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BODY AND SOUL IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE IN THE CONTEXT OF ANCIENT GREEK THOUGHT

1. Introduction

Anthropology is the study of the various aspects of man. The noun ‚man’, is generic noun which refers to all persons, men and women. Anthropology not only is the study of man¹ but includes the study of man in the world, his history, society, culture, way of life, environment, communication and social life.

In this article, I want to limit the study of many branches of anthropology to two, namely, theological and natural anthropology.

Theological anthropology in the Christian context is the study of man as he relates to God. Man from the beginning has been created in the image and likeness of God. Man was not created by accident. His creation was an act of God’s love. It was a decisive act of God to bring man into being. God personally invited man with a purpose and brought him into being to share in his love, joy and presence. God made man with a body and soul as properties suitable to man’s nature, to know and experience God. Consequently, man’s natural properties namely, ‚body and soul’ are central concepts in this article. The relationship between man and God affirms the theological anthropology, which is also understood as the study of concepts of God and the nature of religious ideas of man. Using theological understanding as an instrument, I want to focus on key concepts of ‚body and soul’ which are embedded in man’s nature, rather than the study of theology in general. Anthropology as a chapter of theology, seeks to highlight God’s plan for man and his responsibilities², obligations and values in his social life which will lead man to his final

¹ J. Moltmann, *Man*, John Sturdy, Tran., SPCK, London 1974, p. 1.

² C. J. Mcfadden, *Medical Ethics*, Burns & Oates, London 1962, p. 1.

end. Gregory of Nyssa, affirmed that man is founded on the ontological distinction between the created and uncreated. Man is a material creation, and thus limited, but infinite in that his immortal soul has an indefinite capacity to grow closer to the divine³. Due to the indefinite capacity and immortality of the soul, we shall see from the Greek thought how the ,soul' is seen to be immortal and the important emphasis laid on the ,body' which housed the ,soul', and how the Incarnation of Jesus revealed the divine plan when God created the properties of ,body' and ,soul'.

On the other hand, natural anthropology is the study of the various structures and functional activities of man as a member within the animal kingdom and within a certain race, and with reference to his sex, age, profession, social conditions ecological peculiarities etc. In fact, Joy and Simon put this point very well when they said: „The evidence points to the unity of human life, and illustrating both the declining importance of issues such as race and how we have evolved to differ from other living beings, namely animals who we are closely related in genetic terms⁴. The substance of anthropology is human genetics and ecology. Both the human genetics and ecology form the factors and mechanisms of human beings, and population growth as I expand their difference.

The difference between theological and natural anthropology is that theological anthropology is chapter of theology which seeks to study how God relates with man in time and space. The relationship between God and man provides an opportunity to search and study in depth the purpose and the meaning of this encounter. God's relationship with man is not out of place. Moreover, man is created in the image and likeness of God. Man's response to this relationship is a natural fulfilment of man's moral call. If man does not accept God's invitation to relate with him, man will be unable to live his theological virtues which are the instruments that tend man to do good as a moral demand in his relationship with God.

On the other hand, natural anthropology seeks to study various structures and daily activities man, within the material and physical world of language, gender, ecology etc. In every world and human endeavours, especially, anthropology, man is the subject without which no center can hold. Man is the factor that determines meaning and purpose of the created world of study. At this point, I do not lose the sight of the fact that man is the embodiment of ,body and soul' which represents the components of man's substance.

As man encounters God and relates to his world in his activities, the natural tendency is how to find happiness after all.

³ K. Corrigan, *Evagrius and Gregory, Mind, Soul and Body in the 4th century*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England 2009, p. 37.

⁴ J. Hendry and S. Underdown, „*Anthropology a Beginner's Guide*, Oneworld Publications, England, 2012, p. 10.

Consequently, this article, seeks to support the importance of body and soul from the Christian theological understanding with the hope to achieve eternal happiness. Body and soul are central components of man as a human being. Due to the centrality of these properties in man, anthropology in St. Augustine seeks to understand the position and the end of these properties as they relate to man who is created in the image and likeness of God. This article does not cover the scope of theology and anthropology as such, but provides a link to man's original nature and functional structures which exist within the animal kingdom in the world. Following the understanding that God created man with a purpose, anthropology seeks to explain the status and meanings of body and soul in man. Many ancient and modern philosophers and theologians alike have studied the concepts of body and soul.

St. Augustine's anthropological views on the 'body and soul,' are fundamentally rooted in the theological anthropology. The human person in his entirety is made up of 'body and soul' as man's natural attributes. The sacredness of the human person lies in the inherent essence of the human body and soul. By divine design, both the body and soul are important as intended by God. Thus, the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us⁵, was possible because this was the plan of God. The life of Jesus affirms the human body through righteousness, God will change the body and make it like his glorified body⁶. Thus as important as the body and soul are, they deserve the special attention that makes their dignity beyond doubt, they are properties created by God in his image and likeness with a moral duty to tend toward God's will as found in the Christian Tradition.

In the Christian Tradition, 'body and soul' are very central in our understanding when Jesus upgraded the dignity of the human body by his Incarnation. And in reality it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man truly becomes clear⁷. Christ, who is the pledge of our inheritance⁸, the whole man is inwardly renewed, right up to the 'redemption of the body'⁹ through his death and Resurrection. All these hold true not for Christians only but also all men of good will in whose hearts grace is active invisibly¹⁰. I will now look at the basis of my argument to find out how the development of the understanding of the properties of 'body and soul' come

⁵ Jn 1:14a.

⁶ Phil 3:21.

⁷ A. Flannery, *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1, 1988 Revised Edition, Iperu-Remo: Ambassador Publications 2001, pp. 922–923.

⁸ Eph 1:14.

⁹ Rom 8:23.

¹⁰ Cf. *Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution, Lumen Gentium*, n. 16.

from. Although, I mentioned above that God created man, and ,body and soul' constitute man with specific duties to love God and neighbour.

2. The Basis and Developmental Understanding of the Body and Soul

God created man out of love to know him, to love him and to serve him in this world in order to be happy with him in the hereafter. The human body and the bodily life are lofty values, transcending all earthly goods. Man cannot express his love for God and for neighbour in a more exalted manner than by the sacrifice of his life¹¹ and rationally contemplating on God's love through which man derives happiness for his life and soul. Body and soul were familiar concepts among the ancient Greek philosophers to describe man who by nature is connected to God as the source of happiness.

