The Augustinian Art of Living and Dying:  
The Analogy of the Sun in Soliloquia 1:12-15

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Abstract

Augustine's "Soliloquia" contains his earliest attempt to prove the immortality of the soul. The Platonic imprint is clearly visible, which is why this work is suited to demonstrate both Augustine's extraordinary logical sophistication and his theological introspection regarding the topics of death and soul, so crucial for human life. I wish to shed new light, by the help of philological as well as philosophical methods of analysis, upon the questions of how people had been dealing with the subject of death in the period of transition from pagan to Christian culture and how ancient and Christian philosophical ideas interacted in this process. In the analogy of the sun Augustine explores how the soul recognises God. The mind has to be free from corporal desires. The final stage is the otherworldly vision of God, which enables the soul to reach felicity. Since merely a gradual ascension can be gained by human efforts alone, Augustine introduces the figure of the soul doctor. Thus, the Platonic analogy of the sun serves in Christian guise too as a model of a fulfilled life and for a fearless death.

Keywords:  God, death, Middle Ages, Christianity, soul

The Augustinian "Soliloquia"

The work "Soliloquia" contains Augustine's first investigation into the immortality of the soul, in which the interaction of Christian and Platonic motifs becomes particularly apparent, especially in the section on the ascent to God (Sol. 1, 11-27). In the following article, it will be shown to what extent ancient philosophical ideas regarding death and the soul merge with Christian explanations and thus establish a very special Augustinian conception of Visio Dei for early Christianity.

The Augustinian "soliloquy" can be seen as the author's dialogue with his ratio – written six months before he was baptized – with which he peculiarly wanted to win an educated Latin readership as well as his friends including people who like him were well-read and interested in the "art of living and dying" for his ideals. In his sun analogy, Augustine discusses the problem of how to deal with death and the limited lifetime before it. From this true-to-life approach, Augustine derives his cura mortis – "concern for death": In the given lifetime men must overcome their fear of death in the belief that they can acquire the *ars vivendi moriendique* themselves. The underlying thesis to be analysed is as follows: The significance of the solar parable lies in the description of the Augustinian *ars vivendi moriendique*.

Augustine had begun his "Soliloquia" with the question of how to acknowledge God. He stated that human cognition is necessary for this, since the human body is qualitatively inferior to the soul because of its lack of a higher-quality being, meaning: immaterial. In Sol. 1, 11-15, Augustine devotes himself to the question which was of most importance to him: How

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1 New word-formation of the author; Derived from: *ars moriendi* – which means Plato's "art to die" combined with *ars vivendi* – corresponding to the "art to live", which takes into account Augustine's stronger focus on life before death and in preparation for death.
can man recognize God? In the sun parable, Augustine explores the questions of how the soul fits into the divine order, how the soul is connected to God, how and to what extent it can understand and comprehend the divine, and what happens after death. Although the "vision of God" presupposes the same kind of knowledge as the understanding of other intelligent things, there is a fundamental difference between them: The divine is thought to be something unique as "the very highest" by Plato, Plotin, and also by Augustine. Especially in the Neoplatonic doctrine, in the succession of which Augustine imposes himself, the divine One is seen as the absolute unity and the primordial cause of all being. Plotin also contains references to the sun and to the radiant power of its light, ergo the cognitive faculty, which is only made possible by the medium of "light". Plotin refers to the human ability to acquire knowledge and to finally bring light into darkness through sunlight in the literal sense of the word.

**Plotin's analogy term**

Before we discuss Plotin’s concept of analogy, a fundamental trait of the plotinic doctrine of being must first be explained. Plotin's ontology is based on the following train of thought: there must be something underlying, an ὑπομείμενον, which cannot be traced back to anything else. This he calls Hen – "the One". It is the source of all complex entities. A definition of Hen includes a demarcation to other things, whereby a duality would arise:

"This ultimate principle of unity, the One, cannot strictly be named or spoken about at all; for this would compromise its status. Any statement made about it will necessarily be composed of a subject and predicate, which already implies a duality."

As an absolute One, this is impossible, which means that a definition of Hen, as well as positive statements about Hen, aren’t possible either. Only from the thinking substance, in this case: the individual human being, it appears as the highest quality and thus as good. However, it is not good in itself – it is sublime above it – but appears to the thinking person only in this way:

"For if we call the One the cause, it is not necessarily an accidental statement about this, but about us, for we have something of it in us, while it remains within itself."

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5 To be found in: R. Harder/ W. Theiler/ R. Beutler: Plotins Schriften. Übersetzt von Richard Harder, Hamburg 1960, Ennead 6, liber 9, § 4: 'Yes even 'that' we should not call it in the proper sense when we want to speak exactly, but it only wants to be the interpretation of what we ourselves, who play around with the One, as it were, from the outside, experience by remaining close to it, soon being thrown back completely by the difficulties which are attached to it.'
6 Plotin: Ennead, 1, 8, 2.
7 Ibid., 6, 9, 3.
Consequently, it is not possible to express positive provisions about the One, since these statements would require a distinction from something else, in other words, a difference. For this reason, it cannot be said that the One exists. Because no positive determination is at all possible about the One, even the determination of the One in contrast to multiplicity, would mean a devaluation of its actual nature.\(^8\)

"This is why it is not possible to 'speak or write' of him, as it is said [in Plato]: 'but we speak and write of it only in order to lead to him, to awaken from the concepts to see and, as it were, to show the way to him to whom wants to see something."\(^9\)

