

# Cities of Men, Cities of God: An Introduction

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*I dreamed I saw St. Augustine,  
Alive with fiery breath,  
And I dreamed I was amongst the ones  
That put him out to death.  
Oh, I awoke in anger,  
So alone and terrified,  
I put my fingers against the glass  
And bowed my head and cried.*

—Bob Dylan, “I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine”  
(1967)<sup>1</sup>

In 1930 the philosopher and theologian Maurice Blondel celebrated the fifteenth-century anniversary of Saint Augustine’s death by affirming not only his continued relevance but also the latent creative force of his dynamic philosophy: “Augustine has more to give us than he has yet done...Alone, perhaps of all philosophers, Augustine boldly faced the concrete and complete state of man as he is in the unity of his destiny and *transnatural* state, for our real state is not, of itself, either a state of pure nature or, at once, a supernatural state.”<sup>2</sup> Augustine’s is, in Blondel’s terms, “a plastic force [able] to assimilate further elements,” “a truly integral philosophy,” “ever-fruitful,” young, “not only directed to a definite end, but also susceptible of unlimited adaptations and developments”—in other words, a philosophy that is, like its author, “the most alive of the living” with “no need of our purple cements.”<sup>3</sup> Blondel’s theses on Augustinianism are by no means exclusive to his thought; the Catholic milieu of the early twentieth century, particularly in the French context, is notable insofar as we encounter, across several projects, the discovery of an Augustinian *philosophy* geared toward the present. Henri Marrou, for instance, during his tenure as Chair of the His-

tory of Christianity at the Sorbonne in 1954, cited Blondel in his later affirmation of “the ever-renewed fecundity of Augustinian thought”—this time marking the sixteenth-century anniversary of Augustine’s birth.<sup>4</sup> But insofar as the Augustinianism of “The Latent Resources in St. Augustine’s Thought” takes peculiar shape as a sort of Catholic Pragmatism, “afire with charity rather than a spirit of pure light and scientific precision,” Blondel reintroduces to his generation a quintessentially modern Augustine wrested from late antiquity and from successive centuries of scholastic quarrel.<sup>5</sup> Recasting the communion of the saints in terms of “the still very recent science which goes by the name of the history of philosophy,” Blondel imagines Augustine’s thought, in its unity, proceeding as a “living, concrete truth... [which] may grow indefinitely,” a body of work that remains effectual long after the author’s demise.<sup>6</sup> Augustine the saint, *especially* after his death, “has more to give us than he has yet done.”<sup>7</sup>

Blondel’s statement that Augustine remains “the most alive of the living” orients the collection at hand—whether as a directive, a threat, or a promise. But the present volume does not mark a date, nor does it celebrate any notable occasion in Augustine’s life, writing, or legacy. This volume is not an encomium. It begins, in fact, with a rather impassioned interrogation of Augustine’s sainthood/saintliness, with Bruno Bosteels’s introduction to León Rozitchner’s work and with excerpts, for the first time in English, from Rozitchner’s vitriolic condemnation of Augustine and Augustinianism, *The Thing and the Cross: Christianity and Capitalism (About Saint Augustine’s Confessions)* (1997). Rozitchner, like Blondel, recognizes the scope and reach of Augustine’s philosophy, but to very different ends; in *The Thing and the Cross* we encounter a determination of Augustinianism which is overwhelmingly responsible for the advent and successive dominance of a mode of production of subjectivity proper to capitalism. Rozitchner depicts the interim between Augustine’s birth and our contemporary occasion as “sixteen centuries of subtle, refined, brutal and miserable subjection”; his disdain for the celebration of Augustine—for Blondel, Marrou, and their cohort, Catholic or otherwise—is unmistakable.<sup>8</sup> Yet Rozitchner betrays a firm belief in the continued relevance of Augustinianism, even as the object of critique. Where Augustine stands as the animus behind the metaphysical premises and the production of capitalist subjectivities—cursed, broken, ailing bodies and spirits, accumulating “sacred capital” at the expense of joy—Augustinianism nevertheless remains a *contemporary* threat to life, as near in time as a host of other horrors and injustices, the subjects and targets of Rozitchner’s numerous works, summarized adeptly by Bosteels. Most of the essays included in this issue challenge (however implicitly) Rozitchner’s stark depiction of the collaboration between Augustinian and capitalist metaphysics, from orthodox, heterodox, heretical, and atheistic perspectives. These challenges are made both with respect to discipline as well as to confession. Nevertheless, the sense that Augustine speaks to our contemporary occasion, that we are entangled in Augustinian concepts, provides the critical node around which this issue of *Polygraph* takes shape.