From the theological understanding, the principal source of happiness is the Christian Gospel¹². In view of the ideal and permanent happiness, not only for the human body but the human soul. The philosophers of ancient Greece, were the first people to set about freeing happiness from pure luck or being lucky which, does not suggest an ideal or permanent reality. They tried to see beyond the material unpredictability of life and began by looking at the constant features of nature such as mountains and rivers. Yet even as they sought permanence they perceived permanent flux: ,you can never step into the same river twice', observed Heraclitus¹³. The observations were primarily made as an effort to seek permanent happiness man.

Man, who is at the center stage of history, is made up of ,body and soul'. But that is not all, this ,body and soul' was subjected under scrutiny as to whether is to attain temporary or permanent status or not? Here it was Plato, who took the whole system of thought about stability man's happiness. He arrived at Europe's first clear definition of what he considered to be the permanent aspects of life and hence of permanent happiness. This was to ascertain the purpose and meaning of the existence of ,body and soul'. Plato's understanding of reality took human thought into new realms, and the river provides a good illustration of this philosophy. For instance, the water in the river is always moving and the river is always changing, the idea ,river' does not change. And that unchanging idea must come from somewhere. For Plato,

¹¹ B. Häring, *The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Laity*, Translated by Edwin G. Kaiser (C.P.P.S), Vol. Three, The Mercier Press, Cork 1967, p. 189.

¹² C. Jamison, *Finding Happiness: Monastic Steps for a Fulfilling Life*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 2008, p. 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

it came from the realm of unchanging ideas, a region where the perfect idea exists, the perfect form of everything that is. While our bodies experience change and decay, our minds know that there is something permanent beyond the material¹⁴. In the same vein, Aristotle who was a disciple of Plato, concluded that everything has a purpose, a final end, and that this purpose is imprinted within the thing itself. The task of the philosopher therefore is to discover the final end of every individual thing including ‚body and soul’. He argued that the purpose for human beings, is to be happy, but the kind of happiness we seek is also imprinted in the human soul. What distinguishes humans from other beings is reason, the rational soul, and so human happiness must be rational happiness¹⁵, which can be attained through the ‚body and soul’ which is perceived to be in the realm of the ideal where everything that is exist.

Thus, idealism is the belief that beyond the ceaseless change and imperfections of daily life, there is a world of unchanging, perfect ideas from which every object derives its existence. Essentially, anthropology of St. Augustine has traces in the ancient Greek thought. Of course, ideas and meanings can be acquired and formed into new meaning. From this back ground, St. Augustine’s anthropology is going to provide a fundamental missing link that is embedded in the Christian Scripture which was absent in the ancient Greek thought in its vision of happiness. Both Plato and Aristotle, imply a struggle against the lower passions that leads away from beauty and goodness which the ‚body and soul’ are the beneficiaries of this beatific vision of St. Augustine.

Before I plunge into the analysis of ‚body and soul in the anthropology of St. Augustine in the context of ancient Greek thought’, his historical background, his contributions to society, his attributes and his vision of theological anthropology of body and soul, are worth mentioning in order to put things into perspective. Thus, the ancient Greek thought about „the ideal world” which invariably provided a link to understanding the soul as immaterial and immortal. This understanding puts further enlightenment to the fact that the „Source” of the soul must also be „Immaterial” or „Spiritual” in nature with all the moral¹⁶ implications. This description presents a clear premise of the image of the Christian God which his anthropology is anchored on. From St. Augustine’s arguments and the contemporary reading materials available at the time, the context left no doubt that he was influenced by both Platonic and Aristotelian thoughts.

First of all, St. Augustine was born 13 November 354 Tagaste and died 28 August 430 in Hippo, located in present day Algeria (Africa). He was one

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁶ H. Kuklick, ed., *A New History of Anthropology*, in: *The Spiritual Dimension*, Ivan Strenski, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, USA 2008, p. 113.

of the Fathers of the Church, and perhaps the most significant Christian thinker after St. Paul. His adaptation of classical thought from ancient Greece to Christian teaching created a powerful theological system which influenced the development of Western Christianity and Western philosophy.

Essentially, St. Augustine was a philosopher and a theologian. His works involved the gathering, assimilation and transmission of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian cultures to the middle Ages. His works were landmarks showing a new path of man's thinking, in which he explained the deep relationship between faith and reason as they relate to man's existence. His philosophy was an example of the effort of the Christian-Faith seeking a greater understanding of its own content¹⁷ with the aid of the philosophical instrument, which is based principally in the Neo-Platonism of Pontius which was rooted in the context of Greek thought. Plato's and Aristotelian¹⁸ thought of the ideal and permanent reality is assumed here. He used the classical thought to declare the supremacy of the human spirit over nature and the supremacy of God over the human spirit. In the mind of St. Augustine, the centrality of the value of human 'body and soul' cannot be overemphasized in the early contemporary readers.

The anthropological views of the soul came about as an effort to strengthen his theological anthropology for the understanding of his readers, especially Evodius his friend, in about 388–415 AD¹⁹. Evodius as a friend to St. Augustine, understood a lot of his views on the issues of man, Christian Faith *visa viz* his thoughts and other contemporary thoughts. St. Augustine's correspondence with Evodius, who was the Bishop of Uzalis, indicates that the dialogue is based on conversations that actually took place between Augustine and his friend Evodius, though the manuscripts give Augustine's partner in the dialogue as Adeodatus or reason²⁰. The whole reason for his argument is about solidification of a sound theological teaching on the source and relationship between „body and soul” in the human person. At this time there were many stories about creation accounts; there was the Biblical Account of creation where man is created in the image of God and likeness; the Platonic account of creation of man was also available among the ancient philosophers and the account of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ who after the Resurrection came

¹⁷ E. Portal, *Saint Augustine. Initiation à la philosophie de Saint Augustine*, in: *Dictionnaire de la Théologie Catholique*, vol. 1, Paris: Letouzey et Ane 1947, cols. 2268–2472.

