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The Confessions of Augustine's Flesh:
Counter-Conducts Overwhelming to Pastoral Power in Christian Conversion

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Abstract of the Thesis

**The Confessions of Augustine's Flesh:
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in

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In his 1978 lectures at the College de France, *Security, Territory, Population*, Michel Foucault shifts his analysis of power by arguing for pastoral power as both the prelude to governmentality and as the decisive moment in the constitution of the Western subject. If the history of the Christian pastorate involves “the entire history of procedures of human individualization in the West (184),” then, Foucault argues, there has never been a revolt against pastoral power because such a revolt would be a revolt against the constitution of the self, that is to say against self-consciousness. If the revolt against pastoral power is a revolt against self-consciousness, then I argue that the psychagogic-spiritual, as opposed to rhetorical-theological, practices of religious conversion may be where counter-conducts (already understood to be subsumed within Christian pastoral power) may also overwhelm the Christian pastorate.

In his conversion to Christianity Augustine employs techniques that are ‘overwhelming’ to pastoral power, but are never actually an attempt to overcome pastoral power. In the specific experiences recalled by Augustine in his *Confessions*, through the various non-discrete phases of his conversion he takes up what Foucault calls counter-conducts. Through asceticism (especially in the author’s struggle with concupience); through the establishment of a new religious community (as a Manichean catechumen) through mysticism (in the doctrine of ‘inner illumination’); through the exegesis of scripture (significantly in the voluntary reading of Romans 13:12-14 prior to becoming a catechumen of the Christian Church); and through eschatological belief (specifically in the a-millennial conception of the return of Christ), Augustine, author of the *Confessions*, emerges as a convert to Christianity.

Towards Foucault's call for genealogies of pastoral power and towards the call of philosophy understood as ethico-poetic praxes of *Eros* captured in the phrase *epimeleia heautou*, this thesis will investigate Augustine of Hippo's conversion to Christianity as an enactment of Foucault's 'counter-conducts.' I will argue, through exegesis of Augustine's *Confessions*, that this parrhesiastic document is simultaneously a narrative of psychagogic practices which reflects Augustine's profound ascesis towards Christian subjectivation as well as a document of the counter-conducts that overwhelm Christian pastoral power while never revolting against it.

As a result of his pluralistic and deeply personal approach towards conversion, Augustine's recorded experiences exemplify how 'new' technologies (or at least new modalities of old technologies) are established within the Christian pastorate. It is in and through the event of his conversion that Augustine also emerges as a leader of the orthodox Church and simultaneously as an instigator for later revolts against it—arguably, for example, as an inspiration for the leaders of the Protestant Reformation. If there can be no revolution against pastoral power because it is always instituting, circumscribing, and subsuming new forms of resistance on its own, then perhaps we can best understand where counter-conducts are most dangerous to the practices of power by understanding where some practices actually fail to resist power-effects, while simultaneously transforming power-relations.

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Chapter 1

Pastoral Power

Foucault begins a genealogy of Western subjectivation through a genealogy of the arts of governing men that turns on the notion of the pastorate. Known to the Hellenic-Roman West primarily through Hebraic and Mediterranean cultures, the pastorate is a process of exchange between individuals where some guide others to salvation, where some ensure that others submit their will, and where some will make a commitment to teach other individuals the truth.¹ The pastorate, or pastoral power, circulates beneath the history of governmentality as an even wider, permeable network of apparatuses that already connects government to the art of governing men through the circulation of those epistemologies and ontologies that will inform the conditions for subjectivation in the West. Specifically, the Christian pastorate, according to Foucault, adds complexity to earlier Judaic-Mediterranean processes of pastoral power by requiring new layers of specificity for the government of men. The four additional principles that Christian pastorate adheres to are:

1. Principle of Analytical Responsibility: The Pastor (understood as God, or, additionally in Christianity the representatives of God, i.e. bishops) must account for every sheep, that is, the pastor as shepherd is responsible for every action of each individual.
2. Principle of Exhaustive and Instantaneous Transfer of Merits and Faults: The Pastor is responsible for every act of every sheep as if it were his own act--his very life and freedom, that is, his soul will be judged according to the acts of the sheep in his care.
3. Principle of Sacrificial Reversal: Pastor must be willing to risk his biological life and spiritual soul to save the lives and souls of others.
4. Principle of Alternate Correspondence: Pastor's faults and weaknesses contribute to the edification of his sheep and are part of the dangerous, courageous, and constant process of seeking and finding salvation.²

Overall, the Christian pastor is not a magistrate or administer of the law who sits on high and remains separate from his flock as in the juridical model inherited from Judaic culture. Nor is he a weaver of societal unity who ensures public harmony like the Athenian statesman. Instead, the Christian pastor is "essentially a doctor who has to take responsibility for each soul and for the

¹ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave, 2004, 168.

² Ibid. 171

sickness of each individual soul”³ in a relationship of submission where someone (God and/or pastor)⁴ is directly responsible for both the spiritual freedom and daily life of another.⁵ This is a relationship in which spiritual direction is paramount; the pastor must not only teach the truth and the techniques for a correct life leading to salvation. He (and later, she) is also responsible for directing the conscience of each, of directing each individual’s attitudes and behaviors in all aspects of day-to-day life. But in Christianity the God-pastor-doctor is sometimes God and it is sometimes those who speak for him. This arrangement opens up the possibility for spontaneous interpretation by those mortals, who are not already recognized as authorities on salvation, to interpret the nature of divine will, and on the specific practices that will offer access to the truth. Thus, in the Christian pastorate, ontology and epistemology, pedagogy and psychagogy, remain linked.

Furthermore, the actual conditions for accessing truth inform the revelation of truth itself. And insofar as conditions for access to and revelation of the truth are bound, there are implications for the Western subject, the history of governmentality and for philosophical thought, in general. In Frédéric Gros’s 2007 address to the American Philosophical Association he offers that in the later course lectures Foucault offers a new conception of subjectivity. Gros argues that by the end of his work the Western subject, for Foucault, is an ethical self who self-styles his freedom as a “set of practices rather than as a fundamental nature.”⁶ Gros continues, “[W]hat Foucault understands as the ethical self is a subject that experiences its own transformation, through historical and determined procedures. For instance: work on oneself, introspection, asceticism, conversion, etc.”⁷

So, if knowledge and truth depend on another in this way, and individuals (after the emergence of the Christian pastorate) can and must spontaneously offer interpretations of this interdependence to other subjects, then the circulation of power-effects through sovereign objects and institutions are always vulnerable to resistance from practices employed by individual subjects. Together, those conditions for knowledge tied to the practices of the self that require constant care and lead to revelation of truth for construction of subject can be defined within the history of the care of the self as spirituality. Below, I hope to begin the genealogy of spirituality in the West in order to show how philosophy as spirituality holds a privileged position in the history of the Western subject.

³ Ibid. 174

⁴ This ambiguity is necessary for what allows for both universal and direct access to the truth in Christianity. This direct access to the truth through belief in the Christ event and living the Christian way of life that necessarily arises from that belief is what allows for Augustine’s *eros*. Here, Foucault offers that we might understand *eros* as the movement or transformation in the condition of the subject or the movement of enlightenment at work in the subject. It is *eros* as *askesis* or that work on the self by the self. It is an ongoing and constant transformation of the self by the self.

⁵ Ibid., 175

⁶ Frédéric Gros, “Subjectivity, Truth, Philosophy: On Michel Foucault’s Courses at the College de France” Presentation at the American Philosophical Association Meeting, Baltimore, Maryland, December 29, 2007.

⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 2

Philosophy as Spiritual Knowledge of the Self

Pierre Hadot explains that philosophy, at one time, considers itself as nothing less than spiritual practices, wherein these practices are not merely ‘thought’ on some cognitive level, distinct from spirit, but, are understood to concern individuals’ “entire psychism”⁸--that is, their entire being. Ancient philosophy, or certain philosophical schools of ancient Greece engage in *askesis*, or spiritual practices, which in large part ‘teach’ psychagogic techniques to cultivate attentive consciousness and the healing of the soul. In regards to the role of the philosophy in everyday life Epictetus says: “You must not separate yourself from these principles; don’t sleep, eat, drink, or converse with other men without them.” And at least for the Stoics, Epicureans and the ancient Cynics “philosophy did not consist in teaching abstract theory--much less in the exegesis of texts but rather in the art of living.”⁹

The psychagogic practices of certain ancient schools including the Stoics, Cynics, Pythagorean, and Neo-Platonists mean to transform the life of man already understood to be dominated by his passions. Driven by his libido, paralyzed by daily worries, and suffering from fear and death and the unknown, philosophical askesis offered therapeutic practices for helping man, not only to live with fewer worries, but also to *transform* his own limited perspective on the rational and universal. This transformation, the transformation of his soul renders him capable of being what he had not been prior to taking up these new practices.

To ask the classical philosophical question of “How can I have access to the truth?” was, for these schools, never separate from asking “what transformations in the being of the subject are necessary for access to the truth?”¹⁰ Whether this universal vision is seen from the point of view of nature (Wisdom, rationality) or as a transcendent form (the Christian God, the Manichean Kingdom of Light) askesis addresses the “metamorphosis of our inner self.”¹¹ and thereby requires the participation of the guided soul in its own self-styled processes of veridiction. This participation usually comes in the form of the practices of meditation and exegesis as will be discussed below.