Comparisons between this volume and recent publications on Saint Paul, militant subjectivity, and to a nexus of religious concepts organized under the flexible

interdisciplinary rubric “political theology” are perhaps inevitable.<sup>9</sup> We welcome such comparisons and certainly believe that the essays in *Polygraph 19/20* contribute to an ongoing conversation concerning the status of belief, religion, and theology in philosophy and critical theory, to say nothing of the conflicted and often contradictory public discourses negotiating both sacred and profane. It is important, however, to make it clear that the contributions which follow do not merely apply new or renewed critical methods to Augustine and Augustinianism as disciplinary objects, nor are they invested in the “turn” or “return” to religion currently in vogue across the humanities.<sup>10</sup> On the contrary, the following works recognize the degree to which Augustine is exemplary—in a formal, but not necessarily qualitative, sense—albeit to very different purposes.

Augustine is exemplary in his inextricability from Christ and hypostasis, as an (if not *the*) inaugural figure in the development of a truly catholic Christianity. Augustinianism is arguably the dominant intellectual and exegetical resource in the constitution of orthodox Western Christianity—in affirming the Trinity, formulating election and predestination, and providing, in supple and complex languages, approaches to grace and donation. Paul often figures a Messianic approach to ethics and justice or, when the Epistles are stripped of their content and faith is reduced to mere belief, a militant subjectivity *par excellence*; Augustine, in his devotion, thus stands in opposition to Paul, or at least to a certain generic Paul, the Paul of Judaism or atheism (with particular caution never to conflate the two strands).<sup>11</sup> In this respect they are, perhaps, different kinds of saints—at least in philosophical parlance—and, as Bosteels notes of contemporary philosophy, the attention to sainthood or saintliness that complicates distinctions between sacred and profane spheres of politics reconfigures the task of the philosopher today.<sup>12</sup> Augustine, as an incontrovertibly Christian saint, enables us to approach such distinctions from another vantage point, and a text such as his *De Spiritu et Littera* complicates recent unorthodox determinations of Paul and the Epistles without necessarily relegating politics or the challenge to Christianity to the sidelines—even when, as Creston Davis affirms in this issue, we are confronted with “the founder of Western Christianity.”<sup>13</sup>

In this sense, Augustine and Augustinianism also pose critical questions regarding the autonomy of philosophy, its theological origins, periodization and academic province. The most careful treatments of Augustine’s writing require one to problematize the distinction between religious and philosophical sources, between the histories of philosophy and theology which seem to intertwine once one begins investigating works such as *De Trinitate* or *De Civitate Dei*. Such distinctions have long preoccupied scholars of Augustine’s Neoplatonism, and the Augustinian origins of modern philosophy beginning with René Descartes pose a similar challenge;<sup>14</sup> both Michael Hanby and Stephen Menn, in very different idioms, have attempted to locate the inaugural moment of modern philosophy (if not philosophy itself) in Descartes’s confrontation with Augustine, with the alleged Augustinian origin of the Cartesian *cogito*.<sup>15</sup> Menn seeks to disclose the true Augustinian character of the *Meditations* in order to come to a more accurate understanding of the warp and woof of Cartesianism, while Hanby, in contrast, reads Descartes’s Augustinianism as mere parody,

as an unfortunate misreading of Augustine with dire consequences for modernity and Christianity.<sup>16</sup> Whatever their conclusions, such studies disclose the tenacity of Augustinianism in modern philosophical parlance, even where Augustine, saint or no saint, risks virtual unrecognizability.

This is certainly the case in twentieth-century philosophical and political debates. Across languages and discourses, the import of Augustine is evident in works by such towering figures as Martin Heidegger, Paul Ricoeur, Hannah Arendt, Eric Voegelin, and Jacques Lacan.<sup>17</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein adapted Augustinian genres and concepts, as James Wetzel demonstrates in this issue. Taking Wittgenstein's meditation on the *Confessions* in the posthumous *Philosophical Investigations* as a point of departure, Wetzel investigates his approach to confession and desire as a form of critique proceeding from within an Augustinian language. In probing the Augustinian resources of Wittgenstein's later philosophy and in establishing critical distance between the two philosophers, "Wittgenstein's Augustine: The Inauguration of the Later Philosophy" yields crucial insight about doctrine, application, and the lived experience of religion. Wetzel mines a well of resources philosophical and linguistic to reveal the Augustinian stakes of both. But even in standard confessional circles—the Catholic milieu of Henri Marrou and Maurice Blondel cited above, for instance, including Henri de Lubac and Etienne Gilson—Augustine's corpus of writing is understood as somehow exceeding theology.<sup>18</sup> While there are marked distinctions between the treatment of Augustine's religious writing and his treatises on pagan philosophy, temporality, anthropology, politics, art, music, and rhetoric, many exegeses seek to overcome such generic differences, searching for a unity among seemingly diverse genres and concepts. Augustine's work even presents problems across forms of religious writing—with the rigor of *De Civitate Dei* set against the affective devotion of the *Confessions*, or even sections of the *Confessions* set against each other—raising important questions about genre and idiom as well as those regarding faith, love, and prayer.<sup>19</sup>

