginning of 18 [4.11.16, 4.11.17, 4.12.18]):

> ***Noli*** *esse vana, anima mea, et* ***obsurdescere*** *in aure cordis tumultu vanitatis tuae.* ***audi et tu***: ***verbum ipsum clamat ut redeas***, *et ibi est locus quietis imperturbabilis … ibi fige mansionem tuam, ibi commenda quidquid inde habes, anima mea; saltem fatigata fallaciis, veritati commenda quidquid tibi est a veritate, et non perdes aliquid, et reflorescent putria tua, et* ***sanabuntur omnes languores tui*** *… Ut quid perversa sequeris carnem tuam? Ipsa te sequatur* ***conversam***
>
> [Do not be vain, my soul. Do not deafen your heart's ear with the tumult of your vanity. Even you have to listen. The Word himself cries to you to return. There is the place of undisturbed quietness … Fix your dwelling there. Put in trust there whatever you have from him, my soul, at least now that you are wearied of deceptions. Entrust to the truth whatever has come to you from the truth. You will lose nothing. The decayed

[14] O'Donnell does not remark on the device in 1.5.5 but his interpretation at 4.11.16 supports my observations on this same passage, although he interprets it differently: 'The line between past and present is blurred. A. speaks as if in the present, using words only available to him in the present … but the address is apt to the condition in which he found himself … The apostrophe here does not address the anima as it was twenty years earlier; rather A. turns from contemplating his fall, as he completes its description, to address the soul by way of admonition against the future. That what he says here in paragraphs 15–19 is what he should have said at the time adds irony' (1992, 2:238).

> parts of you will receive a new flowering, and all your sicknesses will be healed (Matt 4:23; Ps 102:3) … Why then are you perversely following the leading of your flesh? If you turn away from it, it has to follow you].

I have underlined in the passage those phrases that indicate protreptic intent while the rest of the quotation serves to indicate that the soul Augustine speaks to is the soul of someone who is not yet converted. Here lies at least one of the keys to the device of the shifting persona in these sections: it brings home a forceful protreptic message. It is a device that temporarily allows the character of the young Augustine to dominate the narrator, the older Augustine. It grips the reader in a manner that speaks louder than any amount of preaching by the narrator could have done. But its effectiveness lies in its subtlety, in the fact that the reader has the impression of being absorbed in eavesdropping on an intense and intimate moment in Augustine's inner life without realizing the subconscious effect uttering or reading these words may have on her own inner life.

In 4.12.18 the effect of the apostrophe is heightened by further embedding: the voice tells its own soul to address other souls and this gives rise to a protreptic passage in effect also directly addressing the readers of the *Confessions* in the second person plural. But still the protreptic functions at a slight remove, still it targets the subconscious and emotional rather than the intellectual faculties of the reader: professedly it is Augustine's soul talking to other (unidentified) souls and not Augustine talking to his readers (once again I try to quote only the most salient phrases):

> *Rape ad eum tecum quas potes et dic eis: 'hunc amemus: ipse fecit haec et non est longe. non enim fecit atque abiit, sed ex illo in illo sunt. … redite, praevaricatores, ad cor et inhaerete illi, qui fecit vos. state cum eo et stabitis, requiescite in eo et quieti eritis. quo itis in aspera? quo itis? … quo vobis adhuc et adhuc ambulare vias difficiles et laboriosas? non est requies, ubi quaeritis eam. quaerite quod quaeritis, sed ibi non est, ubi quaeritis. … Et descendit huc ipsa vita nostra et tulit mortem nostram et occidit eam de abundantia vitae suae et tonuit clamans, ut redeamus hinc ad eum … non enim tardavit, sed cucurrit clamans dictis, factis, morte, vita, descensu, ascensu, clamans ut redeamus ad eum. et discessit ab oculis, ut redeamus ad cor et inveniamus eum … filii hominum, quo usque graves corde? numquid et post descensum vitae non vultis ascendere et vivere? sed quo ascenditis, quando in alto estis et posuistis in caelo os vestrum? descendite, ut ascendatis' … dic eis ista, ut plorent in convalle plorationis, et sic eos rape tecum ad deum, quia de spiritu eius haec dicis eis, si dicis ardens igne caritatis*
>
> [So seize what souls you can to take with you to him, and say to them: 'Him we love; he made these things and is not far distant.' For he did not create and then depart; the things derived from him have their being

> in him … 'Return, sinners, to your heart' (Isa 46:8 LXX), and adhere to him who made you. Stand with him and you will stand fast. Rest in him and you will be at rest. Where are you going to along rough paths? What is the goal of your journey? … With what end in view do you again and again walk along difficult and laborious paths (Wisd 5:7)? There is no rest where you seek for it. Seek for what you seek, but it is not where you are looking for it … He who for us is life itself descended here and endured our death and slew it by the abundance of his life. In a thunderous voice he called us to return to him … He did not delay, but ran crying out loud by his words, deeds, death, life, descent, and ascent—calling us to return to him. And he has gone from our sight that we should 'return to our heart' (Isa 46:8) and find him there … 'Sons of men, how long will you be heavy at heart?' (Ps 4:3). Surely after the descent of life, you cannot fail to wish to ascend and live? But where will you ascend when you are 'set on high and have put your mouth in heaven'? (Ps 72:9). Come down so that you can ascend … Tell souls that they should 'weep in the valley of tears' (Ps 83:7). So take them with you to God, for by his Spirit you declare these things to them if you say it burning with the fire of love].

Let us consider for a moment the implications of the context where the passage (from which both long quotations above come) occurs for its interpretation. On a first level, this passage is introduced at a point where the narrative has reached a climax of emotional intensity in Augustine's descriptions of the sweetness of friendship, the agony of losing a friend, and the transience of life in general. But we are also reminded by the content of the passage that Book 4 forms part of the description of the intellectual journey away from Manichaeism that spans books 3 to 7. Some of the terms used here remind us of the meditation on Ps 4, analyzed in chapter 3, which I have already described as direct protreptic to the Manichaeans: the references to *vanitas*, *fallaciae* and *veritas*, the medical imagery (in the apostrophe of the speaker to his own soul), and especially the emphasis on Christ's humanity and his mediating role, the use of the phrase *quousque graves corde*, and the accusation that these souls are subject to *superbia* in *sed quo ascenditis, quando in alto estis et posuistis in caelo os vestrum? descendite, ut ascendatis* (in the address of the soul to the other souls).

That we are justified in seeing the elements discussed above as indicative of Augustine's preoccupation with his Manichaean audience, is confirmed by the fact that the soul the speaker exhorts to (re)turn to God, to be converted, is the soul of the young Augustine at the stage when it was still in the grip of Manichaean thinking. We are therefore not surprised to find that the content is especially apt for addressing those readers who are still Manichaeans at the stage when they read

the *Confessions*. I surmise that Augustine is perfectly aware of this and is in fact addressing his Manichaean audience as much as his own soul in the opening words of 4.11.16: *noli esse vana … et obsurdescere in aure cordis tumultu vanitatis tuae. audi et tu* and what follows.

The fact that a passage that displays concern with his Manichaean audience is embedded in a section where *amicitia* is a prominent theme may also be significant. I think that Augustine intentionally uses the strong bonds of friendship that probably existed between him and many of his co-Manichaeans to add yet another dimension to the appeal he makes to them. This is supported by the words in paragraph 20 immediately following the speech of the soul, which puts it in perspective and reinforces the idea that *amicitia* is important here:

> *Haec tunc non noveram, et amabam pulchra inferiora et ibam in profundum, et dicebam amicis meis, 'num amamus aliquid nisi pulchrum?' …*
>
> [At that time I did not know this. I loved beautiful things of a lower order, and I was going down to the depths. I used to say to my friends: 'Do we love anything except that which is beautiful? …].

The Augustine of that era (*tunc*) was still a Manichaean and many of the *amici* mentioned here were in all probability also Manichaeans.

The impression that Augustine has the Manichaeans in mind is sustained in the section where the soul addresses other souls, firstly because in the opening hortative verb (in the first person plural: *hunc amemus)* Augustine identifies the quest of the own soul with that of the others, telling them, in effect: you need the same exhortation as I, therefore let us (both I and you, souls) love Him. This is followed by a repetition of the consolation that has become a Leitmotiv in the *Confessions*: *ipse fecit haec et non est longe*. Even though man may be unaware of God's presence He is never far away.

Two lines further the imperatives and indicatives in the second person plural start: *redite, state, requiescite, itis, amatis*, up to *quaeritis*. The passage recapitulates one of the ideas of the opening paragraph of the work that I have described as part of a protreptic progression there: namely the references to seeking and to finding rest. Furthermore, it is important to note that Augustine's soul is not speaking to souls who are unconcerned about their salvation, but to souls searching for it seriously, even though they may be prevaricating, falling into unnecessary polemics, or taking the wrong routes. There is no denying that this description of the other souls' search shows many similarities to the description of Augustine's own search described in books 1 to 8 of the

Confessions, a search that was for a large part of this quest governed, or as he interprets it, hampered, by Manichaean thinking.

Paragraph 19 focuses sharply on Christ, on his humanity and his redemptive role, an issue that, as I have indicated in chapter 3, was a constant point of contention between the Catholics and the Manichaeans. The analysis in chapter 3 also referred to the *tochme-sotme* pair, the concept of calling and answering that plays an important role in Manichaean liturgy and literature. In 4.12.19 the references to calling (here Christ calling out to man to return to Him) are even more persistent than they were in 9.4.8–11: *tonuit,* ***clamans*** *ut redeamus hinc ad eum … non enim tardavit, sed cucurrit* ***clamans*** *dictis, factis, morte, vita, descensu, ascensu,* ***clamans*** *ut redeamus ad eum … ut redeamus ad eum.* The use of these expressions of course also embodies a protreptic purpose, which is further strengthened by the utilization of protreptic topoi as in the accumulation of verbs referring to traveling and roads (*redeamus, processit, procedens, ad currendam viam, cucurrit, descensu, ascensu, discessit, abscessit, reliquit, recessit, venit, ascendere, ascenditis, descendite, ascendatis*), medical terminology (*cui confitetur anima mea et sanat eam*), and the exemplum of the vita of Christ (*clamans dictis, factis, morte, vita, descensu, ascensu*). Another technique used here reminds of 9.4.8–11, namely the identification of the soul (who speaks) with the souls it addresses through the use of first person plural verbs and pronouns (*vita nostra, mortem nostram, redeamus, ad nos, inveniamus, nobiscum*) that occur with high frequency especially in the first part of paragraph 19.

Although technically the prayer stance of the confession has not been broken, this is one of the sections where the preoccupation with the well-being of other souls (including that of the reader) is so strong, that the passage may almost be perceived as a direct protreptic addressed at the reader. I argue that at some level this is exactly what it is designed to be.

4.3. *Allusion to Matthew 7:7 and the Expression of Protreptic Purpose*

Describing the *Confessions* as a quest is common. That the idea of this quest and its successful completion may be expressed by the verbs *quaerere* and *invenire* among others is to be expected. But the verb *quaerere* and its counterpart *invenire* in the *Confessions* stand for much more, mainly because from the first appearance in the work these words evoke

a series of allusions to Matt 7:7 that gain in importance as the narrative progresses. Knauer's remarks (1957, 240) already point to the thematic and structural importance of Matt 7:7 in the *Confessions*:[15]

> Dieses Zitat verklammert die letzten drei Bücher der *Konfessionen* … nach mehreren Anspielungen im 11. Buche zu Beginn des 12. Buches ausführlich zitiert, beschließt es das ganze Werk in feierlich stilisierter Form. Es klingt aber … auch schon im Prooemium des 1. Buches an. Damit wird es bis zu einem gewissen Grade das Leitmotiv für das immer wieder neubegonnene Suchen nach Gott. Das 'Finden' Gottes ist zugleich das *intellegere* Gottes, das aber nur Gott selbst gibt, wie es die letzten Worte der Konfessionen formulieren.

Here I intend to show first how, as the narrative of the *Confessions* progresses, the pair *quaerere* and *invenire* accrues meaning through repetitive use and through association with other scriptural quotations, so that in the end the words become loaded concepts with far more than the normal semantic reach of *quaerere* and *invenire*. Secondly, I want to argue that this same word pair supports the expression of protreptic purpose. Of course *quaerere* and / or *invenire* do not *per se* constitute the expression of protreptic purpose, but these verbs are used in the *Confessions* in a way reminiscent of what I described above as the discrepancy in the speaking voice. There are many instances where they are the vehicles of a description in the first person of an ongoing quest that must in actual fact already have been completed by its subject at the specific stage in the narrative. This displacement of the action may have the function of showing the reader how to conduct the quest, of putting into the reader's mouth the words with which to formulate his or her thoughts on this quest.

Let us return to how the allusions to Matt 7:7 function in the *Confessions*. Knowing that I run the risk of stating the obvious I nevertheless want to spell out that 'Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you' is on a literal level a description of everyday events that has acquired an allegorical interpretation with metaphysical implications in a Christian context.[16] On

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[15] Various other scholars also remark on the prominence of allusions to this verse in the *Confessions*. See for example Kienzler (1989, 127): 'Vielleicht das wichtigste Schrifzitat in den gesamten Konfessionen ist bekanntlich Mt 7,7f.;' and Ferrari's insistence (1994) on the role of 'petitionary knocking' based on allusions to Matt 7:7 and the function of this text in the *Confessions*.

[16] The interpretation given in scripture itself, in Matt 7: 9–11, represents but one possibility: ' Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a

the literal level we 'see' in our mind's eye a person requesting to receive something (a hungry child asking for a loaf of bread), seeking to find an object (a woman seeking for her lost drachma) or knocking at a door in order to be let in. On the allegorical level this is open not only to the explication in Matt 7:9–11 but also to the other more intellectual interpretations Augustine makes the image carry in the *Confessions*. Through a process of repetition and association the reader soon starts to assume the implicit object of any form of *quaerere* or *invenire* to be the ultimate goal of life, Truth or God.

What O'Donnell (1992, 2:15–16) recognizes as the first quotation of Matt 7:7 in *Conf* 1.1.1 is a partial quotation intertwined, as he also points out, with the quotation of two other sections from scripture (Rom 10:13–14, which brings into circulation the verbs *invocare* and *credere* and the idea of the *praedicator*; and Ps 21:27 that brings with it *laudare* and *requirere*, the latter as an equivalent for *quaerere*). This instance, in my opinion, already illustrates the salient characteristics of Augustine's use of the *quaerere*-complex: firstly, any reference to *quaerere* and/or *invenire* can evoke the whole of Matt 7:7 (for an audience that we suppose were familiar with this section of scripture, Catholics and Manichaeans alike), and secondly, the allusion is often accompanied by quotations of other passages from scripture in a way that makes the connotations associated with it accumulate as the text progresses. This means that, while O'Donnell correctly indicates the other quotations of Matt 7:7 as occurring in book 6 (6.4.5; 6.11.18; 6.11.20), book 11 (11.2.3; 11,22,28), and books 12 (12.1.1; 12.12.15; 12.15.22; 12.24.33) and 13 (13.38.53, the very last words of the *Confessions*), I try to show below that the power of this verse and the imagery associated with it is in fact far more prevalent throughout the *Confessions* than these statistics seem to indicate.

Let us look at some passages where the *quaerere*-complex occurs, with a view of showing how frequently the image of seeking and finding is used in the *Confessions*. First, up to book 7 the occurrence of these words very often indicates the misdirected nature of Augustine's search—searching for the wrong object (in 3.1.1):

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stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!' The translations of Matt 7:7–9 given here are from the NRSV.

Quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare, et oderam securitatem et viam sine muscipulis

[I sought for an object for my love; I was in love with love, and I hated safety and a path free of snares (Wisd 14:11; Ps 90:3)];

searching in the wrong manner in 3.6.11, where the intellectual quality of the quest is also brought to the fore:

Cum te non secundum intellectum mentis, … sed secundum sensum carnis quaererem

[In seeking for you I followed not the intelligence of the mind … but the mind of the flesh];

in 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 (where the third person plural verbs refer to the Manichaeans of which Augustine had been one):

Non religiose quaerunt … non pie quaerunt

[They do not in a religious spirit investigate …they do not seek in a devout spirit];

in 6.4.5 where we have one of the occurrences of the *pulsare* element of Matt 7:7, which occurs (like *petere*) much less often than *quaerere*:

Pulsans proponerem quomodo credendum esset, non insultans opponerem quasi ita creditum esset

[I should have knocked (Matt 7:7) and inquired about the meaning of this belief, and not insulted and opposed it, as if the belief meant what I thought];

in 6.11.20:

Amans beatam vitam timebam illam in sede sua et ab ea fugiens quaerebam eam

[I longed for the happy life, but was afraid of the place where it has its seat, and fled from it at the same time as I was seeking for it];

or in 7.5.7:

Quaerebam unde malum, et male quaerebam, et in ipsa inquisitione mea non videbam malum

[I searched for the origin of evil, but I searched in a flawed way and did not see the flaw in my very search];

and searching in the wrong places in 4.12.18:

Non est requies ubi quaeratis eam. quaerite quod quaeritis, sed ibi non est ubi quaeritis. beatam vitam quaeritis in regione mortis: non est illic

[There is no rest where you seek for it. Seek for what you seek, but it is not where you are looking for it. You seek the happy life in the region of death; it is not there];

or in 6.1.1:

> *Et quaerebam te foris a me, et non inveniebam deum cordis mei. et veneram in profundum maris, et diffidebam et desperabam de inventione veri*
>
> [I was seeking for you outside myself, and I failed to find 'the God of my heart' (Ps 72:26). I had come into the depth of the sea (Ps 67:23). I had no confidence, and had lost hope that truth could be found].

Augustine however, makes sure that his reader realizes that God is in actual fact directing the search unbeknown to the seeker in 2.2.4:

> *Nam tu semper aderas, misericorditer saeviens et amarissimis aspergens offensionibus omnes inlicitas iucunditates meas, ut ita quaererem sine offensione iucundari, et ubi hoc possem, non invenirem quicquam praeter te, domine, praeter te, qui fingis dolorem in praecepto et percutis ut sanes et occidis nos ne moriamur abs te*
>
> [For you were always with me, mercifully punishing me, touching with a bitter taste all my illicit pleasures. Your intention was that I should seek delights unspoilt by disgust and that, in my quest where I could achieve this, I should discover it to be in nothing except you Lord, nothing but you. You 'fashion pain to be a lesson' (Ps 93:20 LXX), you 'strike to heal,' you bring death upon us so that we should not die apart from you (Deut 32:39)].

Man is not the only one searching, God also seeks out man, as 5.2.2 implies:

> *Fugiant a te … ubi tu non invenis eos?… solus es praesens etiam his qui longe fiunt a te*
>
> [Where have those who fled from your face gone? Where can they get beyond the reach of your discovery? (Ps 138) …You alone are always present even to those who have taken themselves far from you];

and as 11.2.4 states explicitly:

> *Christum … per quem nos quaesisti non quaerentes te, quaesisti autem ut quaereremus te*
>
> [By him you sought us when we were not seeking you (Rom 10:20). But you sought us that we should seek you].

Important for this notion is also 12.1.1 where the action of knocking is ascribed to the words of scripture:

> *Multa satagit cor meum, domine, in hac inopia vitae meae, pulsatum verbis sanctae scripturae tuae*[17]

[17] See O'Donnell (1992, 3: 166 and 301) for other instances of scripture knocking at the heart of man.

> [In my needy life, Lord, my heart is much exercised under the impact made by the words of your holy scripture].

Of course not all instances where the verbs *quaerere* and *invenire* and their derivatives (or the other verbs from Matt 7:7, *petere* and *accipere*, *pulsare* and *aperiri*) are used evoke the imagery of Matt 7:7, but the few examples discussed above should serve to illustrate that very often this is indeed the case.

Let us look at a number of other instances where the use of the Matt 7:7 imagery plays a significant role in the narrative. At the end of 1.6.10 Augustine is lead by his musings about his own infancy to a reflection about time in a passage that clearly foreshadows Book 11 of the *Confessions*. This is followed by another oblique reference to Matt 7:7:

> *Quid ad me, si quis non intellegat? gaudeat et ipse dicens, 'quid est hoc?' gaudeat etiam sic, et amet* ***non inveniendo invenire potius quam inveniendo non invenire te***
>
> [If anyone finds your simultaneity beyond his understanding, it is not for me to explain it. Let him be content to say 'What is this?' (Exod 16:15). So too let him rejoice and delight in finding you who are beyond discovery rather than fail to find you by supposing you to be discoverable].

The first sentence seems to deny concern for whoever is unable to follow his rhetoric but the rest of the passage once again displays Augustine's desire for the salvation of his audience, i.e. betrays his protreptic intentions: *invenire deum* is more important for the hypothetical person Augustine speaks about here than a solution to the problem of what time is.

Next, I want to look at book 6.1.1 where we have an example of how the imagery is invested with accrued meaning through the association with other scriptural quotations. After two opening questions, Augustine says (in 6.1.1):

> *Et ambulabam per tenebras et lubricum et quaerebam te foris a me, et non inveniebam deum cordis mei … et desperabam de inventione veri*
>
> [I was walking through darkness and 'a slippery place' (Ps 34:6). I was seeking for you outside myself, and I failed to find 'the God of my heart' (Ps 72:26) … and had lost hope that truth could be found].

It is clear that the imagery of seeking and finding is used to sum up how the quest has progressed up to this point and that here the quest

image is fused with the image of the way, i.e. the image of the prodigal son, implicit in *ambulare* and *lubricum*.[18]

This is also the case in 6.5.8 where we have *invenire*, coupled with the *via* image as well as medical imagery:

> *Sed … semper tamen credidi et esse te et curam nostri gerer, etiamsi ignorabam vel quid sentiendum esset de substantia tua vel quae via duceret aut reduceret ad te. ideoque cum essemus infirmi ad inveniendam liquida ratione veritatem et ob hoc nobis opus esset auctoritate sanctarum litterarum, iam credere coeperam*
>
> [But at least I always retained belief both that you are and that you care for us, even if I did not know what to think about your substantial nature or what way would lead, or lead me back, to you. So since we were too weak to discover the truth by pure reasoning and therefore needed the authority of the sacred writings, I now began to believe].

Let us move on to the more expansive use of allusion to Matt 7:7 in 6.11.18–20. O'Donnell (1992, 2: 329) describes this section with the title, 'State of mind: interior monologue.' It is the first subsection in the last part of book 6 which he gives the overarching title 'Perplexities.' It is clear already from these titles that once again the allusions to Matt 7:7 is a vehicle for the evaluation of the state of the quest at this stage in Augustine's life. Two of the three elements in Matt 7:7 are present in this lively interior dialogue with its 'ironic quality of … self-representation' (O'Donnell 1992, 2:371), the *quaerere* and *invenire* pair (by far the most dominant) and the *pulsare* and *aperiri* pair (used only twice in 6.11.18–20, but an important indication that in this typical use of *quaerere* and *invenire* Augustine does have the whole of Matt 7:7 in mind).

It is interesting to note that Augustine here goes back to the beginning of his quest, the reading of the *Hortensius*,

> *Recolens quam longum tempus esset ab undevicensimo anno aetatis meae, quo fervere coeperam studio sapientiae … et ecce … in eodem luto haesitans aviditate fruendi praesentibus fugientibus et dissipantibus me*
>
> [As I anxiously reflected how long a time had elapsed since the nineteenth year of my life, when I began to burn with a zeal for wisdom … and here I was … and still mucking about in the same mire in a state of indecision, avid to enjoy present fugitive delights which were dispersing my concentration],

[18] Knauer (1957, 226) quotes the opening lines of book 6 in a way that implies his interpretation of the references as being part of the peregrinatio-image and Pine-Coffin (1961, 111) translates: 'I was walking on a treacherous *path*, in darkness' (my emphasis).

as an introduction to the interior monologue that is an ironic skip through his (lack of) progress up to now. We have here a powerful warning about how time can be lost in a fruitless quest. We also have the fusion of a number of elements we have encountered before and that are all appropriate in the context of a protreptic text: the fire imagery associated with the reading of the protreptic text, the *Hortensius* (*fervere coeperam*), the image of the prodigal son (in *dissipantibus*)[19] and (in the following quotation) the repetitive use of *quaerere* and *invenire*, here together with *pulsare* and *aperiri*. It is a pity not to quote this entertaining passage in entirety, but for the sake of brevity I will only quote the occurrences of *quaerere*, *invenire*, *pulsare* and *aperiri*, reminding the reader that these are found within the scope of 27 lines (in O'Donnell's text, 1992, 1:68) in 6.11.18 and the first section of 6.11.19:

> *Cras inveniam … immo quaeramus diligentius … figam pedes in eo gradu in quo puer a parentibus positus eram, donec inveniatur perspicua veritas. sed ubi quaeretur? quando quaeretur? … ubi ipsos codices quaerimus? Unde aut quando comparamus? … et dubitamus pulsare, quo aperiantur cetera? … conferamus nos ad solam inquisitionem veritatis … ergo et hoc quaerendum … quid cunctamur igitur relicta spe saeculi conferre nos totos ad quaerendum deum et vitam beatam?*
>
> [Tomorrow I shall find it … Yet let us seek more diligently … Let me fix my feet on that step where as a boy I was placed by my parents, until clear truth is found. But where may it be sought? When can it be sought? … Where should we look for the books we need? Where and when can we obtain them? … Why do we hesitate to knock at the door which opens the way to all the rest? … Let us concentrate ourselves exclusively on the investigation of the truth … this too, then, is a question needing scrutiny … Why then do we hesitate to abandon secular hopes and to dedicate ourselves wholly to God and the happy life?].

Augustine ends the monologue with the words *cum haec dicebam* at the start of 6.11.20 which functions as a conclusion to this section and once again contains allusions to Matt 7:7, in this case combined with the use of medical imagery:

> *Amans beatam vitam timebam illam in sede sua et ab ea fugiens quaerebam eam … putabam enim me miserum fore nimis si feminae privarer amplexibus, et medicinam misericordiae tuae ad eandem infirmitatem sanandam non cogitabam … utique dares, si gemitu interno pulsarem aures tuas…*
>
> [I longed for the happy life, but was afraid of the place where it has its seat, and fled from it at the same time as I was seeking for it … I thought

[19] See O'Donnell's discussion (1992, 2:372) of the echoes of the story of the prodigal son and of Is.11:12.

> that I would become very miserable if I were deprived of the embraces of a woman. I did not think the medicine of your mercy could heal that infirmity … You would surely have granted it if my inward groaning had struck your ears].

By now the object associated with the search expressed in *quaerere* (and *invenire*) has so often been stated as *deus* or the *beata vita* that any allusion to Matt 7:7 has come to suggest the whole intellectual quest, the very process of Augustine's conversion, and if the reader has obeyed the text in identifying with Augustine, then also the reader's conversion.

As book 8 is discussed more fully elsewhere, a few remarks will suffice here. First, I find it significant that where in previous books the *quaerere* part of the *quaerere-invenire* pair has clearly dominated we find the opposite in book 8. The book starts on a jubilant note, reflecting the resolution at last of the persistent problems of books 1 to 6 in book 7, but also making clear that the final goal is not yet reached. Paragraph 8.1.2 describes Augustine's doubts, but still contains some confident phrases:

> *Inveneram te creatorem nostrum et verbum tuum apud te deum … et inveneram iam bonam margaritam*
>
> [I had found you our Creator and your Word who is God beside you … And now I had discovered the good pearl],

while 8.3.6–8 muses about man's tendency to be more joyful about finding what was lost, than about having what was never lost. In 8.3.6 the *quaerere-invenire* pair is associated with the 'constellation of echoes … of Luke 15' (O'Donnell 1992, 3: 25): the shepherd retrieving the lost sheep; the woman finding her drachma and once again the prodigal son, received with open arms by his father. As is appropriate for this stage of the narrative the focus of the *quaerere-invenire* imagery has moved from the arduous task of seeking to the joyful stage of finding. Once again the image has acquired new connotations.

Having illustrated the way in which Augustine uses the Matt 7:7 imagery it remains now only to have a look at the function of allusions to this verse (and the subsequent one) in books 10 to 13 of the *Confessions*, that I take to be more paraenetic in intention. In book 10 passages with *quaerere* are often passages inquiring into the nature of the quest for God. Do I find God in memory? How do I find God in memory? What does this imply about foreknowledge of the *vita beata*? Also the losing and finding theme of book 8 is taken to a different (metaphysical) level: Did I first have and then at some stage lose the *beata vita*? I will not go

into the (neo-Platonic) philosophical ramifications of this question here but ask only one question: Does the use of the *quaerere* image in book 10 corroborate my reading of the *Confessions* as a protreptic-paraenetic text? A statistical look at book 10 indicates the high frequency of the *quaerere-invenire* pair: in its almost 28 and a half pages *quaerere* occurs 39 times, and *invenire* 34 times. Add to this a number of occurrences of *aperire*, *petere, accipere* and *pulsare*, and it becomes clear that the presence of Matt 7:7 is kept alive throughout book 10. It must be conceded that one of the possible functions of the detailed exposition of Augustine's search for God in memory is to show his reader (here probably the neo-Platonic reader as much as the Manichaean, but one who has become more positive through his reading of books 1 to 9) exactly how this can be understood. Book 10 can be seen also as a repetition of the quest for God on a different (higher and more intellectual) level, a narrowing down of the focus, an explanation from a different perspective. Note that Augustine has resolved his problems about what God is in book 7, has succeeded in finally yielding to this God in book 8, and has even momentarily succeeded in 'seeing' him in book 9. On a certain level, in book 10 the search seems to start all over when he asks once again in 10.6.8 to 10.7.11 and the reader realizes that the same subject matter is treated from a different angle:

> *Quid autem amo, cum te amo? … hoc est quod amo, cum deum meum amo. Et quid est hoc? … Quid ergo amo, cum deum meum amo? Quis est ille super caput animae meae?*
>
> [But when I love you, what do I love? … That is what I love when I love my God. And what is the object of my love? … What then do I love when I love my God? Who is he who is higher than the highest element in my soul?].

I have indicated that I take books 10 to 13 of the *Confessions* to express, especially initially, mainly paraenetic concerns, namely to encourage and admonish those who have already made the life-changing decision to convert to God but are still struggling through everyday life. Book 10 speaks paraenetically to those who may merely want to acquire a better intellectual insight into the process of approaching God or who need encouragement in their daily struggle against sin, to Augustine's Christian brethren. O'Donnell (1992, 3: 245) has pointed to the fact that in books 9 and 10 Augustine's 'true readership consists of those who are joined with him in the *caritas* of his church.' I agree that in the opening paragraphs of book 10 the focus has shifted to the more

sympathetic among Augustine's potential readers and that the second part of the book, which O'Donnell (1992, 3: 150) gives the title '*temptatio est vita humana super terram*' is especially appropriate to encourage those embroiled in the same struggle against the flesh as Augustine describes himself fighting. Still, book 10 does also speak protreptically to those who still need to find out how imperfect they are and how to find God. Especially in 10.3.3 the intended audience still appears to be in a less positive relationship with Augustine, or at least not showing the ideal attitude of one who is already converted:

> *Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus, ut audiant confessiones meas, quasi ipsi sanaturi sint omnes languores meos? curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam. Quid a me quaerunt audire qui sim, qui nolunt a te audire qui sint?*
>
> [Why then should I be concerned for human readers to hear my confessions? It is not they who are going to 'heal my sicknesses' (Ps 102:3). The human race is inquisitive about other people's lives, but negligent to correct their own. Why do they demand to hear from me what I am when they refuse to hear from you what they are?].

The text (in 10.6.8) even reminds the readers that there is no excuse for not hearing and seeing the evidence of all creation about God:

> *Sed et caelum et terra et omnia quae in eis sunt, ecce undique mihi dicunt ut te amem, nec cessant dicere omnibus, ut sint inexcusabiles*
>
> [But heaven and earth and everything in them on all sides tell me to love you. Nor do they cease to tell everyone that 'they are without excuse' (Rom 1:20)].