The One, therefore, remains withdrawn from reasonable comprehension. Yet our intellect forces us to accept the One. Just like the neo-Platonists, Augustine faces the problem that no statements can be made about the divine. Plotin expresses himself for exactly these reasons only by means of analogies about Hen.\(^10\) Augustine does the same and uses parables in order to write about his work despite the inexpressibility of God. With this procedure, Augustine clearly places himself in the Platonic tradition – Plato wrote about the idea of good, Plotin about Hen – to make do with analogies, to be able to make statements about God at all.\(^11\)

**The Platonic Solar Equation**

Now Augustine falls back on Plato’s parables, which is why his parable of the sun should be briefly recapitulated: The book "Politeia", in English: "The State”, deals with justice and attempts to construct an optimal state, which is only made feasible by the realization of the good. The human life aims to focus on ideas, as there is a possibility of returning the soul to its homeland through philosophy and orientation towards virtues. The ideal rulers are philosopher-kings who can recognize the good and lead others to the realization of the good. The good, meaning "the idea of the good", is presented by Plato as the highest of all ideas and the most important subject of teaching [505a 4], because "although we know everything else, we have no use for it" [505a 8-10]. Socrates declares that he cannot present the idea of good [cf. 506d 4-9], he offers to describe "an offspring of good that is very similar to him" [507e 3-4]. This "offspring of good" is the sun, "whom good has begotten in the image of itself" [508b 13-c 2]. Sight is the "most precious of the senses" because, in addition to the sight of the eyes and an object under observation, it needs something else: light [cf. 507c 7-e 4]. The sun, which gives light, is thus the source of vision [cf. 508b10-11], which makes it the "offspring of good". This is where the decisive point of the parable of the sun comes into place: The sun relates to the visible and sight, just as the idea of the good relates to the conceivable and to the ability to think [cf. 508c 2-e 3]. In other words, the idea of good has the same task in the process of cognition as the sun has in the process of seeing.

\(^8\) Ibid., 6, 9, 3.
\(^9\) Ibid., 6, 9, 4.
\(^10\) For example, Plotin uses the "outflow-analogy" to illustrate the productive activity of the One in the form of emanation (Plotin. Ennead, 5, 1, 6); The parable which associates the emanation of Hen with the warmth of fire is also found in 5, 4, 2; Another analogy – with regard to the recognizability of the One – is the equation of Hen with a choral leader in front of a singing dance troupe (6, 9, 8).
\(^11\) Uhle 2012, page 160; Note: Porphyrios also uses the light metaphor as a synonym for cognition (for example, in his Sentences 29, 19-20); Augustine also uses an ascension model to orient himself on Neoplatonic thought structures. The thought of the ascent to God can be found among other things in 6, 9, 4.
Additionally, "the sun gives the visible not only the ability to be seen, but also to become, to grow and to nourish, without itself being subjected to becoming" [509b 2-4], and also "the objects of knowledge are not only given recognizability by the good, but they also receive existence and essence from it, which is now not itself an existing being, but projects beyond being in sublimity and power" [509b 5-9].

By giving light, the sun enables all living beings to exist on earth, it is "not subject to becoming," so it does not change or become extinct. Moreover, the idea of good is not only the source of knowledge but also the source of all being. On the one hand it "projects" itself "beyond being", but on the other hand is connected with existing, since it creates it. As already mentioned, Socrates refuses to speak of the idea of good itself. But why does Socrates not treat the idea of the good as such, but only as an offspring? In the following passage, Platonic Socrates expresses his views:

"For it is enough for us if you enlighten us about the good in the same way as about righteousness, prudence and the other; [Glaukon interjected]. 'It would be enough for me too, dear friend. But I won't be able to! I still make a fool of myself even if I want to, but am unskillful'" [506d 4-e 5].

Consequently, Socrates cannot discuss the idea of good. Why he cannot do so is not explained in the text. There is room for conjecture. One can probably exclude the assumptions that he cannot define the idea of the good out of ignorance or that knowledge of it is in principle not feasible, since he says: "[T]he question of the essence of the good we should leave aside now" [506d 11-12]. Accordingly, he may not be able to answer to the question "only now", in the present situation of conversation. It is possible that reasoning has not yet advanced far enough. Or the parable of the sun should, at best, only recall acquired knowledge pictorially, because: "It is possible that Plato also used the illustration in academic teaching with a leading intention". This is based on the assumption that Plato's "unwritten teaching" possibly contained more than he noted in his works. It would also be conceivable that he discusses only one offspring of the idea of the good, because he shows great reverence for this very idea, although here too the restriction applies that he cannot possibly only "now" talk about it. And this assumption can even be substantiated by the following request: "Be quiet!" [509a 9]. The German translation does not say so, but "Sei still!", in Greek: εὐφήμε and so in English "Be quiet!" is the command to fall silent for a sacred act. Socrates, therefore, makes his statements with great awe, as he calls in the face of goodness, seriousness, and silence. Most likely, Socrates cannot speak of the idea of the good itself because its interlocutors are not yet sufficiently prepared – since they have not yet undergone the curriculum – and would be "blinded", i.e. overwhelmed. They would have to exert the intellect (νοῦς) even though they have not yet trained their ratio (λόγος). The fact that Platonic Socrates himself must know the

12 Note: In addition, Platonic Socrates weakens the special position of the good beyond existence in the further course of the work (cf. O. Höffe: Platon. Politeia, Berlin 1997, page 186). In the seventh book, for example, he calls it "the most blessed of all that exists" [526e 3-4].
14 cf. Höffe, Politeia, p. 185.
15 Note: In order to understand the call to silence in this passage, it is necessary to consider the context: Glaucon had previously said something completely inappropriate, which is why Socrates reacted so violently.
idea of the good emerges from the explanations on poetry and painting, in which Socrates is depicted literally as a good poet and craftsman.