Augustine's philosophical importance has hardly diminished in the last twenty years. Jean-François Lyotard, in the posthumous work, *The Confession of Augustine* (1998), reflects on the province of sensation in philosophy as well as on the task of the philosopher.<sup>20</sup> In turn, Jacques Derrida, in his celebrated work *Circonfession* (1991), meditates on mourning, autobiography, and the unstable set of relations between religion and philosophy, between competing regimes or idioms of thought, in the Augustinian mode of the *Confessions*.<sup>21</sup> In *Empire* (2000) Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri imagine a "divine city [that] is a universal city of aliens, coming together, cooperating, communicating" in a determinately Augustinian mode—a catholic collective, an excursus through *De Civitate Dei*, a "pilgrimage on earth" without "transcendent telos beyond."<sup>22</sup> Such contests over philosophy's relation or debt to Augustine and to the general question of modernity opens up to a more pointed and potentially irascible topic—that of secularism which, in its various forms, conditions, and procedures, sets the tone for most contemporary debates on religion.

Secularism has received warranted attention in recent years and has reconfigured approaches to religion and ideology across the humanities. Key works by Marcel

Gauchet, Talal Asad, Gauri Viswanathan, and, recently, Charles Taylor have done much to challenge outmoded assumptions about faith, belief, and the *time* of secularism.<sup>23</sup> Such studies tend to identify secularism or secularization as historical processes particular to Enlightenment and, in many cases, to modernity; in doing so, however, they present new problems, not only conceptual difficulties but also in the potentially confusing terms of the debate. To begin, while we are meant to understand secularism and “the secular” as specific concepts they are too-often (and too-easily) elided with modernity, liberalism, the Enlightenment, citizenship, a certain instrumental form of reason, immanence, capitalism, agnosticism, and atheism. While related, such terms are not substitutable. On the contrary, secularism is perhaps best isolated and described as a discourse or process of belief, as a comportment to belief or faith; secularism reorganizes belief, whether in transcendent or supernatural matters or in the world itself, reinscribing it as a private or subjective concern. But the discourse of secularism ultimately forces its version of belief beyond religion (a category which emerges and acquires meaning only after secularism), taking shape generally as an ideology of critique, as a window to a world to which we are comported as critics, cynics and skeptics. To take an obvious example, the Bible, once revered as the Word of God, is recognized by secularist discourse as a human creation, subject to historical interpretation, aesthetic judgment, and new forms of suspicion. Fidelity to Scripture, after this secular transformation, is relegated to a realm apart from the public sphere of politics, made a matter of mere opinion. The same might be said for all forms of belief or fidelity to ideas, in the absence of persistent critique or scrutiny and against the assumption that any one belief is as good or on par with another, which is perhaps why secularism is so often conflated with liberalism.

Nevertheless, the example of Scripture reveals another key facet of the current debate over secularism—namely, the degree to which many different parties and ideological camps advance critiques of secularism, from very different positions. Christians across the political spectrum challenge secular approaches to government, from Radical Orthodox approaches to the “post-secular” on the left to American Evangelical political interventions on the far right. But the critique of secularism need not be Christian—or religious—at all. Insofar as secularism names a comportment to belief, a limited political imagination for faith and public commitment, and a supposedly-scientific form of critique or cynicism which might be recruited for any number of disciplinary or political projects, we are invited to consider materialist or “secular” critiques of secularism which duly reject the melancholic longing for premodern Christianity or Fundamentalist (another category proper to secularism) politics that characterize so many positions in the current global debate. Slavoj Žižek’s work on cynicism and belief, for instance, reveals the secularist origins of modern ideological formations but ultimately challenges Christian or, in general, religious refutations of secularism.<sup>24</sup> While the possible terms of further materialist encounters with secularism are still open, it is clear that critiques of secularism need not draw from decidedly religious resources; we encounter, in certain forms of Marxism as well as in Spinozism, indictments of secularism that locate its failures in its abnegation of belief, transcendent principles, and historical alliances—not in

its denial of religion.<sup>25</sup> Even where secularism creates discontent the *saeculum*, the world itself, remains something worth fighting for.<sup>26</sup>

In this sense it might be wise to consider the distinction between secularism, as an historical discourse, and the secular (or *saeculum*)—the time and place of the world. Asad, for instance, argues for a distinction between secularism and the secular (as well as secularization), where the former term names a process particular to the Enlightenment—and, avowedly, to modernity—which operates on several levels.<sup>27</sup> But in what sense is this distinction already active in Augustinian thought? Augustine is certainly invested in belief and, even in the final moments of *De Civitate Dei*, in affirming the resources of the *saeculum*; his attention to the *civitatis peregrinas* and to the enduring materiality of the Resurrection, of the City of God, seems to invite investigation of secularism and its critique. Whether Augustine finds a form of secular thinking or a proleptic critique of secularism is certainly at stake in this volume. Our hope in assembling the present issue is to give the current debates over secularism and the scope of the secular some traction, in interrogating specific discourses and projects in the name of, against, and, in some cases, obliquely related to Augustine and Augustinianism.