Bifurcation of Gnothi and Epimeleia Heatou

Philosophy in Greek society is never separate from one’s self--to do philosophy is to sleep, eat, drink and concern yourself with others according to the principles of your philosophy. Foucault argues that while ancient psychagogic practices, or practices that mean to be persuasive to the conduct of the soul, were heavily linked to pedagogy; psychagogic practices in

⁸ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 82.

⁹ Ibid., 83

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France, 1981-1982*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2005) 17.

¹¹ Ibid.

Christianity, on the other hand, “will unhook psychagogy and pedagogy by requiring the psychagogized soul, the guided soul, to express a singular truth; a truth that only it can tell, that it alone holds.

Ancient askesis is often directed towards *apatheia*--the absence of passions--for the sake of preparing the soul. Renunciation of self is seen as a necessary condition for access to the truth and it is a spiritual activity inherited by what will come to be taken up as one mode of the Christian way of life.¹² But certainly self-renunciation in Christianity is not the same as philosophical askesis and there is a major break in history with radically different demands made on the soul and body by the early Church founders. The essence of the Christian pastorate is the obedience of one individual to another wherein obedience takes the form of obedience for the sake of obedience itself.¹³ That is, obedience in Christianity is an obedience made, first, for the sake of the truth and not solely for the transformation of the individual. Also, the Christian pastorate is separate from the history of philosophy because the relationship of obedience to a pastor is one that is ongoing and constantly in play throughout an individual’s life.

But, Foucault writes, “when one submits to a philosophy professor in Greece, it is in order to succeed in becoming master to oneself at a certain moment, that is to say, to reverse this relationship of obedience and to become one’s own master.”¹⁴ However, in the title essay of his book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Hadot characterizes philosophy for the ancients as an existential activity, as a “mode of existing in the world, which had to be practiced at each instant, and the goal of which was to transform the whole of the individual’s life.”¹⁵ So what is happening here? The Hellenic politician acts as neither a weaver or ship captain who guides the city-state. But by the sixteenth century, the prince acts as a functionary who arranges things to their suitable ends such that his role corresponds with the Christian pastor as a shepherd of souls. So how do ancient philosophical practices and Christianity come to index one another as a spiritual practices for transforming the entire life of a person, if there is no evidence for this transference through Greek political life: Hadot explains:

Since its inception, Christianity has presented itself as a *philosophia* insofar as it assimilated into itself the traditional practices of spiritual exercises. We see this occurring in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, and monasticism. [But]...(W)ith the advent of Scholasticism...we find a clear distinction being drawn between *theologia* and *philosophia*. Theology became conscious of its autonomy qua supreme science, while philosophy was emptied of its spiritual exercises which, from now on, were relegated to Christian mysticism and ethics. Reduced to the rank of a “handmaid of theology,” philosophy’s role was henceforth to furnish theology with conceptual--and hence purely theoretical--material.¹⁶

In one example of how Christianity has assimilated philosophy understood as spiritual exercises, Foucault cites Saint Gregory Nazianzen, a mid-fourth century Christian contemporary to Augustine, as the first to define this art of governing men by the pastorate as *techne* (art, craft, technique) and *episteme* (knowledge, science), where pastoral power is understood as those

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 175.

¹⁴ Ibid. 177.

¹⁵ Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 265.

¹⁶ Ibid. 107.

techniques and knowledge useful to governing souls.¹⁷ I argue that the reassignment of truth (wherein the Christ event offers itself as *the* truth) that applies the principles and techniques for circulating pastoral power for the correct governance of men is, in fact, the initial organization of all of the themes and power-effects continually operating throughout Western culture.

Thus, the history of Christian pastorate is a history in which theology elides philosophy to become that “art by which some people were taught the government of others, and others were taught to let themselves be governed.”¹⁸ Further, the history of governmentality must become the genealogy of the Western subject in that the practices of the Christian pastorate, inherited from philosophy, are the first to define and then continue to determine the circulation of power in the West through direction of individuals in every aspect of life both prior to and now shot through the arts of government.

So, at first the history of governmentality appears to be something distinctive from the pastorate in that we typically connect the history of governmentality in the West to the idea of the Greek politician as weaver¹⁹ or as a functionary administering to the city-state. We do not tend to think of the statesman as a shepherd of men, but as a magistrate.²⁰ However, at this crucial stage in his thinking on the hermeneutics of the Western subject, in the *Security, Territory, Population* lectures, Foucault does recognize some limited importance in the phenomena of the Christian pastorate as it relates to the history governmentality:

“...the idea of pastoral power...was introduced into the Western world by way of the Christian Church. The Christian Church coagulated all of these themes of pastoral power into precise mechanisms and definite institutions, it organized a pastoral power that was both specific and autonomous, it implanted its apparatuses within the Roman Empire, and at the heart of the Empire it organized a type of power that I think it unknown to any other civilization.”²¹

Here, it is clear that the Christian Church begins to attach itself to Rome in a unique and irreversible way such that the apparatuses of the Church become the apparatuses of the Roman empire or the *philosophia* of the ancient world becomes the theology of the Christian West.

Although at this point Foucault does not see an overlap between the history of governmentality and the history of the Christian pastorate originating in the ancient world,²²

¹⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 150.

¹⁸ Ibid. 151

¹⁹ Ibid. 145.

²⁰ On Foucault’s exegesis of the myth in *The Statesman*: “Politics begins when the world turns in the opposite direction [away from its natural happy course]. When the world turns in the opposite direction, in fact, the deity withdraws, and difficult times begin. For sure, the gods do not completely abandon men, but they only help them in an indirect way, by giving them fire, the [arts], and so forth. They are no longer really the shepherds who were everywhere and immediately present in the first phase of humanity. The gods have withdrawn and men are obliged to direct each other...[However]these men...are themselves a part of humanity and therefore cannot be seen as shepherds” Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 145; “At any rate, I do not think that the positive analysis of power on the basis of the form of shepherding and of the pastor-flock relationship is truly found in major political thought.” Ibid. 147; “...Wide gap between the government or pastoral direction of individuals and communities, and the development of arts of government, the specification of a field of political intervention, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” Ibid. 165

²¹ Ibid. 130

²² “There is, of course, the process that, dismantling feudal structures, organizes and sets up the great territorial, administrative, and colonial states. Then there is a completely different movement, but with complex interactions

Instead, what he does see is the institution of the pastorate inserting itself into Western hermeneutics as a paradox. ‘Despite his bloodlust and history of conquer,’ “Western man has learned to see himself as a sheep in a flock...he has learned to ask for salvation from a shepherd (*pasteur*) who sacrifices himself for him.” It is here²³ where Foucault first indicates the beginning of a turn in his focus away from the project of genealogies that expose the permeability of institutional objects to a creative investigation for understanding how the power-effects that circulate through and around these permeable objects also have a constituting effect on their ostensible subjects. Most importantly Foucault realizes what his genealogies have in common--that the disciplinary, psychiatric, and the various techniques of governmentality inform the practices of how to care for the self and how to care for others which becomes synonymous with the knowledge(s) of self or the most familiar exhortation from Western philosophy to “know thyself.”

Then in 1982 with the course lectures titled the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault makes the connection: “Governing” being governed,” and “taking care of the self” form a sequence, a series, whose long and complex history extends up to the establishment of pastoral power in the Christian Church in the third and fourth centuries “...[T]he idea that one must put a technology of the self to work in order to have access to the truth is shown in Ancient Greece, and what’s more in many, if not all, civilizations, by a number of practices...”²⁴ And in his lectures from the following year, *The Government of Self and Others*, Foucault develops the genealogy of the long-standing, plural and ambiguous notion of parrhesia to “show how the individual is constituted as subject in relationship to self and the relationship to others”²⁵ through the “truth telling procedures of government and the constitution of [an] individual as subject for himself and for others.”²⁶

Through exegesis of ancient Western philosophical texts where the use of the notion of parrhesia first appears, Foucault is able to trace the notion of parrhesia from its origins as political parrhesia--the privilege or right to tell the truth to others for the purpose of guiding the conduct of others--to spiritual parrhesia--the obligation to expose or confess oneself to another towards salvation understood as an intimate transformation of the self. Parrhesia, I think, is one of the practices of the self that make clear how circulation of power effects are always vulnerable to resistance by technologies or practices employed by individuals. And parrhesia is not only defined negatively here. Spiritual parrhesia in particular, is a tactic and a space of entry “for modifying the relations of power and the bringing into play of theoretical elements which morally justify and give a basis to these tactics in rationality.”²⁷

I would like to show some of the ways in which it is very hard to demarcate the directionality of the spiritual practices or *askesis* in philosophy and in Christianity that are both active and overlapping in late antiquity. Through the event of Augustine’s conversion to

with the first--there is no question of analyzing all this here--that, with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, question how one wishes to be spiritually directed here on earth for one’s salvation.” Ibid., 89

²³ As well as in *The Government of Self and Others* and in a list of books that must at least include: *The History of Sexuality* series, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, and *The Courage of Truth*.

²⁴ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 45-46.

²⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College de France, 1982-1983*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 42.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 216

Christianity and specifically through the parrhesiatic document of Augustine's *Confessions* (probably completed in 398²⁸) we witness the subjectivation of the Western subject right at the crux of what is not at all the transfer of power between the Roman empire and the Christian West, but the multi-directional and spontaneous transference of spiritual practices in late antiquity (*philosophia*) with what will eventually come to make up the de-centralized theologies of the early Church. Here, I take up Hadot's definition of theology as "the rational exegesis of a sacred text"²⁹ where it is especially crucial to remember that for Augustine and the early Church leaders, exegesis was not simply the production of a rational systems of thought but is also a spiritual practice, in itself, oriented towards revealing the truth and guiding the direction of the soul.³⁰ Towards an understanding of Foucault's work as a genealogy of the subject and the "practices of the self,"³¹ Mendieta writes, that:

"[F]or Foucault, Augustine marks the transition from late antiquity from a preoccupation with desire that is distributed among different techniques: from diet, to physical exercise, to with whom and when to have sex to a "doctrinal unification" that made it possible to put together under one theoretical overview questions of death and immortality, with questions of desire, sex, marriage and the "conditions of access to truth...With Augustine, what had been dietary and medical concerns become the litmus test of the sinfulness and salvation of the subject."³²

The event of Augustine's conversion or series of conversions culminates in his taking up the Christian way of life under Bishop Ambrose who baptizes him in 386-387 CE. His exegesis of Paul's letters to the Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians and other new Christian communities throughout the Mediterranean guides Augustine's conduct of himself. That is, through exegetical interpretation of biblical scripture, Augustine guides his soul towards salvation or what he calls the "true Light [which] is one, and [in which] all are one who see it and love it."³³ But, I argue, the event of Augustine's conversion cannot simply be understood as succumbing to the doctrines of a new belief system. The doctrines he takes up unify not only the views of the newly forming Christian pastorate but also insofar as the Christian pastorate takes up those doctrines and practices of late antiquity, specifically certain Gnostic practices of the self, Augustine's conversion, the transformations of his soul, must also be understood as a gathering of earlier conversions through the Christian-Gnostic-Neo-Platonist practices already circulating in late antiquity as well as through "Cynic scandal" of exposing himself to several modes of veridiction. The gnostic tradition and the care of the self which requires Augustine to go outside of the

²⁸ Introduction in Augustine of Hippo, *Augustine: Confessions*, trans. Albert C. Outler (Dallas: Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, 1955), 4

²⁹ Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 72

³⁰ Or as James O'Donnell writes in his article on Augustine's *Confessions*: "What was at stake was more than words. The 'truth' of which Augustine spoke was not merely a quality of a verbal formula, but veracity itself, a quality of a living human person. Augustine 'made the truth'--in this sense, became himself truthful--when he found a pattern of words to say the true thing well. But both the 'truth' that Augustine made and the 'light' to which it led were for him scripturally guaranteed epithets of Christ..." O'Donnell, James J. "An Introduction to Augustine's *Confessions*," accessed April 14, 2011, <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/introconf.html>.

³¹ Eduardo Mendieta, "The Practice of Freedom" in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts*, ed. Dianna Taylor (Durham: Acumen, 2011), 112.

³² Ibid. 117.

³³ Augustine of Hippo, *Augustine: Confessions*, trans. Albert C. Outler (Dallas: Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, 1955), Book 10, Chapter 34.52.

slowly forming codes of a Christian way of life, this series of modes of veridiction, are inspired by his love for an intimate and eternal wisdom. That is, Augustine's conversion to Christianity must be read through the spiritual practices of the philosopher still concerned with the care of the self.

While Foucault creates a distinction between spirituality--the modalities in which the subject's being is transformed to have access to the truth, and philosophy--the cognitive attempt to determine the conditions for access to the truth--a major objection arises to this distinction. "The whole gnostic movement is precisely a movement that overloads the act of knowledge (*connaissance*)...with all the conditions and structure of a spiritual act. The gnosis is, in short, is that which tends to transfer, to transpose, the forms and effects of spiritual experience [ontological effects] into the act of knowledge itself."³⁴ In Augustine's *Confessions* we witness just the sort of ambiguity between gnostic theology or philosophical spirituality as an act of knowledge that is overloaded with the conditions for salvation.

Through his deep and embattled experiences with the Manicheans, a rouge Christian sect, in his transformative experiences towards the search for wisdom inherited from the Platonists, Augustine's conversion is an example of the way in which pastoral power demands submission to a unique authority, subsumes techniques of submission which may be external to it, and is also overwhelmed by those same counter-conducts through a courage on par with the ancient Cynics who abandon society in order to return with the truth of the true life. In the *Confessions* Augustine narrates his own memories and imagination to vividly show the deep anxiety of his inner spiritual turmoil and the logos of his heart which will eventually and uniquely unite him with a rationality and truth which depend least of all on privileging any particular doctrine over the practices of spiritual care of himself.

Through allegorical exegesis that connects the pastoral care he receives to his own real life experiences and a faith which is constantly informed and reshaped by a uniquely crafted set of practices, Augustine is finally baptized in the Church by way of personally managing the conditions for the truth in a care of the self which depends on relations with a plurality of others. Put another way, ontology and epistemology are depend on one another in such a way that rational submission to the truth *cannot* circulate without defacing or reassigning the value of doctrine in question.

Augustine's conversion, which will come to take on inarguable significance to the history and doctrines of the orthodox Christian Church is *also* an event which prefigures what it may mean to overwhelm the Christian pastorate. His uniquely constituted practices of spiritual conversion are those very revolts against self-consciousness which lead both towards acceptance of the power effects of Christianity as well as towards practices of veridiction and what Foucault calls the new "culture of the self"³⁵ by which we will come to define the Western subject.

The deeply personal and spiritually risky process of transformation that engulfs Augustine and out of which he emerges with the conviction of his beliefs and a resolution of his will become most evident in Augustine's struggle with concupience, or absolute chastity.

³⁴ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 16.

³⁵ "[W]e can speak of culture...[1.] when there is a set of values with a minimum degree of coordination, subordination, and hierarchy...and these values are given as both universal and also as only accessible to a few... [2.] when a number of precise and regular forms of conduct are necessary for individuals to be able to reach these values...effort and sacrifice are required...[3.] when regular techniques and procedures that are developed, validated, transmitted and taught...[4.]and when [those techniques and procedures] are associated with a field of knowledge (*savoir*)."³⁵ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 179.

Representative of one of the most dramatic and intimate trials of the human condition, Augustine's struggle with desire was not only his own, but remains symbolic of the all the struggles innate to the human condition. In the *Confessions* he tells the everyday and innermost experience of his life to confess his innermost secrets to himself, to God, and to us--his ostensibly universal readership. Thus, Augustine confesses the truth to himself for himself and not only for his own salvation, but also for the salvation of others. Herein, lies the multi-directionality of spiritual knowledge. It is the knowledge of epimeleia heatou, knowledge of the care of the self for the care of the other, as well as knowledge that cannot exist outside of relationship to other.

Chapter 3

Pastoral Power: Counter-Conducts in the Christian Pastorate

If I could have believed, I might have been cured, and, with the sight of my soul cleared up, it might in some way have been directed toward thy truth, which always abides and fails in nothing. But, just as it happens that a man who has tried a bad physician fears to trust himself with a good one, so it was with the health of my soul, which could not be healed except by believing. But lest it should believe falsehoods, it refused to be cured, resisting thy hand, who hast prepared for us the medicines of faith and applied them to the maladies of the whole world, and endowed them with such great efficacy.³⁶

This excerpt from Book Six of the *Confessions* captures a high point of anxiety for Augustine in his struggle for faith. Upon examining his inner self, he admits that his will refuses to submit itself to the truth. The theology of the Manicheans and the words of the Christian scripture (as he understands them at this point) are likened to a bad physician's prescription and the patient simply cannot continue to take the same medicine for his ailing soul if it does not show itself to have improved or cultivated him for the truth that he seeks. It is question of both the right conditions for access to the truth and the correct condition of his soul to access that truth. Towards an understanding of the games of veridiction in the pastorate, Foucault must question what the points of resistance working within and against Christian pastoral power.

However, these resistances are not revolts against or a show of disobedience towards some sovereign because this resistance does not mean to overcome Christianity. Instead, Augustine's resistance may be better understood as what Foucault calls counter-conducts. Here Foucault is interested in the way that individuals go outside of the centralized, hierarchical and orthodox centers for guidance. By counter-conducts Foucault means to refer to the active sense of the word conduct, "in the sense of struggle against the processes implemented for conducting others."³⁷ Although for Foucault, it is not until the Middle Ages where five classifiable forms of counter-conduct develop, I think that we can see a similar experience in the way that Augustine works on himself. Counter-conducts "tend to redistribute, reverse, nullify, and partially or totally discredit pastoral power in the systems of salvation, obedience, [and] truth."³⁸ The five counter-conducts include:

1. asceticism - close combat of the individual with himself which challenges the complexity of obedience because the monastic, for example, is responsible for his own obedience...the ascetic with his suffering, with his own refusals, his own disgust, and his own

³⁶Before Ambrose introduces him to allegorical exegesis Augustine's confesses that his will was both set against the Manichean theology and against Christian scripture on the immateriality of God and the materiality of Christ. In Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 6, Chapter 4.6.

³⁷Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population* 201.