In books 11 to 13 Matt 7:7 is to my mind used in a different way: It occurs far less often in the course of the narrative but its use at key points to frame the narrative causes its presence to be felt as strongly as before. Matt 7:7 is clearly present at the opening of book 11 (11.1.1–11.2.4) that constitutes a serious appeal to God for help, an appeal through which reverberates Augustine's awareness of the difficulty of the task of *meditari in lege tua* (11.2.2). This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the results are not only for his own benefit *sed usui vult esse fraternae caritati* (11.2.3), a phrase that can be taken as the explicit formulation of paraenetic purpose. The echoes of Matt 7:7 figure against this background: first, the quotation of Matt 6:8, with its use of *petatis*, serves both to evoke Matt 7:7 and to add to it the dimension of the Father's knowledge of the petitioner's needs, even before he asks (or knocks or seeks): *novit pater vester quid vobis opus sit priusquam petatis ab eo*. (This is of

course only a repetition of what has been said and implied throughout the narrative of Augustine's life.) Next, we have a direct allusion to Matt 7:7 in 11.2.3:

> *Neque adversus pulsantes claudas eam* (*sc. legem*)
>
> [And do not close the gate to us as we knock],

and then a conglomeration of allusions in 11.2.4:

> *Quae omnia nobis apponuntur quaerentibus regnum et iustitiam tuam … placeat in conspectu misericoriae tuae invenire me gratiam ante te, ut aperiantur pulsanti mihi interiora sermonum tuorum … obsecro per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum … per quem nos quaesisti non quaerentes te, quaesisti autem ut quaereremus te*
>
> [They are all things added to us as we seek your kingdom and your righteousness (Matt 6:31) … May it please you that in the sight of your mercy (Ps 18:15) I may find grace before you, so that to me as I knock (Matt 7:7) may be opened the hidden meaning of your words … I make my prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ … By him you sought us that we should seek you].

The allusions certainly serve to underscore the searching spirit with which the reading of scripture is approached, the awareness of own inadequacy and of the gravity of the task as well as the urgency of the appeal.

It is important to note that where the object of the search in previous allusions soon became strongly identified with God or the *beata vita*, it is now explicitly formulated as *interiora sermonum tuorum*, another argument for my observation that protreptic purpose has yielded to paraenetic: the reader has already found God, has already converted. What she is seeking now is a deeper understanding of God, through studying his word. Thus, the last two significant allusions to Matt 7:7 occur far apart (at the opening of book 12 and the close of book 13), but the spirit in which Augustine's reading of Gen 1:1–2:2 is presented throughout is that of the humble petitioner, consistently knocking to gain entrance into the mystery of scripture. I am convinced that allusion to Matt 7:7 is one of the devices intended to give the reader an important clue as to how Augustine's reading of Genesis is to be understood: It is a window on a believer trying to move nearer to God. It is the embodiment of the difficulty all experience in the face of reading God's Word. It is also an illustration of the problems associated with all forms of communication, and it does not pretend to offer all the answers, as 11.2.2 states:

> *Et olim inardesco meditari in lege tua et in ea tibi confiteri scientiam et imperitiam meam, primordia inluminationis tuae et reliquias tenebrarum mearum*

> [For a long time past I have been burning to meditate in your law (Ps 38:4) and confess to you what I know of it and what lies beyond my powers—the first elements granted by your illumination and the remaining areas of darkness in my understanding].

I conclude this section with a look at the allusions to Matt 7:7 in books 12 and 13 of the *Confessions*. The opening paragraph of book 12 is constructed almost in its entirety around allusions to Matt 7:7. The description explicates once again the difficulties of the activity of reading as well as the problems associated with the communication of the findings of a reading (in a beautiful sentence that any academic reader of literature must identify with!):

> *Et ideo plerumque in sermone copiosa est egestas humanae intellegentiae, quia plus loquitur inquisitio quam inventio, et longior est petitio quam impetratio, et operosior est manus pulsans quam sumens*
>
> [All too frequently the poverty of human intelligence has plenty to say, for inquiry employs more words than the discovery of the solution; it takes longer to state a request than to have it granted, and the hand which knocks has more work to do than the hand which receives].

This is followed by the first complete quotation of Matt 7:7, framed by references to God's promises in a way that underlines the meaning of the quotation for Augustine here. It emphasizes his need to reassure himself that in spite of the daunting nature of the project he has embarked on (a fact he takes pains to constantly remind the reader of), he will be successful. This serves once again to direct the reader's attention to the fact that he is not presented here with a cut and dried thought out exegesis, but rather with a view on the process that reading entails, with indications about the spirit in which such a reading should be undertaken. A paraenetic assurance that in prayerful reliance on God anyone can do this.

There are quite a number of occurrences of *quaerere*, *invenire*, and the other important verbs from Matt 7:7 in the course of the narrative of books 12 and 13 that I do not examine here, having pointed out that the reader has been warned that she is allowed to watch the process of knocking throughout the last 3 books of the *Confessions*.

Let us look at the way Matt 7:7 is used to conclude the work. After the three rhetorical questions implying still the difficulty of understanding God's mysteries (thus summing up the attitude with which the reading of Genesis has been presented), all Augustine can do is to exhort the reader (he still does not address the reader directly, but God) in the words and images of Matt 7:7 to perpetuate the process that he has

just seen played out: the reader must keep on (suggested by the present tense) asking, seeking and knocking. But the emphasis is on the source towards which these activities should be directed, in the initial repetition of *a te*, *in te*, *ad te*. The reader is sent on his way with the consolation of Augustine's certainty (expressed in Augustine's future indicatives uttered in God's presence) that she will be successful:

> *Sic, sic accipietur, sic invenietur, sic aperietur*
>
> [Yes indeed, that is how it is received, how it is found, how the door is opened].

4.4. *How Pervasive Are the Indications of Protreptic-Paraenetic Intent?*

The objective of the following section is to show that direct or indirect indications of protreptic purpose are sustained throughout the work. This is, however, the section of the analysis where the frustration of the literary analyst at being unable to unravel more than one thread of the text at a time is especially pronounced. The Scylla and Charybdis constantly threatening the meta-text, here even more than in other sections, are saying too much too repetitively (so that the reader becomes bored) and saying too little (so that the reader gets lost along the way). The other caveat that I was constantly aware of is the tendency to find too easily what one is looking for,[20] to read into the text what you want to see there.

Nevertheless, I find an overview of the distribution of the articulations of protreptic purpose in the *Confessions* such a central aspect of this study that I am willing to risk the dangers, and to try to convince the reader that there is no book or lengthy section of narrative in the *Confessions* where protreptic-paraenetic purpose is not one of the important issues on the narrator's mind. Many of the instances cited here are of course treated under other headings above and below but I refer to them again cursorily in order to present the picture of sustained attention to protreptic concerns. Other instances, especially short and often unexpected or isolated direct utterances of protreptic purpose, are discussed only here. There is also one feature of the narrative that con-

[20] Walker's warning (1952, 10) is one that always stays with me because I have so often perceived this to be the case in the analyses of ancient texts, especially dense and multidimensional texts like the *Confessions*.

tributes largely to its sustained protreptic character that I do not discuss here. This is the narrator's constant awareness of his audience, which I treat in chapter 5 because I want to focus on a specific segment of the audience, the Manichaeans, for reasons already made clear in the analysis in chapter 3.

4.4.1. *In Book 1*

After the implicit but sure indications of protreptic intent in *Conf* 1.1.1 (discussed in 4.1 above) the first formulation that patently displays protreptic intent occurs in the conclusion of 1.10.16. Augustine, in the course of confessing the sins of his childhood, comes to the realization that the parents of other children like him, often prominent citizens who could sponsor shows in the circus or theatre, are no better off than their children. This leads to a prayer, which, the context seems to indicate, is for these people but which unexpectedly widens its scope to become a prayer for nothing less than the salvation of all of mankind:

> *Vide ista, domine, misericorditer et libera nos iam invocantes te,* ***libera etiam eos qui nondum te invocant, ut invocent te et liberes eos***
>
> [Look with mercy (Ps 24:26–28) on these follies, Lord, and deliver us (Ps 78:9) who now call upon you. Deliver also those who do not as yet pray, that they may call upon you and you may set them free].

This movement from the specific moment in the autobiographical narrative to a wider general context is characteristic throughout the *Confessions*. The life story provides the springboard for a narrative that is much more universal than specific. (This is of course typical of ancient biography and autobiography.)[21]

Where the story moves on to Augustine's experiences with the stage and the stock motive of Jupiter's immoral conduct near the end of Book 1 (1.16.25), the influence a represented life can have on the observer is stated explicitly:

> *Sed actum est ut haberet* ***auctoritatem ad imitandum*** *verum adulterium lenocinante falso tonitru … sed verius dicitur quod fingebat haec quidem ille, sed*

[21] Pleading for deliverance of the folly of traditional education (which the context makes this, among other things) is of course also part of the recurring theme that classical education is in many ways a waste of time, that children of God should be educated on more worth while texts, although the suggestions never become more concrete than a potent dissatisfaction with the system Augustine grew up with.

> *hominibus flagitiosis divina tribuendo, ne flagitia flagitia putarentur et ut, quisquis ea fecisset,* ***non homines perditos sed caelestes deos videretur imitatus***
>
> [But he was so described as to give an example of real adultery defended by the authority of a fictitious thunderclap acting as a go-between …It would be truer to say that Homer indeed invented these fictions, but he attributed divine sanction to vicious acts, which had the result that immorality was no longer counted immorality and anyone who so acted would seem to follow the example not of abandoned men but of the gods in heaven].

The theme of the influence of lives (lived and represented) on other lives is also present in 1.18.28 where Augustine talks about his teachers:

> *Quid autem mirum, quod in vanitates ita ferebar et a te, deus meus, ibam foras,* ***quando mihi imitandi*** *proponebantur homines qui …*
>
> [When one considers the men proposed to me as models for my imitation, it is no wonder that in this way I was swept along by vanities and travelled right away from you my God];

and in 1.19.30 where he describes as part of the sins of his youth his desire to imitate what was presented to him in the theater:

> *Ubi etiam talibus displicebam fallendo innumerabilibus mendaciis et paedagogum et magistros et parentes amore ludendi, studio spectandi nugatoria et* ***imitandi ludicra inquietudine***
>
> [Shocking even the worldly set by the innumerable lies with which I deceived the slave who took me to school and my teachers and parents because of my love of games, my passion for frivolous spectacles, and my restless urge to imitate comic scenes].

In his excellent article 'The Conversion of Vergil: The Aeneid in Augustine's Confessions' Bennett (1988, 47–69) discusses in detail Augustine's theories on reading implicit in his references to Vergil in the *Confessions*. Most of the points Bennett makes support my reading of the work. First there is his insistence (57–58) that all literature invites the reader to identify with the characters it portrays, that literature shapes action and that the ancient educational system actually encouraged the recognition of this relationship between life and literature.[22] A further important point Bennett makes concerns Augustine's efforts in the *Confessions* to educate the type of reader that can successfully read this work: 'At this point—after his conversion … Augustine has become a proper

[22] 'What Augustine did naturally and unconsciously in his childish reading of Vergil was institutionalised in education. Little Augustine had to pretend to be Juno' (Bennett 1988, 58).

reader. The *Confessions* is designed as, in part, an exemplary story of the education of a reader' (1988, 65). In my own reading I have constantly emphasized that Augustine intends the reader to speak and pray with him, to develop with him. This would imply that when reaching book 9 (or 10) of the work, the reader of the *Confessions* has also become 'a proper reader.' Lastly, the emphasis Bennett places on Augustine's portrayal of the differences between what he calls the *figmenta* of pagan literature on one side of the spectrum and conversion stories on the other end of the spectrum, also provides clues as to the function Augustine sees his own conversion narrative fulfilling. Like the conversion stories that are described as having a profound influence on him in book 8, his own conversion story provides an 'accurate' model that encourages 'self-identification,' and that acts 'as a mirror' because it is 'historical, not fictional' (Bennett 1988, 66–67).

The next passage I quote (1.18.28) is one that forms part of a constant stream of reassurances that God is always near and always ready to receive with open arms whoever turns to Him, which I interpret as part of the awareness of the protreptic function the text can fulfil:[23]

> ***Et nunc eruis de hoc inmanissimo profundo quaerentem te animam et sitientem*** *delectationes tuas, et cuius cor dicit tibi, 'quaesivi vultum tuum.' vultum tuum, domine, requiram: nam longe a vultu tuo in affectu tenebroso*
>
> [Even at this moment you are delivering from this terrifying abyss the soul who seeks for you and thirsts for your delights (Ps 41:3), whose heart tells you 'I have sought your face; your face, Lord, I will seek' (Ps 26:8). To be far from your face is to be in the darkness of passion].

In addition we have here the combination of two scriptural quotations that recur regularly and carry important meaning (and also have protreptic implications) throughout: the emphasis on seeking (*quaerentem, quaesivi, requiram*), which echoes Matt 7:7 (occurring in the prologue, as I have shown, and discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.3) and the references to the story of the prodigal son from Lk15: 11–32. The phrase *longe a vultu tuo in affectu tenebroso* is explained, in the section directly following the quotation, by the example of the prodigal son (*filius ille tuus minor*), an example that per se stands for the assurance of a joyful reception by the Father, no matter how badly the culprit may have erred: a fact that could form a basic tenet of any Christian protreptic text.

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[23] The theme of God's abiding presence is also found for example in 2.2.4 (*nam semper aderas*); that God was never silent in 2.3.7 (*audio dicere tacuisse te … et cuius errant nisi tua verba illa per matrem meam, quae cantasti in aures meas?*)

In book 2.3.5 the first explicit recognition of the human audience of the *Confessions* is coupled with an expression of protreptic intent:

> *Cui narro haec?* ***neque enim tibi****, deus meus,* ***sed*** *apud te narro haec* ***generi meo, generi humano, quantulacumque ex particula incidere potest in istas meas litteras****. et ut quid hoc? ut videlicet ego* ***et quisquis haec legit cogitemus de quam profundo clamandum sit ad te***
>
> [To whom do I tell these things? Not to you, my God. But before you I declare this to my race, to the human race, though only a tiny part can light on this composition of mine. And why do I include this episode? It is that I and any of my readers may reflect on the great depth from which we have to cry to you (Ps 129:1)].

The last sentence makes the passage much more than an acknowledgement that the *Confessions* is intended to be read by a human audience. It is an implicit statement of protreptic intent. Although as it stands the emphasis seems to be on how far man may be removed from God (*de quam profundo clamandum sit*), the underlying implication is that the speaker (Augustine) together with his audience ('we' in *cogitemus*) should think about God and call out to Him, i.e. seek Him and seek to be converted to Him, no matter how far from God he may perceive himself to be. This idea is, however, put into circulation almost on a subliminal level. Augustine is not yet interested in telling his audience outright that his intention is to convert them.

4.4.2. *In Book 2*

Throughout the narrative of Book 2 the reader is never allowed to forget that the presentation of Augustine's life story is first and foremost a representation of the restlessness that results from being separated from God. The autobiographical narrative remains an illustration of all the negative aspects of a life without God, an illustration that should by implication incite the reader to abhor this kind of life and seek an alternative as Augustine has done. The definitions of protreptic in chapter 2.2 point to exactly this modus operandi in protreptic texts: to expose the human condition and to reveal the inner inconsistency in the philosopher's hearers in order to convince them to convert.

We have, for example, in 2.1.1:

> *Recordari volo transactas foeditates meas et carnales corruptiones animae meae, non quod eas amem, sed ut amem te, deus meus … ut tu dulcescas mihi*

> [I intend to remind myself of my past foulnesses and carnal corruptions, not because I love them but so that I may love you, my God … so that you may be sweet to me];

in 2.2.3:

> *Non enim longe est a nobis omnipotentia tua, etiam cum longe sumus a te*
>
> [Your omnipotence is never far from us, even when we are far from you];

in 2.2.4 (note the medical imagery implicit in *sanes*):

> *Tu semper aderas misericorditer saeviens, et amarissimis aspergens offensionibus omnes inlicitas iucunditates meas ut ita quaererem sine offensione iucundari, et ubi hoc possem, non invenirem quicquam praeter te, domine, praeter te, qui fingis dolorem in praecepto et percutis, ut sanes, et occidis nos, ne moriamur abs te*
>
> [For you were always with me, mercifully punishing me, touching with a bitter taste all my illicit pleasures. Your intention was that I should seek delights unspoilt by disgust and that, in my quest where I could achieve this, I should discover it to be nothing except you Lord, nothing but you. You 'fashion pain to be a lesson' (Ps 93:20 LXX), you 'strike to heal,' you bring death upon us so that we should not die apart from you (Deut. 32:39)];

and in 2.3.6–7 (note the imagery of the way and journeying, and the theme of God's constant calling to man):

> *Timuit tamen vias distortas, in quibus ambulant qui ponunt ad te tergum et non faciem; Ei mihi! Et audio dicere tacuisse te, deus meus, cum irem abs te longius? Itane tu tacebas tunc mihi? Et cuius erant nisi tua verba illa per matrem meam, fidelem tuam, quae cantasti in aures meas?*
>
> [She feared the twisted paths along which walk those who turn their backs and not their face towards you (Jer 2:27). Wretch that I am, do I dare to say that you, my God, were silent when in reality I was traveling farther from you? Was it in this sense that you kept silence to me? Then whose words were they but yours which you were chanting in my ears through my mother, your faithful servant?].

One of the many things that can be said about the story of the pear theft that makes up the rest of book 2 (*Conf* 2.4.9–2.11.18) is that it is more a meditation on the nature of sin in general than on the specific incident. The things man crave, for example, are represented as false imitations of God's attributes, like power, honour, glory, beauty or love. In 2.6.14 the impression is created that the whole episode has been included in the narrative to lead up to a general statement about the condition of the godless man (note once again the imagery of journeying away from or to God and verbs of seeking and finding):

> *Ita fornicatur anima, cum* ***avertitur*** *abs te et quaerit extra te ea quae pura et liquida non* ***invenit****, nisi cum* ***redit*** *ad te. Perverse te imitantur omnes, qui* ***longe se a te faciunt*** *et extollunt se adversum te. Sed etiam sic te imitando indicant creatorem te esse omnis naturae et ideo non esse,* ***quo a te*** *omni modo* ***recedatur***
>
> [So the soul fornicates (Ps 72:27) when it is turned away form you and seeks outside you the pure and clear intentions which are not to be found except by returning to you. In their perverted way all humanity imitates you. Yet they put themselves at a distance from you and exalt themselves against you. But even by thus imitating you they acknowledge that you are the creator of all nature and so concede that there is no place where one can entirely escape from you].

This is followed by more general statements in the same vein, like the paraenetic exhortation in 2.7.15, which also displays the same protreptic-paraenetic themes:

> *Qui enim* ***vocatus a te secutus est*** *vocem tuam et vitavit ea quae me de me ipso recordantem et fatentem legit, non me derideat* ***ab eo medico aegrum sanari****, a quo sibi praestitum est,* ***ut non aegrotaret****, vel potius ut minus* ***aegrotaret****, et ideo te tantundem, immo vero amplius diligat, quia per quem me videt tantis peccatorum meorum* ***languoribus*** *exui, per eum se videt tantis peccatorum* ***languoribus*** *non inplicari*
>
> [If man is called by you, follows your voice, and has avoided doing those acts which I am recalling and avowing in my own life, he should not mock the healing of a sick man by the Physician, whose help has kept him from falling sick, or at least enabled him to be less gravely ill. He should love you no less, indeed even more; for he sees that the one who delivered me from the great sicknesses of my sins is also he through whom he may see that he himself has not been a victim of the same great sicknesses].

4.4.3. *In Book 3*

Let us move on to book 3 where the main subject is Augustine's 'fall' into Manichaeism during his period of study in Carthage. The most important protreptic section here is his description of the influence of the *Hortensius* on his inner life (in 3.4.7 to 3.5.9, discussed in 4.5.1 below). The incident (preceding his turn to the Manichaeans) is represented as causing a radical change of direction in Augustine's life. The description of the event makes conscious use of protreptic phrases and topoi, which are discussed in greater detail in 4.5.1.

But, like in book 2, protreptic intention seems to be present throughout book 3. I quote a few instances. In 3.1.1 we find the expression of the unsatisfactory nature of the previous way of living:

> *Famis mihi erat intus ab interiore cibo, te ipso, deus meus, et ea fame non esuriebam, sed eram sine desiderio alimentorum incorruptibilium, non quia plenus eis eram, sed quo inanior, fastidiosior. Et ideo non bene valebat anima mea*
>
> [My hunger was internal, deprived of inward food, that is of you yourself, my God. But that was not the kind of hunger I felt. I was without any desire for incorruptible nourishment, not because I was replete with it, but the emptier I was, the more unappetizing such food became. So my soul was in rotten health].

In 3.2.3 we have a direct exhortation to the own soul:

> *Cave immunditiam, anima mea, sub tutore deo meo, deo patrum nostrorum et laudabili et superexaltato in omnia saecula, cave immunditiam*
>
> [But my soul, be on your guard against uncleanness, under the protection of God, 'the God of our fathers, to be praised and exalted above all for all ages' (Dan 3:52–55); be on your guard against uncleanness];

and in 3.3.5, a reassurance of God's presence in the midst of the most abject sinfulness:

> *Et circumvolabat super me fidelis a longe misericordia tua. In quantas iniquitates distabui et sacrilega curiositate secutus sum*
>
> [Your mercy faithfully hovered over me from afar. In what iniquities was I wasting myself! I pursued a sacrilegious quest for knowledge].

The section of Book 3 where Augustine describes his first encounter with Manichaeism is in many ways a representation of the errors of Manichaean beliefs, offset by the repetition of *haec ergo tunc nesciebam* (3.7.14) and *haec ego nesciens* (3.10.18). The tone is polemical and it fits in perfectly with a general protreptic progression as the negative feature, the depiction of the inferior way. His treatment (cursory at this stage) of the Manichaean question *unde malum* leads to generalizing about sin that in many ways continues where the last section of book 2 left off. The theme of God's patient (if invisible) presence in the face of man's movement away from Him is also kept alive in the following three sections:

In 3.6.11:

> *Ubi ergo mihi tunc eras et quam longe? Et longe peregrinabar abs te, exclusus et a siliquis porcorum quos de siliquis pascebam*
>
> [At that time where were you in relation to me? Far distant. Indeed I wandered far away, separated from you, not even granted to share in the husks of the pigs, whom I was feeding with husks];

in 3.8.16 (containing a long warning and including the reader through first person plural verbs and pronouns):

> *Et ea fiunt cum tu derelinqueris, fons vitae, qui es unus et verus creator et rector universitatis, et privata superbia diligitur in parte unum falsum. Itaque pietate humili reditur in te, et purgas nos a consuetudine mala, et propitius es peccatis confitentium, et exaudis gemitus compeditorum, et solves a vinculis quae nobis fecimus, si iam non erigamus adversus te cornua falsae libertatis, avaritia plus habendi et damno totum amittendi, amplius amando proprium nostrum qua te, omnium bonum*
>
> [That is the outcome when you are abandoned, fount of life and the one true Creator and Ruler of the entire universe, when from a self-concerned pride a false unity is loved in the part. Return to you is along the path of devout humility. You purify us of evil habit, and you are merciful to the sins we confess. You hear the groans of prisoners (Ps 101:21) and release us from the chains we have made for ourselves, on condition that we do not erect against you the horns (Ps 74:5f.) of a false liberty by avaricious desire to possess more and, at the risk of losing everything, through loving our private interest more than you, the good of all that is];

and in 3.11.19:

> *Misisti manum tuam ex alto et de hac profunda caligine eruisti animam meam, cum pro me fleret ad te mea mater*
>
> ['You put forth your hand from on high' (Ps 143:7), and from this deep darkness 'you delivered my soul' (Ps 85:13). For my mother, your faithful servant, wept for me before you].

4.4.4. *In Book 4*

In book 4 the protreptic appeal to the reader starts at the center of the book, in 4.10.15 where the quotation from Ps 79 expresses the desire for God literally to turn man towards him so that he may be saved (once again, the reader reading this out loud, would be praying for salvation):

> *Deus virtutum, converte nos et ostende faciem tuam et salvi erimus. Nam quoquoversum se verterit anima hominis, ad dolores figitur alibi praeterquam in te*
>
> ['O God of hosts, turn us and show us your face, and we shall be safe' (Ps 79:8). For wherever the human soul turns itself, other than to you, it is fixed in sorrows].

The context here is Augustine's reflection on the loss of his unnamed friend (in the opening paragraphs of book 4) and the expression of his conviction that attaching oneself to anyone or anything but God will lead only to disappointment. The heightened emotional tone the narrative has reached here is indeed a well-chosen moment to introduce

an appeal for conversion. Although my interpretation may seem to stretch the text here, it is reinforced by the strong protreptic content of the following paragraphs 4.11.16–4.12.19 where Augustine talks to his own soul and makes this soul address other souls (discussed in 4.2 above).

Book 4 also ends (4.16.31) with protreptic phrases and hortative verbs in the first person plural that makes the reader participate in the appeal to God (note also the consolatory tone of the passage):

> *O domine deus noster, in velamento alarum tuarum* ***speremus***, *et* ***protege nos et porta nos*** *… vivit apud te semper bonum nostrum, et quia inde aversi sumus, perversi sumus,* ***revertamur*** *iam, domine, ut non evertamur, quia vivit apud te sine ullo defectu bonum nostrum, quod tu ipse es, et* ***non timemus ne non sit quo redeamus***, *quia nos inde ruimus. Nobis autem absentibus* ***non ruit domus nostra***, *aeternitas tua*
>
> [O Lord our God, under the covering of your wings (Exod 19:4) we set our hope. Protect us and bear us up … Our good is life with you for ever, and because we turned away from that, we became twisted. Let us now return to you that we may not be overturned. Our good is life with you and suffers no deficiency (Ps 101:28); for you yourself are that good. We have no fear that there is no home to which we may return because we fell from it. During our absence our house suffers no ruin; it is your eternity].

4.4.5. *In Book 5*

Although book 5 does not contain the same emphasis on protreptic appeal to the reader, the theme is nevertheless not allowed to slip completely. It is kept alive especially in the opening paragraphs and at the end of the book. The prologue of book 5 is discussed in more detail in chapter 5 below as an instance of Augustine's constant awareness of his audience, a theme that is of course very closely related to that of making protreptic appeals to this same audience. In 5.1.1 the protretpic intention is situated in the assurance, or warning, to the reader that he or she will not be able to hold out against God in the long term, i.e. that eventual conversion is inescapable:

> *Oculum tuum non excludit cor clausum nec manum tuam repellit duritia hominum, sed solves eam cum voles, aut miserans aut vindicans, et non est qui se abscondat a calore tuo*
>
> [The closed heart does not shut out your eye, and your hand is not kept away by the hardness of humanity, but you melt that when you wish, either in mercy or in punishment, and there is 'none who can hide from your heat' (Ps 18:7)].

The protreptic intention is also carried by the frequent references to *viae* throughout this book and the assurance of God's long-suffering presence, even in the face of man's contempt, in the oblique reference to the prodigal son in 5.12.22 (in the context of his description of the unruly behaviour of students in Rome):

> *Contemnendo te manentem et revocantem et ignoscentem redeunti ad te meretrici animae humanae*
>
> [They despise you, though you abide and call the prodigal back and pardon the human soul for its harlotry when it returns to you];

coupled with the reference to how he now thinks about such people, a reference that testifies to a constant awareness of his responsibility for his fellow man:

> *Nunc tales odi pravos et distortos, quamvis* ***eos corrigendos diligam***
>
> [Today too I hate such wicked and perverted people, though I love them as people in need of correction].

Book 5 ends with the description of Augustine's encounter with Ambrose in Milan. An important aspect of this narrative is that it displays Augustine's awareness of how a reader may be touched by a sermon (or a text) in a way completely unforeseen by him or her. This is in many ways a repetition of the circumstances surrounding the reading of the *Hortensius* (reading or listening not for the sake of the subject matter but for the sake of style only which achieves the opposite effect of the one expected) and a reaffirmation of the importance of the theme of reading or listening and how this can affect the lives of readers or hearers. For now it is important to show that the strand of protreptic appeal (here in the reminder of the possibility of the protreptic effect of a text) is sustained also through to the end of book 5.

4.4.6. *In Book 6*

In books 6 and 7 of the *Confessions* there are few direct expressions of protreptic intent. Instead we find in these two books, more pronounced in book 6 than in book 7, an accretion of protreptic topoi, especially the imagery of the way (or two ways) and medical imagery. The main thrust of these books remains, however, intellectual progress: a process of gradually becoming liberated from Manichaean ways of thinking and resolving the pressing questions of *unde malum* and *quid est deus*.

These books are protreptic mostly in the sense that they represent the negative stage in protreptic texts, the stage where opposing views are refuted.

In book 6, although the subject matter seems a somewhat disjunctive conglomeration of topics (Monnica's arrival, encounters with Ambrose and a beggar, a short biography of Alypius, marriage plans and the dismissal of Augustine's concubine), the tension of the narrative, moving excruciatingly towards conversion, never slackens: 'the book represents undiluted, though often painful, progress' (O'Donnell 1992, 2:329). And progress, especially in books 3 to 7 of the *Confessions*, implies liberation from Manichaean ways of thinking, which in its turn implies the polemic treatment of the tenets of Manichaean religion.

The reader is taken from the question evoking the theme of God's abiding presence in the opening words of the book:

> *Spes mea a iuventute mea, ubi mihi eras et quo recesseras?*
>
> ['My hope from my youth' (Ps 70:5), where were you, and where did you 'withdraw' from me (Ps 10:1)?];

through statements about his desire for progress (in 6.4.6):

> *Volebam enim eorum quae non viderem ita me certum fieri ut certus essem quod septem et tria decem sint*
>
> [I wanted to be as certain about things I could not see as I am certain that seven and three are ten];

about God's guiding presence (employing the topos of the way) in 6.5.8:

> *Suspirabam et audiebas me, fluctuabam et gubernabas me, ibam per viam saeculi latam nec deserebas*
>
> [I sighed and you heard me. I wavered and you steadied me. I travelled along the broad way of the world, but you did not desert me];

about the unacceptable condition of the godless life in 6.6.10:

> *Et inveniebam male mihi esse et dolebam et conduplicabam ipsum male*
>
> [And my state I found to be bad; this caused me further suffering and a redoubling of my sense of futility];

about reading the *Hortensius* and his impatience with the lack of progress in 6.11.18:

> *Satagens et recolens quam longum tempus esset ab undevicensimo anno aetatis meae, quo fervere coeperam studio sapientiae … et ecce iam tricenariam aetatem gerebam, in eodem luto haesitans*

> [As I anxiously reflected how long a time had elapsed since the nineteenth year of my life, when I began to burn with a zeal for wisdom … and here I was already thirty, and still mucking about in the same mire];

about impatience and conversion in 6.11.20:

> *Transibant tempora et tardabam converti ad dominum, et differebam de die in diem vivere in te*
>
> [Time passed by. I 'delayed turning to the Lord' and postponed 'from day to day' (Ecclus 5:8) finding life in you];

and about God's presence and the unsatisfactory condition of the previous life in 6.16.26:

> *Ego fiebam miserior et tu propinquior. aderat iam iamque dextera tua raptura me de caeno et ablutura, et ignorabam*
>
> [As I became unhappier, you came closer. Your right hand was by me, already prepared to snatch me out of the filth (Jer 28:13), and to clean me up. But I did not know it];

towards a repetition of the assurance of God's presence in the closing lines of the book (6.16.26), which is at the same time a powerful consolation to the reader, an affirmation that conversion and final certainty is possible:

> *Et ecce ades et liberas a miserabilibus erroribus et constituis nos in via tua et consolaris et dicis, 'currite, ego feram et ego perducam et ibi ego feram'*
>
> [You are present, liberating us from miserable errors, and you put us on your way, bringing comfort and saying: 'Run, I will carry you, and I will see you through to the end, and there I will carry you' (Isa 46:4)].

4.4.7. *In Book 7*

In book 7 we find in many ways the culmination of the negative stage of the protreptic, here the final refutation (for this narrative) of two central Manichaean positions: Manichaean claims about the nature of God and of evil. The subject of God's nature is announced in 7.1.1 with

> *Quanto aetate maior, tanto vanitate turpior, qui cogitare aliquid substantiae nisi tale non poteram, quale per hos oculos videri solet*
>
> [But the older I became, the more shameful it was that I retained so much vanity as to be unable to think any substance possible other than that which the eyes normally perceive];

qualified as Manichaean in nature by

> *Clamabat violenter cor meum adversus omnia phantasmata mea*

> [My heart vehemently protested against all the physical images in my mind].[24]

The issue is resolved with the help of the concepts of neo-Platonic thought in 7.9.13–7.10.15.

Manichaean claims about the nature of evil is introduced through the discussion of Nebridius' argument (it questions the role of the realm of darkness in Manichaean cosmology) in 7.2.3 and resolved in 7.11.17–7.16.22 as the following quotation from 7.16.22 indicates:

> *Et quaesivi quid esset iniquitas et non inveni substantiam, sed a summa substantia, te deo, detortae in infima voluntatis perversitatem, proicientis intima sua et tumescentis foras*
>
> [I inquired what wickedness is; and I did not find a substance but a perversity of will twisted away from the highest substance, you O God, towards inferior things, rejecting its own inner life (Ecclus 10:10) and swelling with external matter].