Two notable contributors, John D. Caputo and John Milbank, are among the most influential voices disclosing the true shape and limitation of secularism to contemporary audiences, even as their own separate visions of the “post-secular” stand in contest.<sup>28</sup> Moreover—and crucially for this issue of Polygraph—both Caputo’s and Milbank’s projects gather concepts and historical phenomena together under the sign of “secularism” in such a way as to invite engagement with Augustinianism. Augustine, though for very different reasons, remains an important reference in both of their work. John D. Caputo activates the resources of religious thought and radical philosophy—the work of Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Søren Kierkegaard and, in particular, Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction—to set to work an ethics of alterity, in opposition to theological and secular moralities alike; his determination of “religion without religion” proceeds from an investigation of belief and conviction and the work of said concepts as they cut across disciplines, confessions, languages, and spheres of articulation. Caputo, through his encounter with Derrida’s Augustine, the Augustine of the *Circonfession*, formulates in detail a fundamental formal relationship between faith and knowledge—one of commitment and desire. Expanding on earlier claims regarding Deconstruction as a sort of “Augustinian science,” Caputo investigates the terms and resources of Augustinian thought through the call to a heretical Augustine, a figure for whom Deconstruction is as legitimate a legacy as various orthodox approaches to Christianity.<sup>29</sup> In reading Augustine against the grain of confessional theology—and, indeed, against *De Civitate Dei* itself—Caputo discovers an Augustinianism in which philosophical concepts do not necessarily serve religious or secularist regimes but which, rather, enable “a theology of and for the world, a theology in which eternity has come into time, God come into the world, and theology conducted on and for what Deleuze calls the plane of immanence.”<sup>30</sup> Caputo’s is thus a theology of the *saeculum*, but not necessarily the irreparable *saeculum* of *De Civitate Dei*. Moreover, where Caputo marshals a heretical Augustine

against secularism—the Enlightenment project bent on confining religion to private spheres and on formalizing belief in supposedly-rational institutions (for instance, the nation or the free market) in opposition to an irrational religious devotion—we encounter an understanding of faith and commitment at odds with key assumptions of modern theology and politics.

John Milbank also challenges secularism and its version of modernity; across a number of important works, he examines secularism's debts to heterodoxy and heresy in an attempt to shake the ground beneath it, to recuperate a critical orthodoxy against which its assumptions and processes can no longer stand intact or remain viable as solutions to pressing political problems. As is evident in his essay below, "From Sovereignty to Gift: Augustine's Critique of Interiority," it is in terms of Augustine and Augustinianism that the trinitarian framework of Christian orthodoxy takes shape, precisely as an innovation in philosophy and an impetus towards a diffuse and immanent determination of grace (if not God itself). Augustine figures quite prominently, then, in Milbank's history of Christianity, working proleptically against secularism (in opposition to antitrinitarian versions of Christianity which might give way to secularist concepts and regimes); Milbank thus participates (and, in a very real sense, leads others) in the recuperation of Augustinian trinitarian thought and Christology *against* its modern secularist perversions, primarily Cartesianism (in its transformation of Augustinian subjectivity) and any institutional sciences operating under the assumption that religion merely names a sacred plane hidden from worldly contact, unapproachable by reason in its transcendence.<sup>31</sup>

With regard to the present volume, Jonathan Tran and Eric Gregory both activate Augustinian concepts in an attempt to stem secularist projects. In "The Limits of Franz Boas's Multiculturalism: An Augustinian Critique," Tran interrogates twentieth-century anthropological approaches to culture and difference, binding multiculturalism and secularism together in opposition to an Augustinian politics of grace. In retrieving, from *De Civitate Dei*, notions of space, time and, indeed, lived experience which are "replete with grace and hopefulness," where "[t]here is no protected, autonomous secular space beyond the reach of the gospel's invitation," Tran shatters the limited order of difference under secularism.<sup>32</sup> Against a boundless Augustinian determination of difference informed—indeed, *restructured*, as a "wild space"—by grace, secularism merely offers a compromise, a "caged multiculturalism."<sup>33</sup> In "Love and Citizenship After Augustine" Eric Gregory attends to liberalism, investigating Augustine's alleged contributions to competing liberal traditions in an attempt to reconstitute Augustinian political thought against secularism. Love, in *De Civitate Dei*, "ineliminable, a component of all action and agency," does not only indelibly bind ontology to moral psychology, philosophy to theology—as an irreducible figure in Augustinian thought, it challenges existing liberal assumptions about privacy, corporeality, desire, human behavior, and secularism.<sup>34</sup>

Both Tran and Gregory interrogate secular liberal compartments to difference in an Augustinian spirit; their contributions to the present volume thus stand against competing depictions of Augustine as the enemy, or of Augustinianism as the precondition for capitalist exploitation. But the horizon for this encounter with Augus-

tine as enemy shifts within the issue. Where Tran and Gregory address Augustine's detractors in terms of anthropology and liberal political theory, respectively, Robert Geroux answers Rozitchner's investigation of the sexual production of capitalist subjectivities in terms of political economy and temporality. In this sense, Geroux responds not only to Rozitchner but to Éric Alliez who, in *Capital Times* (1991), implicates Augustine in the conquest of time for capitalism, where

the divine economy [advanced in Augustine's appropriation of Plotinus and Neoplatonism] henceforth implies a principle of dissociation, a specific break between what is beyond and what is here below, which, far from fulfilling itself in a negative logic with regard to the terrestrial city, in the end favors the autonomy of the temporal.<sup>35</sup>