³⁸Ibid. 204.

impossibilities...becomes the guide of his own asceticism... and through...direct experience...he feels pushed to overcome it.”³⁹ towards the mastery over his passions.

2. establishment of a new religious community - similar to asceticism, new religious communities who also claim to be Christian but by breaking away from the Church also tend to complicate existing pastoral hierarchies.

3. mysticism - offers a different game of visibility; by offering direct and immediate revelation of God to the soul mysticism reorganizes the practices or techniques of veridiction; in mysticism, “the soul sees itself. It sees itself in God and it sees God in itself.”⁴⁰ “...mysticism develops on the basis of, and in the form of, absolutely ambiguous experiences, secrets in the night that are simultaneously illuminations.”⁴¹

4. exegesis of scripture - texts can “short-circuit”⁴² the pastorate... “Because the Scripture is a text that speaks for itself and has no need of pastoral relay...[R]eading becomes a spiritual act that puts the faithful in the presence of God’s word and finds its law and guarantee in this inner illumination.”⁴³

5. eschatological belief - disqualifies the pastor’s role as the sole authority that can claim that the times are fulfilled or in the process of being fulfilled.

While Foucault locates examples of struggles against and within the pastorate from Middle Ages forward⁴⁴--he cites the Reformation led by Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century as the most notable employment of counter-conducts--I think that we can locate the counter-conducts to pastoral power in the event of Augustine’s conversion--even before there is an established Church or a clearly unified pastorate in the form of the locatable object of the Roman Catholic Church of the middle ages. If counter-conducts are those practices of conducting the soul in which “a whole new attitude, religious comportment, way of doing things and being, and a whole new way of relating to God, obligations, morality...or...civil life”⁴⁵ then it seems that Augustine’s confessions understood as a psychagogic exercise of parrhesia (persuasion of his soul by telling the truth) which fits the criteria for counter-conducts that are overwhelming to pastoral power. Through asceticism, especially in his struggle with continence; through the establishment of a new religious community in his conceptualization of the ‘City of God’; through mysticism, in the doctrine of ‘inner illumination wherein only he can overcome his doubt through the struggle with and against his own will; through the exegesis of scripture, significantly in the voluntary reading and personal exegesis of Romans 13:13; and through eschatological belief, specifically in the a-millennial conception of the return of Christ. Augustine, in his authorial function, as parrhesiazesthai, emerges as a convert to Christianity but also exemplifies the way in which power is subsumed and still overwhelmed by resistances to it.

³⁹ Ibid. 205

⁴⁰ Ibid. 212

⁴¹ Ibid. 212

⁴² Ibid. 213

⁴³ Ibid. 213

⁴⁴ Ibid. 204

⁴⁵ Ibid. 204

Below I hope to show how Augustine's (proto)counter-conducts narrated in his *Confessions* offer vivid examples of the ways in which spiritual parrhesia, as recounted and exercised in that document, are both overwhelming to early pastoral power and actually at the heart of what we will later call a Western culture of the self.

Chapter 4

Care of the Self in Late Antiquity: Christianity's Struggle against Benevolent Dualism

In his book *Body and Society*, on continence or sexual renunciation in early Christianity, Peter Brown explains how in late antiquity, body and soul are coupled in a "benevolent

dualism”⁴⁶ wherein the determination about the human body’s proper connection to its animal nature is codified according to the social and political aims of Rome. The aims of these social codes in second century Rome, which are put into effect primarily to direct the conduct of metropolitan elites, are informed by the empire’s goal to keep the population growing and healthy by encouraging intercourse under the proper conditions. Marriage is the setting for healthy intercourse and frequent intercourse, contrary to contemporary beliefs about ancient society, is not the norm. In fact it was looked down on. Orgasm is considered to be a dangerous act on par with an epileptic fit and “the virile man was the one who lost little or no seed.”⁴⁷ Benevolent dualism means that on the one hand, the fleshy human body is accepted for its biological nature in the great chain of being between gods and beast. But, on the other hand, any dangers to the loss of vitality can be countered by complex and civilizing medical and spiritual regimes. “An unaffected symbiosis of body and soul was the aim of both medicine and philosophical [read: askesistic] exhortation. The body must not be permitted to force its needs upon the tranquil mind.”⁴⁸ To maintain control over the passions--anger, anxiety, desire, was foremost.

Brown makes an important correction to contemporary attitudes on the sexual openness in late antiquity when he explains that “[I]t is not sufficient to talk of the rise of Christianity in the Roman world simply in terms of a shift from a less to a more repressive society. “What was at stake was a subtle change in the perception of the body itself.”⁴⁹ That men and women of later centuries would come to view their bodies differently is of equal importance to the fact that more exacting prohibitions on the care and use of the body do emerge in the Christian era. So, as Clement of Alexandria (a second century Christian) explains ‘while the Greek philosophers teach the resistance of passion and “train the instincts to pursue rational goals”... for Christians, “our ideal is not to experience desire at all.”⁵⁰

In fact, Brown writes, the correct use of the body and mind turned towards the protection and productivity of vital spirit is “one of the many notions that gave male continence a firm foothold in the folk wisdom of the world in which Christian celibacy would soon be preached.”⁵¹ Thus, in late antiquity there is a sea change in how the body is viewed. But co-incident with this sea change is a continuation of the myth or fantasy of vitality, a continuation of the long-held belief that through healthy practices for mind and body one can engage in *paideia*---the forming or education of the self⁵²--towards the goal of *apatheia*--absence of the passions.

⁴⁶ Peter Brown, *Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 26

⁴⁷ Brown, *Body and Society*, 19

⁴⁸ Ibid. 27

⁴⁹ Ibid. 29-30

⁵⁰ Ibid. 31

⁵¹ Ibid. 19

⁵² In the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, in Foucault’s exegesis on the *Alcibiades* he highlights Socrates answer to *Alcibiades* after Socrates points out to him that if he does not know what harmony of the city-state is, then how can he govern and Socrates comforts him with these words: “you are young and have time, not to learn, but to take care of yourself (127e)” Foucault understands this as the intersection between care of the self and governing: “between pedagogy understood as apprenticeship and this other form of culture, of *paideia*...which revolved around what could be called the culture of the self, the formation of the self...in this gap, this interplay, this proximity that a number of problems rush in which concern, it seems to me, the whole interplay between philosophy and spirituality in the Ancient world. Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 46.

Chapter 5

Paul's "New Creation" in the Spirit: The Origins of the Christian Pastorate in Late Antiquity

Upon weighing the benefits of what effect a youthful marriage would have had on his soul—namely that by marrying during adolescence he would have set boundaries for his desire to help him to achieve the lawful satisfaction of his desire through orderly procreation—Augustine is guided by Paul’s words to the Corinthians and recalls that... “[o]n the other hand, “[H]e that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but he that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.””⁵³ Augustine exhorts himself by saying “I should have listened more attentively to these words, and, thus having been “made a eunuch for the Kingdom of Heaven’s sake,”⁵⁴ I would have with greater happiness expected thy embraces.”⁵⁴ So it is not only Paul’s words, but also Augustine’s *attention* to himself which create the conditions for his access to the truth. Presented here as heeding God’s call towards truth over the ‘things of the world’ Paul brings Augustine’s attention to himself.

Here we witness Augustine’s recollection of his encounter with Paul’s concept of the “new creation” or a human community bound only by their beliefs in the return of Christ without the palpable rituals around birth, marriage and death that many other religions share.⁵⁵ And instead of submitting to Roman social codes or a contemporary Mediterranean lifestyle (wherein he would probably pursue a career as a professor of Rhetoric and eventually choose a socially suitable wife); Augustine, through his own concentration, becomes aware that the Christian god offers him another life--a life completely transformed by belief in the event and meaning of the Christian resurrection. For Paul, “chastity announced that time was running short, that [human] Time would soon stop for the time of the New Creation.”⁵⁶

Total chastity makes Christianity a unique and universal religion in the first centuries. By directing individuals to practice total abstinence, Christianity exposes how all humans are vulnerable to sexual desire. And it is a religion that offers universal access to the truth specifically through the practice of confessing one’s belief in the truth of the Christ event to others. Through Christian continence individuals are simultaneously relieved of learning confusing and elaborate social codes for managing desire and they can also participate bodily in guiding their souls towards salvation. Another way to put this is that Paul founds the tenet of Analytical Responsibility of the Christian pastorate wherein the pastor is responsible for the salvation of every single individual in the flock. But what is more interesting here to our investigation of counter-conducts within the pastorate is how Augustine despite his identification with a life in the “New Creation” must still conduct himself towards the truth, he must have an active role in submitting to a life in Christ. So simultaneous with Paul’s decree for abstaining completely from sex, Augustine’s personal examination and struggle with continence is an example of the counter-conduct of asceticism--Augustine is in close combat with himself and directly experiences the complexity of obedience and through his own suffering, and, as a result he recognizes himself as guide of his own salvation.

To be the guide of his own salvation Augustine confesses how he is overcome by desire in his youth. He exposes himself when he writes: “Where was I, and how far was I exiled from the delights of thy house, in that sixteenth year of the age of my flesh, when the madness of lust

⁵³ Augustine quoting Matthew 19:12, *Confessions* Book 2, Chapter 2.

⁵⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 2, Chapter 2.3.