Furthermore, the idea of the good is not something abstract, but something personal, something divine. The text not only alludes to Helios, the sun god as a descendant of the idea of the good [cf. 508a 5-b 8], but the "Politeia" also contains these sentences: "Which of the gods do you call the cause of it? Who gives the light [...]?" [508a 5-6]. In Greek, however, there is no mention of a "cause", but the Platonic Socrates uses the term κύριος, which in English means "Lord" or "ruler" up to "God". Accordingly, the sentence, closer to Greek semantics, translates as: "Which of the gods in heaven do you believe to be the rulers?" This supports the assumption that the idea of good refers to a person or a god, probably Helios, the sun god, since his name is mentioned in this context.

"I believe that the righteous and the beautiful have received a very bad guardian in a man who does not know why this [is] good; and I suppose that no one will sufficiently grasp the connections [until he has recognized the good].' 'You are correct! Our constitution will only be in proper order if a man guards it and knows all about it" [506a 5-b 2].

Platonic Socrates speaks about the idea of the good to complete the education of the most capable in the state, for the idea of the good is for Socrates "the highest" [cf. 505a 3-4]. It makes it possible that "not only a shadow image is considered" [504c 10-d 10] and brings clarity into the qualities of justice, temperance, courage, and wisdom [cf. 504a 3-b 3]. The idea of the good makes these virtues, as well as their knowledge, possible only because "the objects of knowledge of the good are not only given recognizability by the good, but they also receive existence and essence from it" [509b6-7]. However, the question of how it brings clarity to these characteristics is not specifically discussed. In any case, the four virtues depend on the good and are thus in some way twinned. A good person – just like a good state – needs all four of them to unfold the good.

In addition, Socrates thinks: "But even if we know everything else so well without them, we have – as you know – no use for it, as little as if we had a possession without the good. Or do you think any possession is valuable except the good?" [505a 8-b 2].

Platonic Socrates also speaks about the idea of the good, because everyone is concerned with the good and every person strives for the idea of the good [cf. 505e 1-506a 3]. Accordingly, the good acts "solely as an end in itself". Furthermore, in contrast to light, it is not only a medium, but also "the goal of all philosophical efforts, for it is the cause of everything beautiful and right in the world and the end of a long journey".

To sum up: The Platonic Sun Parable shows the great importance of the idea of good, which is introduced as the source of all being and cognition. The parable says almost nothing about the recognizability of the idea of the good; however, no positive provisions are made about the idea of the good. An attentive reader may automatically conclude that the sun can dazzle when one comes out of the darkness and – analogous to seeing – must be recognized

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16 Höffe, Politeia, p. 184.
with the noblest cognitive faculty, *i.e.* νοῦς [508c]. For Plato, *noesis* means the highest cognitive faculty, related to the purely spiritual realm. The νοῦς is defined as the ability to grasp the eternal, like the idea of the good, within the soul. Moreover, it can be stated that there is no science in the strict sense of the idea of good, since it is even better than knowledge, science, and truth [508 d-e].

The Augustinian sun equation

However, following the historical significance of the analogy, let us discuss Augustine's sun parable: According to Augustine, a soul that is entitled to see God must have reached three "peculiarities" – in the original Latin text they are called *quaedam res*:\(^{18}\)

When Augustine talks about the first *quaedam res*, he talks about "healthy eyes" which relates to the *mens*, i.e. "the healthy mind".\(^ {19}\) The *ratio* behaves to the *mens* like the ability to see to the eye; thus reason can be equated with the ability to see (*aspectus*\(^ {20}\)). The mind must be free of physical desires in order to reach this first stage. The first *quaedam res* could thus be described as the turning away from the sensual world.

To heal the eyes, the mind needs to believe that it will not see God in any other way. Recovery is therefore indispensable not only to wash the soul of physical pollution but also to clear the way to the vision of God. Otherwise, no knowledge of the soul and God would be possible since not even the striving for knowledge is directed towards them; the desire to recognize these two would be exchanged for entertaining desires. The thought of recovery through the renunciation of unnecessary physical hardships is also found in Augustine's late writings. Thus, the downgrading of the material in "De utilitate credendi" leads to the demand and desire to withdraw from the physical world. However, since men are dual beings, for the human soul and body "the Church Father takes over Plotin's [...] analogy, [...] as air and light"\(^ {21}\), a complete abstention from matter is not possible. In order to approach the unchanging