Here a different determination of the secular is at stake, where the relationship between the *saeculum*—*distentio animi*, lived human time in either the City of Man or the City of God—and secularism is not necessarily clear. Employing a “non-religious radical hermeneutic” to read the *Confessiones*, Geroux's distinctly critical Augustinianism bears witness to secular market time, to the fallen temporality of capitalism.<sup>36</sup> But more than temporality is at stake. Since Augustine's striking depiction of human desire—degraded through sin, insatiable, impossible to fulfill, *in love with love*—furnishes Geroux with a critical understanding of the production of subjectivity proper to the *saeculum* as well as its alternative: membership in the *civitas peregrinas*, in the City of God. For Geroux, Augustine, in his vivid description of the corruption of the City of Man and of human time, provides us with critical resources to reconfigure relations between Cities—between radical politics and the entrenched times and regimes of late capitalism. His deployment of “secular”/“*saeculum*” discloses an Augustinian determination—and proleptic critique—of secularism, even as he identifies Augustine's potential complicity in “the trinitarian alliance of western Christianity, market capitalism, and neoliberal politics, described by Derrida as ‘Globalatinization.’”<sup>37</sup>

In a sense, all of the essays in this collection address problems of materialism in Augustine or Augustinianism. The real disagreement seems to take shape when we ask *whether* Augustine investigated materialist matters in philosophical terms, *how* Augustine posed materialist problems (in terms of corporeality, sexuality, or the Trinity, for instance), or whether such matters have been left entirely to Augustine's interlocutors and detractors. The latter question, in relegating materialist critique to Augustine's followers (and, most likely, to his discontents), presupposes that we answer how, if at all, Augustine's attention to human being constitutes materialism, given both his determinately Trinitarian understanding of ontology and relation and the diffuse conception of the human body—in whom God is closer and more interior than man himself—given in the *Confessiones*.<sup>38</sup> This opens the investigation to the larger concentric matter of subjectivity.<sup>39</sup> Of course, others have implicated Augustine in the history of the self in the West; Charles Taylor, in his magisterial work *The Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (1989) identifies Augustine, in his

mediation of Platonism, as the foremost architect of subjectivity before the Cartesian revolution in the seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup> Augustine's is "a radically new doctrine of moral resources, one where the route passes within... [and where] reflexivity takes on a new status, because it is the 'space' in which we come to encounter God, in which we effect the turning from lower to higher."<sup>41</sup> Moreover, theorists as diverse as Fredric Jameson, Jonathan Dollimore, and Michel Foucault locate Augustine at the forefront of the production of sexual subjectivity in the West—at the expense of an adequate materialist understanding of desire and its radical potential.<sup>42</sup> This is Rozitchner's conceit in "Appendix I" of *The Thing and the Cross*, in his affirmation of desire against what, for Augustine, takes shape as an "Accursed Libido" that holds fallen man in subjection.<sup>43</sup> This identification, for Rozitchner, enables a thorough and furious condemnation of Augustine and Augustinianism in psychoanalytic terms, against Christian attempts to realize the Edenic ideal of the body through constant and intense repression.

In "Augustine and Post-Secular Political Theology," Creston Davis employs psychoanalysis to other ends. In an investigation that recalls Rozitchner's indictment of Augustine, Davis identifies a contradiction in *De Civitate Dei*, an incommensurability between Augustine's Neoplatonic configuration of justice and his radical *descriptive* determination of desire, a desire that is supple in a way that anticipates psychoanalytic approaches to desire but which is ultimately complicated by his insistence on "a single logic that motivates the will of all human beings, viz. the desire for peace."<sup>44</sup> According to Davis, the tension between justice (and its attendant, knowledge) and desire takes shape as a sort of unconscious *avant la lettre*, as a proto-unconscious grounded in reason which overcodes fallen human desire as an unknown—and, indeed, *inhuman*—longing for peace. This strategic psychoanalytic identification enables Davis to interrogate, with a critical eye, another tension in Augustine, one between a remunerative debt economy proper to the superego and the overcoming of that debt economy—between punishment under the Law and the fulfillment of the Law realized in the Incarnation and execution of Christ, the Son. The Augustine of *De Civitate Dei* is thus revealed as inadequate in his understanding of the Incarnation and redemption, "unable to see the radically liberatory implication of the Incarnation that sets the world free from the debt of our existence."<sup>45</sup>