Augustine's encounter with the *Platonicorum Libri* described in 7.9.13 convinces him that the one weakness of the neo-Platonic system is that they lack a mediator through which man may reach God. They knew the goal but not the road that lead there (as the last paragraph of book 7 makes clear):

> *Et aliud est de silvestri cacumine videre patriam pacis et iter ad eam non invenire … et aliud tenere viam illuc ducentem*
>
> [It is one thing from a wooded summit to catch a glimpse of the homeland of peace and not to find the way to it … It is another thing to hold on to the way that leads there].

From 7.18.24 up to the end of book 7 we find the reflections on Christ and the incarnation.[25] After a lyrical passage describing, in 7.18.24, the Christ he could not yet conceive of,

> *Christum Iesum … cibum, cui capiendo invalidus eram … non enim tenebam deum meum Iesum, humilis humilem*
>
> [Christ Jesus … The food which I was too weak to accept … To possess my God, the humble Jesus, I was not yet humble enough];

Augustine relates the false perceptions he held at the time in 7.19.25:

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[24] In chapter 3.2 I argue that in the *Confessions* the term *phantasmata* very often denotes Manichaean doctrine.

[25] O'Donnell (1992, 2:459–460) gives a concise discussion of the salient aspects of Augustine's Christology and its development.

> *Ego vero aliud putabam tantumque sentiebam de domino Christo meo, quantum de excellentis sapientiae viro cui nullus posset aequari*
>
> [I had a different notion, since I thought of Christ my Lord only as a man of excellent wisdom which none could equal].

This affirms what has been true of the previous sections of book 7, namely that the protreptic nature of the book is embodied in the refutation of the claims of rival groups, of whom the one this study focuses on, the Manichaeans, constitutes an important—perhaps the most important—part.[26]

4.4.8. *In Book 8*

The protreptic character of the eighth book of the *Confessions* is situated mainly in the way it illustrates, repeatedly, the effect of protreptic texts, spoken or written, on their readers or hearers. But this is discussed in detail in chapter 4.5.2 below.

4.4.9. *In Book 9*

Book 9 of the *Confessions* is the book O'Donnell (1992, 3:72) calls 'the book of death and rebirth,' with the 'death and rebirth of Augustine' constituting the first half of the book and the 'death and rebirth of Monnica' the second. The ninth book is in many ways a conclusion to the autobiographical (and biographical) part of the work, effected through the recapitulation of the (auto)biographical themes from books 1 to 8.

As far as the story of Augustine's conversion is concerned, we have the extension of the narrative up to his baptism and the rounding off of the more or less diachronical autobiographical narrative up to this point.[27] In the proem (9.1.1) we have the recapitulation of the completed narrative about Augustine:

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[26] In Augustine's polemical statements about Christology in the *Confessions* he presumably treats more than just the Manichaean position. See O'Donnell's remarks (1992, 2:459–460 and 467).

[27] Book 10 is still autobiographical but describes Augustine at the time of writing of the *Confessions* and omits the years between baptism and the author's present. Also in concentrating on the present the fibre of the text in book 10 becomes more purely reflexive and less narrative.

> *Tu autem, domine, bonus et misericors, et dextera tua respiciens profunditatem mortis meae et a fundo cordis mei exhauriens abyssum corruptionis*
>
> [But you, Lord, 'are good and merciful' (Ps 102:8). Your right hand had regard to the depth of my dead condition, and from the bottom of my heart had drawn out a trough of corruption];

and, typical of Augustine's style in the proems to individual books of the *Confessions*, a foreshadowing of the journey into his own mind described in book 10:

> *Ubi erat tam annoso tempore et de quo imo altoque secreto evocatum est in momento liberum arbitrium meum*
>
> [But where through so many years was my freedom of will? From what deep and hidden recess was it called out in a moment?]

Thus the proem refers to the conversion story, an important element in a protreptic text as I have shown, and to the illustration of how to find God within the self, which, I argue below, is an integral part of the protreptic-paraenetic purpose of the whole.

It is important to note that in the conclusion of the narrative of Augustine's conversion some of the protreptic themes I have discussed are also recapitulated. This is also the case in the tying of loose ends of the stories of other people who played minor roles in the first part of the narrative (Verecundus, Nebridius, Alypius, and Adeodatus). Theirs are also stories of death and rebirth, in the sense that for each of them, apart from their death at some later stage, their conversion is reported as an important event in a life-story that is only a few lines long. Thus we have of Verecundus, as part of a 17-line summary, all of the following information about his conversion in 9.3.5:

> *Nondum christianus, coniuge fideli, ea ipsa tamen artiore prae ceteris compede ab intinere quod aggressi eramus retardabatur, nec christianum esse alio modo se velle dicebat quam illo quo non poterat … corporali aegritudine correptus et in ea christianus et fidelis factus ex hac vita emigravit ita misertus es non solum eius sed etiam nostri, ne cogitantes egregiam erga nos amici humanitatem nec eum in grege tuo numerantes dolore intolerabili cruciaremur*
>
> [He was not yet a Christian, but his wife was a baptized believer. Fettered by her more than anything else, he was held back from the journey on which we had embarked. He used to say that he did not wish to be a Christian except in the way which was not open to him … he was taken ill in body, and in his sickness departed this life a baptized Christian. So you had mercy not only on him but also on us. We would have felt tortured by unbearable pain if, in thinking of our friend's outstanding humanity to us, we could not have numbered him among your flock].

In the story of Nebridius's death and rebirth (in 9.3.6) the parallels with Augustine's intellectual quest for truth (also following the road via Manichaeism) are obvious, as is the emphasis on the importance of being converted and converting others:

> *Quamvis enim et ipse* ***nondum christianus*** *in illam foveam perniciosissimi erroris inciderat ut veritatis filii tui carnem phantasma crederet, tamen inde emergens sic sibi erat, nondum imbutus ullis ecclesiae tuae sacramentis, sed* ***inquisitor ardentissimus veritatis****. quem non multo* ***post conversionem nostram*** *et regenerationem per baptismum tuum* ***ipsum etiam fidelem catholicum****, castitate perfecta atque continentia tibi servientem in Africa apud suos, cum* ***tota domus eius per eum christiana facta esset****, carne solvisti. et nunc ille vivit in sinu Abraham*
>
> [He was also not yet a Christian. He had fallen into that ditch of pernicious (Manichee) error which taught him to believe that the flesh of your Son, the truth, was illusory. Nevertheless he had emerged from that to the attitude that, though no yet initiated into any of the sacraments of your Church, he was an ardent seeker after truth. Soon after my conversion and regeneration by your baptism, he too became a baptized Catholic believer. He was serving you in perfect chastity and continence among his own people in Africa, and through him his entire household became Christian, when you released him from bodily life. Now he lives in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22)].

Alypius' conversion was reported in book 8, parallel to that of Augustine, and is also recapitulated here (in 9.4.7):

> *Dulce mihi fit, domine, confiteri tibi … quoque modo ipsum etiam Alypium, fratrem cordis mei, subegeris nomini unigeniti tui, domini et salvatoris nostri Iesu Christi*
>
> [It becomes sweet for me, Lord, to confess to you … how you subjected Alypius too, my heart's brother, to the name of your only-begotten Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18)];

just as his baptism is reported parallel to Augustine's in 9.6.14:

> *Placuit et Alypio renasci in te mecum*
>
> [Alypius also decided to join me in being reborn to you].

Also Adeodatus' Christian life, death, and baptism is reported in 9.6.14:

> *Cito de terra abstulisti vitam eius, et securior eum recordor non timens quicquam pueritia nec adulescentiae nec omnino homini illi. sociavimus eum coaevum nobis in gratia tua*
>
> [Early on you took him away from life on earth. I recall him with no anxiety; there was nothing to fear in his boyhood or adolescence or indeed his manhood. We associated him with us so as to be of the same age as ourselves in your grace].

This is followed by the sentence *et baptizati sumus*, probably indicating that Adeodatus was also baptized together with Augustine and Alypius.[28] It is clear that book 9 contributes to the bigger picture of the paradigmatic character of book 8 in the sense that it contains additional conversion stories that complement the cluster of conversion stories in book 8.[29]

The most pronounced protreptic element in the conclusion of Augustine's life story remains, however, his presentation of the meditation on Ps 4 (analysed in chapter 3) in the sense that this is the most direct appeal to the Manichaeans in the *Confessions*. As I have argued in chapter 3, this passage derives additional significance from the fact that it is situated at the exact midpoint of the *Confessions*. If this passage—an unequivocal and emotional protreptic to the Manichaeans—is the climax of the work, presented at its centre, it is a highly significant affirmation of the interpretations of both the preceding and the subsequent sections of the *Confessions* offered here. This is the strongest factor that legitimises the quest of this section (chapter 4.3) to identify phrases or devices scattered throughout the work as persistent pointers to an overall protreptic purpose.

The biography of Monnica in the second half of book 9 is also a fitting recapitulation in the sense that the story of her life is treated in the same way as the story of Augustine's life in the first part of the *Confessions*, namely as a paradigm of God's action in the life of man. For example, like Augustine's childhood sins, Monnica's love of wine as a child becomes a paradigm for sin in general, expressed by generalizations in 9.8.18:

> *Qui modica spernit, paulatim decidit*
>
> ['He who despises small things gradually comes to a fall' (Ecclus 19:1)];

and

> *Numquid valebat aliquid adversus* ***latentem morbum***, *nisi* ***tua medicina***, *domine, vigilaret super nos? absente patre et matre et nutritoribus tu praesens, qui creasti, qui vocas, qui etiam per praepositos homines boni aliquid agis ad animarum salutem. Quid tunc egisti, deus meus? unde curasti? Unde* ***sanasti****? Nonne protulisti*

[28] Courcelle (1963, 67) refers to 'leur commun baptême de 387.'

[29] O'Donnell's view (1992, 2:329) that the biographies of Alypius and Monnica in books 6 and 9 respectively are 'each a conversion story in its own right' and that they 'bracket A.'s central conversion story' indirectly supports my theory about the function of Augustine's conversion story and other conversion stories in the *Confessions* and the importance given to these stories in the narrative.

> ***durum et acutum*** *ex altera anima convicium tamquam* ***medicinale ferrum*** *ex occultis provisionibus tuis et* ***uno ictu putredinem illam praecidisti***?
>
> [She could have had no strength against the secret malady unless your healing care, Lord were watching over us. When father and mother and nurses are not there, you are present. You have created us, you call us, you use human authorities set over us to do something for the health of our souls. How did you cure her? How did you restore her health? You brought from another soul a harsh and sharp rebuke, like a surgeon's knife, from your secret stores, and with one blow you cut away the rottenness].

It is important to note the protreptic topoi (the medical imagery which implies that sin is sickness and something that God wants to heal) as well as the theme of God's unchanging presence, constantly desiring the correction of the sinner. Even though Monnica is unaware of God's presence or voice he speaks to her through the voice of the slave girl whose taunts cause a decisive change of heart.

This is the reiteration of a constant theme in the preceding books of the *Confessions*, a theme that is eminently suited to serve the purposes of a protreptic communicative purpose: God is continually calling to each individual, even though the voice is often not recognized as his. God speaks to Augustine through Monnica in 2.3.7:

> *Et cuius erant nisi tua verba illa per matrem meam, fidelem tuam, quae cantasti in aures meas?*
>
> [Then whose words were they but yours which you were chanting in my ears through my mother, your faithful servant?];

to mankind through his creation in 5.1.1:

> *Non cessat nec tacet laudes tuas universa creatura tua*
>
> [Your entire creation never ceases to praise you and is never silent];

and in 8.1.2

> *Contestante universa creatura, inveneram te creatorem nostrum, et verbum tuum apud te deum*
>
> [By the witness of all creation I had found you our Creator and your Word who is God beside you];

to Monnica through the slave girl (in the passage from 9.8.18, quoted above) and to Patricius through Monnica's life in 9.9.19:

> *Sategit eum lucrari tibi loquens te illi moribus suis*
>
> [She tried to win him for you, speaking to him of you by her virtues].

Paragraph 9.8.18 is concluded by what reads very much like a warning reminder of Augustine to himself, as well as an implicit acknowledgement of the protreptic intentions of this text:

> *At tu, domine, rector caelitum et terrenorum, ad usus tuos contorquens profunda torrentis, fluxum saeculorum ordinans turbulentum, etiam de alterius animae insania sanasti alteram, ne quisquam, cum hoc advertit, potentiae suae tribuat, si verbo eius alius corrigatur, quem vult corrigi*
>
> [But you, Lord, ruler of heaven and earth, turn to your own purposes the deep torrents. You order the turbulent flux of the centuries. Even from the fury of one soul you brought healing to another. Thereby you showed that no one should attribute it to his own power if by anything he says he sets on the right path someone whom he wishes to be corrected].

This is yet another indication that the responsibility for the moral instruction of his fellow men and the possibility of his words working this effect, is never far from Augustine's thoughts.

It is also important to note that one aspect that does receive a place in Monnica's very concise biography is her concern for the spiritual well being of those nearest to her: her husband and her recalcitrant son, i.e. the actions she is praised for are actions that aim for the same goal as a protreptic aims for: conversion of others. This is foreshadowed, significantly, in the introduction to Monnica's biography in 9.8.17:

> *Multa praetereo, quia multum festino … sed non praeteribo quidquid mihi anima parturit de illa famula tua,* ***quae me parturivit et carne****, ut in hanc temporalem,* ***et corde, ut in aeternam lucem nascerer***
>
> [I pass over many events because I write in great haste… But I shall not pass over whatever my soul may bring to birth concerning your servant, who brought me to birth both in her body so that I was born into the light of time, and in her heart so that I was born into the light of eternity];

continued by the references to her 'gaining' of Patricius for Christianity in 9.9.22:

> *Denique etiam virum suum iam in extrema vita temporali eius lucrata est tibi*
>
> [At the end when her husband had reached the end of his life in time, she succeeded in gaining him for you];

and in 9.13.37

> *Cui servivit fructum tibi afferens cum tolerantia, ut eum quoque lucraretur tibi*
>
> [She served him by offering you 'fruit with patience' (Luke 8:15) so as to gain him for you also];

and of course all the references throughout the *Confessions* to her efforts to assure Augustine's conversion. This motif in her biography is fittingly concluded by her poignant and prophetic words in 9.10.26, after the shared vision at the window in Ostia and shortly before her death:

> *Fili, quantum ad me adtinet, nulla re iam delector in hac vita. quid hic faciam adhuc et cur hic sim, nescio, iam consumpta spe huius saeculi. unum erat propter quod in hac vita aliquantum inmorari cupiebam,* ***ut te christianum catholicum viderem****, priusquam morerer. cumulatius hoc mihi deus meus praestitit, ut te etiam contempta felicitate terrena servum eius videam. quid hic facio?*
>
> ['My son, as for myself, I now find no pleasure in this life. What I have still to do here and why I am here, I do not know. My hope in this world is already fulfilled. The one reason why I wanted to stay longer in this life was my desire to see you a Catholic Christian before I die. My God has granted this in a way more than I had hoped. For I see you despising this world's success to become his servant. What have I to do here?'].

4.4.10. *In Book 10*

Book 10 of the *Confessions* creates in many ways the impression that a new stage in the narrative has been reached. On a first obvious level there is the fact that Augustine is no longer relating past events (though this only becomes clear in 10.3.4). Although this is not unprecedented in other prologues to individual books, the density of the narrative and the reflexive character of the opening paragraphs may also be a warning to the reader that a change of some sort is taking place. More significant is the shift in the kind of audience the text seems to envisage, a shift accompanying or perhaps rather embodying the shift from protreptic to paraenetic purpose. One of the strongest indications that we are still reading a protreptic text, but one where the emphasis has now shifted to paraenetic, lies in the constant awareness of the audience in this book, an aspect which is discussed more fully in chapter 5.

The only passages I want to refer to here are two expressions of purpose in the introductory section. The first instance we find in 10.3.3–4 where the quotation I give below occurs in a section where Augustine repeatedly challenges his reader (through the rhetorical questions he puts to God before he answers them himself) to think about the purpose of the *Confessions*:

> *Quid mihi ergo est cum hominibus, ut audiant confessiones meas? … verum tamen tu, medice meus intime, quo fructu ista faciam, eliqua mihi*
>
> [Why should I be concerned for human readers to hear my confessions?

> … Nevertheless, make it clear to me, physician of my most intimate self, that good results from my present undertaking].

The questions are answered in the section I quote below (10.3.4) and the answer is as strong and clear an expression of protreptic-paraenetic purpose as one can get. Note the sleeping and waking imagery that we find in other places in the *Confessions* as well as in Ambrose's hymns (in *excitare*, used also in the *Retractationes* to describe the function of the *Confessions* and *ne dormiat … sed evigilet*) as well as the consolation offered to the reader:

> ***Nam confessiones*** *praeteritorum malorum meorum (quae remisisti et texisti, ut beares me in te, mutans animam meam fide et sacramento tuo),* ***cum leguntur et audiuntur, excitant cor****,* ***ne dormiat*** *in desperatione et dicat: non possum,* ***sed evigilet*** *in amore misericordiae tuae et dulcidine gratiae tuae, qua potens est omnis infirmus, qui sibi per ipsam fit conscius infirmitatis suae*
>
> [Stir up the heart when people read and hear the confessions of my past wickednesses, which you have forgiven and covered up to grant me happiness in yourself, transforming my soul by faith and your sacrament. Prevent the heart from sinking into the sleep of despair and saying 'It is beyond my power.' On the contrary, the heart is aroused in the love of your mercy and the sweetness of your grace, by which every weak person is given power, while dependence on grace produces awareness of one's own weakness].

Also the whole line of the argument 10.4.6 insists that the *Confessions* is meant to be anything but a narcissistic search for the self. It is clearly intended to present an example that the reader should follow, and the reader is told this in no uncertain terms (I omit everything but the bare frame of the argument):

> *Hic est fructus confessionum mearum … ut hoc confitear non tantum coram te … sed etiam in auribus credentium filiorum hominum … hi sunt servi tui, fratres mei … quibus iussisti ut serviam, si volo tecum de te vivere. et hoc mihi verbum tuum parum erat si loquendo praeciperet, nisi et faciendo praeiret. et ego id ago factis et dictis*
>
> [When I am confessing … the benefit lies in this: I am making this confession not only before you … but also in the ears of believing sons of men … They are your servants, my brothers … You have commanded me to serve them if I wish to live with you and in dependence on you. This your word would have meant little to me if it had been only a spoken precept and had not first been acted out. For my part, I carry out your command by actions and words].

I end the discussion of book 10 by a quick look at the overall plan of the book. O'Donnell (1992, 3:150) calls the section following the introduction of book 10 (10.6.8–10.27.38) 'the search for God in mem-

ory,' and the next section (10.28.39–10.39.64) '*temptatio est vita humana super terram*.' The 'search for God' theme is picked up again in the last section of the book which O'Donnell subdivides into two sections: 'the search for God: memory and temptation' (10.40.65–10.41.66) and '*verax mediator*' (10.42.67–10.43.70). In many ways the narrative in the sections embodying the search for God is a 'practical illustration' of how to search for God. The reader is allowed to observe step by step how Augustine arrives at finding God through turning towards himself and searching within his own mind. Like in previous sections of the *Confessions* the aim is to enable the reader to find God in the same way, thus still a protreptic aim. But this is an exercise that can and should be repeated by the already converted, so that these passages have at the same time a paraenetic purpose. Similarly, as I have indicated, the section where Augustine shows the reader how he himself is still embroiled in a daily struggle with temptation and sin is particularly apt to fulfil a paraenetic function. Of course it also has the expressed aim to show the reader that Augustine is not perfect and that he is still in need of their prayers, but I think the context of the whole makes it unlikely that this is the only purpose of this section.

4.4.11. *In Books 11 to 13*

I conclude by a very concise discussion of protreptic and paraenetic purpose in the last three books of the *Confessions* that are analized more fully in chapter 5.3.3. I have argued that this is to a large degree carried by the strong influence of the Matt 7:7 quotation that frames and unites the last four books through the veritable hammering on this verse (it is not only quoted but expanded upon and interpreted) at the opening of book 10 and the end of book 13, but also at the beginning of book 12.

Here I discuss only the small number of more or less explicit expressions of protreptic-paraenetic purpose in books 11 and 12. A fuller analysis of the protreptic-paraenetic nature of book 13 follows as a conclusion to this chapter in 4.6 below. In the opening paragraph of book 11 Augustine once again prompts his reader to think about the purpose of the work through a rhetorical question put to God:

> *Cur ergo tibi tot rerum narrationes digero?*
>
> [Why then do I set before you an ordered account of so many things?]

and the answer is once again an unequivocal expression of protreptic intent:

> *Non utique ut per me noveris ea, sed affectum meum excito in te, et eorum qui haec legunt, ut dicamus omnes, 'magnus dominus et laudabilis valde.' iam dixi et dicam, 'amore amoris tui facio istuc'*
>
> [It is certainly not through me that you know them. But I am stirring up love for you in myself and in those who read this, so that we may all say 'Great is the Lord and highly worthy to be praised' (Ps 47:1). I have already affirmed this and will say it again: I tell my story for love of your love].

Augustine's exasperation with a lack of strength and of time (expressed in 11.2.2) is also in part a formulation of what he intends to do in the *Confessions* (the underlined sections below):

> *Quando autem sufficio lingua calami* ***enuntiare omnia hortamenta tua et omnes terrores tuos, et consolationes et gubernationes, quibus me perduxisti praedicare verbum et sacramentum tuum dispensare populo tuo****? et si sufficio* ***haec enuntiare ex ordine****, caro mihi valent stillae temporum*
>
> [But when shall I be capable of proclaiming by 'the tongue of my pen' (Ps 44:2) all your exhortations and all your terrors and consolations and directives, by which you brought me to preach your word and dispense your sacrament to your people? And if I have the capacity to proclaim this in an ordered narrative, yet the drops of time are too precious to me].

When he explains that he wants to tell of all the *hortamenta*, *terrores*, *consolationes* and *gubernationes* through which God led him to the point of preaching his word and dispensing his sacraments I argue that this does not have to refer exclusively to 'the demands of ordained ministry' (O'Donnell 1992, 3:256). In a passage so intent (like almost all opening sections of books) on the challenges of the task at hand, and on what his aim with the *Confessions* is, Augustine may be referring also to the preaching and dispensing done in and through the *Confessions* (See O'Donnell 1992, 3:245 on the embodiment of liturgical action in the text). Further, the echoes of 1.1.1 in the previous chapter (11.1.1) make it more probable that we are supposed to pick up the echo of the *preadicator* here. And one of the functions of the role of the *praedicator* is to win new converts for his religion, as the concise formulation of 1.1.1 (see analysis in 4.1) and the context of the opening of book 11 implies.

The analysis of book 13 in 4.6 below shows that protreptic-paraenetic concerns, and what is more, a final return to the protreptic side of the scale, remain foremost in the narrator's mind, right up to the end of the *Confessions*.

4.5. *The Protreptic Power of Reading and Listening in the* Confessions

Many scholars have reflected on the importance of reading in the *Confessions*.[30] The analysis in chapter 3 discusses an Augustine reading scripture, Ps 4 in this case, and reporting on the effects of that reading. The latter episode is the last comprehensive reading experience reported on in the first section of the *Confessions*, the section where I contend that protreptic dominates paraenetic concerns. The reader will remember that I argued there that Augustine intended his meditation on the psalm as a protreptic to his Manichaean audience, but also that he interpreted Ps 4 itself as though it were a protreptic, calling on its audience to convert. In this section I want to look at two other instances from books 1 to 9 where the effect of reading and listening is reported as a protreptic effect. They are, first, Augustine's version of his reading of the *Hortensius*, bringing about what is commonly called his first conversion, in book 3 of the *Confessions* and, secondly, the intricate and intertwined version of a number of instances of reading or listening and conversion that form the backbone of the narrative in book 8.[31]

4.5.1. *The Hortensius*

I want to argue here that the prominent treatment given in Book 3 of the *Confessions* to Augustine's reading of the *Hortensius*, a text scholars agree was a protreptic text,[32] may be intended as a pointer to the genre of Augustine's own text. The counter argument would, of course, be that if this was meant to be a generic pointer, the reference should have occurred earlier in the work. I have, however, argued above that Augustine may have had reasons for at least initially hiding the protreptic intentions of his text.[33]

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[30] See for example Jacques (1988); Stock (1996).

[31] See O'Donnell 1992, 2:163 for a 'short catalogue of readings explicitly reported.'

[32] See for example Ruch (1958).

[33] The chronological constraints of the *de me* bibliographical framework of the narrative of course also necessitate a delayed introduction of this episode. As it is we find Augustine only gradually acknowledging the presence of his audience as book 2 progresses (see chapter 5). His purpose for writing the *Confessions* is put on the table only indirectly and gradually in book 2 with *ut amem te* and *amore amoris tui facio istuc* (2.1.1), but also the more explicit and inclusive *ut … cogitemus de quam profundo clamandum sit ad te* in 2.3.5. All these factors make it feasible that the report on his reading of the *Hortensius* may still be part of this gradual setting up of generic pointers.

The fact remains that Augustine describes his encounter with the *Hortensius* in terms that ascribe powerful protreptic properties to this text. It causes nothing less than the life-changing decision a protreptic is supposed to canvass for, and the start of Augustine's journey back to God. He in fact calls the work an *exhortatio*, the Latin equivalent of προτρέπτικος (*liber ille exhortationem continet* in 3.4.7 and especially *in illa exhortatione* in 3.4.8), and uses emotional terms and erotic fire imagery that I have shown is often part of protreptic vocabulary and that is repeated at other points in the *Confessions*, as in the following quotation from 3.4.7:

> *Ille vero liber* ***mutavit*** *affectum meum, et ad te ipsum, domine,* ***mutavit*** *preces meas, et vota ac desideria mea* ***fecit alia***. *Viluit me* ***repente*** *omnis vana spes, et* ***immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu*** *cordis* ***incredibili***, *et* ***surgere coeperam*** *ut ad te* ***redirem***
>
> [The book changed my feelings. It altered my prayers, Lord, to be towards you yourself. It gave me different values and priorities. Suddenly every vain hope became empty to me, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour in my heart. I began to rise up to return to you].

Also the retrospective description of the effects of the *Hortensius* in 3.4.8 teems with erotic vocabulary and fire imagery. It is introduced by *quomodo* ***ardebam***, *deus meus, quomodo* ***ardebam*** *revolare a terrenis ad te … me* ***accendebant*** *illae litterae* at the beginning of the paragraph, and followed by another emotional segment near the end of 3.4.8:

> *Hoc tamen solo* ***delectabar*** *in illa* ***exhortatione***, *quod non illam aut illam sectam, sed ipsam quaecumque esset sapientiam ut* ***diligerem*** *et* ***quaererem*** *et* ***adsequerer*** *et* ***tenerem*** *atque* ***amplexarer fortiter***, ***excitabar*** *sermone illo et* ***accendebar*** *et* ***ardebam***, *et hoc solum me in* ***tanta flagrantia*** *refrangebat, quod nomen Christi non erat ibi*
>
> [Nevertheless, the one thing that delighted me in Cicero's exhortation was the advice 'not to study one particular sect but to love and seek and pursue and hold fast and strongly embrace wisdom itself, wherever found.' One thing alone put a brake on my intense enthusiasm—that the name of Christ was not contained in the book].

Furthermore, the *Hortensius* is payed the compliment of having its secular contents summarized by scriptural quotation (Paul's words from Col 2:8–9) as is the case with the reading of the very influential *Libri Platonicorum* in book 7, a device that gives it authority above other secular texts:

> *Manifestatur ibi salutifera illa admonitio spiritus tui per servum tuum bonum et pium: 'videte, ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam et inanem seductionem, secundum*

> *traditionem hominum, secundum elementa huius mundi, et non secundum Christum, quia in ipso inhabitat omnis plenitudo divinitatis corporaliter'*
>
> [That text is a clear demonstration of the salutary admonition given by your Spirit through your good and devoted servant (Paul): 'See that none deceives you by philosophy and vain seduction following human tradition; following the elements of this world and not following Christ; in him dwells all the fullness of divinity in bodily form' (Col 2:8–9)].

I contend that Augustine's reading of the *Hortensius* may be intended as a paradigm for reading the *Confessions* as a protreptic text, a paradigm the reader will gradually be induced to make his own as the narrative progresses and the effect texts can have on lives that has been implied before is repeatedly brought to the fore to reach a climax in Book 8 (see discussion below). I also argue that the fact that this text is called an *exhortatio* and that it is described by using the stock terminology of protreptic texts must have had an important influence on the reader's perception of the genre of the *Confessions*. In this I assume, of course, that the privileged discourse community Augustine had in mind consisted of classically educated readers to whom the protreptic genre and its characteristics were well known and a genre such a reader may have expected a great exponent of the new philosophy (Christianity) to use.

4.5.2. *The Conversion Stories in Book 8*

Book 8, well known for Augustine's dramatic description of his conversion in a garden near Milan, is in fact a series of conversion stories. It shows how Augustine's final conversion is made possible by having listened to these stories. But the stories themselves contain instances of others being converted by hearing or reading scripture or conversion stories. It seems reasonable to assume that this may be yet another indication to the reader as to how Augustine intends his own conversion story to be read, a repetition of the paradigm presented in 3.4.7–8.

In the analysis of book 8 presented here I focus on one aspect to the exclusion of many other important themes: I examine the conversions that the reader is told about in an attempt to show that the presentation is an instruction to the reader on how to read the *Confessions*. I argue that this 'instruction' can function on a conscious level, but will more probably function on a subconscious level, so that its relevance is only brought up from the subconscious at the crucial moment when

the reader is ready to make the final decision to read and obey scripture, that is, in the way the story of Antony's conversion functions for Augustine.

Let us take another look at the embedded conversion stories in book 8 that have been analyzed by various others.[34] The reader learns of six instances of conversion brought about by various factors and presented by Augustine (sometimes as told or read by others) with various degrees of detail and emotional involvement: the Roman senator, Victorinus; the two *agentes in rebus* at Trier (Ponticianus' former colleagues); the monk, Antony; Augustine himself; and Alypius.

In 8.2.4 we see Victorinus converted through reading, indeed, seriously studying scripture:

> *Legebat, sicut ait Simplicianus, sanctam scripturam, omnesque christianas litteras investigabat studiosissime et perscrutabatur, et dicebat Simpliciano, non palam sed secretius et familiarius, 'noveris me iam esse christianum?'*
>
> [Simplicianus said Victorinus read holy scripture, and all the Christian books he investigated with special care. After examining them he said to Simplicianus, not openly but in the privacy of friendship, 'Did you know that I am already a Christian?'];

talking to Simplicianus and studying scripture once again:

> *Et hoc saepe dicebat, iam se esse christianum, et Simplicanus illud saepe respondebat … sed posteaquam legendo et inhiando hausit firmitatem timuitque negari a Christo coram angelis sanctis*
>
> [He used frequently to say 'I am a Christian already,' and Simplicanus would give the same answer … But after his reading, he began to feel a longing and drank in courage. He was afraid he would be 'denied' by Christ 'before the holy angels' (Luke 12:9)].

Thus, Victorinus' conversion comes about primarily through his own reading (of scripture and many other Christian works: *omnes*), but also through talking to Simplicianus. Interesting to note here is the way in which Augustine focuses the narration of how the conversion happened by his opening statement in 8.2.4. He desires to know how God wrought the conversion of an unlikely convert, i.e. he is interested in how conversions may be brought about:

> *O domine, domine, qui inclinasti caelos et descendisti, tetigisti montes et fumigaverunt, quibus modis te insinuasti illi pectori?*

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[34] See for example Schmidt-Dengler (1969); Boyd (1974); Archambault (1986); Bennett (1988); Jacques (1988); Tavard (1988); O'Meara (1992); and Stock (1996).

> [Lord God, 'you have inclined the heavens and come down, you have touched the mountains and they have smoked' (Ps 143:5). By what ways did you make an opening into that heart?]

Of Ponticianus' colleagues, the *agentes in rebus*, we learn that one needs nothing more than reading a conversion story (that of the monk Antony in this instance) to come to an immediate conversion. Here we have a main character who is converted and his partner who plays a very minor role. The reader is left with the impression that the latter, almost blindly, follows his friend because he is struck with the immediate, emotional and life-changing response of the first. All we learn about Antony's conversion at this stage is that it is brought about by hearing scripture.