\(^{18}\) Sol. 1, 14, 3; 5: *Item quia in ista vita, quamquam Deo intellecto anima iam beata sit, tamen multas molestias corporis sustinet, sperandum est ei post mortem omnia ista incommoda non futura; [...] Tria igitur ad animam pertinient, ut sana sit, ut aspiciat, ut videat. Alia vero tria, fides, spes et caritas, primo illorum trium et secundo semper sunt necessaria, tertia vero in hac vita omnia, posthanc vitam sola caritas. *"Because the soul in the present life also – although it is already blessed by the knowledge of God – can endure many difficulties of the body, one must hope that all those difficulties will not happen to it after death; [...] So three things belong to the soul: That it is healthy, that it sees and that it looks upon. But three others – faith, hope and love – are always necessary for the first and for the second of these three things, but for the third in this life: after this life: only love".\(^ {19}\) Sol. 1, 12, 2-4: *Deus autem est ipse, qui illustrat: ego autem Ratio ita sum in mentibus, ut in oculis est aspectus. Non enim hoc est habere oculos quod aspicere aut item hoc est aspicere quod videere. Ergo animae tribus quibusdam rebus opus est: ut oculos habeat quisquam ipsis bene uti possit, ut aspiciat, ut videat. Oculi sanam mens est ab omni labe corporis pura, id est a cupiditatisibus rerum mortalium iam remota atque purgata. Quod ei nihil aliud praestat quam fides primo. *"But it is God Himself who illuminates: But I myself, reason, am as contained in the mind as sight is in the eyes. To have eyes is not that which is to behold, or to behold is that which is to see. Therefore, the soul must have three specific features: That it has eyes that it already knows how to use well, that it sees, that it looks upon. Healthy Eyes' means: Mind that is pure from every corruption of the body, that is: that has already turned away from the transitory and has been purified. This grants him nothing other than faith first."\(^ {20}\) Note: This text passage is an error, since the word *aspectus* has a different meaning in two places. *Aspectus* – in the first stage of the parable as "the sight" to understand "the sight" can also be translated as "the contemplation" or "the gaze", which, however, is too short for the meaning of the word in the above passage. On the second level of the parable *aspectus* can be reproduced very close to the word meaning "look at" of *aspicere* – with "look" or "look upon".\(^ {21}\) M. Bettetini: The choice of angels. Evil, matter and free will, in: C. Horn, Augustine. De civitate dei, Berlin 1997, page 145.
truth of God, it is however necessary, both in Plotin's view and in Augustine's concept to at least avert his gaze, i.e. his striving for knowledge, from the sensually perceptible world. *Nolite conformari huic saeculo*, continete vos from eo. Evitando vivit anima, "Do not adapt yourselves to worldliness", abstain from it! The soul lives in avoidance." Augustine himself "combines his practice as a 'life of this world together', whereby 'world' is used here in the pointed sense of the here and now or of the material. On the other hand, he has now moved away from this orientation towards this world in practice as well. He has turned away from 'profane things' and is now content with what is necessary for physical health.22

The thought that correct knowledge does not yet lead to the right orientation of the soul's will, but that the right orientation of the will must also affect the way of life by allowing one's spiritual eyes to become healthy and avoiding carnal desires is also prevalent in his "Confessiones".23 That is why men, alienated from God by original sin, should "turn back" to God with the help of their soul given by God and through "God's Spirit in them", that is, through their intellect. Men can be redeemed through the connection with God through their soul, their intellect and with a good way of life.24 Augustine's desirable ideal of men, as presented in the "Confessiones", presupposes that the certain human has recognized and internalized the fact that God is true, as well as his or her own position within the divine creation to the most humanly possible extent. In addition, it is indispensable that the individual life model of the respective believer corresponds to this knowledge.

"In a traditional Platonic metaphor, dawn is like the situation in which man acquires knowledge only in the light of the divine sun, it is not about the sun itself, that is, God. Therefore, he at best achieves self-knowledge and also grasps the creatures as they are presented in [...] Genesis.25"

In particular, the Christian faith demands that we renounce a vicious life that is purely focused on material pleasures, that we develop complete trust in God, and that we promote the spiritual part in human beings. Even if the trust in God is only rewarded after leaving the body, when the soul returns to the spiritual world, men can and should already orient their lives in this world towards this. But Augustine's theology does not embody a radical rejection of the immanent world or men because of their dual nature, but above all a "yes to this world of God"26. It is precisely this thought that explains the ascension model in the "Soliloquia" and reflects the first step towards knowledge.

Looking again at the Augustinian ascent model in "Soliloquia" 1, 12 to 15, it can be seen that the second level represents only a gradually different aspect in connection with the first level. Secondly, the one who wants to recognize it needs the contemplation – aspicere – by which the "viewing" of the soul with the ratio, "reason", is meant, because only the view with the help of reason, the "completed contemplation" ultimately leads to the vision.27 This stage

23 V. H. Drecoll/ M. Kudella: Augustine and Manichaism, Tübingen 2011, pp. 210-211.
27 Sol. 1, 13, 1-2: Aspectus animae ratio est. Sed quia non sequitur, ut omnis, qui aspicit, videat, aspectus rectus atque perfectus, id est quem visio sequitur, virtus vocatur; est enim virtus vel recta vel perfecta ratio. Sed et ipse aspectus quamvis iam sanos oculos convertere in lucem non potest, nisi tria illa permaneant: fides [...] ; spes [...] ; caritas [...] . "The sight of the soul is reason. But because it does not follow that everyone who looks is looking, only the right and perfect gaze, that is to say, the one whom the gaze follows, is called virtue. For virtue is right or perfect reason. But even the gaze itself, though already healthy, cannot turn the eyes into the light unless those three persist: faith [...] hope [...] love".
can also be thought of as a kind of "change of point of view". But this is by no means just a repetitive extension of the *oculi sani* of the first stage. Where the first *quaedam res* only demands the turning away from the world of the senses in everyday matters, the second stage of the ascension model focuses the inner reflection and spiritual orientation towards God. Interestingly, not everyone who sees will also have divine knowledge; only the change of gaze which "follows", *i.e.* culminates in the vision of God, is regarded as a virtue. This "perfect reason" – in the form of the "perfect change of gaze" of Augustine – is described with the word *virtus*. Or in other words: If the soul has turned away from the material goods and its desire for them, it directs its thinking only "inwards", and no longer "outwards", it focuses only on the spiritual. This focus comes from the following:

"Our power of thought itself is the work and image of God, in a certain sense a sympathy for the uncreated divine light and therefore capable of recognizing the truth. Moreover, as Augustine explains in his dialogue *De magistro*, "God in the act of our knowledge of truth is himself in a very special way the supreme inner teacher and the sun of our soul, inasmuch as we recognize in the light of the supreme divine truth, through the irradiation of eternal truth in our mind, the truths, the supreme concepts and principles from which all science flows".29

Thus, the human soul manages to make the leap from the physical world to the immaterial intelligent world; it consciously changes its attitude, its direction of vision and thus puts the decisive – the spiritual – at the centre of rational contemplation. Now, this only needs to be recognized.