John D. Caputo, in this issue, also attends to the elusive body of the *Confessiones* and of Augustinianism in general in terms that gloss Deconstruction and psychoanalysis as well as theology.<sup>46</sup> Nothing less than a reconsideration of the last century of Catholic Augustinian thought is at stake in his complication of the distinction between corporeal immanence and incorporeal transcendence, in the very theology of the Incarnation and its implications for political theology. Caputo—in his critical exegeses of the Incarnation as flesh-become-word, informed by Derridean, Deleuzean, and Bergsonian approaches to difference and affect—certainly challenges Blondel's description of Augustinian philosophy as treating "the concrete and complete state of man as he is in the unity of his destiny and *transnatural* state, for our real state is not, of itself, either a state of pure nature or, at once, a supernatural state."<sup>47</sup> In a sense, Caputo's declaredly heretical Augustine rejects outright the terms of unity

and integration espoused by Catholic theologians in search of an Augustinian philosophy; he reads Augustine against a certain orthodox grain, attempting to locate (while ultimately recognizing the difficulty—if not impossibility—of naming or locating) the “bleeding body, the real body, [which] finds itself situated between two bloodless bodies, two bodies that do not bleed.”<sup>48</sup> Moreover, in his reconfiguration of Augustinian prayer, of “prayers and tears,” Caputo redirects philosophy toward a radical understanding of desire, one that initially takes shape in the *Confessiones* and which duly complicates belief as a form of desire or passion.<sup>49</sup>

Our contributors offer exciting new directions for the study of Augustinian desire and subjectivity; we hope the following essays might, in turn, spur further investigation with respect to feminism, sexuality and, in particular, sexual difference. Augustine might seem to offer cold dualisms in *De Civitate Dei* but holding such an unconditional view risks missing the radical potential of *De Trinitate*, particularly in its ontological determinations of difference and relation.<sup>50</sup> It is the hope of the Polygraph Collective that declaredly feminist interventions in politics, ethics, theology might take some of the concepts and arguments herein as productive points of departure toward new praxes and political imaginaries.

Given the radically different approaches to Augustine in the articles published in this volume, it is perhaps around the question of secularism that the contributions can best be understood. In particular, the title term “late secularism” warrants attention, particularly as it attempts to organize various and competing determinations of desire, subjectivity, temporality, and liberalism, of *Cities of Men* and *Cities of God*. Without attempting to reconcile the various projects within, we feel that this term names, in its ambiguity, a productive tension with respect to secularism and *De Civitate Dei*. It suspends secularism by pointing to its inevitable end while at the same time—in a manner reminiscent of the “late” in late capitalism—attempts to periodize secularism and its fellow ideological travelers as we round the corner toward a third Christian millennium. Declaredly post-secular political theologies operate under the assumption (right or wrong) that secularism might be overcome through the recuperation of truth and belief against liberalism and cynicism. But what would it mean to overcome the *saeculum*, the secular—human time itself as opposed to secularism, an historical process operating within that time? Or to live at the end of secular time? Augustine, in *De Civitate Dei*, gives us some provisional answers. The City of God, exists as a collective of its elect; for

the saints [it] is up above, although it produces citizens here below, and in their persons the City is on pilgrimage until the time of its kingdom comes. At that time it will assemble all those citizens as they rise again in their bodies; and then they will be given the promised kingdom, where with their Prince, ‘the king of ages,’ they will reign, world without end (*De Civitate Dei*, XV.2).<sup>51</sup>

“Late” secularism attempts to name the comportment to this median time, a time that is certainly complicated by Augustine’s ontological investigations in the *Confes-*

siones but which ultimately amounts to the time of the end, a time which shapes the political vision of *De Civitate Dei* against the expectation of the end, against an unconditional millenarian or dispensationalist program. For Augustine, the human community attempts to realize the City of God at the end of the *saeculum*, even if the end is *always* imminent. The promised kingdom takes shape in precisely that form—as a promise. Perhaps it is not difficult for even the most orthodox interlocutor to locate in Augustinianism a messianic or utopian promise that cuts against the grain of late secularist approaches to the millennium as a telos rather than an opening. Perhaps it is not with but through Augustine—through Augustinianism, in its points of contact with radical philosophy—that the “to come” is to come.

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- 1 Bob Dylan, “I Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine,” Track 3, *John Wesley Harding* (1967), Columbia Records, SACD 2003.
- 2 Maurice Blondel, “The Latent Resources in St. Augustine’s Thought,” trans. Fr. C. M. Leonard, *Saint Augustine* (Meridian Books: New York, 1957), 352–3. This work was first published by Sheed and Ward in 1930 under the title *A Monument to Saint Augustine*. It includes, among others, essays by Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 322.
- 4 Henri Marrou, *St. Augustine and his Influence Through the Ages*, trans. Patrick Hepburne-Scott (New York and London: Harper and Brothers and Longmans, 1957), 180. For the original language publication see Henri Marrou (with A. M. La Bonnardière), *Saint Augustin et l’augustinisme* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1955).
- 5 Blondel, 324.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 323, 324.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 352. See also Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 5, for a sophisticated methodological gloss on Blondel: “By Augustine’s own lights, the best literal reading of Augustine’s theology would be a new Augustinian theology. Indeed the best literal reading of Augustine would be a figurative reading of Augustine.”
- 8 Rozitchner takes issue with Henri Marrou in particular in *The Thing and the Cross*. See, in this issue, page 34.
- 9 Recent works with which we hope to place the present volume in conversation, and to which we owe much, include: *SIC V: Theology and the Political: The New Debate*, ed. Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Žižek (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2005); *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, ed. Hent De Vries and Lawrence Sullivan (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006); Hent De Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Hent De Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The*

*Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge, M.A.: MIT Press, 2003); Dominique Janicaud, et. al, *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology*, ed. John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, M.I.: W. B. Eerdmans, 2003); William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking About God Went Wrong* (Louisville, K.Y.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); and Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1987). This list is by no means exhaustive, nor are the works placed in any particular order.

- 10 The recent English-language publication of Jean-Luc Nancy's essays on Christianity and monotheism offers new insight into contemporary philosophical and secular impasses with religion as well as vital tools in confronting Schmittian determinations of "political theology"—a thesis on sovereignty which has little to do with theology, religion, or "the religious," per se but which nevertheless figures prominently in many contemporary discussions. See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 4–5, 175–6; and Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
- 11 See Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, ed. Aleida and Jan Assmann, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 79–154; Hent De Vries, *Minimal Theologies: Critiques of Secular Reason in Adorno and Levinas*, trans. Geoffrey Hale (Baltimore M.D.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005). See also, in this issue, Bosteels, 17; for a Jewish Augustine inflected through Derrida's mediations of the *Confessions*, see Caputo, 160–6.
- 12 See, in this issue, Bosteels, 17
- 13 See Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter" [*De Spiritu et Littera*], trans. P. Holmes, *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*, Volume I (New York: Random House, 1948), 461–518. See, in this issue Davis, 105.
- 14 In a sense, Augustine poses the intertwining of philosophy and doctrine as a problem or a matter for reflection in *De Civitate Dei*; the peculiarity of Augustine's record of the encounter between Platonism and the City of God, in its pilgrimage, lies in its historical character. See VIII.8–12 in Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1972).
- 15 See Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*, and Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 16 For Hanby, Descartes's—and, subsequently, modernity's—"res cogitans, thought to issue naturally from the seed of Augustine's thought, is a bastard offspring whose other parent is a stoic voluntarism that Augustine had once contested in the name of Christ and the Trinity." As a result of this conceptual perversion, Augustine has been unduly criticized as a proponent of modern subjectivity (which, Hanby argues, he fought proleptically against) and its own appropriations of Christian transcendence. See Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*, 3, 134–5, 178.

- 17 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine*, ed. Joanna Vecchiarelli Scott and Judith Chelius Stark (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952); Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1992), 218–30.
- 18 See Henri de Lubac, *Augustinisme et théologie moderne* (Paris: Aubier, 1965); Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine*, trans. L. E. M. Lynch (New York: Random House, 1960).
- 19 Caputo often looks to Augustine in his treatment of prayer, as in John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997) and in the interview in this issue.
- 20 See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Confession of Augustine*, trans. Richard Beardsworth (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
- 21 See Jacques Derrida, “Circumfessions” [in the original French, “Circonfession”], in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- 22 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, M.A. and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 207.
- 23 See Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), a translation of the 1985 French text *Le désenchantement du monde*; Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Gauri Viswanathan, *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, M.A.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007). I would also like to draw attention to a past issue of *Polygraph*—*Polygraph 12: World Religions and Media Culture* (2000), edited by Amardeep Singh—which critiqued approaches to religion as mere ideology or false consciousness in an effort to recognize faith and belief as challenges, at the level of everyday embodied experience, to secularism.
- 24 See Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London and New York: Verso, 1989) and his *The Puppet and the Dwarf*.
- 25 See Antonio Negri, *The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza’s Metaphysics and Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*.
- 26 I thank Luka Arsenjuk, Michelle Koerner, Alex Ruch, and Britt Rusert for their invaluable comments and suggestions on secularism and its discontents.
- 27 Asad’s approach in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, and Modernity* (2003) is to reveal the degree to which secularism and liberalism merely replace religious belief with a “universalizing reason...[f]or to make an enlightened space, the liberal must continually attack the darkness of the outside world that threatens to overwhelm that space.” His practical concern is to enable an anthropological description of secularist phenomena

that recognizes the overlap between secular and religious spheres, between the sacred and the profane; he also stands to unmask secularist investments in reason as forms of belief not unlike religious commitments, dependent upon foundational myths and appeals to transcendent categories. The secular, on the other hand, is not necessarily tied to this version of secularism. While it might, as either a noun or a verb, describe secularism and its attendant procedures it might also refer to the world in a more general manner. It is in this sense that Augustine describes the City of Man as proper to the *saeculum*, to the secular, insofar as it is rooted in determinately worldly materials and perspectives. Moreover, secular matters need not be entirely separate from religion or the religious; indeed, Asad is insightful in his methodological description of the secular as “a concept that brings together certain behaviors, knowledges, and sensibilities in modern life...showing how contingencies relate to changes in the grammar of concepts—that is, how the changes in concepts articulate changes in practices.” In other words, Asad’s determination of the secular neither privileges nor discounts the degree to which faith, belief and commitment stand to alter existing relations; in this sense, he attempts to combat reigning approaches to secularism which consign belief (and, specifically, *religious* belief) to an otherworldly realm, apart from politics. See Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 59, 25.