⁵⁵ Brown, *Body and Society*, 59.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 64.

held full sway in me.”⁵⁷ Augustine admits that despite his early exposure to the Christian doctrine (certainly through his mother Monica, who as a practicing Christian warns him against his desire) a life of the flesh is still more persuasive in his youth than the salvation that pastoral care offers his soul. While it is not surprising that a young man from any era would fail to heed the advice of his mother, what is interesting is that with this confession of desire Augustine locates his own will against the will of God. He goes on “I wish now to review in memory my past wickedness and the carnal corruptions of my soul--not because I still love them, but that I may love thee, O my God.”⁵⁸

From some his youthful memories then, Augustine can trace the trajectory of the two wills--his own and God’s. The relationship with the other that Augustine exists in through his *Confessions* is exactly the practice of the self that we see throughout classical antiquity. Foucault writes that this practice of confession is unlike the ritual sacrifices that bound pagans to their gods. Just as with Paul’s ‘new creation,’ the practice of confession in antiquity had been “an explicit, developed, and regular verbal practice by which the disciple must respond to this parrhesia of the master’s truth with a certain parrhesia of his own. And yet it is both the master and the apostle, the student of philosophy in ancient culture and the new Christian catechumen, who all are required to abide by a certain open-heartedness, which is the opening of his own soul...[and which] encourages others to undertake their own salvation.”⁵⁹ This theme of the two wills of wisdom and the multi-directionality of salvation recurs throughout the *Confessions*. It is in through courageous exposure to wisdom and questioning of doctrine in his youth as well as the courageous truth-telling his own personal struggle in the document itself that Augustine is able to rationalize through his own secrets how multiple wills can exist together, both in the world and in his own soul, such that he might unite his soul with the universal truth that he seeks.

Chapter 6

Manichean Mystical Wisdom: Towards a Radical Hermeneutics of the Flesh

⁵⁷ Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 2, Chapter 2.4.

⁵⁸ Ibid. Book 2, Chapter 2.3.

⁵⁹ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 390-391.

Thus, for Augustine, the flesh and sexual renunciation occupy a central role in his conversion to Christianity and not only to quiet his passions for the sake of his well-being, but specifically because it is the way in which his desire remains the most tedious chasm separating his will from unity with God's. The Manicheans, remembered mostly as a heretical Christian sect, offer palpable doctrines to the young adult Augustine that clearly and systematically explain the inherent sin of the flesh. A major example of (proto)counter-conducts in late antiquity, Mani, a twelve year old boy who receives a series of visions in 228/229 AD particularly stands out as what Brown cites as "the founder of the only independent universal religion to emerge directly from the Christian tradition"⁶⁰ It seems that Augustine is attracted to the Manichees because they approach the problem of the duality between body and spirit by applying concrete material practices for overcoming the inherently polluted and stained body. The Church of Mani and Augustine's near decade long devotion to it, exemplifies both the counter-conducts of the formation of a new religious community and mystical practices that offer direct illumination of the truth.

The Manicheans, while roaming the desert and cities of the Mediterranean, do succeed in establishing communities that challenge, but without overcoming, the burgeoning authority of the unifying Christian Church. Through telling their truth that only the continent, or those who engaged in the ritual practices through their continent priests, would attain salvation this rogue group forces the Church to recognize them for their austerity. Early Christian bishops recruit devout and celibate Manichean women as spokespeople for public debates and overall the Manichees 'brought forth a sense of the terrible, high freedom, associated with radical Christianity of the East.'⁶¹ "For Mani, the bodies of believers, if kept holy by continence, could play a role in nothing less than the redemption of the universe"⁶² The world, for the Manicheans, was not irrevocably fallen. Just beneath the pollution of the physical world "there shimmered the hope of a great deliverance, which would be brought about, on earth, through the true church of Mani."⁶³ Through the strict theology the Manichean Gnostics, a kind of astro-mythological system, the holy Elect and their Hearers beneath them rejected the truth of the early Catholic Church and through their doctrines they created a new field of visibility in the struggle for salvation.

Like Paul, the Manichees believed that sexual urge could be totally transcended. Similar to the celebration of the Eucharist today wherein the ritual sacrifice of Christ body and blood wash away the sins of humanity, the Manichean Elect, were fed cultic meals whereby through proper diet and digestion (and invocation of the pastoral principle of 'Sacrificial Reversal') they could reverse the "indiscriminate greed of the Kingdom of Darkness."⁶⁴ Manichean myth held that the visible world was a binary playing field for the Kingdom of Light and the Kingdom of Darkness and that through their rituals they could distill the Light of truth.

Augustine was not persuaded, he did feel transformed by the 'wisdom' the Manichean doctrine since he could not understand how a true and perfect God who had created all of the

⁶⁰ Brown, *Body and Society*, 197.

⁶¹ Ibid. 202.

⁶² Ibid. 198.

⁶³ Ibid. 198.

⁶⁴ Ibid. 199.

things and beings in the world could also be to blame for the evils (desire of the flesh) within and around man. Against the Manicheans, Augustine confesses that:

All this wholesome advice [the astrologers] labor to destroy when they say, “The cause of your sin is inevitably fixed in the heavens,” and, “This is the doing of Venus, or of Saturn, or of Mars”--all this in order that a man, who is only flesh and blood and proud corruption, may regard himself as blameless, while the Creator and Ordainer of heaven and the stars must bear the blame of our ills and misfortunes.”⁶⁵

How, in other words, Augustine asks himself, am I to believe that the perfect God of Truth is also simultaneously the cause of sin? Instead, Augustine seeks within himself and realizes that the Manichean myth in which the material world and the spiritual world remain separate (in the Kingdoms of Light and Darkness) cannot contain the truth that he seeks because “...far better than all [the parts of existence] this is He who made it all. He is our God and he does not pass away, for there is nothing to take his place.”⁶⁶ For Augustine then, the truth he seeks must be Good the whole all the way through. But the question remains for him then, how can evil exist materially and be co-existent with an omnipotent Creator?

It is perhaps impossible to impart with what great pains of love and reason Augustine approaches this question: “Whence is evil?”⁶⁷ Where is the nature of evil? Where does evil come from? He continues to agonize with the astral myths of the Manicheans and the classical literature which he has been exposed to from a young age. Through his training in the liberal arts and his talent as a Rhetorician he is inspired by all the beautiful objects that God and men, through God, have created. But it disturbs him that these things share the same nature as evil and/or that these things of beauty could also be commensurate with the nature of God. In his quest for resolving the duality between of good and evil, which he takes up in earnest, Augustine reports to us that he reads various philosophical works around this time, (in his late teens and early twenties) from Cicero’s *Hortensius* to Aristotle’s *Ten Categories*.

Regarding the *Hortensius* he confesses that what impresses him in it is not its style but its substance and it here, where philosophy speaks of the wisdom that goes beyond rhetoric. He confesses: [Still regarding Cicero’s *Hortensius*] “Now it was this book which quite definitely changed my whole attitude and turned my prayers toward thee, O Lord, and gave me new hope and new desires. Suddenly every vain hope became worthless to me, and with an incredible warmth of heart I yearned for an immortality of wisdom and began now to arise that I might return to thee.”⁶⁸

Thus, the failure of the Manichean doctrine to persuade Augustine’s soul, does not, in turn, lead him deeper towards Greek philosophy but back to prayer and reading the scripture and hence the doctrines of the newly organizing Christian Church. He finds Paul’s letter to the Colossians resonates here: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily.”⁶⁹ But Augustine goes on, “Only this checked my ardor: that the name of Christ was not in it [*Hortensius*]... And whatsoever was lacking that name, no

⁶⁵ Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 4, Chapter 3.4.

⁶⁶ Ibid. Book 4, Chapter 11.17.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Book 7, Chapter 5.7.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Book 3, Chapter 4.7.

⁶⁹ Colossians 2:8-9 in *Confessions* Book 3, Chapter 4.8.

matter how erudite, polished, and truthful, did not quite take complete hold of me.”⁷⁰ And it is at this point that Augustine still far from ready to make the commitment to continence becomes a catechumen of the Christian Church.

So, philosophy actually inspires Augustine towards seeking out wisdom in Christ through scripture. Ultimately, Machinean dualism, their purification rituals and astrological beliefs are not enough to persuade his soul. Augustine confesses: “Still they cried, “Truth, Truth,” and were forever speaking the word to me. But the thing itself was not in them.”⁷¹ Through his struggle for truth under the direction of the Manicheans Augustine tries to get answers to his questions on the materiality and dual nature of God and when their doctrines fail to persuade him of having found with those answers Augustine is made more and not less attentive to his will for love of wisdom in Christ. That is, the conditions for truth of the Christ event become more and not less specific for Augustine because of his experiences with Manichees, his search for a wisdom is more finely attuned to the care that his particular soul needs to receive the care of the Other.

Chapter 7

⁷⁰ *Confessions*, Book 3, Chapter 4.8.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* Book 3, Ch.6.10.