The third peculiarity is "looking" – *videre* –, thought of as "seeing", which stems from the moment of insight. It is the understanding that lies within the soul, the vision of God and thus the ultimate goal, the bliss, which enables a *vita beata*, which also corresponds to the Platonic theorem of a delighted life. The change of perspective of the *ratio* was followed by the knowledge of God. Augustine also calls this level *perfecta virtus*, which implies that the certain human has not only attained bliss – as far as it can be achieved in life – but has also given a morally impeccable testimony. This is particularly evident in the rejection of all transient desires that are deeply rooted in the character of men at this stage. The approach to God makes people blessed: to be able to connect with God makes people very happy and they even feel immense love. This act of knowledge of the soul is finally only attainable by the sole orientation towards the divine. However, the last stage of the divine vision remains somewhat

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28 Note: This formulation is also found in the fourth stage of the ascension model in Augustine’s “De Quantitate animae”.


30 Uhle 2012, page 162.

31 Sol. 1, 13, 1-2: *Iam aspectum sequitur ipsa visio Dei, qui est finis aspectus, non quod iam non sit, sed quod nihil amplius habeat quo se intendat: et haec est perfecta virtus, ratio perveniens ad finem suum, quam beata vita graditur. Ipsa autem visio intellectus est ille qui in anima est, qui conficitur ex intelligent et eo quod intelligitur, ut in oculis videre, quod dicitur, ex ipso sensu constat atque sensibili, quorum detracto quolibet videri nihil potest.* “The vision is followed by the vision of God Himself, which is the end of the vision – not in the sense that the vision is no longer, but that beyond that it has nothing more to look at. And this is truly the accomplished virtue, the reason reaching its goal, which follows the happy life. The vision itself, however, is the understanding within the soul, which arises from what is to be understood and from that which understands, as in the eyes what is called "seeing" arises from the perception itself and the sensually perceptible, none of which may be absent – otherwise nothing can be seen.Author’s note: The proof that love is preserved when *Visio Dei* is the only one of the three virtues of Paul is found a few lines away in Sol. 1, 14, 1-4, which extends to the situation after life; In life the human soul also retains the hope that it can escape the physical hardships of death.

32 Sol. 1, 13, 2: *perfrui*; Sol. 1, 14, 1: *ingenti amore*. 
incomprehensible. One could certainly understand Augustine as equating divine truth with content of human thought.  

"Augustine also emphatically describes internalization, the turning away from the world of the senses and the contemplation of oneself as the path that leads safely to the knowledge of our soul."

But doesn’t the complete identification of God with the dialectical truth fall short, precisely because Augustine declares the completed vision of God as after death? Augustine also enriches the Platonic argumentation in his parable of the sun with Christian ideas: he inserts the three Pauline virtues, faith, hope and love, into his concept of human happiness. This means that the person striving towards God in life is always dependent on his faith, his hope, and his love for God. But in the afterlife – according to Augustine – only love remains, because to hope and to believe are replaced by knowing. Of course, this point of view is taken from 1 Corinthians 13:13:

\[ Nunc autem manet fides spes caritas tria haec maius autem his est caritas. \]

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

The three steps to be climbed, combined with the three Pauline virtues, bring about the following chain of knowledge and sequence of beliefs in practical application: Faith is an advance of trust in what will be known; hope gives men the certainty that it is also possible to know, while the object of knowledge is the highest truth. Hope also ensures that the person seeking God's knowledge does not despair of his situation – for he is not yet capable of seeing God – and abandons his efforts, especially because the way "into the light" must be perceived as difficult by him who is accustomed to the darkness. Love, on the other hand, emphasizes the aspect of man's longing for God and can be considered here as borrowed from the word "carrier".

\[ R.\: \textit{Ergo fidei spes adicienda est.} \]
\[ A.\: \textit{Ita credo.} \]
\[ R.\: \textit{Quid? Si et credat ita se habere omnia et se speret posse sanari, ipsam tamen quae promittitur lucem non amet, non desideret suisque tenebris, quae iam consuetudine iucundae sunt, se arbitretur interim esse contentam: nun medicum illum nihilominus respuit?} \]

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33 Grabmann is convinced of this: Grabmann 1967, page 83.
34 Ibid., Page 45.
35 Note: In Augustine's early dialogues, dialectic refers to the art of logically stringent argumentation (Uhle, p. 1). The fact that Augustine also refers to dialectics with regard to a theologically significant Scripture can be explained by the fact that in the Platonic sense it is to be applied as the main óργανον for all efforts at knowledge.
36 Sol. 1, 12, 7: \textit{Sine tribus istis igitur anima nulla sanatur, ut possit deum suum videre, id est intelligere.} "Without these three, therefore, no soul is healthy, so that they may see their God, which means to know."
37 The eros concept is also found in Plotin, 6, 9, 9: As Apuleius writes in his "Golden Donkey", \textit{Eros} takes the king's daughter \textit{Psyche} as his wife, who then also becomes divine.
38 Sol. 1, 14, 5.
A.: *Prorsus ita est.*
R.: "So hope must be added to faith."
A.: "I believe so, yes."
R.: "If he believes that everything is like that and hopes to be healed, the light that was promised but still does not love, does not long for and believes that he must be satisfied with the darkness that has already become pleasant to him out of habit: Does he not – nevertheless – reject the doctor then?"
A.: "That's exactly how it is."