About Augustine's conversion we have an abundance of information, of course, but the catalysts that function in book 8 are the conversion stories he hears on the one hand, and his reading of the specific passage from Romans, on the other. Alypius' conversion is presented, like that of the second agent at Trier, with very little detail, except for the information that the final catalyst is the reading of scripture, specifically the passage in Romans immediately following on the one read by Augustine. We may assume, that, like in the case of his Trier counterpart, the emotional final yielding of his friend also plays a role.

I want to argue that these stories have in common a message about reading and hearing that may once again be interpreted as an indication to the reader about how to read the *Confessions*. In all these cases the final catalyst for conversion is reading, and the material that is read is either scripture or a conversion story (the only exception is the second courtier at Trier who does not read but who does witness a conversion).[35] There are three other important features of these conversions that I think are emphasized in the text and that support my argument. The first is the assumption of Augustine and the other narrators he introduces that examples invite imitation; the second is willingness of the reader or potential convert to apply what he reads to his own life and circumstances; and the third is the description of the effect of the conversion in terms of the fire-imagery and erotic vocabulary typical of protreptic texts. The theme of drawing parallels between the lives read

[35] Of course, like with everything he narrates in the *Confessions*, Augustine makes sure that God is recognized as the ultimate author or catalyst behind the events portrayed here. See for example: *immisisti in mentem meam … pergere ad Simplicianum* (8.1.1); or the question about Victorinus: *quibus modis te insinuasti illi pectori?* (8.2.4).

in literature and the reader's own life and of imitating those lives is one that has been carefully prepared throughout the narrative in books 1 to 7 (see my discussion 4.4 above).

If we follow these three features through the conversion stories in book 8 we first find Simplicianus telling Victorinus's story for the purpose of exhorting Augustine to become a Christian (as 8.2.3 states explicitly), i.e. as a protreptic:

> *Ut me exhortaretur ad humilitatem Christi … Victorinum ipsum recordatus est*
>
> [Then, to exhort me to the humility of Christ … he recalled his memory of Victorinus himself].

Then, it is Victorinus' willingness to apply what he has read and heard to his own life that convinces him that his way of being a Christian is not satisfactory and leads to his decision to be publicly baptized (8.2.4):

> *Sed posteaquam legendo et inhiando hausit firmitatem timuitque negari a Christo … ait Simpliciano … 'eamus in ecclesiam: christianus volo fieri'*
>
> [But after his reading, he began to feel a longing and drank in courage. He was afraid he would be 'denied' by Christ 'before the holy angels' (Luke 12:9) … he said to Simplicianus … 'Let us go to the church; I want to become a Christian'].

This story is meant to elicit imitation from Augustine and in 8.5.10 we learn that it is successful in the sense that it at least awakens the desire for imitation (note the fire-imagery in *exarsi*):

> *Sed ubi mihi homo tuus Simplicianus de Victorino ista narravit, exarsi ad imitandum: ad hoc enim et ille narraverat*
>
> [As soon as your servant Simplicianus told me this story about Victorinus, I was ardent to follow his example. He had indeed told it to me with this object in view].

Also Augustine's reflection on Victorinus' conversion in 8.4.9 emphasizes its value as an example for others to follow:

> *Deinde quod multis noti, multis sunt auctoritati ad salutem et multis praeeunt secuturis, ideoque multum de illis et qui eos praecesserunt laetantur, quia non de solis laetantur*
>
> [Then those who are known to many are to many a personal influence towards salvation. Where they lead, many will follow. That is why on their account even those who have preceded them feel great joy; for their rejoicing is not only for them].

The conversion of the Trier courtiers (told in its entirety in 8.6.15) is perhaps the quickest, least tortuous and least intellectual conversion the

reader learns about in book 8, but Augustine's version conveys that it has a great emotional impact on him. The first courtier reads Antony's conversion story:

> *Et invenisse ibi codicem in quo scripta erat vita Antonii. quam legere coepit unus eorum et mirari et accendi, et inter legendum meditari*
>
> [They found there a book in which was written the Life of Antony. One of them began to read it. He was amazed and set on fire, and during his reading began to think].

He immediately applies what he reads to his own life, decides to imitate Antony, and converts to Christianity on the spot:

> *Iratus sibi, coniecit oculos in amicum et ait illi, 'dic, quaeso te, omnibus istis laboribus nostris quo ambimus pervenire? quid quaerimus? … amicus autem dei, si voluero, ecce nunc fio' … et legebat et mutabatur intus*
>
> [Angry with himself, he turned his eyes on his friend and said to him: 'Tell me, I beg of you, what do we hope to achieve with all our labours? What is our aim in life? … Whereas, if I wish to become God's friend, in an instant I may become that now' … He read on and experienced a conversion inwardly].

Augustine's narrative does not give us any reason to suspect that other circumstances in his life contributed to the life-changing decision. The courtier's reactions to the conversion story he reads are described in typical protreptic vocabulary, emotional and erotic:

> *Subito repletus amore sancto et sobrio pudore … turbidus parturitione novae vitae … dum legit et volvit fluctus cordis sui, infremuit aliquando et discrevit decrevitque meliora*
>
> [Suddenly he was filled with holy love and sobering shame … and in pain at the coming to birth of new life … Indeed, as he read and turned over and over in the turbulent hesitations of his heart, there were some moments when he was angry with himself. But then he perceived the choice to be made and took a decision to follow the better course].

Antony's conversion story (presented indirectly and in fragments) is the one to which the least amount of space is allotted. We learn less about the conversion itself than about its protreptic effect on others, but the salient elements are there. In 8.12.29 we learn that Antony had heard a reading from scripture and applied what he read to his own life:

> *Audieram enim de Antonio quod ex evangelica lectione cui forte supervenerat, tamquam sibi diceretur quod legebatur: 'vade, vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus et habebis thesaurum in caelis; et veni, sequere me,' et tali oraculo confestim ad te esse conversum*

> [For I had heard how Antony happened to be present at the gospel reading, and took it as an admonition addressed to himself when the words were read: 'Go, sell all you have, give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me' (Matt 19:21). By such an inspired utterance he was immediately 'converted to you' (Ps 50:15)].

The effect of this reading is not described here, although we learn that it was powerful enough to cause a sudden conversion. What is described is the effect of the knowledge of Antony's experience on Augustine. The moment he hears the '*tolle, lege*' chant is the moment Antony's story rises to the surface and plays its decisive role: Augustine is struck (*concitus*) with certainty about what he should do. He imitates Antony, after reading a random passage from scripture, in interpreting the words as though addressed directly to himself:

> *Arripui, aperui et legi in silentio capitulum quo primum coniecti sunt oculi mei … nec ultra volui legere nec opus erat. statim quippe cum fine huiusce sententiae quasi luce securitatis infusa cordi meo omnes dubitationis tenebrae diffugerunt*
>
> [I seized it, opened it and in silence read the first passage on which my eyes lit … I neither wished nor needed to read further. At once, with the last words of this sentence, it was as if a light of relief from all anxiety flooded into my heart. All the shadows of doubt were dispelled].

I think that we also have reason to assume that Ponticianus told Antony's story (in 8.6.14) with its protreptic power at the back of his mind. Augustine is careful to underline the fortuitous character of the whole meeting with Ponticianus and the apparently incidental character of the conversation. But, Ponticianus was probably (like Simplicianus) conscious of how a conversion story might influence Augustine. He was a practicing Christian, probably aware of Augustine's Manichaean connections, and he may have gathered that Augustine was searching in his reading of Paul:

> *Cui cum indicassem illis me scripturis curam maximam impendere, ortus est sermo ipso narrante de Antonio Aegyptio monacho*
>
> [When I had indicated to him that those scriptures were the subject of deep study for me, a conversation began in which he told the story of Antony the Egyptian monk].

The last conversion story in book 8 is Alypius' conversion. Partly like Augustine, and partly like the second Trier courtier, he is influenced, on the one hand, by the example of a conversion that happens before his eyes, and on the other, presumably, by the conversion stories (of Antony

and the Trier courtiers) told by Ponticianus, as well as by reading a random section from scripture.

To come back to the most important conversion reported in book 8, that of Augustine himself: this conversion constitutes of course the long awaited climax of the autobiographical section of the *Confessions*. Though the final conversion constitutes the main line of tension that runs from the opening of book 8 to its end, everything narrated in books 1 to 7 forms part of Augustine's preparation for this final surrender, with his reading of the *Hortensius*, his experience of Ambrose's exegesis of scripture and the reading of the *Libri Platonicorum* playing the most prominent role. Still, the stages of his conversion described in book 8 display the same elements as the other conversions told here. First, in 8.4.9, in 8.5.10, and in 8.8.10 Augustine's assumption that the other conversions may be imitated is clear:

> *Multis sunt auctoritati ad salutem et multis praeeunt secuturis*
>
> [Those … are to many a personal influence towards salvation. Where they lead, many will follow];
>
> *Exarsi ad imitandum [Victorinum]*
>
> [I was ardent to follow his example];
>
> *An quia praecesserant, pudet sequi et non pudet nec saltem sequi?*
>
> [Is it because they are ahead of us that we are ashamed to follow? Do we feel no shame at making not even an attempt to follow?]

Secondly, Augustine's narration of Ponticianus' telling of the conversion story of the Trier courtiers (the central section of the book) is interrupted by Augustine's narration in 8.7.16 of how, while Ponticianus spoke, he drew parallels with his own life and inferred meaning for himself (although the action is ascribed to God, it is clear that the catalyst is Ponticianus' words):

> *Narrabat haec Ponticianus. tu autem, domine, inter verba eius retorquebas me ad me ipsum, auferens me a dorso meo, ubi me posueram dum nollem me attendere, et constituebas me ante faciem meam, ut viderem quam turpis essem, quam distortus et sordidus, maculosus et ulcerosus. et videbam et horrebam, et quo a me fugerem non erat. sed si conabar avertere a me aspectum, narrabat ille quod narrabat, et tu me rursus opponebas mihi et impingebas me in oculos meos, ut invenirem iniquitatem meam et odissem*
>
> [This was the story Ponticianus told. But while he was speaking, Lord, you turned my attention back to myself. You took me up from behind my own back where I had placed myself because I did not wish to observe

> myself (Ps 20:13), and you set me before my face (Ps 49:21) so that I should see how vile I was, how twisted and filthy, covered in sores and ulcers. And I looked and was appalled, but there was no way of escaping from myself. If I tried to avert my gaze from myself, his story continued relentlessly, and you once again placed me in front of myself; you thrust me before my own eyes so that I should discover my iniquity and hate it].

Augustine's final decision is thus precipitated both by hearing conversion stories and by reading scripture. One interesting aspect of Augustine's conversion is that the description in emotional terms and with fire-imagery precedes the narration of the final conversion, while what follows is described as utmost serenity. In Augustine's case the flagrant emotions are excited by the conversion stories he hears. Following Victorinus' conversion, the opening sentence of 8.4.9 is such an emotional appeal to God to fire up 'our' hearts. It is a general outcry that aims to include the reader:

> *Age, domine, fac, excita et revoca nos, accende et rape, flagra dulcesce: amemus, curramus. nonne multi ex profundiore tartaro caecitatis quam Victorinus redeunt ad te et accedunt et inluminantur recipientes lumen?*
>
> [Come Lord, stir us up and call us back, kindle and seize us, be our fire and our sweetness. Let us love, let us run. Surely many return to you from a deeper hell of blindness than Victorinus. They approach and are illuminated as they receive light].

We also have the *exarsi ad imitandum* at the opening of 8.5.10 (already referred to above). But the most intense emotions are described during and after Simplicianus' narration. In 8.7.17 we have:

> *Tunc vero quanto ardentius amabam illos de quibus audiebam salubres affectus, quod se totos tibi sanandos dederunt, tanto exsecrabilius me comparatum eis oderam*
>
> [But at that moment the more ardent my affection for those young men of whom I was hearing, who for the soul's health had given themselves wholly to you for healing, the more was the detestation and hatred I felt for myself in comparison with them];

and in 8.8.19:

> *Tum in illa grandi rixa interioris domus meae, quam fortiter excitaveram cum anima mea in cubiculo nostro, corde meo, tam vultu quam mente turbatus … illuc me abstulerat tumultus pectoris, ubi nemo impediret ardentem litem quam mecum aggressus eram … ego fremebam spiritu, indignans indignatione turbulentissima*
>
> [Then in the middle of that grand struggle in my inner house, which I had vehemently stirred up with my soul in the intimate chamber of my heart, distressed not only in mind but in appearance … The tumult of

> my heart took me out into the garden where no one could interfere with the burning struggle with myself in which I was engaged … I was deeply disturbed in spirit, angry with indignation and distress].[36]

Also the opening chapters of book 9 (i.e. immediately following the description of the conversion at the end of book 8) contain some typical protreptic vocabulary. The beginning of 9.2.3 is full of erotic fire-imagery and refers back explicitly to the exempla of book 8:

> *Sagittaveras tu cor nostrum caritate tua … et exempla servorum tuorum, quos de nigris lucidos et de mortuis vivos feceras, congesta in sinum cogitationis nostrae urebant et absumebant gravem torporem, ne in ima vergeremus, et accendebant nos valide, ut omnis ex lingua subdola contradictionis flatus inflammare nos acrius posset, non extinguere*
>
> [You pierced my heart with the arrow of your love … The examples given by your servants whom you had transformed from black to shining white and from death to life, crowded in upon my thoughts. They burnt away and destroyed my heavy sluggishness, preventing me from being dragged down to low things. They set me on fire with such force that every breath of opposition from any 'deceitful tongue' (Ps 119:2f.) had the power not to dampen my zeal but to inflame it the more].

It seems clear to me that by the end of book 8 Augustine has given his reader explicit instructions as to how his conversion story should be read. It should be read as an example to be imitated, as a protreptic text. The ground has now been prepared for the (almost) explicit protreptic to a specific segment of his audience in book 9 and for the reading of scripture offered in books 11 to 13.

4.6. *The Protreptic-Paraenetic Purpose of the Allegory in Book 13*

Looking at the allegorical exegesis of the creation narrative in Gen 1:1–2:2 from the perspectives I hope to have opened up so far offers the possibility of calling the first section (paragraphs 13 to 31) a protreptic-paraenetic discourse designed to exhort and encourage the members of the *ecclesia catholica* to persevere in the daily struggle of Christian life. In the second section (paragraphs 32 to 49) the emphasis moves

[36] Two other sections contain descriptions of violent emotions and erotic overtones: *aegrotabam et excruciabar … volvens et versans me in vinculo meo* (8.11.25) and the section immediately preceding the final conversion, 8.12.28: *oborta est procella ingens ferens ingentem imbrem lacrimarum … nescio quid … dixeram in quo apparebat sonus vocis meae iam fletu gravidus … et dimisi habenas lacrimis, et proruperunt flumina oculorum meorum.*

back to the protreptic side of the scale, coupled with an increased indication of Augustine's awareness of his Manichaean audience.[37] My choice to analyse the first of these sections in chapter 4 and the second in chapter 5 is based on the nature of the narrative in the respective sections, but it is also to a certain degree arbitrary: this modus operandi allows me to say something about almost all of the allegory without saying everything about all sections. I hope to focus the attention of my reader on only one thread running through these paragraphs and do not in any way do justice to the scope and variety of the account of congregational life offered here or to the construction or tone of the whole.

The four aspects of the allegorical exposition I concentrate on in the analyses below are the following:

- The element of exhortation or consolation offered to the members of the ecclesia (as the main focus of my discussions) that in many places makes the text approach the nature of a sermon[38]
- The defense of the whole of scripture (both Old and New Testament) as the authoritative word of God that targets especially a Manichaean audience
- The authoritative presence of Paul and his writings
- The degree to which what is offered here is a reading not only of the verses from Genesis but of the whole of scripture

Before I analyse the allegory a cursory look at the opening section of book 13 is necessary. This section is apparently designed to introduce the book as the conclusion to the work as a whole, and thus points to a well thought out construction with important pointers concerning the coherence of the whole. The first paragraph is heavy with echoes of most of the important themes in the *Confessions*. There are verbal echoes of the prologue: the same insistence on the verb *invocare*, especially *priusquam invocarem* (recalling *utrum sit prius invocare te* in 1.1.1), and also the repetition of *fecisti* (repeatedly used in 1.1.1 and 1.2.2).

More indirectly, but still unmistakeably, the prologue is also evoked by the references to *omnia mala merita mea* [all the evils which merited

[37] Because in this section I need to refer repeatedly to the different sections of a relatively long continuous passage I find it less complicated and easier for the reader to follow when I refer to the different sections only by their paragraph numbers.

[38] Ries (1963, 202 and 212) also indicates that whenever Augustine writes on scripture pastoral aims tend to dominate, exactly what we see happening in the first section of the reading of Genesis in book 13.

punishment], recalling *circumferens testimonium peccati sui* in 1.1.1; to the fact that man's very being depends on God: *nec eram cui praestares ut essem … a quo mihi est ut sim cui bene sit* [I had no being to which you could grant existence … To you I owe my being and the goodness of my being], recalling *sine te non esset quidquid est … et ego sum … qui non essem, nisi esses in me. an potius non essem nisi essem in te* in 1.2.2; and to man's capacity to receive God in his soul *animam meam, quam praeparas ad capiendum te* [my soul which you are preparing to receive you], recalling *quis locus est in me quo veniat in me deus meus … est quicquam in me quod capiat te?* in 1.2.2. Further, the first few lines of paragraph 1 sound, in many respects, like a summary of the conversion story in the first nine books of the *Confessions* where Augustine is portrayed as the prodigal son, moving away from God (forgetful of Him), then on his way back to Him, while God remains ever present, constantly calling to Augustine in different ways that he only retrospectively recognizes as coming form God:

> *Invoco te, deus meus, misericordia mea, qui fecisti me et oblitum tui non oblitus es … priusquam invocarem praevenisti et institisti crebrescens multimodis vocibus ut audirem de longinquo et converterer et vocantem me invocarem te*
>
> [I call upon you, my God, my mercy (Ps 58:18). You made me and, when I forgot you, you did not forget me … Before I called to you, you were there before me. With mounting frequency by voices of many kinds you put pressure on me, so that from far off I heard and was converted and called upon you as you were calling to me].

This distillation of the first nine books to an end product that clearly portrays emphasis on the progress towards conversion provides important support for my argument that this is what the first books of the *Confessions* are: the exemplum of a conversion implemented as a protreptic tool.

As is often the case in Augustine's prologues to individual books, this one is not only retrospective, but also prospective. It invokes God's help for the task that still lies ahead. It states the current state of Augustine's earthly *peregrinatio* (*nunc invocantem te ne deseras*), and it foreshadows one of the most important themes of book 13, the goodness of God's creation, of which Augustine and all men (created not out of necessity but out of the goodness of God) are, of course, part:

> *Et tamen ecce sum ex bonitate tua … neque enim eguisti me … non ut tibi sic serviam quasi ne fatigeris in agendo … sed ut serviam tibi et colam te, ut de te mihi bene sit, a quo mihi est ut sim cui bene sit*

> [Nevertheless here I am as a result of your goodness … You had no need of me … it is not as if I could so serve you as to prevent you becoming weary in your work … But I serve and worship you so that from you good may come to me. To you I owe my being and the goodness of my being].

The second section of Book 13 (paragraphs 2 to 12), which O'Donnell gives the heading, 'Why did God create,' is in many respects simply a continuation of the discussions in books 11 and 12. It still occupies itself with the first three verses of Genesis and it still meditates on some of the difficult theoretical concepts that the reading of Genesis brings into play. The issues of contingent creation (*ex plenitudine*, 12.4.5) and of the beauty and goodness of all creation, of the role of the Spirit in the ascent of the soul, the introduction of Paul as an important figure and the continued exploration of the mystery of the Trinity are in my opinion all part of the preparation of the Manichaean reader to accept the final message of the *Confessions*. This is embodied in the last section (paragraphs 35 to 49), which I treat mainly in chapter 5. Importantly, this last section of Book 13 also puts on the table the parallels between the *conversio* of man and the *formatio* of creation out of *materia informis*, mainly through its exploration of the phrase 'fiat lux' in Gen 1:3, interpreted as a parallel for the much quoted Eph 5:8 *eratis enim aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino*, that becomes 'a Leitmotiv of Book 13' (O'Donnell 1992, 3: 348). Thus it prepares the way for the allegorical exposition of the creation story as a parallel for man's life on earth as well as for the method of interpretatively juxtaposing texts from the Old Testament with texts from the New Testament.

To assist the reader in following the arguments presented in this regard a schematic exposition is given below. Note that the thematic structure I identify in the allegory does not follow exactly the surface structure of the text that follows the verse by verse or day by day plan of Gen 1. Furthermore, only the subsections belonging to section A are discussed here, because of the opportunity they present to clarify protreptic-paraenetic matters that are the subject of chapter 4. Section B is treated in chapter 5 because the strong pre-occupation with a potential Manichaean audience there makes its discussion in chapter 5 (on matters concerning the audience of the *Confessions*) more suitable. For now I do, however, give a table of the whole allegorical section of book 13:

Section	*Subsection*	*Paragraphs*	*Theme*
A. Paraenetic to members of the Church	(i)	13–15	Hope in spite of present imperfect conditions
	(ii)	16–19	Value and authority of scripture
	(iii)	20–25	Exhortation to bear fruit
	(iv)	26–31	Value of the preaching and example of ministers
B. Against Manichaean dogma	(v)	32–34	Man in the image of God and Manichaean anthropology
	(vi)	35–37	A verse offensive to the Manichaeans
	(vii)	38–42	Manichaean eating rituals
	(viii)	43–49	Manichaean views of creation

The main aim of the discussion of subsections (i) to (iv) offered here is to illustrate that the element of consolation offered to believers figures prominently in the first part of the allegory (section A) and as such constitutes a paraenetic discourse. I do not claim that this is the only issue at stake here, but it is one that is certainly also present here. Let us take a closer look at the individual sections of the allegory.

4.6.1. *Section (i): Hope in Spite of Present Imperfect Conditions (paragraphs 13 to 15)*

At paragraph 13 Augustine makes a transition from the theoretical discussion of the *trinitas* and the difficulties concerning this concept that he has still not solved to his own satisfaction (in paragraph 12):

> *Trinitatem omnipotentem quis intelleget? … rara anima quae, cum de illa [sc. trinitate] loquitur, scit quod loquitur … quis facile cogitaverit? quis ullo modo dixerit? Quis quolibet modo temere pronuntiaverit*
>
> [Who can understand the omnipotent Trinity? … It is a rare soul who knows what he is talking about when he is speaking of it … Who can find a way to give expression to that? Who would venture in any way whatever to make a rash pronouncement on the subject?]

to its practical manifestation in the *ecclesia*:

> *Procede in confessione, fides mea; dic domino deo tuo, 'sancte, sancte, sancte, domine deus meus, in nomine tuo baptizati sumus, pater et fili et spiritus sancte, in nomine tuo baptizamus, pater et fili et spiritus sancte'*

> [Proceed with your confession, my faith. Say to the Lord your God: 'Holy, holy, holy,' Lord my God (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8). In your name we are baptized, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:10); in your name we baptize, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit].

Talking about baptism in the name of the Triune God provides the beginning for the story of the members of the church, both the followers (*baptizati sumus*) and the leaders (*baptizamus*), the *carnales* and the *spiritales*, that starts here. The other beginnings that feature in this paragraph are the first words presented as spoken by God in scripture *fiat lux*, juxtaposed by the first words reported as spoken by Jesus *paenitentiam agite* (O'Donnell 1992, 3: 363). The latter of course also represents the first step towards conversion.

Let us move to the paraenetic concerns that I find dominating the first part of the allegorical reading of Genesis. I argue that the text contains exhortations and encouragements aimed at readers that were either already converted when they started reading the *Confessions*, or, hypothetically, those who succumbed to the protreptic of the first ten books and must now start life as members of the church, making this section strictly speaking more paraenetic than protreptic. The allegory is introduced in paragraph 13:

> *Quia et apud nos in Christo suo fecit deus caelum et terram, spiritales et carnales ecclesiae suae*
>
> [Among us also in his Christ God has made a heaven and an earth, meaning the spiritual and carnal members of his Church].

This sentence at the same time includes the reader (as so often in the *Confessions*) in a meditation expressed in the first person plural that on many levels emphasizes the common bond between all those trying to live the Christian life and offers consolation during the daily struggle this life implies:

> *Sed quia spiritus tuus superferebatur super aquam, non reliquit miseriam nostram misericordia tua … et quoniam conturbata erat ad nos ipsos anima nostra, commemorati sumus tui, domine … et displicuerunt nobis tenebrae nostrae, et conversi sumus ad te, et facta est lux. et ecce fuimus aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino*
>
> [But because your 'Spirit was borne above the waters,' your mercy did not abandon our misery … Because our soul was 'disturbed' within ourselves, we 'remembered you, Lord' … Our darknesses displeased us. We were converted to you (Ps 50:15), light was created, and suddenly we 'who were once darkness are now light in the Lord' (Eph 5:8)].

In this context it is not accidental that Augustine opens paragraph 13 by addressing his own *fides* (*Procede in confessione, fides mea*). *Fides* and *spes* are presented in section A as the two realities man has to cling to during his struggle to live as a Christian in this world. The two concepts are introduced in combination at the beginning of paragraph 14 through quotations from Paul's letters to the Corinthians (2Cor 5:7, *per fidem ambulamus et non per speciem*) and to the Romans (Rom 8:24 *spe enim salvi facti sumus. spes autem quae videtur, non est spes*) and remain part of a constant reminder to the reader of what she may hope for, as does the figure of Paul, who becomes not only a quoted author but also an important character, yet another life that may be imitated, in the narrative.

Paragraphs 13 to 15 are an exposition of Gen 1:2–5. But the presence of the Genesis text is of minor importance in comparison to the presence of the texts from different sections of the rest of scripture (most prominent are the book of Psalms, the Gospels and Paul's Letters). On a different level these texts are used to allow the reader to see Paul as an already converted Christian, advanced enough in his spiritual life to belong among the *spiritales*, but still having to live *per fidem* and not yet *per speciem*. We learn that even Paul did not understand all, that he still suffered and thirsted for God, and that he passionately longed for Christ:

> *Etiam ipse nondum se arbitratur conprehendisse … ingemescit gravatus, et sitit anima eius ad deum vivum, quemadmodum cervi ad fontes aquarum, et dicit, 'quando veniam*?'
>
> [Even he … does not think that he himself has comprehended … Weighed down he groans (2Cor 5:4); 'his soul thirsts for the living God, like a hart for the springs of waters', and says 'when shall I come?' (Ps 41:2–3)].

Paul's elevated position in the Church is not forgotten. It is emphasized, for example, that he no longer speaks in his own voice, but that God speaks through him:

> *Sed iam non in voce sua; in tua enim, qui misisti spiritum tuum de excelsis … quia in voce cataractarum tuarum, non in voce sua, invocat alteram abyssum, cui zelans timet ne sicut serpens Evam decepit astutia sua, sic et eorum sensus corrumpantur*
>
> [But now he is speaking not with his own voice but with yours. 'You sent your Spirit from on high' (Wisd 9:17) … 'By the sound of your cataracts' (Ps 41:8), not by his own voice, he calls to the other deep. In his jealousy for it he fears lest 'as the serpent deceived Eve by his subtlety, so also their mind may be corrupted to lose chastity' (2Cor 11:2)].

At the same time, however, the fact that he remains in a situation of expectation, of less than perfection, that he too is still an abyss, though calling to others that are the abyss, and even worse off than he is may serve to encourage those struggling with the daily demands of a Christian way of life:

> *Adhuc abyssus abyssum invocat … vocat inferiorem abyssum … invocat alteram abyssum*
>
> ['Deep' still 'calls to deep' … To the lower abyss he calls … he calls to the other deep].

In paragraph 15, introduced by *et ego dico*, the focus moves to the exemplum of Augustine himself. Once again we have, together with evocations of a higher union with God, also an emphasis on the flipside of the same coin, the slipping back and the daily struggle the Christian remains embroiled in, with the *adhuc* picking up the *adhuc* in the previous paragraph where it was used to introduce this same aspect of the Christian peregrinatio:

> *Respiro in te paululum, cum effundo super me animam meam in voce exultationis et confessionis, soni festivitatem celebrantis. et adhuc tristis, quia relabitur et fit abyssus, vel potius sentit adhuc se esse abyssum* (the subject of the third person verbs is *anima mea*)
>
> [I sigh for you a little (Job 32:20) when I 'pour out my soul upon myself in the voice of exultation and confession, the sound of one celebrating a festival' (Ps 41:6). Yet still my soul is sad because it slips back and becomes a 'deep,' or rather feels itself still to be a deep].

Following this we have Augustine's *fides* addressing his soul in a passage in many respects similar to the one in 4.11.16 to 18 (discussed in 4.2 above), and constituting a strong paraenetic message well suitable to encourage the *fideles* in their daily struggle. Especially noteworthy are the exhortations embodied in the imperatives:

> *Spera in domino … spera et persevera … spera in domino*
>
> [Hope in the Lord … Hope and persevere … Hope in the Lord];

the references to the imperfections of the present situation:

> *Et adhuc tristis est … 'quare tristis es, anima, et quare conturbas me? spera in domino' … fuimus aliquando tenebrae, quarum residua trahimus in corpore propter peccatum mortuo*
>
> [Yet still my soul is sad … 'Why are you sad, soul, and why do you disturb me? Hope in the Lord' (Ps 41:6) … We were 'once darkness'

> (Eph 5:8), the remnants of which we bear in the body which 'is dead because of sin' (Rom 8:10)];

balanced with reminders of what may be hoped for:

> *Donec transeat nox … donec transeat ira domini … donec aspiret dies et removeantur umbrae*
>
> [Until the night passes … until the Lord's wrath passes … 'until the day breathes and the shadows are removed' (Cant 2:17)].

This hope for a better future is also expressed in the future verbs in the quotation from Ps 41 that follow the address to the soul:

> *Mane astabo et contemplabor; semper confitebor illi. Mane astabo et videbo salutare vultus mei*
>
> ['In the morning I will stand up and will contemplate you. I will ever confess to Him. In the morning I will stand and I will see the salvation of my face' (Ps 41:6–12)];

and the renewed reminders that man has already become light, has already been saved:

> *Unde in hac peregrinatione pignus accepimus, ut iam simus lux, dum adhuc spe salvi facti sumus et filii lucis et filii diei, non filii noctis neque tenebrarum quod tamen fuimus*
>
> [From him during this wandering pilgrimage, we have received an assurance that we are already light (Eph 5:8). While still in this life, we are 'saved by hope' (Rom 8:24) and are 'sons of the light' and sons of God, 'not sons of the night and of darkness' (1 Thess 5:5) which we once were].[39]

4.6.2. *Section (ii): The Value and Authority of Scripture (paragraphs 16 to 19)*

Paragraphs 16 to 19 constitute the allegorical analysis of the second day of creation, described in Gen 1:6–7 (*et fecit deus firmamentum, et divisit deus inter aquam … et … aquam*) and as such brings into focus the role of scripture in the Church (in the allegory *firmamentum* equals *scriptura*). The main subject here is the authority of scripture and in this I already perceive a receding of the paraenetic intention and the surfacing of the protreptic, for as soon as Augustine talks about scripture the Manichaean resistance to large parts of it and the need to con-

[39] We have to assume that while man has been made light already (as Eph 5:8 indicates) at the moment of conversion, through the reflection of the Light, this state is not permanent or perfect, hence the need for the believers to be reminded of the fact, and the assumption that they are still waiting for the night to pass, etc.

vince them of the erroneous nature of their views in this regard seem to surface in his mind. But elements of the consolation offered to believers are still discernible. The firmament is portrayed, implicitly first, in paragraphs 16 and 17, as a protection offered to sinful men, like the clothes given to Adam and Eve after the fall:

> *Aut quis nisi tu, deus noster, fecisti* ***nobis*** *firmamentum auctoritatis super nos in scriptura tua divina? caelum enim plicabitur ut liber et nunc* ***sicut pellis extenditur super nos*** *… et tu scis, domine, tu scis, quemadmodum pellibus indueris homines, cum peccato mortales fierent. unde sicut pellem extendisti firmamentum libri tui concordes utique sermones tuos, quos* ***per mortalium ministerium*** *superposuisti nobis … quia subterpositis solidasti ea [sc. casta eloquia]*
>
> [Who but you made for us a solid firmament of authority over us in your divine scripture? For 'the heaven will fold up like a book' (Isa 34:4), and now 'like a skin it is stretched out' above us (Ps 103:2) … You know, Lord, you know how you clothed human beings with skins when by sin they became mortal (Gen 3:21). So you have stretched out the firmament of your book 'like a skin,' that is your words which are not mutually discordant, and which you have placed over us by the ministry of mortal men … since for those who submit you have firmly established the scriptures' authority].