¹⁸ E. Hartman, *Substance, Body and Soul”: Aristotelian Investigation*, Princeton University Press, 1977, p. 10.

¹⁹ S. J. Teske, *Soul*, in: *Augustine through the ages. An Encyclopedia*, ed. A. D. Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids-Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1999, p. 809.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

back with a „Glorified Body”. The Resurrection of Jesus provoked theological explorations into his natures. St. Augustine’s theological anthropology became searchable materials among individual scholars and corporate bodies.

In 1679, the Maurists were the first to identify Evodius as Augustine’s interlocutor. However, the dialogue begins with six questions, which includes the origin of the human soul, its quality, its quantity or greatness, the reason for its union with the body, the result of that union, and the result of its separation from the body²¹. The major part of the work is devoted to the question of the greatness of the soul, from which the dialogue about the soul takes its course and name. Augustine went further, to show that the soul does not have bodily quantity, but is nonetheless, something greater than the body. To Evodius, who held that the soul seems to be nothing if it does not have bodily dimensions, a view similar to that of Augustine before he encountered the books of the Platonists²², which Augustine tried to show that the soul is not merely but is even more valuable for lacking such properties.

St. Augustine tried to argue and show that from its knowledge of geometrical forms, the soul must be non-bodily, defining it in highly Platonic language as „a certain substance partaking in reason and suited to rule the body”. In his view, the soul has brought with it all the arts and that what we call learning is merely remembering what was already known in the past which the soul is the propelling factor. Moreover, the fact that the soul has sensations throughout the body leads to a definition of sensation reminiscent of Platinus’s definition as „a bodily change which of itself does not escape the soul’s awareness”. Apart from the argument of the soul, the ‚mind’ was another property among philosophers which needed to have its status defined since these were all the properties found in man. St. Augustine defines reason as „the mind’s gaze,” and reasoning as „the movement of that gaze over objects to be seen”²³. But, I do not intend to present the functions of the human organs and properties here. Rather, I wish to show the emphasizes of St. Augustine’s argument which shows no doubt it has its roots in within ancient Greek thought providing an early outline of theological anthropology²⁴. For Augustine, the ‚mind’

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ S. J. Duffy, *Anthropology*, in: *Augustine through the ages. An Encyclopedia*, ed. A. D. Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids-Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1999, p. 26.

²⁴ W. W. Wiersbe, *Augustine’s Philosophical Anthropology. Immortality of Human Soul in a Composite Soul-Body*, in: *The Wiersbe Bible Study Series. A Biblical Commentary*, ed., B. Manning, <https://cafn.us/2011/01/26/augustine%E2%80%99s-philosophical-anthropology-immortality-of-human-soul-in-a-composite-soul-body/> (access 7 January 2016).

is representing the awareness²⁵ and activities of the soul in the entire activities of a person. Although, the later developments in his thought retain much of it, but in emphasis it occurs as he continues to probe body/soul relationships. The soul is the life principle of the body, which it preserves and gathers into unity. Consequently, the basic task of the soul is the establishment and maintenance of harmony in the body and all the dimensions of a human being. The soul is also the seat of memory in every person. The human person is a diachronic being. Not only do human persons have a past, but to a large extent one is one's past as well as one's present and future, hence St. Augustine's identification with self-memory. Thus, beyond memory the moral life also derives from the soul. Culture, sense of life, sheer bodily existence is common to all, good and bad alike. But the hope in the future calls for the consideration of the immortality of the soul.

3. The Immortality of the Soul

Moral good is one of the characteristics of the soul which belong to good alone for which asceticism is required to purify and strengthen the soul against all that might distract it from the pursuit of truth and goodness. The immortality of the soul derives its existence from God who is the source of Immortality. Once the soul is purified, it rests in joyful contemplation of God. A good example of this is found with the Catholics belief in confession where the penitent receives God's grace in the soul to be able to be with God who is Immortal.

On the immortality of the soul, St. Augustine bases his arguments on the human mind and secondly, in the Scriptures of the Christian God and its teachings. The soul must be a reality²⁶ because of its capacity to reason²⁷. In support of the argument of St. Augustine about God as the source of the immortality of the soul, O'Connor summarizes Augustine's argument as follows: „Truth so exists in the soul that it is inseparable from it, but Truth is immortal, there, the soul is immortal”. Here, he identifies the Truth, the soul, and argues back to the truth again to imply the undividable correlation between God and the soul. In other words, a soul is a rational being actualizing its essence into the material and corporeal body in order to be a fully human being. This is because truth can only exist in an incorporeal substance that is alive, and

²⁵ A. de Mello, *Awareness*, J. Francis Stroud ed., William Collins Sons & Co Ltd, Glasgow (Great Britain) 1990, p. 64.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 64.

²⁷ The soul among other things is regarded as superior to the body due to its immaterial nature which has its relationship with God who is Immaterial and Immortal. But of course, from the anthropological understanding, man is made up of body and soul in his entirety.

is inseparably connected with it as with its subject. This corporeal substance, that is, the soul, must be everlasting²⁸. Therefore, the soul must be necessarily an incorporeal substance in order to willingly reason. Thus, the soul is immortal which reflects the „Source and Immortal” by lacking the bodily properties.

The view of the immortality is related with the ideal and permanent state of existence, which express the idea of the purpose of the existence of ‚body and soul’. In other words, the concepts of permanent and immortality are correlated. The first reason for the immortality of the soul, for Augustine, is the nature of science, which is believed to be eternal. According to his writings, science exists everywhere and can never cease to exist in the human mind. He uses the word ‚mind’ as the source of the gaze. It is eternal and the nature and truth it has cannot be invalidated. For instance, the equilateral triangle always has three equal angles and three equal sides. The form of the equilateral triangle exists in our human mind without our seeing it once we know its basic characteristics. Thus, it is rooted in absolute truth and science. The science that is being spoken about, is not like the science of today, where laboratory activities are carried out on hypothesis. The Christian Scripture is the basis and structure of the idea of science as verifiable Truth. Every field of study has its instruments with which the meaning and purposes of something are decided and that is why science needs to live for its own existence²⁹. Only the living possesses Science, so it cannot dwell in anything that cannot reason. Thus, if we exist who reason, then science is in the mind of man who exists and reasons³⁰. Obviously, if science is unchangeable, surely the unchangeable must also be the same eternal property that holds another eternal property. By applying the same logic, we can say that the mind in which eternal science exists ought to be eternal in terms of its nature for the eternal cannot exist in non-eternal property.