According to the word, this passage is Pauline but does not correspond to the meaning of the Pauline πίστις concept, since the Augustinian overshaping of the three virtues is more epistemologically thought out. Perhaps the formulation must also be analysed more rhetorically, and Augustine included it in his argument as "duty bound". However, the idea of the provisional nature of faith and hope is also substantially Pauline.39 This indicates – as does the maternal milk metaphor in 1 Cor 3:2 – that Augustine also read many Pauline writings before his conversion, possibly in preparation for his baptism. The Augustinian understanding of the Pauline πίστις, according to which both the quality of love is the highest and its quantity the best – because love, of all virtues, lasts the longest – corresponds to 2 Cor 5:7 "For we live by faith, not by sight.". From this it can be concluded, especially for "De Quantitate animae", that Augustine read a lot of Paul between the writing of the "Soliloquia" together with "De Immortalitate animae" and "De Quantitate animae" and included Pauline as well as substantially Christian thinking in his considerations40, whereby it should be noted that the manuscripts of the fourth century often reproduced the Epistle to the Hebrews together with the Epistles to Paul.

But how is the divine vision ultimately attainable? In Sol. 1, 17, 1 Augustine describes that even healthy eyes are often still blinded by the sun and thus indicates that the sequence of steps towards the knowledge of God increases gradually, but that there seems to be a kind of "obstacle" that has to be broken through in order for man to be considered finally healed.41 Thus men cannot reach the vision of God only by their human capacity for knowledge, but need God for perfection as well as a "qualitative leap", which they can receive only by divine assistance, since God – just as in the Platonic Sun Parable – like the sun is thought to be "illuminating".42 In this context, this can also be well understood as "enlightening" or "illuminating", referring to the spiritual part of man. This formulation is synchronous to the Platonic Sun Parable, which also places the equation of the cognitive subject, object and cognitive process per se with the process of seeing or looking upon at the center of contemplation. Moreover, in the Augustinian analogy – just as in the Platonic analogy – God is equated with the sun, since the highest being is embodied by both of them and everything that exists emerges from them, cannot be seen directly by those who are unprepared, and only make the process of knowledge possible through the divine "light". In other words, it's reproduced: The sun, i.e. the Christian God in the Augustinian concept, enables the visible to be seen through the medium of "light" and provides

39 Röm. 8, 24.
40 Note: Very clear here are 1 Peter 2, 2 and 5, 12-5, 13 Hebrews.
41 Also Sol. 1, 18, 1 and Sol. 1, 19, 1: *Aliud est enim exhausta pestis, aliud consopita.* "An eradicated disease is something other than a merely calmed one." In this passage, Augustine refers to the fact that there is a great difference in whether a desire, because hope in it has been abandoned, is only continually suppressed, or whether, because one was healthy, it was really discarded and died.
42 Sol. 1, 15, 3: *Ergo quomodo in hoc sole tria quaedam licet animadvertere: quod est, quod fulget, quod illuminat, ita in illo secretissimo deo, quem vis smarter, tria quaedam sunt: quod est, quod intelligitur, et quod cetera facit intelligit.* "So how three specific things can be perceived in relation to the sun: That it is, that it shines, that it illuminates, there are also three specific things with that extremely deeply hidden God whom you want to know: That he is, that he is known, and that he makes the other things recognizable."
existence, growth, and nourishment to all transience without passing away itself. The sun and God themselves rise above being, but at the same time, they are connected with all that exists, because they produce it. Furthermore, every virtue that a person needs in order to live well and happily depends on the highest good. Moreover, even in the Augustinian parable of the Sun, it is only an allegorical illustration; a kind of portrait designed to make it easier for the reader to understand, more appealing to the imagination and faith of the readership, as Augustine himself points out.  

For the reasoning put forward so far, this means the following: As long as the soul is connected to the body, there is a peril that it will be attracted by physical things, that it will be deceived and will not be able to resist them. Moreover, Augustine opens a prethanatical vision of life after death for the first time, which concludes that a postmortem being, as well as an insight into the divine, is intended for man. It seems however that this very knowledge and the life after death associated with it must be earned. If this is achieved, this kind of life lacks all physical hardship and is therefore better than earthly existence – it is all that remains to be "hoped for". Additionally, the Augustinian recommendation has far-reaching consequences and the statement that it is desirable for the people – Augustine uses himself here as an example – to fulfil both Platonic and Christian conditions for the vision, since through the vision of God the soul enters into another world. We cannot make any precise statements about this posterity at the present. It is clear, however, that the soul does not have to die or possibly wander on as with Plato’s theories, or even enter another world, such as hell.

In which way can we imagine the qualitative leap through the help of God? Is it enough to believe, hope and love? Augustine suggests otherwise. Because the body restricts the soul, the turning away from the world of the senses must be fulfilled, just as the Pauline virtues must be kept. This serves only as preparation for the onset of the vision, because in this way one can only achieve a gradual increase towards the knowledge of God. For this reason, Augustine introduces the "soul doctor" (ille medicus), who makes himself felt inside the human being through a kind of "lightning" or "shine" (nescio quis fulgor) and makes the completion of the vision possible in the first place.