This interpretation is reinforced by the description in paragraph 18 where man's weakness (presumably the reason why he needs scripture to mediate between himself and the will of God) is contrasted with God's mercy and Truth:

> *Hoc firmamentum … quod firmasti super infirmitatem inferiorum populorum, ubi suspicerent et cognoscerent misericordiam tuam temporaliter enuntiantem te, qui fecisti tempora. in caelo enim, domine, misericordia tua et veritas tua usque ad nubes*
>
> [This firmament which you established to be above the weak who are on a lower level so that they could look up and know your mercy, announcing in time you who made time. For 'in heaven, Lord, is your mercy and your truth reaches the clouds' (Ps 35:6)].

The passage also contrasts those beings who inhabit the *caelum caeli* and directly know the will of God with man who cannot as yet achieve this, as paragraph 19 explains (in neo-Platonic terms):

> *Nec videtur iustum esse coram te, ut, quemadmodum se scit lumen incommutabile, ita sciatur ab inluminato conmutabili*
>
> [In your sight it does not seem right that the kind of self-knowledge possessed by unchangeable light should also be possessed by changeable existence which receives light].

But both paragraphs 18 and 19 once again end with a consolatory glimpse of what is to come:

> *Sed cum apparuerit [sc. filius tuus], similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum, sicuti est: sicuti est, domine, videre nostrum, quod nondum est nobis … sic enim apud te fons vitae quomodo in lumine tuo videbimus lumen*
>
> ['But when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is' (1John 3:2). 'As he is' Lord will be ours to see; but it is not yet given to us … For 'with you is the fountain of life,' and so also it is 'in your light' that 'we shall see light' (Ps 35:10)].

4.6.3. *Section (iii): Exhortation to Bear Fruit (paragraphs 20 to 25)*

Although, on the level of the explanation of the Genesis text, paragraphs 20 to 21 talk about the third day of creation (the conglomeration of the waters and the creation of fruit bearing plants) and paragraphs 22 to 25 about the fourth day (the creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars), this section of the allegory can also be described as a unity constructed around the metaphor of fruit bearing from 1Corinthians, used to describe the pious actions of the believer in the community. The first section (paragraphs 20 to 21) interprets Gen 1:9–10 on the gathering of the waters and the segregation of the dry land, as well as the creation of the fruit bearing plants in verses 11–12. It serves as an introduction to the second section (paragraphs 22 to 25) where the creation of the lights in the sky (Gen 1:14–18) becomes an allegory for believers living the life expected of them in scripture, i.e. metaphorically bearing fruit.

The emotional quality of the prayer opening paragraph 22 sets the tone for the whole allegory on the *luminaria* from Gen 1, and for this thematic unit that forms in many respects the climax of this first part of the allegory:

> *Ita, domine, ita, oro te, oriatur, sicuti facis, sicuti das hilaritatem et facultatem, oriatur de terra veritas, et iustitia de caelo respiciat, et fiant in firmamento luminaria*
>
> [So, Lord, I pray you, as you are the maker, as you are the giver of cheerfulness and of power, let 'truth arise from the earth and justice look down from heaven' (Ps 84:12) and let there be 'lights in the firmament' (Gen 1:14)].

The artfully constructed sentence with its hesitant start and triumphant finish poignantly expresses God's love of man as well as Augustine's deeply felt desire for Truth (and to make his audience perceive truth),

the fulfilment of which is implicitly compared to the miraculous appearance of the lights in the sky.

This is followed by the exhortation from Isa 58:7–8, in turn followed by the command not to be easily satisfied, but to progress towards the contemplative life described by Paul in Phil 2:15–16 (note still the emphasis on the central role of scripture):

> *Frangamus esurienti panem nostrum et egenum sine tecto inducamus in domum nostram, nudum vestiamus et domesticos seminis nostri non despiciamus … et de ista inferiore fruge actionis in delicias contemplationis verbum vitae superius obtinentes appareamus sicut luminaria in mundo, cohaerentes firmamento scripturae tuae*
>
> [Let us 'break our bread to the hungry,' and take into our house the homeless destitute; let us clothe the naked and not despise the domestic servants who share our human stock (Isa 58:7–8) … Passing from the lower good works of the active life to the delights of contemplation, may we 'hold the word of life' which is above and 'appear as lights in the world' (Phil 2:15) by adhering to the solid firmament of your scripture].

Paragraph 23 interprets the description of the creation of the sun, moon, and stars through the words of 1 Cor 12:7–11 so that the possession of *sapientia*, *scientia* and the various gifts of the spirit are, respectively, equated to the *luminare maius*, the *luminare minus* and the *stellae* specified in Gen 1:16. The section is not directly paraenetic, but the subject remains the different levels of spiritual maturity among believers and Paul's views on this gathered from other sections of the letters to the Corinthians and the Romans.

Let us look at 13.19.24–25. The texture of the prose is dense with scriptural quotations from various books of both the Old and the New Testament and the intricate interweaving of metaphors from the New Testament and Psalms suggested by the choice of words and the allegorical interpretation of Genesis. The result is a passage with high emotional intensity that works up to a climax at the end of 13.19.25. The paragraph starts with a direct exhortation, God's answer to Augustine (indicated by *haec nobiscum disputas* at the end of paragraph 23, as O'Donnell 1992, 3:382 points out). But the plural imperatives at the beginning of paragraph 24 make it of course applicable (and a direct exhortation) to all readers:

> *Lavamini, mundi estote, auferte nequitiam ab animis vestris … discite bonum facere, iudicate pupillo et iustificate viduam*
>
> [But first, 'wash, be clean, remove malice from your souls … Learn to do good; judge in favour of the orphan and vindicate the widow'].

Following these words we have the introduction of yet another exemplum, the rich man from Matt 19:16–22 who asks what he should do to have eternal life. Although the narrative here follows the story of Matt 19 closely, small alterations and additions (like the change of *dixit* to *dicat*, or the insertion of phrases) remind the reader that this is not quotation but the authorial voice alluding to and interpreting the story in a way that makes the example more universal and the advice given once again clearly applicable to all readers (I quote only the changed sections and the inserted phrases):

> *Separet a se amaritudinem malitiae atque nequitiae*
>
> [He must separate himself from the bitterness of 'malice and wickedness' (1 Cor 5:8)];
>
> *Unde ergo tantae spinae, si terra fructifera est*
>
> [Then if the earth is fruitful, whence come so many thorns?];
>
> *Eis sociatus inter quos loquitur sapientiam ille*
>
> [Join the society of those among whom he 'speaks wisdom' (1 Cor 2:9)].

The apostrophe of the *dives* by the narrator also has the effect of directly addressing the reader, now as an individual and not as part of a group:

> *Ut noris et tu, ut fiant et tibi luminaria in firmamento caeli. quod non fiet, nisi fuerit illic cor tuum; quod item non fiet, nisi fuerit illic thesaurus tuus*
>
> [Then you too may know that. For you lights in the firmament are created. This will not happen unless your heart is in it, and that will not occur unless your treasure is there (Matt 6:21)].

It is clear that paragraphs 20 to 25, ending with the illumination of yet another exemplum (the *dives*), also speak paraenetically to the members of the church.

4.6.4. *Section (iv): The Value of the Preaching and the Example of the Ministers (paragraphs 26 to 31)*

I do not aim to present a detailed analysis of the paragraphs 26 to 29 that constitute the interpretation of the fifth and the first section of the sixth day of creation (the creation of the reptiles, birds and other animals), but there are a number of elements from this section that I want to comment on. First I want to point to the insistence in this section on those who serve God by spreading the Gospel. Note further that in 26

to 28 where the allegorical interpretation of the creation of the reptiles and birds (from the sea) occurs Augustine describes the work of God's ministers among fallen sinners, while in 29 to 31 where we have the interpretation of the section on the creation of the other animals (on dry land), he describes the work of the ministers among those already baptized, frequently contrasting it with the previous section.

Let us start with the references to the work of *praedicatores* among the unbelievers. We have in paragraph 26:

> *Separantes enim pretiosum a vili facti estis os dei, per quod diceret … repserunt enim sacramenta tua, deus, per opera sanctorum tuorum inter medio fluctus temptationum saeculi ad inbuendas gentes nomine tuo in baptismo tuo …voces nuntiorum tuorum volantes super terram iuxta firmamentum libri tui … neque enim sunt loquellae neque sermones quorum non audiantur voces eorum, quando in omnem terram exiit sonus eorum et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum*
>
> [As you separate the precious from the vile, you become the mouth of God (Jer 15:19) saying … Through the works of your holy people, God, your mysteries have crept through the midst of the waters of the world's temptations to imbue the nations with your name through baptism … and the voices of your messengers flying above the earth close to the firmament of your book … For there are neither languages nor discourses in which their voices are not heard. Their sound is gone out into all the world, and their words to the ends of the earth];

and in paragraph 28:

> *A quo si non esset lapsus Adam … non opus esset ut in aquis multis corporaliter et sensibiliter operarentur dispensatores tui mystica facta et dicta*
>
> [If Adam had not fallen from you … there would have been no need for your ministers at work 'in many waters' (Cant 8:7) to resort to mystic actions and words in the realm of the bodily senses].

In paragraph 29 the focus moves from the *infideles* to the *fideles*. This is, of course, once again a shift from the protreptic to the paraenetic: Not only Augustine, but also the *praedicatores* described here, have to be constantly aware that both types of audiences have to be addressed:

> *Primarum enim vocum evangelizantium infidelitas hominum causa extitit, sed et fideles exhortantur et benedicuntur eis multipliciter de die in diem*
>
> [Human unbelief was the cause which made the first voices proclaim the gospel. But the faithful are encouraged and blessed frequently 'from day to day' (Ps 60:9)].

Interesting in paragraph 30 is once again the emphasis on the exemplary value of the lives of others, especially the lives of the *praedicatores*.

Indirectly, this is yet another instance where the *Confessions* itself provides a perspective on the autobiography it starts with:

> *Operentur ergo iam in terra ministri tui, non sicut in aquis infidelitatis annuntiando et loquendo per miracula et sacramenta et voces mysticas, ubi intenta fit ignorantia … sed operentur etiam sicut in arida discreta a gurgitibus abyssi et sint forma fidelibus vivendo coram eis et excitando ad imitationem*
>
> [May your ministers now do their work on 'earth,' not as they did on the waters of unbelief when their preaching and proclamation used miracles and sacred rites and mystical prayers to attract the attention of ignorance … May they now work as on dry land separated from the whirlpools of the abyss. May they be an example to the faithful by the life they live before them and by arousing them to imitation (1Thess 1:7). Thereby hearing them is no mere hearing but leads to doing].

The idea that the ministers are those to be imitated, while they themselves aspire to imitate the example of Christ is present also in paragraph 31:

> *In verbo tuo per evangelistas tuos animam continentem imitando imitatores Christi tui*
>
> [By your word through your evangelists the soul achieves self-control by modelling itself on the imitators of your Christ].

It is also interesting to note how in paragraphs 29 to 31 the work of the *ministri* is described in terms of the typical vocabulary of protreptic-paraenetic texts discussed in chapter 2. The description in paragraph 29 of the work of the *evangelizantes* (quoted above) reminds strongly of Jordan's description (1986, 313) of paraenetic, namely 'paraenesis often consists of traditional moral precepts taught to students who ought already to have heard them':

> *Primarum enim vocum evangelizantium infidelitas hominum causa extitit; sed et fideles exhortantur et benedicuntur eis multipliciter de die in diem*
>
> [Human unbelief was the cause which made the first voices proclaim the gospel. But the faithful are encouraged and blessed frequently 'from day to day' (Ps 60:9)].

In paragraph 30 *excitare* occurs once again, in the context of the imitation of lives:

> *Sint forma fidelibus vivendo coram eis et excitando ad imitationem*
>
> [May they be an example to the faithful by the life they live before them and by arousing them to imitation (1Thess 1:7)].

Lastly, in paragraph 31, also the theme of friendship and the power of friends to influence each other surface yet again:

> *In verbo tuo per evangelistas tuos animam continentem imitando imitatores Christi tui. hoc est enim secundum genus, quoniam aemulatio viri ab amico est: 'estote,' inquit, 'sicut ego, quia et ego sicut vos'*
>
> [By your word through your evangelists the soul achieves self-control by modeling itself on the imitators of your Christ. That is the meaning of 'after its kind.' For a man is aroused to rivalry (Eccles. 4:4) if a friend says 'Be as I am, since I also am as you are' (Gal 4:12)].

As I have indicated, the protreptic-paraenetic intentions I identify in the last section of book 13 could of course also be discussed in this chapter. However, I define it as moving towards the protreptic end of the scale exactly because of the fact that the focus moves away from those in the church, back towards a not yet converted (Manichaean) audience. Thus I defer the discussion of this section to the end of chapter 5, which treats all matters concerning the Manichaeans as the target audience of the *Confessions*.

CHAPTER FIVE

AUDIENCE

CUI NARRO HAEC

The one characteristic of the *Confessions* that at first glance seems to undermine my argument that the text may be read as a protreptic, and that clearly distinguishes it from its antecedents in this genre, is the fact that it presents itself as a sustained prayer. The work is a tour de force of confession, a highly intimate and often lyrical confession of praises and of thanksgiving, of sins, and of faith, by a mortal man speaking to his omnipotent and omniscient God. But, because we know—if merely by the fact of its publication—that the work was intended for a human audience, we must assume this prayer stance to be a rhetorical strategy, designed to influence an audience in a specific manner.[1]

Indeed, as has already become clear from the analysis of *Conf* 9.4.8–11 in chapter 3, there are many signs in the text that Augustine remains acutely aware of his other audience, his readers. He often talks to God about people. At times he addresses these people directly. Sometimes he fights philosophical or theological positions and in this manner bestows on their adherents an indirect presence in the dramatic situation set up in the *Confessions*. He seems to be aware of the fact that human curiosity may be an important ally in enticing readers to take up his text.[2] In addition to this the prominence of the theme of reading and listening and the influence these activities can have on a reader or listener, as well as the awareness of the problems of communication in general, send a strong message as to how his own work should be read.

All the elements named above work together in a stream that displays a clearly visible progression in the degree to which the presence of the audience is acknowledged. This progression moves between the

[1] For a discussion of the communicative function of prayer, see for example Fenske (1997, especially 79–127).

[2] Joubert's readings (1992, 99) in her section on Augustine's pedagogy, correlate perfectly with my own: she also finds that Augustine probably meant to employ the *curiositas* of his readers about his personal life as an enticement for them to read his work and that he realized the value of the use of a concrete *exemplum* as a rhetorical strategy.

poles of barely perceptible implicit acknowledgement of the human audience coupled with explicit disavowal in the opening stages of the work and the first explicit acknowledgement of the possibility of an audience in book 2.3.5 on the one hand,[3] and eventual veritable preoccupation with the audience in the opening paragraphs of books 10 and 11 of the *Confessions* on the other. What is more, the preoccupation with the audience is, throughout the *Confessions*, very often a preoccupation with a specific segment of the audience, namely those who are Manichaeans or may still harbor Manichaean sympathies (as has been illustrated already in the case of book 9.4.8–11).

In chapter 2 I gave a short survey of the most important elements of Manichaeism that play a role in the allusions to this religion in the *Confessions*. I also pointed out that, in spite of the secret nature of much of Manichaean dogma, Augustine must have acquired a thorough knowledge of most aspects of their religious practice.[4] That this knowledge was a powerful tool enabling him to write the many influential polemical works against the Manichaeans is well known. However, the degree to which the *Confessions* is preoccupied with Manichaean categories of thought, and more importantly, the degree to which the work seems to target a Manichaean audience is a dimension that has not received sufficient consideration from the scholarly community. Ries (1995, 547) points out that the recent discovery of Manichaean texts put the study of Augustine's anti–Manichaean writings in a new perspective. I argue that a fuller understanding of the *Confessions* may also be acquired by taking into consideration the new insights made possible by a comparison to these texts (although this is not the objective here). We must keep in mind that, because of the active proselytising of the Manichaeans, many of the Manichaean arguments or polemical questions may have been familiar even to readers who were not Manichaeans. Also for these readers, always in danger (from Augustine's perspective) of being won over to Manichaeism, Augustine's handling of the many Manichaean categories in the *Confessions* may have fulfilled an important paraenetic function in constantly confirming why choosing Catholic over Manichaean Christianity was the right choice.

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[3] O'Donnell (1992, 2:140) speaks about the 'veiled dialogue with an imaginary audience' starting at 2.17.15.

[4] Although I have shown above that scholars assume that an auditor normally did not have access to all Manichaean literature and dogma, Van Oort (2002, 15) points to the fact that parallels between some of the canonical works and Augustine's oeuvre seem to indicate otherwise.

The relevant issues in this chapter are treated under the following headings: deception, friendship, and a history of failed communication (5.1); the role of *curiositas* (5.2); and the pervasiveness of the expression of concerns with a Manichaean audience (5.3). This latter section, taking a cursory look at books 1 to 10 of the *Confessions*, leans heavily on Van Oort's indications of the presence of Manichaean categories in the *Confessions*. It is complemented by closer analyses of two sections: the prologue (5.3.1), and the last 3 books (5.3.2). The chapter ends with an examination of the extent to which the last section of the allegory in book 13 targets its Manichaean audience (5.4). I want to make clear that the aim of this study is not to do primary research on the occurrence of specific elements of the Manichaean religion or of specific textual allusions in the *Confessions* but to provide a synthesis of research already done in this field in the context of a reading of the *Confessions* as a document much less narcissistic and much more tuned to influence its audience than research has shown up to now.

5.1. *Manichaeans, Deception, Friendship, and a History of Failed Communication*

One aspect of Augustine's relationship with the Manichaeans that is often not sufficiently taken into consideration is the role of friendship in the social organization of Manichaeism. The prominence of Augustine's large number of polemical anti-Manichaean works and our awareness of the absurd light in which he often makes Manichaeism appear have predisposed us to always think of Augustine as the arch-anti-Manichaean. Yes, the bishop of the Church representing the official position of Catholicism and publicly opposing a rival religious group, often with a large measure of invective or sarcasm and with much success, is part of the picture. But, as my analysis of *Confessions* 9.4.8–11 has shown, there are many instances in this work where the attitude displayed towards a potential Manichaean reader is much less harsh than the attitude displayed towards Manichaean dogma.

I argue that one of the elements in the *Confessions* that contribute to the establishment of a positive relationship with its potential Manichaean readership is the way in which the theme of friendship is handled in book 4. The book as a whole can, in fact, be seen as pertaining to Augustine's association with Manichaeism and the poignant evocation of the joys of rewarding relationships as designed to have a subtle but

profound influence on the Manichaean reader. The themes emphasized in the introductory 4.1.1 (the paragraph is characterized throughout by allusions to Manichaeism and echoes of earlier references to the Manichaeans)[5] show not only that the issues of Manichaeism and of friendship are of paramount importance in this book but also that the two themes are closely interrelated.

Let us look at my claim that the theme of the book as a whole is Augustine's association with Manichaeism. In the very first line of book 4 Augustine uses the phrase *per idem tempus annorum novem*.[6] This, together with *in illis annis* at the opening of 4.2.2 and the regular repetition of time indicators like *tunc* (which Augustine seems to hammer on in the opening sections of paragraphs in the first and third parts of book 4),[7] *eo tempore* in 4.3.5, as well as the contrasting of *nunc* with *tunc* and *illo tempore* in 4.5.10 to 4.6.11 and *nondum* in 4.15.24 function to show that the unifying element in the events narrated here is the fact that the actions taken and the intellectual processes experienced come from the same time bracket, the time when everything Augustine did and thought was influenced by the Manichaean way of thinking.

Also the view of Manichaean friendship portrayed in book 4 is foreshadowed in 4.1.1. The repetition, three times, of the idea of 'deception,' deception both of Augustine and by Augustine in 4.1.1, sets the tone for the description of the events that follows:

> *Per idem tempus annorum novem, ab undevicensimo anno aetatis meae usque ad duodetricensimum, seducebamur et seducebamus, falsi atque fallentes … et sectabar ista atque faciebam cum amicis meis per me ac mecum deceptis*
>
> [During this same period of nine years, from my nineteenth to my twenty-eighth year, our life was one of being seduced and seducing, being deceived and deceiving (2Tim 3:13) … This was how my life was spent,

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[5] The references to *falso nomine religionis*, *superbi*, *superstitiosi* and *vani*; the description of the service rendered by the *auditores* to the Manichaean *electi*; to *praeteritos circuitus erroris mei*; even the references to food picked up at the end of the paragraph all ring with echoes of Manichaeism as does the references to *loquacitatem*, *lapsantem in lubrico* and the *diligentibus vanitatem et quaerentibus mendacium* in 4.2.2 and the *non enim amare te noveram, qui nisi fulgores corporeos cogitare non noveram* and *talibus enim figmentis* in 4.2.3. Also the dalliance with astrology described in 4.3.4 to 4.3.6 is a direct result of Manichaean influence (see discussion in chapter 2).

[6] Augustine habitually refers to his Manichaean allegiance as a nine-year period (O'Donnell 1992, 2: 297).

[7] See the opening sections of 4.3.6; 4.4.7; 4.4.8; 4.7.12 and again in the last part of book 4 in the opening sections of 4.13.20; 4.14.22; 4.15.25; 4.16.30; 4.16.31.

> and these were the activities of myself and my friends who had been deceived through me and with me].

This idea of deception includes the semantic domains of *seducere, falli*, and *decipere* but as the narration progresses comes to include also the meaning of *errare* (to be mistaken, to think incorrectly). One way to see the coherence of book 4 is to consider the introduction (4.1.1–4.3.6) as an announcement of the themes of friendship and of Manichaeism; the central section (the description of the death of the friend in 4.4.7–4.12.19) as holding a magnifying glass over one particular friendship (where Manichaeism plays an important role); and the closing section as an indication of Augustine's (lack of) intellectual development under the influence of Manichaeism.[8] I think that it is significant also for the communicative aim of the *Confessions* that the central section of book 4 does not show an Augustine being led astray by Manichaeans but an Augustine leading his boyhood friend into the *superstitiosae fabellae* of Manichaeism (4.4.7).

Let us return to the theme of friendship that I argue is intertwined here with the theme of Manichaean deception and error. It is clear that for Augustine thinking of his period with the Manichaeans brings strong memories of friendship. The deception was perpetrated together with friends, and by friends on friends as the first person plural verbs, other plural forms, and the explicit *cum amicis meis* in the introductory section foreshadow. I think the passage also makes clear that the events of his secular career narrated in book 4 are seen as closely related to his Manichaean connections. This is a picture of Augustine the Manichaean (in a period of life where everything is coloured by Manichaean ways of thinking and Manichaean friends).

Also the other references in book 4 make it easy to imagine the background of the small circle of friends fostering the new adherent to Manichaeism (that I described in chapter 2),[9] with Augustine in

[8] What Augustine narrates about writing the *De pulchro et apto* and reading Aristotle's categories can be read as an evaluation of his inability to come to a true understanding of reality, under the influence of the Manichaean way of thinking, that is of his inability to conceive of anything that is not a corporeal substance. See the frequent references to Manichaeism in this last part of book 4 (especially from 4.15.24 onwards), for example: *falsa opinio quam de spiritalibus habebam*; *nescioquam substantiam et naturam summi mali … nec ullam substantiam malum* esse (4.15.24); *quid autem superbius quam ut adsererem mira dementia me id esse naturaliter quod tu es?* (4.15.26); *volvens apud me corporalia figmenta* (4.16.28); *falsitas enim erat quam de te cogitabam, non veritas, et figmenta* (4.16.29); and *putanti quod tu … corpus esses lucidum et immensum et ego frustum de illo corpore* (4.16.31).

[9] See for example: *maxime quippe me* ***reparabant*** *atque* ***recreabant aliorum ami-***

his turn drawing new members, like the friend in Thagaste, into this fold. The most powerful evocation of the role of friendship and how friends influence each other's religious and spiritual allegiance remains of course the description in the central section of book 4 of the death of this friend. Note that Augustine's apostrophe to his own soul and of the soul to other souls that I argued in chapter 4 was a passage embodying protreptic intent, makes up a large part of this central section.

Let us turn to the issue of failed communication. Augustine's anti-Manichaean works are powerful pieces of polemic. But the fact that he publicly defeated Manichaean opponents in open debates does not mean that he succeeded in convincing specific individual adherents of Manichaeism (perhaps friends that used to be co-religionists) that the Catholic system of belief was preferable to theirs. The very fact that Manichaeism continued to exist signifies that Augustine's communication had not been optimally effective. Because I read the *Confessions* as another effort to communicate, among others, with Manichaean readers, it is important here to take a quick look at one aspect of the communication between these two parties that Augustine spells out in his *Contra epistolam manichaei quam vocant fundamenti*, as Joubert (1992, 100) points out. This section accurately describes the tone and the techniques of persuasion (designed specifically to reach the Manichaeans) that Joubert finds in book 13, which I have shown exist in *Conf* 9.4.8–11, and which I hope to show characterizes most of the *Confessions*:[10]

> *Haeretici sanandi magis quam perdendi: Unum verum Deum omnipotentem … et rogavi et rogo, ut in refellenda et revincenda haeresi vestra, Manichaei, cui et vos fortasse imprudentius quam malitiosius adhaesistis, det mihi mentem pacatam atque tranquillam, et magis de vestra correctione, quam de subversione cogitantem. quanquam enim Dominus per suos servos regna subvertat erroris; ipsos tamen homines, in quantum homines sunt emendandos esse potius, quam perdendos iubet … nostrum igitur fuit eligere et optare meliora, ut ad vestram correctionem aditum haberemus, non in contentione et aemulatione et persecutionibus; sed mansuete consolando, benevole cohortando, leniter disputando* (c.1)

***corum solacia**, cum quibus amabam quod pro te amabam, et hoc erat ingens fabula et longum mendacium* in 4.8.13.

[10] Joubert (1992, 102) ends this section of her article with a description of Augustine's methods to convert his audience in the *Confessions* that concurs perfectly with the tone and purpose I try to describe in the analyses below: 'Il veut les séduire par la douceur et en utilisant leur propre langage pour se mettre à leur portée. Tout se passe comme s'il voulait faire une dernière tentative pour les ramener à la foi, par le biais d'une méthode nouvelle fondée sur la seduction.'

> [To heal heretics is better than to destroy them. My prayer to the one true, almighty God … has been, and is now, that in opposing and refuting the heresy of you Manichaeans, as you may after all be heretics more from thoughtlessness than from malice, he would give me a mind calm and composed, and aiming at your recovery rather than at your discomfiture … It is ours, accordingly, to desire in preference the better part, that we might attain our end in your correction, not by contention, and strife, and persecutions, but by kindly consolation, by friendly exhortation, by quiet discussion].[11]

Of course this is Augustine's formulation of his modus operandi for the *Contra epistolam manichaei quam vocant fundamenti* and not for the *Confessions*. But it must be clear that the aim formulated here may conceivably still be foremost in Augustine's mind at the time of the composition of the *Confessions*. I argue that a careful reading of the *Confessions* corroborates this.

The remarks above show that if we consider Augustine's expressed concern with the Manichaeans, together with what we know about his Manichaean past and especially the central role friendship played in this past, we must concede that it is plausible and even probable that by the time he writes the *Confessions* he may still feel the urgent need to communicate with those still entrapped (from his point of view) in Manichaeism. His emphasis on the theme of friendship in the work itself may be seen as yet another device designed to seduce especially his Manichaean reader into being a more 'obedient' reader and to act as a strong *captatio benevolentiae* for especially this group.

5.2. *The Role of* curiositas

There is another strategy that I argue the rhetor trained in capitalizing on the psychological make-up of his audience employs in the *Confessions*: he makes use of natural curiosity to achieve his goal.[12] The device targets, of course, Manichaean and other readers in equal measure, but the text of the *Confessions* contains indications that *curiositas* was a vice especially associated with Manichaeism (see discussion in 5.3.1 below). The fact that in late Antiquity people were especially fascinated by the lives of others, especially the (auto-) biographies of well-known figures

[11] For this quotation I use the Migne text (1861) and the translation by Schaff (1956).
[12] See also Joubert 1992, 99, referred to above.

like Augustine,[13] and that Augustine's confession gives them what they crave to have would not make Augustine a literary genius. But if the text has a protreptic aim as I argue, harnessing the curiosity of the reader to achieve an effect at least initially unforeseen by the reader is a clever rhetorical strategy. What is more, my belief that Augustine is consciously using the *curiositas* of the reader to motivate him or her to subject him or herself—unknowingly at first—to the protreptic influence of this text is supported by the awareness of the power of *curiositas* expressed in the *Confessions*.[14] When one takes into account also Augustine's avowed awareness of problems assailing human communication (see discussion below) together with his openly stated intention to try softer and more subtle methods to touch his Manichaean audience in a way his polemic works up to this stage have failed to achieve, the idea becomes even more plausible. Let us look at what Augustine says in the *Confessions* about the *curiositas* of his reader or readers in general.

First, the oblique reference to his audience in 1.6.7 (in spite of the explicit disavowal of the importance of the human addressee) provides a clue to how both the title of the work and the prayer stance (both equally excluding the human addressee) may have been intended to function rhetorically. The words here (like the expectations embodied in the title of the work and the prayer stance) can be interpreted as an indication by Augustine that in his narrative about himself he will not hold back for fear of human censure, that he will 'tell it all just as it was:'

> *Sed tamen sine me loqui …sine tamen loqui. quoniam ecce misericordia tua est,* ***non homo, inrisor meus, cui loquor***
>
> [Nevertheless allow me to speak … allow me to speak: for I am addressing your mercy, not a man who would laugh at me].

This is, of course, an effective ploy to engage man's *curiositas*.

Next, in 1.13.20–21 we have a version of Augustine's own curiosity about the lives of Dido and Aeneas. (He claims to have been forced to read and learn these passages but the strong emotions he describes

[13] Brown (1967, 158) points out that 'Augustine had come to live in a circle of men who shared a lively curiosity about other people … The changes that had happened to these men, the course of their "conversion", the quality of the new life they had adopted, would be a subject of absorbing interest to anyone who had shared such an experience.'

[14] To go into all the ramifications of how Augustine defines *curiositas* in the *Confessions* and the larger explication of this theme falls outside the scope of the present discussion.

do point to a personal fascination.) It is important to note that the theme of curiosity about represented lives and the possibility of these lives influencing the observer, or at least of drawing parallels between those lives and the life of the reader, is already implicitly present here:

> *Nam utique meliores … quam illae quibus tenere cogebar Aeneae nescio cuius errores,* ***oblitus errorum meorum****, et plorare Didonem mortuam, quia se occidit ab amore,* ***cum interea me ipsum in his a te morientem, deus, vita mea, siccis oculis ferrem*** *miserrimus.* ***quid enim miserius misero non miserante se ipsum*** *et flente Didonis mortem, quae fiebat amando Aenean,* ***non flente autem mortem suam, quae fiebat non amando te****, deus*
>
> [This was better than the poetry I was later forced to learn about the wanderings of some legendary fellow named Aeneas (forgetful of my own wanderings) and to weep over the death of a Dido who took her own life from love. In reading this, O God my life, I myself was meanwhile dying by my alienation from you, and my miserable condition in that respect brought no tear to my eyes. What is more pitiable than a wretch without pity for himself who weeps over the death of Dido dying for love of Aeneas, but not weeping over himself dying for his lack of love for you, my God].

In 1.14.23 we have the well-known reference to what has become a modern principle of learning, and which I feel becomes an important code governing the communicative purpose of the *Confessions*:

> *Nam et latina aliquando infans utique nulla noveram, et tamen advertendo didici sine ullo metu atque cruciatu, inter etiam blandimenta nutricum et ioca adridentium et laetitias adludentium. didici vero illa sine poenali onere urgentium, cum me urgeret cor meum ad parienda concepta sua, … nisi aliqua verba didicissem non a docentibus sed a loquentibus … hinc satis elucet maiorem habere vim ad discenda ista liberam curiositatem quam meticulosam necessitatem*
>
> [At one time in my infancy I also knew no Latin, and yet by listening I learnt it with no fear or pain at all, from my nurses caressing me, from people laughing over jokes, and from those who played games and were enjoying them. I learnt Latin without the threat of punishment from anyone forcing me to learn it. My own heart constrained me to bring its concepts to birth, which I could not have done unless I had learnt some words, not from formal teaching but by listening to people talking … This experience sufficiently illuminates the truth that free curiosity had greater power to stimulate learning than rigorous coercion].