Neo-Platonists and the Return to Exegesis of Scripture Made under the Proper Conditions for Truth

Leaving the dualism of the Manicheans behind, Augustine still struggles to rationalize how evil exist together with the God of Light, wisdom and truth. He finds the scriptures still lacking towards persuading to join the Church. And it is through his reading of the Neo-Platonists, most likely, Plotinus's *Enneads* and *Nous*⁷² that Augustine realizes that the material evil of the world--experienced most acutely through the desire of the body is actually external to the truth of Christ. The truth Augustine realizes, the rational truth is that God is unchangeable, whole, incorruptible. Instead it is he, after all, who is mutable and changeable and had wrongly believed that God was the same. He continues to seek after wisdom to transform himself towards unification with the immutable truth of the Christian god but regarding the Platonists he confesses: "Thus, though they know God, yet they do not glorify him as God, nor are they thankful." Therefore, they [and here he follows Paul's warning to the Romans to not be like philosophers] because: ""they become vain in their imaginations; their foolish heart is darkened, and professing themselves to be wise they become fools.""⁷³

Here, we witness Augustine's multi-directional and complicit resistance both to Platonism and to Christianity. While Augustine moves away from the Manicheans he does not move immediately towards the Church but, instead, he moves most immediately towards Platonism. And yet, while his will is moved by the philosophy of the new Platonists his inner self is also moving towards the wisdom of the truth of Christ. Lest we underestimate the role of the Platonists in Augustine's conversion, he passionately describes his ecstasy^{74,75} when he finally grasps the infinite from his finite self and confesses that "By having thus read the books of the Platonists, and having been taught by them to search for the incorporeal Truth, I saw how thy

⁷² See Albert Outler's Notes 210-214 in *Confessions* Book 7, Chapter 17.23.

⁷³ Romans Ch1: 21-22 in *Confessions* Book 7, Chapter 9.14.

⁷⁴ "And thus by degrees I was led upward from bodies to the soul which perceives them by means of the bodily senses, and from there on to the soul's inward faculty, to which the bodily senses report outward things--and this belongs even to the capacities of the beasts--and thence on up to the reasoning power, to whose judgment is referred the experience received from the bodily sense. And when this power of reason within me also found that it was changeable, it raised itself up to its own intellectual principle, and withdrew its thoughts from experience, abstracting itself from the contradictory throng of fantasies in order to seek for that light in which it was bathed. Then, without any doubting, it cried out that the unchangeable was better than the changeable. From this it follows that the mind somehow knew the unchangeable, for, unless it had known it in some fashion, it could have had no sure ground for preferring it to the changeable. And thus with the flash of a trembling glance, it arrived at that which is. And I saw thy invisibility [invisibilia tua] understood by means of the things that are made."

Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 7, Chapter 17.23.

⁷⁵ Another quite beautiful description of the experience of the infinite from the view of the finite further down: "And being admonished by these books to return into myself, I entered into my inward soul, guided by thee. This I could do because thou wast my helper. And I entered, and with the eye of my soul--such as it was--saw above the same eye of my soul and above my mind the Immutable Light. It was not the common light, which all flesh can see; nor was it simply a greater one of the same sort, as if the light of day were to grow brighter and brighter, and flood all space. It was not like that light, but different, yea, very different from all earthly light whatever. Nor was it above my mind in the same way as oil is above water, or heaven above earth, but it was higher, because it made me, and I was below it, because I was made by it. He who knows the Truth knows that Light, and he who knows it knows eternity." Ibid. Book 7, Chapter 10.16

invisible things are understood through the things that are made”⁷⁶ This is a cataclysmic ontological and epistemological breakthrough for Augustine. He sees himself in comparison with the infinite and for the first time he is able to pursue his search for wisdom in the Church under what he *personally feels* are the necessary conditions for receiving wisdom. Ultimately, it is in this resolution of the singular nature of God and of the two wills within himself, that eventually lead to Augustine’s full conversion into the Christian church.

Chapter 8

⁷⁶ Ibid. Book 7, Chapter 20.26.

Ambrose's Hermeneutics of Flesh and Spirit: Conversion through Exegesis of Scripture

As a reader of Greek, from a high profile family, the active theologian and sometimes politician Bishop Ambrose of Milan argued for, defended, and worked to popularize the Church's stance on perpetual virginity. Like Augustine after him, Ambrose was familiar with the doctrines of the Platonists and the other philosophers who worked on the resolution between body and mind, the finite and the infinite. In his own ethical-poetic theological work will greatly influence Augustine's positions in his own pastoral career, Ambrose argued that the Christian body must fight the weakness of the flesh by 'putting on the flesh of Christ.' "For Ambrose, to "put on Christ" meant in some mysterious manner to exchange the weakened flesh of human beings for flesh reformed. "[Through baptism] the baptized Christian would [immediately] come to share in the tranquility that flowed from the spotless flesh of Christ."⁷⁷ Nonetheless, despite his growing faith and newly found understanding of the infinite nature of the God even from the finite material of the bodily senses, Augustine still struggles with continence. He says that although the much admired and deeply educated Ambrose inspires him towards reading the Scriptures, "his celibacy appeared [to me] a painful burden."⁷⁸ After all his transformations, through his experiences with the Manicheans and the Neo-Platonists, Augustine still feels trapped and unable to overcome his attachment to the flesh. "Thus my two wills--the old and the new, the carnal and the spiritual--were in conflict within me; and by their discord they tore my soul apart."⁷⁹

But something has changed, and Augustine express a direct and personal affirmation of his will through scriptural exegesis. He confesses that "came to understand from my own experience what I had read from Paul's letter to the Galatians, how "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."⁸⁰ And here is an example of the counter-conduct of scriptural exegesis at work. Augustine recounts how excited he is to hear Ambrose "often recommending [after Paul's second letter to the Corinthians] how '[T]he letter kills, but the spirit gives life.' "[Ambrose] drew aside the mystic veil and opened to view the spiritual meaning of what seemed to teach perverse doctrine if it were taken according to the letter."⁸¹ At this point it has been twelve years since Augustine read Cicero's *Hortensius* and was first inspired to seek wisdom. He is devastated by his continued inability to make his will comply with the truth that he now so faithfully believes. Certainly not wanting to be led astray again after his experience with the Manichees, Augustine knows that he must go deeper into himself to find wisdom. He resists the role of a passive catechumen and rhetorician of biblical scriptures. Regarding his will, he confesses that:

"...the will does not will entirely; therefore it does not command entirely. For as far as it wills, it commands. And as far as it does not will, the thing commanded is not done. For the will commands

⁷⁷ Peter Brown, *Body and Society*, 350.

⁷⁸ Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 6, Chapter 3.3.

⁷⁹ Ibid. Book 8, Chapter 5.10.

⁸⁰ Ibid. Book 8, Chapter 11.9.

⁸¹ Ibid. Book 6, Chapter 4.6.

that there be an act of will--not another, but itself. But it does not command entirely. Therefore, what is commanded does not happen..."⁸²

He struggles with his will, taking elaborate pains to understand why he cannot make his will to submit to what he knows and faithfully believes is the Christian god's will for his life and salvation. The denouement of *Confessions* is the dramatic event of Augustine's experience in the garden when he hears a mystical voice telling him to "Pick it up, read it; pick it up"⁸³ and he randomly opens his bible to Paul's letter to the Romans at the thirteenth chapter and the thirteenth verse. The verse reads: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof."⁸⁴ Thus, the event of Augustine's eventual baptism in the Church and is brought about through several counter conducts that effectuate the transformations of his will.

Over the course of his life, Augustine develops a hermeneutics of the flesh that inform his will towards unity with wisdom of the Christian truth. Through his experiences with the Manicheans and the Neo-Platonists, he develops a personal faith in the invisible and immutable infinite through his visible and mutable bodily senses. Through his experiences in an even newer religious community than the burgeoning Christian Church and in reading the Platonists philosophical texts Augustine makes a risky stake in his soul such that he goes beyond or outside of Christianity's gathering pastoral power. Finally, under Ambrose' care, Augustine continues to effectuate his conversion through counter-conduct. By learning from Ambrose' allegorical exegetical style, Augustine learns that he must strive to get underneath the scriptures in order to personally offer his soul to the spirit of the Word *especially so that* the spirit of the Word might conduct his soul. He must make his life an allegory for the scriptures such that the doctrines he is now open to receiving from the Church are always subject to the inner illumination received directly by his own will. I invite you to hear as lovers of wisdom and with an open heart as Augustine confesses once more to us:

The authority of Scripture seemed to me all the more revered and worthy of devout belief because, although it was visible for all to read, it reserved the full majesty of its secret wisdom within its spiritual profundity. While it stooped to all in the great plainness of its language and simplicity of style, it yet required the closest attention of the most serious-minded-- so that it might receive all into its common bosom, and direct some few through its narrow passages toward thee.⁸⁵

Chapter 9

⁸² Ibid. Book 8, Chapter 9.21.

⁸³ Ibid. Book 8, Chapter 12.29.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Book 8, Chapter 12.29.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Book 6, Chapter 5.5.

Secrets in the Salvation of the Self: Divine Technologies of Subjectivation

Following Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 20, verse 12 Augustine, newly baptized, confesses: "And it is certain that "now we see through a glass darkly," not yet "face to face..." I would therefore confess what I know about myself; I will also confess what I do not know about myself. What I do know of myself, I know from thy enlightening of me."⁸⁶ Here, Augustine admits that what he can see and know of the truth from his perspective as a finite and mutable being *always and only in the process* of trying to see himself from the perspective of the infinite and rational truth will be seen as if through a darkened mirror.