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43 Sol. 1, 15, 5.
44 Sol. 1, 16, 1: Videamus tamen quod praecedit omnia, utrum sani simus. "Let us nevertheless consider what precedes all things: whether we are healthy." From Sol. 1, 16 to 1, 27, the dialogue partner Augustine is reviewed with regard to the first premise – mental health. The result of the review is that although Augustine has his sights firmly set on the goal (Sol. 1, 18, 1: Multum profecisti. "You have made great progress."). the progress is not yet sufficient for the vision of God (Sol. 1, 20, 6: Nunc ergo propter aevum, ne aliquo pei ore malo involvaris, quo tibi auferatur divina cognitio? "So are you afraid to die now so that you don't get into a worse evil [sc. death] that would take away your divine knowledge?"). The methodical basic rule is the complete renunciation of the sensual world, but it is also emphasized that so far not all souls have the power to ascend in auras suas (Sol. 1, 24, 2-3). However, the complete devaluation of the physical is incompatible with the Christian doctrine, since everything is well created by God, which is why Augustine presents a different solution in the following passage: Only with the admission of one's own limitations – Augustine's progress is not enough – which is expressed by crying, the leniency of the doctor is given room.

45 Note: Of course, the question arises what kind of life after death could be according to Augustinian understanding. Did he imagine a kind of Hindu rebirth of the soul – with possible return of the soul to its homeland through insight – as presented in Plato's Timaios? Or are his statements already underpinned by Christian ideas and the separation of heaven from hell? However, any idea of the afterlife that presupposes physical survival, such as that represented by the ancient Egyptians, can be excluded. Whereby here of course the subsequent question is raised, whether there is, as especially in the Middle Kingdom of Egypt or with Plato, for Augustine a court for the dead or not.

46 Especially in Timaios 90e-92c so represented.

47 Sol. 1, 25, 1-2: Et in eo saepe case animus, ut sanum se putet et sese iacet; et quia nondum videt, veluti iure conqueritur. Novit autem illa pulchritudo, quando se ostendat. Ipsa enim medici fungitur munere meliusque intelligit, qui sint sani, quam idem ipsi qui sanantur. "And it is precisely in this that the soul often deceives itself...
Ratio: Gerit tibi ille medicus morem. Nam nescio quis me quo te ducam fulgor invitat et tangit.

Reason: "That doctor is at your will. For an inexplicable lightning strikes me and shows me where to lead you."

In the New Testament, for example in Luke 10, 18, there is talk of a *fulgor* in the sense of *astrapa* – "lightning". Plotin speaks in Ennead 6, 9, 4 of a "divine splendour" in the sense of *ἀγλαία*; a splendour that is "up there" and enlightens the whole soul. With δόξα θεου in the Christian sense is often meant "the glory of God", which in Latin is also expressed as *claritas*. Therefore not only a kind of "flash of inspiration" could be meant, but also a glow or shine, since *fulgere* can mean "shine". It should be noted that a flash disappears again after a brief glaring spectacle of light, so a brief inspiration that then goes out could well be described like this, whereas a shine is used colloquially to describe a weaker glow, but looks like a kind of "halo". Since a shine lasts longer – and the knowledge of God is described as permanent once the *Visio Dei* has occurred – the translation "shine" is therefore best suited.

The contradictory contrast between illness and health of the soul can only be overcome with the help of "that doctor" and not by the patient's own strength. In this model, the certain human is given the task of preparing for the onset of the vision by constantly turning away from the sensual world and focusing his or her spiritual part on God, whereas the task of the physician is to show which diseases have already escaped by his healing and which still need to be healed. The Platonic doctrine of ideas should not be ignored here, according to which the archetype of "health" is formed by diseases, which must be eradicated in order to approach the archetype again, but which will only finally surmount in death. Disease is understood by Plato as an evil and health as a positive good, whereby it is pointless to merely want to heal the body, since all good and evil have their origin in the soul. The figure of the doctor who heals the soul, however, is both a Platonic and a Christian thought. It probably seems that Augustine refers to the second Trinitarian person and describes Jesus Christ as a physician, as it is also the case in the synoptic gospels – here even "a monopoly position as healer" is attributed to him.

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48 Ibid. 1, 27, 3.
49 Note: As already mentioned in the quotation on this subject, Sol. 1, 15, 3 the formulation *fulget* in relation to the sun, which is equated with *intelligitur* in relation to God.
50 Uhle 2012, page 168.
51 Sol. 1, 25, 4: Ut sic tibi secretissimus ille medicus utrumque demonstraret, et ande cura eius evaseris et quid curandum remaneat. "So that deeply hidden doctor wanted to show you both what you escaped by healing and what remains to be healed."
52 Michael Dörnemann. Krankheit und Heilung in der Theologie der frühen Kirchenväter, in der Reihe: Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 20, Herausgeber Christoph Markschies, Tübingen 2003, Seite 48; Platon, Phaidon 100e, 80e-83c.
53 Ibid., Page 47; Plato, Charmides 156 d.
54 Note: Also in the Old Testament God is represented as healing Κύριος ("Lord" or also directly "God") – above all in relation to physical suffering – but not in the form of the second Trinitarian person. Especially in the book Exodus 15, 26, in Isaiah 53 and in the book Tobit; Note: Already in the Platonic parable of the sun the sun had been described as Κύριος.
55 Uhle 2012, page 167; Dörnemann 2003, page 21; Note: Jesus is presented as ὁ σε σε ("Healer"), which means healing in relation to sinfulness, whereas a righteous and good life promises health, especially spiritual health.
Jesus Christ's very own concern was to help humanity first and foremost, the needy and the sick, which could justify a reference to the incarnation of Christ. That at this point the Christian God is meant as soul physician also suggests a parallel formulation in the parable of the sun. The true knowledge of God is shifted by Augustine into the otherworldly life of the souls. Nonetheless "touches" with the divine can already occur in this world, made possible by the soul doctor:

"Augustine proffers an interpretatio christiana of the Neoplatonic vision of the One or supreme principle. The divine wisdom may be momentarily 'touched' in rare instants of our lives".  