I think that in the context of the work as a whole this could be reformulated, without stretching the text too far, as 'a lesson is learnt or a point internalized better when the receiver is not aware that he is being taught but thinks that he is following a story-line motivated by nothing but his own curiosity.' Real protreptic power may be exerted

by a text exactly when it hides its protreptic intentions (*non a docentibus sed a loquentibus*), as the title, the prayer stance and the initial denial of the importance of the human audience do.

The last prominent reference to *curiositas*, that is relevant for my argument,[15] we find in the opening section of book 10, a section I have already implied is much preoccupied with both the purpose of writing the *Confessions* and the audience it is addressed to. This is also the stage in the work where I have argued that a different reader may be indicated, different in the sense that this is a reader that has already been submitted to the full protreptic force of the conversion story (bolstered by a number of other conversion stories) in books 1 to 9. The more sympathetic reader envisaged from this point onwards in the *Confessions* is complemented by a different, more vulnerable, persona shown by the narrator (but more about this later). The point is that here the narrator may no longer be as interested in hiding his protreptic intentions as he was before and that the reference to *curiositas* here must be read against this background.

Where books 1 to 9 allowed the reader to be drawn into the story through his or her *curiositas*, at this point Augustine seems to make explicit that he is no longer interested in a curious but uninvolved onlooker. Against the background of many references to the effect that a life (read or experienced) can have on other lives the antithetical phrase in 10.3.3 clearly implies here that knowing about the life of the other should inspire you to improve your own:

> *Curiosum genus ad cognoscendam vitam alienam, desidiosum ad corrigendam suam*
>
> [The human race is inquisitive about other people's lives, but negligent to correct their own].

Also the following question implies that the only legitimate reason why others could inquire of Augustine who he is would be because they do want to know who they themselves are in God's sight in order to change and be as God would want them to be:

> *Quid a me quaerunt audire qui sim, qui nolunt a te audire qui sint?*

---

[15] There is one reference to *curiositas* in book 2.6.13 and none in the rest of books 2 to 4. The two references in book 5.3.3–4 concern the (misdirected) *curiositas* of the astrologers; the two references in 6.8.13 and 6.12.22 concern Alypius' *curiositas* (for the games and about sex respectively); the three references in book 7 once again concern astrology, this time as part of the story of his final disillusionment with it. There are no references to *curiositas* in books 8 and 9.

> [Why do they demand to hear from me what I am when they refuse to hear from you what they are?]

Further on in the same paragraph we find the emphasis on a different aspect of what the *Confessions* requires of its reader:

> *Si autem a te audiant de se ipsis, non poterunt dicere, 'mentitur dominus.' quid est enim a te audire de se nisi cognoscere se? quis porro cognoscit et dicit, 'falsum est,' nisi ipse mentiatur?*
>
> [But if they were to hear about themselves from you, they could not say 'The Lord is lying.' To hear you speaking about oneself is to know oneself. Moreover, anyone who knows himself and says 'That is false' must be a liar].

The reader is supposed to take the message as coming not from the sinful man who writes it, but from the Almighty God who inspires him to write it. This is a position that Augustine has been establishing as the *Confessions* progressed, namely that God is the ultimate authority for what he tells his reader (see my discussion in chapter 4). Within the context of the whole, this implies in turn that the reader should see the *Confessions* itself as another instance of God calling to him through the voice of another.[16] If 10.3.3 (like the other introductory paragraphs of book 10) muses about the purpose of the *Confessions* (or even only in retrospection of the conversion story in books 1 to 9), it clearly formulates this purpose as a protreptic one. To get back to the main point of this section: I argue that the analyses above show an Augustine aware of the fact that curiosity can be his ally and willing to use this as part of a rhetorical strategy that aims to do what more direct strategies may fail to achieve.

5.3. *How Pervasive is the Expression of Concerns with a Manichaean Audience?*

What remains to be shown in this chapter is how pervasive the concern with a Manichaean audience is in the *Confessions*. To do full justice to this subject would, of course, as I have said, require a thorough comparative reading of the *Confessions* and all the available Manichaean documents, as well as a detailed study of Manichaean religious prac-

[16] Many instances of this occurrence are given and explicitly remarked on in the *Confessions*. See my discussion of book 9 in chapter 4.4.

tice, which exceeds the limits of the present study.[17] But it should become clear that even an identification of only the broad outlines of Manichaean echoes in the *Confessions* shows that the protreptic devices in the work never lose sight of a potential Manichaean reader.

Thus, what this section aims at is to present a quick overview of the *Confessions* in order to create in the reader's mind an impression of how Augustine's awareness of his potential Manichaean audience seldom wavers. Put differently, I intend to show that reading the text 'through Manichaean eyes' often provides a completely different perspective on certain passages in the narrative and eventually on the narrative as a whole.

The reader must, however, always remember that to look at the stream of references that reflect consciousness of a Manichaean audience is to follow only one line of melody in a dense polyphonic composition. The lines of the awareness of other philosophical schools, the themes of worldly ambition, of deafness and blindness, of God's omnipresence all proceed at the same time, sometimes dominating and sometimes subordinated to the Manichaean melody, which is the one I follow in the run through the different books of the *Confessions* I offer below. To listen only to this melody brings new and important perspectives but is not the whole music.[18]

The reader is reminded of the fact that I argue that the purpose of Augustine's constant probing of his Manichaean audience in the *Confessions* is not to deride them or polemically defeat them, but a result of his heartfelt sense of duty towards people in this group and the missionary burden to correct their mistakes and lead them to the light. The findings of Van Oort, who has done a great deal of work identifying elements in the *Confessions* that would have had special significance for Manichaean readers, show a shift that supports this argument. Earlier Van Oort (1997, 241) remarked that 'in his *Confessiones* Augustine was engaged in a controversy with his former coreligionsts and that, at the same time, he played on words by making use of their own vocabulary,' but his later formulation (2002, 17) in this regard displays a shift towards my own position. Discussing the repetitive emphasis on central aspects

[17] This is a task that Van Oort is presently occupied with, mostly by comparing sections of the *Confessions* to original Manichaean documents and finding Manichaean categories of thought represented in the work.

[18] To describe the *Confessions* in terms of musical categories is a device many researchers resort to. See for example Clark 1993, 37: 'This is "polyphonic discourse," not a clear melodic line.'

of Manichaean spirituality (the materialistic concept of God and the sacred meal) in the *Confessions* he describes the nature and function of the Manichaean element in the work as follows:

> Die frequentie en essentie brengen mij er zelfs toe dit geschrift *niet in de laatste plaats te karakteriseren als een anti-manichees document.* Veel meer dan we tot nu toe wisten heeft de katholieke bisschop bij het schrijven *zijn vroegere geloofsgenoten in het vizier gehad.* Soms (zoals in boek III) noemt hij hun opvattingen expliciet, maar vaker nog in allerlei subtiele toespelingen impliciet. *Men kan nog een stap verder gaan: zelfs positief, voor zijn eigen mystieke spiritualiteit*, voor zijn spreken over God en zijn zelf, neemt Augustinus spreekwijzen en gedachten over uit zijn gnostische verleden en brengt hij deze in in de spiritualiteit van die Westerse kerk.

The positive attitude that Van Oort perceives and that now prevents him from simply calling the *Confessions* anti-Manichaean is part of what motivates me to see the work as a positive effort to convert its Manichaean reader. I argue that what can be identified as anti-Manichaean in the *Confessions* represents the negative stage or stream in the protreptic (where the views of the opposing school(s) or group(s) are countered) and that what Van Oort also observes as a strong positive element in the use of Manichaean categories and ideas is used as a device to capture goodwill and persuade the Manichaean reader. This complements the positive stream of the protreptic, aimed at nothing less than the conversion of its Manichaean readers.

I start with a concise overview of the presence of Manichaean ideas and categories of thought in the *Confessions* as a whole.[19] Then, having already shown in chapter 3 that book 9—the middle of the work—contains a passage that is an unmistakable protreptic to the Manichaeans I analyze in some depth the beginning (1.1.1 to 1.5.6) and the end (Books 11 to 13) of the work.

5.3.1. *Books 1 to 10: A General Overview*

a. In Books 1 and 2

Although in books 1 and 2 allusions to Manichaean categories and ideas remain subtle and indirect, the fact that the prologue (1.1.1 tot 1.5.6) of the work foreshadows many Manichaean themes that are picked up and made explicit at later stages in the *Confessions* is highly

[19] This leans heavily on Van Oort's inaugural speech (2002, 7–32), which is in fact as a whole dedicated to giving an outline of the sustained nature of Manichaean echoes in

significant. But this is shown in my more extensive analysis below. Here I start with the broad overview of the rest of book 1 and book 2.

The very beginning of the 'autobiography' in 1.6.7 shows, and is probably meant to announce to the reader, that its point of reference is an anthropology foreign to Manichaean thinking. I referred in chapter 1 to Babcock's observation that in book 8 Augustine replaces his earlier Manichaean anthropology with a new, anti-Manichaean anthropology (1994, 181). The implication is that probably the whole view of Augustine as a sinful creature offered in the *Confessions* is at least partly designed with the aim of refining and eventually replacing the Manichaean view of man.[20] Augustine portrays human procreation as part of God's good creation, a total contrast to the Manichaean view that procreation perpetuated the entrapment of divine particles in flesh (the latter belonging to the realm of darkness). Note also the emphasis on natural food appropriate to the stage of life and the kind of being (whereas Manichaean dogma displayed a fixation with the serving of special kinds of food provided in special ways) and the use of *clamante* (that becomes part of the theme of God's calling to man through everything in creation and that had significance in Manichaean liturgy as part of the *tochme-sotme* pair, as chapter 3 illustrates):

> *Nescio unde venerim huc … nescio … sicut audivi a parentibus carnis meae, ex quo et in qua me formasti in tempore… tu mihi per eas dabas alimentum infantiae secundum insitutionem tuam … bonum erat eis bonum meum ex eis … ex te quippe bona omnia … quod animadverti postmodum, clamante te mihi per haec ipsas quae tribuis intus et foris*
>
> [I do not know whence I came … I do not know … as I heard from the parents of my flesh, him from whom and her in whom you formed me in time … it was … you who through them gave me infant food, in accordance with your ordinance … For the good which came to me from them was a good for them … and 'from my God is all my salvation' (2Sam 23:5). I became aware of this only later when you cried aloud to me through the gifts which you bestow both inwardly in mind and outwardly in body].

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the *Confessions*. The catalogue of passages and concepts or themes that he has identified here and elsewhere as having specific Manichaean overtones is impressive and should almost suffice to convince the reader of the importance Augustine's Manichaean audience had for him.

[20] Cary (1994, 70) remarks on the fact that Augustine eventually replaced the Manichaean idea that the soul is divine and material creation evil with the opposite view (under the influence of neo-Platonism), namely that 'the material world is good and the soul is full of iniquity.'

The idea of God creating man as a wonderful and good being is also present throughout book 1 in the descriptions of man's abilities as *dona dei*.

Book 1 also contains a number of other themes that may have been designed to catch the attention of Manichaean readers: the *scire/nescire* theme (foreshadowed in the prologue and running through the whole of the *Confessions*); the time theme (definitely foreshadowed here and brought to its zenith in book 11 where it uses the Manichaeans' polemical *quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et terram?* as the springboard for Augustine's 'digression' on time); the theme of God as the creator of heaven and earth (introduced like a casual motive here and there but becoming stronger until it receives a full treatment in books 11 to 13) together with the theme of the nature of God, once again especially in his capacity as the Creator of the universe, and his relation to his creation;[21] the theme of dispersion and restoration to wholeness (in 1.3.3 and especially at the beginning of book 2) that O'Donnell (1992, 2:22) indicates was a well-known concept in late Antique thought but also in Manichaean thinking; the theme of man's *voluntas* which becomes a keystone element in the final unraveling of Augustine's conceptual problems with the nature of God and creation and the provenance of evil in books 6 to 8; and the theme of man's sinfulness (seemingly out of place in Augustine's description of the infant, but acquiring rhetorical importance as the narrative progresses and becoming an important element of the polemic about sin).

The opening section (2.1.1–2.3.8) of Book 2, dedicated to a description of Augustine's sexual excesses and the shortest book of the *Confessions*, is rich in images, motives and themes that gain importance as the narrative progresses. There are protreptic motives: the image of roads and traveling, as well as the assurance of God's presence even while man is moving away from Him. It also contains the first explicit acknowledgement of the audience (the well-known *cui narro haec?* and what follows in 2.3.5). The tone of book 2 is negative and in the first number of paragraphs, especially 2.1.1 to 2.2.4, the emphasis is on Augustine's distance from God through the *via* image typical of protreptic texts, his state of dispersion, and his inability to see or hear.

[21] All emphasis on God as the creator (especially *creator omnium*, *creator universae creaturae*, *creator noster*) Van Oort sees as part of 'Augustine's argument against the Manichaeans' view of God, against their denouncement of the Creator of the universe and of this creation itself' (1997, 244).

These are all images strongly associated with Manichaeism later in the *Confessions*:

> *Recolens vias meas nequissimas in amaritudine recogitationis meae … et conligens me a dispersione, in qua frustatim discissus sum dum ab uno te aversus in multa evanui … sed exhalabantur nebulae … et obnubilabant atque obfuscabant cor meum, ut non discerneretur serenitasdilectionis a caligine libidinis … obsurdueram … et ibam longius a te … et ego ibam porro longe a te… sed efferbui miser, sequens impetum fluxus mei relicto te … ubi eram? et quam longe exulabam a deliciis domus tuae anno illo sexto decimo aetatis carnis meae*
>
> [The recalling of my wicked ways is bitter in my memory … You gathered me together from the state of disintegration in which I had been fruitlessly divided. I turned from unity in you to be lost in multiplicity … clouds … filled the air … befogged and obscured my heart so that it could not see the difference between love's serenity and lust's darkness … I had become deafened … I traveled very far from you … and I traveled much further away from you … But I in my misery seethed and followed the driving force of my impulses, abandoning you … Where was I in the sixteenth year of the age of my flesh? 'Far away in exile from the pleasures of your house' (Mic 2:9)].

Augustine's reflection on the possibility that his sexual excesses might have been curbed by marriage and canalized into serving its proper function, namely procreation (followed, ostensibly to support his argument, by three quotations on marriage from Paul's letter to the Corinthians) was probably also designed to catch the attention of a Manichaean reader. This is a statement directly contradicting Manichaean belief and, more significantly, supported by quotations from the part of scripture the authority of which the Manichaeans did recognize, Paul's letters.

But the main emphasis in book 2 is on sin, as the first line announces:

> *Recordari volo transactas foeditates meas et carnales corruptiones animae*
>
> [I intend to remind myself of my past foulnesses and carnal corruptions].

This is also illustrated by the second (more than) half of the book through the example of the pear theft. And sin is a central issue in the debate between Augustine and the Manichaeans, as my analysis of 9.4.7–11 in chapter 3 shows and as the careful analyses of the episode of the pear theft by a number of scholars emphasize. The fact is that what seems to most modern readers the overemphasizing of a childish prank may have had completely different overtones for a Manichaean audience to whom the senseless act of throwing fruit—that they believed contained particles of the divine—to pigs must have appeared 'particu-

larly shocking' (O'Donnell 1992, 2:127; see also Van Oort 1997, 245 and 2002, 30–31).

This is just one illustration of how one's perspective on the text changes once you start reading through the eyes of a Manichaean reader (even to the limited extent to which this is possible for a modern reader). O'Donnell (1992, 127) remarks that Augustine 'dramatized the episode in part to shock his old co-religionists.' What I am interested in here is why Augustine would want to shock his former co-religionists. The argument here is that the constant probing of Manichaean ideas and beliefs in the *Confessions*, sometimes subtly, sometimes sarcastically, sometimes coaxingly, is designed as a strong argument to convert the Manichaean reader.[22]

b. In Books 3 to 8

In book 3.6.10 Augustine describes his 'falling in' with the Manichaeans and from this point onwards, at least up to book 8, perhaps the main concern of the narrative is to show the development of Augustine's thought on the nature of God and the origin of evil, a process he repeatedly emphasizes was hampered by Manichaean thinking. But let us first look at the opening paragraphs of book 3. The introductory paragraphs recapitulate some of the motives already present in book 2 and introduce others that will still become important further on:

> *Veni Carthaginem, et circumstrepebat me undique sartago flagitiosorum amorum. nondum amabam, et amare amabam … quaerebam quid amarem, amans amare … quoniam fames mihi erat intus ab interiore cibo, te ipso, deus meus, et ea fame non esuriebam, sed eram sine desiderio alimentorum incorruptibilium … amare et amari dulce mihi erat … quanto felle mihi suavitatem illam et quam bonus aspersisti*
>
> [I came to Carthage and all around me hissed a cauldron of illicit loves. As yet I had never been in love and I longed to love … I sought an object for my love; I was in love with love … My hunger was internal, deprived of inward food, that is of you yourself, my God. But that was not the kind of hunger I felt. I was without any desire for incorruptible nourishment … To me it was sweet to love and to be loved … in your goodness you mixed in much vinegar with that sweetness].

Especially the culinary imagery here (*sartago, cibo, fame, esuriebam, alimentorum incorruptibilium, felle, sauvitatem, aspersisti)* as in book 9 and throughout in the *Confessions* would have had special meaning for Manichaean

[22] See also my discussion, at the end of chapter 1.2.3 above, of Asher's arguments about this section and how it may have fascinated Manichaean readers.

readers. This is underlined again by the recent discovery of Manichaean depictions of the sacred meal discussed by Van Oort (2002, 24). The latter also points to hymns (2002, 24–25) that refer repeatedly to the 'taste' and the 'sweetness' of God as well as to the idea of eating with the spirit.

O'Donnell (1992, 2: 173) also remarks on the interesting relation between *curiositas*, *phantasmata*, and the culinary imagery used to express Augustine's desire for but failure to find real spiritual food:

> The extensive food metaphor reflects the practice of the Manichaean elect, who consumed particles of the divine in their banquets. At 3.1.1 a parallel use of metaphor (*'famis mihi erat'*) marked Augustine's isolation from authentic nourishment; here now he ingests all manner of false victuals. The emphasis on *phantasmata* is likewise apt: *curiositas* has led him into a world of images—eye-food, images of things that never existed. The paragraph thus moves from imagery drawn from *concupiscentia carnis* (wolfish feeding on food that does not satisfy) to imagery drawn from *concupiscentia oculorum* (greedy gazing at *phantasmata* that are hollow and empty): all against a backdrop of empty words.

Also the theme of friendship that plays such an important role in book 4 and in Augustine's relationships with Manichaeans in general, is introduced:

> *Venam igitur amicitiae coinquinabam*
>
> [I therefore polluted the spring water of friendship].

Together with this we find the motif of the sin of *curiositas*, which predominates in book 3 and which is particularly associated with the Manichaeans. Augustine accused them of using *curiositas* 'to lead the naïve astray' (O'Donnell 1992, 2: 171) and implies that he himself was drawn to them because of his *curiositas* (O'Donnell 1992, 2:154).

Augustine's description of his introduction into Manichaeism in book 3 is most important for the way it introduces the basic motifs by which many oblique references in other parts of the *Confessions* may be unequivocally identified as meant to refer to Manichaeism. This is illustrated by Van Oort's analyses (1997, 236–243 and 2002, 11–17) as well as my analysis of 9.4.8–11 in chapter 3.

But let us take a quick look at books 3 to 8 of the *Confessions* where references to Manichaeism and arguments against central tenets of Manichaean dogma are at their most explicit and a preoccupation with Manichaeism is not difficult to illustrate. What is presented in book 3 as the autobiographical version of Augustine's joining of the Manichaean

sect is in fact the strongest direct critique of Manichaeism in the *Confessions*. It starts with a general impressionistic rendition describing the Manichaeans as *delirantes, carnales, loquaces*, as *laquei diaboli*, as advocating *phantasmata*. Then the focus narrows down to the two main conceptual problems with Manichaeism that Augustine will treat up to book 7 (the issues of the origin of evil and the nature of God) together with the other important issue on which he contradicts them throughout the *Confessions*, their criticism of the Old Testament.

The narrative in book 4, as I show above, is bracketed together by references to the influence of Manichaean thinking on Augustine's thought and his friendships The first part of book 5 presents the argument against Manichaean claims about astronomy and its importance in their system of belief while the second half emphasizes in turn the faults of thinking of sin as caused by the *alia natura*, and of God and evil as substances. The narrative moves from the final disillusionment with Manichaean dogma precipitated by Faustus' inability to resolve Augustine's difficulties to the beginning of a shift back to Catholic Christianity, through the removal of the important hurdle of Manichaean criticism of scripture by means of Ambrose's sermons.

Book 6 represents an inexorable (though slow) movement towards the final resolution of problems with the Old Testament and conceptual problems with the nature of God and evil (presented in book 7). It contains the *vita Alypii* which may have held exemplary value for the Manichaean reader who is characterized, like Alypius, as particularly susceptible to the sin of *curiositas* (O'Donnell 1992, 2: 377). It also contains the recapitulating summary of his progress since the reading of the *Hortensius* that I discussed in chapter 4.3 above. Book 7, as I have said, presents the culmination of one aspect of the negative stream of Manichaean criticism in the *Confessions* in the resolution of the conceptual problems that have been present up to this point as well as matters of Christology. Book 8, in the midst of its emotional version of Augustine's conversion, keeps in sight its Manichaean reader through its dependence on Paul's letter to the Romans and its emphasis on the role of the free will: 'Het bekeringsverhaal in boek VIII staat geheel in de context van de manichese thematiek van de twee naturen en de twee willen' (Van Oort 2002, 31), 'ook wel paulinisch benoemd als "de oude mens" tegenover "de nieuwe mens"' (Van Oort 2002, 69).

As I have said, the whole of books 3 to 8 is Augustine's representation of how he learnt through a painfully slow and gradual process to free himself from the erroneous thinking of the Manichees. Although the

author knows the answers to the problems posed by Manichaeism and also provisionally indicates the solutions to his reader, the reader is, nevertheless, made to accompany the young Augustine on every step of the arduous journey, through every ramification of the argument against the Manichaean position. This is a slow and patient effort to help the reader follow Augustine in his process of conversion and, hopefully, to convert the reader, but, note well, to convert especially a Manichaean reader or one confused with the Manichaean arguments that this group was so ready to sling at less sophisticated Catholics at any possible occasion.[23]

c. In Books 9 and 10

The most important Manichaean thread in book 9 I have already discussed in chapter 3. Let us move on to book 10. This is one book where Manichaean echoes seem, at first reading, far distant. I have also argued that the audience targeted here is different from the one in the earlier books of the *Confessions*. To a certain extent Augustine opens himself up much more intimately here, a procedure which would require the more sympathetic audience he defines here. But Van Oort's recent analysis (2002, 21–28) of the recapitulation of the search for God in book 10 shows how this search, now conducted through a move into the self as a search within the own soul, is presented in terms especially accessible to the Manichaean reader. Augustine uses Manichaean terms and categories in a way that simultaneously contradicts and appropriates them,[24] a procedure that is, to my mind, designed to effect highly efficient communication. Van Oort points out that Manichaean literature, hymns and visual art bear out the importance thinking in terms of the five senses had for this group. The description of God's beauty in terms of the five senses has strong parallels in Manichaean descriptions of God as well as in their thinking about the sacred meal served to the elect by the auditors, a ritual in which Augustine himself partook when he was still a Manichaean.[25] For them God is 'zichtbaar,

[23] See for example also van Oort on the role of the Manichaean concept of God in Augustine's thinking in books 4 to 7 (2002, 20–21); the central importance of the Manichaean idea of two opposing wills in man in book 8 (2002, 31); the use of terminology with specific Manichaean overtones in book 9 (1997, 246).

[24] Van Oort (2002, 23) argues 'dat Augustinus, wanneer hij de vraag stelt wie God is, kennelijk opponeert tegen manichese terminlogie en deze tegelijk overneemt.'

[25] See Van Oort 2002 (25–28) on what we know about Augustine's experience with the Manichaean sacred meal.

hoorbaar, ruikbaar, smaak- en tastbaar *voor de innerlijke mens*' (Van Oort 2002, 24). The combination of the description of a search for God in Manichaean terms in the first section of book 10 with the confession of sins in the second section, an action that the Manichaeans seem to have been preoccupied with, and 'opvallend verwant met manichese biechtspiegels' (Van Oort 2002, 32), makes it clear that book 10 does not lose sight of its potential Manichaean reader.

The catalogue above is far from exhaustive. A careful reading mindful of Manichaean overtones, however, by any reader with knowledge of only those categories of Manichaean thought already discussed here, should be enough to convince that reader that Augustine has his Manichaean reader on his mind constantly and that he probes this reader incessantly to react to his use, throughout the *Confessions*, of words and concepts that were loaded concepts in Manichaean religious practice.

In the following section of this chapter, 5.3.2 I focus, as I have indicated, on the beginning and the end of the *Confessions*. My aim is to show that also in these key passages in the work a clear awareness of the Manichaean audience is discernable.

5.3.2. *Manichaean Echoes in the Prologue*

Like the indications of protreptic purpose in the prologue allusions to a Manichaean audience are also already present at the outset of the *Confessions*, thus, to my mind, providing another strong argument for seeing the Manichaean segment of Augustine's intended audience as a prime target for the protreptic devices used in the work.[26] The very opening line of 1.1.1 (a quote from Ps 144, followed by one from Ps 146: *magnus es, domine, et laudabilis valde. magna virtus tua, et sapientiae tuae non est numerus*) has clear Manichaean echoes: Van Oort (1997, 243) points out that *magnus* reminds of the title 'Father of Greatness' that appears repeatedly in, inter alia, the Manichaean Psalm Book.[27] This could of course be an accidental similarity.

But let us look at the next words: *magna virtus tua et sapientiae tuae*. The Manichaeans used 1Cor1:24[28] as the basis for a pivotal doctrine that

[26] See also Van Oort's analyses of the prologue (1993 and 2002).

[27] Van Oort (1993, 243) also thinks that, because these psalm texts echo well known and frequently used Manichaean phrases, Augustine uses them at this point 'as a polemic against the Manichaeans'.

[28] *[Praedicamus] … Christum Dei virtutem, et Dei sapientiam.*

Christ was God's power and wisdom. They seemed to have thought of this in a typically literal way, as they held that his *virtus* was present in the moon and his *sapientia* in the sun. Also the phrase *non est numerus* was one well known in Manichaean documents (Van Oort 1993, 244).

There are other elements in this prologue that the modern reader can, with hindsight, call Manichaean on the grounds of internal evidence (especially from book 3). But Augustine's contemporaries may well have realized the overtones of these terms at first sight. An example of this is the use of the word *superbis*. *Superbia* becomes, as the story of the *Confessions* unfolds, perhaps *the* concept to embody the vices Manichaeism stands for.[29] The Bible verse Augustine quotes here (1 Pet 5:5 *Deus superbis resistit*) recurs several times in the *Confessions* and *superbia* is significantly associated with the Manichaeans where they are first introduced in *Conf* 3.6.10:[30]

> *Itaque incidi in homines superbe delirantes, carnales nimis et loquaces*
>
> [That explains why I fell in with men proud of their slick talk, very earthly-minded and loquacious].

In the next words of the prologue we have the implicit introduction of Matt 7:7, as I have shown (*laudabunt dominum qui requirunt eum. quaerentes enim inveniunt eum et invenientes laudabunt eum*). But this is a Bible verse that the Manichaeans were very fond of quoting as a remark in Augustine's *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae* tells us (Ferrari 1994, 162). The words of Matt 7:7 would not only have had specific overtones for a Manichaean audience, they also foreshadow an important theme in the whole of the *Confessions* and are in fact present in the emotionally loaded last words of the work, as I have shown. That Matt 7:7 played an important role in Manichaean thinking does not, of course, necessarily make Augustine's oblique allusion to this verse a reference to his Manichaean audience. The fact that there are a number of these indirect allusions does, however, cause the one instance to reinforce the other.

Further, the emphasis in the prologue on God's act of creation through the repetition of *portio creaturae tuae* and *fecisti nos* reminds strongly of Augustine's many polemics with the Manichaeans on creation and on the meaning of the book of Genesis in the Old Testa-

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[29] See for example Van Oort's analyses of book 3.6.10–3.10.18 (1997, 236–245 and 2002, 11–17).

[30] See also Van Oort 1997, 240.

ment. It foreshadows the theme of God the creator that I have argued (in 5.3.1 above) forms an important line throughout the *Confessions*. It also foreshadows the treatment of the creation story in books 11 to 13 that I argue below is designed especially to convince a Manichaean reader.

In the same way the seemingly neutral phrase, *aliud enim pro alio potest invocare nesciens*, fulfils the double function of pointing to the Manichaeans and prefiguring an important aspect of Augustine's inner journey and thus of the progression in the *Confessions*. He describes himself as for too long calling in vain to a conception of God-in-a-quasi-physical form, a conception shaped by the Manichaeans and one that was false and not really God at all. The Augustine presented in the *Confessions* labours under this misconception up to book 7. It is only when he discovers neo-Platonist philosophy and its conceptual apparatus that he is at last free to really grasp the nature of God's existence.

Also the phrase *humanitatem filii tui* at the end of the paragraph would have nettled a Manichaean reader. For these words touch on the main point of difference between Catholic and Manichaean Christology: The Manichaeans held that Jesus lived on earth in a pseudo-body only, that he was never really human.

The last element in this paragraph I want to argue was designed to talk to the Manichaeans is the following:

> *Da mihi scire et intellegere utrum sit prius invocare te an laudare te, et scire te prius sit an invocare te. sed quis te invocat nesciens te?*
>
> ['Grant me Lord to know and understand' (Ps 118: 34, 73, 144) which comes first—to call upon you or to praise you, and whether knowing you precedes calling upon you. But who calls upon you when he does not know you?]

Here the tone of the passage has changed. The accumulation of questions introduces a more intellectual atmosphere, foreshadowing the important role of intellectual inquiry in the narrative that follows.[31] But I have pointed out that exactly this was a cardinal issue on which the Manichaeans claimed superiority over the Catholics (they accused

[31] This is also emphasized by Herzog (1984, 216): 'Das zu Gott gewandte Sprechen der laudatio hält sich durch, aber es schliesst die Form der quaestio, der philosophischen Zergliederung ein … Augustin … hat mit dieser Rückbindung des "quaerere" … an das "credere" … mittels der "invocatio" … auch inhaltlich den Lobpreis des Anfangs auf die theologischen Erörterungen der Frühschriften (Problem der "auctoritas" und des Verhältnisses von "fides" und "intellectus") zurückgeführt.'

the Catholics of expecting blind faith while they declared that their members would only have to believe what they could grasp through their own intellect). Here Augustine counters the Manichaean claim (as yet only provisionally and concisely) by offering a solution to the dilemma of authority versus reason: he invokes the ultimate authority, God (in whom he believes), to help him use his reason (through which he wishes to understand). This is not the arrogant assumption of the Manichaeans that man can reach the ultimate goal through human reason alone. But the reader is assured that he will not have to forgo intellectual inquiry in the reading of this text.

The next two paragraphs of the prologue (1.2.2–1.4.4) are much less densely composed than 1.1.1 and treat the question posed in the opening line of 1.4.4: *quid es ergo, deus meus?* It is obvious that Augustine's 'concern with the "place" of God … tied up with [his] pre-conversion notion of God permeating all matter' (O'Donnell 1992, 2:18) is dominated by Manichaean ways of thinking. Once again I want to argue that this is not so much Augustine's way of clarifying for himself how to think about God (more than ten years after having sorted out this problem), as a device to stimulate and direct the thought processes of the reader, whether this reader is a Manichaean or a Catholic Christian (potentially) bombarded by Manichaean propaganda.

The last three paragraphs represent 'invocation at last,' (O'Donnell 1992, 2:23). But even in the midst of emotional and ecstatic invocation Augustine does not lose sight of his Manichaean reader. O'Donnell's assertion (1992, 2:23) that 'the paragraph is a tissue of paradoxes, with a submerged polemical purpose,' aiming with its conglomeration of paradoxes 'to rule out Manichaean criticism of the God of the Old Testament' provides very good support for my contention that the whole of the prologue of the *Confessions* is so strongly dominated by 'Manichaean concerns' that one cannot but see this as a significant indication of who a very important segment of the intended audience of the work may be.