On his exegesis of the metaphor of the mirror and the eye in Plato's *Alcibiades*, Foucault concludes that "we need the other with an identical nature of our soul to be able to see our soul...[and that it is] by looking at the element of the same nature as itself which is the source of the soul's nature...that the soul will be able to grasp itself....What is this element? It is the divine element." And, Foucault continues, "in opening onto this knowledge of the divine, the movement by which we know ourselves, in our care for ourselves, enables the soul to achieve wisdom."⁸⁷ If ontology and epistemology, psychagogy and pedagogy have a history of interdependence in the West and are always in process, affecting one another constantly in the games of veridiction, then the practices of the self, those technologies of the self, by which the subject constitutes itself are always generating new knowledge and new power effects.

Chapter 10

⁸⁶ Ibid., Book 10 Chapter 5.7

⁸⁷ Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, 69-71.

Counter-conducts as the Outsider's Attitude in Care of the Self

The new Platonists inspire Augustine towards love of God or Christian gnosis which includes, not least of all, the demand for concupience. But, simultaneously the risk of constituting himself as a Christian also expresses similarities which can also be indexed to the ancient Cynic mode of veridiction. Ancient Cynicism or Kynisum is described by Foucault as an aesthetics of life or a style of bios. This aesthetics manifests itself as an attitude about knowledge where both knowledge and attitude towards knowledge are understood as a care of the self (epimeleia heatou). This care of the self is deeply intertwined with the genealogy of parrhesiatic, or courageous truth telling, and its accompanying shifts.

First, Foucault shows the intertwining of parrhesia with care of the self in a series of Platonic dialogues surrounding Socrates' death. Then, a shift happens where Socratic parrhesia must overcome rhetoric once again and opens out onto this other pole of care of the self which happens in Cynic parrhesia. The Cynics, most notably Diogenes of Sinope, works on an entire aesthetics of existence wherein not only one's attitude, but the truth of one's entire self is at stake. Here, we see a new kind of courage, beyond, underneath and enveloping the courage required for Socrates' technique of irony in the Platonic dialogues. I would like to show how the Cynic parrhesia works in tandem with or are the originary strands of the counter conducts or proto-counter-conducts in Augustine conversion practices.

Foucault underscores the shift in the locus of parrhesia from the polis of the Greek city-state to the soul (*psuke*) of the individual.⁸⁸ This shift entails a movement of the cite of salvation from the city to individuals' ethos which 'underpins the very existence of all philosophical discourse from Greek to the present.'⁸⁹ In the initial movement from political parrhesia to spiritual parrhesia, the series of decisions that Socrates makes around his death exemplify 'what is at stake in this new form of parrhesia, beyond political parrhesia': "the foundation of ethos as the principle on the basis of which conduct can be defined as rational conduct in accordance with the very being of the soul."⁹⁰

Augustine takes up this very mode of veridiction, of courageous truth-telling for the sake of the soul, when he speaks to his readers of a kind of rationality which exhorts them to speak only in the voice which burns with the power of love.⁹¹ Here, he does not offer a technique for conversion, an epistemological system, and least of all any rhetorical opulence for followers to submit to in order to know the truth. But instead, like Socrates in Foucault's reading of Plato's *Pheado*, Augustine offers an exhortation towards a kind of truth-telling that he also must riskily practice to care for others (his universal reader). Augustine is in a pact with the Christian god and with his readers separately and simultaneously. Moreover, Augustine's pact with God is expressed through the pact with his readers in that Augustine can only know the value of his truth-telling insofar as it is valued as truthful by his readers. This element of attentiveness involved in courageous truth telling can be expressed as the *principle of homologia*, "having the

⁸⁸ At first, it is primarily the soul of the prince or ruler that is at stake, but then all individuals are included insofar as they come to constitute their own ethos.

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College de France, 1983-1984*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 66.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 86

⁹¹ Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 4, Chapter 12.

same logos as those with whom one is discussing...entering into that kind of pact according to which when a truth is discovered, everyone will recognize it.⁹² This is what is employed in courageous truth telling understood as epimeleia heatou or the care of the self for the care of others in Platonic-Socratic spiritual parrhesia.

Under this principle of homologia we may begin to understand the genealogy of the Christian pastorate directly from this form of spiritual parrhesia in classical Greek culture. Earlier, Foucault argues that the Christian pastorate adds complexity to earlier Judaic-Mediterranean processes of pastoral power by requiring new layers of specificity for the government of men.⁹³ However, these principles may only seem additional when we take up philosophy in Western culture only through the traditional lens of the gnothi seatou, and separately from that other process of veridiction forgotten by philosophy and elided to Christianity: epimeleia heatou. Now the (proto)counter-conducts which I argue Augustine takes up and narrates through his *Confessions*, his practices towards conversion,⁹⁴ all become primary practices for the culture of the self that Foucault sees as a new experience that will emerge as the Western subject. Again, the care of the self as a spiritual form of veridiction requires attentiveness to self through and for others and this care of the self for the care of others is itself the possibility for knowledge.

It is very important to distinguish between Augustine's *Confessions* in the 4th century from the mode of programmatic confession unique to the Christian Church, that occur directly under the auspices of the Church in the middle ages. Although later Ambrose will take on the role of Augustine's Father-confessor, the confessions that Augustine makes of his conversion processes between being young man and baptism in 387 are not always mediated through the institution of the Church. Or, at least, we seem to be able to clearly identify earlier experiences before and just after he becomes a Christian catechumen when Augustine's transformations seem to escape the formal version of what will eventually become identifiable as the Christian pastorate. There is another pact of parrhesia wherein Augustine is in direct contact with God. He has a confidence in the will God has for him in his faith as a believer.

So we must distinguish between early Christians confidence in God's will, "this other dimension of parrhesia, which is a trust in God, confidence in salvation, in God's goodness, and also in His listening...the idea of a parrhesia as parrhesia of vis-à-vis, of a face-to-face with God."⁹⁵ This face-to-face confidence of being in direct parrhesia with God, by the 5th century Foucault claims, shifts towards a "trembling obedience"⁹⁶ wherein the individual pact of a courageous confidence with God is overtaken by techniques of surveillance in the increasingly institutionalizing Church (i.e via collective monasticism and, of course, through the beginnings of what we will come to recognize as the Christian pastorate).

⁹² Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the College de France*, 1983-1984, 109.

⁹³ See Footnote 2 above. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the College De France 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell. New York: Palgrave, 2004, 171.

⁹⁴ asceticism in the reported struggle with concupience; work toward building a new religious community both as a Manichean catechumen as well as a Christian catechumen; through mysticism in the doctrine of 'inner illumination'; through the exegesis of scripture; and through eschatological belief.

⁹⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II: Lectures at the College de France*, 1983-1984, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 333

⁹⁶ Michel Foucault, *Ibid.*

In addition, Augustine's conversion processes or how he forms himself—that is, his subjectivation processes—do not lack mortal interlocutors. But instead of a Church leader (before he meets Ambrose in Milan in 384 at age 30), Augustine's interlocutors like many of those in ancient culture “could be anyone who necessary for [him] to tell the truth.”⁹⁷ For example, when Augustine meets Faustus, one of the leaders of the Manichees, Faustus is unable to answer many of Augustine's questions about the nature of God and evil. Augustine writes that Faustus was only expressing what the others (Manichees) said, but with more rhetoric. But, Augustine, continues, “Faustus was ignorant and knew that he was ignorant and as a result he did not enter into controversies from which he could not withdraw readily.”⁹⁸ In turn, Augustine respects Faustus even if he could not help him answer his questions about the nature of Good and evil. Instead, together they read literature and study grammar and liberal arts until Augustine can find someone (the Platonists) to whom he can address these questions concerning the nature of evil in general, and the nature of the fleshly evil in particular.

Another example of a determining, though never systematic or institutionally mediated relationship towards knowledge, was Augustine's relationship with his mother Monica. Over the course of his conversion processes, Augustine's repeatedly tells of his prayerful relationship with his mother. This relationship of care and the effects towards conversion that Monica has on Augustine do not always fit neatly into some familial or psychological portrait. Augustine, from the beginning of the *Confessions* says that his mother is a devout Christian woman who also practices the pagan rituals of their culture—practices which Augustine will never take up as a Christian.⁹⁹ What Augustine does, in fact, is leave home. First for his formal education in Carthage, and then again when he seeks out the community of the Manichees, and then again when he leaves the Manichees to study with the Platonists and finally again when he leaves Rome to eventually becomes a catechumen in the Church in Milan when he is thirty years old. Still, Augustine is in an undelineated psychagogic relationship with his mother, whom he loves deeply and continually thanks and credits for giving him the faith to continue his search for truth.¹⁰⁰

Chapter 11

Augustine as Cynic Parresiazesthai:

⁹⁷Ibid. 5.

⁹⁸*Confessions*, Book 5, Chapter 6.

⁹⁹One practice such as sharing wine at funerals or even during Church services to produce ecstatic experience was never to become part of Augustine's conversion experience. Later Monica relinquishes this practice the behest of Ambrose when she visits Augustine in Milan. *Confessions* Book 6, Ch2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Book 6, Chapter 11.