In the seventh book of the "Confessiones" Augustine himself expresses the points of contact between his theology and Neoplatonic theology. In the Neuplatonic and Augustinian way of thinking, people already knew of "a testimony of the light" within them, whereby God was the lumen verum. Although the anima ipsa lumen non est ("the soul itself is not the light"), it not only refers to the "light" given by God in us but also points the way towards God. Through his soul, man can, however only with divine assistance, ascend "upwards", so to speak "towards God". As in the "Soliloquia", Augustine also comes to the conclusion in "De utileitate credendi" that he is not sufficiently prepared for the highest truth. Augustine himself makes the difference to Neoplatonic thinking: Plotin's conviction lacks the Son of God as the mortal manifestation of the transcendent God in the cosmos created by God. Augustine, on the other hand, recognizes Jesus Christ as an entity of the Holy Trinity.

The idea that every human being receives a soul of equal quality from God and thus has the same chance to gain knowledge as everyone else, can also be found in much later Augustinian works. Neither Augustine nor Neo-Platonism know of any internal differentiation within mankind that has been predetermined from the very beginning. In addition, both theologies are united by the following basic parameters: Man is inferior to God as a creature, but his creator is superior to him, and Plotin is even more elitist than Augustine about this point. All these statements about the human soul and the human being as a "divine product" have Plotin's ontology and Augustine's doctrine of being in common. But that was not all: The Christian statement: "I entered my inner being under your guidance and I could do this because you have become my aide" implies that Augustine clings to the thought of an inner "coadiutor" (adiutor meus). Similarly, the following statement is revealing that "the Word, God Himself, is the true light that enlightens every person coming into this world; and that He was in this world and the world was created by Him", since it clearly refers to an "inner divine enlightener" who was already "in this world". This can only mean Jesus Christ. Only the finding of the truth by

This thought fits well into the Augustinian argument, since it is also a healing of the soul and not only a recovery of the already fragile body.

56 Sol. 1, 25, 4; 1, 15, 3: secretissimus ille medicus; illo secretissimo deo.
57 G. O'Daly: Augustine’s Philosophy of Mind, London 1987, page 215; Note: Augustine states this so clearly only in the Confessiones (9, 24-25).
59 De utileitate credendi, 2, 4:
[I] ta mihi nunc evenit non neganti esse ineffabile quiddam et singular animae bonum, quod mente videatur, et me ad contemplandum nondum esse idoneum cum fletu et pituitu confitenti."So meet me, who I do not deny that there is a certain inexpressible and unique good of the soul, now that this can be seen with the spirit, although I confess also with tears and sighs that I am not yet suitable for its contemplation."
60 In Conf. 7, 10 there is a suitable light metaphor for this.
62 Note: Augustine formulates that "every person who comes into this world becomes enlightened", which is a clear difference from the ascension thought in the early dialogues.
means of faith distinguishes the function of the soul in the late Augustinian from the plotinian conception, which does not presuppose faith.

It is interesting to note that the physician for the soul also appears as a metaphor for Christ in various patristic writings, such as Evagrius Pontikos. Evagrius sees in the second Trinitarian person "the anointing God", whereby Jesus Christ is used by him synonymously for the divine Logos. Thus, through the Logos, man participates in the divine, which leads him to salvation, whereby Jesus Christ is seen as a kind of "special intellect" which is sublime above the human intellects and thus rather "as inseparable unity with the Logos". This raises the question of whether other Church Fathers and the Cappadocians, as well as Iamblich, are to be assumed here rather as literary sources than Plato. Finally, in the Augustinian concept, the idea of starting from the immortality of the soul as a gift of the good God to his supreme creation, the human, becomes tangible. After all, the connection of the human soul with the divine is also a result of the goodness of God. May God in the form of the second person of the Holy Trinity, i.e. Jesus Christ, help man, after his preparatory work, as a soul doctor to the knowledge of the divine truth. In this way humanity per se would have an open door to the knowledge of God – although the dispositions of each human being are individual and very different – but only with the help of God as inner medicus.

References


63 Evagrius Ponticus. Ad monachos. Ad virginem. Institutio ad monachos. The monk's mirror. The nun mirror. Warning to Monks, introduced and translated by Christoph Joest, in the series: Fontes Christiani 51, Editor Marc-Aeillo Aris, Franz Dünzl, Winfried Haunerland, Rainer Ilger, Rudolf Schieffer, Freiburg im Breisgau 2012, pp. 108-112; Note: The Greek church father Gregory of Nazianz, who lived like Augustine in the fourth century, also deals with Jesus as a soul doctor, pastoral care and mental illnesses, whereby for him the healing of the soul serves as preparation for the vision of God (Orationes 2, 16-18). The Platonic view that the body is worse than the soul is also represented by him.