In the same vein, reason comes from the soul. In the process of reasoning, the soul performs solely, devoid of any assistance from the body for its activities. Our thought or reason comes to exist independently through thinking. Of course, as Augustine contends that science is the synonym for all kinds of knowledge as far it can be verified. Science exists and dwells in the human mind. Therefore, whatever comes to exist independently through our thought is thus eternal. In addition, O’Connor puts it clearly, when he says, „The human soul contains knowledge, but all knowledge pertains to some science, and science is immortal, therefore, the soul is immortal”³¹.

²⁸ W. W. Wiersbe, *Augustine’s Philosophical Anthropology: Immortality of Human Soul in a Composite Soul-Body*.

²⁹ T. Alvira et al., *Metaphysics*, Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers, 1991, p. 10.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. p. 12.

However, it should be born in mind that when Augustine speaks of science here, it is not in the modern sense of scientific understanding of verification and hypothetical analysis. But it is clear that the ‚soul’ as in this context as the human property is beyond scientific investigation as presented by Augustine.

The second reason for the immortality of the soul is reason itself, which is immutable. Our reason originates from the mind. Now for this reason, permit me to say that reason is in the mind or reason itself is a mind giving the qualifications of the soul as inseparable from reason. Hence, the body is mutable due to its alternation in its mode of existence. On the other hand, reason is immutable and undeniable in the sense that it applies the same mode consistently in its reasoning. Augustine maintains the arguments for the immortality of the soul, because God intended the soul to be immortal. After all, it bears the very image of God. And also that God created the soul as a simple spiritual substance that does not decompose, and which characterizes eternity. Thus, he knows the Platonic ideas of reincarnation of the soul. In the *City of God*, he states that „Plato said that souls could not exist eternally without bodies; for it was on this account, he said, that the souls even of wise men must some time or other return to their bodies”³². For Plato, the eternal soul will return to live in another body to become or reincarnated being. Thus, this kind of body returns to God the Father after the death of the body. This point is not far from religious point of view³³ and in their incarnated state, they will be free from the misery of this world and live where they will suffer no more. The arguments of Plato here is very close to Augustine’s and Christian understanding of the theological purpose of the ‚body’ which God will change it and make it into the „Glorified body”³⁴ after his likeness, when all is made a new in the Kingdom of God.

Augustine found a connection of the value and purpose of ‚body and soul’ in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. This means that earthly existence of the ‚body and soul’ is temporal. The soul shall return to its immortal state to be with God, while the body shall change and be transformed to enable it to take the state of eternity in order to be with God the Creator of both. A quick survey of the views of some ancient Greek philosophers would also serve as a stepping stone into the anthropological understanding of the ‚body and soul’ as the human properties.

³² Ibid.

³³ J. D. Eller, *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Second Edition, London and New York 2015 p. 1.

³⁴ Philippians 3:21

4. Views of some Philosophers about Body and Soul

Due to the importance of body and soul in the human person, I will survey a very few philosophers like Socrates and Plato, whose summary views about the body and soul can be added to this article. Although I mentioned some views of Plato. But there are other specific views that were not mentioned above that are worth surveying.

4.1. Socrates' Anthropological ideas and their ethical implications

Socrates' philosophy and anthropological ideas have important significance in the history of the human soul. The soul is one of the properties of the human being which makes him rational and intelligible. The soul is widely believed to be invisible. Socrates believed that the human soul was invisible, immortal and directs the human body³⁵. The soul was invisible to men at any rate, even though we have been speaking about the visible and invisible things that relate to the human person. Socrates thinks that the soul is superior to the body when he said, „When the soul and body are both in the same place, nature teaches the one to serve and be subject, the other to rule and govern. The nature of the divine is to rule and direct, and that of the mortal to be subject and serve”³⁶. What this means is that the soul keeps a body alive. When Death occurs the soul stops animating the body. Scripture defines death as the separation of the body from the spirit. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead³⁷. In the most ordinary sense of human understanding, eternity is already understood and set in within the human heart. When people desire and act truthfully or justly, they are linking the immortality of life which is in the soul and, consequently, the sense of justice urges that those who do good will eventually be blessed and those who do evil will somehow suffer harm. There is need for ultimate justice, even though it is often avoided in this life.

For Anthropology³⁸ as the study of man and the essence of his existence, Socrates developed three principles that help a person to pursue his anthropological life purpose. These principles form the basis and structure of man's thinking which leads him to his end. Man knows that one day he must die.

³⁵ Plato, *Phaedo*, in: *The Collected Dialogues of Plato: Including The Letters*, ed. E. Hamilton, H. Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI, Princeton: University Press, 1961, p. 46.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Jam 2:26.

³⁸ A. Sharma and A. Gupta eds., Blackwell Publishing Ltd, USA, 2006, p. 221.

But in man's thinking faculty, he will live another life one day as philosophers present many views about man's future. From the arguments of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, one can see the idea of the ideal permanent world as clearly pointed out by Aristotle. For Socrates, to pursue anthropological life purpose, firstly, strive to discover who you are, what is your mission in life, and what you are trying to become. Life would be disaster without a responsible and fully awakened status. This constitutes the worth in man's existence. In other words, man must create life vision and remain focused on it. Secondly, one must care for soul as one of the most important aspects of knowing who one really is. The soul is the centre of man's character and what makes man who he is. The soul forms the basis and structure of thoughts, feelings, values and decisions. For Socrates, the state of soul makes a person either foolish or wise. Thus, the soul should be kept healthy, like the body, in order to maintain knowledge of the priorities of life. The soul should be kept free from envy. This is because „Envy is the ulcer of the soul”³⁹ Thirdly, man must be a good person so that he will not be harmed by outside forces. The soul is the most important part of man and since the soul is not physical but inward then it cannot be harmed. Another person may harm the body, but the soul, cannot be harmed unless one allows oneself to become susceptible to others. Wisdom must be searched constantly to liberate one from outside harm. The method of solving scientific problems today, owe a lot to the Socratic method in Western thought in which hypothesis is the first stage of inquiry. The development and practice of this method earned Socrates the mantle as the father of political philosophy, ethics or moral philosophy⁴⁰. Even though he is being accused of believing in gods created by him instead of those acknowledged by the state.