Confessions of the Flesh in the Problem of the True Life

Around age 19 and still far from baptism in the Church, Augustine reads Cicero's *Hortensius* which gives him a love of wisdom, of philosophy. He yearns for 'the immortality of wisdom and to embrace wisdom, not in this or that sect but wisdom itself wherever it might be.'¹⁰¹ Through this early encounter with philosophy in his formal education, Augustine finds inspiration towards finding that wisdom which is immortal, never-ending. This does not mean he seeks to be obedient to the Christian god or to any teacher as a permanent shepherd. Instead he desires a wisdom which has no need to speak from the authority of dogma. Nor does he accept that his literal reading of the scripture is the unchallengeable word of God.

On *Hortensius*, a Latin adaptation of an Aristotelian introduction to philosophy, Augustine writes: "Philosophy is love of wisdom and it was with this love that the book inflamed me."¹⁰² But, he goes on 'the name of Christ was not in it [*Hortensius*].'¹⁰³ And so he resolves to direct his mind to the holy scriptures but there he found nothing like the inspiration towards wisdom as he had found in the philosophy but an understanding of wisdom seemingly only acceptable to children. So he returns to men, but this time to the Manicheans and though he is with them for almost a decade, he ultimately decides that they only offer him fantasies.¹⁰⁴

Augustine's *Confessions* reveals a multi-level *outsiderness*. A short list of this outsider status may be seen in Augustine's love of learning the liberal arts and rhetoric for their own sake and not for the sake of fame or prosperity; by his not submitting himself outright to the Church; through taking up of the love of wisdom, and yet still loving this Christian god (from whom he still feels estranged throughout much of his youth); and even in his long-term relationship outside of marriage with a concubine of low social status. This life of the outsider is a scandalous life in that Augustine seems to be unable or unwilling to accept any way of life and instead engages in what may appear to be an endless search. But this scandalous life might be less of a lack of commitment to some truth and better understood as a seeking after *bios kunikos*—the true life. This modality of the true life is one of the final discussions Michel Foucault takes up in his final course lecture.

What Foucault calls the "Cynic scandal"¹⁰⁵ requires a kind of courage that is distinct from the parrhesia of political bravery of Periclean speech and from the two manifestations of Socratic irony in the Laches and Alcibiades (giving an account of one's self/taking care of one's soul). The Cynic's courage of truth is an examination and a condemnation of all those truths entrenched in any principles arising from any discipline or any singularizing mode of veridiction. The "Cynic courage of truth" Foucault writes, consists in the 'condemnation, rejection, despising, and insulting of whatever is believed at the level of principles.' In short, one risks one's life in order to tell the truth, and risking one's life because one has told the truth." In this respect Augustine's search for the truth of Christ lays itself over the question of fleshly evil (in the question of concupiscence) but not only on the level of accepting (or not) this Christian

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Book 3, Chapter 10.

¹⁰² Ibid. Book 3, Chapter 4.

¹⁰³ Ibid. Book 3, Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. Book 3, Book 6.

¹⁰⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II: Lectures at the College de France, 1983-1984*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 234.

principle. The search for truth taken up from within the struggle with concupience, or total sexual renunciation, is an extreme care of the self whereby the salvation of the soul requires not only the courage of truth-telling but is also actually a public and intimate confession of the truth through the practices of the body.

For example, to take up concupience, to refrain from sexual interactions of any kind, was not a principle that Augustine could simply take up because he was taught that Christianity requires it. Reversing the order of operations his entire bios is, or the practices of his body are, a mode of veridiction wherein and only thereby truth is then, and only then, uniquely and intimately experienced. Therefore, Augustine's confidence in the truth of Christian rationality develops not only through the clearing away of intellectual doubt and through the obedience of will to the doctrines of the Church, but through a scandal of self through which he publically and privately styles his entire life.

The courage of Cynic parrhesia is the courage to expose one's life and "not through one's discourses, but through one's life itself; Cynicism...constantly raises the question: what can the form of life be such that it practices truth-telling?"¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷ Augustine answers this question with the form truth telling that is a pact with God expressed through concupience. The pact opens up a direct relationship with God whereby Augustine can engage in a transformation of ascension towards Christ.

Chapter 12

Kynismus, Platonism and Christian Care of the Self:

¹⁰⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 234.

¹⁰⁷ "The absorption and, to a certain extent, confiscation by religion of the theme and practice of the true life has certainly been one of the reasons for this disappearance." Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 235. This is a new form of veridiction, where care of the self and knowing thyself are intimately bound up with one another not as an epistemology, but as a necessity for access to truth, which has been relinquished in the practice Western philosophy. Especially as philosophy as a foundation for scientific practice, public philosophy in Western culture is content to let religion concern itself with the courage of truth at the level of true life.

Re-valuing the Currency of Truth through Asceticism

In the third section of *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, “Spiritual Exercises,” Hadot calls the Cynics “champions of askesis”¹⁰⁸ because their philosophy was a totally immersed with life and called for a commitment to the care of the self in the same way that the Christian way of life would later called for a total break from all forms of habituated life. Quickly the life for the ancient Cynic shared several themes with other forms of Greek culture of the self broadly (Stoics, Epicureans) and with Socratic-Platonic philosophy in particular. Namely the Cynics would understand ‘philosophy as a constant preparation for life, as care of the self which circulates around the principle that one must only study what is really useful to existence, as a true care of the self only if the principles one formulates as true are at the same time authenticated by one’s actual life.’¹⁰⁹ But a unique and additional requirement from the Cynics was that one must alter or change the values of the currency of one’s truth: *parakharattein to nomisa*¹¹⁰

This complex notion certain calls for more investigation but from the point of view of what will become the Christian way of life that Augustine takes up this idea of changing the value of the currency resonates because this is a philosophy which calls for the most dogged examination of every aspect of one’s life as it is being lived such that one may work on (*ergon*) living the true life. So, while the other world (*l’autre monde*) is already a concept articulated by Platonist philosophy (for example, in philosophy understood as preparation for death), Foucault argues that the Cynic problem shows that the life of truth must be one in which there is a radical break with traditions, norms, habits, public opinions and speculations about what life should be.

These overlapping and divergent strands between philosophy as a way of life for the other world and for the other life become and remain major problems through the ethical, spiritual and moral life of Western culture. And Christianity remains a major access point for understanding the subjectivation processes working in Western culture in particular because the other life which Cynic aesthetics of existence for life here and now is also the radical transformation of life of Christian way of life which is mediated by Platonism and the gnostic tradition. Or, put another way, practices of the self in Platonic metaphysics offers Christianity a denial of the body for the care of the self/soul towards a transcendence towards Idea or God. By contrast and in tandem, the Cynic call for a radical change of life also manifests itself in the Christian way of life as a call to an outsider status in this world. Foucault writes:

“...one of the master strokes of Christianity, in its philosophical significance, consists in it having linked together the theme of the other life (*une vie autre*) as true life and the idea of access to the other world (*l’autre monde*) as access to the truth which consequently, founds the truth of that true life which one leads in this world here: it seems to me that this structure is the combination, the meeting point, the junction between an originally Cynic asceticism and an originally Platonic

¹⁰⁸ Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, trans. Michael Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 103.

¹⁰⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 238-239.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* 239.

metaphysics...Christian asceticism managed to join Platonic metaphysics to that vision, that historical-critical experience of the world”¹¹¹

Certainly, there will be some early Christians whose practices appear to be more closely related to the aesthetics of Kynism¹¹² and those whose practices seem to more closer to Platonist metaphysics. The relationship between a stable Christian metaphysics of the soul is made flexible by way of making possible many styles of existence.¹¹³ But as far as the moment just prior to the real institutionalization of the Christian pastorate goes, Augustine’s *Confessions* of his conversion processes, especially in his struggle with conscience, seem to embody both through the metaphysics of Platonism and the outsider stylization of bios found in ancient Kynism.

And it is in this intersection, this juxtaposition that Augustine emerges as such an important figure in the culture of the self. What, until now, I have been calling (proto)counter-conducts employed outside the auspices of any particular doctrine towards his conversion are actually and definitively elements of that very same culture of the self that will identify the Western subject. Augustine’s conduct or practices which are a care of his body and soul, a care of his body for his soul, a courageous, intimate and public telling of the truth of the care of his body for his soul and for the care of others is deeply caught up in his epistemological and ontological commitments towards the transformation of self and others.

The history of the pastorate circulates beneath the history of governmentality as a wider but still permeable sphere that captures both the arts of government and the art of governing men by creating the interdependence between ontology and epistemology in the culture of the self that characterizes Western subjectivation. Through the *Confessions*, a parrhesiatic poetics of salvation, Augustine courageously confesses the truth of his inner most self--from the familiar mistakes of youth (theft of the pears) to unchecked passions that torture his soul. He confesses his wretchedness before himself, his readers and the Christian god for the sake of a rational and transparent universal truth. If revolt against the Christian pastorate is a revolt against self-consciousness because the pastorate subsumes the techniques of veridiction for its own suitable ends, then search for truth, understood as those often spontaneous practices of the self which also condition that search, may be a point of entry, a mode of access for modifying circulations or intervening in relations of power.

¹¹¹Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 319.

¹¹²Ibid. 318.

¹¹³“While...there is a certain degree of constancy in the metaphysics of the soul specific to Christianity, you know very well that Christianity developed very different styles of existence both simultaneously and successively within the framework of this metaphysics...” Foucault goes on to list the ascetic, the layperson, the monk, the clergy, ect.) Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 164.

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