Let me repeat what I said above: in the analysis of the prologue offered here I consider a number of elements as allusions to issues that had special significance for the Manichaean reader. In each case the allusion is so subtle and indirect that the nagging suspicion occurs that this may be over-interpretation. If one considers, however, the frequency of these subtle Manichaean echoes together with the fact that they occur in a prologue where indirect foreshadowing rather than direct statement is to be expected the chances of these allusions being

accidental are much reduced.[32] If these allusions are picked up and made more explicit as the narrative of the *Confessions* progresses (as my discussion confirms) the echoes in the prologue acquire, in retrospect, great significance indeed.

5.3.3. *Augustine's Analysis of the Creation Story and Continued Preoccupation with a Manichaean Audience*

Most scholars recognize, like O'Donnell (1992, 3:252 and 343), that book 11 and a section of book 13 (13.2+8.43–13.30.45) is aimed more or less directly at the Manichaeans. Van Oort and others have pointed to the importance of Manichaean categories of thought throughout the last three books of the *Confessions*.[33] In this section I argue that Augustine's primary objective in books 11 to 13 is to redeem the story of creation in the sight of his Manichaean reader, that Augustine's so-called exegesis of the creation story in Genesis is less an exegesis than a rhetorical tour de force to convince the Manichaeans of the validity of this story.

This is achieved through a technique used also in book 9.4.7–11 (see the analysis in chapter 3) and at other pivotal points in the *Confessions*. Augustine attempts to convince his Manichaean reader that the full message of the creation story in Gen 1, the story rejected (together with the rest of the Old Testament) by the Manichaeans, is present in the words of Paul, the apostle and biblical author specially venerated by them. Books 11 to 13 clearly have the Manichaean reader in mind throughout, but the most significant use of devices aimed at this group occurs in books 12 and 13 and then especially in book 13.22.32 to 13.34.49.

We find here, in fact, a combination of two techniques previously used in the *Confessions*. The first is the intermingling of texts from the Old and the New Testament (especially the texts by Paul) as I show in

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[32] Van Oort (2002, 19) speaks of the 'thematisch-indicatieve functie' of the prologue.

[33] Joubert (1992, 102) explains the reasons for Augustine's choice of specifically the creation story in Gen 1 as the subject of his exegesis against the background of Augustine's desire 'pour réformer ses anciens amis': it affords him the opportunity to treat the philosophical problems at the centre of his differences with the Manichaeans (and the neo-Platonists) and simultaneously to redeem the Old Testament in their eyes. See also for example Desch 1988, 56: 'Augustinus' Bibelinterpretation in den Büchern X–XIII ist systematische Widerlegung der Manichäer, geht aber weit darüber hinaus und wird zu einem existentiellen Anliegen Augustins.'

my analysis of *Conf* 9.4.7–11 above. Throughout the *Confessions*, when Augustine intermingles texts from the Old and New Testaments this has the function of showing the consistency of the message carried by these two sections of the Bible, and by implication of illustrating the value of the Old Testament in the eyes of those sceptical about its legitimacy. The second is the technique of interpreting a text by summarising its contents in the words of another text, as Augustine does in the narration of his reading of the *Hortensius* (see the analysis in chapter 4) and of the neo-Platonic documents.

In the following section I look at books 11 to 13 individually. The focus of the analysis is on the way in which a Manichaean reader may have read these passages.

a. In Book 11

Scholars like Mayer (1974, 2:151) and O'Donnell (1992, 3:252) confirm that book 11 as a whole targets a Manichaean audience familiar with a dogma that stressed the importance of three moments in time, a dogma that is replaced here with Augustine's interpretation of time and eternity. I will not analyse book 11 in detail here, but it is important to look at its opening, which functions as the opening of the whole of the so-called exegetical section of the *Confessions*, as well as to take a quick look at main gist of the narrative.

The 'considerable reorientation' that O'Donnell indicates is required from this point onwards in the *Confessions* is thoroughly prepared in the opening paragraphs (11.1.1 to 11.2.4) where a number of factors indicate that this is a new beginning. First there is renewed emphasis on the protreptic-paraenetic purpose of the confession coupled with explicit mention of the audience, repetition of the opening phrases of the work and the use of the by now familiar *excito* in 11.1.1:

> *Cur ergo tibi tot rerum narrationes digero? non utique ut per me noveris ea, sed* ***affectum meum excito in te***, ***et eorum qui haec legunt, ut dicamus omnes, 'magnus dominus et laudabilis valde'*** *… ut liberes nos omnino, quoniam coepisti, ut desinamus esse miseri in nobis et beatificemur in te*
>
> [Why then do I set before you an ordered account of so many things? It is certainly not through me that you know them. But I am stirring up love for you in myself and in those who read this, so that we may all say 'Great is the Lord and highly worthy to be praised' (Ps 47:1) … so that the deliverance that you have begun may be complete. So I may cease to be wretched in myself and may find happiness in you];

and in 11.2.3:

> *Misericordia tua exaudiat desiderium meum, quoniam* ***non mihi soli aestuat, sed usui vult esse fraternae caritati***
>
> [May your mercy attend to my longing which burns hot for my personal advantage but desires to be of use in love to the brethren].

Further, as we expect, the issue of time as the theme for book 11 is announced in the first line:

> *Numquid, domine, cum tua sit aeternitas, ignoras quae tibi dico, aut ad tempus vides quod fit in tempore?*
>
> [Lord, eternity is yours, so you cannot be ignorant of what I tell you].

But note that in 11.1.1 and 11.2.2 also the nature and purpose of the work as a whole are redefined in terms of the time-theme in the references to the length of the narrative and the lack of time to say all that can be said:

> *Tot rerum narrationes … ecce narravi tibi multa … quando autem sufficio lingua calami enuntiare omnia hortamenta tua … et si sufficio … caro mihi valent stillae temporum*
>
> [An ordered account of so many things … See, the long story I have told … But when shall I be capable of proclaiming by 'the tongue of my pen' (Ps 44:2) all your exhortations … And if I have the capacity … the drops of time are too precious to me].

We also have spread over 11.1.1 to 11.2.4 the renewed evocation of Matt 7:7 (and also verse 8) that plays a crucial role in the opening and closing lines of the *Confessions*:

> *Novit pater vester quid vobis opus sit, priusquam petatis ab eo … neque adversus pulsantes claudas eam … quidquid invenero in libris tuis … quae omnia nobis apponuntur quaerentibus regnum … et placeat in conspectus misericoridae tuae invenire me gratiam ante te, ut aperiantur pulsanti mihi interiora sermonum tuorum … mediatorem tuum et nostrum, per quem nos quaesisti non quaerentes te, quaesisti autem ut quaereremus te*
>
> ['Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him' (Matt 6:8) … and do not close the gate to us that knock … what I find in your books … They are all things added to us as we seek your kingdom … May it please you that in the sight of your mercy (Ps 18:15) I may find grace before you, so that to me as I knock (Matt 7:7) may be opened the hidden meaning of your words … mediator between yourself and us. By him you sought us when we were not seeking you (Rom 10:20)];

as well as a repetition of verbs of calling and answering evoking the Manichaean *tochme-sotme* pair (*vocasti nos, exaudiat, audi clamantem de profundo … quo clamabimus? … exaudi … per quem vocasti*).

But most important for the significance of the theme treated in books 11 to 13 as well as for the creation of a sense of a new beginning is the attitude and tone of renewed invocation in the opening paragraphs of book 11. We now have the classical statement of the greatness of the theme (*quando autem sufficio lingua calami enuntiare omnia hortamenta tua et omnes terrores tuos, et consolationes et gubernationes*) and repeated prayers for help in 11.2.3–11.2.4:

> *Intende orationi meae et misericordia tua exaudiat desiderium meum … circumcide ab omni temeritate omnique mendacio interiora et exteriora labia mea. sint castae deliciae meae scripturae tuae, nec fallar in eis nec fallam ex eis. domine, attende et miserere … attende animam meam et audi clamantem de profundo … largire inde spatium meditationibus nostris in abdita legis tuae … o domine, perfice me et revela mihi eas … vide, pater, aspice et vide et approba, et placeat in conspectu misericordiae tuae invenire me gratiam ante te … obsecro per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum … per eum te obsecro*
>
> [Lord my God, 'hear my prayer' (Ps 60:2), may your mercy attend to my longing … Circumcise my lips (cf. Exod 6:12), inwardly and outwardly, from all rashness and falsehood. May your scriptures be my pure delight, so that I am not deceived in them and do not lead others astray in interpreting them. 'Lord, listen and have mercy' (Ps 26:7; 85:3) … Listen to my soul and hear it crying from the depth … From them grant us space for our meditations on the secret recesses of your law …O Lord, bring me to perfection (Ps 16:5) and reveal to me the meaning of these pages … See Father: look and see and give your approval. May it please you that in the sight of your mercy (Ps 18:15) I may find grace before you … I make my prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ … I make my prayer to you through him].

The body of book 11 is dedicated to the first sentence of Gen 1:1, *in principio fecisti caelum et terram*. It is important to note that I agree with O'Donnell (1992, 3: 253) who in his broad outline of book 11 divides the discussion of Gen 1:1 into three sections (A riddle: on the eternity of God; Time; Time and eternity), but sees this narrative not as a digression on time but as an integral part of the reading of the Genesis text presented by Augustine.

The opening section ends with a repetition of what was identified as Manichaean echoes in 1.1.1 and with references to the second person of the Trinity in terms that, once again, simultaneously contradicts and appropriates Manichaean Christological terms in 11.9.11:

> *In hoc principio, deus, fecisti caelum et terram in verbo tuo, in filio tuo, in virtute tua, in sapientia tua, in veritate tua*
>
> [In this beginning, God, you made heaven and earth, in your Word, in your Son, in your power, in your wisdom, in your truth].

Augustine, it is important to note, also introduces the first section of his famous contemplation on time by reference to the Manichaean (and neo-Platonic) polemical question *quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et terram?*

Moreover, the recapitulating closing section of book 11 (11.29.39–11.31.41) unmistakeably moves the focus back to the Manichaean reader when Augustine says in 11.30.40:

> *Nec patiar quaestiones hominum qui poenali morbo plus sitiunt quam capiunt et dicunt, 'quid faciebat deus antequam faceret caelum et terram'*
>
> [I shall not have to endure the questions of people who suffer from a disease which brings its own punishment and want to drink more than they have the capacity to hold. They say 'What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?'].

Like in the reading of Ps 4 presented in book 9, Augustine's concern for his Manichaean readers is clear when in 11.30.40 he prays to God to bring about what he assumes his arguments might fall short of doing:

> *Da illis, domine, bene cogitare quid dicant et invenire quia non dicitur numquam ubi non est tempus … videant itaque nullum tempus esse posse sine creatura et desinant istam vanitatem loqui*[34]
>
> [Grant them, Lord, to consider carefully what they are saying and to make the discovery that where there is no time, one cannot use the word 'never' … Let them therefore see that without the creation no time can exist, and let them cease to speak that vanity (Ps 143:8)].

Thus the reading of Genesis presented in the last three books of the *Confessions* is introduced by a discussion with its main focus on the phrase *in principio*, but more specifically, on the problems the Manichaeans had with this phrase. The length of the discussion of the issue of time is probably also due to the importance this matter had in Manichaean dogma and it reflects once again Augustine's desire to cure his Manichaean reader of what he now believes to be erroneous thinking. This fact must make us seriously consider the possibility that what is presented in the last three books of the *Confessions* is much less a for-

[34] O'Donnell (1992, 3: 297) notes the echo of Ps 4 here.

mal analysis of a section of scripture than a meditation presented, like the meditation on Ps 4, with the purpose of talking to the Manichaeans about the important remaining issues of cosmology and the authority of scripture, especially of the Old Testament.

b. In Book 12

Book 12 consists of two main sections. The first, following the short introductory paragraph, is a continuation of the meditation on Gen 1 where it left off in book 11, still not progressing past the first verse. The second section of the book reflects on the nature of the process of interpretation itself. The sections of book 12 that would have held the biggest interest for its Manichaean readers, and which I examine more closely here, are the opening paragraph and the five paragraphs from 12.10.10 to 12.11.14, near the end of the first section.

Let us start with the opening paragraph. The fabric of 12.1.1 is made up almost entirely of references to Matt 7:7, the verse we know had special meaning for the Manichaeans. We have an opening statement about scripture knocking on Augustine's heart (probably a reference to his encounter with the Word described in the previous book):

> *Multa satagit cor meum, domine, in hac inopia vitae meae, pulsatum verbis sanctae scripturae tuae*
>
> [In my needy life, Lord, my heart is much exercised under the impact made by the words of your holy scripture].

This is followed by an interpretative quotation of Matt 7:7, a description of the process of the interpretation of scripture in terms of the imagery of asking, seeking and knocking:

> *Et ideo plerumque in sermone copiosa est egestas humanae intellegentiae, quia plus loquitur inquisitio quam inventio, et longior est petitio quam impetratio, et operosior est manus pulsans quam sumens*
>
> [All too frequently the poverty of human intelligence has plenty to say, for inquiry employs more words than the discovery of the solution; it takes longer to state a request than to have it granted, and the hand which knocks has more work to do than the hand which receives].

In the next lines of 12.1.1 we have Augustine's explicit appropriation of God's promises in Rom 8:31 and those embodied in Matt 7:8, framing the first full verbatim quotation of Matt 7:7:

> *Tenemus promissum: quis corrumpet illud? si deus pro nobis, quis contra nos? 'petite et accipietis, quaerite et invenietis, pulsate et aperietur vobis. Omnis enim qui petit accipit, et quaerens inveniet, et pulsanti aperietur'*
>
> [We hold on to the promise, which none can make null and void. 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (Rom 8:31). 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives and the door is opened to the one who knocks' (Matt 7:7–8)].

The closing statement of the paragraph is a reaffirmation of the trust put in God's promises:

> *Promissa tua sunt, et quis falli timeat cum promittit veritas?*
>
> [These are your promises, and when the promise is given by Truth, who fears to be deceived?]

It is clear that this introduction prepares the reader to see that the following paragraphs present Augustine in the process of asking from, seeking in, and knocking on the door of scripture (as the other comprehensive allusion to Matt 7:7 at the end of the *Confessions* also confirms), but more importantly, that the answers he arrives at represent the fulfilment of God's promises. If God keeps his side of the bargain, the interpretation we are presented with in the following paragraphs bear the authority of God.

As far as the rest of book 12 (except for paragraphs 10 to 14 that I discuss below) is concerned, an anti-Manichaean argument or protreptic-paraenetic stream directed at the Manichaeans is not as obvious at first reading as, for example, in book 11. O'Donnell emphasizes that the imaginary adversaries Augustine allows to speak in the second section of book 12 do not exemplify specific groups, 'not even the Manichees' (1992, 3:317).

Still, it is clear that book 12 does have a role to play in the effort to redeem the text of Genesis in the eyes of the Manichaeans, an enterprise enhanced by the use in the opening paragraph of the book of a Biblical text that had special meaning for this group. Where in book 11 Augustine endeavours to refute Manichaean objections against the opening time-phrase of Gen 1 and Manichaean dogma about time, the first section of book 12 takes the process just a little step further in its treatment of Manichaean ideas about matter and the way God created through his Word, issues still pertaining to the first verse of Gen 1.

But it is also important to convince the Manichaean reader (together with any other potential reader) of the legitimacy of the process of inter-

pretation followed here in the first place, as well as of the authority of the answers arrived at in due course. This is what the second section of book 12 is dedicated to. Note, however, Augustine's humble approach to scripture throughout. He pleads for tolerance of different interpretations and does not pretend to have all the answers as, for example, in 12.4.4–5:

> *Cur ergo non accipiam informitatem materiae … ita commode hominibus intimatam ut appellaretur 'terra invisibilis et incomposita', ut, cum in ea quaerit cogitatio quid sensus attingat … dum sibi haec dicit humana cogitatio, conetur eam vel nosse ignorando vel ignorare noscendo?*
>
> [I have no reason to doubt that the formlessness of matter …is conveniently described for human minds in the words 'the earth invisible and unorganised.' In this matter thought seeks to grasp what perception has touched … Human thinking employs words in this way; but its attempts are either a knowing which is aware of what is not knowable or an ignorance based on knowledge].

He also takes pains to confess how difficult he himself found these concepts at first, and this difficulty (as we know from books 3 to 7 of the *Confessions*) is one that is particularly acute for someone thinking in Manichaean terms. The statement in 12.6.6, for example, may thus function simultaneously as confession, consolation and *captatio benevolentiae*:

> *Si vellem prorsus informe cogitare et non poteram*
>
> [… if I wished to conceive the absolutely formless. I could not achieve this].

Thus, a number of elements that are obviously (anti-) Manichaean are present in the narrative and it is clear that an awareness of this segment of the audience has not slipped from Augustine's mind.[35]

We have, for example, in 12.3.3 Augustine's explanations of the concepts *tenebrae* and *terra invisibilis et incomposita* from Gen 1:2 in terms that clearly echo aspects of Manichaean cosmogony and arguments between them and Augustine on what matter is (note also Augustine's constant references to God as the ultimate source of his convictions):[36]

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[35] The instances named here are those referred to by O'Donnell (1992, 3:300–342). A careful comparison of the text of book 12 with available Manichaean literature will probably reveal more references or echoes that would have had special meaning to a Manichaean reader.

[36] See also O'Donnell's remarks on 12.6.6 where the differences between Augustine's and the Manichaean view of *materia* are discussed.

> *Tenebrae … quid aliud quam lucis absentia … quid erat adesse tenebras nisi abesse lucem … nonne tu, domine, docuisti hanc animam quae tibi confitetur? nonne tu, domine, docuisti me quod, priusquam istam informem materiam formares … non erat aliquid … non tamen omnino nihil*
>
> [… darkness … this simply means the absence of light …Where, then, light did not yet exist, the presence of darkness was the lack of light … Is it not you, Lord, who instructed the soul which is making confession to you? Do I not owe to you the insight that before you gave form and particularity to that 'unformed matter' (Wisd 11:18), there was nothing … Yet it was not absolute nothingness];

and in 12.6.6:

> *Ego vero, domine, si totum confitear … quidquid de ista materia docuisti me, cuius antea nomen audiens et non intellegens, narrantibus mihi eis qui non intellegerent*
>
> [If I am to confess … everything you have taught me about this question of matter, the truth is that earlier in life I heard the word but did not understand it, and those who spoke to me about it (the Manichees) did not understand it either].

Also Augustine's insistence in 12.7.7 that God created *ex nihilo* and that creation is not emanation resulting in creatures carrying elements of the divine within themselves makes a specific anti-Manichaean point:

> *In principio, quod est de te, in sapientia tua, quae nata est de substantia tua, fecisti aliquid et de nihilo. fecisti enim caelum et terram non de te*
>
> [In the beginning, that is from yourself, in your wisdom which is begotten of your substance, you made something and made it out of nothing. For you made heaven and earth not out of your own self].

In 12.11.14 we have another clear reference to Manichaean error, reminiscent of the description of the Manichaeans in 3.6.10:

> *Nescio quid informe in istis mutationibus rerum extremarum atque infimarum, et quis dicet mihi, nisi quisquis per inania cordis sui cum suis phantasmatis vagatur et volvitur, quis nisi talis dicet mihi quod …*
>
> [There is an inexpressible formlessness in the changes undergone by the lowest and most inferior creatures. Only a person whose empty heart makes his mind roll and reel with private fantasies would try to tell me …];

while 12.14.17 at the opening of the section on methodology reminds strongly of Augustine's frustration at being unable to convince the Manicheans in 9.4.8–11, both in choice of words and in the urgent tone perceptible here:

> *Odi hostes eius vehementer: o si occidas eos de gladio bis acuto, et non sint hostes eius! sic enim amo eos occidi sibi, ut vivant tibi*
>
> [Scripture's enemies I vehemently hate (Ps 138:22). I wish that you would slay them with a two-edged sword (Ps 149:6); then they would no longer be its enemies. The sense in which I wish them 'dead' is this: I love them that they may die to themselves and live to you (Rom 14:7–8; Cor 5:14–15)].

The opening sentence of 12.16.23, stating the intention to speak with those who agree with Augustine (*qui haec omnia … vera esse concedunt*), is followed by a long *praeteritio*, which clearly refers to the Manichaeans (*latrare* is also used to refer to himself as a Manichaean in book 9) and includes some typical protreptic elements:

> *Qui haec negant, latrent quantum volunt et obstrepant sibi: persuadere conabor ut quiescant et viam praebeant ad se verbo tuo … et dimittam eos foris sufflantes in pulverem et excitantes terram in oculos suos, et intrem in cubile meum et cantem tibi amatoria*
>
> [Those who deny them may bark as much as they like and by their shouting discredit themselves. I will try to persuade them to be quiet and to allow your word to find a way to them … I will leave my critics gasping in the dust, and blowing the soil up into their eyes. I will 'enter my chamber' (Matt 6:6) and will sing you songs of love].

We have further allusions to Manichaean issues in 12.26.36 where the term massa (used by the Manichaeans to refers to human solidarity in sin, O'Donnell 1992, 3:335) occurs:

> *Ex eadem namque massa omnes venimus*
>
> [We all come 'from the same lump' (Rom 9:21)];

and in 12.27.37 with its references to a materialistic way of thinking, typical of this group:

> *Alii enim cum haec verba legunt vel audiunt, cogitant deum, quasi hominem aut quasi aliquam molem immensa praeditam potestate novo quodam et repentino placito extra se ipsam tamquam locis distantibus, fecisse caelum et terram*
>
> [When they read or hear these texts, some people think of God as if he were a human being or a power immanent in a vast mass which, by some new and sudden decision external to itself, as if located in remote places, made heaven and earth].

Let us now take a closer look at paragraphs 10 to 14 that I have referred to above. What is striking about this passage at first sight is the heightened emotional tone created by the repetitive, almost refrain-like opening and closing formulations of each of the three central

paragraphs of the above-mentioned section, paragraphs 11 to 13. The opening phrase, repeated three times, is:

> *Iam dixisti mihi, domine voce forti in aurem interiorem*
>
> [Already you have said to me, Lord, with a loud voice in my inner ear];

while the closing phrase, also occurring thrice, states:

> *Hoc in conspectu tuo claret mihi et magis magisque clarescat, oro te, atque in ea manifestatione persistam sobrius sub alis tuis*
>
> [Let it become more and more evident, I pray you, and as it becomes manifest may I dwell calmly under your wings].

The subjects of the first two of the central paragraphs (11 and 12) are issues on which we know that Augustine was anxious to convince the Manichaeans of their errors: God's relation to time and eternity, the immutability of his will, and God as the good creator who created everything good. The second of these paragraphs emphasizes that nothing is co-eternal with God, that he created everything (*omnes naturas atque substantias*). The implication is clear: there is no *alia natura*, as the Manichaeans suggested, responsible for man's sin and not created by God. The third of the central paragraphs (13) is dedicated to the main subject under discussion in this stage of the 'exegesis', the *caelum caeli* seen here as an intellectual creature created before time was created (see 12.9.9). The paragraph is introduced and concluded by the same phrases as the previous two paragraphs, clearly illustrating the coherence of this section.

If we add to this information the fact that the concluding paragraph of the section (14) clearly echoes the description of the Manichaeans in 3.6.10 while it touches on the subjects of time and mutability, it becomes obvious that the whole passage has the Manichaean reader in mind and that the matter of convincing him is very urgent indeed: we have to deduce that it is very often the thought of Manichaean error that brings Augustine to the point of intense emotion displayed here (as is the case in book 9 where he speaks to them about Ps 4). Augustine seems to try to add to the power of pure logic by the repeated emotional claim that God, Truth Himself (*O veritas* in 12.10.10), has inspired him with the knowledge he imparts here (*iam dixisti mihi, domine … item dixisti mihi, domine … item dixisti mihi … voce forti in aurem interiorem*).

It is this analysis of paragraphs 11 to 14 that provides perhaps the strongest argument to see the *tumultus impacatorum* in the introductory paragraph of this passage (paragraph 10) as a reference to the Mani-

chaeans.[37] If, against this background, we read the *ista* in *defluxi ad ista* (in 12.10.10) as referring back to the issues in the previous paragraph (formless matter and eternity), and thus as a reference to Augustine's preoccupation under influence of the Manichaeans with material things and trick questions about time, it provides an additional argument for this position.

To quote this section (paragraphs 10 to 14) in full would take up too much space, but this is one of those instances where no amount of descriptive words can explain the emotional power of the passage with the same force that a reading of Augustine's words themselves would. I quote only the first paragraph of the section (paragraph 10), the one displaying the most intense emotion, and the one warning the reader of the importance of what is to follow:

> *O veritas, lumen cordis mei, non tenebrae meae loquantur mihi! defluxi ad ista et obscuratus sum, sed hinc, etiam hinc adamavi te. erravi et recordatus sum tui. audivi vocem tuam post me, ut redirem, et vix audivi propter tumultus impacatorum. et nunc ecce redeo aestuans et anhelans ad fontem tuum. nemo me prohibeat: hunc bibam et hinc vivam. non ego vita mea sim: male vixi ex me. mors mihi fui: in te revivesco. tu me alloquere, tu mihi sermocinare: credidi libris tuis, et verba eorum arcane valde*
>
> [May the truth, the light of my heart, not my darkness, speak to me. I slipped down into the dark and was plunged into obscurity. Yet from there, even from there I loved you. 'I erred and I remembered you' (Ps 118:176). 'I heard your voice behind me' (Ezek 3:12) calling me to return. And I could hardly hear because of the hubbub of people who know no peace. Now, see, I am returning hot and panting to your spring. Let no one stand in my path. Let me drink this and live by it. May I not be my own life. On my own resources I lived evilly. To myself I was death. In you I am recovering life. Speak to me, instruct me, I have put faith in your books. And their words are mysteries indeed].

It is passages like this one (paragraphs 10 to 14) that make me hesitate to use the term exegesis to refer to the concluding books of the *Confessions*. It is, like the reading of Ps 4, much more a meditation or a sermon than the theoretical thesis the term exegesis connotes. Of course, the word exegesis is not totally inapplicable. But to use it as an unqualified epithet to describe books 11 to 13 of the *Confessions* may create a distorted perception of what these books actually aim to do, and, more importantly, of how they may be understood as part of the organic whole.

[37] See O'Donnell 1992, 3:312 for other suggestions on *tumultus impacatorum*.

c. In Book 13

My task of arguing that book 13 continues the themes prepared in books 11 and 12 and targets especially a Manichaean audience in order to bring them to the point of conversion is simplified to a great extent by Joubert's article (1992, 77–117). She shows how the themes of book 13 are clearly foreshadowed in the early books of the work and how books 11 and 12 have the function of providing the groundwork for the arguments presented in book 13. The argumentation around the more difficult fundamental theoretical issues, namely the *creatio ex nihilo*, the characteristics of God as creator of the whole universe, the issue of temporality, the theory on matter and lastly the theoretical considerations surrounding the issue of interpretation itself, are concerns that form the basis for the allegorical interpretation offered in book 13 and that have to be clarified before the presentation of that at which the whole of the *Confessions* is aimed. Joubert argues, as I have indicated in chapter 1, that the aim of the *Confessions* as a whole is to convert Augustine's erstwhile friends (both Manichaeans and neo-Platonists) and that book 13 is the fitting end to the work, embodying this goal.

The most important elements in this book that Joubert identifies as designed specifically to reach the Manichaeans are (a) the emphasis on the theme of God's goodness, used as a structuring principle at the opening and the close of the book (1992, 91); (b) the effort to redeem the Old Testament in the eyes of his (Manichaean) readers by showing how it can most satisfactorily be interpreted allegorically (1992, 93 and 102–103); and (c) the pervasive use of terms, concepts and realities familiar to the Manichaeans that are nevertheless given their proper Christian content (1992, 91–94). As far as this last category is concerned Joubert shows convincingly how the use of the themes of light and darkness, the emphasis on the idea of the ascent of the soul so prominent in Manichaean thinking and on the fact that the body is not part of an *alia natura* but created good by God while the soul is not divine are all designed to address a Manichaean audience in a very effective way.

She illustrates convincingly how Augustine's insistence on the spiritual nature of the ascent of the soul drawn to God by the Holy Spirit and by Love, while still using terms and categories familiar to the Manichaeans, is designed to replace their materialistic thinking in terms of liberated light particles physically received by the sun and the moon. Also Augustine's arguments about the creation of the world in two stages, his emphasis on the absolute transcendence of God, on *cari-*

tas (a concept foreign to Manichaean dogma) and on the influence of the Holy Spirit that is a gift from God, are designed to eliminate Manichaean error; in Joubert's words (1992, 94):

> Tout se passe comme s'il voulait d'abord séduire les manichéens en parlant leur langage. Cependant, loin de céder à leur theories, il profite au contraire de leur attention pour faire passer dans son discours les thèses qu'il veut leur faire accepter.

It is clear then, that also the last book of the *Confessions* targets its Manichaean audience in a particularly effective way. I am convinced, and would argue more strongly than Joubert, that one of the main aims of the meditation on Genesis in books 11 and 12 and particularly of the allegorical interpretation offered in book 13, is to redeem this text (and together with it the whole of the Old Testament and all of the New Testament)[38] in the eyes of the Manichaeans.

Let us look at the last section of the allegory that, as I have indicated, forms the basis for my arguments about Augustine's Manichaean audience in this last chapter, paragraphs 32 to 49.

5.4. *The Manichaean Audience of the Allegory in Book 13*

To facilitate the presentation of my arguments I repeat here the schematic analysis of the allegory already given in chapter 4.6:

Section	*Subsection*	*Paragraphs*	*Theme*
A. Paraenetic to members of the Church	(i)	13–15	Hope in spite of present imperfect conditions
	(ii)	16–19	Value and authority of scripture
	(iii)	20–25	Exhortation to bear fruit
	(iv)	26–31	Value of the preaching and example of ministers

[38] Although the canon of the Bible was not fixed by the time the *Confessions* was published, all the books Augustine refers to in this section were eventually accepted as part of the canon.

B. Against Manichaean dogma	(v)	32–34	Man in the image of God and Manichaean anthropology
	(vi)	35–37	A verse offensive to the Manichaeans
	(vii)	38–42	Manichaean eating rituals
	(viii)	43–49	Manichaean views of creation

First, my identification of an important thematic articulation in the narrative between paragraphs 31 and 32, i.e. in the course of the interpretation of the sixth day of creation, needs some justification. The primary reason for this division is the move away from the consolatory sermon-like exhortations clearly aimed at the members of the Church towards a more polemical kind of argumentation increasingly targeting a Manichaean audience. I detect in the paragraphs from 32 onwards the beginning of an indirect expression of concern with the Manichaean audience that gathers in momentum from this point onwards to become explicit in the closing paragraphs both of the allegory and of the *Confessions* as a whole.[39]

It has become clear that two of the main tenets of Manichaeism that Augustine has to deal with are their cosmogony and their anthropology. In the first part of the allegory (analysed in chapter 4) we have observed him adroitly removing the discussion of the creation story from the realm of cosmogony to the pastoral domain (Ries 1963, 212). In the second part of the allegory we see him eventually coming to grips with some aspects of Manichaean anthropology (in sections v, vi and vii) and cosmogony (in section viii) after all. The Genesis verses that now come under discussion touch the nerve of a number of issues from these domains, issues of central importance and on which major differences existed between Manichaean and Catholic views: the Manichaeans (like Augustine at an earlier stage) maintained that the Catholic acceptance of the phrase *ad imaginem dei* (the subject of section v) was proof of the anthropomorphic views they accused them of holding; the phrase *crescite et multiplicamini* (the subject of section vi) as a command to humans was particularly offensive to the Manichaeans and totally irreconcilable with a pessimistic view of man that prohib-

[39] This interpretation is supported by the fact that this is the stage where the creation of man is interpreted, and then the creation of man in the image of God, which does lift this part of the creation process to an entirely new level, although the events are still part of the events of the sixth day of creation.

ited procreation; the Old Testament version of a creation that was totally good (the subject of section viii) also stood in direct opposition to their fundamentally dualistic worldview. The tour de force of this part of the allegory is, however, the use of the less offensive verse 29 as a springboard for a lengthy and carefully constructed argument against the eating rituals of the Manichaean elect (see my arguments below).

In this second section of the allegorical reading of Genesis where we may have expected the consolatory exhortations to move inexorably on to the idea of apocalyptic eternal rest, we find the pastoral tone of the previous paragraphs gradually making place once again for a more polemical approach, though still not what I would call 'Manicheebashing' (O'Donnell 1992, 3:408). Augustine argues patiently and laboriously, often with great emotion, but the aim clearly remains '*to heal heretics*' rather than *'to destroy them*.' The fact that the last issue the monumental *Confessions* focuses on is the elimination of Manichaean error constitutes one of the strongest foundations for my argument that the work may be primarily intended as a subtle protreptic aimed at a Manichaean audience. Let us examine these closing paragraphs of the *Confessions*.