Essentially, both Socrates and Plato, sought the truth because they knew that the soul is immortal and it is going live another life again. The self-preservation of soul and body, both in quality and worth form the center of human rationality.

4.2. Plato's Views of the soul

It is difficult for me to stop referring to Plato as far as the properties of body and soul in man as concerned arising from Greek thought. In the context of man's activities in the world, his views were more of a natural anthropology than theological anthropology. But the link between the physical man and spiritual man which is built within the soul is also there.

³⁹ G. Liu, *The Modern Value of Socrates' Anthropology Philosophy and his "Midwifery" Education Concept*, <http://www.seiofbluemountain.com/upload/product/201107/2011jyhy101a43.pdf> (access 8 January 2016).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Plato was among the ancient philosophers who took interest in giving an analytical perspective of the soul. He points out that the Greek word *Soma* coined by the Orphic poets to denote body, itself connotes a prison house, and that its inventors thought that the soul is suffering the punishment of sin, and the body is a prison in which the body is kept safe until the penalty is paid⁴¹. At this point, I am not expanding analysis of the doctrine or teaching on sin and punishment. Rather, it is necessary to throw more light on how Plato in his argument expressed the importance of the properties of soul and body in man. No wonder, at another place he himself writes that „The body is a prison house which we are now encompassed withal”⁴². It is also considered a tomb where we are now, being dead, buried⁴³. Elsewhere he approvingly mentions the saying: „Body is the grave of the soul”⁴⁴. The metaphoric language used here, it is suitable to his audience at the time to make out the intended meaning for his readers. This has something to do with the mode in which the body was created. According to the Platonic story of creation, God, committed the task of creating bodies to „His offspring” who „Received the immortal principle of the soul from Him and fashioned round it a mortal body and made it to be a vehicle of the soul”⁴⁵.

By evaluation of the views of Plato and other philosophers like Porphyry, we come to know that these views are contrasted with the Christian view of the resurrection of the body and the soul. Both opposing views deny the resurrection of the body. For Porphyry, the pure soul belongs to the wise and the righteous will only return to the incorruptible bodies in the world to live a blessed and immortal life where there will be no death. But he knows that in the cycle of this life, reincarnation should come to an end for the deliverance of these righteous souls, but thinks that no philosophical school of thought has yet discovered how. This also means that the status of the human body and soul at this time was still under research.

⁴¹ See Plato, *Cratylus*, in: *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, ed. E. Hamilton, H. Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI, Princeton: University Press, 1961, 400c.

⁴² See idem, *Phaedrus*, in: *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, ed. E. Hamilton, H. Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI, Princeton: University Press, 1961, 250c.

⁴³ See idem, *Gorgias*, in: *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, ed. E. Hamilton, H. Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI, Princeton: University Press, 1961, 493a.

⁴⁴ See Plato, *Cratylus*, 400c.

⁴⁵ See Plato, *Timaeus*, in: *The Collected Dialogues of Plato including the Letters*, ed. E. Hamilton, H. Cairns, Bollingen Series LXXI, Princeton: University Press, 1961, 69 c-d. It would be relevant to mention here that later on the Gnostics produced a similar, albeit a more detailed, mythology according to which the human body was not.

Thus, if we put these views together, we can find the missing link that Augustine found to formulate Christian life and worldview about the soul-body's eternal state of life in harmony with Scripture.

This missing link is the grace of Christ that many philosophers in the ancient Greek thought did not find. The grace of Christ enables a person's body to resurrect with a 'Glorious Body' that is immortal and pure in order to live with God. Porphyry maintains „We (Christians) say that the separation of the soul from the body is to be held as part of the punishment". For the philosophers who suppose that the blessed of the soul then only is complete, when it is quite denuded of the body, and returns to God as a pure and simple, and, it were, naked soul. But, this argument Augustine did not accept because it lacks coherence and consistency in its logic, and contradicts their doctrine of reincarnation. The views of Porphyry and Plato, somehow bear the closest resemblance to the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the saints.

At the cross examination of Augustine's position on the immortality of the soul and the soul-body unity, one can easily assume how much Greek Philosophy and individual philosophers had influenced his anthropological thought. Platonic traditions and Neo-Platonic thought can be easily traced in some of his writings. For example, his philosophical theology of original sin, free will, and the nature of the human soul, which has a lot of Neo-Platonic influence. In addition, Augustine praises Porphyry for substituting Plato's view that the human soul will not return to bestial⁴⁶ rather than human bodies.

As I mentioned above, in his high analytical posture, Augustine presents seven levels of the soul's greatness which culminate in the three levels of moral purification, of the soul's gazing upon the truth, and of its contemplative vision of the truth, a passage which Dom C. Butler described as Augustine's „Nearest approach to a formulation of Mystical Theology"⁴⁷. In connection with the final level, Augustine for the first time mentions the resurrection of the body in his writings.

Of course, this is not the first time polemics about the origin and nature of the soul in philosophy, psychology and theology. In Greco-Roman

⁴⁶ The dual nature of man in his body and soul, made some philosophers think that after the death of the body, the soul will wander around and reincarnate in an animal. Augustine rejected the argument that the human soul will return to the bestial state which debases the body that is created in the image and likeness of God. For Augustine, the Grace of Christ found in the Scripture as a missing link in the arguments among philosophers is the argument that gives meaning to the body created in the image and likeness of God. After death, it is the Risen Body of Christ (Glorified Body of Christ) that gives the Christian believer the immortality of the body (Philippians 3:21).