- 28 See John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*; John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); John D. Caputo (with Gianni Vattimo), *After the Death of God*, ed. Jeffrey W. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); James K. A. Smith, *Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-secular Theology* (Grand Rapids, M.I.: Baker Academic, 2004). See, in this issue: Caputo, 166; Davis, 104–5.
- 29 See James K. A. Smith, “Is Deconstruction an Augustinian Science? Augustine, Derrida, and Caputo on the commitments of philosophy,” *Religion With/Out Religion: The Prayers and Tears of John D. Caputo*, ed. James H. Olthuis (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 50–61.
- 30 See, in this issue, Caputo, 166.
- 31 See Michael Hanby’s *Augustine and Modernity* (2003), written in the spirit of Milbank’s important *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (1990).
- 32 See, in this issue, Tran, 71, 72.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 72.
- 34 See Gregory, 90. For a potentially fruitful encounter between an Augustinian politics premised upon love and a thorough investigation of “neighbor love,” one might read Eric Gregory’s essay with and against the pieces collected in *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*. See Slavoj Žižek, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- 35 Éric Alliez, *Capital Times*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 83.
- 36 See, in this issue, Geroux, 124. Moreover, in his conceptual debt to Hent de Vries’s “inverse” or “other theology,” one might consider Geroux’s Augustine as an intervention informed by Judaism, after John D. Caputo or Jacques Derrida, instead of radical atheism of the kind modeled by Alain Badiou. See De Vries, *Minimal Theologies*, 49–107, 601–57.
- 37 See, in this issue, Geroux, 123.
- 38 For a compelling complication of agency and the limits of the human body see Augustine’s meditations on confession and memory in the *Confessiones* 10.ii.2: “my God, my confession before you is made both in silence and not in silence. It is silent in that it is no audible

- sound; but in love it cries aloud. If anything I say to men is right, that is what you have first heard from me. Moreover, you hear nothing true from my lips which you have not first told me." See Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 179.
- 39 Bracketing the question of the degree to which investigations of subjectivity and materialism (in most cases here, standing in for an Augustinian approach to the body or the fallen world) should overlap, we leave it to the contributors to treat such matters topically.
- 40 See Charles Taylor, *The Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 127–142. See also Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity*, 8–12.
- 41 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 139–40.
- 42 See Fredric Jameson, "On the Sexual Production of Western Subjectivity; Or, Saint Augustine as a Social Democrat," *SIC 1: Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek (Durham, N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1996), 154–78; Jonathan Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 131–147; Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality, Volume 2*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1985).
- 43 See, in this issue, Rozitcher, 49.
- 44 See, in this issue, Davis, 108.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 118–9.
- 46 See, in this issue, Caputo, 166–71.
- 47 Maurice Blondel, "The Latent Resources in St. Augustine's Thought," 352–3.
- 48 See, in this issue, Caputo, 168.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 165–6.
- 50 Luce Irigaray moves toward such a challenging reading in *Speculum of the Other Woman*—particularly in "La Mystérique," although with explicit reference to mystical traditions of Christianity rather than Augustine. In a rather profound meditation on the Incarnation, in an idiom closer to Hans Urs Von Balthasar or Graham Ward than Hélène Cixous or Julia Kristeva, Irigaray identifies Christ as an interruption of homosexuality, as "[t]hat most female of men, the Son," who through a "love [that] conquers every thing that has already been said" affirms sexual difference. Amy Hollywood, in her exegesis of "La Mystérique," recognizes the degree to which "Irigaray links mysticism, God, the flesh, and sexual difference, implying that any viable conception of the divine must be tied to the body," which, in turn, is inextricable from an apt understanding of sexual difference. In making this move to connect corporeal and ontological registers—without, of course, *opposing* the two, as a sort of crude duality between substances—one might be led back to *De Trinitate* and to Augustine's absolute insistence on the Incarnation: the joining, in hypostatic union, without admixture, of God and man. Such a path, through feminist philosophy and sexual difference, is only one among many possibilities; Irigaray and Hollywood both pose problems for Augustine and his interlocutors and, at the very least, force an encounter between Augustinianism and feminism—an encounter between theories of desire, materialism, and the resources or limitations of trinitarian Christian philosophy. See Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), 199. See also Graham Ward, *Cities of God* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 81–202, for a thorough and striking investigation of the erotic resources of christology; Amy Hollywood, *Sensible Ecstasy: Mysticism, Sexual Difference, and the Demands of History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002), 187.
- 51 Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1972), 596.