5.4.1. *Section (v): Man in the Image of God (paragraphs 32 to 34)*

Although paragraphs 32 to 34 start by putting on the table the issue of the differences between Manichaean and Catholic anthropology, this section serves more as a bridge between the first and second parts of the allegory and a preparation of the reader for what follows than a polemic on the issue of the nature of man. Still, it is clear that a whole nexus of problems and arguments that were points of debate between Augustine and the Manichaeans is on the table here:[40] 'the treatment here is brief and suggestive, and conceals complex doctrinal development' (O'Donnell 1992, 395).

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[40] It is interesting to note, though, that even before Augustine introduces the part of Gen 1:26 under discussion in this paragraph (*et dixit deus, 'ecce faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*) he quotes a verse from Romans 12:2 "*nolite conformari huic saeculo, sed reformamini in novitate mentis vestrae*." This must immediately have put on the table for any Manichaean reader the Manichaean understanding of anthropology, namely that 'there are two men in each person' of which only the 'inner, heavenly and new man … is formed by God according to his own image' (Bammel 1993, 6) and the different views held by Augustine and the Catholics.

Where paragraph 31 discussed the interdependency of men, paragraph 32 emphasizes the autonomy of man: the ultimate meaning of being created in the image of God is receiving the capacity to understand eternal Truths:

> *mente quippe renovatus et conspiciens intellectum veritatem tuam homine demonstratore non indiget ut suum genus imitetur, sed te demonstrante probat ipse quae sit voluntas tua, quod bonum et beneplacitum et perfectum, et doces eum iam capacem videre trinitatem unitatis vel unitatem trinitatis*
>
> [The person whose renewal is in the mind and who contemplates and understands your truth, needs no human to 'prove' it, imitating the example of humankind but, as you show, he 'proves what your will is, which is a thing good and well-pleasing and perfect.' Because such a person now has the capacity, you teach him to see the Trinity of the Unity and the Unity of the Trinity].

Augustine emphatically declares, adducing the authority of Paul, that now man does not need other men to mediate between him and God. Once he has been 'renewed in the newness of his mind,' he can know the will of God directly. In paragraphs 33–34, however, we learn that, in spite of the privileged position occupied by man in relation to God, and in spite of the amount of authority over the whole of creation that he is said to receive in Gen 1, he does not have the authority to judge the spiritual state of other men. He cannot decide who must be classified as *spiritales* and who as *carnales*, nor can he judge who is excluded by God's grace (*foris*) and who is not.

The affirmation of man's ability to know the will of God functions, like many other devices in the *Confessions*, as a validation of the insights presented in the following paragraphs. Founded as it is on the authority of Paul, 'the apostle of the Manichees,' it is designed to carry special weight with Manichaean readers. Also the insistence on man's inability to judge the spiritual condition of his fellow men has the additional effect of assuring the reader that Augustine does not assume to judge him, while at the same time it contains a warning that God does judge (note also once again the probes in the direction of the Manichaeans on the point of man's proper relation to scripture):

> *Spiritales ergo … spiritaliter iudicant, non de cognitionibus spiritalibus … neque de ipso libro tuo, etiam si quid ibi non lucet, quoniam summittimus ei nostrum intellectum certumque habemus etiam quod clausum est aspectibus nostris recte veraciterque dictum esse … (sic enim homo, licet iam spiritalis et renovatus … factor tamen legis debet esse, non iudex); neque de illa distinctione iudicat, spiritalium videlicet atque carnalium hominum, qui tuis, deus noster, oculis noti sunt et nullis adhuc nobis apparuerunt operibus ut ex fructibus eorum cognoscamus eos, sed tu, domine, iam*

> *scis eos et divisisti et vocasti inocculto antequam fieret firmamentum; neque de turbidis huius saeculi populis … homo iudicat*
>
> [So spiritual persons … exercise spiritual judgement. They do not judge those spiritual intelligences … Nor do they sit in judgement on your book, even if there is obscurity there. We submit our intellect to it, and hold it for certain that even language closed to our comprehension is right and true. Even a person who is spiritual … has to be 'a doer of the law' (Jas 4:11), not its critic. Nor does he judge which persons are spiritual and which carnal. They are known to your eyes, our God. To us no works have as yet appeared so that we can know them by their fruits. Yet you, Lord, already know them and have made a division. You called them in secret before the firmament was made. The spiritual person does not judge the storm-tossed peoples of this world].

5.4.2. *Section (vi): A Verse Offensive to the Manichaeans (paragraphs 35 to 37)*

Paragraphs 35 to 37 of book 13 are dedicated to a laborious interpretation of the phrase *crescite et multiplicamini et inplete terram* in Gen 1:28. Although there is little explicit indication of this in the text of the *Confessions*, it must be clear that this thoughtful analysis offered in an attitude of humility cannot but be designed to argue with the Manichaeans. In this instance we have clear evidence that the issue was a point of discussion between them and Augustine: 'This particular command offended the Manichees. Secundinus found it evidence of the barbarity of mores among the Jews' (O'Donnell 1992, 3:399). Thus, this was certainly another of those aspects of the Genesis narrative that Augustine had to explain in a way acceptable to the Manichaeans if he hoped to succeed in convincing them of the value and validity of this text and the whole of the Old Testament.

Paragraph 35 consists almost entirely of those interpretations of the phrase *crescite et multiplicamini et inplete terram* that Augustine has to discard:

> *Sed quid est hoc et quale mysterium est? … dicerem …dicerem … item dicerem …*
>
> [But what is this text about, and what kind of a mystery is it? … I might say that …I might say … I might further say that …].

We are made aware of the fact that Augustine does not go over this section lightly, that he finds it difficult to interpret.

Also in paragraph 36 we are reminded of the fact that Augustine has to dig deep to find answers: *Quid igitur dicam*? The point he makes directly after this is almost certainly aimed at Manichaean criticism of scripture:

> *Quid igitur dicam, lumen meum, veritas? quia vacat hoc, quia inaniter ita dictum est? nequaquam … absit ut hoc dicat servus verbi tui. et si ego non intellego quid hoc eloquio significes, utantur eo melius meliores, id est intellegentiores quam ego sum … placeat autem et confessio mea coram oculis tuis, qua tibi confiteor credere me, domine, non incassum te ita locutum*
>
> [What then shall I say, truth my light? That there is no special significance in this, and the text is empty of meaning? No indeed … be it far from a servant of your word to say this. And if I fail to understand what you intend by this utterance, let better interpreters, that is more intelligent than I, offer a better exegesis … But let my confession also be pleasing before your eyes. I confess myself to believe, Lord, that you have not so spoken without a special intention].

Augustine's humility here is a practical illustration of a point he has made in book 3.5.9 (*video rem non compertam superbis neque nudatam pueris, sed incessu humilem, successu excelsam et velatam mysteriis* [And this is what met me: something neither open to the proud nor laid bare to mere children; a text lowly to the beginner but, on further reading, of mountainous difficulty and enveloped in mysteries]) and has repeated shortly before in paragraph 33 (*homo … factor tamen legis debet esse, non iudex*). If man finds something in scripture that he does not understand he should assume that he himself is at fault, rather than *divina scriptura*. This is clearly a finger pointed at the Manichaeans who made their own reason the norm by which the acceptability of the various sections of scripture was measured.

It is only in paragraph 37 that Augustine's positive allegorical interpretation of the phrase *crescite et multiplicamini* is presented. The allegory, in its recapitulation of almost all the elements of Gen 1, becomes in the last instance a 'higher-order' allegory, that I cannot describe any better than O'Donnell (1992, 3: 400) does:

> The result is a higher-order allegorical interpretation: it applies to the essential business of the church, giving body to the presence of the word of God: in the waters, through the multiplication of signs; in the children of this age, through the multiplication of interpretations.

What we have here is a practical illustration of how a particular verse, taken *ad litteram*, 'kills' the interpreter, while the figurative interpretation makes a profound and acceptable statement about the very essence of the role of the Church on earth, and thus testifies to the validity of the verse or section of scripture. Augustine is applying to his readers the medicine that he knows healed him.

5.4.3. *Section (vii): Manichaean Eating Rituals (paragraphs 38 to 42)*

Paragraph 38 introduces Augustine's transition to the next section of scripture up for analysis, Gen 1:29–30, the passage where God ordains that man and animals may eat certain fruits and plants. Augustine's allegorical interpretation of these verses is a tour de force that turns what seems a bleak narrative detail into a powerful argument against one of the central rituals of the Manichaean religion, the provision of food to the elect by the auditors. Joubert's short paragraph (1992, 93) refers to the references in book 13.26.39–40 as criticism of the feeding of the Manichaean elect, and calls it 'la réussite la plus flagrante d'Augustin.' I argue that it is in fact the whole section of which paragraphs 39 and 40 form the heart (paragraphs 38 to 42, two pages in the O'Donnell edition) that argues against this Manichaean ritual.

The fact that Augustine starts paragraph 38 with five and a half lines of affirming the authority of what he is about to say before he introduces Gen 1:29–30, is also an indication the importance the subject matter presented here holds for him:

> *Volo etiam dicere, domine deus meus, quod me consequens tua scriptura commonet, et dicam nec verebor. veram enim dicam te mihi inspirante, quod ex eis verbis voluisti ut dicerem. neque enim alio praeter te inspirante credo me verum dicere, cum tu sis veritas, omnis autem homo mendax, et ideo qui loquitur mendacium, de suo loquitur. ergo ut verum loquar, de tuo loquor*
>
> [Lord, my God, I also want to declare what the following text of your scripture suggests to me, and I will say it without fear. With you inspiring me I shall be affirming true things, which by your will I draw out of those words. For I do not believe I give a true exposition if anyone other than you is inspiring me. You are the truth but every man is a liar (Ps 115:11; Rom 3:4). That is why 'he who speaks a lie speaks from himself' (John 8:44). Therefore I depend on you to enable me to speak the truth].

This is followed by a lengthy quotation of the Genesis verses, followed in turn by a reference to the earlier stage in the allegory where the bearing of fruit was compared to the good deeds of men. The argument starts in the last part of paragraph 38 with the citation of two instances of Paul being pleased with the donations provided for him by members of some of the congregations (from 2 Tim 1:16 and 2 Cor 11:9–10) but also an instance of how upset he was when no aid was forthcoming (2 Tim 4: 16–17), because, says Augustine, these donations are the due of those preaching God's word.

Paragraph 39 opens with two sentences that already contain the essence of where the main thrust of the interpretation of Paul's words in this whole section will lead to: the receiver of the donation is not fed by what he receives but by his delight in the spirit in which it was given, and it is not the fact that people give that constitutes the spiritual fruit they bear, but the right moral motivation for the gift:

> *Pascuntur autem his escis qui laetantur eis, nec illi laetantur eis, quorum deus venter. neque enim et in illis qui praebent ista, ea quae dant fructus est, sed quo animo dant*
>
> [Those who enjoy these foods are fed by them; but those 'whose god is their belly' (Phil 3:19) derive no pleasure from them. But in those who provide the food, the fruit lies not in what they give but the spirit with which they give it].

Can we be sure that reading this passage as an argument against Manichaean eating rituals is not over interpretation? First, it is conceivable that the Manichaeans used the example of Paul and his many statements on the subject of the material support required from congregations as a validation of the ritual of the auditors providing the food the elect ate in order to liberate the divine particles contained in these foodstuffs.[41] Secondly, let us look at the phrase *quorum deus venter* that forms part of the introduction to this section. I contend that a closer scrutiny of the context this phrase alludes to and of the section in book 3 where Augustine describes the eating ritual of the Manichaean elect, provides a strong indication that Augustine's readers may have recognized the phrase as a direct reference to this ritual.

In Phil 3:18–19 Paul exhorts his reader to follow his example and to beware of being ruled by the flesh:

> *Multi enim ambulant, quos saepe dicebam vobis, nunc autem et flens dico, inimicos crucis Christi: quorum finis interitus, quorum deus venter, et gloria in confusione ipsorum, qui terrena sapient*
>
> [For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.][42]

We may guess that Augustine would have found much in these verses that reminded him of the Manichaeans. The phrase *inimicos crucis Christi*

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[41] See Van Oort (2002, 26) on the probability of Augustine regularly partaking in this ritual.

[42] All translations of quotations from the Bible are from the NRSV.

aptly describes their beliefs about Christ's life and crucifixion (that his body was a pseudo-body and that his death on the cross was only an apparent death). Further, the eating ritual of the elect came very close to literally making the stomachs of this group their god, as a look at Augustine's remarks in book 3:10.18 shows:

> *Et quid agebam cum inridebam eos*
>
> *[sc. sanctos servos et prophetas tuos], nisi ut inriderer abs te sensim atque paulatim perductus ad eas nugas ut crederem ficum plorare cum decerpitur et matrem eius arborem lacrimis lacteis? quam tamen ficum si comedisset aliquis sanctus, alieno sane non suo scelere decerptam,* ***misceret visceribus et anhelaret de illa angelos, immo vero particulas dei gemendo in oratione atque ructando****. quae* ***particulae*** *summi et veri dei* ***ligatae*** *fuissent* ***in illo pomo, nisi electi sancti dente ac ventre solverentur*** [I was ignorant of these principles and laughed at your holy servants and prophets. By my mockery I only achieved the result that I became ridiculous to you. Gradually and unconsciously I was led to the absurd trivialities of believing that a fig weeps when it is picked, and that the fig tree its mother sheds milky tears. Yet if some (Manichee) saint ate it, provided that the sin of picking it was done not by his own hand but by another's, then he would digest it in his stomach and as a result would breathe out angels, or rather as he groaned in prayer and retched he would bring up bits of God. These bits of the most high and true God would have remained chained in that fruit, if they had not been liberated by the tooth and belly of that elect saint].

But, most significantly, Augustine has earlier in the *Confessions* (5.8.14) used a close variant of the phrase *terrena sapiunt* in what is certainly a reference to the Manichaeans if we take into account the role this group played in promoting Augustine's career, not only in Rome, but also as far as the move to Milan was concerned:

> *Nam et qui perturbabant otium meum foeda rabie caeci erant, et qui invitabant ad aliud* ***terram sapiebant***
>
> [For those who disturbed my serenity were blinded with a disgraceful frenzy. Those who invited me to go elsewhere had a taste only for this earth].

It is also important to realize that the section from paragraph 39 up to the beginning of paragraph 41 is no explanation of the Genesis text but in fact a laborious interpretation of Paul's views on the subject of material support (based on passages from various letters), an interpretation that refutes any claims the Manichaeans may have derived from these texts for the legitimacy of their ritual and that exposes the respects in which this ritual is open to criticism. It is clearly Augustine's aim here

to demonstrate that, even though material support is the due of God's ministers, this is not at all the point that Paul intends to bring across. He interprets Paul's statements to show that the latter is chiefly interested in the spiritual health of those giving gifts and not in the gifts themselves. What we read, for example, in paragraph 41 represents the total opposite of what the Manichaean ritual was about:

> *Ipse sequitur dicens: non quia quaero datum, sed requiro fructum. didici a te, deus meus, inter datum et fructum discernere. datum est res ipsa, quam dat … fructus autem bona et recta voluntas datoris est*
>
> [He goes on to say: 'Not that I seek a gift but I look for fruit.' From you, my God, I have learnt to distinguish between gift and fruit. A gift is the object given … Fruit, however, is the good and right will of the giver].

Paragraph 42 concludes this section with a quick recapitulation of the preceding arguments and an explanation of the last phrase Augustine had added to the quotation of Gen 1:30 at the opening of paragraph 38 (*piscibus autem et cetis magnis non dedisti haec*).

That section (vii) as a whole treats matters of a high priority to Augustine is indicated by the length of the passage as well as by its heightened emotional tone. This tone is created by the repetitive nature of the prose (paragraphs 39 to 41 are characterized by the insistent repetition of forms of *gaudere* and *pascere*) and especially by the direct apostrophe of Paul in paragraph 40. Both of these aspects are illustrated in the following quotation (from paragraph 40), as well as the degree to which Paul (as I have argued above) has become not only a quoted author in the text but a also a character with an important role to play as a figure of authority and an example to follow (note also, how in passages like this, the prayer stance recedes temporarily in favour of a more argumentative style):

> *Unde ergo gaudes, o Paule magne? unde gaudes, unde pasceris, homo renovate in agnitione dei secundum imaginem eius qui creavit te, et anima viva tanta continentia et lingua volatilis loquens mysteria? talibus quippe animantibus ista esca debetur. Quid est quod te pascit? laetitia. quod sequitur audiam: 'verum tamen,' inquit, 'bene fecistis communicantes tribulationi meae.' hinc gaudet, hinc pascitur, quia illi bene fecerunt, non quia eius angustia relaxata est*
>
> [What then is the reason for your rejoicing, great Paul? Why your joy? Where do you find your nourishment? You are a man 'renewed in the knowledge of God after the image of him who created you' (Col 3:10) a 'living soul' of great continence, a tongue which flies like the birds as it proclaims mysteries. It is indeed to such living souls that this food is due. What then is it which gives you nourishment? Joy. Let me hear what follows: 'Nevertheless,' he says, 'you did well in taking a share in my

> tribulations' (Phil 4:14). The ground for his joy and for his nourishment is that the Philippians had acted well, not that his trouble was relieved.].

5.4.4. *Section (viii): Manichaean Views of Creation (paragraphs 43 to 49)*

Let us move on to the last part of the allegory. In paragraphs 43 to 49 we have the last section of the explanation of the sixth day of creation, a meditation on the words of Gen 1:31 (looking back on the all that God has created: *et vidit deus omnia quae fecit et ecce bona valde*).[43] In paragraph 43 the phrase repeatedly applied in Genesis to the various objects created (*et vidit deus quia bonum est*) is replaced with an all-encompassing *omnia quae fecit* and the addition of *valde*. The section is held together as a thematic unit by the fact that Gen 1:31 remains on the table throughout, but also more explicitly by the frequent repetition of *omnia bona valde* and even more frequently of the different forms of *videre*. The whole section emphasizes the goodness of creation throughout. It recapitulates on the issue of time in paragraphs 44, 46, 47 (that also contains a first recapitulation of the whole of the preceding allegory), and 49. Thus we have, for example in paragraph 44:

> *Ad haec tu dicis mihi … 'o homo, nempe quod scriptura mea dicit, ego dico. Et tamen illa temporaliter dicit, verbo autem meo tempus non accedit, quia aequali mecum aeternitate consistit'*
>
> [To this you replied to me … 'O man, what my scripture says, I say. Yet scripture speaks in time-conditioned language, and time does not touch my Word, existing with me in an equal eternity'].

The passage also implicitly and explicitly targets Manichaean beliefs about creation, explicitly in paragraphs 45 and 48, and implicitly throughout this section. In paragraph 45 we have a reference to different (erroneous) views of creation but with special emphasis on Manichaean error:

> *Et intellexi quoniam sunt quidam quibus displicent opera tua, et multa eorum dicunt te fecisse necessitate compulsum … et hoc non de tuo, sed iam fuisse alibi creata et aliunde … cum de hostibus victis mundana moenia molireris, ut ea constructione devincti adversus te iterum rebellare non possent; alia vero nec fecisse te nec omnino compegisse … sed hostilem mentem naturamque aliam non abs te conditam tibique contrariam in inferioribus mundi locis ista gignere atque formare. insani dicunt haec, quoniam non per spiritum tuum vident opera tua nec te cognoscunt in eis*

---

[43] O'Donnell (1992, 3:343) sees this as two separate sections, 13.28.43–13.30.45 as a section against the Manichees (also forming the last subsection of the interpretation of the sixth day of creation), and 13.31.46–13.34.49 as a summary of the exegesis.

> [… and I understood. There are people (Manichees) who are displeased at your works. They say you made many of them … under the compulsion of necessity. They say you did not produce the creation from your own matter, but that its elements were already created elsewhere by another power … when, after defeating your enemies, you built the ramparts of the world so that they would be held in check by that construction and unable to fight against you again … They claim that in the lower places of the world those things are generated and formed by a hostile mind and an alien nature, not created by you but opposed to you. This is the utterance of madmen. They do not see your works with the help of your Spirit and do not recognize you in them].[44]

Paragraph 48 insists on the creation *ex nihilo* (a passage already quoted above) and also touches on Manichaean ideas about predestination (O'Donnell 1992, 3:413).

The subsection is concluded by paragraph 49 that is, now for the second time, a recapitulation of the allegory as a whole in terms of the phrase *et vidit deus omnia quae fecit et ecce bona valde*. That the whole of section (viii) is aimed particularly at a Manichaean audience (with its belief in a fundamentally dualistic universe) is clear enough to make further argumentation on my part superfluous: O'Donnell (1992, 3:343), for example, who does not remark on the (anti-)Manichaean content in the previous sections, gives the passage 13.28.43–13.30.45 the title, '"And God saw that it was very good" (against the Mancihees).'

Before I conclude this chapter, let us take a look at the end of the *Confessions* (paragraphs 50 to 53) to see how different strands that I have followed throughout this multidimensional work are tied up at its end, remaining aware of the many strands that I have not paid any attention to. Augustine very aptly bases the conclusion to his *Confessions* on Gen 2:1–2, which concludes the creation narrative with its description of how God rested on the seventh day after everything had been completed, providing at last the eschatological perspective which is the natural goal of an allegory based on the hexameron. This verse, as O'Donnell (1992, 3:418) points out, is not interpreted directly, but it forms the subtext of all that is said in these closing paragraphs with their eschatological orientation.

The conclusion to the *Confessions* starts with a prayer for peace. Its opening sentence recalls the tortured prayer of the prologue (*da mihi, domine, scire et intellegere utrum sit prius incovare te an laudare te, et scire te prius*

[44] This is the one passage that does come near to 'Manichee-bashing.'

sit an invocare te, and what followed) in the verbal echoes and in the contrast of its simplicity:

> *Domine deus, pacem da nobis (omnia enim praestitisti nobis), pacem quietis, pacem sabbati, pacem sine vespera*
>
> ['Lord, grant us peace; for you have given us all things' (Isa 26:12), the peace of quietness, the peace of the Sabbath, a peace with no evening (2 Thess 3:16)].

The labyrinthine intellectual quest and the accompanying urgent effort to convince the reader of the validity of its points, all the Sturm und Drang have been replaced by an emphasis on *requies*.

The work ends with a last allusion to Matt 7:7 (a favourite with the Manichaeans and a vehicle to indicate protreptic intent) in a statement that for me recapitulates the endeavour of the whole. Its last thought is dedicated to the reader Augustine has spent so much emotional energy on, with the acknowledgement and acceptance that he can do no more to persuade this reader, that only they themselves can find the answers with God Himself:

> *Et hoc intellegere quis hominum dabit homini? quis angelus angelo? quis angelus homini? a te petatur, in te quaeratur, ad te pulsetur: sic, sic accipietur, sic invenietur, sic aperietur*
>
> [What man can enable the human mind to understand this? Which angel can interpret it to an angel? What angel can help a human being to grasp it? Only you can be asked, only you can be begged, only on your door can we knock (Matt 7:7). Yes indeed, that is how it is received, how it is found, how the door is opened].

I conclude this chapter with a few remarks on Augustine's aims and techniques in the allegorical interpretation of Genesis in general. First, when Augustine announces his project for the last three books, using the words *olim inardesco meditari in lege tua*, we must take him seriously. The allegory as a whole is described much more accurately by the term meditation, than by terms that carry connotations of a theoretical, orderly and focussed analysis of a particular text, terms like interpretation or exegesis.

A careful reading of book 13 also reveals that, while the Genesis narrative provides a skeletal structure on which the allegory is based, what the reader is presented with encompasses much more than the reading of one section of scripture. This is indeed a meditation on *divina scriptura* as a whole, not only because the quotations and allusions range from Genesis and Exodus, Isaiah and the book of Psalms in the

Old Testament to almost all the books of the New Testament, but also because it meditates on the very nature and function of scripture.

Second, this meditation on *divina scriptura* consists of such a clever interweaving and juxtaposition of texts from different sections of the Old and the New Testament, interspersed with Augustine's own words, which he claims, are directly inspired by God (who is *veritas* and to whom every word is addressed), that it is often difficult to unravel the various individual strands. This has the powerful effect of making the reader perceive one message, coming now from the Old Testament, now from the New, in a persistent visible and audible illustration of the harmony between the two testaments. This affirms a fundamental truth about scripture that constitutes at the same time a persuasive argument against Manichaean rejection of the Old Testament. If the contribution of Paul's voice to this message, through the quotation of Paul's writings, indeed through the representation of Paul as a character in the narrative, is taken into account, it must be clear that this section of the *Confessions* constitutes a defence of the Old Testament that the Manichaeans would have had great difficulty to refute.

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CONCLUSION

The formulation of the topic for the present study had its origin in an unwillingness to accept that a master rhetorician who is at the same time one of the greatest thinkers of all times would write a work that violates one of the basic principles of composition, that of constructing a coherent whole, i.e. with the problem of the unity of the *Confessions*. I did not at any stage expect to find a miracle key that would unlock all the mysteries of such a multi-dimensional work, but I believe that what this study presents does bring us a small step closer to a truer appreciation of the literary qualities of the work, including the coherence of its construction.

My survey of the intimidating bibliography on the *Confessions* (in chapter 1) has convinced me that research on the literary devices of the work is one field where progress is relatively slow. What has been done is still far from adequate to enable the modern reader to fully understand how the *Confessions* functions as a literary work of art. This is largely due to the fact that, because classical philology has for the most of the previous century been focussed on other eras and other works, the bulk of research done on the *Confessions* is by specialists from non-literary fields, like theology or philosophy. Many of the literary devices used in the *Confessions* still need to be examined (e.g. the structuring function of Bible quotations from other books than the Psalms or a close comparison of the work to other Christian protreptics), each meriting a full-scale project. On the other hand, there exists the need for another study like that of Grotz in 1972 to draw together and evaluate all efforts to discover the unity of the work. This study must also incorporate an assessment of how research on isolated literary qualities of the work contributes to our understanding of the unity of the *Confessions*.

This study focuses on only two of the literary devices employed in the *Confessions*, namely the use of generic conventions and the targeting (through various means) of a particular audience in the work. It also examines only one aspect of each of these categories, namely the degree to which the work displays qualities of a specific genre (the ancient protreptic) and the degree to which it targets a specific segment of

its audience (the Manichaeans). Chapter 2 presents the theoretical and historical background to underpin the reading of selected passages from the *Confessions* proposed in chapters 3 to 5.

Much research still has to be done on the generic devices employed in the *Confessions*, e.g. a study of the utilization of conventions from genres other than the protreptic; a comparison of the work with other literary antecedents than the ones discussed here and in much more detail than was done here; or a comparison of the work to the rest of Augustine's oeuvre and the generic devices used there. Also on the audience of the *Confessions* a lot of work remains to be done, e.g. a more theoretical examination of exactly how the text communicates with and delineates its audience and of all the groups who constitute this audience; a closer co-operation with historians of religion to further illuminate the Manichaean connotations of various concepts in the work; or more detailed comparisons between the *Confessions* and the available Manichaean documents as well as between the *Confessions* and Augustine's anti-Manichaean works.

But the results of the research expounded here have convinced me that the *Confessions* has a protreptic-paraenetic communicative purpose that is far more fundamental to the essence of the work than most scholars realize. Statements directly expressing protreptic intent occur frequently throughout the *Confessions*, and there are a number of factors that carry protreptic intent indirectly. In this last category I examined elements like the shifting persona of the narrator who at times speaks in the voice of the not-yet-converted in an effort to show the reader how to talk to God and how to proceed towards conversion; the important role played by references to Matt 7:7, which fulfil the double function of expressing protreptic intent (in its exhortation to seek and its assertion that those who seek will find) and carrying specific overtones for Manichaean readers; and the occurrence of the theme of the protreptic power of reading in the *Confessions* (which I read as an instruction to the reader on how to read the text in hand). But it is the fact that a protreptic-paraenetic communicative purpose is clearly present in the key sections of the work that constitutes the strongest argument for postulating protreptic intent as a fundamental communicative purpose of the *Confessions* as a whole: in the opening paragraph which foreshadows the main themes of the work; in the central section with its pivotal function within the whole (especially in ancient works); as well as in the concluding paragraphs with their unifying function of tying up the individual strands of the narrative.

Once the autobiographical section of the *Confessions* is described as a conversion story, it is easy to appreciate that it may have a protreptic aim. But if the last section of the work is conceived as exegesis a protreptic and/or paraenetic function is not what a modern reader would expect it to fulfil. Thus, the analysis of the allegory in book 13 rendered the most interesting results. The contents, the tone, and the allusions in this section, in short the sum of the literary devices employed here, have on the reader the effect of an exhortative sermon much rather than that of a theoretical piece of exegesis. It has a protreptic-paraenetic communicative purpose which targets, moreover, both an already-converted Christian audience and (increasingly towards the end) a Manichaean audience.

Also as far as a Manichaean intended audience for the *Confessions* as a whole is concerned I discovered a sustained preoccupation with this group that is not yet fully appreciated by the scholarly community. Once again I found it significant that allusions to this group occurred at the pivotal sections of the work, but especially that the end of the work is dominated by an unmistakeable last effort to convince the Manichaean reader of his erroneous beliefs. What I found especially ingenious was the indirectness and the subtlety of the approach to the Manichaeans: the initial concealment of protreptic intentions only gradually makes way for a more explicit targeting of Manichaean beliefs, while the tone never becomes scathing enough to alienate this audience. In this manner Augustine employs the natural curiosity of man about other men to seduce the Manichaean reader who may not have read the work if he knew that it meant to convert him to Catholicism. Also the poignant evocation of the joys of friendship is cleverly designed to touch a tender spot with Manichaean readers: close circles of friends formed the core of Manichaean social organization and under Augustine's influence many of his friends converted to Manichaeism. The use of numerous categories and terms that had special significance for Manichaean readers adds to the appeal the text is designed to make to this group.

My research has opened up two very important perspectives on how the *Confessions* may be read. Let us turn to the second leg of the study first. This line of enquiry revealed that looking at the text with an awareness of the added connotations many words and categories may have had for a Manichaean reader or for any other reader familiar with these terms brings about an important change in perspective. Passages like the 'digression' on time in book 11 and the allegorical interpretation

of the creation story from Genesis take on a totally new aspect and their place within the whole becomes a completely different matter. Apart from the enhanced understanding of the *Confessions* this perspective brings about, this should caution the modern reader to even greater circumspection in the approach to ancient texts in general. It should sharpen our realisation that even the most thorough study of an ancient work, taking into account as much as possible of the background and the context within which the work functioned, may still not understand many of its devices.

It is however my exploration of the possibility that the *Confessions* employs some of the devices of the (already Christianised) protreptic genre that provides the most important new way to view the unity of the work. I argue that an inability to escape from expectations formed by modern perceptions lead researchers to ask the question that put research completely off track: why did Augustine add three books of exegesis to his autobiography? This formulation brings into play the totally invalid expectations associated with modern autobiography and makes readers experience the last section of the work as superfluous and perplexing. Calling the last part of the work exegesis also evokes connotations that do not do justice to the compelling exhortation that figures strongly in this section.

The *Confessions* consists, like many of its literary antecedents already identified by Courcelle, of a conversion story with the ulterior purpose of preparing the reader for a more difficult theoretical section, which is argumentation with a protreptic purpose, supported by copious scriptural quotation. But in its subtlety and multi-layered character the *Confessions* superseded its antecedents to such an extent that later readers were unable to recognize antecedent generic practice in this work. Augustine's ingenious and intensely passionate effort to convert his reader to Christianity resulted in a disclosure of his innermost self so touching and a segment of his life-story told so compellingly that readers through the ages (but especially modern readers) became so fascinated by the man that they lost sight of what he was aiming at. But it is only a careless and selective reader that falls into this trap and fails to appreciate how the *Confessions* moves inexorably on in pursuit of its communicative aims. The last section of the work illuminates the reformation of the old man to become the new (or the Manichaean to become the Catholic) parallel to the treatment of this theme in the first section of the work. The effort to convert continues in the same voice and is supported by the same relentless argumentation after the

conversion story is brought to an end and when the issues of time, creation and the authority of scripture are treated. To conclude: it is not the compositional techniques of the *Confessions* that are inadequate. It is the ability of readers to appreciate the subtlety of these techniques that has diminished over centuries. And the fact that the *Confessions* has remained Augustine's most read work is proof that it is the work of a literary genius, one of the greatest thinkers of all times.

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