⁴⁷ T. Alvira et al, *Metaphysics*, p. 13.

philosophy⁴⁸, no such progress was made in the doctrine of the soul in the age immediately preceding the Christian Era. Of the strife and fusion of systems at this time the works of Cicero are the best examples. But, on the question of the soul he is by turns Platonic and Pythagorean⁴⁹, while he confesses that the Stoic and the Epicurean systems have each an attraction for him. This was the situation in the West at this time at the dawn of Christianity. In the circles of the Jews, the state of the soul was uncertain; Sadducees denied immortality and all spiritual existence; Pharisees believed in pre-existence and transmigration; the psychology of the Rabbis is founded on the Sacred Books especially the account in Genesis. Thus, three terms were used for the soul: anima and vegetative nature; ethical principle and purely spiritual intelligence. It must be born in mind that Christianity applied the criticisms to the various psychologies of antiquity, after many centuries of struggle, and brought their scattered elements of truth to full focus through the Fathers of the Church.

St. Augustine as one of the Fathers' of the Church, contributes to every branch of sciences; the senses, the emotions, imagination, memory, the will, and the intellect-he explores them all and there is scarcely any further development of importance that he never managed. He is the founder of the introspective method. St. Augustine lays more stress on the volitional activities than the French Idealists. As against the Manicheans, he always asserts the worth and dignity of the body. Like Aristotle, he makes the soul the final cause of the body. He maintains that as God is the Good of the soul, so is the soul the good of the body. As regards spirituality, he is everywhere most explicit, but it is interesting as an indication of the futile subtleties current at the time to find him warning a friend against the controversy on the corporeality of the soul, seeing that the term „Corpus” was used in so many different senses as we shall see the eternal principle in God.

5. God as the First Principle of Things

In the ancient Greek thought, principle is a fundamental truth or scientific theorem which covers a wide range of applications in the fields of knowledge. Sometimes, it can be exchanged by a premise when it comes to sharing of ideas of importance. In the same vein, there are premises and principles to be considered when it comes to the exploration of why the soul is in the human body. And if there is a principle, then there is „Principle” of all principles, namely, God who holds everything in being.

⁴⁸ J. W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism–Dualism Debate*, 2nd ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1989, p. 5.

⁴⁹ A. Diogenes, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, Atlanta: John Knox 1985, p. 5.

First of all, in his summation about the greatness of the soul, the soul is not what God is, but that there is nothing closer to God than the human soul, and it is in fact, equal to an angel. Sharing the horizon of earlier Christian writers, saw all things proceeding from and radically depending on God, their first principle, in diverse degrees of participation. Within the context of this time, while human agents were considered free and responsible, autonomy did not receive the emphasis it knows in the modern era where God is kept on the last number in the list of things.

It is impossible to speak of humanity without speaking of God. In St. Augustine therefore, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and theology intertwined; one cannot engage any aspect without touching the whole in these three dimensions. Thus, a comprehensive view of St. Augustine's anthropology would have to attend to his positions on creation, body/soul relationships, epistemology, the emotions, the image of God in humanity, willing and loving, freedom and choice, sin and grace, moral and social life, history, and death⁵⁰, and all this more a project in process than a task brought to an end. St. Augustine's anthropology begins with God creating and concludes with Christ, in whom all creation will be united and presented to the Father. He was unable to speak of history without speaking of creation, sin and grace, incarnation, and unity in diversity in Christ.

However, it must be born in mind that Augustine did not write his philosophical works; in the sense that we understand the word „Philosophical”⁵¹ is understood in the modern sense. Both philosophical and theological works could be perfectly be distinguished from his theological works⁵². It should also be emphasized that after his episcopal consecration, his writings were predominantly theological in content and presentation. Therefore, to understand the theory of knowledge of Augustine, one must consult appropriate texts such as of *De Trinitate*⁵³, *De Genesi ad literal*⁵⁴, and *Confessions*⁵⁵ where he discussed thoroughly his notion of time and eternity.

Furthermore, Augustine did not play three roles, that of anthropologist, of philosopher and that of theologian. As a theological anthropologist, he studied man in his pure natural state harmonizing the natural and theological anthropology. He considered man as an individual, fallen, and redeemed, with

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ M. Artigas, *Philosophy. An Introduction*, Manila: Sinag-Tala Publisher 1990, p. 3.

⁵² *Soul-Body: The Philosophy of the Commentators, 200-600 AD. A Source Book. Vol. 1: Psychology*, ed. R. Sorabji, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004, pp.182–216.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

capacity to attain truth, and constantly being called by God's grace. Man, by his nature is in need of God's grace to enable him to reach the truth where he can be saved. He was very convinced that reason would lead man to the Faith, and when reason aids him to reach the Faith, reason would also lead man into the mysteries of that Faith.

More importantly, the primary interest of St. Augustine's anthropology is the total relationship of the soul with God. This can be seen as the reason why his writings about man and his soul⁵⁶ were associated with greatness, as well as frequent ambiguous expressions which might have been formed due to dialectical battles or simply were just part of him. Of course, he was aware of the ambiguity, because in his „*Prout sonant*” some of his statements towards the end of his life (472), he wrote his famous *Retractationes*. But still, some of his contemporaries did not understand the sense of his arguments. The classic example of these controversies is about predestination in the ninth-century and the polemics provoked by Jansenism in the mid-seventh century.

It would have been interesting to know the Hebrew view of the body and soul. But for now, I want to focus on St. Augustine's anthropology which is about ‚body and soul’. However, these two properties ‚body and soul’ united in one person, such that the soul is entirely present in every part of the human body. My concern here is to provide anthropological link between the origin of the soul, what is the connection and purpose of its existence in the body. And yet, St. Augustine had some doubts about the origin of the soul⁵⁷. But this doubt was experienced before his encounter with the Christian Scriptures. After all, the mystery of the natural unity of body and soul provoked different generations. Many philosophers and theologians have pondered the issues regarding man and the origin of the soul. For example, Boethius⁵⁸ in his exploration of the nature of the soul, defines man as „Rationale animal atque mortale”. He is a person composed of immortal soul. Human souls are „Intellectibles” that degenerate into „Intelligibles” when they come in contact with the human body⁵⁹. These souls do not lose the knowledge they had before coming into contact with the human body. For Boethius, the act of knowing is the act of recalling, by which what had been known before is made present in one's memory. This means also that the seat of knowledge is in the soul and through the intellect approves and disapproves human acts. On this point, Boethius agrees with the platonic doctrine on knowledge and he seems to accept

⁵⁶ I. Yarza, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers 1994, p. 97.

⁵⁷ G. Bardy, *Saint Augustine. L'homme et l'oeuvre*, Paris: DDB 1948, p. 20.

⁵⁸ J. Saranyana, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers 1996, p. 31.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

the pre-existence of souls. According to Boethius, man is also a free spirit, capable of knowing and choosing. Man becomes happier as he unites himself to the divine will through rational knowledge. That is, to will what God wills, to love what God loves, is the highest form of liberty and happiness: inversely, to will what the body desires is the extreme degree of servitude which is out of freedom.

Anthropologically, the study of man involves the structures surrounding his activities and these relate to him both at personal and social contexts. To consider the possible explanation of human freedom, that if God knows beforehand what a man will do and at the same time he governs the universe providentially, how the human freedom be explained? Supposing man is free, does that mean that God's providence is fallible? Boethius considered such formulation of the problem and argument as inaccurate. This is because there are two distinct realities involved; God foresees human acts in eternity, while the use of human freedom is carried out in time, wherein, there is the fact of beforeness⁶⁰ and afterness⁶¹ in events.

In most of the controversies between the dialecticians and the anti-dialecticians, St. Anselm insisted that man has two sources of knowledge: reason and faith⁶², and maintained against the dialectician the supremacy of faith in the search for God, who provides his ultimate happiness. Even though Augustine became an ontological dualist claiming that some entities are non-corporeal, he believed that among these entities are God and the soul⁶³, and these entities he desired to know most.

The focus of St. Augustine's interest, however, was the human soul. His general arguments are immateriality of the soul and which critical connection with the views from the contemporary debate⁶⁴ in the philosophy of the mind.

In a nutshell, St. Augustine's view on the human soul is a rational substance consisting of soul and body. Neither the soul alone nor the body alone is an individual human being or a human person. Only the soul-body composite is an individual human being, a person. However, the rational part of the soul is superior to the human body⁶⁵. Thus, it is the human soul, which is spiritual

⁶⁰ The ,beforeness' is the beginning of anything. God is the only Supreme Being that has no beginning. Any other thing has its beginning.

⁶¹ While the ,afterness' refers to the completion of an event or the end of the life span of something that had a beginning. God is the only Supreme Being whose existence is eternal and timeless.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ S. M. Cahn, *Plato: Classics of Western Philosophy*. 7th ed. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishers 2006, pp. 49–113.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

⁶⁵ Ps 145,4.

that makes a person close to God, who is spiritual in Himself as expressed by Catholic theological understanding.

Conclusion

At the introduction of this article, anthropology was presented as a chapter of theology which not only studies God but also studies man's history of beginning, his life activities and his end. St. Augustine's theological anthropology begins with God creating and concludes with Christ, in whom all creation will be united and presented to the Father. St. Augustine's does not believe that it is possible to speak of humanity, history or any reality without speaking of God as the source of all aspects of anthropology.

From the Christian point of view, the context of the ancient Greek thought remains the backbone of St. Augustine's anthropology. It was a platform through which anthropological views were presented in the West and other parts of the world as the ideas became clear in the Christian Scripture.

Building theological anthropology from Scripture, man's constitution is made up of 'body and soul', man must act in such a way that the human faculty of the intellect, which approves and disapproves human acts, directs reason in the choice of acts to suit the nature and the end of human acts in God. God remains the eternal truth both spoken and unspoken. Even if he is not acknowledged, it does not change his attribute of being God and ontological reality which is the basis of both his existence and non-existence. Both existence and non-existence have no history without connection with the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

For St. Augustine, to understand God, and whatever is attributed to him as source, the inevitable understanding of Jesus Christ is necessary, who has both human and divine natures. The Incarnation of Christ gives the human body a new significance and the highest dignity among all the creatures of God. Jesus Christ is timeless and eternal, yet descended to the human level and status. His descent on earth is science beyond cosmic and transcendent significance. He is unchangeable, and yet was within the human condition of mortality and still he remains Immortal. Thus, Jesus is truly the image of God. So, to know God is to know Jesus Christ. That is, for humanity to transcend to the knowledge of God, knowing Jesus is the ordinary way to the transcendence and full knowledge of God. Man's position at the center of history, has witnessed the past, has seen the present but has the hope to see the future which anthropologically is part of man's activities through various studies.

Due to the sacred nature of man, many philosophers held their various views and opinions about man and his biological properties through studies.

Both ancient and Christian philosophers had a lot to say about what constitutes man. Key among the important analogical concepts of man are, 'body and soul'. Studies and ideas⁶⁶ of these arose because the beginning and man's activities have been experienced, which propelled the question of what will be the future, the end of man having experienced his past and present? Theologians through the instrumentality of Christian Revelation have offered satisfactory understanding as to what is the nature of man and the purpose of his existence. Theologians developed answers based on Biblical Revelation through which God's mysterious nature is understood. The concept of a mystery provides a clear understanding of God's mysterious nature in Jesus Christ, who has both human and divine natures.

The Incarnation of Jesus prompted more investigations on the biological properties of man. Since Jesus Christ came with a human body, died and rose with another 'Glorified Body', the study of man possesses not only in his history, but even more on what constituted man, 'body and soul'. It is also clear that the mortality of man possesses a big challenge about his final and future state. Questions such as why is man a mortal being despite the quest for immortality? If this is not possible to achieve, what is it in man that is mortal and immortal? Of course, these questions are put on a general platform where people have their different approaches to the same questions centred on 'body and soul' properties.

The anthropology⁶⁷ of Augustine not only remind us about the ancient philosophers and modern theologians who have made their different inputs on the mortality of the body and immortality of the soul, but made a clear link with the human nature of Christ as found in the Bible who shared human nature. From the various positions of philosophers and theologians, about body and soul, have similar meaning of the central components that make up the human person. This understanding is not only based on the rational capacity of a person to understand, but the application of faith is a necessary instrument to arrive at the mysterious constitution of man. Understanding the mystery of the Incarnation is a prerequisite to understanding the mystery of God. This means faith becomes a necessary instrument, as a supernatural gift of God to attain the knowledge and meaning of man's body and soul. The writings of the New Testament have a lot of theological anthropology which served as lenses for St. Augustine's anthropology which is embedded in Christ.

St. Paul, who understands God's mystery, invited the wise and simple-hearted to be encouraged, anthropologically knitting together in love the riches and full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which

⁶⁶ N. Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2006 p. 1.

⁶⁷ J. Lewis, *Anthropology Made Simple*, Made Simple Books Heinemann Ltd London, 1982 p. 7.

is Christ⁶⁸. Thus, Jesus hypostatically assumed the human condition of time and mortality⁶⁹ to express God's plan not only for the entire creation but the purpose and meaning of the existence of 'body and soul'. Jesus establishes relationship, by his grace and that is the missing link discovered by St. Augustine that was not there in the context of ancient Greek thought which has redemptive value.

This redemptive act of Christ unites humanity with God by taking the human form and its nature to perfect God's relationship with man after the Fall of Adam. The ordinary human transcendence to God is a gift of God through Jesus Christ whose mission expresses God's perfect identity and his relationship with God in the Trinitarian life. In this sense, God takes our weak mortal bodies and changes them into glorious bodies of his own, using the same power with which he brings everything under his control⁷⁰. But as human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, we are still within the mysteriousness of God about the present and future. St. Paul puts it clearly when he says, „We are already God's children, but he has not yet shown to us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is”⁷¹.

Finally, our theological and natural anthropologies, in the anthropology of St. Augustine have found meaning in transcending to the understanding of God in the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ as an expression taken in its entirety 'Body and Soul' and Divinity of Jesus Christ, signifying the wholeness of the Personality of the Incarnate Son of God. This meaning finds its expression in the Eucharistic celebration, where Jesus enacts his sacrifice, with us participating in offering both His Divine Personality and His Humanity composed of body and soul. In this understanding, we consequently, appeal to the love of the eternal Father, which finds its highest expression in the Passion and Death of Jesus. Thus, we turn to the strongest point of our appeal to God for our intentions and requests to be heard through cooperation of 'body and soul'.

⁶⁸ Col 2:2.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 2:15-20.

⁷⁰ Phil 3:21.

⁷¹ 1 Jn 3:2.

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Summary

BODY AND SOUL IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF ST. AUGUSTINE IN THE CONTEXT OF ANCIENT GREEK THOUGHT

The writing of this article aims at seeking Augustine's anthropological position on the body and soul of the human person. But, as Augustine is concerned, it is not possible to speak of humanity without speaking of God who is the author of creation. This position calls for the investigation on the constitution of man. Since God created rational man in his image and likeness, the soul, which has the attribute of God by its immaterial essence, it is an immortal reality. To understand the immortality of the soul, one needs to understand the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Keywords: Body, Soul, St. Augustine, Anthropology, Rational Man, Truth, Existence, Image, Likeness, Immaterial Essence, Immortality, Incarnation

Słowa kluczowe: ciało, dusza, św. Augustyn, antropologia, człowiek rozumny, prawda, istnienie, obraz, podobizna, niematerialna istota, nieśmiertelność, wcielenie

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with the view of St. Augustine; second, St. Augustine thinks that human beings are equal in front of evil, which, has positive significance compared with the ideas posed by Hsun Tzu who insists on the distinction between. saint and ordinary people, between monarchs and their subjects. Keywords: Augustine, Hsun Tzu, Evil, Free Will, Nurture. Introduction. In this paper, evil human nature in St. Augustine's thoughts. and Hsun Tzu's thoughts is compared under scrutiny. In the light of St. Augustine, evil is the privation of goodness. God is. omniscient and omnipotent, and creates every thing. polysemy and semantic shifts in the lexicon used for "body" and "soul" in Ancient Hebrew and Ancient Greek, which are the two linguistic systems known by St. Paul of Tarsus, and then confront them with Paul's usage context, and finally with Modern English, hypothesizing a possible case of linguistic relativity. BODY and SOUL in Ancient Greek. , sma. , sarx. Orphism: prison (sma) or tomb of the soul. Plato: concept of body in antithesis with the soul THE COSMOS IS A BODY GOVERNED BY THE DIVINE SOUL THE POLIS IS A BODY GOVERNED BY POLITICAL/INTELLECTUAL SOUL. IV. Man is sarx and as such is mortal. Aristotle: a fundamental reality only be means of the. 1 Ennead VI 4 in the Works of Saint Augustine, in Revue des Études Augustiniennes , 9 (1963) 1-39. 2. The fact that these treatises help explain obscurities in Augustine's text and in the movement of his thought (without, however, deforming it) would itself constitute evidence of their relevance, to be confirmed, if possible, by further data of a more philological nature. See the methodological remarks in our former article, pp. 4-5 and nn. Hence Augustine can say that the basic flaw of the Manichaean anthropology arises from its starting point: multum errent qui post peccatum considerent hominem, cum in hujus vitae mortalitatem damnatus est; (ibid. 1.29). Add that we look forward to a renovatio, a liberatio which Augustine terms a commutatio in angelicam formam (ibid. One, the problem of evil. Second, the relation between body and soul. And three, the Christian understanding of sin and redemption. Now, it turns out these are all aspects of the same problem, and they are dealt with in Augustine's works most thoroughly, more thoroughly than any other thinker of the ancient world. Augustine is always surrounded by friends. Even in the most intimate moments, when he's undergoing this conversion, there're all sorts of people right around him. And as I said before, this seemed to be "the explanation was, well, he must've been homosexual, or he must have these desires, or maybe it's part of Roman culture of friendship." Rhetoric in this context means the art of persuasion. So it's very closely related to law and legal pleading. Augustine belonged to the world of late Roman antiquity, and its cultural and educational system had a decisive and lasting role in shaping his mind. His education, following the standard pattern of the time, was almost entirely literary, with great stress on rhetoric. Its aim was to enable its recipients to imitate the great literary masterpieces of the past. It tended, inevitably, to encourage a conservative literary antiquarianism. The culture it produced rarely rose above the level of the sterile cult of "polite letters" and generally had little contact with the deeper forces at